Twenty Years:
Deep Bay Yacht Club
1997 – 2017

by Jetty Niet
edited by Nelson Eddy

This is a short history of the yacht club and the legacy left to the DBYC by my husband Henri Niet (who unfortunately passed away in 2013). In addition it is recognition of all the other members named and unnamed for their many volunteer hours and hard work. Some of the information came from the history book that was compiled by Jo Williamson in 2010 (housed on the desk in the clubhouse) and some from my own memories.

In 1997 several local boat owners discussed the formation of a yacht club in Deep Bay with marina owner Lawrence Foort. They formed a society called Deep Bay Yacht Club. The early directors were Don Manness, Robert Seline, Mark Pierce, Nick Anderson and Bob Norman. Of these, only Don Manness is still a member today. In subsequent meetings, Don Manness was installed as the first Commodore, with Mark Pierce as Secretary-Treasurer. Judy Roberts relieved him of the secretarial duties shortly thereafter. Lawrence Foort had an old icehouse that he offered as a clubhouse. Many hours of work went in the restoration of this floating building that was at the bottom of the ramp across from Lawrence's office. Bob Norman was the "prime contractor" who did much of the re-framing and renovation single-handedly. When Nelson tried to help, Bob responded "No need", correctly assuming that he was more efficient on his own. Bud Mountan supervised the drywall installation and did the original stippled ceiling that gave the Clubhouse an elegant touch of class. George Williamson, Lyle Roberts and other volunteers obtained and mounted the large windows and sliding door to the rear porch. Judy Roberts and other female members took charge of the wall papering, painting, etc. The purchase agreement was presumably $1.00, the papers were signed and the ownership was passed from Lawrence to the DBYC.

Signing of the papers. George Williamson and Lawrence Foort.

A driving force behind the society was Mark Pierce. He was the first treasurer. Don Manness, Mark Pierce, Nelson Eddy and George Williamson were commodores during the first years.

In 1998 the design for the burgee for the Deep Bay yacht club was selected from a few that were submitted in a contest that was held. Mark Pierce's wife Robin submitted the winning design, which is still in use today.

DBYC Burgee

Nelson Eddy became the person in charge of the youth program. The program started in July 2000 and ran through 2005, when he turned over the management to Bill Chubb. Nelson was able to secure grants through the RDN (Regional District of Nanaimo). The docks were busy with youth and many members who volunteered to help with chasing, boats, boat rigging, launching and hauling out, etc. It was lots of fun to witness all the activity around the Club, and to join in as volunteers.

Henri Net was also involved with the youth programs. Henri, Nelson, George Williamson and many others spent many hours piloting the rubber dinghies to rescue lasers that had flipped over. George Gutsche was sailing nearby and occasionally picked up wet sailors. At lunchtime, Dianne and Nelson anchored the mother ship Blue Chip, (their own sailboat) at the end of the spit. Blue Chip also provided toilet facilities and to offer warmth to students after they fell in the water.
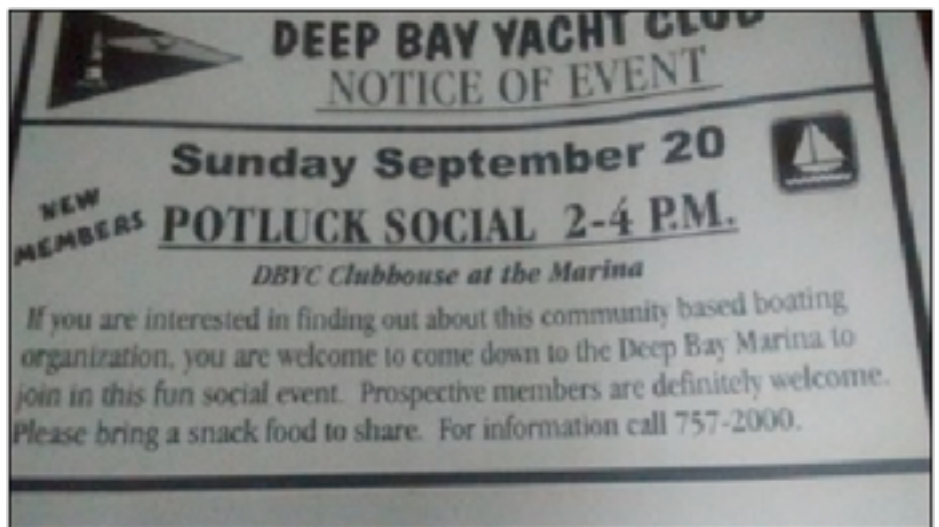

*In the early 2000's the DBYC had youth memberships, as well as
family and individual memberships.*

In 1995 Henri Niet and Jetty Niet (the undersigned) sailed their boat North from Nanaimo to Port Hardy through Johnstone Strait and back down south in 2000 through the Yaculta, Dent and Green rapids. We sailed the Northern Inlets. It is amazing beautiful up North but pretty cold. The rapids are a special challenge with a small engine. It always seems to be raining on the North Island, and we were ready to come south to work and sail the Southern areas of the Island.

