



# the Binnacle

*Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club, Inc.*

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<http://www.lcyc.info>

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## **LCYC ANNOUNCEMENTS: See you at Work Day May 7, 2016**

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## **Commodores Corner**

Greetings LCYC members:

I am really happy to join the Board of Governors in helping to keep our tremendous club moving forward. Although a long off-season, as always, seems like it will never conclude, we all know spring will arrive soon enough and before long we will be enjoying the passion that pulls us together, our love of boating and our fabulous Lake Champlain.

We had a wonderful Change of Watch party, and I want to restate my thanks and congratulations to Doug Merrill for doing a terrific job as commodore and also thank the outgoing Board members for their hard and heartfelt work in making our club a success.

We have a strong and engaged incoming Board with some excellent new members being balanced out by some continuing tried-and-true hands. Our mission is to serve the club and its members, so please let me or any of us know if there are any ways we can make the club an even better institution.

Thank you for this opportunity to help lead this wonderful institution, and I look forward to working with the Board and the full club membership to keep us on the favored tack, sailing on a 15 degree lift to the mark. Can't wait to see everyone in May.

All the best,  
Commodore Tris



## **Change of Watch Dinner**

On Saturday, January 23, 2016, the Change of Watch was held at Burlington Country Club with 101 LCYC members in attendance. It is the official "changing of the guard" for LCYC's Board of Governors, with some Board members' terms ending and new Board members beginning their terms.

While Change of Watch dinner has the formal purpose of inducting new members onto the Board, it is much more ... a great party and mid-winter way to enjoy the company of fellow club members...to reconnect, to catch up and to dream of good times ahead on the water together.

Though the outside temperature was only in the single digits, the Burlington Country Club atmosphere was warm and welcoming and spirits were very high while we enjoyed an excellent buffet dinner and great company! Gathered around the lounge area for cocktail hour, stories could be heard of winter sailing adventures, distant travels and great anticipation of what's ahead...spring "to do" lists for boats, opening work day at the club on 5/7 and most importantly - launch dates!

The formal program was lead by our retiring Commodore Doug Merrill, who recognized and thanked retiring board members Joss Besse, Chris Hathaway, David Main, and Don Weaver and gave each a commemorative LCYC pewter mug. New BOG members were introduced and welcomed: Tris Coffin - Commodore, Jeff Bordeau - Boats, Bill Bresee - Stewards, Bob Finn - Harbor, and Bob Schumacher - Docks. New auditor - Bill Kallock was welcomed as well.

A highlight of the evening was the awards given to exceptional LCYC members. The Commodore's Cup was awarded posthumously to Dick Walters for his outstanding devotion and dedication to sailing, and Yachtsman of the Year was awarded to John Harris for the enormous contributions he makes to LCYC in all the many roles he plays for the club.

But the evening wasn't all business for sure! DJ Duane Dakin from SuperSounds offered a wide selection of dance choices for all tastes and ages, and we had a great time on the dance floor!

See you all on May 7, 2016 for our much anticipated opening work day!

Jean White

LCYC Social Chair





## Steward(Ship)

I write this as I'm flying home from visiting family who live a much more glamorous life than I do. I had the good fortune to spend time at a Club, where Michael Jordan is a member and where money is not a big hurdle.

Valets, private lockers, free candy, and TVs were abundant. I could go on. But beyond the frills, I noticed the sense of order at this Club. The place was spotless. What really resonated with me though, were the employees. Each one seemed to really like the place. They seemed happy to work there. The employees made you feel that they were happy that you had come. This reminded me of the great people at LCYC.

When John Harris called me and mentioned Stewards, my reaction was, "GREAT - I'd be happy to be a Steward!" What could be better than being paid to spend time at LCYC running boats? Sadly, I am not 20, and no one will pay me for "simply messing about in boats." The closest I could come is my new stint as BOG member responsible for organizing the Stewards. Which brings me to the matter at hand.

