

LONG BEACH YACHT CLUB

History of Long Beach Yacht Club

In the beginning

The following brief summary of the beginning and early years of LBYC is excerpted from the 75th Anniversary Book published in October 2004.

Long Beach Yacht Club began in 1929 as a direct result of an inquiry from the Associated Boating Industries of Northern California about the possibility of a powerboat race between Long Beach and San Francisco.

The proposed race would be run during the San Francisco Motor Boat Show, and would provide advertising for the show and the Northern California boating industries. The inquiry was addressed to Daniel M. Callis, Sr., a prominent naval architect active in yacht club committee work.

The inquiry to Callis, and the subsequent initial race, clearly were the catalysts that led to the formation of Long Beach Yacht Club as we know it today. Another Long Beach Yacht Club might have formed under other circumstances, but those two events started the current Long Beach Yacht Club.

The First Race

The concept of the race was to use a handicapping system, to race from Long Beach to an overnight stay in Santa Barbara, then to another overnight stay in Monterey, and then finish in San Francisco for a total distance of 460 miles - the longest powerboat race in the world. The winner would receive a trophy donated by Sir Thomas Lipton then-valued at \$1,000.

Callis agreed to be General Chairman of the Executive Committee and promoter of the race. Committee work would be handled by the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, the Monterey Chamber of Commerce, the Santa Barbara Yacht Club and the Associated Boating Industries of Northern California.

Callis initially offered the sponsorship of the race to the California Yacht Club; however, CYC declined on the basis that they would not have complete jurisdiction over the race. Callis then met with Charles Camp and Norman Able (all would become Commodores of LBYC), and a decision was made to run the race under auspices of a "Long Beach Yacht Club" which reportedly might have existed at some time but no longer did so.

Despite problems with finding enough entries, the first race was run in April of 1929 by a Long Beach Yacht Club, the burgee for which was made by the wife of prominent Long Beach attorney Jonah Jones, Jr. and flown in the race. Winner was Arthur Macrate (LBYC Commodore in 1931) in his Zoa III.

This first race was viewed as a great success, future races were anticipated, and it seemed that it might be time to form a real Long Beach Yacht Club.

A Real Long Beach Yacht Club

Callis, Macrate, Camp, Able and others met at St. Francis Yacht Club to see if there was support for the concept of a real Long Beach Yacht Club.

There was, and a subsequent meeting was called by Jonah Jones, Jr. on September 6, 1929 to present the concept to a group of Long Beach businessmen interested in yachting. They agreed to form a real Long Beach Yacht Club.

Widely acclaimed speedboat racer Richard Loynes was elected Commodore, and on October 7, 1929 Jonah Jones, Jr. filed the Articles of Incorporation. Charter Memberships were extended to 100 individuals. Despite collapse of the stock market, the new and real LBYC soon had 100 members paying dues of \$5 per year; \$2.50 for kids.

The Club Starts Rapid Growth

Less than a week after filing the Articles of Incorporation, the new LBYC finished off 1929 by organizing a speedboat race between Long Beach and Avalon for October 11-12, 1929. Boats were to be 16 to 30 feet in length with inboard engines (some expected to be 500 hp). Officials were from LBYC and the Catalina Island Yacht Club, and this race appears to have begun a long-term and close relationship between the two clubs including overlapping memberships and Flag Officers.

By February 1930, only four months after incorporation, membership had increased to approximately 150, and arrangements for meeting space had been secured at the Pacific Coast Club. Planning was underway for the second Long Beach to San Francisco powerboat race, and "plans were being formulated for the finest yachting harbor on the Pacific Coast at Long Beach."

On April 24, 1930, the "Second Annual All-California Power Cruiser Race to San Francisco" started off Belmont Pier with 10 of the 21 entries flying the LBYC burgee. Not surprisingly, in view of the time of year, the boats encountered heavy weather with considerable damage being done to boats and participants.

