

## YACHTING IN BEACHWOOD

One of the buildings constructed as part of the New York Tribune development, Beachwood, was a small yacht club. It was located at the north end of the bathing beach. By 1920, the club members had a fleet of seven new fifteen-foot Perrine sneakboxes. Their differently colored sails proclaimed their club's name, Polyhue, but other small sail and power boats rounded out the fleet. A growing and active membership raised funds for a larger structure built at the foot of Brigantine Street. The 1924 Barnegat Bay Yacht Racing Association listed Polyhue Yacht Club's fifteen and twenty foot sneakbox races on July 5th. Other classes active in the Bay area at that time were the catboats and sloops.

In 1933, the Polyhue Yacht Club fell victim to the Great Depression. Unable to pay the mortgage and taxes, its members signed over the property to the Beachwood Property Owners Association and faded away. The building's new owners were unable to maintain the property and in 1936 there was no money to pay the mortgage, current taxes or back taxes. The Borough of Beachwood, also troubled financially, was asked to take over the building, but there were higher priorities such as paying employee salaries and supporting community services.

The Borough finances began to show more black than red in 1938 and acquisition became possible. Mayor Jerue, Councilmen Haring and Fellows considered the building a vital part of the recreational development of the beachfront. The old Yacht Club building, then being used by the Women's Club, was needed as a service building for the bathers. The Polyhue building became the Community Club, a place where all the town's social and recreational groups could be housed. In May, 1939, all interested parties were invited to an organizational meeting. Among them were the nucleus of sailors and their families who were to call themselves the Beachwood Yacht Club.

The Polyhue had not entirely disappeared during those lean years. Robinsons, Ortels, Gamps, Hotalings, Irelands, Harings, to name a few, had kept alive a small interest in boating from their homes and the beach. Chapmans were a new family here, whose two sons were among the most vigorous recruiters of sailors Dr. Robinson could have desired. These sailors began improving the open space under the Community Club to shelter their equipment and their club activities. Besides enthusiastically wielding brushes and rakes, the young people, at "Buz" Chapman's instigation, designed the burgee we now use.

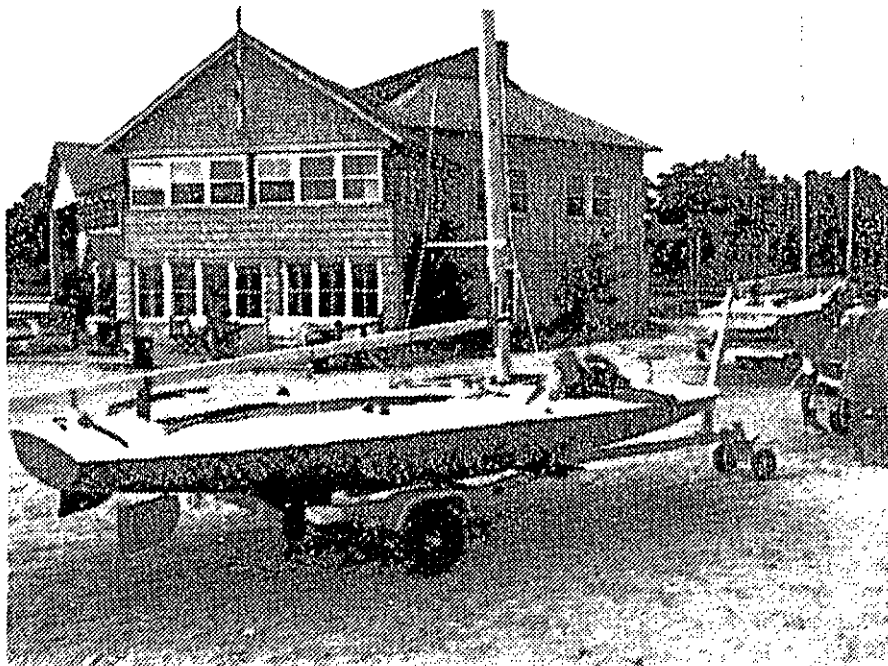
Over the next forty years, members constantly improved the space to include floor, windows, partitions, restrooms, kitchen and bar. The electrical system was wired and rewired, the patio put down, the exterior landscaped, the water-edge cleared of stumps and maintained, tennis courts resurfaced, fencing and a shuffleboard court installed. Tennis nets were supplied as needed. Members also pitched in to supply the kitchen upstairs, adjacent to the meeting room, the club rented for its large affairs.

It was sailing that set it all into motion. In 1940, the Beachwood Commissioners put up the Commissioners Cup and proposed a race to encourage the growth of sailing in Beachwood. Sailors were asked to find others to participate. Anyone could join and any kind of sailboat could compete. It was won by Tom Chapman. Beachwood Yacht Club began to compete with other river yacht clubs and with Shore Acres Yacht Club and Admiral Farragut Academy.

