

# **Membership Backgrounder to the former ST.CATHARINES BOAT CLUB, now known to us as the SMUGGLER'S COVE BOAT CLUB (reprinted from the early 1980's)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the St. Catharines Boat club. We are known as one of the friendliest Clubs on the lake and we hope that's a reputation we will never lose. This write up was developed to help new members fit in more easily, and to serve as an occasional reminder for older members.

We start out with a history of the Club, which was written by Wally Tufnell, and then we cover the various different facilities and functions of the Club, section by section. To cover every little detail would require a book. This document is only intended as an introduction, so ask questions!

## **HISTORY**

The St. Catharines Boat Club had a casual beginning with a small group who raced outboard motorboats. It is not absolutely certain which summer they decided to make a proper club of it but research done in the 1950's picked 1947 as the likely year.

Bill Boughen was the first commodore. He was followed by: Cyril Read, Clare Brandow, Dennis Lott, Don Sexsmith, Frank Crane, Everett Smith, Ken Boles, Fred Clarke, Doug Johnson, Les Loucks, Bill Yaxley, Alf Desserud, Bill Bradley, Bud McLaughlin, Ray Bornn, Tony Price and Alan Graves.

Bill Boughen was a founding father and guided the club with a wise and firm hand through its early years. He was also our star racing driver and a champion. He was a Charter Member of the Southern Ontario Outboard Association, with which the St. Catharines Boat Club was affiliated.

Member clubs of the S.O.O.A. all held annual regattas. Every summer there was a full schedule. Our regatta was down at the Henley course at Port Dalhousie, seating our audience in the grandstand and splitting the take with the Henley Aquatic Association. There we ran the best show on the circuit. The regattas were a lot of work (and fun). Their organization and post mortems dominated every meeting until we took up dock building!

Until 1950, the Club had no base of operations. Members kept their boats on trailers or docks between Jordan Harbour and Niagara. The average boat was probably 15 feet long. In the winter of 1949-50, we rented some frontage from the Canada Steamship lines, on the slip at Niagara-on-the-lake. In the spring, we pounded in a dozen jetties and painted them green.

The next owner, the Cayuga Steamship Line, leased us more frontage and a big field. In the middle of the field, to the design and direction of Art Ellis, one of the earliest members, we built the clubhouse, which is now in Port Dalhousie and used by the DYC junior sailors. We bought a power mower and Commodore Brandow cut the grass. His successor, Dennis Lott, appointed a harbourmaster and assigned the hayfield to him. The field became a lovely big lawn, which we had to police as well as cut!

The Club dropped out of outboard racing as our membership changed and pleasure boaters including a few sailors and anglers (there were lots of fish in the 50's) outnumbered the racers. Then the Port Dalhousie council passed a resolution asking the Aquatic Association to cease renting us the grandstand on July 1<sup>st</sup> because we made so much noise (it was ear splitting) and because the canoe liveries could not operate when we were there. The Aquatic, who appreciated our rent, suggested that we plead with the Port Dalhousie council. Realizing that in the last season we had entered only two racers, we did a survey and found we had no racers left and no problem.

We acquired a small fleet of sailboats. An offshoot was the 6 boat Niagara Penguin Fleet with a membership in the International Penguin Association. Our penguins faded away as owners went to bigger boats and sold their Penguins outside the Club.

Changes of ownership at the slip caused us worries. The third owner charged us \$1000, which we handled comfortably, but we considered the fourth owner's demands exorbitant and on a spring morning in 1959 when ice was still in the river, we hauled our string of floating docks upriver. In 1960, we built a small floating clubhouse and over a period of years put our present large and beautiful one together. The gatehouse came next and then the sewage barge.

The original floating docks have been replaced twice, in some instances, three times.

## **FACILITIES**

### **Docks**

The Club has fifty assigned docks and is limited to boats up to 26 feet or 8.0 metres long, the manufacturer's advertised length being acceptable in either case. This is a fairly simple method of making sure the complex does not get structurally overloaded and while it may not be perfectly fair between the long skinny boat and the short fat heavy boat, it sure beats having someone (maybe you) performing reams of complicated calculations every time a new boat wants to come in.

