

Racine Yacht Club

A History in Pictures



Racine Yacht Club - 1916

The charter of Racine Yacht Club dates back to January 23, 1916. Charter members are shown in the picture. Fred Hermans was the first to serve as Commodore. The first clubhouse was located halfway up the hill by Barker Street. This small building was leased to RYC by the Glass Family. The first initiation fee was \$5.00 to be paid within 30 days. By August, the initiation fee was raised to \$9.95 with dues of \$.50 per month. The original three boat owners were Pete Goldick , Bill Rohan, Sr., and Chester Krusinski.



1916 Regatta



Over 10,000 people attended the Regatta held of North Beach. Races were held for sailboats, motor boats, canoes, and other people (swimming, water skiing, etc.). Kenosha won all of the sailboat races. Racine won the power boat races. It was sponsored by Billy's Ice Cream store.



1921 Iroquois Jack Sutler



1921 Iroquois Jack Sutler. Owned by a fireman, Bob Dowd, in Racine. It was a Class M Sloop.

1922 Edgewater Beach and Bath House



1922 Edgewater Beach and Bath House was constructed by the Edgewater Transit Company formed by RYC. This bath house was formed to offset expenses of running the club. Bill Rohan, Sr., Erv Schoppee, and Josh Milke were some of the initiators. Bathing suits were rented out and a place to change clothes was provided, etc. Hans Jensen was the manager and Herman Nitz was the first lifeguard. The bathhouse opened in June, with a debt of \$2000, and was free and clear of debt on the first of August that same summer. This good fortune of the Club's venture was short-lived, because of the increasing popularity of the automobile. The boat on the left in this picture is the old Diamond. It is still sailing on Sturgeon Bay.

1929, October Storm

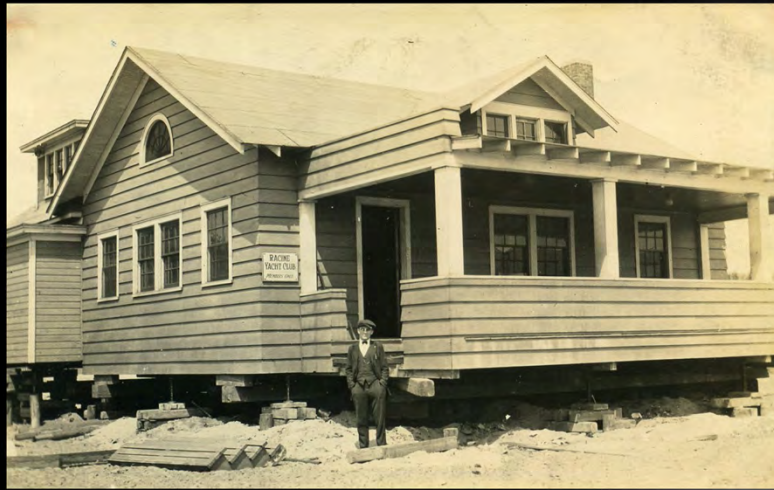


After the bathhouse lost the ability to make money, it was torn down in about 1924 and the land was sold to the city for the new Water Department building. The land was leased back from the Water Department for \$1. The original clubhouse was moved to the location where our next clubhouse stood. At this time, the clubhouse was placed on pilings about 3 or 4 feet above the ground because the land was much lower than it is now. All improvements, including filling in the land, and making the surroundings of the clubhouse presentable as it looks today was done at the Club's expense, with no outside help.

In October of 1929, RYC experiences a very severe storm which practically wrecked the clubhouse. It was damaged so severely that hopes of rebuilding it were almost nil. This period was possibly the lowest point of enthusiasm the Club has ever known.

Saved the piano, not the chandelier.

1933



In 1933, Otto Wadewitz became Commodore and thru his efforts and leadership, the Club was rebuilt and placed on a foundation with a basement under the structure. Many other improvements were made. It didn't cost the club a dime. At the end of every day, the leftover concrete was dumped into the foundation. It was done by Gloedy Concrete, free of charge. The man in the picture is possibly Jack Ritman (sp?).



