

Ococoquan Yacht Club
P.O. Box 469, Ococoquan, VA 22125

The Daymarker

October 1994 Vol. XI Issue 10

Member: PRYCA, CBYCA Boat/U.S. Accord # GA80979

JT

Commodore
Ray Steele
703-385-8615

Vice Commodore
Sandy Leathers
703-425-1994

Rear Commodore
Tom Egmore
703-256-8442

Secretary
Teresa Sorrenti
703-590-6724

Treasurer
Steve Wexler
703-437-0687



Commodore's Comments

Ray Steele

Our Cruise for Crabs shouldn't have caused the crabs any concern. I believe only three boats attended this event. Our thanks to Cruise Coordinator Steve Worcester—you were ready, we weren't. I think the poor attendance was caused by members needing to catch up after being gone frequently on previous cruises.

The Labor Day Cruise to Dennis Point Marina was enjoyed by all. Everyone ended in a slip or alongside a pier. Cruise Coordinator Tom Egmore replaced a starter motor and joined us just a little late. The restaurant accommodated everyone on Saturday night and Vice Commodore Sandy Leathers produced charcoal for the Sunday night barbeque. The charcoal grills, when combined with the gas grills, allowed everyone to eat in a timely fashion. The band working outside the restaurant provided a nice touch. Thank you, Tom Egmore, for coordinating this event, your hard work is appreciated. Dennis Point remains a favorite of ours.

Congratulations to PRYCA Commodore Ned Rhodes, OYC members have greatly benefited from your PRYCA leadership during 1994. The PRYCA Fall Event, hosted by Tantallon Yacht Club, was outstanding. Yes, it rained during

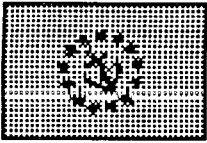
dinner and it's true that four out of the twelve OYC boats experienced problems, but everyone enjoyed the weekend with friends and family. This is the third PRYCA event during the 1994 boating season and our PRYCA representative, Steve Wexler, has provided outstanding support during both. Thanks, Steve, we appreciate your involvement. Our personal thanks to *Evermoore* for towing *Pat & Ray* out of the Potomac River Channel and to *Mutants on the Bounty* for standing by while your Commodore assessed an overheating engine.

It was good to see so many of you (and so many desserts!) at the Oct. 1 Fall Membership meeting, Potluck Dinner and Election of Officers at Fairfax Yacht Club. A new Board was elected (few surprises

here), a \$5.00 dues increase was approved, and a good time was had by all.

Columbus Day Weekend Cruise! We have four boats signed up to spend October 8th, 9th and 10th at Aquia Yacht Club. Please call Cruise Coordinator Ray Steele at 385-8615 if you wish to join this illustrious gathering.

"The PRYCA Fall Event, hosted by Tantallon Yacht Club, was outstanding."



Vice Commodore's Comments

Sandy Leathers

The General Membership Meeting was held October 1 at Fairfax Yacht Club. Thanks to the many members of OYC who took time out of their busy schedules and boating activities to attend the election of officers for the 1995 OYC Board. There were a few "write-in" votes, but the slate presented by the nominating committee did prevail. (Sorry, Jess.) Your new Board for 1995 is as follows:

Commodore:	Sandy Leathers (<i>Sandy's Run</i>)
Vice Commodore:	Tom Egmore (<i>Morning Mist</i>)
Exec. Rear Comm.:	Rich Ziegler (<i>Leisure Leigh</i>)
Secretary:	Teresa Sorrenti (<i>Sea Duck II</i>)
Treasurer:	Steve Wexler (<i>Sweet Gussie</i>)

The new Board will begin its term November 1. Congratulations!

Being a potluck dinner meeting, we all want to thank the cooks in our club for their culinary delights, such as Bonnie and Bill Fulford's pork and sauerkraut. Steve Wexler said it was so good that he would pay their membership dues if they would bring it to every meeting. Sounds like a deal to me!

