Stories from the Union League Yacht Club

Union League Yacht Club
140 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 563-6500

Website: www.ulyachtclub.org

The Union League Yacht Club is an activity of the Union League of Philadelphia, whose purpose is to encourage the sport of yachting within the League, promote safety and courtesy on the water and enhance friendship among the members. With over 200 active members ranging in age from 21 to 90, the Union League Yacht Club is the largest affinity group in the Union League, and is open to all levels of boaters, including those with no boating experience, whether or not they own a boat. Members meet year round, once in the spring and in the fall on the water for annual regattas. During the uncooperative weather months the Yacht Club hosts guest speakers. In addition, members plan longer trips out of the area. Recent trips have included an expedition to the Galapagos Islands, trips to the British Virgin Islands, and Belize.

UNION LEAGUE YACHT CLUB BECOMES NSHOF FOUNDING MEMBER

From the Commodore:

"The Union League Yacht Club is very excited to be a founding member of the NSHOF. While our Yacht Club is only 30 years old, we are part of a larger historic organization, The Union League of Philadelphia, that is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. By becoming a founding member, we have ensured that the Union League of Philadelphia will always have a place in Sailing History. We are a club built on tradition, and we look forward to creating a new tradition with our support for the National Sailing Center & Hall of Fame."

Wes McMichael, Commodore

History

The Union League Yacht Club began in 1983 after a couple of members of the Union League of Philadelphia attended a nine-day cruising course in the Virgin Islands run by the Annapolis Sailing School. Immediately, they were "hooked" on sailing. Leading the charge was Elliott Rittenhouse, who quickly took action and placed an announcement in the League's newsletter asking for League members who were interested in sailing to attend a meeting. The first meeting brought 25 League members and the Yacht Club was formed thereafter, electing Elliot as the first Commodore.

The club began to take shape with both an organizational structure and a program of events. The first Yacht Club cruise took place in the fall of 1983 at Great Oak Landing and traditions were started. After the New Year a grand party was organized and held on February 24, 1984,

this was the first Commodore's Ball. The Commodore's Ball celebrates the induction of the new Commodore while paying tribute to the retiring Commodore.

Today the Yacht Club has almost 200 members ranging in ages from 21 - 90 years. It meets

year round, once in the spring and fall on the water for the annual regattas and in the uncooperative weather months the Yacht Club hosts guest speakers at the League. In addition, the members have longer trips planned out of the area. Recent trips have included an expedition to the Galapagos Islands, trips to the British Virgin Islands, and Belize.

Ellie Hovey, a founding member of the Yacht Club commented, "What keeps me involved is not only my interest in sailing, but the people in the club - the camaraderie, friendship & openness in sharing their boats with you." This reinforces the Yacht Club's commitment to involve members without boats. Sharon McGinley, Yacht Club member for 16 years and now a Past Commodore said, "I joined the Yacht Club to gain sailing experience. I was new at sailing and figured this would be a great way to meet people who needed crew. We now have our own boat and the entire family are sailors." Many members willingly act as crew along with the boats' owners, this is a great way to meet and socialize with your fellow League members. When asked to name the best thing about the Yacht Club the members resoundingly cried "the people."

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