

## Seaford Yacht Club History

The Seaford Yacht Club was launched on July 27, 1978, at an organizational meeting held on the dock at Mill's Marina. The stated purpose of the Club was to promote safe boating, general camaraderie and to have a successful but informal club. Within a matter of months the original fourteen families had doubled. Dues were ten dollars a month. After three years the club had outgrown meetings on the dock in Seaford and meetings were then generally held at Sammy and Nick's Restaurant in Yorktown. Membership had grown to forty-four families and a junior sailing program was begun from Dan Smoker's backyard.

In January 1983, the Club bought the present five-acre site along Back Creek. The old farmhouse on the property was renovated to the point where it could be used as the Clubhouse. Due to the limited size of this building, membership meetings and meals were held outside on the lawn from April through October without a meeting ever having to be cancelled on account of rain. During the winter months, meetings were still held at Sammy's and Nick's. The Club's first master plans for growth were drawn up and adopted by the membership in 1985. In 1986 the large meeting room was built onto the waterside of the Clubhouse. The members did all the work, from the laying of the foundation to the final coat of paint. At last the entire membership could sit down to a meal together. From 1987 through 1988 the kitchen was rebuilt from the foundation up, all within the original farmhouse walls. The roadway was enlarged, a parking lot was constructed and the back porch was rebuilt with modern windows and walls. A complete heating and cooling system was installed.

In September 1984, the original pier was extended from 57 feet to 232 feet. Once the pilings were set in place, the pier was constructed in one day by membership labor. In 1989, the water depth was dredged to a minimum depth of five feet and additional boat slips were added to make a total of 28 slips available to members. During the same period, the members also constructed the bathhouse with showers and a dump station. In 1996 an additional pier with 24 slips was built and the area dredged to a minimum depth of five feet. This work was contracted out due to the size of the project.

In July 2001, a major renovation/expansion project began which provided a doubling of the size of the club meeting room, new toilets, a new kitchen and a large deck. All the original building was renovated and new roofing and siding was provided throughout. The parking lot was expanded and many landscaping improvements were made. Approximately 1/3 of the work was accomplished by the volunteer labor of club members and the rest completed by the contractor. The project was completed in February 2002.

Initially, the Club membership was predominantly comprised of sail boaters and racing events. These events have continued to the present time. In 1979, the first New Year's Day Race and the Spring and Fall Series were begun and in 1980, the Summer Series races were initiated. In 1981, the Club received CBYRA sanctioning. This same year the first Trans-Bay was held. In 1986, the Club hosted over 70 boats participating in the first annual CBYRA Southern Bay Race Week. Seaford Yacht Club Skippers have been and continue to be among the top-ranked racing sailors on the Bay.

Over the years, as more power boaters have joined the Club, many of the Club activities have been tailored towards the combined requirements of sail and power boaters. The local mini-

cruises and the weekend cruises attract large numbers of both power boaters and sail boaters. It is not unusual to see raft-ups of from fifteen to twenty club boats, both power and sail on some cruises. Even the annual fishing tournament, which has heavy powerboat participation, also attracts a few sail boaters. In recent years as some club members have gone on extended cruises, the Club has joined the Yachting Club of America to gain reciprocity status with yacht clubs throughout the United States.

Since 2007, the Club became even more involved with its local community. Chesapeake Experience, a non-profit organization that creates on-the-water educational experiences for the public, has successfully partnered with the Club to conduct several of its classes from the Club's facilities. The Club's Junior Sailing program, dormant for several years, was revived in 2010 and has grown and evolved to a program that teaches sailing to children as young as eight and to the more experienced youth in their mid teens. In 2011 and 2012, the Poquoson High School sailing team was invited to use the Club's facilities for their sail training. Also, in 2011, a Grafton High School science class began using the Club's waterfront for their oyster raising project and their project continues today at our facility.

In 2011 the storage barn was replaced by a new, efficient, and attractive barn designed and built by the membership. The Saturday Sea Dog Lecture series was initiated in 2012. The speakers, who are SYC members or members of the community who are knowledgeable in areas of yachting, occupations relating to the water, or topics affecting the Chesapeake Bay share their expertise both with Club members and members of the public.

In 2013 the Club undertook a major dredging project in order to maintain the depth of the water in and around the dock. A major kitchen improvement effort was also authorized that year and both of these projects were completed successfully in 2014.

In 2014, the Club purchased seven 420 boats to extend the breadth of the Junior Sailing Program, and today the Program employs a fleet of Optimist Prams, Lasers and 420s. These boats are also available for our Club members to use.

In 2015 the York County High School Sailing Team competed quite successfully, first in the area, using the Club's 420 sailboats.

In 2017, an inspection revealed substantial structural problems with the original portion of the Clubhouse. After considering various options, and with input from the Club membership, the Board decided to have the old structure razed and rebuilt. Demolition and reconstruction began in late 2019.

2020 has been a challenging year. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing construction work of the Clubhouse created significant challenges to our programs. None-the-less, Clubhouse reconstruction was completed by mid-Summer. After finishing the interior, the Club members now have a Clubhouse to be truly proud of. Unfortunately, COVID-19 health restrictions continued to limit many of the Club's usual activities. Boating events and creative teleconferencing have kept the membership informed and engaged.

As the Seaford Yacht Club continues to grow in the future, it will respond to the needs and goals of its membership. It will prove to be a club of diversity and noteworthy accomplishment - a place where members and guests feel welcome.