

History of the Everett Yacht Club

The waterways of the Pacific Northwest were the major routes of communication and travel for the early settlers, just as they had been for the Indians. The importance of the water to the history of Everett is undeniable. One of the major considerations in the selection of a town site on Port Gardner was the excellent harbor. Even before Everett's founding fathers checked the land area, they took harbor soundings and determined that it was suitable for deep-water shipping.

Before the dawn of the 20th Century the inland waters had come to be used for pleasure as well. Yacht clubs were beginning to be organized in the 1890's in the larger and older ports on Puget Sound.

As early as 1895, yachts were being seen in Port Gardner Bay. The first reference to the Everett Yacht Club as such is in a newspaper clipping of May 17, 1895. Titled, "Everett's New Yachts", it reads:

"The new yacht, 'Storm King', completed by R.A. Whitney, Jr., and George Mantandon, and just completed by M.S. Pettersen, shipbuilder at the Barge Works, was launched at 1 o'clock yesterday morning at high tide. It is an eighteen footer, a pleasure craft and cruiser. Mr. Pettersen has also recently completed a yacht for himself and one for superintendent Calderwood of the Barge Works. It is claimed that in point of workmanship the three yachts are by far the finest ever launched on Puget Sound. These boats are the first of the fleet of the Everett Yacht Club. These three yachts will leave for Victoria on Sunday morning to participate in the regatta during the celebration of the Queen's Birthday."

It seems likely this informal organization had no activity for a number of years due to the passing of the Barge Works from Everett's industrial scene. A 1931 article in the Everett Daily Herald reports the date of organization of "Everett Yacht Club" as July 2, 1907. Quotes from that article include: "The list of founders is a roster of well-known names in Everett."

"The meeting took place in the parlor of the Mitchell hotel for the purpose of organizing a yacht club, which would eventually be admitted to the International Yacht Club Association." "No time was lost in carrying on the work of organizing, which was taken up again a week later." "On July

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30, 1907, the charter of this pioneer organization closed with 32 names." By April 1908, the club had progressed to the point where it built a yacht to compete in the 29-foot class. After a public contest to select a name, it was launched as the "Rival" May 27th.

The "Rival" is again mentioned in a 1909 clipping from "Pacific Motor Boat." titled "Honors in Yachting". It reads: "The Everett Yacht Club is the baby member of the International Yachting Association, yet it is a right lusty youngster, full to the coamings with snap, vim and determination that refuses to be jockeyed out of a windward position in the operation of the Northwestern aquatic activities. About two years ago the nucleus of the club got their heads together little knot of 'once-upon-a-timer-ers' possessed of a consuming inclination to pull once more on the mainsheet and grasp the tiller.

The City laughed openly when the struggling club, with an amazingly small number of dollars to its credit, spoke right out in meeting, saying Everett would have a craft to compete for honors in the international races, then only a short time distant. By subscription, several thousand dollars rolled in, by heroic endeavor the hope of the club -the sloop 'Rival' was turned out in Van Dyke's Yard, and by gracious!

The Puget Sound country sat up and rah-rah-ed when Commodore Goldfinch and his green crew captured the trophy offered for the best sailing time over the course, not only winning the event, but also establishing a new time record. Again this season the Rival will compete for international honors, good luck to her! The club today is strong, and contemplates a house and float on the bay."

This yacht seems to have put something of a burden on the club, and was eventually sold to the Goldfinch brothers for \$525. The Everett Yacht Club of the early 1900's was apparently the outgrowth of pleasure sailing. The clubhouse was located at Camp No. 1, south of Weyerhaeuser Mill A. The only way to get there was by water or by foot down the Great Northern tracks. After it was replaced by a more modern structure, it became the Sea Scout headquarters.

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In 1910, another group of men met at the Labor Temple on an evening in May to do something about the troubles of the motorboat enthusiasts. They thought there should be better mooring facilities; a place to buy their gas, oil and necessary boating equipment; and, they needed the company of friends with whom boating problems might be discussed. So began the first Everett Motor Boat Club.

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Arthur A. Pettersen was named temporary president for the group and Harry F. White was chosen temporary secretary. S.C. Pettersen, Fred C. Roscoe and Miles S. Mitchell were appointed as committee to draw up by-laws and those present agreed to meet May 23 at the Northern Pacific Express Co. office.

