

KLAMATH YACHT CLUB HISTORY 1947 – 1999

As written by Irene M. Currin

The Quonset hut was constructed by W. Gene (Doc) Boggle, starting in August, 1949, and work continued on it through January, 1950. The interior was designed and made livable by two architects, John Howard and Murdo Morrison, who found the project to be quite a challenge, especially the rounded base of the walls of the balcony, and the designing of the staircase. Some of our guests still seem to find the stairs a bit of a challenge, but most of us have become used to using them.

A number of the original members helped with the actual construction of the building and there were regular work parties for the club, grounds and docks. At a meeting in January, 1950, plans were being made for a commissioning of the club later in the spring. At that time there were 62 members, with 20 more having applied for membership. It should be noted that membership was made only, not unusual at that time, so all the officers' were men.

However, the wives of the members were active participants, mostly by helping to raise money to finance the project. This was accomplished by having rummage sales, dinners and similar projects. They formed an organization which was called the Anchor Club, which managed the social affairs of the organization, and there were many, from the beginning.

The first Sunday of the month was Family Day, with picnic or potluck, the Anchor Club met on the fourth Wednesday of the month helping arrange for club furnishings and landscaping grounds. Besides the regular boat races, there were annual events, as a cruise to BBQ at Rocky Point, picnic at the apple tree, a crab feed, and of course the Installation Dinner Dance and Fall Formal.

One obstacle which early club members faced was a liquor license for the club. During the hearings for construction permits, some of the immediate neighbors had voiced an objection to have a place similar to the "Lakeshore Inn", an establishment on the opposite side of the lake. They were assured there would be no liquor on the premises and it was several years before a beer and wine license was obtained, and eventually a full permit was given.

In 1953 a number of the club members hosted a Chamber of Commerce tour of Klamath Lake for a group from Oregon State College, who had a three year grants to "study the algae problem".

A committee was formed with Mrs. Orth Sisemore as Chairman, Mrs. Merle Swansen and Mrs. Hugh Currin, to design a burgee for the Club. Since we had already borrowed our name from the local Native American people, it seemed fitting that we should use an insignia of theirs and Mrs. Sisemore enlisted the help of two friends of hers from Modoc Point, Mrs. Ike Mose and Mrs. Ida Crawford. The design selected represents lightning, and is done with their colors.

There was a continuing boating program on the sanctioned, and of course the sailboat fleet which was constantly expanding. When Louis Mann's 28 foot Great Lakes Skimmer arrived, the racers began to think about handicapping, and more serious racing.

The year 1959 saw the Club hosting a public boat show over a weekend, with displays by local boat dealers, and participation by the US Coast Guard and the Oregon State Police. Besides water safety

demonstrations, there were exhibitions of scuba diving and water skiing - - a fairly new sport at that time. Reportedly the show was well attended by the public.

Also, Ray Byrnes, who had done some paving of the parking areas around the Club, began dredging the harbor, and creating the first of the dykes. This not only increased the number of slips available, but made a breakwater and improved the safety of the harbor.

Resident caretakers lived in a small Quonset hut built north of the clubhouse, found to be necessary because the club was broken into twice. It was presume they were looking for alcohol, so for some time the liquor supply was not left in the club house, unless some member was there. For the first tens years or so, Mike and Beulah Regan were caretakers, when they were gone, Ollie and Mac McCargill lived in and took care of the clubhouse. They also served dinners on occasion, and retired in the middle 1980's. When Maury Clark was commodore, in 1957, he found and had installed the heavy duty kitchen stove, which was in use until recently (2007). In 1974 Dick Cullen's term as Commodore, the commercial dishwasher was purchased and the refrigeration system has recently been completed replaced and updated.

In the early 1960's, the Club was getting behind with its mortgage payments, but fortunately for the club, Ray Byrnes, the Commodore in 1959, with his wire Irene, were able to assume the mortgage in 1964. Payments to him by the Club were \$100 a month, members dues were \$6.00. This for the original 20 lots, or two hundred feet of street frontage, purchased from Lewis Kandra. In 1957 an additional 10 lots, or 100 feet, were acquired from P.P. & L, north of the original 20. Between 1965 and 1968, Ray Byrnes paved most of the original 20.