It was a beautiful, clear, warm evening at Fairfax Yacht Club, where members enjoyed food and drink on the back deck of the clubhouse, watching the sun set over the Occoquan. It was good to see new members in attendance along with 35 renewal memberships. The dues increase of \$5.00 for family membership was voted and approved. Aaron Martin reported on the great turnout at the Dunes on Sept. 24th for the Shrimp Feast. Tom Cqldwell reported on membership. Ray Steele discussed activities scheduled for the Columbus Day weekend cruise to Aquia Yacht Club. Steve Worcester won the 50/50 drawing of \$40.00 (or did Mary Jo win?). And we have a new supply of OYC polo shirts and white golf hats available for sale to club members.

Saturday, Oct. 22, 1:00PM. Join OYC members and friends at the Annual Chili Cookoff/Dessert Bakeoff and Photo Contest at Prince William Marina (South). This is always a well-attended and enjoyable event. It is one of the last outdoor events of the boating season when we have the opportunity to talk with new and old boating friends over food and drink about the past boating season via the photos submitted for the photo contest. It is also a time for the cooks in the membership to show us their stuff. OYC will provide beer, soda and hot dogs to accompany the chili and desserts. If you're not bringing chili or a dessert, try a side dish or hors d'oeuvres to share. But most of all, bring your best (or worst) snapshots for the Photo Contest. The categories for prizes are: Wildlife, Boat Profiles, People, Animals, and Land/Seascapes. RSVP Sandy Leathers at 703-425-1994.

Labor Day Weekend Comments

Thanks to Barbara and Tom Egmore, cruise coordinators for the Labor Day Weekend at Dennis Point Marina off the beautiful St. Mary's River. The weather was great with the

exception of a small blow (4-8 ft. waves on the Bay) on Sunday. This was my first time to Dennis Point and I would highly recommend this Marina for another OYC cruise next year. Don and Susan Neilson (*The Patriot*) were heard to say they would lead an OYC cruise there anytime next year. Thanks again to Barb and Tom for a well-organized weekend full of OYC fun and festivities, and to Dennis Point Marina for their hospitality.

PRYCA "End of Summer Party" Comments

I can't say enough about the great hospitality given to all the PRYCA guests at this "End of Summer Party" at Tantallon Yacht Club. Thanks go to Commodore Michael Strunk and all the wonderful, hardworking members of Tantallon Yacht Club for hosting this event at the newly remodeled club house. Thanks also to PRYCA Commodore Ned Rhodes (OYC PC) and Steve Wexler for their leadership and coordination efforts at this major party. OYC received the "Best Representation Award" with the most people in attendance (12 boats). Thanks again to Tantallon for a great time!



Treasurer's Comments

Steve Wexler

Paula and I were not able to attend the Labor Day Weekend Cruise to Dennis Point, which I understand was capably coordinated by RC Egmore. We did attend a renegade cruise which was coordinated (??) by Captain Al Hobson and his beauteous crew aboard *Lucky Ducks*. The activities included an afternoon cruise toward Georgetown with Jan's family from Michigan, the departure of the cruise ship *Crown Jewel*, dinner at Ecco Cafe, and an afternoon stroll through Old Town Alexandria during which Steve and Paula watched Jaimey Turner play his well-tuned brandy snifters and liquor glasses. One of the highlights was *Lucky Duck's* departure exercise, during which Captain Al excited the guests aboard the tour ship *Matthew Hayes* with a ramming drill and doughnut turns in the travelway.

The following weekend we had the opportunity to cruise with guests to Tim's River Shore restaurant located at Cherry Point, which we determined to be a gem in the rough. Decent food at a reasonable price and minimal fuel usage. Approximately 3 to 4 feet of water at the docks and Tim will personally pick you up with his pontoon boat if you don't want to try going all the way in.

