



The Honker

Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club



January 2023

Lesser Black-backed Gull —Photo by Jodi Forster

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THANKS FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club
193 Westview Drive
Penticton BC V2A 7W1
www.southokanagannature.com



Mission Statement:

To provide a dynamic local focus for experiencing the natural world of BC and for promoting its conservation.

Membership: Individual: \$35; Family: \$45 (membership year is Sept 1 to Aug 31)

Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month from September through May (except December) at 7PM in the basement hall of the Penticton United Church, 696 Main St. (corner of Main and Eckhardt). Please bring your own coffee mug. New members always welcome.

Board meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Please contact any Executive or director if you wish to add an item to the agenda.

Our birding, wildflower, geology, social group meets every Thursday in the north parking lot of Cherry Lane mall (northeast corner of Warren & Atkinson) at 9AM (hours may change in summer & winter). Be prepared to car pool. Trips range from 'car birding' to easy strolls to occasional more moderate hikes. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Everyone welcome. For more info contact Wendy Stewart or check out the birding page on the website.

Field Trips are generally held in the spring and fall and may be all day or occasionally overnight. Check the website for details. Please notify of the trip leader if you intend to participate. Dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear appropriate footwear, bring a lunch and drinking water. Pets are not appropriate for field trips or Thursday outings.

SONC is a society under the BC Societies Act and a federated club of BC Nature

Executive Officers:

President: Alex Bodden a.bodden@shaw.ca

Vice-president: Wendy Stewart, wendyastewart@shaw.ca

Treasurer: Colleen Simmons colleensimmons@live.ca

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Newsletter Submission Dates:

Please submit material for publication by the 15th of January, March, June, September and November. Any item relevant to the Club is welcome as are photos taken by club members.

Coordinators/Representatives:

Archivist: Jim Ginns 250 492 9610; ginnsj@shaw.ca

Conservation Committee:

To be determined

BC Nature Rep: Alex Bodden; a.bodden@shaw.ca

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Meeting programs: Doreen Olson threegates@telus.net and Bob Handfield

Publicity: Chris Anderson

Refreshments: Jim Shaver

S Okanagan Habitat Garden: Marlene Hikichi (temporarily)

Thursday Birding: Wendy Stewart, Alex Bodden and Jim Shaver

Cover photo: Lesser Black-backed Gull - rare for here - seen along Okanagan lake on November 23/22—Jodi Forster

According to "Merlin" - Slender, long-winged gull, slightly smaller than Herring Gull. ... Can be found around any body of water but prefers beaches and flats. Often with flocks of other large gulls. Common in Eurasia, wintering to Africa and Southeast Asia. Population in North America has increased dramatically in the last couple decades; now regular (even fairly common!) on the Atlantic coast, rarer inland and farther west.

President's Message

Happy 2023 to you all! I hope that you all had a great holiday season with friends and family in spite of the weather, airline chaos, turkey shortage and lingering COVID. We are finally getting things back to usual routine and we are going to have a great year ahead.

I would first off like to thank you all for getting your memberships paid up for the new year. This is probably the first time ever that everyone was paid up by the December deadline to update our data base with BC Nature. We currently stand at 36 family memberships and 53 individual members. We have already had our first new members of 2023 join the club. Welcome to Jean Lederer and Barry Burto.

The Christmas bird counts took place as usual and I would like to thank all of the club members who participated. I participated in five different counts this year and enjoyed the challenge that each one of them presented. The Penticton count was on a cold blustery day, especially for those observing around Okanagan Lake. The Vaseux count was on a warm, but drizzly day and the Oliver-Osoyoos count was done on a fairly nice day. I also did the Peachland count up in the highlands in Meadow Valley and Darke lake, and the Cawston count. The count results were mixed with Penticton and Vaseux being among the worst and Peachland being one of the best on record. As usual, the local counts were all organized by Dick Cannings and we all thank him for the time and effort required to do this. Getting enough people out this year was a real challenge and I encourage you to work on your birding skills and join in next year. December 17 should be the 2023 Penticton count day.

