



April 21, 2021

Dear WYC Members,

The countdown to summer 2021 at the Weekapaug Yacht Club has begun! We have the benefit of building on a very successful summer of 2020 where we not only persevered, but flourished in the face of the unprecedented impact of a pandemic. Thanks to your support, we built on the impressive membership gains we achieved in 2019 and finished 2020 with 251 members, a great outcome in a challenging year. More impressively, Art Ellis and an amazing team of instructors, developed creative ways to run a fun and active 5 day per week sailing program that kept sailors, the staff, and their families safe. We also saw more members enjoy the beauty and nature of the pond with increased use of our kayaks and paddleboards, a busy harbor and mooring field, and big numbers of Optis, 420s and Beetles on the starting line. We are very proud that the club was able to operate so well without pandemic related interruptions while keeping our members and staff healthy.

The summer of 2020 was a huge success in another important way. Our board and its clubhouse committee developed a detailed plan to preserve the future of the Weekapaug Yacht Club by proactively building a new clubhouse that could withstand the forces of nature for decades to come. Along the way, we worked closely with the club's immediate neighbors and the Weekapaug Fire District (WFD) to ensure we were respectful of their concerns in the design and operation of the future clubhouse. It was especially heartwarming to see the support we received for the project from our members and from the Weekapaug and pond communities at large, with over \$3 million in donations pledged towards the project to date. This allowed us to move forward during the fall and winter to apply for permits, engage a contractor, and put the finishing touches on the design and amenities of the new clubhouse, with plans to begin construction by this September, subject to receiving all necessary permits.

If you have already pledged to the clubhouse project, we thank you! If you have not had the opportunity, or wish to make an additional contribution, please contact Rick Constantine who can record your pledge and answer any questions you may have. We are hoping to have 100 percent participation by our members, as our board of directors has already achieved.

Summer 2021

We are hopeful that with the continued aggressive rollout of highly effective vaccines, including to adolescents and younger children, that by late June, we will be able to operate our sailing program and kids camp more normally, and be able to schedule many of the fun social activities, regattas, and special events we have held in the past. Needless to say, we will look for guidance from state and federal health authorities, and as we did last summer, will put in place any procedures necessary to keep our members and staff safe. That said, we are optimistic of a return to normalcy and we are planning accordingly.

Clubhouse Sendoff

If we receive the necessary clubhouse project permits on time and are able to stay on schedule, it means that the summer of 2021 will be the last one for our current clubhouse; a little bittersweet to think about, but holding the promise of a new, equally special place for our members to enjoy sailing, the pond, and their fellowship for many years to come. Accordingly, the first important date to mark on your calendars will be Saturday, August 14, when we plan to say farewell to our current clubhouse and share memories and stories with fellow members, old and new, and also celebrate the end of another successful summer.

Membership Renewal and Program Registration

In an effort to make membership renewals more convenient for you, we will be sending you an invoice in the next week for dues and mooring fees based on the same membership category and mooring assignment, if any, that you signed up for last summer. There will therefore not be a need to renew your membership online. Online registration will still be used to enroll children or grandchildren for camp or sailing programs or for new members. We have made improvements to our website and online registration for the junior programs and new members is open as of today.

Junior Sailing

After a strong 2020 season with over 120 children in the camp and sailing programs, we plan to continue much of what we implemented last year – smaller groups, consistent instructor coverage, and more on-the-water opportunities for those kids that want to take advantage of an expanded schedule. Art Ellis, our Sailing Program Director and former Olympic sailor, is back again this summer with many returning instructors. The weekly class schedule looks very similar to last summer with beginner Opti and 420

classes in the mornings 5 days a week and intermediate and advanced sailors in the afternoons. Registration is open on our website as of today.

The addition of the new 15-foot RIBCRAFT coach boat last summer was a huge success and we are further upgrading our fleet this year with the addition of two smaller 12 foot inflatables. This will help our instructors provide more effective on the water instruction in safer, more reliable soft-sided boats. To help defray the cost of the new boats and reduce our maintenance costs, we are selling three older whalers and the Mako.