End of Summer Party at Tantallon Yacht Club. The official count of 12 boats and 26 people resulted in OYC being awarded the Best Club Representation award...and this didn't even include the dual citizenship Mount Vernon crews from *Seminole Wind*, *Mutants on the Bounty*, and *Last Resort* (even though Steve and Carla came by car—something about a carburetor acting up). As an aside, special congratulations to John and Elaine Robey on their August wedding. John, is it really true that you will simultaneously celebrate Elaine's birthday and your one-year anniversary by coordinating next year's PRYCA Float-In??? Saturday morning found *Lucky*

Ducks, Sweet Gussie and *Shalimar* cruising up-river together (well, sort of—it's hard for *Lucky Ducks* to really cruise with boats that move at a speed faster than "Crawl"). Just off Fort Belvoir we passed the aforementioned cruise ship *Crown Jewel* heading down river, whereupon Captain Tom communicated "Crown Jewel, this is the vessel *Shalimar*...I will slow down at your request so that my wake does not affect your ship's operation!" Talk about the mouse that roared! Good party—even though the Tantallon area lost power for almost two hours Saturday night. With enough booze consumption, we hardly noticed. Once again, a heartfelt thanks to Commodore Mike Strunk, Club Manager Mary Ann Garges, Event Coordinator Alan Lee, Past Commodore Bud Clark, and all of the TYC members.

PRYCA Board and Delegates Meeting. On September 12th, I attended the PRYCA meeting. We received a presentation from a representative of the D.C. Fireboat, which operates 365 days a year, 24 hours a day from Georgetown to Hallowing Point. The boat primarily provides search and rescue, pollution control and fire-related services. The two D.C. fireboats maintain a marine radio watch monitoring VHF channels 16 and 17. They can also be reached at 202-673-3200. Interesting article was handed out:

"MSO Baltimore has responded to several oil spill cases in which boat owners, facility operators and even oil clean up contractors had poured dishwashing detergent in the water to break up an oil sheen. While this may appear to be a quick answer to dispersing a sheen on the water, soap does not actually make oil disappear. Rather, it breaks up the oil into particles that then sink down into the water column where the oil can cause even more harm to marine life. In addition to causing further environmental damage, anyone who uses dishwashing detergent—a chemical dispersant—to break up a sheen in the water is violating Coast Guard regulations and liable for a civil penalty up to \$5,000."

OYC Holiday Party. Finally, a quick note—the OYC Holiday Party will be held at the Fort Belvoir NCO Club on December 3rd. The schedule of events:

6:30-7:00PM	Arrivals and cocktails
7:00-8:00PM	Dinner
8:00-8:30PM	Awards and Presentations
8:30-???	Dancing and karaoke

We're still working out the final menu, but it will basically provide for your choice of either beef or seafood. We'll provide details and costs in next month's edition of this literary gem. Note this date in your personal calendars now so as to avoid conflicts later on.



Past Commodore's Comments

Tom Coldwell

About New Members...

Extend a warm OYC welcome this month to Gordon and Patricia Clatterback, Family, aboard *Shear Madness* at OHM; Jim and Dottie Jacobsen, Family, aboard *Uff Da!* at Prince

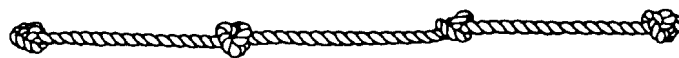
William Marina; Duane and Janet Jeirles, Family, aboard *Our Pride* at OHM; Mark and Beth Swansen, Family, cruising in *Tipsy*, from Fairfax Yacht Club; Donald and Diana Uber, Family, on *Paramour* at Pilot House; and Deloris and Harold Usher, Family, aboard *Marietta* at OHM.

About Old Ones...

Okay, boys and girls, now be the time to renew your OYC membership for 1994. It's so easy to do, almost 80% of our board can figure it out. Maybe 100%. Anyhow, in this edition of The Daymarker, journal of the award-winning Occoquan Yacht Club, you will find a membership renewal form to clip out and send in with your check to OYC, PO Box 469, Occoquan, VA 22125.

If your registration information is unchanged, you may write your name(s) on the form and "unchanged" or "same as '94"... I don't care, whatever.

Important point is to renew. And please do it now.