Pipe hinges, steel cables, and telephone pole screw anchors hold us together. (Doesn't that give you a kind of warm feeling?) So, if your joints start creaking don't go complaining to your Doctor, just get out the oil can. In order to keep the docks in good shape, for as long as possible, we have established some guidelines. They are as follows:

- a) No nailing is permitted into the wooden planking and no rug material or anything else shall be attached in a manner that prevents good air circulation around the planking. This is necessary to minimize wood rot.
- b) Bumper boards may be installed, with or without padding, but must be removed before "haul-out" each year. These boards can be hooked on or tied on, and care must be taken to avoid sharp edges on the hooks because the dock tubing is very thin and easily damages. Also good ventilation around the dock planking must be maintained.

Every spring and fall the whole complex is installed ("put-in) and removed ("haul -out") from the river. The docks are stored ashore and the Clubhouses are pushed down to the Niagara-on-the-lake basin and stored there. This is an activity that needs maximum membership participation and it's a good time to get to know people.

There is a river current at the docks, which is usually downstream, sometimes upstream, and sometimes zero. It is one of the more interesting features of the Club and we are sure you'll love it!

### **Main and Little Club House**

The Little Club House is located at the downstream end of the dock system and is used for the Ladies Auxiliary meetings. It is part of the swim platform and functions for the storage of some club equipment under the seats. It's available for any other uses of course.

The Main Club House is the general meeting area and also contains the kitchen. The furniture, the kitchen, the utensils and all the equipment are the club's and so are now also yours to share and, of course, to look after.

If you bring some friends down you would be welcome to socialize with them in the Club House but large private parties are not in order since this would detract from use by the rest of the membership.

The electrical controls for the dock lights and outlets are located on the end wall of the kitchen area. The total supply for the whole Club is only a 100-amp service, about the same as most houses, so go easy on using it.

### **Gate House**

As its name implies, this separates the Club from the beach and your use and control of this separates the Club from the beach and your use and control of this access has a great deal to do with the general security of the club. Obviously if you think you're the last one out at night you leave it locked. In the daytime, it is a bit more difficult particularly with club children playing on the beach and going back and forth. As a general guide the outer door should be locked as much as it reasonably can be to restrict access by the general public.

The Gate House has two storage areas for Club equipment and one of these has a refrigerator in it for your use. This refrigerator is a supplement to the one in the main Clubhouse and it should be obvious that there isn't room for us all to store a case of beer in them, or a large amount of food. The intent is that they be used for short-term storage only and to produce enough ice for mixed drinks. Feel free to keep the ice cube trays filled up!

Also, in the Gatehouse are the heads. This Gatehouse is really quite something isn't it? The water supply comes from a connection at the top of the hill which feeds the wash basins (as well as the outside hose reel and the main Clubhouse). The wash basins drain into 200 gallon holding tanks under each washroom and this "one-used" water is then used to supply the heads. When you push that button on the wall you're drawing used wash water from one tank, flushing the head with it then sending it down into another holding tank. If no water comes in when you push the button the tank may be empty, run the sink tap a little then try again.

When the two final holding tanks are full they have to be pumped out into the "honey-barge" which is then taken down the river by a member (you may be the lucky skipper of this some day), and pumped out at Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club. You can see this a time and cost situation for us so careful use is the guideline.

## **FUNCTIONS**

### **Assignment of Docks**

The Vice-Commodore is responsible for dock assignments. In order to assist him in this difficult job certain ground rules have been developed. First is a limit on the total membership in the Club to 80, excluding honorary members. This automatically places a natural limit on those who can be waiting for docks (another example of how we try to keep everything as simple as possible).

Once on the waiting list for a dock, a member will gradually work his way to the top. During this period, which may be two or three years, there are a few alternatives available. If someone has a boat docked elsewhere, they can choose to leave it docked there until they get a dock assignment and this will not affect the speed they move up the list. Dock hopping is permitted to a degree. This means that some of those on the waiting list use the vacant docks of others under the control of the Vice-Commodore. There are usually some docks open because of late launch, vacations, boats taken to cottage and so on. The third alternative is to not buy a boat until near the top of the list.

