

Commodore's Column, September 1, 2009

If one must own a boat here in the Pacific Northwest (and one must, mustn't one?) this summer has been the proof. The weather has been nearly perfect, with the longest period of no-rain days for as long as I can remember... and I'm a native of the Skagit Valley. Our cruisers have been reporting delightful cruising conditions, with the only drawback being the importance of returning. Our racers have enjoyed decent winds with sunny skies. Social gatherings have been able to utilize the clubhouse deck and outside barbeque area.

Since mid-February I have had the opportunity to spend 108 days on the water this year! Some days have found me delivering boats, some doing instruction, some cruising, but mostly racing. I do love being on the water. Tomorrow night is another of the club's Wednesday night races and this weekend will be spent racing in the Bellingham Yacht Club's PITCH regatta. AYC hopes to defend our possession of the Kelly O'Neal team trophy from other club challenges.

A few years ago AYC members voted down a proposal to expand the clubhouse, albeit by a narrow margin. The overwhelming consensus was that members wanted additional room, but were vehemently against undertaking debt. My recollection is that the proposed project at that time was in the range of \$200,000 to \$300,000. The members proved to be quite informed, as the present worldwide economic situation deteriorated within two years of the vote. As a former businessman and opportunist I requested that the board look into the possibility of doing some of the work incrementally. The city of Anacortes will not permit any change of our clubhouse unless our sanitary facilities are brought up to code... we must have two stalls for each gender on the main floor. Again, the opportunist in me saw an opportunity in the present economic climate. So, after polling the members who affirmed their desire to bring the bathrooms up to code, your board has decided to expand the bathrooms to the approximate cost of \$33,000. Work should begin September 9, the clubhouse facilities will remain useable, and the work should be completed in approximately two months. After completion of this project we will then have the ability to expand the deck, the galley, or other ideas, so long as we have the financial resources on hand to do so.

Our membership has different interests; however all seem to revolve around boating. We have been able to maintain a strong, growing membership, and I believe that much growth will continue to come from our youth programs. Member Stephanie Schwenk has just completed her second season of "Pirate's Camp" where young sailors had the opportunity to sail smaller boats. She mentioned to me the need for a dock for small boats. The Cap Sante boat basin had an old fuel dock which was decommissioned and not being used. We have decided to lease that dock and members now have the opportunity to rent space on that dock for \$100 per year. Contact me directly with your interest. Also, there is opportunity for those of us with skills to rejuvenate parts of that dock. Contact me to show your volunteerism.

Jerry