That meeting was the official beginning of the club, although a full slate of officers was not elected until a third meeting. By-laws were adopted and dues were set. Dues started at \$2.50 for the charter members and were "good until the next meeting." After that they were to be increased to \$5.00 for initiation and 50 cents a month. A committee composed of E.B. Cheney, A.H. Spencer and Arthur A. Pettersen was appointed to draw up a suitable club burgee.

Permanent officers were chosen at the meeting of June 20 in the editorial offices of the Herald Publishing Company. The report of the burgee committee was accepted at this time. While the dimensions of the insignia were changed in 1912, when it was entered in Lloyd's Registry of American Yachts, the original design was retained.

The original members owned a listed total of 14 boats. Both the times and the boat designs were different. The commodore's "Kilowatt," for example, had only a 4'6" beam for its 23' of length. A 5 horsepower motor powered it.

Everett Motor Boat Club held its first meeting in its own quarters July 11, 1910. The clubhouse was described as "a little old float with a dilapidated house on it" which had been purchased for \$28. Originally located on the

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Snohomish River just south of Hewitt Avenue, it was later moved downstream to a site just below Everett Avenue. Boat owners were legion and expansion of the club's membership was rapid. A larger float house was purchased and it was fitted out with lockers, a kitchen, and dining accommodations for 42 persons at a single table. This float was later hauled out of the river and allowed to remain high and dry on the bank for nearly two years. It was then towed across the river to Dead Water Slough. Money was spent on floats and the club had finally achieved its adequate moorings. Club rights in Dead Water Slough were held until 1935.

For many years there was no record of boating activity of an organized type probably due to WWI and its post-war problems. In 1927, the Port of Everett was responsible for a revival of interest in the boating program. "Pacific Motor Boat" of January 1929, describes the incident like this:

"The City of Everett, situated in the heart of some of the Puget Sound's most attractive pleasure and commercial boating grounds, is at last free from the one great handicap that has kept it from being one of the most important boating centers in the Northwest. The handicap in the past has been lack of good storage and mooring facilities. By action of the Port of Everett taken during the past summer, and still in progress, the handicap has been removed, and now the city has one of the finest small-boat landings in the sound area.

During 1927 the port acquired a tract of tidal land between Piers 1 and 2, south of the city dock and nearly opposite the Great Northern Railway station, right in the heart of the boating area. It had been used as a privately operated moorage for some years, but had always been subject to tidal conditions, and open to strong northwest winds which wrought havoc at low and half tides. The port bought it and drove pilings and provided other improvements chiefly to see whether the cost of building a real landing would be warranted. What they found out justified their proceeding with the construction of a terminal that cost nearly \$35,000, and already looks like a paying investment.

The greater part of the area was dredged first to a depth of five feet, the silt being used to fill a one-and-one half acre tract behind a stone bulkhead,

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raising that part to the level of surrounding docks and street approaches. A strip 100 feet wide was then dredged 12 feet deep for the use of purse seiners and other large boats."

What Crandall wrote (under a May 8, 1929, date) was: "A TRAGEDY! A few days ago, some of our citizens were attacked and stung by the Motor Boat Bug. Since having been stung they have all been shouting for a get-together of all persons interested in motor boating, with the idea of organizing a Motor Boat Club of Everett."

You are requested to appear at the City Dock Club House, foot of Hewitt Avenue, at 8:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 15 there and then to see what can be done. "Bring someone with you who is interested also, if possible."

The meeting was apparently held May 18, for the Everett Daily Herald of the following date printed a story titled "Steps Taken To Organize Boating Club" and sub-titled, "Committees Formed to Draft By-Laws; Election Next Wednesday." The story said:

"Fifty persons attended a preliminary meeting held in the city dock clubhouse on the waterfront last night for the purpose of reorganizing and rejuvenating the Everett Motorboat Club. A joint committee representing the various divisions of motor boating was appointed to formulate by-laws for the new edition of the club, at the office of Dr. J Spencer Purdy this evening."

Later, in 1930, the group got enough financial support from among themselves to start on a building to house the outboard owners. Those who shared in the original financing were later paid off and the club held a stag party in 1938 that was highlighted by the burning of the mortgage.

The Everett Daily Herald of September 28, 1930, reports: "Permit was issued Monday for the construction of the new clubhouse on the waterfront of the Everett Motor Boat Club. Estimated cost of the clubhouse was placed at \$1500. The clubhouse will be built on the port commission's dock on the waterfront immediately west of the Great Northern depot. It will be of frame construction, two stories in height. The

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lower floor is to be built at the approximate height of high tide. The second floor will consist of one large room where the club members hold their social functions."