Between 1965 and 1968, Ray Byrnes paved most of the area around the Club, besides dredging the harbor and building the dykes. The gas pump was installed at the outer end of the main dyke at this time to better serve the power boats.

In 1972 the mortgage was given to Gene Byrnes, and he carried it until 1974, when the Club was able to resume ownership and make the payments.

Several smaller parcels of waterfront footage were added over the years also In 1950 Will Wood gave the Club title to seven 10' lots, north of the original thirty, and in 1976 Bob Chilcote sold the Club (? for James Burness) four more lots to the north. Also in 1976, an irregularly shaped corner lot, called the SW corner of Block 3 was purchased from Helen Bowers, who husband was commodore in 1964. In 1978, Mrs. Lewis Kandra sold the Club twelve lots south of, and adjoining, the original twenty.

This gives the Club title to lots 3 through 66, approximately 630' of continuous street frontage, plus the irregular area north, to the southern edge of Bismark Street.

When the Club resumed it's obligation of ownership in 1974, dues were raised to \$12. a month, due to the increased expenditure, and moorage fees to \$25/12.50 per season, and maintenance assessments were introduced. The new rules were that members could either pay an obligation or join a work party and spend a certain number of hours, freeing dues to be used for paying the mortgage payments, taxes, street improvements, sewer, etc. (Always there seem to be plenty of etc.s!)

During the 1950's and 1960's there was a preponderance of power boats in the Club, mostly cabin cruisers, runabouts, lots of water skiing and overnight campouts. and the yearly trek to Rocky Point for a picnic. However, there were times when things tended to get a bit out of hand, and some of the

jaunts became known as the “booze cruises”. To quote one of our members, “there were various stops, then everyone would pile back into their boats for the next stop, sometimes a barge parked up at the island. One time there were so many people waiting for the bartender that the barge nearly tipped over, and we lost half the liquor in the lake, and had to go diving for it. There were usually every late affairs, with everyone getting home around 2:00 in the morning. Times do change!”

But probably the most exciting time was in 1972, when the Byrnes boat and boathouse burned. It was anchored at the end of the north jetty, “probably cause –a bilge pump”, and it totaled their boat, boathouse, and a Venture sail boat belonging to Gene Wellman anchored next to it. It damaged the next one, the Larry Snyder’s but not irreparably, and no one was hurt, so it could have done a great deal more damage.

But changes were coming, and it could almost be called a revolution- with the advent of the fiberglass sailboats. By the mid 60’s, Bruce Hudson, who taught many of us the basis of boating with the US Power Squadron Courses, was selling the first glass Shock boats, as the Lido, soon followed by the San Juans and Santanas. These are an ideal combination of small cabin cruisers and yet essentially a sailboat, and they changed the whole concept of boating, digging out caulking, sanding, recaulking, more sanding, painting, more caulking and sanding, varnishing, etc. you could not appreciate the fiberglass boat.

However, no one had the courage to try a keel boat on the lake, until Dick Cullen brought them in in 1974. The Cullen’s had taken over the sale of Shock boats from Bruce Hudson, who had retired from the Phone Company and moved to Puget Sound. The Cullen’s established the Lakeside Yacht Sales, from which they still operate today.

The 1960’s began with a majority of the Yacht Club members owning power boats of various sizes and shapes, and their activities consisted of cruising up the lake and overnight jaunts. The wooden sailboat fleet was active but aging, with not too many new ones making an appearance. There were no more than three boats of any one class, so races were not too exciting and apt to be impromptu. This, of course, began to change about the mid-sixties, with the appearance of the fiberglass boats.

