Recollections of the Seattle Forum

The 6th ICOYC Commodores’ Forum was excellent, with all the best ingredients turned into a most satisfying event for both the delegates and their partners. It was the biggest Forum yet and 23 of the 26 yacht clubs in the ICOYC were represented by Commodores, General Managers and quite a number of Past Commodores – most of whom would now hate to miss a Forum. There were also several guest clubs from the USA.

Everyone went away with new ideas and made new friends to contact in the future. Since the Forum many have commented to me how useful it was, and how much they enjoyed it.

Superb Organization
Seattle Yacht Club’s organization was superb. The coaches and yachts, organized by members, arrived and delivered us on time with great good humour. Everyone was welcomed with red (for the men) or white (for the ladies) Slap jackets, Forum hats and bags of ‘goodies’. The bags included cakes and biscuits made for their visitors by Seattle Yacht Club members. We immediately warmed to them.

The impressive Opening Ceremony was quickly followed by a very professional introduction to all the America’s Cup activities by Tom Ehman and Tom Huston, which included the chance to inspect the cup itself at close quarters. We were grateful to the AC team for joining the Forum and sharing the latest information. Earlier in the day they had briefed the young members of all local clubs.

Gary Jobson, President of US Sailing, was the keynote speaker on the Wednesday at the start of the Forum. His opening remarks ‘The yacht club is the core institution in the sport of sailing’, had all those present nodding in agreement. He added ‘each member should do something for the club each year’. All those involved with the Forum have certainly done that.

Two Days of Discussions
The next two days of discussions by the delegates and selected outside speakers were divided into four key topic areas, each chaired by one of the Vice Presidents and the Secretary of the Council. On the Thursday morning we covered the strategic and financial issues facing yacht clubs; in the afternoon the focus was on club organization – which showed there were many different ways to be successful.

On the Friday morning we considered yachting events, new formats and the implications of clubs owning fleets of keelboats for their members to use. In the afternoon various membership issues were on the agenda, including the perpetual dilemma of how to keep the twenty to thirty-year-old members involved. There were many good ideas on the table.

Other Activities
For the discussions on the Saturday all the delegates were transported by sea to Seattle YC’s outstation at Port Madison on Bainbridge Island. Here we had the final sessions, including a short briefing on the initial plans for the 7th Commodores’ Forum in the UK in September 2012, shortly after the London Olympic Games. There was the now traditional racing between all the Commodores present in J-105s in the afternoon, followed by a final BBQ, drinks and toasts all round.

The delegates’ partners had many opportunities to see the best of Seattle, including the shops. By contrast the delegates had little free time, but enjoyed a visit to the studio of the world-renowned glass artist, Dale Chihuly, followed by an evening cruise on Seattle YC yachts around Lake Washington. Later we had visits to the superbly stocked Fisheries Supply chandlery and an evening, with a buffet, at the extraordinary Boeing Museum of Flight. All this was followed by a gala dinner and dance on the Friday evening at the club.

So Much to Discuss
Some delegates thought that we had tried to fit too much into the time available, but others said ‘why not, when we have come thousands of miles to be here?’ It was clear that there is much more to be discussed at future Forums. For all those who couldn’t join us in Seattle there will be the opportunity to review at least some of the issues during the regional Commodores’ Conferences in March 2012. Summaries of many of the talks and slides are, of course, available to member clubs on the website.

John Stork
ICOYC President
Forum Summary: Financial

On the following pages are summaries of the four main sessions from the 6th ICOYC Commodores’ Forum held at Seattle Yacht Club. These summaries provide a unique insight to each session.

I was given the dubious honour of helping organize and chair the first of the 6th Commodores’ ICOYC Forum sessions held at the Seattle Yacht Club. My particular session was titled ‘Financial Session – Managing in Difficult Economic Conditions’.

This financial session comprised three parts, namely:

1. How Economic Conditions Have Affected Our Clubs.
2. Strategic Planning – Identifying Your Club’s Value Proposition.
3. Yacht Club Involvement in Charities, Trusts And Foundations.

