

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

# The Daymarker

May 1995 Vol. XIII Issue 5

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

JF

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Vice Commodore  
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Teresa Sorrenti  
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## Commodore's Comments

Sandy Leathers

You are cordially invited to the  
Twelfth Annual Flag Raising Ceremony  
of the Occoquan Yacht Club  
Saturday, May 6, 1995, at Noon  
followed by a  
Dock Party  
for OYC members and their guests  
Occoquan Harbour Marina  
plus  
Coast Guard Auxiliary  
Courtesy Marine Examinations  
beginning at 10:00AM  
and  
Boat/U.S. Tower  
Captain Gene Olmi  
Tow Boat II  
Serving the Potomac River  
Open for inspection

Dock Party cookout follows Ceremony. Bring a covered dish/casserole, salad, veggie, dessert. OYC will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments, and liquid refreshments. In case of bad weather, the party will be at Gecko's back deck.

Yes, Steve Donock was the Early Bird Cruise Coordinator to Alexandria City Dock. All of us who made the trip want to thank Steve for his efforts in arranging for the slips and social events. He will be providing more details in the Daymarker. It takes more than just collecting a list of names and boat sizes to be a cruise coordinator, as you will hear. So again, OYC and the attendees all thank you!!

## Coming Up

May 6th is our 12th Annual Flag Raising Ceremony at Occoquan Harbour Marina where we will traditionally raise the OYC burgee along with the American Flag and the Virginia State Flag. They will all remain on display throughout the boating season. This represents the official opening of the OYC boating season. I am hoping for another great turn out, and I hope you will be there.

We will attempt, weather permitting, to have a boat "pass in review" about 3:00 or 4:00PM in Belmont Bay followed by a raft-up at Mattawoman Creek. There is no cruise coordinator, so check with a Board member or maintain a radio watch on Channel 16.

May 14th is Mother's Day weekend. OYC leaves this weekend open so that you can share the day with Mom. How about a nice, slow boat ride along the River to show her the spring flowers and trees after breakfast or lunch.

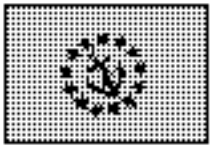
May 20th is the 4th Annual Breakfast Cookout and Swap Meet at Prince William Marina. See additional details in the Daymarker.

May 20th & 21st—Blessing of the Fleet at the Washington Waterfront, preceded by an overnight trip to James Creek and National Potomac Yacht Club for dinner. See details elsewhere in the Daymarker. I attended a planning meeting April

19th on board *M/V Finished Business* at the Gangplank Marina. Plans are for an estimated 125 plus boats to pass in review. There are nine categories for boat prizes. Most important is to sign-up with Henry Lovell, cruise coordinator and give him your deposit by **May 6th**.

May 27th -29th—Memorial Day Weekend Cruise to Yeocomico. The cruise coordinator is Ned Rhodes, PC. See details in the April issue of the Daymarker. Sign up and deposits were due prior to April 14th. Hope you made yours!

As you can see, May is full of cruises and events. OYC hopes that you will find a cruise or event that you and your family will want to attend to make your boating safer, more exciting and filled with new friends and experiences. Be a part of your Yacht Club by attending as many events as possible. See you on the River!



## Vice Commodore's Comments

Tom Egmore

This year's week-long cruise's third port of call is Mears Yacht Haven in Oxford, Maryland, on Tuesday / Wednesday, August 1-2. Mears Yacht Haven is located in historic Oxford on the Tred Avon. The marina has all the amenities: pool, showers, laundry, pump out, grills, picnic tables and, upon special request, set apart slips for those with an assignation in mind. Because the trip will be less than halfway over, most of you should not be suffering from a paucity of funds. Therefore, I have arranged for dinner reservations at the Masthead Restaurant. Owner Gretchen Fox has promised a great meal of prime rib or fish for \$17.95 with all the trimmings. The next morning word has it that you can get a great breakfast at Sally's Deli. For those non-erudite yacht club members, Oxford has a ferry to take you to the shops at Belleview.

There is no doubt that everyone will have a good time at this port.



