

1916-1975 – PINE BEACH YACHT CLUB

The idea of a yacht club in Pine Beach had been talked about as early as 1910. With no action by 1915, Charles Wheeler and William Wilson decided it was time to act. During the summer of 1915, they canvassed all who seemed likely to be interested and succeeded in selling enough charter membership subscriptions, at \$25.00 to organize. Beyond the fact that Wilson became the first Commodore, and Wheeler, Vice-Commodore in 1916, there are no records to tell us where and when and who were involved in the formal organization. We do know some money – amount unknown – was borrowed on mortgage before the club house was started.

Joseph Woods, President of the Improvement Company, donated the land on the waterfront to build on. Roy Hutchinson completed the original one-story club house in the spring of 1916, at a cost of about \$1,500.

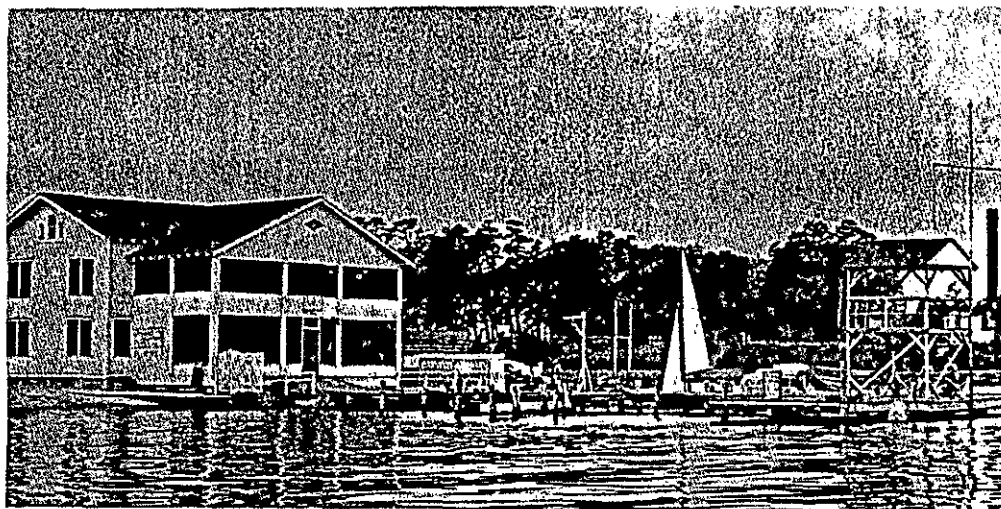
The club quickly became the community center for social and civic activities. Suppers, dances, card parties, country fairs and other forms of entertainment were sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary, and raised most of the money needed for the club to carry on.

The money raising activities of the Ladies Auxiliary were not limited to the summer months in Pine Beach. To the contrary, parties held in the homes of Philadelphia members through the winters raised goodly sums badly needed to pay off several early mortgages. Mmes. Kurtz, Chrstos and Mergenthaler were some whose names are still remembered.

Following World War I, the need for larger facilities soon developed and in 1921 the club house was raised and a new first floor built, resulting in the present two-story structure. Roy Hutchinson was again the contractor; the cost about \$7,000.



Club House, Circa 1916



Club House, Circa 1930

In 1921 or '22, the club got behind John Mergenthaler and John Thomas, who conceived the idea of an annual 4th of July Celebration – a parade with music, speeches, games, races, ice cream, peanuts, flags and prizes. That first celebration set the pattern that has been followed for so many years.

The club continued its important community position and interest until the Depression and World War II forced a curtailment of its activities. In 1945, when the club fortunes were at low ebb, an offer was made to give the club house to the borough for conversion to a borough hall-community building. The Borough Planning Board was favorably impressed with the offer, but the Mayor and Council were not.

Following the war, the club began to recover some of its early importance. With a changing membership and a quickening of interest in racing, the club's activities expanded to include the sponsorship of what has become the largest Snipe Fleet in New Jersey; the club's Sunfish Fleet is believed to be the largest in the county.

Of the 27 Commodores who have held office since 1916 to 1975, two seem to rate special mention: Dr. Earle C. Rice, who served six terms, intermittently, between 1922 and 1924, and Harry Hoffman, the club's oldest living past Commodore, still active as an honorary member. Mrs. Carrie Mergenthaler, now an honorary member after 52 years, sets another record hard to follow.

The club celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1966. Now, with interest running high and all sails set, it is well on course for its next fifty. May the winds hold fair.

1975 PINE BEACH YACHT CLUB OFFICERS

Commodore, Ralph Bush

Rear Commodore, William Kebea

Secretary, Anna Beling

Vice Commodore, Clinton MacInnis

Past Commodore, Herbert Plumb

Treasurer, Agnes Shellmer