Arthur Macrate (then Vice Commodore) did well in that second race in the vessel *Hermana*, but interest in future long-distance powerboat races started to be diluted as other races and events were organized.

Looking for a Marina and Clubhouse

Installation of D. M. Callis as Commodore was held at the Pacific Coast Club with 125 in attendance. Special guests included the Commodores of Catalina Island Yacht Club, California Yacht Club and Los Angeles Yacht Club. An important agenda item at the installation was interest in developing a yacht harbor in Long Beach and to follow that with construction of a clubhouse. There was definite need for a yacht harbor. Forty yachts were reported as temporarily moored in the outer harbor of Long Beach in "exceedingly unfavorable locations, generally where water is dirty and frequently covered with oil."

Using the Pacific Coast Club as headquarters, discussions were underway with the City and County regarding development in Alamitos Bay and plans were being formulated to "begin construction of a clubhouse as soon as a definite location for a yacht harbor has been determined by the City." Key individuals in this effort were identified as including: Jonah Jones, Jr., Frank Garbutt of the California Yacht Club, Pacific Coast Club and Los Angeles Athletic Club, Arthur Macrate, George L. Craig, Norman Able, Charles Camp, Sam Selover and D. M. Callis.

Despite the influence of this group, the cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach agreed in 1931 to build a bridge over the mouth of the San Gabriel River to link Seal Beach with Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach, which then ran down the Alamitos peninsula. This bridge, which would prevent access to all but small craft having less than 14 feet overhead clearance, blocked serious development of Alamitos Bay as an important yacht harbor for the next two decades.

The First Clubhouse

The formal approval of plans for the first clubhouse on June 30, 1936 reportedly started a flurry of fundraising and "sweat equity" on the part of members. On Opening Day, May 8, 1937, the facilities apparently were fully paid for.

The clubhouse was located a 2,000-foot "stroll to paradise" out a boardwalk from the shore (under what is now the Port of Long Beach). There were moorings, a Star Boat dock adjacent to the clubhouse, and an anchorage area. There was no boardwalk beyond the clubhouse, but access to the L-shaped end of the mole was not too difficult by walking over the rocks making up the mole. There are unconfirmed but apparently valid reports that young ladies from the neighborhood enjoyed walking out beyond the clubhouse and skinny dipping inside the L-shaped end of the mole.

After years of having to park boats up and down the coast, or in less-than-favorable locations in Long Beach's inner and outer harbors, members were understandably delighted with their new facilities. The clubhouse was described as having "a snug club-room, a snugger galley," and two heads.

The War Years Were Approaching

Despite some records stating that the Club either sold or donated the first clubhouse to the Sea Scouts in 1939, newspaper articles indicate that the facility was still in the hands of the Club during much of 1940 and perhaps even part of 1941. Opening Day 1940 reportedly was celebrated at the clubhouse, but by November of 1941 the facility was in the hands of the Sea Scouts.

LBYC was once again a "paper club" with no clubhouse, but the yachting and social activities continued for a while despite the growing influence of world events.

World War II would change the lives of many Club members, and markedly affect boating for several years. It would also mark the real beginning of Alamitos Bay as a marina and, ultimately, home for the Club's second clubhouse.

Alamitos Bay and the Second Clubhouse

Beginning as early as the 1920s, individuals who subsequently became prominent members of LBYC were instrumental in the development of Alamitos Bay and the marina. The second, and current, clubhouse simply could not be sited and constructed until the Bay was protected from disastrous floods and the marina constructed.

After major efforts by members, an initial lease for the clubhouse site was obtained in March 1959. The lease was expanded in January 1960 to include the clubhouse building as well as the access to Basin 4 slips adjacent to the clubhouse. In September 1969 the lease was extended to year 2020 and in 2007 the lease was extended to the year 2050.

Groundbreaking for the current clubhouse was held on June 1, 1960, and dedication ceremonies held on December 16, 1960. The Club was now positioned to expand rapidly and gain the recognition and stature that it now has within the worldwide yachting community.