## Exec. Rear Commodore Comments

Richard Ziegler

By the time this Daymarker issue reaches you, the Zieglers will have taken their second early bird cruise. Before the well-attended Alexandria City Dock official OYC cruise coordinated by Steve Donock, we took a three-day weekend April 8-10 down to Dennis Point Marina off the St. Mary's River. This was the weekend where the temperature hit 86 degrees on Sunday and 56 degrees on Monday.

There are three important elements that apply to long-distance early bird cruises. These are 1) the possibility of high winds, 2) cold water temperatures making small accidents potentially lethal and 3) because the vessel has remained dormant over the winter, there is a higher probability of something going wrong mechanically. While we were at Dennis Point, a 2850 Bayliner, just like the Egmore's prior boat, came limping to the gas dock (Sound familiar Tom?). They were coming down from James Creek Marina with a full tank of gas when they unexpectedly ran out of gas off Piney

Point. Being early in the season, Tall Timbers still had no gas. A rescue boat gave them enough fuel to get to Dennis Point. Thankfully for the Bayliner, they made it to the gas dock all right. The real test was leaving the dock with 28 mph wind gusts. The captain overcompensated with the wheel and the throttle while trying to turn away from the dock and into the wind. They came back into the gas dock at probably about 1800 rpm. You can imagine the damage at the point of impact. Tracy (the owner) was sure he would get a call from the captain's attorney on Tuesday arguing that the gas dock had a design flaw since it faced the wind. (I guess this was a little Southern Maryland humor).

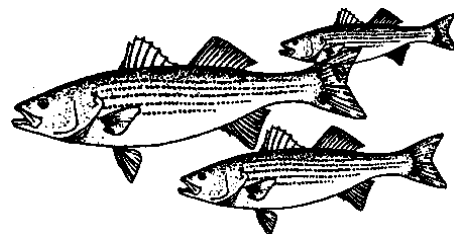
On the return trip, we ran into squalls reported on the radio to be reaching up to 60 mph locally. I can report that for about 10 minutes, it was like cruising the bay on a windy day. The only problem was that we were near Aquia Creek.

Anyway, be extremely careful with the strong winds we've been having this April (or is it really still March?). I know what they can do. I nearly crushed Dicky Lynn and his gas dock when a 30 mph gust pulled my bow in uncontrollably from 30 feet off. Miraculously, we didn't even experience a scratch.

Now for more cheerful news. Dennis Point Marina is renting jet skis this season. They already have three 3-seaters on a specially built jet ski dock, and I hear they are getting more in. With the paddle boats for the kids, the restaurant, outdoor bar and pool, and other features, this destination is quickly becoming a favorite of ours. I can't wait to see the Steeles back on jet skis again, but this time at Dennis Point!

Farther north, I am pleased to report that crabs are abundant (but expensive) at Capt. Johns at Cobb Island. The only problem is the that north inlet is starting to silt in seriously so you may want to access this area from the Wicomico River in the future if you have a deep draft.

Finally, looking ahead, the OYC Flag Raising is on May 6th. There will be safety inspections (bring your boat), great food (bring a dish, we'll provide dogs, burgers and beverage), and later that day a raft-up is planned. I'm told to expect 50 people. In fact, I'm counting on only 50 people. I am also buying for only 50 people. I KNOW BASED ON THE LAST MEETING THAT ONLY 40-50 PEOPLE WILL COME. RIGHT? If more than that come, I will have to work to death to get more provisions. You don't want to see me worked to death do you? So don't let me down. Don't come to this function so that I can sit, relax, and eat and drink all the extra food and beverage. I'm counting on you. Starting with the 51st person, I'll be taking names and admonishing you on the side (or maybe I'll go public and do it on the OYC public address system). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me and I'll give you a list of other things you can do May 6th. But remember, give Ziegler a break and don't come.