At that time Gene Byrnes, Jim Lawson and Larry Snyder had Flying Dutchman boats. Captain Dave McNabb, who was stationed at Kingsley Field when it was still an active Air Force base, brought a Kestrel with him from Ohio. He sold it to Bruce Niles and bought a Flying Dutchman. So we had a “fleet” of four Flying Dutchman, a couple of Lightnings (Ken White and Bill Sisemore), a National One Design (Paul Tremaine), one C-Lark (Gene Wellman), one Kestrel, a Continental 14 (Sue Derby Snyder), a wooden Catamaran (Bob DeRosier), and a few others. Since there was already a small fleet of Kestrels in Eureka, CA. to race against, Bruce Niles convinced several Club members to switch to the Kestrel Class and we ordered approximately sixteen boats from England, with about twelve going to KYC members, and four going to the Humbolt Yacht Club in Eureka. The KYC group, included Bruce Niles, Paul Tremaine, Jim Lawson, Gordon Hart, Dick Wiley, Bruce Henderson, Ed Silani, Allen Lee, Bob Metzger and Bill Brandsness.

An interesting story concerns the sixteen Kestrels which were shipped from England. The four which went to Eureka were shipped separately and arrived in good time and in good shape, although one was pierced by a forklift while being unloaded and had to be replaced. The others, coming to Klamath Falls, arrived in San Francisco at the beginning of a longshoreman’s strike and could not be unloaded. They went onto Portland, but the docks there were closed to shipping too, so they went to Vancouver, Canada, where they were finally unloaded. After some delay, they finally reached Klamath Falls by railroad.

By 1974, the Yacht Club could host its Firecracker Regatta with five classes, which included 13 Kestrels, 8 San Juan 21s, 15 open centerboard boats, 13 open keel boats and 3 ElToro and Sabots. By 1977, the races had to be limited to classes of boats owned by Club members. A number of West Coast Championship and National Championship Races have been held on Klamath Lake over the years, including the 470s Lightnings, Santana 20s, and San Juan 21s.

In all this racing activity, our sailors have always placed well in competition, and one good reason must be the classes given on the basics of sailing and racing each April and May, twice a week, before the start of the racing season. Jim Lawson taught the courses for over ten years, beginning in 1971. After 1981, he was followed by Paul Tremaine, Wayne Conners, Chic Parsons, Paul Dorst and Arke Nelson, each giving the classes in different years. This included a Rules Clinic, with the basic racing rules according to the USYRA, and instructions to those who planned the races and served as officials. The local Coast Guard Auxiliary Squadron also give Safety and Boating Courses, and they have been extremely active in patrolling the lake courses on days the races are held. The power boaters are also active in this regard, and have rescued capsized sailboats, set out markers and many other details which make hosting a race successful. Committee members have been fortunate in having Ron Hahn's houseboat available from which to conduct the races in relative comfort in recent years.

By 1974 the Yacht Club could host its Mid-Summer Regatta with five classes, which included 13 Kestrels, eight San Juan 21's, 15 open centerboard boats, 13 open keel boats and 3 El Toros and Sabots. By 1977, the races had to be limited to classes of boats owned by Club members. A number of West Coast Championship and National Races have been held on the lake over the years.

Other races, as the single-handed one, in which one person sails the boat by himself, can be a real test of skill, and then there are the "just plain fun events"¹ For several years one such was the "Battle of Trafalgar", in which contesting sailboats chose sides and the main form of ammunition consisted of waterballons. And, as always, there are the ever present, but necessary rules. One year the Scuttlebutt announced that before a major race the grass in the south lot had to be mowed and any boat trailed not removed before a certain specified date would be hidden or sunk!

Major races of the Yacht Club are the Trans Klam in June of each year, and the Firecracker Regatta in July, which include all local classes of boats. These are well represented by both our local sailors and guests from other west coast clubs.

An interesting addition to the racing fleet are the catamarans, which made their appearance in the later sixties, also. Hobiecats were among the first and most popular, but others soon followed. The cats, being made of fiberglass, were easy to handle and transport, and though they are a fun plaything, they make for serious and exciting racing.