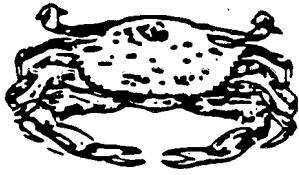


Occoquan Yacht Club Financial Statement

October 1, 1993-September 14, 1994

Beginning Balance (10/1/93)		\$1,041.50
Income:		
1994 Membership Dues	\$3,050.00	
<u>1995 Membership Dues</u>		
Renewal Family Members	\$90.00	
Renewal Indiv. Members	0	
Renewal Assoc. Members	0	
Renewal Junior Members	0	
New Family Members	90.00	
New Individual Members	35.00	
New Associate Members	25.00	
New Junior Members	0	
Club Sales	973.00	
General Membership 50/50	123.00	
Holiday Party	1,875.00	
OYC Breakfast	<u>258.00</u>	
Total Income		\$6,519.00
Expenses:		
Membership Activities	\$3,024.23	
Awards	302.64	
Postage	662.39	
Printing/Reproduction	555.90	
Miscellaneous	170.06	
Organizational Expenses	207.00	
Clothing/Burgee Inventory	953.50	
Bank Service Charges	<u>114.70</u>	
Total Expenses		\$5,990.42
Ending Balance		<u>\$1,570.08</u>

*The Club's Clothing/Burgee Inventory includes 19 burgees and 2 hats.



Cruise for Crabs...NOT! Steve Worcester

During last spring's planning session, the Cruise for Crabs was scheduled for August 20th. There was some reluctance on the part of the membership to spew forth a volunteer cruise coordinator. Exercising the leadership qualities that personified the tenure of both as Past Commodores, Ned Rhodes nominated me and Tom Coldwell seconded. I was really quite pleased since only my innate shyness kept me from stepping forward myself.

The magic day arrived. It was a hot and sunny afternoon with the forecast of a dark and stormy night. Having had unavoidable previous commitments, departure wasn't until the crack of late afternoon. I had surveyed probable participants the previous weekend at the Dinghy Regatta and had a potential list of nine boats attending. However, as the weekend drew nigh, my answering machine overheated from cancellations. Even the folks who were driving to Pope's Creek were intimidated by the weather. By Saturday afternoon, my First (and, may I say, only) Mate was suggesting I call myself and cancel, too. But as the saying goes, "Faint heart never....???"—whatever!

The plan was to travel up the Port Tobacco River and anchor either at Chapel Point or inside Goose Creek, depending on wind and wave conditions. The radio's squawk brought a message from *Shalimar* that the Skipper and Mary Ann were southbound in that direction, with the Chaffins on *Mutants on the Bounty* in pursuit. We cast *Saint 'N Sinner* loose and followed suit.

Our run down the Potomac was enjoyable, with the high point being our encounter with a huge vessel (that at first I took to be Walt Cheatham's new boat) which actually turned out to be the cruise ship *Crown Princess*, having just disembarked from Alexandria enroute to somewhere. Trust me, it is so big!! We made a circle around it so we could see it from all sides, and I noted its size detracted from one's perception of its speed. That revelation struck home as I crossed its bow. I was a quarter of a mile off but felt a sense of relief when it was apparent I was well out of its path.

We caught up with *Shalimar* and *Mutants on the Bounty* at the entrance to Goose Creek and, after making sure none of our members were at Chapel Point, we followed Tom up Goose Creek without a paddle. After Tom circled the spot where he wanted to anchor two or three times (reminded me of Jess) he dropped the hook. After rafting up, we met Tim Chaffin's son, Patrick; his dad, Ed, who is a former Ohio Highway Patrolman; and his sister whose first name my senile brain has forgotten but whose last name is Young. (I should remember her because she made a big impression on me when she stepped up at the bar at Gecko's and ordered a milkshake.) Anyway, for the purpose of this article, we'll refer to her as "Sis."

