



Stories from the Seattle Yacht Club

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Founded in 1892, Seattle Yacht Club is one of our country's most active and long-established yacht clubs. With facilities ranging from the historic main station on Portage Bay, to ten outstations located along the shores of Washington and British Columbia, the club offers an outstanding group of properties for use by its more than 2,500 members.

SEATTLE YACHT CLUB BECOMES NSHOF FOUNDING MEMBER

From the Commodore:

It gives me great pleasure to confirm the commitment of the Seattle Yacht Club Board of Trustees and its members to the goals and mission of the National Sailing Hall of Fame. Our Fleet Captain Sail, Dave Ferguson and his committee, and Past Commodore, Chris Otorowski, will be working together on the member matching fund program that I expect will exceed the Founding Club level.

We look forward to watching the progress of the NSHOF and its home in Annapolis.

Sincerely,

Kim Lorenz

History



Seattle Yacht Club has a name and spirit that goes back to Washington territorial days of the 1870s when Manifest Destiny ideas of frontier possibility and a better life prevailed. It was first reported on as the SYC in the 1879 Seattle Times and formally established with a charter and election of officers 1892. In 1901 it filed letters of incorporation with the state and again in 1909,

merging with the Elliot Bay Yacht Club. Keeping its good name and providing the funding, it adopted the burgee and bylaws of the EBYC.

The Pacific Northwest waters, aristocratic pines and views of Mt. Rainier, Baker and the Olympics provided inspiration for Chief Sealth's (Seattle) native peoples and SYC respects this heritage while developing its own traditions and stewardship. In the 1880s Puget Sound's Budlong's Boat House was the locale of the first gathering place of SYC yachtsmen followed in 1882 by the moorage on Battery Street at Brighton's Boat House. The first Clubhouses built for a formally organized Seattle Yacht Club were in 1892 and 1909 in West Seattle. Presently the Portage Bay clubhouse (1919) between Lakes Union and Washington offers a colonial style with classical elegance and uncovered and covered moorages. It has been on the National Register of Historical Places since 2006. In addition, there are ten beautiful outstations extending from south Puget Sound through Canadian waters. They are Gig Harbor, Elliott Bay, Port Madison and Eagle Harbor on Bainbridge Island, Henry Island and Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands, and Ganges, Ovens Island, Garden Bay and Cortes Bay in Canada. The marine environment is protected by SYC's Code of Ethics and negotiations with the City of Seattle. Reciprocity with U.S. and international yacht clubs exists.



There has been an undaunted determination and racing spirit of "Go and Win" on local through international levels from the beginning. Competitive sportsmanship and leadership resulted in SYC hosting the first Northwest International Yachting Association Conference and Regatta which became today's Pacific International Yachting Association. The R-Sloop, Sir Tom, won the PIYA races from California through Canada and the Lipton and Isherwood Cups almost continuously in the 1920s. The International Flattie Association founded in 1936 by SYC members, promoted junior and women sailors who won local and national championships. Sailing races and regattas continue today in small and large boats skippered by Junior, Intermediate and Regular members. The Mini 12 races, Tri-Island Series and Grand Prix Invitational are a few.

Since 1928 SYC has participated in powerboat predicted log racing's annual International Cruiser Race, the Capital to Capitol Race. Hosted by SYC in 1936, the attendance was the highest of any U.S. cruising event to that date. In the 1940s the IPBA made it a family event. Today SYC hosts the IPBA Stimson Cup and participates in other IPBA and local races.

The belief that "everyone who wants to be on the water should be" underlies programs for the community such as the 1935 Shut In Cruise when 50 SYC boats took patients in wheelchairs and on stretchers for a Lake Washington cruise. World War II veterans were taken on similar cruises. Today's Annual Special People's Cruise was inspired by SYC women who arranged Christmas cruises for the Fircrest clients. SYC's Opening Day, modeled in part by the city's 1911 Potlatch celebration has the largest boating parade and international crew races in the world. SYC sponsors the largest fund raising event in boating, the Leukemia Cup Regatta and the SYC Foundation provides funding for Youth Sailing classes and community boating projects.

Protection of maritime waters and racing abound. SYC formed the first Pacific coastal squadron to teach motorboat navigation and to cooperate with the U.S. government in 1916. During World War II SYC's Flotilla 24, the largest civilian squadron in the U.S., patrolled Pacific inland waters with private small and large luxury yachts. Pleasure boating was dormant but racing continued. The hydroplane races with SYC's Slo-Mo IV and V won the Gold Cup 1950-1954 and put Seattle and Seafair on the map. The hydroplane era continues with the SYC burgee on winning boats and thousands of spectators watching the races on Lake Washington and on television.

Pleasure boating resumed after World War II. In 1964 SYC was invited to join the Cruising Club of America and continues to host several of their events. The latter's goal of promoting cruising by amateurs and its interest in seamanship, navigation and handling of small vessel is in keeping with SYC's philosophy and support of what the juniors call "people who like to mess around in boats". Boating education at SYC has always been a priority for youth and adult members and non-members. Currently it is provided in Lasers, Vanguard 15's, and Optimist dinghies. Pleasure boating for adults, families and the public is provided in Club and private member boats.

Competing in international races in the 1980s again demonstrated SYC's racing skills. Olympic gold, silver and bronze medals were brought home. The SYC burgee flew on One World in the 2003 America's Cup Race. SYC women have won world championships in rowing and the Adams Cup for sailing. World involvement is further demonstrated by hosting of the International Council of Yacht Clubs Forum in 2011. This is the first time it was held in the

United States and 14 countries were represented by numerous delegates.

To insure “the most fun for the most of us” the SYC committee system allows for diversified interest groups and activities for all members. The Men’s and Women’s groups have luncheons with speakers and programs to educate and entertain. Parties, balls, dinner dances and children’s events occur regularly. The annual Commodore’s Ball with the Grand Fourteen Yacht Clubs in the area is a gala event. Potlatch, a weekend of water games, races and feasting at Port Madison, is an example of the family centered events for juniors, intermediates and regular members.

Seattle Yacht Club has a tradition of pride in its members who come from every socioeconomic level. Many have made significant contributions to navigational science and member volunteerism is basic to the Club. The 1937 Board of Trustees stated: the club should cater to the average class of gentlemen yachtsman” attempting to please the aristocrats and also the members with small boats regardless of financial position. SYC also has pride in its clubhouse and the city it is named after. The beacon light on top of the Portage Bay clubhouse was installed by SYC members and the Coast Guard and its spire is shown on nautical charts as a private stationary aid to navigation. It beckons you to join the fun of a cultural icon and continue to make history.

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