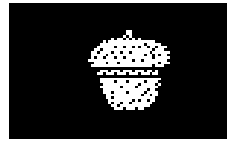
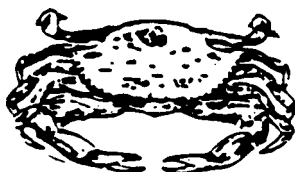


## Secretary's Comments

Teresa Sorrenti

### One If By Land and Two If By Sea

One of the ways we passed the time during the “off-season” was to investigate the Northern Neck by land, and we found it is twice as nice by sea, and much shorter too. It seems that the Neck was developed as a water-access community, with roads coming late and the railroads not at all. Each of those locations we visit by boat is at the end of a winding two-lane road, with only fields on each side. There are only two McDonald’s and no Safeway or Giant (we won’t discuss Woodies, Hecht’s, Starbuck’s, etc!). Colonial Beach shows its past as a faded resort, with a lot of potential in the old houses with breathtaking views of the river. We can recommend a tour of Stratford Hall (birthplace of Robert E. Lee). During March we got a private tour, as the only tourists there. The old Ragged Point, now named Coles Point after the actual geographic landmark, is just as nice when you get there, but it is quite a drive from the main road. Lewisetta, on the other hand, is just a long drive from the main road, with only an old marina visible. You can continue through the back roads to Ophelia, and from there take a two-car ferry (one of the few things left that are free) across the Great Wicomico to Reedville. There in what was once the richest town in America, you can see rows of wonderfully preserved Victorian houses. Going straight down Route 200 to Kilmarnock is bringing you back into the twentieth century, with one of those stoplights and McDonald’s (plus a Hardies!). We went all the way to Windmill Point, which is a great resort and marina that we want to visit by boat someday; in March, however, the restaurant is not open yet. We drove back to Whitestone and had a great dinner watching the sunset on the Rappahannock at the Annabell Lee Restaurant. The next morning we checked out the rest of the gorgeous homes around the Tides Inn that we missed while limited to bike-riding distances on the weeklong (and never figured out how they pay for those Jaguars and BMW’s in the driveways). On the return trip, we followed the Rappahannock, passing through several small towns, skipping another free tow-car ferry (closed Sundays) but admiring the view across the banks of the Carrotoman, and checking out a new waterfront housing development (future site of pool, future sight of tennis, lot for sale, etc.). We wound up the trip with another private tour, of the Ingleside Winery, where after judicious tasting (of everything alcoholic) we selected a mixed case to last us a week-end boating trip (well, maybe two). In need of civilization, we stopped in Fredericksburg for lunch. The moral of this adventure is: If you must visit the Northern Neck do it with your boat...it’s much more fun and 325 fewer miles.



## Treasurer’s Comments

Steve Wexler

For almost two years I have been attempting to achieve some level of literary excellence or journalistic distinction in my monthly contributions to the Daymarker. As you all know, I read Tony Kornheiser with a passion and so have injected little comments about Nancy and Tonya, Michael and Shaquille, and even the Major League Boobs (otherwise known as players and owners). But I have a new hero...frightening as it is to admit...I admire King Nedly Rhodes. Anyone who read his work product last month had to laugh out loud—creative...insightful...right on point (particularly with respect to the Worcestersters and Sandy-squared). Anyway, the next time you see Jess’ Dad, pat him on the back...keep up the good work!!...a simple thank you.

Quick reminders...

PRYCA Boat Roster: The response to my request for voluntary input into the PRYCA Boat Roster has been underwhelming...so I thought I would give it one more try (really I won’t ask again). If any of the members would like any information to be included in the PRYCA Boat Roster they should notify me by filling out the enclosed form and mailing it to me. I will compile the information and provide it to the appropriate PRYCA representative at the May Board meeting.

Blessing of the Fleet: Delegate Henry Lovell has asked me to remind you that the Blessing of the Fleet Event occurs on May 20th and 21st:

#### May 20th

8:30AM	OYC Breakfast/Swap Meet at Prince William Marina
Noon	Depart Occoquan for Tantallon Yacht Club—an afternoon stopover
3:30-5:00PM	Dockage at James Creek Marina
5:00-6:00PM	Water Taxi Service aboard OYC or NPYC Boats to Columbia Island, National Potomac Yacht Club
6:00-?	Catered dinner with entertainment—dancing under the stars
??	Back to James Creek for after-hours dock party and demonstration of proper flashlight usage

#### May 21st

??-Noon	Morning dock party - or repairing the bodily damage from the night before
Noon-2:00PM	Blessing of the Fleet
2:00-5:00PM	Barbecue at Capital Yacht Club

See his Article later on in this issue of the Daymarker for details on costs and signup.