Younger members developed a social program around the clubhouse, the boats, and sometimes, the Circle Shop. The occasional dances were well attended by all members and their friends. For \$5.00 a year, anyone who wanted to could join Beachwood Yacht Club.

The ladies had been supporting their sailors with lunches, supervision and refreshments for their gatherings even before the club was formed. In 1942 they formalized their own group, supporting the yacht club, but in-

dependent in every way, despite efforts by Commodores Cunningham and Chapman to effect a merger. They played cards, gave teas and musicals, and continued making lunches. They supplied the enclosed "club" space with chairs and lamps, and the sailors with trophies and hand-made pennants. Ladies Auxiliary minutes in 1943 listed nine sneaks, five snipes, and four "others" participating in point races. From 1943 to 1945 the ladies sewed a "service" flag and sent Christmas packages to club members serving their country.



As servicemen returned, the club flourished. The teenagers of 1939 had grown up. Boats were refurbished and a Comet fleet joined the sneaks and snipes. Social events like the Seaside Park Picnic gave way to "dress up" and theme partying. The advantages of formalizing the club became apparent and in 1947 Beachwood Yacht Club was chartered as a non-profit organization.

Membership continued to grow as wartime restraints upon travel, building, and boat building were eased and then withdrawn. Beachwood experienced an influx of young family-oriented people. Perhaps it was the club's spirit and policy of shared cooperativeness, as well as its affordability, that drew so many to the yacht club.

A new group of children had grown to adolescence and a relaxed sailing program grew up to meet their needs. Fred Starcke began, in 1953, to bring films and speakers on Friday evenings to encourage interest in sailing. Other parents began to promote evening activities for juniors.

In 1955 the organization of the club was restructured to the form now in operation. Members were counted as those paying dues to the senior club, including the ladies of the Auxiliary. For many of the ladies who had nurtured the club in its infancy, the change was unacceptable. Commodore Norm Brown also brought B.Y.C. to full membership with the Barnegat Bay Yacht Racing Association, of which it had been an associate member since 1944.

The Toms River Pram, designed by Jack Clayton and modified by "Buz" Chapman, came to B.Y.C. Built by Joe Johnson and Vince Sorrentino, the boat was ideal as a training boat, replacing crewing for adults as the only way for juniors to break into sailing. It was (and is) good for adult competition too.

With prams and penguins as preferred boats, a formal sailing program was constructed in 1958. A happy combination of ideal water, qualified instructors and supportive parents has made this program a vital club activity since its inception. It also has produced endless discussion, and has demanded work and money to maintain powered boats for the program.

The sailing program attracted many young married people, not sailors, with a strong interest in water activities for their children. As in B.Y.C.'s earliest days, mothers tended to congregate on the patio, attending to their young, enjoying the company of one another.

Parties became bigger and better. Covered dish suppers, treasure hunts, barbeques and simple dances gradually gave way to the champagne breakfast and more elaborate dinner dances. The old kitchen was taxed to the utmost and committees took pleasure in staging theme events. The upstairs meeting room was available at a moderate fee for really big parties. Occasionally, septic overflows and heavy rain dampened the fun but not for long.

Commodore Marshall expressed concern that the club was outgrowing its base.

We were beginning to outgrow our cozy old place. Besides that, it was becoming apparent that the Beachwood Borough officials didn't regard it as our cozy old place. They were under pressure to make needed renovations to the old building and passed some of the expenses on to its tenant, the yacht club. Members grumbled about the increasing cost of leasing. The twenty-two lots adjacent to the Community Club, purchased by the club through the foresighted help of Messrs. Yoder, Bricker and Knox, were mentioned often. There was also a slowly growing building fund. The idea of building was examined every year but set aside for a more favorable time.

Other organizations in town began eyeing the level we occupied for their own use and pressed officials to discontinue showing favoritism to a yacht club. There was talk of putting us out. Dot and Ed Feirer and Bob Valdes put together a brief history of the club and its beneficial relationship with Beachwood. Commodore Erhard Oksen delivered the text at a Borough meeting in 1974, attended by the many club members residing in Beachwood. We were given a new lease but there was an uneasiness about our future in this location. The Health Department was displeased with our kitchen's shortcomings. Each repair seemed to be a prelude to a new breakdown. We were vandalized twice, club boats were in poor condition, the hoist was in bad shape and the membership seemed unwilling to correct the problems. On top of that, barrel #17 was renamed barrel "U", much to the distress of the sailors.