1933 World's Fair – Schooner – Blue Nose



1933 World's Fair – Schooner – Blue Nose. It was named by Bud Garcia.

1937 Racine Yacht Club



The clubhouse had living quarters in it. The bar was downstairs. The galley was behind the bar.



1934 Haul Out

1934 Haul Out—The boat in the picture is named Spray. This boat sunk. Two men died, thinking they could swim with the spinnaker pole. One man stayed with the boat and was saved by a plane flying overhead. He notified the coast guard. Five men owned part of this boat. It sunk in 1938 or 1939. Only the bronze screws were salvaged. It had switched from being a centerboard to a keel boat.

1936 Pugh Coal Company

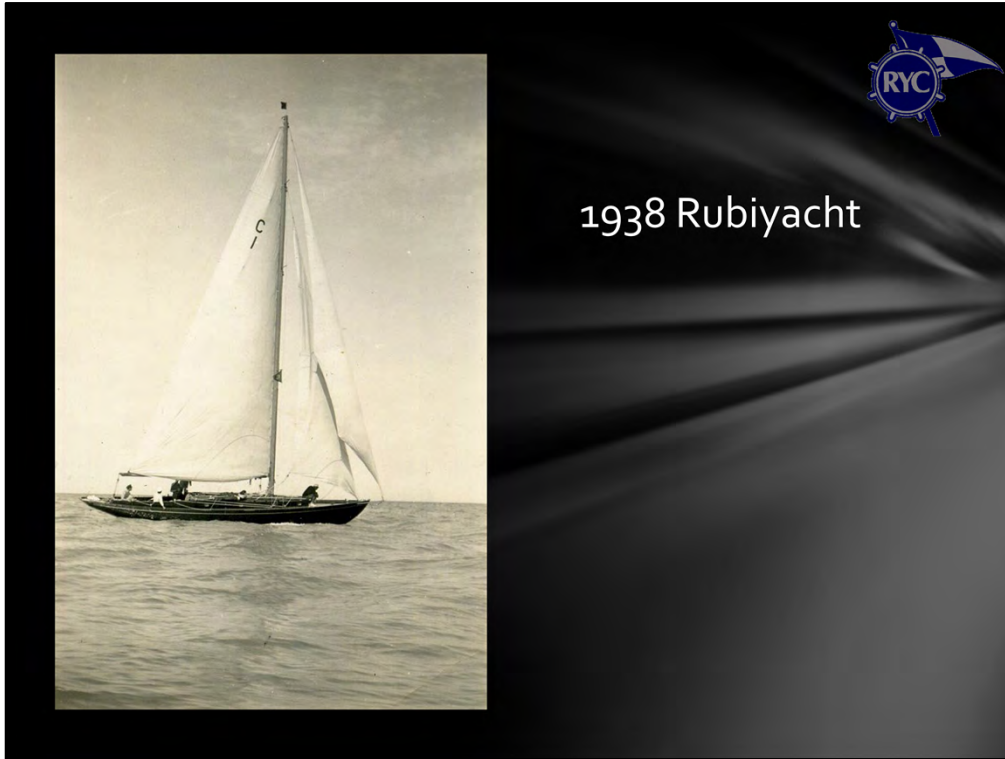


1936 Pugh Coal Company on the Root River.



1936 Racine Reef Light

1936 Racine Reef Light



1938 Rubiyacht—she was brought to Racine for varnishing. She had high top-sides. It required five coats of Dupont varnish. It was taken to Bermuda to race. In 1937, it won the Mac Race.

1939 Racine Regatta



1939 Racine Regatta—Otto W (sp?) put in the derrick. Sold back to the club for \$2500.

1943 Racine Yacht Club



1943 RYC—The boat in the picture is the old Erin was originally owned by the Rohan family. Later it was owned by Pete Goldick. The building to the far right is the Oar Shed.