PRYCA Float-In: The PRYCA Float-In will occur on July 14th through 16th. \$45 per person buys you catered dinner/dance on Saturday night, catered brunch on Sunday morning, the opportunity to mingle with fellow Potomac River boaters, and the thrill of participating in the coveted Aquia Cup competition. Registration coupon will appear in next month’s Daymarker. If you have questions, ask Henry Lovell, Steve Donock or me.

**Occoquan Yacht Club**  
**Financial Statement**  
**October 1, 1994-April 24, 1995**

Beginning Balance (10/1/94):		\$2,080.08
Income:		
<u>1995 Membership Dues</u>		
Renewal Family Members	\$1,485.00	
Renewal Indiv. Members	105.00	
Renewal Assoc. Members	135.00	
New Family Members	330.00	
New Individual Members	0.00	
New Associate Members	0.00	
Club Sales	812.00	
Gen. Membership 50/50 (Oct)	41.00	
Gen. Membership 50/50 (Mar)	88.00	
Clothing/Burgee Raffle	105.00	
Holiday Party Raffle	170.00	
Planfest 50/50	42.00	
Holiday Party	2,000.00	
OYC Breakfast	0.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>0.00</u>	
Total Income		\$5,313.00
Expenses:		
Membership Activities	\$3,026.21	
Awards	454.85	
Postage	447.75	
Printing/Reproduction	466.86	
Miscellaneous	50.00	
Organizational Expenses	195.00	
Clothing/Burgee Inventory	1,582.98 <sup>2</sup>	
Bank Service Charges	<u>94.33</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$6,317.98</u>
Ending Balance		<u>\$1,075.10</u>

<sup>1</sup>Includes \$545.00 of 1995 Renewal Membership Dues and \$315.00 of 1995 New Membership Dues.

<sup>2</sup>The Club's Clothing/Burgee Inventory includes 29 burgees, 31 shirts, and 25 hats.



**Early Bird Cruise to Old Town**  
**(or, can you fit 20 boats into 13 slips?)**

Steve Donock

Back at the Planning Meeting, I readily agreed to coordinate the Early Bird Cruise. I figured this would be a piece of cake and a great way to show off my planning prowess on my first event as an official OYC Cruise Coordinator. Heck, I've planned so many trips to Old Town that if I don't call Deake (the dockmaster) at least twice a month for a group of slips, he sends me a get well card! This, of course, was before I found out that they had lost nearly all of the slips north of the Chart House to silt. Guess where they moved all those yearly slip

holders? And did I forget to mention that they also have more yearly rentals this year than they've ever had? No wonder when Deake called me last week he was laughing!

It all started with 20 of OYC's faithful boats signed up. Deake swore that 13 slips was all he could give us. The bribes would have to start early this time. Well, I know Deake, and between us we "created" a few extras. As fate would have it, between a few cancellations and a creative game of musical slips (hey, Bronwyn, didn't know you could put a 41' in there, did you?), we came out with 14 boats and 14 slips. I love it when a plan comes together!

Now, if I've learned nothing else from reading articles from other cruise coordinators, I've learned that nobody is immune from embarrassment in an article. This one will be no different. Three boats showed up on Friday (*Shalimar, Impulse, and Sandy's Run*), and after no power for the first day, our esteemed Commodore finally had all the electrical connectors he'll ever need. Seems he didn't know there was more than one type of 50 amp power. Past Commodore Rhodes promises a tutorial at the next meeting.

