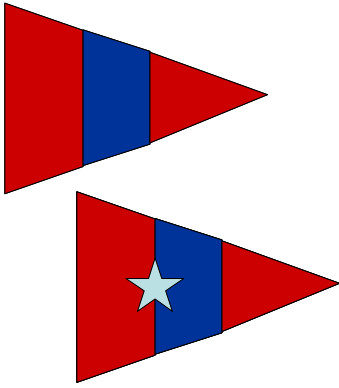


# *Corinthian Yacht Club: A Historical Review*



**T**he membership of the Corinthian Yacht Club celebrated the centennial of the founding of the Club by hosting an open house on September 13, 2003 and a formal dinner dance on September 27, 2003. Rick Sass and Dolores Derrington compiled a history of the club, including photos, and presented a narrated slide show at the formal dinner-dance. Sharon Cullison and Pat Fitzpatrick assisted with photos and graphics. This document captures the essence of that presentation.





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*“Aboard the sloop Janet, at anchor near the old Cumberland boathouse at the foot of F Street, on the Potomac River, were two young men, Ross L. Fryer, owner of the Janet, and J. Edwin Lawton, his friend and constant companion. It was a sunshiny day in September 1903, and they had gone aboard to dry the sails. The sails hoisted and some chores attended to aboard the ship, they sat down in the cockpit for a few yarns. Fifteen or eighteen sailboats, owners of which used the Cumberland boathouse for headquarters, lay at anchor near by or along the shores of Analoetan Island.”*

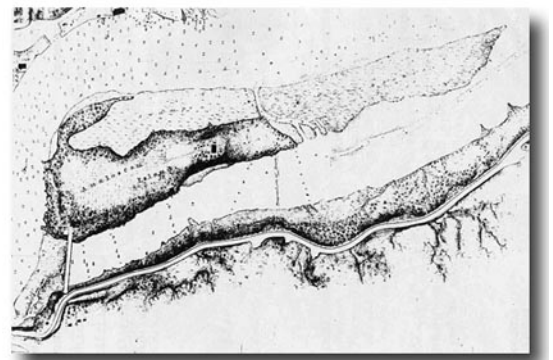
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**S**o begins Charles S. West’s History of the Corinthian Yacht Club 1903 –1938.

Based on Rick’s research, Analoetan Island, must be about the spot where our protagonists, **Ross Fryer** and **Ed Lawton** first discussed the formation of the Corinthian Yacht Club.

Analoetan Island is now Roosevelt Island. The early Corinthians built a picnic table here and would tie up and have cookouts. Shad bakes were then the favorite excuse for a party.

After Ross and Ed decided to form a yacht club, they went ashore and asked Bob Cumberland, if they could hold their meetings on the second floor of his boathouse. He agreed and the first meeting of the Corinthian Yacht Club was held on September 15, 1903.



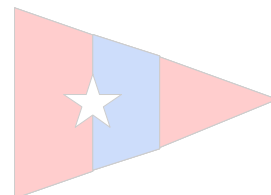
*Analoetan/Roosevelt Island*



*CYC Locations in D.C. & Virginia*

West’s account has the Cumberland Boathouse’s location as the foot of F Street on the Potomac River. F Street doesn’t go all the way to the river today, but if you extend it on a map, it would probably run between the Kennedy Center and the Watergate Hotel.

At the first meeting, the burgee was designed and adopted. Later that year, the star was added on April 14, 1904.



**Ross Fryer** was elected the first Commodore of CYC at the initial meeting on September 15. He would later serve as Vice Commodore in 1906-07, Rear Commodore from 1930 – 32, and Trustee in 1928. He was a member of **Charles West's** committee on the history of the Club and undoubtedly provided much of the early flavor. **Ross Fryer** was still a member of the Club when he died on January 26, 1933.

*(Right: Ross Fryer, 1<sup>st</sup> CYC Commodore)*



**T**his picture of the 1906 Board of Trustees (*left*) includes **J. Edwin Lawton**, who was one of the most influential early members of the Club. He served as Measurer in 1904–05, Vice Commodore in 1905-06, Secretary Treasurer in 1906–07 and Trustee from 1928—1934. He led the team that secured the land and built the first club house and was National Commander of the United States Power Squadron.