1944—This is Milwaukee Yacht Club that burned down.



1944

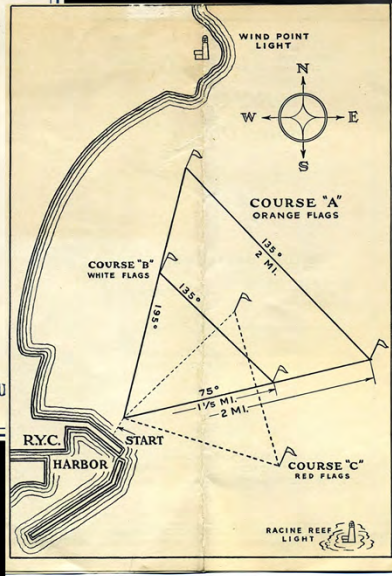
1944—This is the Coast Guard station.

1946 RYC
Commodore Vitas
Thomas wins the
Chicago Mackinac
Race



MACKINAC TROPHY TO RACINE YACHTSMAN—Commodore Vitas Thomas, Racine Yacht Club, holds the Universal division Chicago Mackinac Trophy, which he won as skipper-owner of the Spindle in the 1946 Chicago to Mackinac race. CYC Commodore George Sollitt (right) presents Ernie Grates and Murray Knapp, co-owners of Blitzen, Detroit Yacht Club, with the cruising division Mackinac trophy. Thomas won the fresh water classic with Spindle in 1943. As the Gloriant the Racine sloop led the fleet in 1937, skippered by owner Tony Herrmann. Spindle also won the 1946 Fred A. Price Trophy, the Universal Class B time prize award, at the annual Mackinac dinner presentation in Chicago. (Chicago Sun Photo).

1946 RYC Commodore Vitas Thomas wins the Chicago Mackinac Race. This is the third Mac that was won by Vitas Thomas. The boat, a Q boat, was originally named Northeast. Spindle is the second name. Tony Herman changed to Gloriant and won the Mac Race in 1939 and 1943. Vitas Thomas won in 1946. Name was changed to Gale and won the Port Huron Mac in 1948. Won the Mac in 1949 and 1951. The boat is on Flathead Lake in Montana.