Saturday arrived and so did the rest of the fleet (*Evermoore, Happenstance, Lucky Ducks, Dealmaker, Last Resort, Dealmaker, Morning Mist, Sea Duck II, Mutants on the Bounty, Cheers II, Touch of Fate* and *Mary Catherine II*). The highlight reel of docking maneuvers really isn't that great this time. Even Tim Chaffin was able to put *Mutants on the Bounty* in the right slip on the first try, despite the wind. Jim Ball did an exceptional job docking the new *Cheers II* (er, Jim, can I have my lines back...please?). It was also nice to have a new addition to the fleet, *Mary Catherine II*. Don't worry, Captain John, we're really nice people for the most part!

The highlights of the entire day was, of course, Happy Hour! So, what's new? Well, this time we had a real treat. A former member of OYC, Gordon Murchie, just happens to have his boat docked in Old Town. Did I forget to mention that he's a heavyweight with the Virginia Wine Growers Association? The good Mr. Murchie arrived with a case of assorted Virginia wines that had many of us arguing over which was best! Seems that for many it was a toss up between the Cabernet from Oasis and the Merlot from Prince Michel. Many thanks to Gordon—I'd love to claim credit for planning that part, but it was just luck.

Sunday brought one regular OYC occurrence and one never-before-seen event. First, the usual—it seems that anytime Tim Chaffin and a boat are in the same marina, Tim is sure to end up in the engine room. However, this time Al Hobson and I ended up helping him. What happened, Al? Seems that the nearly new *Sea Duck II* needed a bit of fine-tuning. Actually, I think Tim would have had the starboard engine up on the dock for a rebuild if Theresa hadn't blocked the way. A quick tune-up later and all was well. Now for the unusual—After years of trying, Jess finally got Tom Egmore up long enough to steal his seat. You'll have to ask Ned (or Jess) for the details, but there was something said about "I ain't gonna pet that mutt..." but before you knew it, Jess was victorious!

So, the 1995 boating season is off to a great start. Thanks to everyone for being patient while we worked out the docking details and we'll do it again...probably next weekend!

## Washington Blessing of the Fleet

Henry Lovell

The winds have changed, winter is gone, the sweet smell of Spring is in the air, and Newt is on the Capitol steps. Engines are revving, and the river is flowing straight for Washington Channel and the PRYCA Blessing of the Fleet.

The Blessing of the Fleet is quickly approaching. While the Blessing itself is on Sunday the 21st, a number of pre- and post-Blessing activities have been planned, beginning on Saturday the 20th. Boats are scheduled to arrive at James Creek Marina between 3:30-5:00PM, with a 6:00 catered dinner at the National Potomac Yacht club. Price per person is \$16.50, and there will be water taxis to take you to NPYC from James Creek.

After dinner there will be "cup dancing" led by Paula—*whoops*, I mean, there will be dancing under the stars led by all the fleet-footed OYC captains and first mates, with those other yacht clubs doing their best to "tread water / keep afloat" against the boogying OYCers.

On Sunday morning will see all (we hope) rise early (?) to join in for the "Recovery Party" on the docks before departing at approximately "o'high noonish" to line up for the Blessing in the beautiful Washington Channel.

Following the Blessing, the party moves to Capital Yacht Club for hot dogs/hamburgers and the fixings. Cost per person is \$5.00 (payable at the door).

As of this printing, OYC has 12 boats signed up. If you signed up at the General Membership meeting, please send your check, payable to "PRYCA," to Henry Lovell, 2921 Madeira Court, Woodbridge, VA 22192. Your check must arrive NO LATER than MAY 8th!! If you have not yet made your reservation, do so quickly—there aren't many slips left at James Creek. Questions? Call Henry at 703-490-5986 (before 9:00PM, please).

Look for details of the next BIG PRYCA event—the "10th Annual PRYCA Float-In" at Fort Washington Marina July 14-16, 1995.

See you at the next Daymarker.



### Things I Have Learned as a Cruise Coordinator

Jess Rhodes

16 boats have signed up. 12 got checks in on time; We had to call and remind 3. One was two weeks late.

2 people don't know that I'm a dog, making it hard to cash those checks.

One person wanted regular power, another needed T-250's.

First Union and First Virginia are the most popular banks for Memorial Day cruise members, followed a distant third by NationsBank. The oldest established account is 1978, with the newest one being 1991.