The club held its first meeting in the new quarters November 4, 1931. The published report says: "Lighting fixtures were partially installed yesterday. The interior finishing with veneered board is to be stained a driftwood color and will also be finished by meeting time tonight. On the lower water level floor, the locker room is nearly complete with 21 lockers installed. A large sliding door on the waterside will be connected with the small boat dock floats. The gangplank and commodious repair room will make it possible for owners to bring their dinghies into the room for repair work. The blue and white blinker light will be installed today completing the light house tower on the northeast corner of the building."

The club was constructed entirely by volunteer labor of the members. The official opening was held November 28, 1931. It was also 1931 when the revamped organization decided to officially change its name to "Everett Yacht Club." H.S. Wright became the first commodore of the group under this new designation. It was 1936 before the club was incorporated as a non-profit organization. Present by-laws date from that incorporation. Later, in 1930, the group got enough financial support from among themselves to start on a building to house the outboard owners. Those who shared in the original financing were later paid off and the club held a stag party in 1938 that was highlighted by the burning of the mortgage.

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In 1932 the Everett Yacht Club began its longtime sponsorship of the Sea Scout movement. Ship No. 1 of the Everett Area Council was organized as the result of actions taken by the club. This ship obtained its original charter from the national organization January 1, 1934.

During the summer of that same year, 1934, a 50-foot motor sailor was assigned by the Navy Department for the use of the Everett Sea Scouts. It was no more than a hull but was speedily converted into a two-masted cabin schooner, equipped with an auxiliary motor. Later, equipped with a diesel engine it became one of the most pretentious Sea Scout ships on the coast. Much of the progress with the craft was made possible through the cooperation and generosity of Captain Harry Ramwell after who the boat was named. It was Captain Ramwell too, who was responsible for the shore headquarters of the scouts.

Everett Yacht Club broke into the win column in the International Cruiser Race in 1933. The "Kaleta" of Howard S. Wright, the club's first commodore, led the pack in the race from Olympia to Nanaimo, B.C.

The Aquilonus Sailing Club, then with a membership of 20, became affiliated with Everett Yacht Club January 16, 1934. The formal organization of the Aquilonus group was accomplished May 25, 1933 to promote the sport of sailing. Paul and Walter Morris were the moving forces behind the organization, probably because they were the owners of the old sailing yacht "Myth." The club held its first race on Port Gardner Bay July 4, with officers of the U.S.S. Chester, in port for the Independence Day Observance, acting as race judges.

Three other races for club members were held during that season with points being awarded for performance. Winner of the first year's trophy a cup presented by Goldfinch Brothers was the "Wee Myth", (the craft sailed by the Morrisses). The Aquilonus Club later merged with the Yacht Club.

Complete remodeling and redecorating of the club facilities was the major project of 1935. Concessions for both food and refreshment were leased out. The same year Everett Yacht Club acquired the "Black

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Prince", which was to be, for the next 20 years, an integral part of the club program.



1936: "Black Prince" on shore and in place adjoining the Everett Yacht Club

Charles Wright and Captains Elwell and Pinkerton built the "Black Prince" on the Snohomish River in Everett in 1901. Strictly a working boat, the old stern-wheeler plied the Snohomish as far as Tolt, the Skagit as far as Sedro-Woolley, and the Puget Sound between

the two with her tows. New she was the pride of the Snohomish and Skagit Navigation Co. line. Retired from active duty she became the meeting place of Everett yachtsmen.

The "Black Prince" had a hull of 93' and an over-all length of 112'. Her beam was 19' and her depth of hold was 5'. Twin engines that received their steam from a brickyard boiler powered her. She had become the property of the American Tow Boat Co. in 1922 and, in 1935 when her job on the waterfront had been taken over by more modern craft, she was offered to the Everett Yacht Club for a token sum of \$1. The club snapped up the offer.

The following year the Prince was pulled up the bank to the level of the clubhouse and shored up on piles and timbers. Remodeled as the club's official meeting room, she was dedicated July 3, 1936. The only remaining evidence of the famous "Black Prince" is the name. Its name was used for many years to designate rooms at the club.