**Ed Lawton** taught celestial navigation to **General George Patton**, who then proceeded to sail his sailboat from California to Hawaii with his wife and sister-in-law as crew, using the navigation skills that Ed had taught him. When Patton arrived in Hawaii he telegraphed Ed:

*“We sailed in accordance to outlined schedule and made landfall as planned.”*

Ed was a member of the Club when he died in 1971 at the age of 89. He had left the Club in 1908 for reasons of health and returned in 1922. He was a member for 54 years.

In 1905 the Club members decided that they needed a clubhouse and docks of their own so they appointed **Ross Fryer, Ed Lawton** and others to find a location, secure the funding and build a clubhouse. The Army agreed to lease CYC a site at the foot of N Street at the Washington Channel for \$75 a year. The Club raised the initiation fee to \$3 and the annual dues to \$1 and issued five dollar bonds paying 5% interest to Club members.

**CYC** then built its first clubhouse, a one story affair that cost them \$3550 (*pictured, right*).

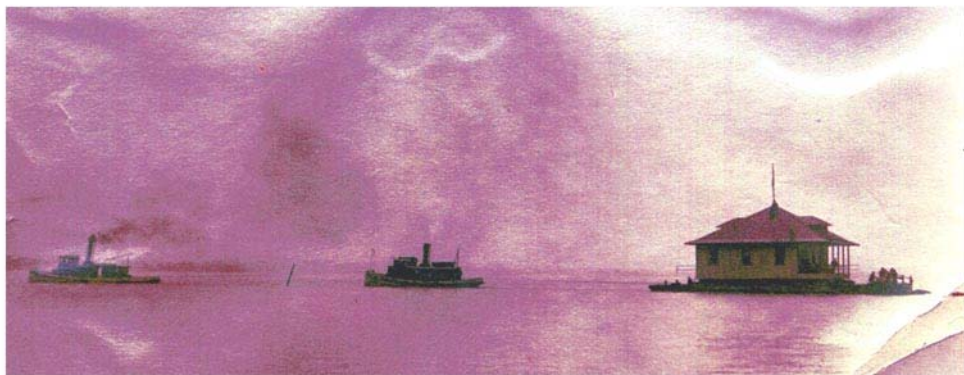
Late in 1906, CYC learned that the Army was about to lease another parcel of land, adjacent to CYC, for a public boathouse. They quickly and successfully offered the Army \$100 per year to lease this land.



**I**n 1911 there were 130 members and the Club was doing very well. The first Clubhouse was just beyond Fort McNair on the right. It is now the Pier for the District of Columbia Harbor Police and fire boats.

In 1911 the Army raised the ground rent to \$274 per annum. CYC decided it needed better slips for their boats so they voted to seek a new location. The land acquisition committee reported back that the Richmond Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad would lease CYC 600 feet of waterfront in Virginia for free. The land was located between the railroad and highway bridges - where the 14th Street Bridge is today.

In May of 1912 the clubhouse was moved from its previous location in the Washington Channel across the river to its new location in Virginia (right).



The first meeting of the Club at its new Virginia location was June 12, 1912.

In 1910 **Dr. A. B. Bennett** joined the Club. He would be an influential leader in the Club for the next 58 years. **Dr. Bennett** was a Commodore of CYC for a total of 10 years, 1914-21 and 1927-30.

In 1931 he was presented a pair of binoculars in commemoration of ten years as Commodore. In 1950 he presented these binoculars to the current and future Commodores as a symbol of their office. We remember **Dr. Bennett** every Change of Watch as the new Commodore is presented with those same binoculars (pictured below, right).

**Dr. Bennett** (below) also served as Chief Commander of the United States Power Squadron.



**I**n 1914 The Potomac River Power Squadron was formed. CYC was one of the forces behind its inception.

In 1919 **C. Francis Jenkins** joined the Club. He had a Hangar at the Club and used it to house his experimental seaplane. He started leasing the Club's hangar to some non-members for more than he was paying in dues and fees. The Club finally decided to take over possession of the hangar to which Jenkins reluctantly agreed.

