

The North Channel Yacht Club

46° 12.312 N 82° 39.086 W

*in the heart of the finest freshwater
cruising ground in the world*

Summer 2020

COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

Inside This Issue

Commodore's Message
Editor's Message
Safe On The Hard
Around The Great Lakes
Lake Level Forecasts
Environmental News
Sailing Lore

Greetings

As you know, the club is open and we have boats in the mooring field and at the docks. The season is open and the we were one of the first clubs in the area. The good news is the Covid-19 guidelines for members at the club seems to be operating. I am looking forward to seeing you here. I met new members who purchased Escale, and saw in their eyes the joy and excitement of sailing in one of the best cruising areas. They made me remember the joy I felt the first time I cruised the North Channel. The smiles could not be brighter or more joyful.

Now I expect that the slight openings of Ontario will bring more of the members out to enjoy parts of the club that are open and seeing old friends (at two meters) and masked. I'm sure you also have the "tired of self-isolating" sickness that can be cured by seeing old friends and regaling one another with stories of sails past and plans on where to go next.

The Covid-19 has tested your Management Committee's ability to respond to changes in provincial constraints, as well as understandable request to launch. I have spent more time on Skype with the MC than I have with my family. But we have and will prevail. Looking forward to seeing you at the club.

Ray Hortness
Commodore

Masthead

North Channel Yacht Club
P.O. Box 175
Elliott Lake, ON P5A 2J7
Tel: (705) 849-5071

Commodore Ray Hortness

Editor Michael Leahy

Board Members

Vice Commodore: Leighton Roslyn
Rear Commodore: Mike Dupuis
Secretary: Debra Maher
Treasurer: Andre Udeschini
Buildings: Tom Baader
Equipment: Mac Nussey
Fleet Captain: Gilles Brunet
Water System: Richard Fortin
Yard: Ivan Mikkelsen

SUGGESTIONS:

ncycsuggestionbox@gmail.com

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Without a doubt, this sailing season will be different. In fact, it may be the most unusual sailing season any of us have ever experienced

For some, it will be on the water. But for the majority of our members, our boats will be on the hard and we must make do with memories and dreams.

As always, I can be reached at mwleahy@great-lakes-sailing.com

SAFE ON THE HARD

While being on the hard in the summer is unnatural for a sailboat, it is certainly a safe place for them during this difficult time.





However, all need not be lost. This could be a great time to plan the trip you have always dreamed about with time to research and make any changes or upgrades to your boat. The Great Lakes are an enormous water world and even if we are restricted to Canadian waters, there is a huge amount to discover and enjoy.

AROUND THE GREAT LAKES

All yacht clubs in Ontario are facing the same questions and challenges. Is it safe to fully open? Should we only partially open? What precautions should we take? Some clubs are fully open, strictly adhering to public health guidelines; other clubs are completely closed – no boats launched and no facilities open to members. Still others have sought a middle ground with boats launched but on-shore facilities curtailed.

At NCYC, the Management Committee decided to open the club with a number of restrictions. You will certainly have received the new protocols from the MC but essentially, while we can launch, use the dock and the mooring field, we cannot use the clubhouse or the white house. The shower building is open but only the heads can be used – the showers are off limits. The bbq's are not available either. Needless-to-say, the need for physical distancing remains along with careful attention to sanitation including hand washing and use of sanitizer.

Some members who have been out have reported very very little boating traffic. Favourite destinations are also seeing much reduced traffic. American-flagged boats are not permitted to enter Canadian waters and this is being policed by not only OPP and RCMP but also Canada Border Security Agency. Just as importantly, Canadian-flagged vessels may not enter American waters and this is being policed by various US police services and the U.S. Coast Guard.

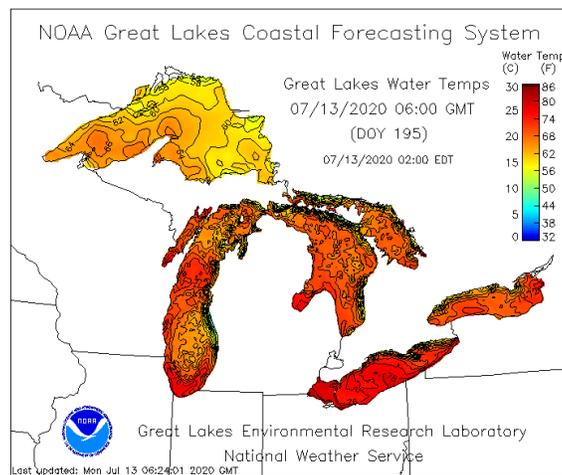
LAKE LEVEL FORECASTS

As sailors, we are always concerned about water levels as that can dictate where we can safely go and places to avoid. Both the Canadian and U.S. governments monitor the water levels continually (links below).