For those of you who get out regularly; you probably have seen some interesting things this year that reflect the natural ups and down of species populations and perhaps the impact of climate change on range. Varied Thrushes seem to be everywhere this year, but Pine Siskins seem to have disappeared. Red Crossbills are abundant at higher elevations and I was amazed to see so many Red Squirrels in the conifer forest. It would seem that there is a good crop of pine cones this year. Bohemian Waxwings are throughout the valley in large flocks, *or museums*, of birds. Bewick's wrens, which even up to 2010 were very rare birds to see in the Okanagan, are now observed regularly through the whole valley year-round. I look forward to some of your highlights at the next meeting on January 26.

An accounting of what the club did in 2022 is probably in order. The big event of the year was our 60th anniversary and unveiling of the new club logo. Under Wendy Stewart's management we were able to get the Thursday outings up and running with above normal club participation. As previously mentioned, our club membership is up and our last meeting was probably the best attended since I joined the club.

We now have a full board of committed directors to take us through this year and lots of new ideas. Our club made contributions to the Nature Trust of BC and Southern Interior

Land Trust for land acquisition in the White Lake basin and the Bourguiba Spring property just South East of Osoyoos. We also continue to support a bursary at Okanagan college. Through all of the challenges of the past couple of years Bob Handfield has continued to produce The Honker newsletter to keep us in touch. Glenda Ross will be producing our next one and I hope one or two of you will step in to help keep the newsletter going.

I also know that some of our club members volunteered with other groups, including the South Okanagan Stewardship society, the Vaseux Lake bird observatory, assisting a grad student with her project, working with the Meadowlark Festival on what turned out to be one of their best years and I am sure other projects that I am not aware of or forgot. Several of us contribute regularly to e-bird and i-naturalists, which have become the leaders of citizen science.

Looking forward, we are planning to do some of our longer day trips and perhaps a couple of multi-day outings. I am working on a date for our trip to the Douglas Lake IBA and Rod Malcolm is working on a plan for a multi-day trip to Fernie. We are working with the RDOS and the Okanagan Falls Community Foundation to develop an observation platform and nature trail near the sewage treatment plant as well. Judy Pratt has re-started our monthly club dining out and we will be enjoying a meal at the Polish Bistro on January 13. I am sure many of you have some exciting ideas of what to do and where to go this year, so let us know. As always, a club only works when everyone pitches in.

We will also be looking for a new meeting place, since the United Church has advised us that they will be selling the property. If you have an idea of a place that will work, please let a board member know. It would be great if the chosen location has a good speaker and media system we can use.

Our February meeting has traditionally been a pizza night and an opportunity for the members to share experiences and photographs, so start collating your images and load them into power point, even if it is only one favorite that you wish to share. This is a great meeting to bring a potential new member to.

I hope to keep running into some of you out in the field during the year and look forward to hearing your stories and creating adventures together.

Alex Bodden

Bewick's Wren
- Credit: A. Bodden



Coming Events

Meetings:

February 24 - Pizza and member slide presentations (cost for pizza to be determined)

March 23—Speaker TBA

April 27 - Speaker TBA

**Invasive Species: Okanagan Lakes Remain
Invasive Mussel Free
By Lisa Scott, OASISS
January 2023**

The Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) is once again celebrating another year free of invasive mussels in the Okanagan.

The society has been monitoring Okanagan lakes for invasive mussels for the past ten years. In 2022, staff collected 148 samples from five lakes.

“We are thrilled that our lakes remain free of invasive mussels for another year,” says Lisa Scott, Executive Director of OASISS. “However, the arrival of zebra or quagga mussels remains a clear and present danger. We must continue to be diligent in our prevention efforts.”

The sampling was made possible by a grant from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, with funding provided by the BC Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship. The Ministry has received support for invasive mussel monitoring from Fisheries and Oceans Canada through the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk. The work is part of a province-wide monitoring initiative and runs in conjunction with the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program. To date, no invasive mussels have been detected in the province.

“Each year the valley attracts thousands of boaters from outside the province,” says Scott. “It could only take one contaminated boat to start an infestation. Invasive mussels could have lasting negative impacts to our lakes, as we have seen in other parts of Canada.”