That evening at Goose Creek was one of the most pleasant I've experienced this summer, despite Coldwell's corny jokes. Tom fired up his dinghy for a trip over to the marina but apparently the locals wouldn't let him land as he returned

immediately. (Must have heard his jokes already.) It was cool and there was just enough breeze to keep the bugs away. After dinner, Mary Ann laid out some hors d'oeuvres and invited everyone to the bow of *Shalimar* for cocktails and to watch the moon rise. We listened to Tim describe how "Sis," whom according to Tim is much older than he is, drove down unannounced from Cleveland. Upon seeing her car pull up out front, Tim and his family hid and refused to answer the door. Not to be deterred, "Sis" was able to slip the lock and get in. Tim admitted that he'd forgotten she learned to jimmy door locks when she was with the French underground during the "big" war. (Ed. note: Come on Tim, I don't think she looked THAT much older than you!) We also learned that Ed was from Ham, Wisconsin, but he wasn't sure whether that was prosciutto, serrano, or Virginia smoked.

That night was cool and reasonably calm, but the next morning was overcast and the wind picked up noticeably. *Shalimar* decided to forego the run to Pope's Creek and headed back to the Occoquan. The *Mutants* and *Saint 'N Sinner* decided to stick it out a little longer. Tim, Ed, and Mary Jo drowned worms, and for a few minutes I moved right smartly when the anchor let go. We decided it was time to head for Pope's Creek when the wind picked up some more.

Once out of Goose Creek the run towards the 301 Bridge got lively. We arrived at the docks off Robertson's a little before noon to see them totally deserted except for a runabout that was tied up and bouncing like an pachinko ball. There were two-foot waves and scattered wind gusts. After ten minutes of milling around we decided to take a rain check on the crab feast, also saving wear and tear on the gelcoat.

On the return to Occoquan, Mother Nature showed her contrary side. The wind subsided and some watery sunshine appeared. The Chaffins joined us for lunch at Gecko's (where "Sis" ordered the milkshake). "Sis" seemed a little standoffish at lunch but Tim explained a few weeks later that her Mickey Mouse cap had blown off and I guess I ran over it. As this was an official OYC function, I've petitioned the club for a replacement. So far the only offer has been a neon orange hunting cap with ear flaps and a "Wyooters Hooters" emblem. No word yet from "Sis" whether this is acceptable.



OYC Shrimp Feast Lynn Martin

September is not September without attending the annual OYC Shrimp Feast at the Dunes. Aaron came through again with lots of shrimp, but he reneged on his promise to deliver them in high heels and swim suit. About 14 boats attended the festivities, among them: *Second Choice*, *Southern Nites*, *Lucky Ducks*, *Evermoore*, *Sea Duck II*, *Lotus IV*, *Mutants on the Bounty*, *New Love*, *Salty Dogs*, *Sweet Gussie*, *Paramour*, *Tipsy*, *Southwind* and the new *Maggie Lynn*. We missed our illustrious leader and his Commodorable since Ray and Pat Steele missed out on the feast due to boat problems (seems we have a natural for the bent prop award).

Daytime events included fishing, horseshoe matches, boat tours and even a lily pad fight, while the evening hours brought forth dinghy ferrying from boats to shore, cooking, eating, roasting of marshmallows and, of course, jokes and boating tales around the bonfire. A nice surprise for the evening was a champagne toast to the new *Maggie Lynn* (a.k.a. Bloody Nose Boat).

At first we thought Ned Rhodes had some real competition this year in the "falling overboard" contest, but it turned out that Tim didn't really fall in, he actually dove in when he saw he had a bite on his fishing line ashore. Sorry Tim, but it must be an actual "fall" to win.

Sunday was a sleep in late and relax day. The first group of boats left around noon; others stayed around until about 4:00 to rest and read. Word has it that a couple of boats couldn't leave until Ned finished his book and that took most of the day (don't know if it was a thick book or if Ned reads real slow!).

Holes in the Sand

Jess Rhodes



I have many memories of boating this year. There was that storm during the Fourth of July at Ragged Point that lasted forever. Then there was that storm at the Moores that lasted forever. All summer long, storms, storms, storms. We didn't have any storms

at the Dunes this past weekend. All we had was sand, water and dead fish to roll in.

