**April 28, 2020**

Hi everybody,

Welcome to the last week in April, and you know what that mean--Summer is coming! We will be back in action enjoying all the wonderful nautically inspired and outdoor activities the Barnegat Bay watershed region provides us! At the same time, I know everyone is looking forward to “re-uniting” and sharing the camaraderie and friendship that is at the root of PBYC.

I am writing this letter with a bit more optimism and some good news. About a week ago the state of New Jersey clarified the status of yacht clubs. Previously yacht clubs were lumped in with social clubs which are currently being given a very low priority for reopening by Governor Murphy. However, there has been a change of heart and yacht clubs are now permitted to operate utilizing the same guidelines as commercial marinas. For members of PBYC who own vessels, this is good news. You may use the dock, hoist and beaches to access and/or launch your sail or motorboats. Members may also use the boatyard to work on them in preparation for the upcoming season. Although there is still a stay at home order in place, boating is considered an exception falling in the category of recreation and exercise.

While this is certainly a welcomed development, the interior of the club, as well as any kind of gatherings other than for maintenance purposes, is still prohibited. Social distancing must be observed and only individuals sheltering together can access and operate their boats. It is crucial to keep in mind how important the optics of PBYC’s compliance are to maintaining our role as an anchor in the community, and we do not want to do anything that might possibly compromise our good standing. To that end, I have been in touch with the PB Police Chief Petrecca in an effort to maintain a dialogue, and to keep him abreast of our activities and adherence to the Governor's current orders.

As far as junior sailing programs go, they are being considered as summer camps and, with to-be-determined guidelines, will be allowed to operate in Phase Two of the get back up and running plan. This will be considered after a successful Phase One implementation which will be steered by 14 days of reported declines in positive COVID-19 cases. I will be taking part in another video conference on May 9th, and I am fairly certain the BBYRA will have guidance for their regatta schedule, and the clubs will follow suit. That said, please keep in mind, everything is subject to change.

Last evening the PBYC Executive Board held a special COVID-19 update meeting. Among other subjects, we discussed the Spring Membership Meeting currently scheduled for May 17th. The take-away for all of you is that we will be utilizing Zoom video conferencing to host it. I plan to hold one or two practice sessions, so anyone needing assistance in utilizing Zoom can get it in advance. If you do not have access to a laptop, pc or internet browser on your cell phone, a dial in number will be provided. Details to follow, and as required by our by-laws, a formal notice will be sent to members in good standing at least 10 days in advance.

On that note, we certainly are not out of the woods, but things are slowly looking up! Please continue to take care of yourself and each other, and I'll look forward to “seeing” all of you via Zoom on the 17th!

Russ

Russ Whitman
Commodore

**April 18, 2020**

Dear Members,

I hope that this email finds you, your family, friends and loved ones safe and in good health.

I have “penned” this e mail to update you following the April 11 BBYRA Executive Committee and club Commodores’ video conference with State Assemblyman Ned Thompson. I would like to echo the words of BBYRA Commodore Mark Masur, in that we are very fortunate to have access to Assemblyman Thompson, who has been instrumental in providing key insights and enlightenment to which we would otherwise not have access. As your Commodore, I am extremely grateful to have him as a resource so that I can better inform and serve all of you.

What has become clear is that the 2020 sailing season will not look or feel like most. We, as members of PBYC and BBYRA, will have to make adjustments that won’t be easy. However, the Barnegat Bay boating community will make it through tumultuous seas, IFwe put our safety and welfare first. Only then can we best plot the course of our sailing and social activities, in this highly fluid environment, with the information we have on hand. As sailors, we are used to adapting to changing conditions. One of my favorite principles for life guidance is a quotation that says something like, “We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust our sails.” As far as I am concerned, that is the attitude we need to embrace in the coming months, as we navigate these uncharted waters.

So, let's get to the current details as I understand them. As you all know, the State of New Jersey is operating under an “Essential Travel” order. What you might not be quite as aware of, is that all “social club” and summer camps in the state are mandated to cease operating. Yacht clubs fall into the category of a social club, while the junior sailing programs are being treated as summer camps. So, for practical purposes, this means that Pine Beach Yacht Club is closed to members. We ARE however, able to maintain and make repairs to the club and grounds, as long as we **adhere to social distancing**. Any construction projects which have already been started can be completed, **if social distancing is observed**. To that end Vice Commodore Cuneo will be supervising a spring cleanup in May which will be structured so that we will be adhering to proper protocol. Questions central to the essential travel order came up frequently during our discussion last Saturday. Pine beach is unique in that most of our members are local and do not “travel” to get to their vessels. However, by the word of the order, traveling to your boat is nonessential. Traveling to the boatyard to work on your boat is nonessential. Naturally, like other issues, the interpretation of this is subjective. For example, there is a conflicting exception to the rules which allow for outdoor activities. Access to and use of sail or motor vessels for pleasure is allowable **as long as social distancing is observed**. In the end, enforcement of restrictions is up to local authorities.

As for Jr. Sailing, every club in the BBYRA is committed to having a program this summer, however it is highly likely that they will be abbreviated. Junior sailing coordinator and PBYC Trustee David Hellmuth will be communicating with all junior sailing participants with further details. Additionally, at our regularly scheduled Executive Board meeting Thursday night, with regret it was unanimously agreed to cancel the 2020 Feed the Need Regatta. Last year’s registered members will be receiving a letter from Regatta Committee Co-chair, Steve Toal. At this point we are not certain how the schedule for PBYC’s Sunday PHRF series will be impacted, but it is important to approach “summer” with an open mind and acceptance that we are going to have to make some sacrifices for the greater good.

In the meantime, scheduled projects and capital improvements continue to take place. Check out the pictures! This week saw the completion of new ceilings and fresh paint to the first and second floor “porch” areas, giving our club’s interior a much-needed facelift! Also, as an anchor in the Borough, the theme of “Pine Beach Strong” greets members and residents of the community with hope and encouragement as they bike, walk and drive by the club.

[Spring 2020 Improvement Photos](https://pbycnj.com/elists/lists/lt.php?tid=cRkBAAgBCwABARpaVFtVGFIEVlsVAFUHAk8HVgxRUgRcAQFSBVZFVgEMAgZXUgYYVFZTCBUMCF0CT1AHWlBPUgFWUwYCBwEAAAwGHwBUCQxRUAEBFQtVVwdPBQMOB08OWFEDHARQAFEDVwVWUlsABQ)

In closing, I want to thank you for the tremendous showing of support during these difficult times. Your PBYC Executive Board is making the best decisions we can in times that none of us have ever experienced before. As members, you should expect that we will suffer “lost revenue” due to the curtailment of income generated by club rentals, socials and bar operations. We will also have a substantial fiscal setback due to the cancellation of the Feed the Need Regatta. However, good fortune shines on PBYC. We are in a position to weather this storm financially and cover the substantial operating expenses we incur whether COVID-19 suspended or not. Other clubs are not as blessed. I sleep better and with re-assurance, that by relying on the strong support, involvement and hard work of our members, we will be able to mitigate the worst of the impact presented by forthcoming revenue shortfalls. It is because of the solid, traditional, hard-work ethic from which our member fabric is woven, that PBYC has survived and prospered for over a century and has a very bright future ahead.

Stay safe, take care of each other, and we’ll be back in action before you know it! I’ll be sure to keep you updated.

Russ

Russ Whitman
Commodore