Two people have their work phone numbers on checks. Seven have their home phone number on the checks. One had work and home address. Three had a social security numbers (not to be used for identification purposes) on the check, although only one had both the husband's and wife's numbers.

Six checks were not drawn on joint accounts and only one of those was female. All the rest were joint accounts from persons sharing the same first or last name or middle initial.

Clark American printed the bulk of the checks, followed by Current Inc. One of the checks was Bugs Bunny and Friends, two were landscape scenes, three were water-related scenes and one was fru-fru purple. All the rest were utilitarian, functional (and probably cheaper).

There was one III and one Sr.

As far as the trip goes, the smallest boat is 27' and the largest is 42', with the average being somewhere around 35'

I am working on a possible Friday night stay at Landmark Yacht Club on Aquia Creek for those who are interested. What we need to know now is what day and time do you plan on departing and what is your cruising speed. With this information, we will be able to match up people and boats for those who want to travel in a group. Call my answering machine (703) 534-2297 and leave a message or tell me at the Flag Raising. And let me know if you are interested in a Friday night departure with a raft-up in Aquia Creek. Participants, watch your mailbox for important information toward the middle of May.

### July 4th Cruise Comments

Rick Sorrenti

The 4th of July weekend at Cole's Point Plantation, which was previously named Ragged Point, is in the final stages of preparation. Teresa and I had the opportunity to meet the new owner, Peter Tucker, a few weeks back and it's exciting to hear their plans for the marina and surrounding area. The July 4th weekend events include a crabfeast and fireworks. To date the OYC has only 20 slips available with 17 who signed up at the Planfest. A \$10.00 non-refundable deposit is required, made payable to your cruise coordinator, Rick Sorrenti. All deposits must be received on or before May 15th to ensure your slip is held. If you did not sign up at the Planfest, please indicate whether you will be leaving prior to the 4th, which is a Tuesday this year, along with your boat's particulars. This is one of our most popular trips of the year, so to avoid disappointment, send your deposits now. I will be contacting those that make the final 20.



## Boating Safety Grants to States

Nicole Sours Larson, the Director for Virginia Legislation of the CBYCA, has requested the assistance of all boaters to save an endangered federal program critical to boating safety. Over the past ten years the taxes we boaters pay on marine fuel, boat motors, and fishing equipment have gone into the Wallop-Breaux Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, which is used to make block grants to states to improve boating safety, increase boating access, and undertake sportfish restoration programs. The future of these funds is in jeopardy. Ms. Larson has requested that each of let Congressman Frank Wolf know, in writing, the importance of these safety grants to the states.

The following is a copy of a letter which can be sent to Congressman Wolf:

The Honorable Frank Wolf  
Chairman, Transportation Subcommittee  
241 Cannon House Office Building  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
Re: Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing this letter to set forth my strong support for legislation to create permanent funding authorization for the boating safety grants from the Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund. As you know, these grants were previously funded through the Coast Guard's annual budget, but have been eliminated from the Coast Guard's Fiscal Year 1996 appropriation budget.

I am a member of the Occoquan Yacht Club, a resident of Fairfax County in your district, and have actively supported your candidacy in every election.

The boating safety grant program is a model example of a highly effective federal "block grant to states," with matching provisions, which works. It is paid for exclusively by users' fees on boaters—no regular tax dollars are used. The approximately \$30 million targeted for cutting comes from the Wallop-Breaux Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, which is supported by users' fees paid by recreational boaters on marine fuel and boat motors and fishing equipment. If the boating safety grants are cut, the "users' fees" will remain, but any service to boating "users" will disappear. These taxes are not proposed for elimination.

The boating safety program is an extremely successful matching-fund program. For every dollar the federal government gives to the states, state and local governments provide over \$4 in additional money. State boating law administrators have testified before Congress that, if the federal program ends, most of the state money will disappear as well.

The boating safety grant program has been demonstrated to cut down on accidents, save lives, and prevent injuries. Since the federal boating safety grant program began in 1971, boating fatalities have dropped by 54%. In the same time period, the number of boats has grown by over 250%.