Economic Conditions

The first part of the session involved a designated speaker from one of the yacht clubs representing each of the thirteen countries present at this Forum. Each speaker gave a two to three minute synopsis on the likely effects of the current economic conditions on their club, this year and in five years’ time.

This was a very useful introduction to the Forum and this financial session served as an ‘icebreaker’ and set the broad worldwide economic scene faced by all clubs throughout the world. It also served to introduce a good representation of the clubs attending the Forum and provided a chance to share problems and concerns in a friendly environment.

Strategic Planning

The second session, ‘Strategic Planning – Identifying Your Club’s Value Proposition’, comprised an interactive presentation and break-out discussion groups with feedback summaries. This session was prepared, presented and chaired by Jim Flaherty, a retired senior partner and chairman of Deloitte LLP and Global Board Member of the worldwide accounting firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and a member of the Seattle Yacht Club.

Jim produced and delivered a very professional and ‘down-to-earth’ presentation which took us through all the necessary steps in understanding and implementing a strategic plan in our yacht clubs. Jim used many yacht club examples at each step of the process and provided us all with a great set of guidelines for undertaking such a plan in our club.

Jim also integrated a break-out and report-back session as part of the presentation comprising some seven location-similar discussion groups which focussed on some of the key recent Commodores Concern Survey issues highlighted earlier in the year which included the following:

1. Membership – Has your club positioned itself to retain and attract new members?
2. Is your club structure appropriate for the level of membership dues, income and capital asset replacements or refurbishment?
3. Does your club have the information necessary to make important decisions?

All in all this session was very successful with significant interaction and discussion, plus a straightforward template of the strategic planning process for us all to take back to our clubs.

Charities, Trusts and Foundations

The third session, ‘Yacht Club Involvement in Charities, Trusts and Foundations’, was comprised of two parts with two speakers talking on their experience in different aspects of this subject.

Our first presenter was John Stork, our current ICOYC President and past Vice Commodore of the Royal Thames, who spoke on ‘Charities within Our Club’. John gave an interesting insight into how his club had come to support two different worthwhile causes/charities over the years and how they had endeavoured to bring the activities together under one set of trustees in order to provide focus, improve administration and most importantly assist and improve fund raising opportunities.

Our second presenter was Philip Smith, Commodore of the Eastern Yacht Club, who spoke on ‘Trusts and Their Limitations’. Philip spoke primarily from a USA perspective and covered the role of charities in USA clubs and some of the complex tax issues relating to this activity. Philip noted that most USA yacht club charities were formed to support sailing and sailors and while this has been successful noted that general charitable efforts have been limited and there were probably better avenues to do this than through yacht clubs.

Conclusion

I think overall the session achieved its objectives of creating a feeling of friendship and trust together with an early exchange of views between clubs, many of whom had not met before.

The opening session focussing on the impact of the current economic conditions highlighted a number of similar issues and concerns that were able to be shared and discussed in a very open way.

The strategic planning session provided a very straightforward and comprehensive methodology for clubs to follow in creating a plan with a template to take back to share with the relevant members and staff of their respective clubs.

The role of charities in clubs was also well explored with some examples and pointers in how these might be established and the benefit that comes to the club and members from such activities.

Past Commodore Rex Harrison
Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron
Forum Summary: Organizational

‘One size doesn’t fit all’; ‘Bigger is not necessarily Better’; and, ‘If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it!’ These expressions in large measure sum up the conclusions reached from the Organizational session of the Seattle Forum.

Chaired by Past Commodore Jim Burns of the Royal Vancouver YC, the Organizational session sought to find how much common ground could be found amongst the various ICOYC clubs in their organizational models.

To that end, all of the ICOYC Clubs were asked to respond to a questionnaire setting out both the numbers of voting and non-voting members, the size and structure of their governing body (Board of Directors/Governing Council) and the term of office of the various Flag Officers and committee chairs.