But time does go by and brought changes in KYC. In 1981, the bylaws were amended, and members no longer had to be male, white and over 21. The biggest change of the last few years has been the removal of the smaller Quonset hut, and the extension of the main building to the north, adding a spacious room upstairs in the club. This made more room for the bar, and provided new rest rooms on the ground floor. Much of the work is being done, as well as financed, by the members themselves, and the Club is fortunate to have so many capable ones to accomplish so much. These improvements, with the new flooring on the main floor, not only make it more attractive for members to enjoy, but also more inviting to the groups who rent the club for their social events (and help pay off the mortgage). When long range plans for improving the harbor are complete the future of the Club will be assured.

Perhaps this is a tradition handed down from those first planners who envisioned, shaped, and were willing to give their time and talents to build the Club. As long as we have members who continue to contribute these gifts, Klamath Yacht Club will grow and be a club we, and those who follow us, can enjoy and be proud to be a member.

Klamath Yacht Club, Information Furnished By:

Don Sloan Commodore 1949

John Howard, Architect, Member

Robert Veach, Owner, Klamath County Title Co. Member

Maury Clark, Commodore 1957

Gene Byrnes, Commodore 1961, Owner with his parents Ray and Irene Byrnes, from 1967 to 1974

Dick Cullen, Commodore 1974

Marlene Cullen

Larry Snyder

Herald and News

Jim Lawson, Commodore 1972

Paul Tremaine, Commodore 1975

Bob DeRosier, Commodore 1983

Vince Wachter, Commodore 1984

And many others, generous with their time, but too numerous to mention.

KLAMATH YACHT CLUB HISTORY UPDATE

1997, the 50th year of KYS, seems a good time to update the History, which was written in 1991 and 1992.

The Club has grown in many ways but its purpose remains the same, to promote sailing and boating on Upper Klamath Lake. To quote the Scuttlebutt, “nearly all of our members live within 15 minutes of the Club. Most of us can set sail within one half hour. We have improved grounds and facilities that are unique. Outsiders who come to visit are impressed by the amenities we enjoy, maybe some that we are members take for granted .” In 1991, Sailing magazine featured the Club with pictures and a write up.

Our racing season gets underway in April with the Frostbite Series and runs until the lake level gets too low. It includes three races, the Firecracker Regatta, the Trans-Klam and the Half-Klam, with thirty to thirty five boats entered, featuring five classes. They have included west coast competition of Santana 20s. Lightnings and San Juans.

Each years has seen a full program of educational classes, which includes a new rules race clinic, safety seminar, a junior sailing program, and learn-to-sail classes. These classes are taught by our members, with help from the Coast Guard.

In these six years, the Club has grown in several way. The addition to the clubhouse to the north has provided some much needed space for storage, a game room on the second floor, and new bathroom facilities, which our-out-of town guests must really appreciate. These improvements have also made the club more attractive to the growing list of rentals (which do help to pay the bills!).

The social life og the Club has been varied, always interesting and the affairs well attended. Winter months celebrated with seasonal get-togethers, summer events offering a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. The highlight of the year is Commissioning Day, with activities which can be varied and finishes with the “Blessing of the Fleet”. this must be effective, for the boating seasons have been good with remarkable high water in the lake during several of these years.

Which brings us to the two years of drought: and record low water in the lake which was used to dredge the two north harbors. This was really needed because of normal sedimentation in the lake,

and sailboats seem to get larger and deeper with the years. So the shorter season was a mixed blessing of less sailing, but improvement of the harbors. Also the material dredged was used to enrich the south lawn area. Reseeded, it will be a better area to use, especially for our camping guests who come to compete in the races.

However, the really big improvement was acquiring and installation of the yacht hoist. Since Dick Cullen had retired his operation on Lake Shore Drive which had provided the only yacht hoist on the lake, it was a “must” for the club.