Dad spent an hour in the hell hole fooling around with something that pumped water. I was hot and wanted to go swimming but couldn't cause he had all the doors up and Mom kept stepping on his arm and pulling him out of the hole by the back of his pants. Luckily there was a breeze to keep me cool. We finally started the thunder makers and off we go to the Dunes. The ride back there was hot and I wanted to go swimming.

After we finally arrived, we rafted against this other boat that had this little snack of a dog. Seems it was only six weeks old and didn't dare bother me. He took a dumpster on the boat and boy were they happy. Dad said something about how they were going to have it bronzed. Things started to settle down, until I noticed that there was another dog on my beach. A big black one that was carrying around two tennis balls that looked like mine. Well, I'm off to teach that dog a lesson!

Dinner went fast and Dad wouldn't let me go beg from the other people. That nice Lonnie came by to pet me and I foraged around for dropped shrimp. Slim pickings. We sat around the camp fire and that funny French guy kept telling the same jokes as last year. Then we did that picnic thing where we were taking apples, bread, a can of peas with no opener, donuts, eggs, fruit, grapes, horse, intellectual idiot, jackass, keg of beer, l??, m??, nuts, opener for the can of peas, p??, queer, r??, sex, t??, u??, v??, w??, x??, y??, z??. I just couldn't remember them all.

Everything was fine, except you had to watch out where

you sat because this guy kept sitting in a chair and falling over. Only Tiffany fell in although the captain of the mutant turtle boat belly flopped in two inches of water.

The next day Dad got out the dinghy before the kids got to it and we went for a row back into the swamp where there are always good smells. After about an hour, we got back to the boat and I got out. Then Dad stood up. Then Dad started to wobble. Then Mom started to laugh. Then Dad wobbled some more. Mom laughed some more and then Dad fell over backwards and flipped the boat. I dove in to rescue him and Mom peed her pants.

Things didn't get any better than that. We sat on the beach all day, making holes and chasing balls. I was sure tired that night and I still can't figure out how all that sand got there. Just remember that the photo contest is coming up and pictures of me always win.

COG's 1994 Harvesting Season Underway

Potomac SAV News, Summer 1994

Results of SAV Ranking Survey

In early July, COG completed a ranking survey of SAV (submerged aquatic vegetation) growth at the 26 harvesting sites along the Virginia and Maryland shorelines. The survey assesses species diversity, distribution, density, and height in order to prioritize harvesting sites. COG staff schedules harvesting operations based on these survey results.

In Virginia, SAV was quite dense along the Alexandria waterfront site. Several species of SAV were present, in addition to commonly found hydrilla and watermilfoil. However, several sites just south of Alexandria and north of Occoquan Bay had little or no vegetation. Further south along the Virginia shoreline from Cherry Hill to Aquia Creek, SAV was abundant. Common species along these sites were hydrilla, watermilfoil, wild celery, and coontail.

In Maryland, aquatic vegetation was relatively sparse from Treasure Cove to Fort Washington, with the exception of Broadwater Estates in Broad Creek, where SAV was dense. Vegetation along the shoreline from Calvert Manor to Mallowes Bay also was abundant. The dominant species were hydrilla, watermilfoil, wild celery, and coontail.

1994 SAV Aerial Survey

In September, an aerial photographic survey of the tidal Potomac River will be taken from the U.S. Route 301 Bridge to Chain Bridge. Aerial photographic interpretation and computer mapping of SAV distribution will be performed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences as part of the Chesapeake Bay Program's SAV tracking efforts. COG staff will conduct an extensive shoreline survey to assist in the photographic interpretation. The survey will help COG determine the control program needs for 1995.



From the Fleet Navigator

Tantallon Yacht Club

It is sometimes necessary to control the engine from a remote location, from the foredeck when anchoring or weighing, for instance. The Navy system of bell commands can easily be adapted. It is simple, effective, and seamanlike. It also does away with noisy misunderstandings on board and Laurel-and-Hardy shows for dockside spectators. The scheme illustrated is for single screw boats with two-lever engine controls.