Every single member club responded to the request and provided an extraordinary amount of detail, all of which was collated and presented in a spreadsheet format to the Forum. The results were quite remarkable and demonstrated both great consistency in the basic governance model and tremendous diversity in the numbers of directors, officers and members.

The spreadsheet demonstrated quite graphically the fact that the Council consists of clubs that range in size from 354 to 5500 voting members. The size of the Boards of Directors ranged from 5 to 21 members and most interestingly, the ratio of directors to voting members ranged from 1 per 27 members to 1 per 422 members. The spreadsheet is included in the presentation of Past Commodore Burns which may be found on the website.

To add some spice to the somewhat dry numbers, the Forum was then treated to an ‘Oxford Union Debate’ between Past Commodore John McNeill of St Francis YC and Past Commodore Sarah Howard of Royal Vancouver YC on the proposition that: ‘Yacht club boards are too large and inefficient and should be reduced.’

Past Commodore McNeill, with tongue firmly in cheek, presented a very lively argument for the proposition and Past Commodore Howard, not to be outdone, responded in kind. The debate was not resolved and no winner declared but Past Commodores McNeill and Howard jointly presented their ‘Top Ten’ indicators of whether one has a functional or dysfunctional board of directors. The top ten lists are to be found on the website.

While very humorous, several very useful points were made about how to tell that you have a governance problem, e.g. ‘meetings include reading written reports to each other’ and, ‘board issues reach the bar before you do’. The tag team of McNeill and Howard received a very appreciative response at the end of their presentation.

Having completed a summary analysis of the size and shape of the various governance structures or boards and considered, albeit in a humorous fashion, the relevance of the size of the board, we then turned to the issue of how to identify and recruit talented members to join the board and rise through the ranks of the club.

In this regard, we were very fortunate to have the views of one Commodore and three Past Commodores, each of whom presented a quite different perspective. In order of presentation, they were: Commodore Phil Smith of Eastern YC; Past Commodore Bill Wood of Royal Sydney YS; Past Commodore Mark Fitzhardinge of Royal Perth YC; and Past Commodore Inge Strompf-Jepsen of Royal Hong Kong YC.

Both the terms of office for Flag Officers and the varying degrees of lock step in the movement of officers up through the ranks of Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore and Commodore are very different at each of these clubs. As such each Commodore brought a different perspective to the discussion.

However, all agreed that it is a critical function of the senior Flag Officers of the club to be constantly recruiting and evaluating ‘talent’ amongst the membership and either passing on to or participating in the deliberations of the nomination committee of the club however it may be constituted.

One interesting side note was that Past Commodore Fitzhardinge was very much in favour of the Roman Legion model of organizational structure. This model propounds the theory that 10 is the ‘magic number’ in the size of organizations and likely the largest size that a committee can be and still function efficiently. The proposition created quite a stir amongst the delegates but unfortunately our time was short as we had to move on to the final section of the Organizational session, where theory meets practice.

In this regard, we were very fortunate indeed to have Past Commodore Jim Wade of the Southern YC in New Orleans give a moving description of the catastrophe that befell Southern YC in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Past Commodore Wade was the Commodore of the Club at that time and personally managed the complete reconstruction of the Club after fire and flood reduced it to rubble. For many of the delegates at the Forum whose clubs have survived many challenges, it was simply inconceivable that the Club would virtually cease to exist for several months and operate out of trailers for almost 18 months before the re-build was completed.

Past Commodore Wade described the challenges of dealing with the Board of the Club in the midst of such a disaster and the very substantial amount of money that was required to be committed with no guarantee that the members would return at the end of the process. It was a very moving presentation and a real-life example of how members and boards can pull together in a time of crisis. We are very grateful to Past Commodore Wade for sharing it with us.

In all the Organizational session was useful and informative but more than anything served to demonstrate that despite the extraordinary diversity of the Council’s member clubs, there are many common themes in the organization of our clubs.

Past Commodore Jim Burns
Royal Vancouver YC
Forum Summary: Yachting

At earlier Forums we have discussed various aspects of yachting, but it was not until the Forum in Seattle that we were able to devote a whole session to the subject. This was not before time – after all yachting is the primary raison d’être of all our clubs.