Chris Hathaway, my predecessor, left us a legacy of good Stewards and Stewardship. He made sure the team was credentialed and trained. For our club, a skilled team meant less risk of loss. For members, a good team meant safe trips to and from their boats. Fortunately for LCYC, Chris understands how to manage a crew of young adults.

Stewardship at LCYC has meant different things over the years. Yes, Stewards drive the launches. But we've also asked Stewards to mow the lawn, pump dinghies, clean launches, clean bathrooms and the clubhouse...

So where do we go now?

I want to redefine the Steward's role and then build out systems and processes that will continue to improve Stewardship at LCYC for years. Stewards are the lifeblood of a vibrant, organized, safe, and great club experience. Like the employees I observed this week at my relatives' club, our Stewards help create a truly welcoming place.

I don't kid myself; I know Stewardship at LCYC is principally about helping members and their guests safely move to and from their boats. However, Stewardship is so much more. Members expect that things are running well. I'd like to make sure that when a boater such as myself is about to plow into the dock, there is a skilled and friendly Steward there, to receive lines and move fenders. Some of us can use an extra set of hands when it's time to haul our stuff. So let me know how else you think an LCYC Steward can help the club.

This will be a rebuilding year for us. A few Stewards will return and a number of new Stewards will join our program. Early season will be rich in training. Please introduce yourself and get to know them. The more we help them, the better the

results for all of us. I hope we can help Stewards develop professionally, and that they help make the club a great experience.

I asked one prospective applicant, "Tell me about an experience with good customer service." He answered, "They made me feel that they were happy to see me." Exactly! So let's start this summer happy to see the Stewards, and I hope they make you feel the same.

Bill Bresee, Stewards

## Harbor Soundings

Pierre LaRocque is contracted by the club to commission, decommission, and inspect our moorings. He will start to commission our 155 boat moorings in mid-April.

There will be almost 20 new mooring assignments – for existing members with new boats and new active members. Assignments are optimized on the basis of boat length and depth at mooring location. If you are assigned a mooring that is new to you, be sure to check with Pierre on the condition of the mooring tackle and its suitability for your boat.

**Note: In some cases pennants have been removed by the prior owner so, before mooring your boat for the first time, make sure there is an adequate pennant.**

We have 155 moorings and each one is spoken for. If plans for your mooring change for any reason, please let me know. We handle requests from members needing a temporary mooring, or non-members needing transient guest mooring, and we want to accommodate as many as possible. All of us look forward to a great 2016 season on the lake.

Bob Finn  
Harbormaster



## SAILBOAT RACING 2016

Gerald S. Davis, MD  
Regatta Chair, LCYC

The racing season is only 2 months away, so it is time to start planning your strategy and dreaming about breezy days. The racing calendar has been set for our Club and the 3 others on Lake Champlain, and it is posted on the LCYC website. There are an amazing number of events in our region when LCYC, the Malletts Bay Boat Club (Colchester), the Valcour Sailing Club (Plattsburgh), and the Royal Savage Yacht Club (Charlotte) are all considered. There is a sailboat race on 3 to 6 days of every week for 7 months, many days with multiple events, and a total of more than 150 races over the season! For LCYC it all begins with the Wednesday night “Practice Event” on May 18 and finally ends with the “Hot Ruddered Bum” on October 1.

The variety of boats that compete is enormous, ranging from a weekly *Laser* series at MBBC (a one-person 14-foot dinghy with a single sail) to full-race 40 – 55-foot speedsters. There are active one-design fleets in *Lasers*, *Lightnings*, *Vipers*, *J-24's*, *Etchells*, and junior sailing in *Optimist Prams* and *Flying Juniors*. The most popular type of boats for racing on Lake Champlain are mid-size cruiser / racer sloops in the 24 – 38-foot range, typically a family boat for weekend overnights or moonlight suppers that steps up for the competition on Wednesday night or Saturday events.