Regattas

After missing out last summer, we are looking forward to hosting our two WYC regattas this summer. The Mary Raftery Girl Power 420 Regatta will be held Thursday July 29 and the Nat Earle Optimist Regatta will be held Tuesday, August 10. For those WYC junior sailors who are interested in racing either Optis or 420s “off pond” this summer, please check out the ECSA events [here](#). These are local regattas that are loads of fun and offer opportunities for our junior sailors to further hone their skills and meet other sailors in the area.

Adult Sailing/Racing

Adult sailing is something we are excited to bring back this summer with an expanded offering - everything from paddleboards and kayaks to windsurfing and sailing, anything to get our members out on the water enjoying the pond (a motorboat safety course is also being considered)! Keep an eye out for a sign-up form as we gauge interest in various programs. Weekend racing will again consist of both Beetles and 420s this summer and we hope to see as many of you out there as possible. The race calendar will soon be posted on the website.

Kids Camp

Rayleen LaRue is returning as Kids Camp Director and has developed a curriculum that takes advantage of our location at the water’s edge, educating our youngest members about the creatures that live in and around the pond, how to better protect these ecosystems, and of course, how to be safe while enjoying the pond and ocean.

Junior Crew, our oldest campers (6-7 year-olds), should expect to be out on the water every day, weather permitting and sailing at least 2 times a week. Swimming lessons will once again be incorporated into the camp curriculum for all campers. This program will be offered 9:00-12:00 either 3 days a week (Mon/Wed/Fri) or 5 days a week.

Having been required to limit our programming last summer we are excited to be offering Little Mariners for 4-5 year-olds again this summer. This program will be offered 9:30-11:30 either 2 days a week (Tues/Thurs) or 3 days a week (Mon/Wed/Fri). Registration is open on our website as of today.

Harbor Update

Docks and Moorings

Attached is an update from Harbormaster Charlie Anthony regarding mooring assignments for the coming summer. High demand for moorings is expected again so be certain to respond promptly to Charlie if you want to rent a mooring this summer. If we do not hear from you, available moorings will be offered to those on our waiting list. Our goal is a full mooring field.

Thank you to Bill Boll and Charlie who made much needed repairs to our docks this spring! With fresh hardware and new rub rails your boats should remain in top condition.

Watersports

The new kayak and paddleboard racks, with designated WYC staff to help keep things organized, were a big hit last year. This summer, we hope to expand upon the growth we have seen in recent summers by creating a few organized excursions. Our Weekapaug Yacht Club is the gateway to fun on Quonnie Pond and access to our paddle sports center should make it easy for all members to enjoy the pond.

Opti/Sunfish Beach Logistics

One of the most visible changes for this summer will be an improved approach to the use of Opti/Sunfish beach for storing small watercraft. Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the number of dinghies, sailboats, paddleboards, windsurfers, and kayaks that are kept on the beach starting from just east of the dock and extending to the far reaches Opti/Sunfish beach. The watercraft are often packed very closely together, or sometimes stacked, making it difficult for members to launch and store them. In addition, this creates difficulties for members, especially our younger junior sailors, to walk along the beach at high tide to rig their 420 or Opti on Opti/Sunfish beach.

To help relieve this crowding and provide a pathway to Opti/Sunfish beach that can be navigated at high tide, 5 additional racks will be built for kayaks and paddleboards on

Opti/Sunfish beach (thank you again, Bill and Charlie!). Our plan is to assign spaces on the racks so members have a designated spot. You will soon be able to register your paddleboards and kayaks and apply for a sticker and rack assignment on our website. Once the season is underway, our staff will also be available to assist any member with carrying their watercraft to and from the racks, if needed.