As usual, our capable members planned, engineered, and executed the operation and within two years it was a reality for the club. But let me quote, if I may, from the July, 1995 Scuttlebutt, a report from our Vice Commodores, Diane and Gary Naseth:

It's a Heck a Lot More Tha Just a Yacht Hoist

When you look at the new yacht hoist it's hard to believe that less than a year ago, it was just an idea: a few guys sitting around (fueled by a sense of urgency with Dick Cullen's decision to retire and no longer lift boats) asking a lot of (what ifs, and why not's?) Next came the sketches, first scrawled on the back of bar napkins, then a flip chart sheet or two of paper estimating weight loads and stress points (and whatever else keeps engineer whizzes like Bud and Bob awake at night) and the finally – detailed, meticulously thought-out drawings and computer printouts. The project took shape over an incredibly short period of time. A used hoist was secured, a seawall was built in the bitter cold of winter. Behind the scenes the hoist was totally disassembled, refurbished and reassembled. A base was prepared and poured, and ultimately the huge machine was lifted into place. What was accomplished is, was, incredible. More than the shafts of steel, the humming gears, and the powerful motor....it's what you don't see or hear that makes it truly extraordinary. The vast array of skills and talents (surfacing from the Club's membership. The endless time and energy given by so many: makes us proud to have been a part of this project. Here's to you: Bud Cook, Bob DeRosier, Bob Dortch, Dick Ford, Dale Mueller, Gary Naseth, Oscar Peterson, Jess Schfstrom, Vince Wachter, Jake Zaiger, Ross Carroll, Sylvia Cook, Dave Doveri, Chuck Dunbar, Gary Ivie, Stephen King, Steve Miller, Diane Naseth, Mike Reynolds, Mike Westbrook. We did it” On Saturday, June 10, 1994, Star Reacher had the honor of being the first boat lifted.

In 1993, a long range planning committee was formed to chart a course for the next fifteen years, which will take the club into the next century. Hopefully, by that time the water management of the Klamath basin will have been resolved, and the lake level will be a more predictable time.

In the meantime, may we all continue to enjoy sharing our harbor with the white pelicans, and on occasion the beaver and muskrats.

With a toast to the next fifty years – may they be as adventurous and rewarding as the last fifty.

Irene M. Currin
February, 1999

Past Commodores

We salute the Past Commodores who have led the Klamath Yacht Club From it's founding

Willam "Bill Owens	1947- 48
Donald L. Sloan	1949
Doctor Wayne Eserson	1950
L. Orth Sisemore	1951
Howard Pernell	1952
Robert sproat	1953
Doctor Neil Black	1954
Louis Kandra	1955
L.A. Larry Brown	1956
Maury Clark	1957
H. O. Juckland	1958
Ray byrnes	1959
Wm. L. Whytal	1960
Gene Byrnes	1961
Ralph Hunter	1962
Clifford Evans	1963
Richard Bowers	1964
Matthew Christian	1965 - 66
Warren Parr	1967
Keith Cramer	1968
Larry Heaton	1969
Ralph Hooper	1970
C.J. Heaton	1971
Jim Lawson	1972
Gene Wellman	1973
Dick Cullen	1974
Paul Tremaine	1975
Lee Daniels	1976
Bill Sisemore	1977
Marty Alter	1978
Fred Ehlers	1979
Gordon Hart	1980
Richard Marlatt	1981 – 82
Bob DeRosier	1983
Vince Wahter	1984
Terry Wilkenson	1985
Mike Bliss	1986
Ron Hahn	1987
Larry Howard	1988
Tim Kerns	1989
Greg Myers	1990
Karl & Jennifer Scronce	1991
Wayne & Pam Conners	1992
Nicki Nordquist	1993

Past Commodores (continued)

Phillip & Peggy Harbin	1994
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Jess & Mary Schestrom	1995
Gary & Diane Naseth	1996
Bob & Marian Dortch	1997
Steve & Sharon Crabb	1998
Fred & Sharon Schuler	1999
Jim & Steph Carpenter	2000
Steve & Judy Lewis	2001
Mick & Lisa Mulvey	2002
Steve Campbell	2003
Fred Schuler & Vince Wachter	2004
Ken & Valerie Paulson	2005
Chuck Dunbar & Sue Breen	2006
Dick & Carolyn Ford	2007
Dick & Sally Houck	2008