

TEXADA'S TRIANGLE RUN - 1965

By 1951 road and ferry connections from Powell River to Vancouver had been established and Texadans were eager to be included.

In 1955 the *Atrevida* ferry provided space for five cars but the increased industry and population on the island gave rise to demands for a more frequent, larger capacity vehicle service to the mainland.

Hopes were raised in 1965 when the Department of Highways announced a new ferry for a proposed triangle run (Comox - Blubber Bay - Westview). However when the *Comox Queen* (later renamed *Tenaka*) commenced operation the Texada stop was “forgotten” (sound familiar?).

Texada resident Mrs Helene Orpen lobbied tirelessly for the connection in her weekly column for the *PR News*. She drew even national attention to the issue and helped raise islanders’ voices loud enough to prompt BC Highways minister (“Flying Phil”) Gaglardi to declare that he’d had “enough of Texada for awhile.”

However, Orpen’s appeals were effective and MLA Isabel Dawson announced that a new ferry dedicated to Texada was on its way. Four years later (August 1969) the *PR News* announced the arrival of the *Texada Queen* - a new 30-car capacity ferry for the route.

The *Atrevida*, meanwhile, was purchased by the BC government and its captain, Gus Liebich, was hired as the first captain of the *Texada Queen*.



Berthed at Blubber Bay the new ferry provided a 16-hour daily service and allowed convenient access to the mainland for work, school, medical appointments, shopping and other activities. Some businesses based on Texada eventually closed down losing customers due to the easier commute to larger centres.

The *Texada Queen* was renamed *Tachek* in 1977 and continued to ply the route until 1979 when the larger *North Island Princess* arrived.

Today the *Tachek* currently services the Quadra-Cortes Island route and has become well known on the coast as a relief vessel on various runs during ferry re-fits and breakdowns. In 2012/2013 a \$20 million project converted her to “hybrid propulsion.”

As for the triangle run, the route was revived briefly in the summer of 1998, then dropped. This year’s third attempt was also short-lived. The public pressure to re-establish this route recalls the efforts of Helene Orpen over 55 years ago.

History repeats itself!

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