Zebra and quagga mussels are non-native freshwater mollusks that are originally from Eastern Europe and Western Russia. They were first introduced to Canada in the late 1980s and since then, have spread into lakes and waterways around North America, mainly by contaminated watercraft. In regions where they have already established, invasive mussels damage sensitive ecosystems, clog water intake pipes and water infrastructure, ruin beaches, reduce water quality and impact tourism.

The society is encouraging anyone travelling with a watercraft to clean, drain and dry their boat before entering a new waterbody.

OASISS - Ty lifts veliger completely out of water - ready for testing
photo credit: Neil Bousquet



Gimli adult with young
photo credit: L Scott

OASISS— Sierra with CDD sign
photo credit: L Scott



Close up of Gimli on hull
photo credit: L Scott

OASISS team with Penticton Mussel Defense crew
photo credit: L Scott



The Heavens

This go-round is about The Planets. There are seven that are visible to the naked eye (that leaves out Neptune, too far away, and Pluto, even more so), and of those seven — Uranus is never mentioned as something to look for, being distant and at the limit of visibility.
— Earth is never mentioned as it doesn't appear in the sky.
— Mercury is never mentioned by me as it is too much of a challenge, its small orbit keeping it close to the Sun and lost in twilight glare (or in daylight) whenever it is above the horizon. That leaves four for me to report on, and here is a rundown of what they are doing this season.

Saturn, most distant of the four, is in the process of disappearing behind the Sun, not because of its own motion (which is quite slow in its enormous orbit) but because of Earth's. We cycle the Sun much more quickly in a much smaller orbit and currently are in the process of putting the Sun between us and Saturn. We won't be seeing Saturn until the spring.

Currently, the remaining three planets all appear left of the Sun, so all three are visible in the evening sky. They will be putting on quite a decent show for us over the next couple of months.

Presently, as the sky gets dark Jupiter appears in the SW, about a third of the way up the sky and brighter than any of the stars. Some distance below-right of Jupiter is Venus, even brighter, but it is low in the sky and possibly hidden behind mountains . . . that depends on where you are. Added to that feature is the fact that Venus will be in the process of setting and so not visible for very long in the evening. However, if you are blessed with a clear sky in that direction you can perhaps watch Venus set, flickering on and off as it passes behind trees on some distant ridge. And then there's Mars, appearing reasonably high in the sky in the SE. It looks as bright as the brightest star, but not as bright as Jupiter, and its reddish colour mutes it somewhat. The bright star Aldebaran, eye of Taurus the Bull, appears a short distance below Mars, similar in colour but not quite as bright. The two are easily recognised as a distinctive pair in the western sky, Mars above, Aldebaran below.

Through the month of February, Jupiter will slowly shift to appear lower in the sky and a little more westward. That is the result of Earth moving to put the Sun between us and it, the same thing that happened to Saturn a couple of months earlier. Venus behaves quite differently from Jupiter, a result of it orbiting the Sun more closely than does Earth and moving more quickly than Earth. What we will witness is Venus coming out from behind the Sun, to the left, eventually to swing around and pass between us and the Sun, and what that will look like is, through the month of February, Venus appearing progressively higher in the sky and closer to Jupiter. By the end of the month the two planets will be quite close . . . on March 2 Venus will appear *above* Jupiter, and very close indeed. This dance of the two brightest planets is worth keeping an eye on . . . all it takes is a quick glance at the western sky as darkness falls, any evening that the sky is clear. During all

this Mars will remain prominently high in the sky, shifting to the south and moving leftward from Aldebaran.

During March the same sort of behaviour will continue, with Jupiter getting lower and disappearing altogether by the end of the month, Venus getting higher and shifting westward, and Mars going to WSW and distancing itself even more from Aldebaran.

Once a month the crescent Moon will join in the Jupiter-Venus dance. On January 25 it will appear below Jupiter, on February 22 left of Jupiter and very close with Venus below-right of the pair — that should be quite a sight ! — and on March 23 it will appear below Venus.