In Fiscal Year 1995, Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries received about \$450,000 through a federal

boating safety grant. Loss of these funds will devastate Virginia's boating safety program. Nationally, elimination of this federal funding will mean canceled boating safety classes, fewer marine police on the waters, reduced search-and-rescue capability, reduced enforcement of new operating-while-intoxicated laws, and a considerable number of lost jobs in an industry barely recovering from recession and the massive losses inflicted by the luxury tax.

Therefore, I strongly request that you consider the foregoing in determining your position regarding the proposed legislation.

Sincerely yours,

cc: Nicole Sours Larson, CBYCA (via facsimile 703-893-9008)

**WE MUST SAVE THIS PROGRAM!!!** It is crucial that each of you write your own letter immediately. This is an issue which affects our rights as boaters. Don't let the money we pay in users' taxes be diverted to other uses. If you can't write, please call Congressman Wolf today at 202-225-5136.

### Anniversaries and Birthdays

Happy Anniversary to the following couples for the month of May:

Steve and Karla Donock (6)  
Donald and Diana Uber (7)  
William and Bonnie Fulford (22)  
Martin and Ann Williams (23)

May Birthday Wishes to:

Barbara Kelly (2)  
Joyce Moeller (3)  
Teresa Sorrenti (4)  
Ed Dodd (11)  
Ray Steele (11)  
Tom Coldwell (15)  
Charles Barrow (19)  
Geraldine McNeil (25)  
David Moore (26)  
Martin Betts (29)

If you would like to see you name in print, make sure that the Membership Guy knows your vital statistics.



## Restored Piney Point Lighthouse Near Planned Underwater Park

Michael Humphries tries to put his finger on why people like lighthouses, even the squat, stubby one in southern Maryland he watches over like he has keeper's blood in him.

He floats a few theories: "The day you retire, you jump in the car and go visit a lighthouse." That's one. Another: "Things that are stationary act as an anchor" in this modern era of transition and people on the move. "It's a way of passing on the mantle from one generation to another."

"I don't know quite what it is," he admits, "but they do emit an aura of romance. There's a mystique about lighthouses."

Humphries is banking on that whatever-it-is to help make "his" lighthouse at Piney Point on the Potomac River a place people will want to visit and where they can mine some of the area's rich veins of history. The first lighthouse on the Potomac, Piney Point now stands as one of the mighty river's last, and come this spring people will be able to climb its tower for the first time in decades.

It also will be the staging area for the state's first underwater preserve, a submerged park a few hundred yards away where the so-called Black Panther, a German U-boat that was rubber-clad to avoid sonar detection, was sunk by the U.S. government after World War II.

When Humphries, director of St. Mary's County's museum division, took over the six-acre lighthouse site in 1990, he already knew his goal: bring the light back to life.

On Christmas Eve, 1835, the Sutter family sold to the federal government 2.5 acres on Piney Point, about 14 miles up the Potomac from Chesapeake Bay. Six months later, in June 1836, Piney Point lighthouse opened. Thirty-five feet tall, its tower contained 10 oil lamps and 10 reflectors that cast a beam 11 miles and helped ships navigate the river's shoaly waters as they made their way to Alexandria, Va., Washington, D.C., and other ports upriver.

One of 11 Potomac River lights, Piney Point switched to a fifth-order Fresnel lens in 1855, the same year officials built a breakwater to prevent erosion (the lighthouse now sits on about 6 acres of beach that has built up over the years). Officials built a neighboring wooden bell tower in 1880, which no longer exists.

Among the several keeps who tended the light, four were women, two of whom succeeded their husbands' tenure, and Humphries is pretty sure that Loch Humphries, who took over the light in 1912, is an ancestor.

Officials decommissioned Piney Point in 1964.

When Humphries started the restoration in 1990, "It was such a mess." The first job was hauling about four dump truck loads of garbage from the lighthouse, keeper's house and the quartermaster's house, a smaller dwelling behind the keeper's house.

The county sheriff assigned Humphries two inmates who helped him for a year renovating the keeper's quarters, which essentially already had been gutted. They renovated the other house and turned what was a garage into a gift shop and indoor museum area, whose exhibits have not yet been completed.