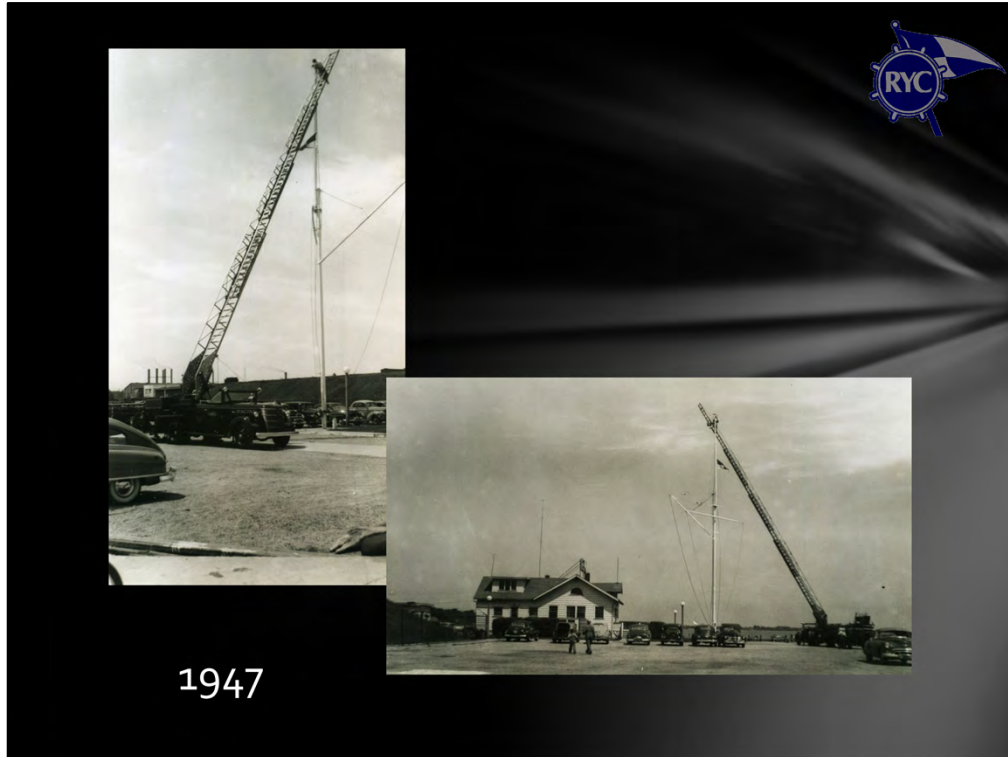
1947 – 1st RYC Junior Banquet



This is in the main dining room. The Juniors were constitutional members of the club.



In 1947, Vitas Thomas was Commodore. Preliminary drawings and sketches were made in consideration of building a new clubhouse at that time. Rough estimates totaled \$45,000, and when presented to the membership, the idea was voted down due to the high cost. Another item of interest at this time, was the rebuilding of the flagpole to a height of 60 feet. This work was done by Red Nymphius and when completed, it was installed in its former location and a plaque bearing the name of Gene Hardy was placed on it. Gene was the first junior member of the club who lost his life in the Navy during World War II. The top of the flagpole is the top of a mast from JB Taylor.



Right after World War II, dues were \$0.60 for dues. There was a large discussion trying to raise the dues to \$0.80. A lot of income was raised from slot machines. The slot machines were in the club. The old members wanted to forget about the clubhouse. They wanted the money. After the war, the club completely changed. Before the war, it was a bachelor club. Afterwards, it was more of a family club.



1948



The thing being launched is Bill Richter's barge.



1948





1948



The bottom boat, named Voyager, is a 26 footer Sea Bird Yawl. The owners were Ray Cook and Ray "Snapper" Knapp.



1948





1948





1948 – Otto Wadewitz Trophy Races



1948 Otto Wadewitz Trophy Star Class winner – “Galaxy” owned by Carl Tomasek sped around the six mile triangular course in 46 minutes and 36 seconds. Thistle Class winter was “Sticker’s” owned by Tony Herrmann, Sr. The people in the picture are Herman Jansen, Jr. and Carl Tomasek.

1949 Root River Opening



PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS AERIAL — RACINE

7B-H1576

Early 1950's RYC Additions



A bar was built in the basement and there had been no problems with water. In the early 50's, RYC started to experience water problems. Milt Stoffel was Commodore at this time and through Milt's efforts, another addition was added to the Club. This included the front section and a bar, and the old basement bar was put in reserve to be used only on special occasions such as New Year's Eve, Regattas, etc. The added section to the north of the dining area was also added at this time.



1952

This is the dinghy harbor.



1952



The lower picture is a tow truck in the dinghy harbor.



1952



Touring ferries.



1952





1952



1954 – Downtown Racine



1955 RYC "Upper Deck"



The Club and its facilities were constantly improved during this time and in 1961, when George Bohn was Commodore, the basement of the club was completely renovated in knotty pine. This picture is the "Upper Deck" which had been the east patio. The man in this picture has a trick knee and elbow, named Bob Patterson. He was the club steward.

1955, March 15 – New Dock to Honor Otto Wadewitz



New Racine Yacht Club Dock Will Honor Otto Wadewitz

The Racine Yacht Club will dedicate its proposed 210-foot dock at the foot of Hubbard St. to Otto Wadewitz, former commodore, yacht club benefactor and power boat racer.

