



Telltales

Newsletter
of the
Seneca Yacht Club

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Commodore's Corner

As we enjoy the best months of the year at SYC, the cooling temperatures, delightful light and shadows, autumn sails, always the sunsets, it may not be time to drop our guard yet, but we can at least take a breath and quietly smile at where we've been this year and what we've come through. In our 92 years we've experienced many things, but never a global pandemic! As the saying goes, we can do anything, but the impossible takes a bit longer. Our season was delayed by about a month...and some things didn't happen the traditional way...indeed, some things didn't happen at all ... but other unexpected and innovative creations emerged to fill the vacuum.

It's been some time since we've enjoyed our Thistle Fleet sticking around on Sunday Mornings dancing on our Seneca Lake waters instead of competing elsewhere. The Seneca Sailing Academy couldn't hold its usual week long Summer Sailing Camps, so it held individual and adult lessons, and launched into hosting Open Sail sessions for sailors to come down and develop their skills on their own. SSA was scheduled to have Boys & Girls Club kids take five summer camp slots...and due to pandemic precautions couldn't, so they had 34 come to swim and get on a boat as an introduction to sailing...and SSA plans to keep sailing thru September and might open shop next May to extend the season! SYC had to cancel the Fajita Fest, but added a new Cocktail Half-Hour to the Commodore's Dinner, and we only cancelled one of three Punch Bowls! Our March Equinox Sock Burning and Haiku Contest was forfeited, but Sunday club racing has been very well attended, our membership is up, and we got half the clubhouse painted with new windows installed.

Tenacity, grim persistence and great good humor deserve more credit. That we had a season at all is thanks to the members of SYC being willing to tolerate, and even zealously evangelize safety precautions that were changing by the day at the national,

state and local levels. It's been dizzying, disorienting and downright annoying ... and still is! Please accept my and the board's sincere apologies to anyone offended or otherwise put off by our "guidelines" and related attempts at imposing safety measures...unfortunately there were a few, but only a few. At a time when people around the globe are dying, marching in protest, watching turmoil in the news and on the streets, at SYC we've remained civil, supportive and cared for each other. It is all rather remarkable...but not surprising!

You can count on the board members to keep a steady hand on tiller and get us through the remainder of this season and ready for the next. Somebody famous, a mountain climber not a sailor...but, said something about picking your colleagues as if your life depended on it...they would be holding the rope as you dangle from a cliff over the abyss in a blizzard. In that sense, SYC has 12 board members (and many past board members and members) that can be counted on to hold on to that line for us all, in fair weather or in a hurricane on the open sea. They will continue to keep things ship shape, to avoid disaster, and when it comes...as it has...they won't let go or abandon ship. You've picked a good bunch, you can trust them to do what's best, what's right (and what's least expensive) for you and for the club. You pick them every year at the Annual Meeting ... so GET OUT AND VOTE!

As we look toward our Clean-Up Day, Annual Meeting & Hauling Out Party (October 24th)...we'll yet again have to adapt and get out of our traditional comfort zone...and we will. There are several distinct events bundled together, which may be worth unbundling for this year at least.

The usual scenario goes something like this. **Our Annual Clean Up Day** is to put the clubhouse and grounds to bed for it's winter slumber, which ends in a **Burger and Hot Dog Picnic** for the volunteers. Later that evening we held the **Hauling Out Party** which includes a **Cocktail Hour and Dinner, Annual Membership Meeting** for to hear reports from the board, vote on a proposed slate of board of directors, and other matters big and small. We also hold our **Awards Ceremony** at which trophies are presented to those winning our sailing competitions. A lovely evening to be sure, sometimes at the Geneva Country Club, Hobart & William Smith Colleges or the Ramada.

This year, being a bit different, we'll do it all a bit differently...but not just as a reaction to the inconvenience of the pandemic. As a membership organization, the Annual Meeting should be attended by as many members as possible ... to learn about the club, get to know the directors, learn about the finances, and our hopes, dreams and aspirations for next year. In the past, with the Annual Meeting being bundled in the evening for a sit down dinner and Awards Ceremony, many have been unable to attend due to babysitting complications or simply the cost of dinner at \$20 bucks a pop ... it can discourage members from showing up.

So this year, KISS...Keep It Safe and Simple Sailors! The concept, still in formation ... In the morning our usual **Clean Up Day from 10 to 1**. Come down and help tuck our club into bed. **At 1:00 to 1:30 or so, Burger and Hot Dog Picnic provided by the Club, immediately followed by our Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony.** It's all outdoors with social distancing...but we have a covered patio and big porch. We can add heaters if needed and maybe a tent ... a nice problem to look forward to. We'll ask for RSVP's so we'll have a rough count. We'll post reports etc. on the website in advance. You don't have to come to Clean Up Day in the morning in order to join the Picnic and Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony, but ... you know...an hour maybe ... did I mention we'll have to drain the beer keg... ! To lift a line from Saturday Night

Live, "...believe me now, think about it later." We're open to any thoughts ... we'll finalize our plans at our October 8th board meeting so let us know what you think. (or...we can get together on Zoom....?)

At the very least, it will be a chance to congratulate ourselves and each other on pulling off an impossible season and toast to our continued health and prosperity ...we certainly deserve it.

Christopher Lytle
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Past Commodore's Corner

As another season draws to a close at SYC. I'd like to bother you one last time with a few comments. When I was approached to get "in line" to become Commodore, I told the nominating committee that I would acquiesce on one condition - that I be allowed to pick my Vice-Commodore, the one who would succeed me. I can say unequivocally that it was one of the best decisions I made as Commodore or Commodore-to-be. I promised to continue to help him after my tenure ended, a promise I was sadly unable to keep due to an ongoing family health situation. My term as Commodore was beset with a number of challenges and I was grateful to have the steady hand and wise counsel of my 'Number Two' to draw on.

The challenges I encountered, pale in comparison to those confronting my successor. Year one was a pretty normal season for SYC. We had a new treasurer who stepped up to fill some pretty big shoes and take over the reins from Dr. Wisor who had so ably performed those duties for so many years. The usual 'House & Grounds', 'Waterfront', Racing and Social concerns were there to be taken care of. Then came 2020. I saw a post today that read: "When we set our clocks in the spring, we had no idea that we were going from Eastern Standard Time to Twilight Zone!" This, of course, has been a year like no other. There was no precedent to draw on or to point the way to a "tried & true" plan to deal with what was happening. Your Commodore, with his usual good natured and often humorous approach to the dilemma waded in and led the charge to salvage what might otherwise have been a dud of a season. He stayed on top of the state mandates and as soon as it was possible for folks to gather responsibly, he and the board put in place measures which would allow us to do that safely. Many things went by the boards for the summer but, where modifications were possible, he and the board figured out ways to make it happen. Punch bowls, racing, Commodore's Dinner, Pizza Posto - all could have been cancelled, but the leadership of this board and this Commodore salvaged what could have been a pretty dire season. Kudos to Commodore Chris Lytle, Vice Commodore Bob Mattick and the entire SYC Board for a job Very Well Done!

Might I suggest that when you encounter any of these people, you give them a (socially responsible, of course) pat on the back and a hearty well done to thank them for a season that started out pretty much as a sow's ear and became almost a silk purse. Thank you, Lady & Gentlemen!

Past Commodore Dave Galleher

Just Sayin...

When I was a kid, my parents told me I could be anyone I wanted to be. Turns out this is called Identity Theft.



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