We first looked for a place for the boat. The home came second. Henri and Jetty met Jo Williamson on the dock. Jo invited us for an open house social that the club was having that night. This is a great way to get new members. And of course it worked and we became active members.

Henri Niet was alternately, commodore, treasurer and secretary for the yacht club from 2002 till 2009 . Nelson Eddy also fulfilled these roles as did George Williamson and Lee England.

Fun events are held all year 'round!

During Christmas of that first year we joined as members. There were fireworks on the parking lot organized by the community and the Bowser merchants. The yacht club participated with lighted boats and Christmas carolling. Many boats were lit up and we all had a sail around the bay. On one occasion, it was said eight hundred people came out to this event. This was a tradition during the next three years but the fireworks stopped as they had become unfortunately too expensive.
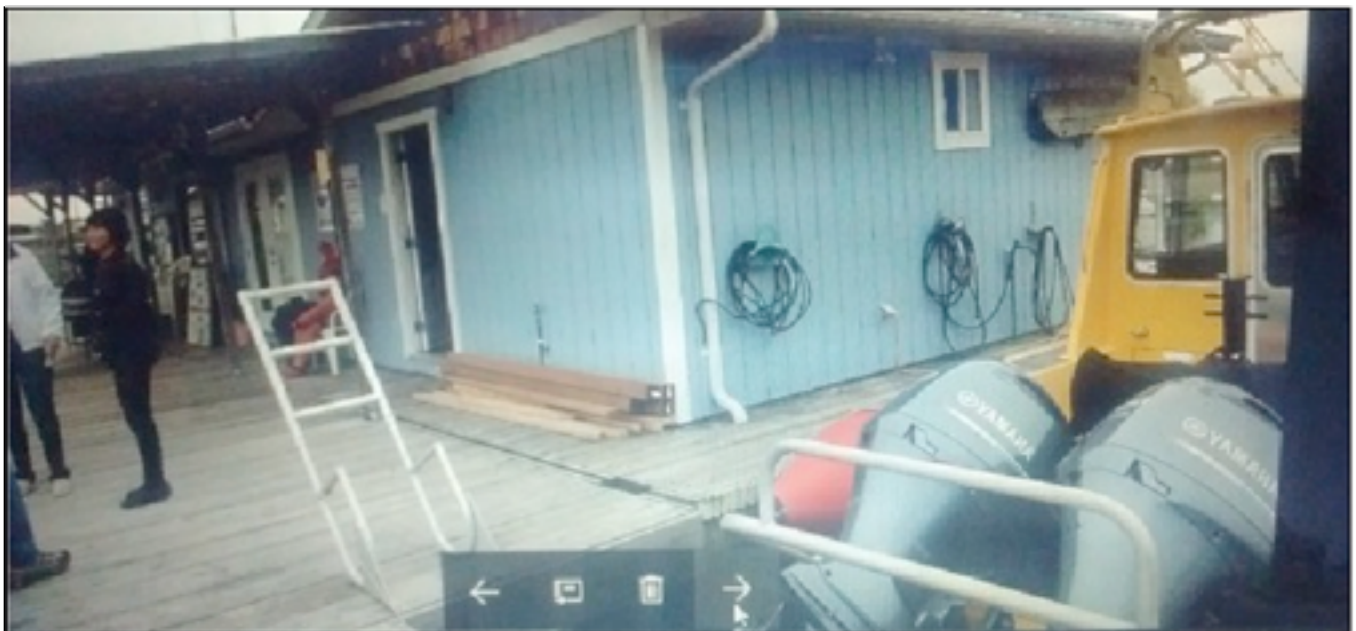
During the following summers the Club held fishing derbies (bullheads) for children and youth. Day trips were organized for both power and sail boats to Sisters Island, Henry Bay, Tribune Bay, Comox Dock, etc. Sometimes events were cancelled due to the weather.

Tribune Bay was not a preferred place. Henri Niet, Nelson Eddy and George Williamson, also belonged to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA). They had to rescue many boats from that spot as a result of Southwesterly storms. A few of the current members experienced the waves and storm coming into Tribune Bay three years ago. They had no fun.Tribune Bay is not the place to be in a SE wind, as many will attest.

The CCGA was renamed Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCMSAR) in 2012, following the adoption of Prince William as official sponsor. The society formed to support RCMSAR was called the Lighthouse Country Marine Rescue Society (LCMRS), and was registered in the year 2000 with the BC Registrar of Societies.