Dr. Robert S. Wright, chairman of the RYC finance committee, today said the board of directors chose to dedicate the new dock to Wadewitz for his services as leader and benefactor to the yacht club in the troubled years of the 1930s.

Commodore Five Years

Wadewitz, who died in 1946, was commodore of the Racine Yacht Club for five terms, from 1932 to 1938. He was one of the founders of the Power Boat Club of Racine which later merged with the Yacht Club.

Construction of the dock, estimated to cost \$10,000, is expected to be completed by June 1. Of wood piling construction, it will be located within the protected harbor, just south of the north arm of the government pier.

Otto Wadewitz was born in Fredonia, Wis., on April 1, 1876. While in his teens he became in-

terested in boating, and when he was a young man, with two other men, he built his first sail boat. He was one of the organizers of the Kinnickinnic Yacht Club of Milwaukee in 1908 which later merged into the present South Shore Yacht Club.

In 1912 he moved to Racine and his interest in boating shifted to power speed boats. He became known throughout the country as he raced Jay-Eye-See I and Jay-Eye-See II in contests from coast to coast. The power boats were named in honor of the J. I. Case Co. which paid the freight charges on moving the boats from race to race. It was at this time that he organized the Power Boat Club.

Coast Guard Used Boat

With the outbreak of World War II, Wadewitz turned over his boat "Rex" to the Coast Guard for wartime duty.

After the war, he retired from Western Printing & Lithographing Co., where he had been a foreman, and moved to Fair Hope, Ala. While there, he organized a yacht club of which he was commodore until he died in 1946.

It went out 150 feet (to the angle). From 1950 on, boating became more of a family affair and many members and their families began to enjoy their membership and participation in the Club's activities. With this expanding interest, it was decided to build the first section of the Otto Wadewitz dock in 1955. The first section was built at a cost of \$13,000. Ollie Anderson was the Commodore at this time.

1956 RYC Dining Room Addition



1966 RYC Jim Rooney-Gary Knop Dock



Three barges were sunk from Chattanooga. The pipes were put in by a group called Haas Associates to extend the pier. Originally only wood piles were in there. Sleeves were jettied down into the piles to hope that the life expectancy would be 15 years. We are living with it in 2012.

1966 RYC Jim Rooney-Gary Knop Dock



In 1966, during Jim Rooney's tenure as Commodore, the new addition was added to the pier, along with the new slips and the barges and rocks for protection. The total cost of the Rooney-Knop dock at present is in excess of \$100,000.

1971 - Racine Yacht Club

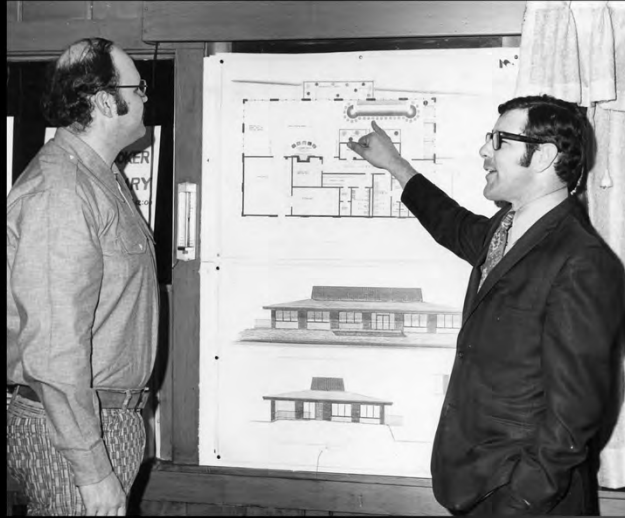


1971 – Planning for the New RYC



In 1971, Vern Barber became Commodore in 1972, a motion was passed to build a new clubhouse. Many members contributed much of their time towards this effort, and it would be impossible to list them all, but special credit must be given to Vern Barber, Commodore, George Zitka, architect, and Gary Knop, past Commodore, who were very instrumental in the final construction.