According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, precipitation this year was at or slightly above average in the upper lakes of Superior, Huron and Michigan. It was significantly below average in Erie and Ontario. Water levels however remain high. Record high monthly mean water levels continued on Lakes Michigan and Huron in June. Lake Huron surpassed its previous record from 1986 by 5 inches. Although precipitation is expected to be below average over the summer, Lake Huron is projected to see continued high water levels.

Higher levels can mean more erosion, less beach and less room to pass under bridges. They will also impact our club due to the effect of higher water on our docks. They also could mean more clearance from underwater obstacles, something we northern sailors value as we explore the North Channel and northern Georgian Bay.

Adding to the climate mix is temperature. The very hot weather we have been experiencing impacts the Great Lakes as well. Here is a temperature chart showing water temperatures across the Great Lakes, courtesy of NOAA



Water level data for the North Channel can be found here: <https://waterlevels.gc.ca>. Click through and follow the links to the monitoring stations at either Thessalon or Little Current. For American data, go here: <https://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/Great-Lakes-Information> and follow the links.

SOME ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

For a number of years, Ontario Power Generation has been working on a plan to build a nuclear waste dump along the shore of Lake Huron, near the town of Kincardine ON. This has been a hugely disputed plan that has seen lawsuits filed by U.S states that border the Great Lakes and environmental protests from many groups. Earlier this year, OPG announced that it was canceling the plans. While the issue of nuclear waste must be addressed, many had grave concerns about the location adjacent to the body of water that supplies among other things drinking water to 40 million people.

Another environmental issue that is being hotly debated is Enbridge Energy's Line 5 oil pipeline. For those not aware of this, Line 5 is an aging pipeline that carries crude oil and propane. Line 5 is a 645-mile, 30-inch-diameter pipeline that travels through Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas, Lying on the bottom, it crosses the Straits of Mackinac west of the Mackinac Bridge for a distance of 4.5 miles.

Built in 1953, there are serious concerns that a rupture would create a catastrophic oil spill into the Great Lakes. In late June, Enbridge discovered that an anchor support for the segment in the straits had shifted from its original position. The company said it shut down the line. The State of Michigan however sought and received a court order shutting the line down until a more detailed analysis can be carried out.

What do these things have to do with NCYC ? Quite simply, we sail those waters. We know the beauty and wonder of these great lakes and it is in our interest to be aware of events that could have a significant impact on them

SAILING LORE

As we sail the North Channel and upper reaches of Georgian Bay, every glance at our charts offers a link to our iconic past. Take McBean Channel. Did you know it was named for John McBean, the Chief Factor for the Hudson Bay Company? And McBean is a direct connection to our courier du bois / furtrader roots.

From the earliest days of exploration, the fur trade was a prominent part of the economy of the North Channel. The two major players were the North West Company and the formidable Hudson Bay Company. The NWC established a trading post on the La Cloche River in 1783. They traded throughout the region and were a direct source of competition to the HBC.. Eventually the two companies came to blows. The conflict was settled by a merger of the two companies. Fort La Cloche became an HBC post and its new Chief Factor was former NWC factor, John McBean.

The fort prospered until the mid-1830's when the government began to encourage native people to settle on Manitoulin Island and begin farming. From that point, business and profits began a steady slide until finally HBC received permission to relocate to Little Current. After a tumultuous year, the

government expelled them and they returned to Fort La Cloche. The fort remained HBC's district headquarters until 1885. That year, they moved to Sudbury following the arrival of the railroad.

The fort was leased for a short period of time to a lumber firm but then fell into disuse. Over the years it slowly crumbled until all that remained was an overgrown cemetery and a lone stone chimney. At one point the Eaton Company purchased the property to build a lodge but that plan failed to materialize. In turn it was sold to a sportsman's club and then converted to a Junior Ranger's camp. Eventually it was sold to its current owners, the Spanish River First Nation.

Located northeast of Fox Island, the area is not accessible to keelboats. Depths are very shallow. And of course, being part of the First Nation would require permission to visit in any event.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Many thanks to CAMECO for their continued supported