The cozy little clubhouse was always packed during Christmas parties, Halloween parties and other social gatherings. We also had an occasional potluck "open house" to attract new members. But the little building started showing it's age and began to list. It became clear that we needed bigger accommodation to hold our events. Don Manness presented some great ideas but unfortunately they were not financially feasible for a small club. Henri Niet as Commodore for the yacht club and also as Unit leader and coxswain for the CCGA saw an opportunity to apply for funding for grants from the BC Gaming Commission for a new rescue boat, and later a training centre for the Unit. Henri had a vision of the Auxiliary and Yacht club sharing a building. Nelson was President of the LCMRS at the time, which had access to grants from BC Gaming and with Henri's help was able to secure the grant for the new rescue boat for the Coast Guard, which is now permanently docked aside the Training centre/clubhouse. Key players in achieving this grant included George Williamson and Lorne Erickson (current Unit 59 leader).

The Mapleguard rescue boat lays on the side of the dock of the marine centre.

As an economist by trade Henri Niet put the financial plans together and Nelson Eddy and Henri together did the rest of the paperwork needed. Together Nelson and Henri worked many hours to get it right and they applied for the grant. The CCGA was very fortunate to receive grants from BC Gaming in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007.The rescue boat was built and commissioned in 2006-7. Once the rescue boat was purchased, the LCMRS executive turned their attention to a storage room for their equipment and gear. A float would be necessary, and it was proposed to also add a training centre for classroom and practice use. This dovetailed nicely with Deep Bay Yacht Club's need for a clubhouse. BC Gaming was initially enticed to donate by the promise of local community involvement, and the building was begun (using plans drawn by George Williamson). A second and third instalment in 2008 and 2009 was granted by BC Gaming, and with this money the float and the building were built.

George Williamson spent many days and months drafting the plans for the float and the building. Volunteers from the CCGA, DBYC and a few others built the float modules on the back deck of the old Clubhouse. These modules were then assembled next to the Clubhouse (see website pictures).

The float was pulled by boats at high tide and anchored in its current place at the end of the dock of the private marina owned by Lawrence Foort. The moorage was donated by Lawrence Foort.

Harley (Lawrence Foort's dog) and Tasha (Henri and Jetty Niet's dog) inspect the new float and want to make sure it will hold the new house.

Many volunteers hours were spent by members of from CCGA and DBYC under supervision of George Williamson. Unfortunately the CCGA was told that the building had to be a training centre for the CCGA only and had to be owned by the LCMRS. CCGA HQ indicated that the funds from BC Gaming to the LCMRS dictated the ownership of the building. (Also insurance companies wanted a legally registered beneficiary.) In order to share the building's cost between the Club and LCMRS, BC Gaming would insist the grant be returned.

Fortunately the Yacht club and the CCGA were able to come up with a solution. The building was named the Lighthouse Country Marine Centre following a suggestion by George Williamson, and it is owned by the LCMRS. A House Committee was formed to handle building maintenance. The Committee has equal representation by members of the LCMRS and DBYC. The building can be rented out for other community events for a modest fee.

The yacht club had some money saved and they built the deck where the barbecues are now held in the summer.

In 2010 the end of the dock became a true marine community.

Lighthouse Country Marine Centre

When the new building was finished in 2010 the lasers for the youth program were still on the float and occasionally used. The youth program was no longer in existence No

new volunteers stepped forward. The lasers were donated to the Denman Island youth program where they are now again actively used.

The vision of Mark Pierce to have sailing races has really taken off during the last five years under leadership of Simon Palmer.

Every other Sunday a race is held starting in the Spring and this continues well into the Fall. In addition there are fun "non racing" events every Wednesday evening in July, usually followed by a great social barbecue on the dock.

The yacht club has started a new tradition in the last four years to have a yearly weekend outing to the Comox dock. This creates an opportunity for members who do not want to take their boat to drive up and join for the day on Saturday. Games are played in the park, followed by steaks and other good food.

As a club we have a monthly social potlucks for members with a different food theme. There is usually beer in the fridge.
The marine community in this small town is amazing.

The DBYC will always have a special place in my heart.They participated in a special ceremony with the CMSAR after Henri Niet passed away.

We now have a digital newsletter and a website, with early contributions by Nelson, Ken McClean and Trish Nickerson.

Under the current commodore Derrick Ward and the work of many other volunteers we are an active yacht club and part of the marine community at large. We share reciprocal mooring with other clubs up and down the coast in B.C. and the U.S.

This reciprocal information is also no longer sitting in a binder on the desk but digital on the computer Go to yachtdestinations.org and a person will see all the needed information.

Reciprocals are on a first come first serve basis and a spot for one night is not guaranteed. It is a privilege not a right.

The twenty years of DBYC falls in the same year as Canada's 150 years existence celebration. A logo was designed by Sherrie Webb and Jetty Niet to celebrate these two events.

This logo will be put the on a T-shirts that will go on sale.

I hope the Deep Bay yacht club will continue to be a part of the Marine community in Deep Bay for many years to come.
Fleet Captain Cruising
Jetty Net