Instead of striking bells, whoever is conning shows 1, 2, 3 or 4 fingers to the cockpit/bridge crew, who responds as follows:

1 finger: AHEAD SLOW—Shift lever AHEAD, throttle lever IDLE.

2 fingers: STOP—Shift lever STOP (neutral), throttle lever IDLE.

3 fingers: BACK SLOW—Shift lever BACK, throttle lever IDLE.

4 fingers: Shift lever AHEAD or BACK, throttle lever set for Full Speed (Full Speed in the direction that the propeller is currently turning).

Notes:

1. Modify for single lever controls.
2. For twin screws, use both hands—right for starboard engine, left for port.
3. If full speed seems to much, designate an appropriate rpm.

Future of Loran-C

The Beacon, September 1994

Don't throw away your Loran-C receiver. Despite the emergence of the new satellite based Global Positioning System (GPS), Loran-C is alive and well. According to the Spring/Summer 1993 edition of the USCG Radionavigation Bulletin Loran-C will be around until at least 2015. Although all foreign stations are being turned over to the host countries, by agreement, they will continue to operate and expand their use. Further, the U.S. Coast Guard "continues to fully support, improve and expand Loran-C facilities in the U.S. and Alaska." Aside from the maritime community, another substantial user is the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) which has designated Loran-C "...as an approved en route navigation system."

The Coast Guard and the FAA are also working toward approval of Loran-C as an approach navigation system. To date, the system is being used for non-precision approaches at over 20 airports. There are also many non-navigational uses of Loran-C, including its accurate time synchronization service, invaluable to telephone and utility companies, television and radio services, and satellite communications companies. It is also used to monitor the location of police and emergency vehicles, and in the transport of dangerous or precious cargos. The Weather Service uses Loran to monitor weather balloons; new auto alarm systems locate stolen cars; the railroads use Loran to keep track of trains. New uses are constantly being

developed. "Loran-C users can be assured that this system will remain an accurate and affordable radio navigational aid well into the next century."

From The Beacon, September 1994, as published in Corinthian News

Potomac

Lights

Potomac Basin

Reporter, Aug.

1994

The Potomac is one of the nation's oldest rivers from a cultural standpoint. Sailing the "Nile of America," as historian Mike Humphries calls it, can evoke a feeling of sailing through history. The river and its environs that

boaters see today, however, is much different than the Potomac of 70 or more years ago. The history of today is largely seen in the imagination. Probably to the benefit of the river's health, the Potomac of today is a river less traveled. Multitudes of steamships, fishing vessels, and other commercial craft have largely been replaced by a smaller but growing number of primarily pleasure craft. Along with this change has been the switch to the automatic beacons that have replaced the Potomac's manned lighthouses.

Looked on as symbols of constance and security to mariners, there were once 11 lighthouses along the Potomac, whose lights shone from the early 1800s. In the 1900s, the lighthouses were gradually decommissioned in favor of automatic lights. Some were damaged in storms and never replaced. Several of the Potomac lighthouses built on screw-piles—trussed iron platforms in the water—were torn down, and beacons were mounted on the platforms.

Four lighthouses remain on the Potomac. In addition to Piney Point, houses remain at Point Lookout, on the Maryland side of the Potomac's mouth; Fort Washington, Md., less than 10 miles downstream from Washington; and Jones Point lighthouse in Alexandria, Va. The tower at Fort Washington is the only lighthouse still used as a navigational aid.

