



# 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 2020

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## Masthead

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Water System: Richard Fortin  
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### SUGGESTIONS:

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## COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

Greetings from your Commodore,

I hope that spring which will start soon, gets you thinking of warm weather, seeing the milky way, days under sail and warm safe anchorages with friends. Your MC, especially our Vice-Commodore has been hard at work cleaning up our paperwork with banks, budgets and organization.

You were issued a request for comments regarding the use of campers, trailers and private property left on sites over the winter. In my previous incarnation, one of my jobs was that of survey designer and analysis. I was worried about open ended questions like those you were asked to fill out. On Monday the committee led by Dave Margetts analyzed the responses and will submit the recommendations for consideration at the Spring Meeting. I read most of the submissions and was astonished at the number of thoughtful responses, which means to me two things. North Channel Yacht Club sailors are both thoughtful and deeply interested in our club. As well, some of these comments show a strong literary bent.

Tom Baader is hard at work pulling together the 50th anniversary celebrations. And his enthusiasm is infectious. I am pleased to see that the direction he has chosen is to celebrate the fact that there are a few clubs that are half a century old. We have history here of friendships, acts of selflessness, and souls missed. This should and will be celebrated.

And now for your twenty-tree word commercial, brought to you from the MC.

“For all you old salts, the spring work party is a chance to renew old friendships and meet new members looking for guidance.” I am one of the old salts who is looking forward to Saturday April 25th and seeing old friends and new members.

Ray Hortness  
Commodore

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

This issue will be much more 'visual'. I wanted 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 and launch days are ahead and will soon be on us.

I have also included some other information in this issue, including our annual Canada Day Cruise to Gore Bay and there is reference to our upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

I can be reached at [mwleahy@great-lakes-sailing.com](mailto:mwleahy@great-lakes-sailing.com)

## A SLUMBERING BOATYARD





(Photo Credit: R. Hortness)

## CANADA DAY CRUISE

This year, Canada Day falls on a Wednesday. Its always more difficult to plan an event for a holiday in the middle of the week. For the past three years, NCYC has begun its cruising season with a club sail to Gore Bay for Canada Day. Those who have sailed over to celebrate this holiday have always had great fun.

This year, our tentative plan is to sail over together on Tuesday June 30<sup>th</sup> and either anchor or dock at Gore Bay Marina. As in years past, we are usually offered a discount on docking of 10-15%. That figure is subject to confirmation with the Town Council. Anchoring in the bay is free.

Gore Bay's Canada Day celebration is archetypical small-town Canada. There is a parade, community events and a terrific fireworks display at the harbour.

Our members have enjoyed spending casual time together at the marina park, coffee at Loca Beanz, sampling the wares of Split Rail Brewing Co. (they make fabulous craft beer) lunch at Rocky Raccoon and a great dinner at Buoys.

It's a great way to start a summer's cruising season and a lot of fun. Circle the date on your calendar and make a point of joining us.

I will be organizing this event again this year and will have more information as time draws closer.

## 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.

The following information comes from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Forecasted water levels for February 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 on the Great Lakes are all well above their long term monthly averages. Lake Superior's level now approximates its level of a year ago, while the other lakes are 4 to 15 inches above what they were at the end of February 2019. The February 28th forecasted water levels of Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, and Erie either match or exceed their respective record high February monthly mean levels. Also, Lake Erie is the only Great Lake that is higher than it was a month ago. Over the next month (March), Lake Superior is projected to fall 1 inch from its February 28<sup>th</sup> level, while the water levels forecasted for Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, Erie, and Ontario are all projected to be 2,3,4, and 1 inches higher than their respective February 28<sup>th</sup> 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.

## SAILING LORE

Sailing the North Channel puts us in close contact with our history. For example, how many connect our wonderful summer paradise with Christmas celebrations across Canada? Decades ago, the North Channel had another name – a nick-name. It was also known as “the turkey trail”. Now some would have you believe that its because of the wandering route that a boat would follow from one small outpost to another but the truth is far more interesting.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, turkey shoots were popular. Taking place in clearings or gravel pits, the birds sat in a barrel and shooters paid for shots. What they shot, they won. They were very popular events. However, not all shooters were sharpshooters. One prairie newspaper reported that “One turkey stood fire for 18 shots unscathed, and then in sheer disgust froze to death.”

Raising turkeys was a cottage industry. Farmers raised them and sold them to town butchers. On Manitoulin Island, alas, there were no turkeys. However, in 1890, Manitoulin was swarmed by locusts. They ate everything. A man named A.J. Wagg heard that turkeys ate locusts so he imported some. They thrived. Soon he had more than he needed and so he sold the excess to the mainland. His neighbours noticed and they followed suit. Voila! A new industry.

In the early years, it was a rough and ready business. Turkeys sweltered in hot sheds in the summer time and froze in the bitter winters. They were driven overland in December to the north shore of Manitoulin. Crammed on to steamships, they were sent south to market on a shipping route that became known as *the turkey trail*.

In 1958, a processing plant opened in Gore Bay. However, with the development of Cryovac wrapping, huge turkey farms opened in Manitoba and Alberta. Small family farms on Manitoulin couldn't compete and the industry died out on the island. Gone but not forgotten as the nick-name for the fabled North Channel lives on.

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

Many thanks to CAMECO for their continued supported