There were several contested elections during this period. In 1920 a **Mr. Kennedy** ran for Commodore against **A. B. Bennett**. He thought he would be elected because he had 16 pledged votes, normally enough to win. Bennett's friends, however, had gotten out the vote and just before the meeting started, members arrived in droves. The vote was 53 to 16 for Bennett.

Another contested election for Commodore occurred in 1923. The nominations had not been properly posted and there was a motion to postpone the elections. The point of order was not accepted and the elections were held. The vote was 46 to 17. In 1927 **Commodore Smith** was very popular among some of the members, as the *President's Cup Regatta* had brought a great deal of publicity to the Club and many new influential members had joined the Club. Smith had stepped on some toes however and in 1927 A. B. Bennett ran against him. The vote was tied at 45 to 45. A second vote was taken and Bennett won by two votes. Smith rushed over to congratulate him. All was well.

In 1928 the Club established a station at Galesville MD. In 1929 a Sea Scouts boy scout troop was founded. In 1929 life memberships were abolished.

In 1926 The President's Cup Regatta was started by CYC. They spent \$5,000.00 for a gold trophy. After it was over and all of the finances had been totaled, there was a deficit of \$5243.57.



*President's Cup Regatta*



**I**n 1929 and 1930 the Club was involved with the move back to Washington and didn't have the time to put on a regatta. Finally, in 1934 the Club signed an agreement with the President's Cup Regatta Association whereby two Corinthians would be on the Board of the Association, and the Association would run the Regatta.

In 1927, after Bennett had been elected Commodore, at the first Board meeting he stated that the Club might lose its location on the VA shore and they should begin looking for an alternative location. They also started saving as much money as they could.

In 1929 the Club had to move from Virginia, as the George Washington Parkway had been approved by Congress.

They negotiated with **Colonel Ulysses S. Grant III** of the United States Army and found the Second and V streets location. At the last minute there was a roadblock. The title to the property had defects, which needed to be cleared. Individual members had to find places for their boats as CYC had to leave the basin in Virginia immediately. The Washington Yacht Club let Corinthian use its facilities. Although they had been led to believe the government would pick up the tab for the move, in the end CYC was completely on its own.

After the lease on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and V Streets location was finally signed there were only 17 days to move the Clubhouse from VA before it would be demolished.

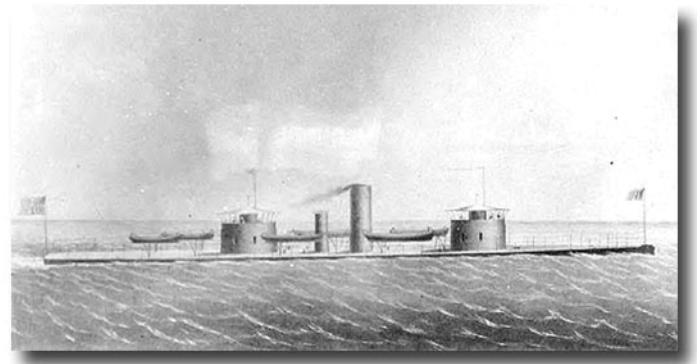
At 2<sup>nd</sup> and V, instead of a basement, a one story brick foundation was built and the Clubhouse placed upon it. A kitchen, locker room, game room and dining room were added at ground level. A restaurant was established. On April 30, 1930 the first meeting was held in the Clubhouse in DC. The move and construction of new facilities in Washington was estimated to cost \$36K. The entire harbor had to be dredged. **Ed Lawton** oversaw the dredging. The marine railway was also installed. (CYC had one in each of its first three locations)



*Clubhouse with brick foundation*

CYC's Bean Room houses a large ship's wheel. Members immediately recognize this wheel since it has been in the Bean Room since the room was built.

This wheel belonged to the **USS Monadnock** (*below*), a sister ship of the famous (or perhaps infamous if you are from Virginia) USS Monitor involved with the Merrimac in the first battle of ironclad ships in the Civil war. The Monadnock was "rebuilt" in 1874, but effectively a completely new ship was constructed. The Club acquired the wheel after the Navy sold the ship in 1923.



The CYC Anchorettes were founded in 1958 and open to wives and unmarried daughters of members. In those days the wives listened to their husbands and many members encouraged their wives not to join so the organization was slow getting started. In 1964 they sponsored a fashion show, however, and that put them on the map.



