



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*

Winter 2021

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Masthead

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COMMODORE'S MESSAGE



“Here be dragons” (*hic sunt dracones* in Latin) means dangerous or unexplored territories. It was a medieval practice to put illustrations of dragons, sea monsters and other mythological creatures on uncharted areas of maps where potential dangers were thought to exist

Before the first maps were drawn, “dragons” were everywhere, once. Fortunately, we don’t see such notations on Navionics or other GPS charts these days. But to-day the Covid-19 “dragon” still confounds us – but less so, as we have learned to map or chart a path forward [or back] to normalcy. But normalcy is still a way’s away.

Last season, NCYC weathered the storm and charted a course through the pandemic without any member, becoming infected – at least not at the club itself. This good outcome was the result of people faithfully, for the most part, following the protocols set by the Management Committee [MC] after **MUCH** detailed debate and input from the membership. Thank you to everyone for that sustained effort!

Will the same be true in the 2021 season? The 2020 protocols remain in place until changed by the MC, which remains open to hearing the views of members as circumstances change – hopefully for the better as the vaccines work their magic on the “dragon”. But until the pandemic “dragon” is finally slain, vaccination does not end the continuing need for masks and physical distancing. A vaccinated member can still become a host to the virus and transmit it to others. An unmasked member can unwittingly [some might say dim-wittedly] become a host and a transmitter and put others into the mouth of the dragon. Let’s continue to be respectful of others and their need to remain safe

Due to the dictates of the provincial chief dragon slayer [aka Doug Ford], NCYC 50th Anniversary events could not be held last year. The likelihood is that they will have to be postponed again this year. In anticipation of eventually being able to host some celebratory events, NCYC is looking for a 50th [or 51st or 52nd] anniversary celebrations co-ordinator/convenor/planner. Tom Baader has had to step away from that role, but had some good ideas percolating last year and might be tapped for input or help. So, if you want to be honoured as the queen or king of the anniversary [dragon slaying] celebrations, please contact me at NCYC.Commodore@gmail.com. Remember that hours spent on this work count as work-party hours.

There is another beast that needs to be tamed and that is the Constitutional amendments that were proposed as the AGM last fall. It was resolved then that a special meeting would be held this spring in advance of the Spring Planning Meeting [SPM] to consider and debate amendments to the By-laws and Rules. The SPM is scheduled for Saturday, May 1, 2021 via Zoom. The special meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 via Zoom. Please reserve those dates and times on your calendars now.

In the meantime, be safe for the sake of yourself and others.

Let's all be "dragon slayers".

Leighton Roslyn
Commodore

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

As in previous years, this issue will be much more 'visual'. I want to try and capture our boat yard as it slumbers through another winter. It's not possible to include all boats but the pictures give a sense of what conditions are like.

Take heart – spring is on its way!. Robins are not the only harbinger of Spring. On Feb 15th, the The Great Lakes- St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation announced the opening date for the 2021 Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System navigation season. According to Seaway Notice No 1, the Welland Canal will open Mar 19th, the Montreal / Lake Ontario section Mar 22nd and the Soo Locks on Mar 25th. The caveat of course is "subject to weather and ice conditions". Hopefully, we will enjoy a better season than last year!

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

A SLUMBERING BOATYARD – DREAMING OF BETTER TIMES





Photo Credit: R. Hortness)

LAKE LEVEL FORECASTS

Great Lakes water levels are continuously monitored by U.S. and Canadian federal agencies in the region through a bi-national partnership.

Going into February, we saw the lowest ice accumulation on the Great Lakes in half a century, according to the Canadian Coast Guard. During the month, the ice cover increased. From 7.2% coverage at the end of January, it has increased to 12.9% coverage as of the end of February. Typically, coverage at this time of year would be 50-55%.

This has widespread implications including significant shoreline damage in the winter months, increased runoff, and spring flooding to name a few. These effect not only our environment but also our wallets.

For sailors, we are also concerned about depths. As of the end of February, the US Army Corps of Engineers have projected that all of the Great Lakes, with the exception of Lake Ontario. will be at levels below last years levels. Lake Ontario is projected to maintain the same levels. Despite the fall in levels, all lakes will remain above chart datum.

SAILING LORE

We are blessed to sail in one of the most beautiful sailing grounds in the world. On the surface, it looks totally pristine. Yet scratch that surface and a fascinating history emerges – a history that we are still quite close to. Here are a few of the many many stories and tales of this fabulous region.

If now and then you are tempted to grumble a bit at Canada Post, imagine what mail delivery looked like up here in the 1850's. Mail was distributed from Penetanguishene. In the wintertime, native couriers brought it north, usually by dogsled to Killarney. Mail couriers from small communities further west along the North Channel would meet the mail courier from Penetang and begin the long trek back home. The mail courier from Bruce Mines snowshoed 150-180 km to get the mail and then turned around and trudged back home with it. He is reported to have said that he wore out a pair of snowshoes each way. According to him, he could make 35-60 km per day depending on weather.

The next time you transit through Little Detroit, imagine what it was like in the mid-1600's. For it was at this location that a band of Ojibwe warriors ambushed a marauding war party of Iroquois who were intent on attacking their nearby village. The Iroquois were trapped in the narrow passage and suffered a brutal defeat. Those who did manage to escape were caught further up along the shore at Landry Point where many were slain. Those who were captured were taken to Frenchman Island at the mouth of the Spanish River. It is said that their ghosts can be heard wailing to this day. One can only imagine what fate befell them.

Many of us would not realize that one of Ontario's largest high schools doesn't have a single brick or nail. It is the Independent Learning Centre (ILO), the Ministry of Education's Distance Learning Program.. And, it has its roots up here on the North Channel – specifically Meldrum Bay on Manitoulin Island. There was a lighthouse on Sulphur Island in the middle of the North Channel between Thessalon and Drummond Island (look it up on your charts ☺). The lighthouse keeper in 1928 was afraid that his daughter's education would suffer from the isolation so he transferred to the Mississagi lighthouse on Meldrum Bay. The local school principal in Blind River wouldn't let her write the high school entrance exams so her father complained to the school board. They sent over an inspector. He was so impressed with the young girl's abilities that he arranged for lessons to be prepared for her. She was successful. Those lessons that were prepared for her were the first of their kind in Ontario and became the foundation for the outstanding distance education program in use today across the Province.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Many thanks to CAMECO for their continued supported