The Forum had started on a yachting theme when the America’s Cup was introduced to all the delegates. It was continued on the subsequent Friday with twelve knowledgeable speakers, ably chaired by ICOYC Vice President Gero Brugmann.

State of the Industry

The scene was set by top representatives from the US marine industry reviewing the state of their boating, which is going through difficult times. New boat sales, particularly powerboats, have halved in the last five years, although boat usage continues at a high level – in somewhat older boats. There is also a concern that it is older people sailing those boats. Thom Dammrich, head of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, with George Harris of the Northwest Marine Trade Association, told us about all their new initiatives to ‘Discover Boating’ and ‘Grow Boating’. In this context delegates were intrigued by one of the resources offered by the NMMA to hardened sailors – the ‘Spousal Conversion Kit’. Thom Dammrich had a most telling chart that showed clearly that childhood boating experience is an important reason for adults taking to the water, highlighting the significance of all the yacht clubs’ youth programs.

Keelboat Fleets and Younger Members

Many of the subsequent talks focussed on the needs of younger club members. Jeff Johnstone, CEO of J-Boats, introduced the subject of clubs owning or managing fleets of small keelboats. He pointed out the many advantages they offer, particularly in developing younger members. Jeff ran through a number of case studies, showing the criteria that can be used by clubs when making decisions about the types of boat to select for fleets. Typically the recent choices have been between J-22s, J-80s, SB3s and Sonars – and in later talks we heard about club boats that had been specially designed to meet local needs. Jeff shared J-Boat’s experience in how to fund club fleets and introduced the concept of shared ownership models with both the club and individuals being involved.

Jeff Johnstone was followed by speakers from Royal Perth YC (Past Commodore Mark Fitzhardinge), Sandringham YC (Commodore Steve Richards) and St Francis YC (Vice Commodore Peter Stoneberg), all of whom discussed their experiences in developing club fleets. Royal Perth YC had collaborated with three other clubs to develop the Bakewell-White 8, which has now grown in popularity in Western Australia. Sandringham in Melbourne has a fleet of Beneteau 7.5s which are being kept going successfully, and St Francis in San Francisco has had 12 months experience with a new fleet of J-22s, following a detailed selection process. Many others in the Forum added their own experiences and there were indications that about half the clubs in the ICOYC now have keelboat fleets available for younger members, training, team and match racing. It’s a new trend.

The useful discussion about yacht club fleets was followed by equally interesting presentations from Royal New Zealand YS (Rear Commodore Andy Anderson) and Royal Freshwater Bay YC (Commodore Peter Ahern) about how they used their fleets of keelboats. New Zealand has Elliott 7s developed locally, and Freshwater Bay also uses Bakewell-White 8s.

Clubs’ Yachting Events

The yachting discussion then turned to various clubs’ own events. In an earlier Forum we had heard of the value of building up a ‘signature’ event. In Seattle we were introduced to all the decisions behind changing the format of the Royal Swedish YC’s Gotland Runt race, which in the past has attracted between 300 and 500 competing boats. With a new sponsor, new ideas were developed in 2011 and now the 2012 race will start from the middle of Stockholm, which has already attracted considerable media interest. The KSSS Managing Director Therese Ahlström told the delegates the fascinating story of how the event had evolved and invited other clubs to send competitors.

Powerboats and Cruising

Therese was followed by two speakers from the Royal Southern YC in UK. Commodore Mark Inkster discussed the importance of his club’s powerboat events, even though the Royal Southern has a very strong sailing tradition. The additional focus on powerboats has given the club a special position in this field in the UK.

Annette Newton, Past Commodore of the Royal Southern, then introduced the delegates to the club’s unique annual ‘Cruiser Race’. This is actually a series of races with a fleet of members’ yachts making day-long passages between four attractive ports (often in France) during a week in the summer. It is designed to get ordinary cruising sailors and their families to join together. An unusual aspect is that participants can use their engines, but strictly for only 50 per cent of the time, and special handicap systems had been developed over the years. Delegates showed considerable interest in this format and the Royal Southern will consider sharing the special handicapping system among other ICOYC clubs.