Calendar and Social Events

Social Events

Michelle Bea and her Social Committee have been hard at work planning what is sure to be a fun-filled summer. Our intention is to build on the success we had in 2019 with a compelling social calendar for all ages and the flexibility to tweak as needed once we have a better sense of any COVID guidelines. The Margaritapaug fundraiser, originally scheduled for last summer and postponed to 2021, is being postponed for another year to Summer 2022, but we hope you will all mark your calendars for our Kick-off to Summer Cocktails on Friday, July 2 at 6pm and our previously mentioned Clubhouse Sendoff Party on Saturday, August 14.

Other events to keep an eye out for include: Monday Night Beach Bingo, Wednesday Night Grill Nights, Sandbar Happy Hours in the third pond, Teen Ping Pong Tournament, Family Pizza Truck and S'mores Night, and a Mixology & Music with Isco Spirits (our very own Doug Randall's Providence-based spirits company).

Key Summer 2021 Dates

Below is a summary of key dates for the coming season. Mark your calendars!

Saturday, June 19 – Club officially opens for watersports and private lessons

Monday, June 21 – First week of Kids Camp

Monday, June 28 – First week of Junior Sailing Program

Friday, July 2 – Kick-off to Summer Cocktail Party @6pm

Saturday, July 3 – Nat Earle Run/Walk @9am

Sunday, July 4 – Blessing of the Fleet and Commodore's BBQ @11am

Sunday, July 25 – July Awards Ceremony

Saturday, August 14 – 2021 Annual Meeting

Saturday, August 14 – Clubhouse Sendoff Celebration @7pm

Saturday, August 21 – August Awards Ceremony

Sunday, August 22 – Pack-up Day; most of the WYC sailboats and powerboats will be put away/stored off-site for the winter, but the club will remain open through Labor Day for kayaking and sailboat rentals as well as late season Beetle races and Kids Camp.

Parking

Partly because of the pandemic, which drew larger crowds to Weekapaug last summer, and partly due to the limited parking available at Fenway beach due to COVID protocols, parking at the Inn beach parking lot was at times very tight last summer. While we hope Fenway beach parking will return to normal, we still expect parking congestion to continue. In response, we have been working closely with the WFD to put together a parking plan that helps relieve pressure on parking at the Inn beach lot for both WFD residents and WYC members, and will experiment with a new approach this summer.

The first step is to encourage all members to walk, bike, carpool, or do drop offs and pickups whenever feasible, especially during the day on busy summer weekends. This summer we will not issue WYC parking stickers to WYC members who are WFD property owners or who are renting a home in the WFD, as those members will already have access to the Inn beach lot with their WFD parking sticker. Because some WYC members are not WFD property owners or renters (such as members from the pond communities of Shelter Harbor, Shady Harbor, and Quonnie) and will therefore not have a WFD parking sticker, the club will issue them a WYC parking sticker, one per membership. WYC stickers will allow members to park in a newly designated dedicated WYC parking area within the WYC property and only members with WFD stickers will be able to park in the Inn beach lot surrounding the WYC dedicated parking area. WYC members from Shelter or Shady Harbor will have the additional option to park in their designated lots a short walk down the sand trail if the WYC lot happens to be full.

Although it may take a little getting used to, if we limit the proliferation of parking stickers, and if WYC members park in their designated areas in the Inn beach lot, we expect parking should be available for all WYC members, whether they have a WFD sticker or a WYC sticker. It should also be easier for WFD residents/renters that are not WYC members to find beach parking. Your patience and understanding is appreciated! We will make a full assessment of how these revised procedures work this summer, seek feedback from our members and other users of the Inn beach lot, and make necessary changes as needed.

Next Steps

Enrollment for our junior sailing programs and kids camp is currently live on our website. Likewise, if you know of friends/neighbors interested in joining WYC for the first time, the new member registration is also live. We will follow up in the next couple of weeks with kayak and paddleboard storage assignment forms and a survey to gauge adult sailing interest. Again, please respond to Charlie as soon as possible if you plan on

having a mooring. Finally, please consider supporting the new clubhouse project if you have not already done so. We look forward to seeing you at the Weekapaug Yacht Club before too long to enjoy another wonderful summer!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brooke D. Horgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' and 'H'.

Brooke Horgan
Commodore