

Episode 4

Catawba Yacht Club, a brief history....



Sixty-nine years old and still counting. Back in 1939 the stalwart gentlemen who formed the Catawba Yacht Club could not have imagined the Lake of 2008. (It would be another 20 plus years before Lake Catawba would be renamed Lake Wylie.) Back in those days there were but a handful of year-round houses on the "river". It was a far piece out of town and it took a while to get there.

Catawba Yacht Club (CYC) was formed, as described in a December 1939 Charlotte Observer front page story, by enthusiastic sailboat and motorboat owners from Charlotte, Gastonia, Rock Hill and other communities near the river. The first Commodore was Mr. A. S. Cooley and membership was for men only, and limited to 50 members. Family members were welcomed, but membership was a male thing. The Club's membership has grown to around a hundred today and, of course, is open to both sexes. And, there are lots of kids "learning the ropes" and enjoying the club facilities.



The clubhouse is a "neat as a pin" board and batten building that has recently had a spotless stainless steel kitchen addition and is perfect for its setting on the beach overlooking the main channel. The walls of the quaint old clubhouse are lined with old photos and memorabilia such as this old map from the 1950s. Black and whites of Lightings, Stars, Highlanders and myriad home built wooden sail boats are everywhere. In addition to the clubhouse there is a marine railway, launching ramp, dry boat storage and floating docks available to members. CYC is located about a mile down river from the Buster Boyd Bridge on the NC side of the lake.

Rowing and sailing are the primary activities at the club, but motor boats area allowed. The one quality a potential new member must have is a spirit of volunteerism. There are no paid employees or caretakers here. All work is done by the members and they run a pretty "tight ship" in my opinion.



Now the rest of the story This venerable old institution founded by and limited to male members now (2008) has a female Commodore. Kathy Crenshaw is the current Commodore and she was most gracious in helping me prepare this story.

Courtesy of Don Stephens
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