At the close of this session, Rufus Gilday, the ICOYC’s Cruising Advisor, made a strong plea to the delegates to keep in mind the value of cruising events in their clubs. He argued that these will often appeal to at least 50 per cent of the membership. He also discussed the successful Royal Thames YC’s cruising programme. This has at least one long-distance event each year when yachts chartered by members – for example Greece in 2012 – combine with yachts kept locally by club members. This gives members the chance to meet each other, and the locals also know the very best places to visit.

Many good ideas came up during these yachting sessions and it has only been possible to give a flavour of them here. Transcripts and slides are available on the ICOYC.org website for Commodores and other club representatives.

John Stork
ICOYC President
Forum Summary: Membership and Communications

Beware the Barnacles!

Many of the ICOYC Clubs who expressed interest in membership development programs were rewarded on the Friday afternoon of the Forum with a packed series of presentations regarding the planning and execution of development actions by both club delegates and professional service providers. Topics covered the entire range of activity from discovering members’ real issues and desires, to effectively communicating the clubs benefits to desired audiences.

Although the barnacles (the six long-standing members at any club bar who know, without doubt, precisely how the club should be run) continue to know all the questions and answers, Frank Vain, President of The McMahon Group, cited experiences of his firm in surveying memberships to discover their real needs, in preparation for development actions. Client clubs of The McMahon Group, Newport Harbor YC, Seattle YC and St Francis YC, all related their experiences in developing significant information in preparation for club planning of development programs. The underlying message emphasized the importance of knowing the reality of current member expectations and satisfactions to enable effective action toward club improvements. With such information, a well defined target can be created.

One such target, generally agreed to be valid, involves youth and the broader family. Annapolis YC and Royal Sydney YS described in some detail their rather successful strategies and programs aimed at membership development to those target groups. These presentations included some creative tactics used in those efforts to both attract new members and more fully involve existing members.

Noting that increases in membership may often be most easily achieved by efforts of retention and increased involvement of existing members, the following presentations spoke to those particular challenges. Nylandska Jaktklubben, in Helsinki, faces an annual challenge brought by a long winter season when the club is less active, and renewing the member fervour can be seen as an annual effort, which is well launched each spring. The Royal New Zealand YS, of course, faces no serious seasonal issues, but does sense the effects of a national sailing culture, where the alternatives to involvement in the club are rampant, and broadly successful. Each of these clubs has found effective ways of keeping their membership involved and supporting the club, no matter the challenges.

Further examples of membership tools and tactics were then presented by delegates from member clubs. Phil Smith, Commodore of Eastern YC in Marblehead, spoke of their Member Enrollment Program, designed to favour the induction of sailors to the club over others in a highly competitive area. Dr Paolo Caffarena of YC Italiano described the elements of their thorough Junior Program and subsequent membership process, designed to develop and enroll sailors to the club, while promoting the sport in general. It, of course, helps to have an outstation in Portofino. Commodore Steve Richards of Sandringham YC in Melbourne went on to speak of their particular success with a new and creatively designed clubhouse, and large, but limited, marina facilities. Facilities, and how they are used, can be of significant appeal to the membership.

Of course, successful surveying, planning and executing of programs is highly dependent on member awareness and involvement, and that is primarily achieved with effective communications, the supporting topic of this afternoon’s session. With the explosion of channels of communications in recent years, reaching your complete member base has become very challenging. Even the ICOYC has had to confront this challenge with use of multiple publications, both printed and electronic, of every message. We have been very fortunate in having the support of Clubessential, the leading provider of private club websites, both as the much appreciated donor of the ICOYC site, and as a featured Forum presenter, represented by President Dr William Ivers, and Executive Vice President Bill Ivers, Jr.