Humphries built a deck walkway through the property leading to the lighthouse and then out to a pier, lined with imitation gas lamps and exhibit panels that explain the lighthouse's and river's history. (Humphries invites boaters to visit the lighthouse via water; the pier has deep water.)

Last fall, brick mason Ray Cannetti began restoring the tower's bricks and mortar, much of which had eroded from years of water insinuating its way down into the thick walls. As Cannetti worked, Humphries says, the lighthouse revealed a bit of its history. By looking at the type of stones he uncovered and the way the stones were cut, he could tell where they came from.

The foundation stones, for example, came from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which was being blasted and dredged out at the time.

The stone on the "light deck"—the small room where the light and lens sat—came from the Aquia Creek Quarry and is the same stone used in the White House and Capitol.

And, Humphries says, Cannetti believes one man, who happened to be right-handed, laid all the brick himself during that winter of 1835-36.

The lighthouse's lens is at the mariners' Museum in Newport News, Va., and a local resident owns the tower's bell; Humphries hopes to get both artifacts on loan.

So far, the site's restoration has cost about \$100,000, including a \$41,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; \$20,000 from the state; \$11,000 from Steuart Petroleum, which operates a tank farm and offshore loading facility at Piney Point; and \$11,000 from the Foundation of the Friends of St. Clements Island Museum, another museum further upstream which Humphries also oversees.

"The real key here is how the private sector has kicked in," he says.

Though it's a quiet community now, Piney Point has been a vacation hotbed for years; in 1820 President James Monroe frequented a cottage there called the Summer White House. Other former presidents who visited included Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Pierce.

In the 1930s and 40s, when steamboats carried tourists and passengers up and down the bay, Piney Point was home to a hotel (now an empty property next to the light) that was one of the steamers' popular destination spots.

Humphries wants to meld all that history—along with that of the longtime military testing along the Potomac and the myriad shipwrecks in the area that are just now starting to be charted—into that of Piney Point Lighthouse.

During winter, the lighthouse and gift shop are open on weekends. Summer hours are dawn to dusk, with special nighttime tours planned for this summer. For information call 301-944-1471.

*Reprinted from Soundings, January 1995*

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. I have nothing funny to say here at this time.

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"). Our preferred word processing format is Microsoft Word. Your articles may be faxed to our corporate offices at (703) 237-9654. In addition, we are also on the information highway at [milepost.rhodesn@aol.com](mailto:milepost.rhodesn@aol.com).

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# PRYCA Blessing of the Fleet

May 20th and 21st

I would like to attend the PRYCA Blessing of the Fleet activities.

Boat Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Captain's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Mate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Length: \_\_\_\_\_  
Beam: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner at Columbia Island, National Potomac Yacht Club (\$16.50 per person).

Dockage at James Creek Marina - \$0.50 per foot per day

My check made payable to PRYCA is enclosed:

Vessel Registration \_\_\_\_ feet @ \$0.50/foot = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
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Please mail this completed form and your check made payable to "PRYCA" to Henry Lovell, 2921 Madeira Court, Woodbridge, VA 22192. Call Henry with any questions at 703-490-5986.

**DEADLINE IS MAY 5TH!!!**



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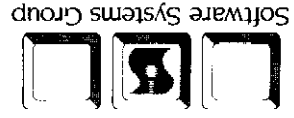
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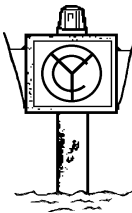


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ALLEN'S COPY CENTERS

<p>May 6</p> <p>OYC Flag Raising. 1200 @ OHM.</p>	<p>May 20</p> <p>OYC Breakfast Cookout &amp; Swap Meet, D. Yarnell (703) 490-0923</p>	<p>May 20-21</p> <p>PRYCA Blessing of the Fleet, Henry Lovell (703) 494-5986</p>	<p>May 27-29</p> <p>Memorial Day Cruise to Yeocomico, Ned W. Rhodes (703) 534-2297</p>
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**C o m i n g   E v e n t s**



# The Daymarker

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