1971 – Planning for the New RYC



Dick Hennig and Vern Barber are in this picture.

1971 – Planning for the New RYC



At this time, the club was changed to a stock club. A Class was \$300. B Class was under 25 or under 30 was under \$100. Over 30, you paid \$300.

1971 – Last Winter of the old RYC





1972 –
Destruction of
the old RYC

October 31, 1972, after 56 years of faithful service, the old clubhouse was raised and that area will later become additional parking and storage area. This ends the era of the old Club and begins the era of the new Club.

1972 – Destruction of the old RYC



1972 – Ground Breaking for the New RYC



In the picture to the right was Mayor Huck and Commodore Vern Barber. The officers were in the other picture.

1972 – Ground Breaking for the New RYC



The bearded man is Andy Vaasch. Behind Andy is Lloyd Gorsiski.

1972 – Memorial Day, Start of New Building



1972, October – Final Interior Touches



October 1972 New Bar gets some business and some finishing touches!



1972, December 10 - New Building Dedication



From left to right: Bill Rohan,



1973 – Docks take a beating during the Winter



Thought we'd lose the building, according to Rooney and Knop. Let's join Kenosha Yacht Club.

1975 – Loser's Party



Racine Yacht Club Hosted a Loser's Party for many years.

1977, October – Big storm takes it toll!



18 boats were lost. Pictured is Calypso and still lives in 2012.

1977, October – Big storm takes it toll!



Bottom picture is a Catalina 27. It may have been cut in half and put on the Pugh Wall.

1985 – Removal of the North Launch Crane



It was taken down to build the Haul Road. 25,000 trucks went through. 500,000 tons of rock. 350,000 cubic yards were excavated.

1985 – Removal of the North Launch Crane



1981 – Racine Regatta



In the 70's and 80's, racing events were well attended up and down the shore of Lake Michigan. The Racine Regatta was one event not to miss. Great Corn, Great Party, Great Games, and Great Racing!

1984 – The HOOK Race was first run.



2006 Hook Race



The first HOOK Race was sailed in 1984 with 12 boats racing from Racine, WI to Menominee, MI. Bud Garcia, RYC Past Commodore, and John Bennett, Custom Sails, ran the HOOK Race during its first 5 years. In 1986 the finish location was changed to Sturgeon Bay, WI. To date, the fastest elapsed time was just under 24 hours in 1987, by *Foxfire*, a Hunter 54 owned by Mark Westdale. The HOOK Race returned its finish to Menominee, MI in 2010.

2001 February – Star Crane Construction



2001 February – Star Crane Construction



2005 – The Racine Regatta was renamed to
The Al Henning Memorial Regatta



The same year, RYC hosted the
Ultimate 20 North Americans

2012 November – Dredging Project



Lake Michigan water levels lowest in history.



The spoils removal exceeded 5700 cubic yards, and will provide the Racine Yacht Club with some breathing room as we approach our centennial. Target depths will range from 9 feet to 7 feet throughout the entire system with several areas for transients exceeding 9 feet of depth. The channel leading to the Racine Yacht Club from the main channel entrance exceeds 9 feet.

2012 November – Dredging Project



RYC has been active in promoting the love of the water over the years.



Adult Sailing, Junior Sailing, Racing, Cruising, etc.



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Special Thanks goes to:

Past Historical Committee Members:

Art Cherkinian, Carl Tomasek, Herman Nitz, Tom Owen,
Cliff Haas, Jim Rooney, Rick Hennig, Tony Herrmann,
Chester Krusienski



Yacht club built 25 Penguins. Some members started Harbor Light Yacht Club on State Street. The Dursleys were called stinkboaters. They could put 4 boats there. Herman Janson, Jr. won the Great Lakes Championship. He then won an east coast award in 1938 or 1939. Woman's Auxiliary started in 1946 and did a lot for the club, including decorating.