The speed and stability of these family boats varies tremendously by size and design, so ‘first across the finish line’ may not always reflect the skills and strategy of the crew. These boats are scored by the “Performance Handicap Racing Fleet” system that assigns a numerical rating to each design and then adjusts the finish time for each boat. Small, heavy boats that are relatively slow around the racecourse receive a high rating, while large, lightweight, fast boats receive a low numerical rating. The registration list for racing at our club in 2015 included over 70 boats, with about 45 from LCYC. The PHRF

ratings for this fleet ranged from +195 (a 27-foot cruiser) to -57 (a 55-foot full-race sled). Most one-design fleets race with spinnakers routinely. The cruiser / racer PHRF boats may race without a spinnaker in the “Jib and Main” (JaM) class. The boats racing with a spinnaker are divided into 4 classes (A, B, C, and D) based on their PHRF rating and their displacement.

The racing season at LCYC is supported by a large group of volunteers that work both on and off the water to make these many events go smoothly. A group of “Principal Race Officers” under the leadership of Keith Kennedy has received special training through *US Sailing* in racing rules and the proper conduct of yacht racing. One PRO is responsible for each race, drives the Committee Boat *Dinse* on the racecourse, and directs all aspects of the event. The PRO is assisted by a “Race Committee” of 2-4 additional people who lend a hand on the course with





anchoring, raising and lowering the signal flags, and recording the finish time for each boat racing. Each LCYC member skipper who registers a boat for racing is expected to gather a team and serve as a Race Committee for one event per year. The results for each race and for the season-long series are computed and collated by our Chief Scorer Charlie London and his team. Fleet captains, PHRF rating representatives, and many others contribute to the success of our racing season.

There are trophies for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners in each class for the major weekend races, and for the season-long series in the one-design and Wednesday Night events. The history of our many races and the trophies that go with them can be found on the LCYC website. There is also the “Lake Champlain Championship Series” of races that includes events from each of the clubs on Lake Champlain, and awards trophies for overall performance in 5 – 10 races over the

season.

Start planning now for your racing calendar, recruit your crew and sign up that new weight-lifter deck ape or foredeck gymnast, and figure out which new go-fast gimmicks you can afford this year. If you have not raced but would like to do so, there are many options. If you want to get the feel of the excitement and what happens on the racecourse, you can always find a slot as crew on a race boat for a Wednesday night or weekend event. If you want to bring your own boat onto the racecourse, entering the “JaM” class on a Wednesday night is a great way to begin. The LCYC Governors, the Regatta Chair and Committee, and just about any regular racer will be eager to help new racers find a crew slot or to get their own boat started.

We look forward to another terrific sailboat racing season at LCYC. With reasonable weather and wind, we will have great fun and sharp competition from May to October.



## Article about Iceboat Racing by Dale Hyerstay 2/18/98

Most local sailboat racers are nautical homebodies — they do their racing only on Lake Champlain. After all, it is not easy to get a 5,000 -15,000 lb. boat and 5 to 8 crew to another place just for a race or two. True, some smaller boats can be trailered to regattas, but only a handful of racers do that. But there is one group of dedicated sailors who are truly the gypsies of the sailing world. They are the iceboaters.

Water is water. It may be salty or fresh, cold or warm, calm or stormy, but as long as it is not frozen, it is still just water, and if it is deep enough, and you have wind, you can race in it. It is not so simple for the iceboater. Ice can be too rough, too soft, too thin, too covered with snow, and if the ice is okay, the air temperature may be too frigid. Hence, iceboaters must be nomads. They seek the appropriate conditions, wherever that may take them. One week it



Ice Boat Start Line

may be Wisconsin, the next Ontario, or Michigan, or Nova Scotia, or who knows where. The telephone is a critical piece of equipment for these dedicated icefolks. It is not unusual for them to find out on a Thursday or Friday that a weekend race scheduled for Maine has been changed to Detroit, or Wisconsin, or wherever. So after their phones are hung up and the sandwiches are made, their cars are loaded, and off they go for long overnight drives to the next race.

