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Heaven Can Wait sails again

by [Contributed - Vernon Morning Star](#)

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The Okanagan Quality Life Society pontoon boat, Heaven Can Wait, heads out on Okanagan Lake.

— *image credit: photo submitted by Dale Dunlop*

Editor's note: The following is from the Vernon Yacht Club and the Okanagan Quality Life Society.

It was a gala party to start the summer season as the Vernon Yacht Club and the Okanagan Quality Life Society joined up to kick off the Heaven Can Wait II replacement pontoon boat fundraising initiative.

More than 100 VYC and OQLS members and friends came out June 21 to generously support the program to purchase a new pontoon boat to replace the aging Heaven Can Wait, which has served so faithfully since 1992. An absolutely outstanding success, the event raised close to \$8,000.

Notably, the idea to have a fundraiser was spawned during the VYC Boat Show. Denise Dobie, who had purchased an evening of entertainment with the popular local band The Goods at the Kalamalka Rotary Dream Auction, heard of the OQLS initiative to purchase a new pontoon boat, so she spoke with OQLS vice-president Gerald Gustafson and VYC Commodore Mike Thomas and suggested a June 21 Summer Solstice fundraising dinner/dance and she would donate the band.

A committee chaired by Gerald was quickly assembled and the rest, as they say, is history. Tickets for the event quickly sold out, and the Vernon and area community responded in fine fashion to requests by donating more than 85 silent auction items. An excellent dinner was catered by Corrine and Carol in the VYC kitchen with Jay and Chanel keeping everyone happy at the bar. Bob and Ken carved up and served the roast beef.

Generously, the attendees responded to MC Mike Thomas' prompting to visit the silent auction tables, and/or give a direct donation. The auction items fetched 75 per cent of their value (60 per cent is considered a success) and more than \$3,000 was donated directly. Add in a share-the-funds' draw of \$456 and the Summer Solstice fundraiser was a huge success.

Significantly, club members have supported the OQLS Heaven Can Wait program by providing moorage free of charge and use of their facilities since 1994.

The OQLS was formed in 1992 to purchase a 24-foot pontoon boat to take seniors confined to long-term residences and disabled members of the Vernon and area community on therapeutic boat rides on Okanagan Lake. The program has proved to be a wonderful success providing so much on water joy to the residents.

The VYC and OQLS would like to thank all of the generous support received during this fundraiser event. Our goal of raising \$40,000 to have Heaven Can Wait II in the water ready for the 2014 season has been given a tremendous send-off. Loads of thanks go to Gerald and his committee for making this a "fun" event, to Denise Dobie for donating the band and to the Vernon and area business community for their many generous donations of items for the silent auction.

If anyone is interested in knowing more about the OQLS program or has an interest in donating to this worthwhile cause (charitable receipts provided), please contact Ron Heuman, OQLS president at 250-558-1063 or the VYC office at 250-545-5518.