Figure caption: Venus as it appears when it is almost lined up between us and the Sun (as seen through a small telescope), looking very much like the Moon does when it is almost lined up between us and the Sun. We are treated to a crescent Venus over a period of a couple of months as it passes between us and the Sun, which happens every 19 months. Credit: James W. Young

Chris Purton



Jim Shaver out on an Oliver Christmas Bird Count in 2018—& still at it to date
photo credit: G. Ross



Penticton Christmas Bird Count: 18 December 2022

Weather -8 to -13C (got colder through the day), wind NW 20-42 kph all day, light to moderate snow all day. Overcast, brighter in afternoon. 2 to 10 cm snow in valley, most oxbows frozen. 42 observers in 19 to 22 parties, 116.5 party-hours. Lowest species total since 1975, one of the lowest efforts (party-hours) in 30 years.

Canada Goose	2642	Steller's Jay	15
Trumpeter Swan	26	Clark's Nutcracker	5
Wood Duck	14	Black-billed Magpie	97
Gadwall	20	American Crow	105
American Wigeon	6	Common Raven	781
Mallard	1057	Black-capped Chickadee	52
Redhead	156	Mountain Chickadee	30
Ring-necked Duck	26	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10
Greater Scaup	346	Pygmy Nuthatch	71
Bufflehead	71	Brown Creeper	2
Common Goldeneye	55	Canyon Wren	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	4	American Dipper	2
Hooded Merganser	27	Golden-crowned Kinglet	9
Common Merganser	50	Western Bluebird	129
Ring-necked Pheasant	11	Townsend's Solitaire	8
California Quail	994	American Robin	420
Ruffed Grouse	1	Varied Thrush	80
Common Loon	2	European Starling	1903
Pied-billed Grebe	21	Bohemian Waxwing	2494
Horned Grebe	20	Cedar Waxwing	145
Red-necked Grebe	10	Spotted Towhee	30
Great Blue Heron	7	American Tree Sparrow	4
Bald Eagle: adult	41	Song Sparrow	115
Bald Eagle: immature	4	Fox Sparrow	1
Northern Harrier	2	White-throated Sparrow	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	Golden-cr. Sparrow	1
Cooper's Hawk	8	White-crowned Sparrow	20
Accipiter sp.	2	Dark-eyed (Sc) Junco	9
Red-tailed Hawk	29	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	1596
Rough-legged Hawk	2	Red-winged Blackbird	27
American Kestrel	3	Brewer's Blackbird	14
Merlin	5	Cassin's Finch	4
Peregrine Falcon	1	House Finch	495
American Coot	1195	Red Crossbill	27
Ring-billed Gull	27	American Goldfinch	193
California Gull	4	House Sparrow	478
Herring Gull	25		
Glaucous-winged Gull	17	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	17016
gull, sp.	129		
Rock Pigeon	208	TOTAL SPECIES	82
Eurasian Collared-Dove	136		
Mourning Dove	43		
Great Horned Owl	4		
Anna's Hummingbird	1		
Belted Kingfisher	2		
Downy Woodpecker	4		
Hairy Woodpecker	2		
Red-shafted Flicker	168		
intergrade Flicker	1		
Pileated Woodpecker	1		
Northern Shrike	2		

Vaseux Lake Christmas Bird Count: 27 December 2022

Mild and drizzly, 3 to 4C, low overcast (foggy at elevation), wind S 0-5, light drizzle in valley in morning, all day at higher elevations. Vaseux Lake and parts of Okanagan River frozen after cold snap previous week. Snow melting fast in valley 4 cm; up to 50 cm at higher elevations. 20 observers in 9 to 14 parties, 71 party-hours. Second lowest species count since 1975.