The third weekend in March was one of those times. On Friday, March 13, over 90 competitors from 15 states and 2 provinces arrived at Button Bay State Park along with their boats and gear for four days of racing. Special racing. For this was the North American DN Championships, the most important regatta for these vagabonds of the hard water. It was originally scheduled to be held in Quebec, perhaps somewhere in the Montreal area or wherever the conditions were right. But, alas, they weren't right anywhere there, and you know what that



meant. Racers elsewhere checked out their own local conditions. Our Vermont DN racers checked out Lake Champlain. Once the decision was made, the phone calls went out, and to Button Bay they all came. The local hosts were Don Brush and Jeff Hill from Charlotte, Jack Milbank and Bob Schumacher from Shelburne, Paul Gervais from Colchester, and John Harlow from Milton.

The DN is the most popular iceboat in the world. In the late 1930s the Detroit News sponsored a contest for the design of a small, inexpensive, easily transportable, single-person craft. The winning design was named after the newspaper.

What is the allure of iceboat racing? The answer is simple: Speed. The DN weighs only 80-90 lbs. The hull of the boat is a narrow box-shaped section about 10 ft. long, just wide and deep enough to hold the racer, who reclines to reduce windage. The rear part of the hull is supported laterally on a slightly arched cross-member. At each end of the cross-member is a steel runner about two feet long and about a quarter inch thick. A third runner is attached to the narrow front end of the hull and is used for

Jeff Hill



steering. A single mast supports the fabric sail, which is shaped fairly flat for speed, like the wing of an F-16. With its light weight and low surface friction, the DN can attain speeds of 25 - 30 mph in light wind. In moderate wind this little demon can reach speeds in the low 50s.

Because of its speed, the DN needs a lot of room to race, hence the attraction of Lake Champlain. For these North American Championships, the races were run on a wide area of smooth clear ice between Button Bay on the Vermont shore and Barber Point on the NY shore.

But all was not simple, even here. On Friday it rained, and several spots of open water resulted. On Saturday the rains had stopped, the lake was again frozen smooth, but the wind was too high for these wispy craft. Sunday was gorgeously sunny, the ice was superb, but the wind in the morning was too light. By noon the breeze picked up and by sunset the fleet was able to get in three races. That doesn't sound like many, but remember there were 90 boats out there. Finally, on Monday there was good wind all day and the group got in seven more races, enough to satisfy these determined competitors and to establish bragging rights for another week. As the sun set on Monday, the parking field at Button Bay was emptying as 90 vehicles and their crew headed back to their scattered states and provinces, there to await the next phone call for the next race...wherever the ice is right.



## Scuttlebut (Editor's notes)

A new year and a new season is upon us. Reading the Rosner's blog about sailing to the Bahamas really wets the appetite.

On the other hand I have been listening to a song sung by Toby Keith and Jimmy Buffett (now that is a pair.):

I'm floating in my boat  
Not the one I used to fish in  
But the boat I sit in wishin'  
I was still floating on my fishing boat  
And I'm out here on this river  
Really it's just a creek  
This river when I drink  
So I'm drinking on my river boat

I could sail to the ocean  
The wind would come and get me  
But I ain't goin' nowhere quickly  
I'm just a drunkin' sailor  
Waiting on a gale  
With a drink in my hand and a sailboat for sale

Aye  
Aye

An old pirate sold me on a  
We traded straight across  
The boat I thought I wanted  
For the boat I hate I lost  
She'll sing when that wind whistles  
When it doesn't, well she don't  
Just ask that old pirate  
That's floatin' on my river boat

I could sail to the ocean  
If the wind would come and get me  
But I ain't goin' nowhere quickly  
I'm just a drunkin' sailor  
Waiting on a gale  
With a drink in my hand and a sailboat for sale

Never make a handshake deal while sharing someone bottle  
Never buy a boat son that doesn't have a throttle

Aye  
Aye

I could sail to the ocean  
If the wind would come and get me  
But I ain't goin' nowhere quickly  
I'm just a drunkin' sailor  
Waiting on a gale  
With a drink in my hand and a sailboat for sale

I got a sailboat for sale

Aye  
Aye  
Peace,

Tony Lamb