

BYC 150th Commissioning Remarks

Distinguished Members and Honored Guests. Welcome to the 2022 season of the Beverly Yacht Club.

Today, as we celebrate Memorial Day, we remember the sacrifices so many have made to ensure our freedom. We are grateful and indebted, to the brave men and woman who fought and continue to fight for our Country, too many having made the ultimate sacrifice. We have so much. We owe them, and their families, our gratitude. Thank you for your service.

The year was 1871. Three summer residents of Beverly, Massachusetts: Walter Burgess, Franklin Dexter, and William Whitney, were unhappy that the newly formed Eastern Yacht Club, in Marblehead, had just voted to not allow boats with less than 26 feet at the waterline, in their regattas. These gentlemen disagreed with this 'small' boat rule. So much so that in 1872, they created a competing club: Beverly Yacht Club. Its first Commodore was the famed America's Cup yacht designer, Edward Burgess.

BYC became a club for sailors who liked racing small boats. There was no clubhouse, but sailors navigated to its races. Over the next 23 years, BYC held its races nomadically. It built its first clubhouse in Pocasset in 1895. In the years that followed, BYC moved four times having lost clubhouses to hurricanes. Through it all, racing and cruising never ceased. And the commitment to Beverly Yacht Club by its leadership and members never waned.

So, five clubhouses, many hurricanes, 55 commodores, and countless races, regattas, and cruising miles later, here we stand. I cannot be prouder of our history, our legacy, and you, our membership. We don't have to delineate world history or current events over the past 150 years, and yet we have been able to keep going. Look at the tenacity of our Club's forefathers and our Past Commodores, to continue to build on something grand. And we have come this far because of your spirit, your passion, your opinions, your volunteerism, and your love of boating.

Our Club has an amazing legacy that continues to grow. This year's Admissions class saw a record number of our juniors aging out of their parents' memberships and taking on their own. They grew up in the Club and want to continue to be a part of it for years to come, as well as for their children. This legacy will sustain our Club, our growth, and our history.

And what about our wonderful Junior Flag Officers? Junior sailors are the future of our club and our sport. Later this summer, at our Gala dinner, we will be dedicating a time capsule to be opened in 2072, our bicentennial year. I'm willing to bet that in 50 years, many of our juniors will be here as the capsule is opened. So, keep getting out on the water, sail, race, but most important, have fun and develop a life-long love of boating.

As we celebrate our 150th Anniversary, we do it with a vision towards the future. In 1955, having lost yet another clubhouse, the members banded together and purchased this building. It is our home. What became evident during the past two years, was how much the membership wanted to be at the Club. We need to have a safe, functional space that we can utilize. Our 1790's clubhouse is well-loved and well-used. It takes work, planning, and funding to keep up with it. We should think towards sustaining this home for our children and grandchildren's futures.

We have come this far because of you and all the amazing volunteers who were willing to give up their time to make the Club something of which we can all be proud. Yes, not unlike our Club's forefathers, we have diverse views and ideas. It got us to where we are and makes for a stronger and more resilient club. And it's this strength, and volunteerism that has, and will sustain us. We have made it 150 years!

Three hundred years is not out of the question. The Royal Cork Yacht Club in Ireland recently celebrated its 300th Anniversary. But we need to plan to sustain. We are the authors of our future.

Since 1872, BYC has had an active racing program that has participated in or held major regattas throughout our history. Our race management is renowned and helps us run over 200 races each year. Additionally, the BYC burgee has been seen on cruising boats around the globe. From our Junior Sailing Program, the sponsoring and management of major regattas, to sending member athletes to the Olympic Games, we have maintained through our 150 years, a clear focus of our sport. So, as we look at our past, present, and towards our future, it is my honor to welcome you to the 150th season of THE Beverly Yacht Club!

Debra Gayle-Malone

May 30, 2022