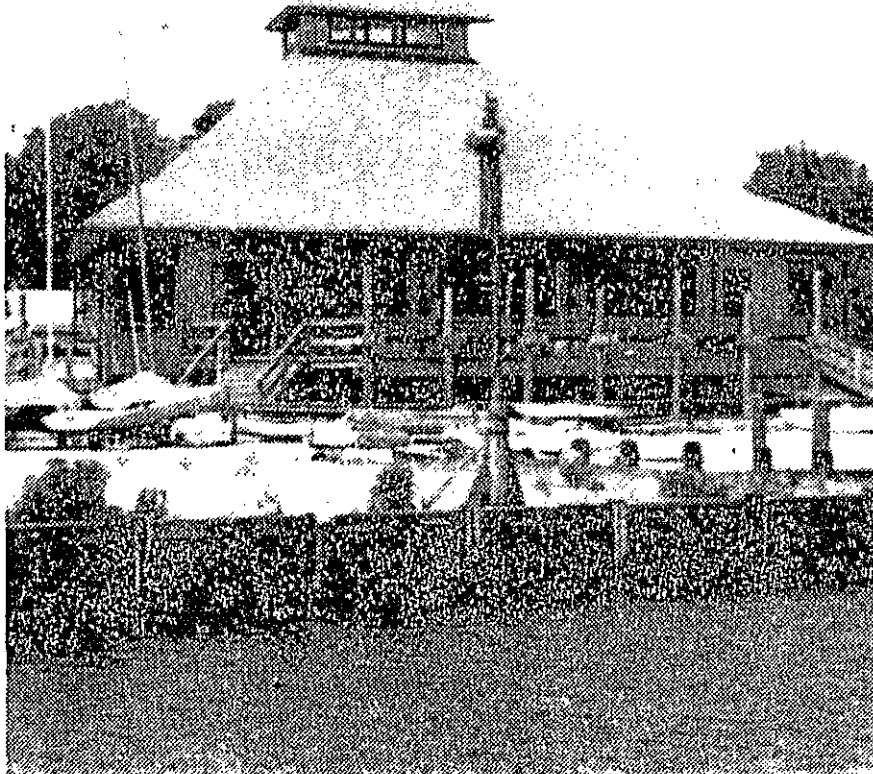
Suprisingly, our sailors, many of whom had learned to sail at B.Y.C., were earning outstanding acclaim at this time. Debbie Freeman won the Adams Cup, the National American Women's Championship. Bonnie Wiencke represented the United States at the Women's World Championship in Spain. Gary Jobson won the Prince of Wales Trophy, and, in 1977 was tactician on the Courageous, the America's Cup winner.

December 9, 1978, the Community Club was severely damaged by fire. When the Borough officials decided to

have the structure demolished, the Yacht Club's possessions had to find storage space. Ken Laursen gave us warehouse space for furniture, cartons, and our stove. Carol and Norm Brown, and many others, packed pictures and championship flags and other treasures in their attics. Unfortunately, the senior club minutes prior to 1972 were lost at that time.

Commodore Lindquist's clubhouse was two trailers and a couple of Mr. Bobs. It was sufficient to shelter a large, enthusiastic sailing program. General club meetings were held in space loaned to us by the River yacht clubs. Social events included raft-ups, barbeques, and parties in members' homes.

Meanwhile, a committed membership began the job of building a new clubhouse, something beautiful, functional and economical that we could build with our own labor. It stretched everyone to the limit, but it was done. The first event held in the new building was the Commodore's Cocktail Party, May, 1981, Joy and Derek Bannister presiding.



August, 1981, Butch Broome secured a house boat hull for the club to purchase. "That Boat" stirred up considerable controversy, but it has served us well. Without it, it's doubtful we would have exceeded all the other B.B.Y.R.A. Clubs, with twenty-one qualifiers to win the Nelson Bowl in 1983.

While senior sailing has fallen off, our sailing program is thriving. The B.Y.C. Fall Series is attracting more participants than ever. Summer isn't really over until that last race in October.

This winter, as we make plans to celebrate Beachwood Yacht Club's fiftieth anniversary, we have an enthusiastic membership, an attractive building plus an additional undeveloped forty foot lot, and a reputation for an excellent sailing program and sportsmanlike competition in the B.B.Y.R.A.

Happy Birthday, Beachwood Yacht Club!

This history is not as precise and full as it could be, but for their help in assembling what we have, our sincere thanks go to the following:

Mrs. Norman S. Brown  
Mrs. Thomas Chapman  
Mr. Walter "Buz" Chapman\*  
Mr. John Broome  
Mr. Fred Starcke\*  
Mr. Douglas Campbell\*  
Mr. Bruce Roth  
Mr. John Moody  
Mr. Patrick Clancy  
Mr. Al Bonnell\*  
Mrs. Mastropasqua, Beachwood  
Borough Clerk

\*Members at BYC's inception.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Klump, February, 1989