Canada Goose	207	Black-billed Magpie	62
Trumpeter Swan	73	Clark's Nutcracker	17
Wood Duck	7	American Crow	14
Gadwall	5	Common Raven	20
American Wigeon	13	Black-capped Chickadee	144
Mallard	464	Mountain Chickadee	45
Green-winged Teal	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	43
Ring-necked Duck	25	White-breasted Nuthatch	9
Lesser Scaup	4	Pygmy Nuthatch	127
Bufflehead	88	Canyon Wren	14
Common Goldeneye	17	Bewick's Wren	8
Barrow's Goldeneye	40	Marsh Wren	1
Hooded Merganser	15	American Dipper	7
Common Merganser	29	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	5	Western Bluebird	63
California Quail	681	Townsend's Solitaire	28
Pied-billed Grebe	3	American Robin	279
Horned Grebe	17	Varied Thrush	11
Red-necked Grebe	5	European Starling	459
Great Blue Heron	4	Bohemian Waxwing	1912
Golden Eagle: adult	1	Cedar Waxwing	4
Golden Eagle: imm	3	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco	619
Northern Harrier	1	White-crowned Sparrow	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Song Sparrow	51
Cooper's Hawk	2	Spotted Towhee	12
Accipiter sp.	1	Red-winged Blackbird	198
Bald Eagle: adult	25	House Finch	160
Bald Eagle: immature	8	Red Crossbill	29
Red-tailed Hawk	24	Pine Siskin	16
American Coot	17	American Goldfinch	38
Wilson's Snipe	1	House Sparrow	238
Rock Pigeon	118		
Eurasian Collared-Dove	57	Total individuals	6822
Great Horned Owl	2	Total Species	75
Downy Woodpecker	6		
Hairy Woodpecker	7		
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	3		
Northern (R.-s.) Flicker	130		
Pileated Woodpecker	1		
American Kestrel	6		
Merlin	2		
Peregrine Falcon	2		
Northern Shrike	3		
Steller's Jay	48		
California Scrub-Jay	1		

What Does a Rare Sighting Mean

It is probably one of the main motivators of birding that keeps you going out, the chance of seeing a rare, or even better, never seen before, bird in the area. The most recent local example is the California Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) first reported at the beginning of December in Okanagan Falls. This is a first for the Okanagan. Several birders quickly went to the area to add it to their local list, and perhaps see it for the first time. The term "twitcher" has even arisen to describe a birder who will go a long way to observe a rare bird and expand their life list. Of course, the ego in all of us wants to be the first to discover a rarity. Getting a good picture is icing on the cake.

I was lucky enough to find a second scrub jay just south of Cawston during their Christmas Bird count. The reality is that finding a rarity is simply the luck of being there when it is. I almost missed seeing it because there were several Steller's Jays (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) in the area and I thought the movement at the top of the pine was just another one. I took a look and noted the different shade of blue and was elated when it popped into the open to see this rarity. My ego is telling me I was the first to report one in the Similkameen valley.

Questions immediately arise. How did it get here and what does it mean? The most usual explanation is that a storm carried it here. This is probably the case for the Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) reported this week in Kelowna. It is a long way from home and would have to cross an ocean and mountains to get here. Perhaps a strong wind brought these jays up from their Southern home.

Other sightings are more a part of natural cycles, probably with a touch of climate change added in. Snowy Owls (*Bubo scandi-acus*) move south when the lemming population is low. We had White-faced Ibises (*Plegadis chihi*) reported two years ago, with the likely explanation that the prairie drought made them look for more suitable nesting areas.

Are they a potentially invasive species and how will their expansion affect local species? The historic rate of expansion for the Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) is an example and the BC invasive species council has called them invasive. This is probably due to the fact that human activity resulted in their arrival in North America and release into wild. There is no indication that they are having any impact on a local species, yet.

Are they the vanguards of the species undergoing a natural range expansion? Is climate change making it more hospitable for them? We had Lesser Goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria*) reported in the South Okanagan for a few years in a row, but this year, none. Were they testing the area out for the future or were they just a strange wind driven anomaly? Take the example of the Bewicks' Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*). Looking at e-bird data, even 10 years ago it was very rare to see one here, but I counted four at Vaseux lake yesterday. They are common now in the Okanagan valley and Lower Mainland. Asking even deeper questions relating to evolutionary genetic modification and speciation can arise.

Climate change is the big unknown, but less so as its effects are seen more every day. The Audubon society field guide for birds has an interactive range map using citizen science data for many species of birds, with range projections based on temperature change. Looking at the projections for the Bewick's Wren (*T. bewickii*) they have already passed what was expected over time.