The Clubessential presentation, ‘Reaching the Other Half of Your Members’, provided an up-to-date description of emerging trends in communications, the critical importance of reaching the growing numbers who rely on the internet as their primary source of information, and how to generate awareness of your offerings and activities among them.

Examples were cited from among the nearly 1000 clubs that Clubessential serves, of such elements as interactivity, building traffic, and dealing with the many social networking sites now taking hold. For most clubs, the internet is now the primary communications choice of more than half of the membership, and a means of reaching almost all members. This session made very clear the critical importance of including interactive online media in every club’s communications strategy.

A number of member clubs had provided an enjoyable array of their various communications elements for a display in the room including magazines, newsletters, promotional pieces, and, in one notable case, a DVD presentation. These materials became a part of the final afternoon topic, ‘Communications are Critical’, examining the full and sometimes complex programs clubs used to reach their desired audiences. In the time remaining, three clubs presented a talk describing the ways in which they conduct communications. Commodore Ambrose Lo of the Royal Hong Kong YC, delivered an excellent review of what may be the most extensive club program encountered, supported by professional staff, and managing at least ten individual communications vehicles. Although few clubs face similar complexity, the professional approaches illustrated provided good specific examples for every club present. Anders Kristensen of the Royal Danish YC again cited the unique values of social media in a full mix, with particular note of the cost efficiency involved because of member created materials, and duplication of material presented in other media. Anders further showed how they are using Twitter and YouTube as active member generated communications with club branding, that can also, because of their public nature, serve as feeds for traditional public media such as television and print. In the last presentation of the day, Past Commodore Mark Fitzhardinge of the Royal Perth YC spoke of the importance of preserving balance in the communications mix, assuring that the traditional print and verbal networking elements so long effective are not abandoned in the rush to be modern and electronic. Our clubs, by their demographic measures, still retain identifiable large segments that prefer the more ‘settled’ means of communicating.

NOTE: This Forum was so packed with informational content that trying to absorb it all was mind-racking. You’ll discover concepts and techniques you missed by taking the time to review selected presentations, and perhaps printing them for passing to your club leadership and committees. The entire Forum is available at www.icocy.org. Pass it on, and make all our works actionable!

Past Commodore John McNeill
St Francis Yacht Club
Immediately following the 6th ICOYC Commodores’ Forum held at Seattle Yacht Club, 31 August through to 3 September 2011, many Forum participants embarked on a 10-day cruise through the American San Juan Islands and the Canadian Gulf Islands. Twenty-three boats and over 100 people attended all or part of this ICOYC Cruise. Seattle Yacht Club, partnered with Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, welcomed the international participants to many of their outstations. Both SYC and RVYC have numerous facilities in the San Juan Islands of the United States and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. The amenities at these facilities range from only a dock on an uninhabited (except for the raccoons) island to docks with water, power, garbage service, and shore-side buildings with showers and bathroom facilities. One RVYC outstation even boasts a swimming pool! Both clubs consider these to be their 'jewels', thus they were eager to show them to the cruise participants.

The cruise began on Monday, 5 September, at Seattle Yacht Club’s Henry Island outstation located in Roche Harbor, on San Juan Island, USA. We welcomed all participants with a delicious barbecued salmon dinner. This night was a ‘getting to know each other time’. We had nine vessels from Seattle Yacht Club, seven from Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, and six international boats that had been chartered by members from Royal Southern Yacht Club, Royal Sydney Yacht Club, and Royal Thames Yacht Club. Members from St Francis Yacht Club, Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club, and Royal Perth Yacht Club were guests aboard four SYC vessels. Cruise guides, red caps, ICOYC burgees, breakfast breads, and name tags were all distributed on this first day.

The next morning the cruisers were awakened to beautiful weather but little wind. A race had been planned for the sailing vessels. We kept motoring to find wind but none materialized. So the fleet pottered on fossil fuel power into the Inner Harbour of Victoria, British Columbia, checked through Canadian Customs, and moored at the public marina at the base of the Empress Hotel. That evening a big yellow school bus transported the group to Royal Victoria Yacht Club for a very fun evening, starting with cocktails on their lawn with its stunning view of Cadboro Bay and the Strait of Juan da Fuca. Dinner was excellent as was the hospitality of the members of Royal Victoria – we feel honoured to have them as close friends.

