Stories from the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club

Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club

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Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club, founded in 1871, located on Oyster Bay, New York, has a long and storied tradition of yacht racing and fostering generations of sailors who have and who continue to excel in sailing.

SEAWANHAKA CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB BECOMES NSHOF FOUNDING MEMBER

From the Commodore:

"Sailing and competitive racing at Seawanhaka prevails as a way of life today as much as it did 141 years ago. Seawanhaka and its members are proud to support the National Sailing Hall of Fame in the continuation and furtherance of that tradition."

William R. Denslow, Jr., Commodore

History

By past Commodore P. James Roosevelt
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The name 'Seawanhaka' is derived from a tribe of Indians who made their home on Centre Island.

Seawanhaka was founded in September 1871 aboard William L. Swan's sloop GLANCE anchored off Soper's Point, Centre Island. As first officially recorded, there were twelve founders.

By acclamation, Swan was elected Seawanhaka's first Commodore. A half model of GLANCE hangs above the arch as one exits the main room of today's Clubhouse, while private signals of the original members crown that exit.

The new Commodore, a member of one of the area's foremost families, served for many years as the Corinthian organist and choirmaster at the First Presbyterian Church in Oyster Bay. He was a round, jolly man who encouraged sailing tests among the oyster fishermen and enjoyed gamming with friends and singing well into the night aboard GLANCE, a bottle of spirits handy on the main saloon table the while.

It was customary to hold Club meetings (both formal and informal) on the flagship. GLANCE at 41 feet was one of only two vessels in the original fleet up to that calling. As the Club grew full tilt, it became necessary for the Commodore to commission a new flagship. This was the 77-foot schooner ARIEL, launched in May 1873. She served as the flagship until 1876 when Commodore Swan declined re-nomination. Her model is on the north wall of the Model Room.

The Club burgee is a constellation consisting of 12 stars in the form of a vertical cross on a field of blue. The fact that this number coincides with the count of Founders s entirely coincidental, as the design was taken from the flag of the Admiral of the Brazilian Navy.

The Founders adopted a threefold statement of purpose:

Becoming proficient in navigation.
The personal management, control and handling of their yachts.
All matters pertaining to seamanship.

These remain today a valid statement of our goals.

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