One hundred sixty-five people attended the second fashion show, held in 1965. In 1964 the Anchorettes also sponsored the Christmas Bazaar. With earnings from these two events the Anchorettes paid for many of the Club furnishings, from carpet to drapes to furniture and silverware.

The Anchorettes also took charge of the Princess arrangements for the Flag Raising ceremony. The princesses were wined, dined and escorted by midshipmen from the Naval Academy. The winner of the competition was crowned Queen of Corinthian and went on to compete in the Queen of the Chesapeake competition sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club Association (CBYCA).



*Cover, CYC Anchorettes Cookbook*

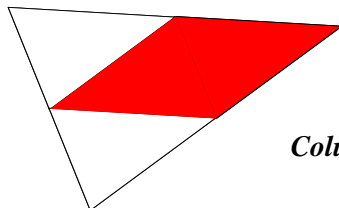
In 1964 the Secretary of the Interior determined that the United States Government should no longer lease facilities to a private club such as Corinthian. CYC owned the land on which the clubhouse stood but did not own the land where they had built the piers.

As a result CYC lost its piers which the government then made into a public marina. CYC boat owners were able to still keep their boats there but the move on the part of the Secretary precipitated a search for a new location for the Club.

The Second and V Streets Club property was sold on August 23, 1967. The total price was \$316,800. A deposit of \$50,000 cash was made and a first deed of trust in the amount of \$266,800 was signed.

With the proceeds from this sale the CYC Trust was established September 7, 1967. It was started with the \$48,834 from the down payment for sale of the Second and V Streets Club location. A promissory note for \$266,800 was also signed. The total balance in the trust was \$315,634.

In 1968, after searching all up and down the Potomac and Bay, the Club decided that the best option for a new location was to join with the Columbia Yacht Club which in 1962 had purchased the Bean Fishing Center on Smith Creek. CYC had the \$50,000 from the CYC Trust with which it could begin building a true Yacht Club facility at Smith Creek.



*Columbia Yacht Club Burgee*



**T**his decision was not without major controversy. Many in the Club were in favor of just disbanding the Club, the proceeds perhaps going to the members. **Dr. Clarence “Bud” Schatz**, (*pictured, right*) a current CYC member, was then Secretary-Treasurer and one of those who saw a brighter future for CYC. He helped convince a majority of the membership to vote to join with Columbia.



**Howard Grant** (*left*) was the Commodore of The Columbia Yacht Club at the time and was also very instrumental in getting approval within both Clubs to merge. It is a tribute to him that he was the first Commodore elected by the merged Club.

**Allen Manning** (*right*), who was the Commodore of CYC at the time of the merger, was also instrumental in bringing it about. Some indication of the level of controversy within CYC that must have surrounded the merger is the fact in 1967 there were 349 members in CYC and after the move to Smith Creek there were about half that number even though the Columbia Yacht Club members had been added.



Those of us in CYC today can be most thankful to these forward thinking Past Commodores or our Club would not be here today.



**Bean Fishing Camp – Columbia Yacht Club merged with Corinthian Yacht Club**

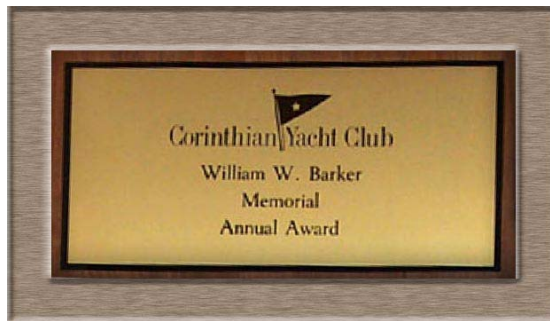


**CYC** was proud to have **William W. Barker** as a member. William Barker joined Columbia Yacht Club in 1936.

He lived on his boat, Eagle, at Clayton Marina (Now Point Lookout Marina, across the creek). His address was Eagle, Ridge Maryland. He alerted the Columbia Yacht Club that the Bean fishing center was for sale resulting in its eventual purchase.

When he died on February 26, 1976, his will left \$2000 to the Club for the establishment of the Barker Award. Note that this was a handwritten will.

