

Beginnings: “ Social Studies”

*“A bunch of the folks were sitting around
In the Irwin Street Saloon,
When the idea formed in the minds of a few,
‘Why should we close so soon?’*

*You’re welcome to join our ‘die-hard’ group
At a supper that’s tureen.
Saturday –October 7...That’s the scoop!
Any time after four, we mean.*

*Bring your dishes, silver and a dish to share
With all the others who will be there.
The meat course (ham) will be provided,
The cost of which will be divided.*

*See you for cocktails- followed by supper
Served about 6:30 or a little after.
The bartender will be an amateur
And you will be your own waiter! “*

And with that announcement came the very first Die-Hard dinner, held in October of 1965, hosted by Dorothy & Joe Long and Helen & Wilson Parker.

While many of our present social traditions were put into place during the 1960’s, SBYC was the place to be for a busy social calendar dating back to the early 1900’s. In 1913, when the Club was open to the public, it was billed as one of the major tourist attractions on Sodus Bay. Musical entertainment and dancing on Saturday evenings was the norm, dating back to 1910, and in 1913 the addition of a “commodious dance pavilion” added to the attraction and appeal of SBYC as a “beehive of activity.” During the season social events were a prominent feature of Club life and announced with decorative program cards detailing the entertainment. A most popular event of the day was a “Venetian Night” and ladies held court on Thursdays, which was set aside as “Ladies Day.” A reception committee appointed by the Commodore welcomed members and guests each Saturday evening.

During war years and hard times for the Club, much of the social scene was curtailed, but slowly over time came a resurgence of the SBYC social spirit. During the 1950’s and 60’s sailing and social program cards were issued for each season, where race events were often complimented by any number of social activities including family picnics and sing-a-longs, ice cream socials, Monte Carlo or Carnival Nights, and annual clambakes.

The year 1969 saw the first Memorial Day Sail Pass, and during this period the Spring Dinner, Commodore’s Ball, a New Members Dinner, Halloween Party and Clambake all became formalized along with the Annual Meeting (then combined with the Awards Dinner.) Also found in the archives was reference to the Annual Powerboat “stink party,” exchanged card parties with the golf club, and the “ Beatnik Dance” — not to be missed I’m sure! One particularly amusing announcement (from a Col. Sanders) featured a “Mock Duck Dinner” held as alternative for those not participating in the annual Main Duck Island Race. Beverage of choice... cold duck of course!

Rosemary Willette