Point Lookout

The light, which was housed in a tower atop a two-story house, was first shone in 1830. At a height of 43 feet, its white light was visible for almost 12 miles. For a short time, its 13 lamps were fueled by gas instead of oil. During the Civil War, the lighthouse was heavily guarded as it resided next to the Confederate prison camp. The lighthouse was unique in its later generating equipment. In 1930, it became the only



lighthouse in the U.S. to experiment with a wind-driven generator powering 16 batteries. The lighthouse, which also served as a buoy maintenance station, was replaced with a navigation light placed off the point in 1965. The house, which can be seen at Pt. Lookout State Park, is part of a naval tracking facility, and is closed to the public except for tours given once each year. A Navy spokesman said that the house may be renovated in the future using Department of Defense grants, but there are no immediate plans. Over the years, some people have insisted that the house is haunted, and the site was visited by psychic Hans Holzer in the 1960s.

Fort Washington

A cast-iron column topped by a light was installed at the wharf below the fort in 1857. The light was later installed in the belltower, which was raised several feet so that the light was visible up and down the river. The white light was changed to red (because of other white lights in the area) in 1920, according to Fred Tilp in his book, "This Was Potomac River." In 1954, the light was changed to an unwatched flashing red light. It remains as the only operational lighthouse on the Potomac.

Jones Point

In the late 1700s, Alexandria was a bustling seaport, shipping tobacco and later, wheat, to other U.S. ports and Europe. By the early 1850s, it was the third-largest port in the Chesapeake region. In 1856, the Jones Point lighthouse shone a white light from the tower atop the house. The light, 17 feet above the water, was visible for 9 miles, protecting ships approaching the city's wharfs from sandbars, tides, and winter ice. The facility, next to the first boundary stone marker of the District of Columbia, included a buoy house and a tide-cleansed privy. A seawall was later added. The sperm oil lamp was replaced by gas in 1858, and changed to a red oil lamp in 1900.

In 1926, a fixed green light placed on a 60-foot steel tower erected on the the river's edge replaced the lighthouse. A

keeper remained on watch at the site until 1934. Deactivation of the light occurred in 1962, with mariners using the navigation lights installed on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Over the years the lighthouse fell victim to vandalism, erosion, and decay. The lighthouse's exterior has been restored through the efforts of the National Park Service and the Mt. Vernon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Plans are underway for restoration of the building's interior.

The Daymarker is published monthly by Ned, Arleen, Jess, Willie and Sally Rhodes. The deadline for submission of materials to the Daymarker is the 20th of every month. Congratulations to the new Board.

Articles should be sent to the Daymarker Editor at 2001 North Kenilworth Street, Arlington, VA 22205. We prefer typed text (no crayons please) or you may submit your text on a disk in Apple Macintosh format or IBM-PC format (3.5" or 5.25"). Your articles may be faxed to our corporate offices at (703) 237-9654. In addition, we also can support a direct feed from your computer to our corporate computer facility utilizing a variety of file transfer protocols and two modem lines (9600 V.32bis/V.42bis available).

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Occoquan Yacht Club 1995 Membership Application Date: _____

Check one: New membership Renewal membership

Please print clearly and as you would like to have information appear in the membership roster:

Name _____
 Spouse (family member) _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____

Work phone: _____
 Work phone: _____
 Home phone: _____

BOAT DATA:

Name _____ Length & Beam _____
 Builder _____ Power Sail
 Where berthed? _____
 Optional: Birthday _____ Spouse's Birthday _____ Wedding anniversary _____

Membership requested:

- Family—\$50
- Individual—\$35
- Associate—\$25

for OYC Burgee add \$15

Total enclosed: _____

Please make check payable to Occoquan Yacht Club. Mail check and this form to:
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ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22206



ALLEN'S COPY CENTERS

Coming Events

October 8-10

Columbus Day Cruise to
Aquia Harbour. Ray
Steele Coordinator 703-
385-8615

October 15

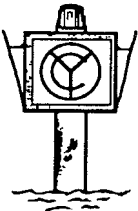
Annapolis Power
Boat Show Weekend

October 22

Chili Cookoff and
Photo Contest. Sandy
Leathers Coordinator
703-690-0038

November 12-13

Hardy Souls Cruise to
Alexandria. Mary Jo
Worster Coordinator
703-494-2383



The Daymarker

Occoquan Yacht Club
P.O. Box 469
Occoquan, VA 22125

Address Correction Requested