The schedule had two nights in Victoria, so Wednesday, 7 September, was a day for exploring. Activities that day included visiting Butchart Gardens, shopping and visiting the downtown area, going to museums, walking along the waterfront, or just relaxing in the beautiful Indian summer weather. The members of the fleet split themselves into smaller groups that evening and dined in downtown Victoria.

Thursday saw the fleet cruising out of Victoria Harbour hoping for wind, but, alas, none was to be found. ‘Motors on’ was the command as we powered to Sidney, BC, about 40 km up around the southeast corner of Vancouver Island. That evening we had a catered barbecue dinner under the tent at the head of the dock. This was a fun time for socializing and swapping boating stories.

We had a slight bit of wind on Friday so were able to have a race for the sailing participants. The course began just outside Sidney breakwater and ended in Ganges Harbour, located on Saltspring Island 30 km north. The weather was superb as every day we were treated to the same weather forecast – high of 27 C° and sunny! It doesn’t get much better than that!

One full pier of the Saltspring Marina is a Seattle Yacht Club outstation, so all the cruise vessels moored there. We had a Greenbox Party that evening on the docks. A Greenbox Party is Seattle Yacht Club’s version of appetizers and beverages. The name originated at our Port Madison outstation where a large green metal box covers some electrical equipment at a wide section on the dock. So, when organizing the evening’s appetizer/beverage get-together at Port Madison, everyone would gather at the ‘green box’ – thus the beginning of this traditional event at all SYC outstations, with or without actual green boxes!

Saltspring Island is a fairly mountainous island filled with artists, farmers, and craftspeople, many who live an alternative lifestyle.
These very creative people hold a Farmers’ Market every Saturday morning in downtown Ganges (a short walk from the marina). This is one of the largest and most varied farmers’/artists’ markets in the Pacific Northwest cruising area and our cruisers took advantage of the great cheeses, vegetables, baked goods and crafts. It was fun to walk around the market and see so many ICOYC red caps. By noon, the fleet had departed on the 30 km run to Ovens Island in Ladysmith Harbour.

Ovens Island is a very simple Seattle Yacht Club Outstation consisting of a dock and an island (really an islet) with paths, lots of trees, and numerous raccoons who like to visit the boats at night. Many cruisers jumped into the water for a swim around the island because the day was very warm (for the Pacific Northwest). The swim was more than a half kilometre and was very refreshing!

That evening we had a Greenbox competition on the dock for special appetizers. Everyone voted on their favourite appetizer, and awards were given for first, second and third places. This banquet of finger foods wasn’t just a bunch of bowls of chips and dips! Following that we had a taco dinner with each vessel bringing contributions for some very hearty tacos.

Sunday morning started off with a breakfast of sausages, pancakes, fruit, juice and coffee served on the dock. Then we jumped into our boats, cast off mooring lines, and headed through Gabriola Pass (attempting to catch slack current) for our trip to Tugboat Island in Silva Bay by Gabriola Island, BC. This was the first Royal Vancouver Yacht Club outstation we visited. The whole island is owned by RVYC and includes a clubhouse, washrooms, many walking paths, and a large field where we had a bocce ball competition on Monday.

Sunday evening we were treated to a wine and cheese tasting in the clubhouse, after which most cruisers barbecued their own dinners on the large deck and conversed with our new cruising friends. The winners of the bocce ball competition were recognized during a fabulous Italian dinner provided by the members of Royal Vancouver Yacht Club the following evening. These members provided us with a marvellous meal which they cooked and served. They even cleaned up for us at the end of the evening.

On Tuesday, we turned back south to Scott Point, which is a Royal Vancouver Yacht Club outstation on Saltspring Island. Monday’s weather had turned cloudy and we had a hint of wind. So, for only the second time in 10 days, we had a sailing race. It was just a bit of wind, so the finish line was adjusted a couple of times. The Scott Point outstation is fabulous! It includes a clubhouse, washrooms, laundry, and even a swimming pool, as well as moorage for everyone! We were met by a group of RYVC members who gave us a hearty welcome to their facility.