### **Dock and Membership Fees**

These are set each year by the Club with membership fee being due by January 31<sup>st</sup> and it is usual for a set amount of deposit on the dock fee to be paid along with the membership fee. The balance of the dock fee is due by June 1<sup>st</sup> but some of all of this balance may be worked off by participating in various club work projects at highly competitive rates of pay - we leave it to you to figure out the meaning of "highly competitive!"

A number of free hours are required to be contributed to the Club each year before the hours for dock fee credits start. The Executive sets this number annually.

### **Entertainment**

Throughout the year a good cross section of activities are organized. A list of these events is usually included in an early bulletin with follow up through the year.

Winter events cover such things as a skating party and a fondue party, based at the Clubhouse anchored in the ice.

Spring, summer and fall there are dances, cookouts, boat trips, boat races and other events.

You don't have to have a boat in the docks to participate in most of these activities.

### **Ladies Auxiliary**

This is a very important group with the Club and is open to all the ladies involved with the Club.

Certain activities are normally organized by this Auxiliary including: the Annual Club Auction, bake sales, raffles, lunches, and encouragement at "put-in" and "haul-out." Funds raised are applied to those items, which this group decides on, and then they carry out whatever the plan may

be. For example, some past items have been new furniture for the Club House, drapes, painting the club ceiling, decorations at some functions and many more.

The ladies Auxiliary normally holds a meeting every month at the same time as the regular monthly Club meeting and, at the end of these meetings, put on a spread of food for all to enjoy while socializing together.

On those occasions when an event is cancelled, or delayed, the Auxiliary gives great assistance to the Club by notifying people of the change in plans.

### **Maintenance and Cleaning**

Maintenance and operation of Club facilities is primarily the responsibility of the Yard Chairman to organize. He will call upon members as needed to carry out those regular jobs, which are required as well as some of the minor repair work.

A Project Chairman organizes major repairs work, rebuilds, or new construction. All of the above can earn work credits.

Cleaning the Clubhouses is the responsibility of the whole membership. Some seem to think this is a Ladies Auxiliary function but this is not so. The Auxiliary sets up the program for scheduling this function and the full active membership is required to participate. With all the active membership participating, once a season for everyone is sufficient.

### **Visitors**

Reciprocal privileges are exchanged with a number of Clubs around the lake and a list of these is hung up in the club House.

The treatment of visitors is an important function. This is the way we build our reputation as a friendly club and does much to ensure a warm welcome from other Clubs when we visit them.

All members have a responsibility to assist in handling visitors and the following guidelines should help you to do this.

1. The Dock plan on the wall with the coloured pins indicates which, if any, docks are vacant.
2. Boats up to 26 ft. can be placed in any vacant dock.
3. Boats over 26 ft. can be tied bow-on, with stern anchor, up to a limit of three, on the end of the little Club House and swim platform.
4. Any boat can be tied to the mooring buoys in the anchorage area, bow and stern should be tied because of the current which does reverse
5. There are large areas where boats can anchor upstream and downstream from the club. Point out that the current does reverse.
6. Reciprocal Clubs take priority, other Clubs come next and marina boats should be discouraged, except in an emergency, since when we visit them we have to pay.
7. As a suggestion, wave the boat up to the Clubhouse, get the particulars, check the dock availability, and have them circle or tie them up at your discretion while you do this.

8. Help them tie up and show them around, pointing out that garbage goes to containers in the parking lot at the top of the hill, and the limits of our washroom facilities.
9. We do not have a strict limit on a visitor's stay; usually we would not expect this to exceed a weekend, or a few days. When weather had been bad, we have let a boat lay over until the following weekend but we certainly don't encourage this. Let common sense be your guide.

### **House Rules**

Using good common sense and treating the Club the same as you would your own home is the best guide. Maybe that's not such a good guide because we don't know how you treat your own home! How about leaving everything you use just a little better than the way you found it.

Some other:

Swimming along behind the boats is not permitted.

If you want a dip in the sweet Niagara do it right at your boat or go down to the swim dock and watch out for the current it really boils sometimes.

Running is not allowed on the docks and small children must wear lifejackets.

For the rest – be reasonable in everything – your language, your noise making, your attitude to others and the way you use the Club.

P.S. Don't store your junk around the Club.