*“The sum of Two Thousand Dollars (2,000) to be paid to Corinthian Yacht Club to be used to donate a trophy to be kept in Club House with yearly name plates to donees. Trophy to be a memorial trophy in name of William W. Barker to be given to a member of CYC who contributed most to the Club during each year except to members of Board of Trustees or Trustees.”*



**Barker Award Plaque**



In 1956, when **John F. Kennedy** was a Senator, *Life Magazine* wanted to do a story on the rising political star and to shoot this picture of Jack and Jackie on a Lightning sailboat which Kennedy raced in Massachusetts. **Bill Rushlaw**, a past Commodore of Columbia, furnished the boat for this photograph (*pictured, right – July 20, 1953 Issue, Life Magazine*).

After Kennedy had been elected president, he accepted a silver membership card in the Columbia Yacht Club presented by **Frank McDonald** (left).



**L**et's turn our attention now to life at CYC in Ridge Maryland.

In November of 1971, CYC finally left the 2nd and V Street location and permanently relocated to Smith Creek. Along with the move, they brought many mementos of the earlier days. One of these was this flagpole which was cut in pieces and trucked down here. It is, of course, the flagpole we still use today.

*Right: Yardarm in front of the Clubhouse in Ridge*



CYC was starting to take shape (*below*). The sheds were built.



*CYC taking shape with construction of A-Dock sheds*



*CYC Gas Dock, now E-Dock*



**W**hen we first moved to Smith Creek, the old farmhouse, the current clubhouse, was rented to a Naval Officer. Cottage 2, which had been a restaurant at the Bean Fishing Center, was used as the Clubhouse. When the Club finally moved the clubhouse into the old farmhouse, Cottage 2 was given to the kids to use as their clubhouse. As the kids were not allowed in the adult's clubhouse unless accompanied by an adult, they passed a rule that adults were not allowed in their clubhouse unless accompanied by a kid.

*Original "Clubhouse" then "Kid's Clubhouse now "Cottage 2"*



West's history indicates that CYC was changing stewards all of the time. For instance, from 1919 to 1921 they had four different stewards. On every other page they were hiring or firing a steward.

An unexpected bonus of moving to Southern Maryland was Steward Martin Russell (pictured, left). CYC changed the revolving door and Martin has been with the Club ever since it moved to Ridge.

Improvements continued to take place at CYC. Below is a picture of the Bean Room under construction. Note that this is different from the building we have today.

**Elsie Bean**, widow of **John Bean**, from whom Columbia bought the property, lived next door to the Club and was a special friend of many at CYC. She was an Honorary member of the Club. She attended all of the Club social functions and in her will, made it possible for CYC to

acquire the property on which her house was built. The Bean Room is named for Elsie Bean. (Pictured, right: *Corinthian News with Bean Room Construction on Cover*)

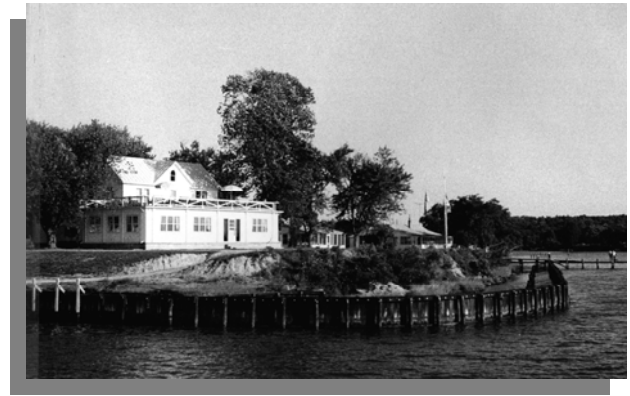


Another mover and shaker of CYC in the past was **Eddie Altman**. Eddie was responsible for the construction of this bulkhead.