Tuesday evening saw our Grand Finale Dinner and Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, again, provided a marvellous meal. We had a champagne toast before dinner and during dinner final awards were given. Then we all proceeded to the tents where a steak and salmon dinner was served. The evening ended with speeches, thank-yous, and goodbyes. We had all made such good friends, it was a bittersweet evening! Everyone exchanged emails and promised to keep in touch.

The next morning had more good-byes as the cruisers went their separate ways to begin their journey home. It was time for the cruise to end – the weather had turned cloudy and cooler and there was even a hint of rain. All good things must come to an end, but the memories will exist forever!

Pam Lowry
Seattle Yacht Club

Photographs:
Mike Duppenthaler, Seattle Yacht Club

ICOYC Cruise, 5–14 September 2011 (continued)
Race Profile: Commodores’ Cup

As part of our series on significant races within ICOYC member clubs we are including a report on our very own Commodores’ Cup which is keenly contested at the end of each Commodores’ Forum.

The marvellous cooperation exhibited between delegates at the recent ICOYC Commodores’ Forum soon gave way to the spirited rivalry for which competitive sailors are noted when the opportunity came to sailing it out among themselves for the now coveted Commodores’ Trophy.

Idyllic conditions awaited the owners, skippers and crews of the six matched J-105s generously volunteered for this 3 September event which could hardly be more international in nature.

Skippers and crews, largely grouped into their respective international areas, set off from SYC’s Port Madison outstation into open waters to gather for the start and the weather gods smiled on the fleet as they were sent on their way.

The six boats completed three races during which mixed fortunes abounded, however by the third and deciding race it was a frustrated Canadian/Hong Kong/South African/American/German team skippered by the ever-competitive Jim Burns sailing ‘Last Tango’ which got a spinnaker set entirely wrong when they had earlier been looking good for the win.

This gave the event to a come-from-behind team from Australia/New Zealand. ‘Delirium’ skippered by Peter Ahern sailed the last race faultlessly and deservedly took the honours and the bragging rights until the next Forum. ‘Delirium’ indeed!

ICOYC Burgeses and Pins

Members of yacht clubs in the ICOYC have the exclusive right to fly the Council’s burgee and wear a tie or lapel pin. In addition to being encouraged to fly the burgee generally, any yacht taking part in an ICOYC event is expected to wear a suitably sized ICOYC burgee. We now have excellent supplies of 12 x 18in and 16 x 24in burgeses, and ICOYC pins, all available at low prices – prices in other currencies will vary. The insignia are available to order through the ICOYC website with payment through credit/debit cards, linked with PayPal. Distribution arrangements are managed by Mike Rogers, the ICOYC Administrator (administration@icoyc.org) who should be contacted by email if you want to make a purchase.

In addition there will usually be a stock of both burgeses and pins available to purchase at Commodores’ Forums, Conferences and other ICOYC events.

Burgeses
12 x 18 inch (c. 30 x 45 cm) – US$32 (c. UK £21)
16 x 24 inch (c. 40 x 60 cm) – US$34 (c. UK £22.50)

Whilst these are the only sizes normally held in stock, others are available on request, subject to a short delay. The prices will fluctuate from time to time, but will always be kept as low as possible.

Pins
These small, attractive pins cost just US$7 (UK£4.50) and may be worn on a tie or lapel.

Delivery and Cost
Burgeses and pins can normally be collected in person at ICOYC events. Alternatively postage for standard or airmail delivery (depending on location) will be added to the purchase price when buying through the website. This will be charged at cost. Enhanced delivery options may be available – please ask about alternatives.

Mike Rogers
ICOYC Administrator
administration@icoyc.org

Registered office:
International Council of Yacht Clubs
3811 Point Grey Rd
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6R 1B3
Canada
www.icoyc.org