Of course, the answer to the many questions that can arise out of unique sightings requires a lot of data collection and analysis over time by qualified people. In the end, we have to enjoy the excitement of discovery, do what we can to contribute to the data through citizen science systems and ponder philosophically about what it all means.

Alex Boddin



California Scrub-Jay - Credit: A. Boddin
Another rare visitor to the Okanagan

Socialè Photo Contest

Some of our birding group went for coffee at Socialè after one of our Thursday outings. Evlyne is one of the staff and checked us out on our website and enjoyed our photographs. She has invited us to enter their amateur photo contest.

Submit to: info@SocialèOnLake.com by January 31st.



Narratives of a Naturalist — Terry and Greg Tellier

Terry and Greg moved to British Columbia in 1981 from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Terry was a Registered Nurse and Greg was a Letter Carrier. They chose to live and work in a small community with good weather, minimal pollution, and amenities close at hand so they chose Penticton.

Terry joined SONC around 1988 due to an interest in learning more about birds, especially Bluebirds. Her first SONC bird outing was a Christmas Bird Count with Glenda Ross and two other excellent birders. That first CBC revealed how knowledgeable, friendly, and hardy birders could be.

In 1993 Terry and Greg joined the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society (SIBTS) and monitored 67 bluebird nest boxes. Greg constructed over 1000 bluebird boxes to install or to sell in order to raise funds for the Society. He also taught children with their parents to make bluebird nest boxes. They co-hosted the North American Bluebird Society Conference in Penticton in 2002. Several SONC members volunteered with the NABS Conference and monitored bluebird nest boxes for the SIBTS.

In 2002 they bought recreational property at Osprey Lake. They retired there in 2010 after Greg built four cabins. As members of the Vermillion Forks Field Naturalists (VFFN) and SONC they hosted bike trips on the Kettle Valley Railbed, bird watching trips, hiking and snow shoe outings in that area.

Terry became a Hummingbird bander with the Princeton VFFN team in 2012. In 2017, they moved back to Penticton. Terry continued banding hummingbirds at two locations in the South Okanagan until 2021. SONC members were again instrumental in volunteering the host site or assisting with the banding process.

Travel activities over the past years have been based on birding conferences plus camping in National, Provincial or State Parks. Upon retirement in 2010, they began traveling to Arizona, finding many exciting birding and hiking locations. They now spend 5 months of the year near Casa Grande in an RV park where Greg leads weekly hikes in the area.

Daily activities at home or on the road include bird watching, photography, and hiking to various locations. Greg sends email photos and stories about their adventures to many friends across Canada and the USA on a monthly basis.

Their passion is sharing their nature finds with others and trying to instill respect for the earth and the natural world in others. They hope that youth will become interested participants in SONC, bringing new ideas and energy to its programs.

Greg and Terry appreciate the contribution SONC members and the executive have made over the past years and thank them for their dedication.

Respectfully, Terry & Greg Tellier



Terry and Greg enjoying warm trips south.



Always ready to share their passion for nature with everyone.

All photos courtesy of Greg and Terry Tellier.



If you haven't checked out our Club's website recently, you should do so. Our site has all the latest information on monthly meetings, etc. Glenda has been working on changing the photographs, both on the home page and in the photography section. She is always looking for new photos so why not send her a few of your Okanagan Valley nature photos and let other Club members have a look at your work.



The stern wheeler SS Sicamous is a luxury vessel that was used to transport passengers and cargo to remote communities along the shores of Okanagan Lake. Today the ship is preserved on the shore of Okanagan Lake, in Penticton BC. <https://www.ssicamous.ca/the-history-of-the-ss-sicamous>—Photo by Rick McKelvey

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Mail form to SONC, 193 Westview Drive, Penticton BC V2A 7W1

Individual.....\$35 per year

Family\$45 per year

Date:.....

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Do you wish to receive The Honker by email? _____

The membership year is Sept. to August; if joining after February 1st please contact the membership secretary first.