1936 was the year when Everett Yacht Club began its affiliation with national and international groups. The club became a member of the International Power Boat Association, the American Power Boat Association, and the Pacific International Yachting Association.

Club sponsorship of the first Tyee Salmon Roundup took place in 1937. Held August 29, the first prize was a new Studebaker coupe that went to Dwight Clifford of Richmond Heights for boating a 14 pound, 11 ounce salmon in the final competition. The roundup was continued, annually;

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through a five-year period that ended abruptly, with the 1941 catch due to WWII.

In 1939, the club took a step in another direction the organization of a Junior Yacht Club. After several years of unsuccessful attempts by young boating enthusiasts to maintain a club to promote their interests, the Everett Yacht Club took them under its wing.

The annual report for 1939 also records the organization of the Everett Barnacle Club, for the female of the species.

Everett Yacht Club was host for the start of the International Cruiser Race in 1939. This was the year that an Everett boat, the "Ivy", Skippered by Captain Ivy Hilton and crewed by Henry Brown and Charles Seiler, won first honors for class C sloops of the P.I.Y.A. races at Bellingham.

The Everett Yacht Club did an about face in 1940. All concessions were canceled and the club took over management its own refreshment and food business. This led to the building of the new clubhouse. The facilities were formally dedicated July 1, 1941.

In 1942 all Yacht Club activities were curtailed, except for participation in the work of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. More than 100 members served with the armed forces in WWII. Those who remained at home devoted much time to the Coast guard or other war-connected activities. All of the club's social and cruising events were cut to a minimum. Club facilities were made available to servicemen of all branches, and many boating activities were planned to include servicemen stationed in the vicinity.

Sea Scouting was still encouraged and cruising was carried out as much as possible by the Captain Ramwell. Working the ship under sail was a necessity much of the time because of the gasoline shortage. Club memberships, both active and social, increased steadily during the war years.

1946 saw a return to cruising, social activities, and to the sixth Tyee Salmon Roundup. This last roundup was as successful as any of its pre-war predecessors, but had grown too large for club sponsorship.

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EYC Clubhouse all lit up for Christmas

The remodeling of the top deck of the Black Prince was completed this year. The two following years saw the addition of the manager's office. A new lease was obtained from the Port of Everett to provide the club with

larger holdings greater security on the waterfront. The Captain Ramwell was re-built and a new engine was installed.

With the new lease from the port the club was able to operate its own moorage. The area adjoining the clubhouse was re-arranged and improved. Water lines and electricity were laid to the floats. An electric pump, fire extinguishers and salvage equipment were acquired. It had taken a long time, but the club members seemed to have secured most of their original objectives, including a lot of their fellows with whom they could discuss boating.

Everett Yacht Club was host to the 19th annual International Cruiser Race in 1950. The International Power Boat Association sponsored the race, from Everett to Victoria, B.C. The over-all winner of the 1950 race was Frank Morris, skippering his "Snuffly."

Everett Yacht Club, now firmly ensconced on the bay, moved a little farther out with its purchase of property on Gedney (Hat) Island for club use in 1951. The installation was used for the first time September 9, 1951, when the Everett yachtsmen were hosts to the first Inter-Club Salmon Derby.

One of the most satisfying projects for the Everett Yacht Club began in 1953. The annual Blind Fishing Derby sponsored in cooperation with Everett Kiwanis Club, makes it possible for the blind of the community to have a part in fishing.

The year 1962 provided racing highlights for the Everett Yacht Club when Captain Ray Davis and crew finished first in class in the International Cruiser Race, and Dr. Ed Chase in "Doc's Out" won the 450-mile Van-Isle Race.

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In 1966, plans were made to build a new facility on 14th Street. It was constructed the following year, and the mortgage was retired 13 years later in 1979. During this period, active social membership was at an all-time high, and the club really prospered. However, the 1980's brought economic changes to the Everett waterfront, and in 1985 the membership voted to close the dining facilities. The following year the clubhouse was sold to the Port of Everett with arrangements for the club to lease space for social activities. Membership fell dramatically at this time. In 1987, and again in 1997, the club changed its by-laws to adjust to the new situation and to encourage new membership. A membership drive was also initiated in 1997 which resulted in a 30% growth in new members.

As the club begins the new millennium, membership continues to grow, with enthusiastic participation in cruising and social events. The club is also working with the Port of Everett to find a site and begin plans for a new clubhouse.