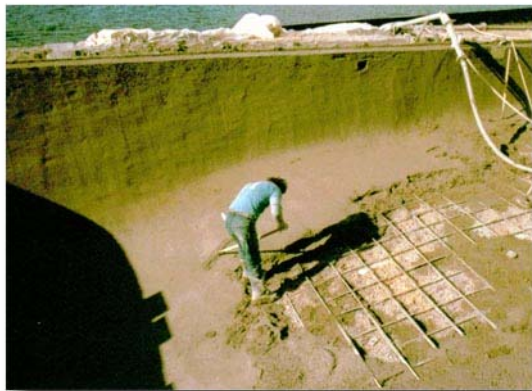
In 1979 or 1980 the roof was added to C Dock. It was kept low and flat to protect the view of the neighbors.

*Right: "Eddie Altman Bulkhead" around CYC*



*Left: Current C-Dock with Lowered Roof*

The need for a pool had been discussed for years. Finally, when **Lynn Young** was Commodore in 1983 or 1984 they waited until the hottest day of the year and held a membership vote on the subject. There were only three negative votes and pool construction began. A piece of folklore of the Club is that the three that voted against the pool became its primary users.



*Spreading concrete for the pool's foundation*

The pool construction was a total CYC effort. The Club members drew up the specifications and did much of the work on the pool surroundings themselves. The front door to the Bean Room was re-located to the pool side of the room, once the pool was installed.

The Pool opening was such an anticipated affair that **Mickey Altman** couldn't wait and jumped in the pool with all of her clothes on.

Corinthians sure know how to party!





*Re-located doors to side of Bean Room*



*Pool Opening Party*

All CYC members are familiar with the peculiarities of the septic system at the Club. In 1991 they thought they had solved the problem by installing 3 two thousand gallon tanks with pumps to slowly pump the effluent into the drain field over time. As we face the future, additional improvements are necessary.

*Right: Septic System Upgrade*



In about 1993 the electricity on the docks had become a potential safety hazard and P/C Jim Webster led the effort to upgrade the system. Along with P/C Jim Eckart, a compelling argument was made to the membership by tossing a piece of “fried wiring” on the table. Funds were quickly approved.

*Left: Upgraded electrical panel*



**CYC** has always had a tradition of women as members. The first woman member was **Mrs. N. W. Davis** elected to honorary membership at the third meeting on Oct 1, 1903. In 1918, **Mrs. E. F. Johnson** was nominated for Rear Commodore, but she withdrew her name before the election. By 1934 several women had been elected to active membership and when CYC joined with Columbia Yacht Club, two women were included in the membership, one of whom, **Florence “Dottie” Colbert**, was subsequently elected recording secretary of CYC.

When **Chuck Cipriotti** was Commodore in 1996 he introduced the concept of joint membership, whereby both husband and wife could hold a single membership in the Club. The Club was not quite ready for such a move then but, under **Ron Ryland’s** leadership on June 23, 2001 the membership voted to amend the by-laws to provide for joint membership. **Rick Sass** led the discussion prior to the membership vote on joint membership.

The Club learned in 2000 that **Joe Lore**, owner of the property adjacent to the Club was planning on opening a commercial party boat fishing business within fifty feet of B Dock. The Club membership rallied behind the Board as they had done back in 1906, and quickly approved a plan to purchase the land from Mr. Lore.

Along with the farm land, CYC also purchased F-Dock where Mr. Lore was going to center his fishing business.

*Right: CYC Farm Land*



The annals of The Corinthian Yacht Club record no harder work by the members than the effort expended on a project to construct replacement dock boxes for A and B-Docks. **VC Darrell Derrington** led the charge with **P/C Tom Shier** with a “We can do this!” rallying cry. Many weekends in horrendous heat were dedicated to constructing these sturdy dockboxes over several months (*pictured below*).



CYC has weathered many storms, but none more scary than Hurricane Isabel in September of 2003, right between our two Centennial Events: an open house, and a formal ball. Isabel brought higher water to Smith Creek than even the Hurricane of 1933. Fortunately the only damage was a couple of downed trees, some loose planks on E-Dock, and a lot of scared boaters. Our biggest challenge was doing without power for a week—meaning no water, all the freezers needing cleaning out, etc. The power came back on just in time for the Centennial Ball.



**CYC** members are most proud of the first one hundred years of the Corinthian Yacht Club. They have all had very special times and friendships here and look forward to a prosperous future as they start CYC's second hundred years.

**For more information on the Corinthian Yacht Club,  
visit**

**<http://www.cycchesapeake.com>**

