**HISTORY OF THE SOLOMONS ISLAND YACHT CLUB**

**Founded in 1937**

The Solomons Island Yacht Club (SIYC) had its beginning in 1937, when an organizational meeting was held on May 12 at Mr. George Townsend’s home next to the then County Trust Company, which later became Maryland National Bank and is now the gift shop of the Harbor Island Marina. Mr. Townsend was the President of the American Power Boat Association and the owner of the M.M. Davis Shipyard, later known as the El Pasco Service Terminal on Mill Creek. Mr. Halvor H. Hellen sent out invitations and issued a public notice for the first meeting. Mr. Marsh was selected as Chairman and John B. Gray was selected as Secretary for the meeting. A draft of the proposed Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws was presented. At a subsequent meeting on June 4, 1937, the Articles of Incorporation and a set of Bylaws were adopted. Forty-one people were elected as the Charter members with the following elected the club officers:

Commodore-Joseph C. Lore, Jr.

V/ C - Harry A. Woodburn

R/C-G. Gunther Walden

Secretary-T.W. Gardner

Treasurer-Halvor H. Hellen

Fleet Captain-W. E Northam

Fleet Surgeon-Dr. E. B. Briscoe

Fleet Chaplain-Father Alexander.

Althea (Bowen) McKenney was chosen as the Club’s first Princess.

The Club’s burgee was selected by a committee of three, Halvor Hellen, Reginald Truitt and Sherman O’Berry. Dr. Truitt reported that the burgee designed had no particular significance, that it was selected for its dissimilarity to other Club burgees, then in the area, and for its ease of recognition on the water. Similarly, the colors were chosen because there were no red and yellow combinations on other burgees in the area. Besides, we are told that red and yellow were Mary Truitt’s favorite colors.

Early Club meetings were regularly held at the Point Patience Hotel. Point Patience was then a farm and summer resort owned by Ben Parran and Judge John B. Gray. In 1943, the Navy acquired the real estate for a Mine Warfare Test Center. From 1941 to 1948, Club meetings were held at Bowen’s Inn, the County Trust Bank Boardroom, or Rekar’s Hotel. Rekar’s Hotel and the Webster Store stood side-by-side on the present site of the Tiki Bar and Island Manor Motel. The first active discussion about building an SIYC Clubhouse occurred at the Board meeting in August 1939.

The Navy’s Mine Warfare Test Center at Point Patience and the establishment of an Amphibious Training Base on the Dowell peninsula, now the site of Calvert Marina, brought hundreds of servicemen to the area and the need arose for a USO Building. The USO Building Program was a community effort under the direction of the Commodore (Dr.) Reginald V. Truitt and Mr. Joseph C. Lore, Jr., Chairman of the Building committee. Many SIYC members donated $250.00 with many local businesses giving more sizable donations of up to $1,000.00 to construct a USO Building. The names of those donors can be found on a plaque displayed in the Club lounge. Additional fundraising consisted of carnivals, circuses, and the then popular donkey baseball games.

The building was designed by architect Katherine Cutler and constructed by the H. S. Trueman Lumber Company in 1944, on land the Club had purchased from William and Maude Kopp. The cost of the building was $29,401.00. The facility was then leased to the USO in October of 1944, for $125.00 a month.

The building was formally dedicated as the Solomons Island USO Club on May 13, 1945, by the Chairman of the Solomons USO Council, Halvor H. Hellen, Captain H.G. Williams, USN Commanding Officer of the Mine Warfare Test Center, and U.S. Senator George L. Radcliff. The USO terminated its lease on the Club in 1948.

An additional parcel of land was later added to the SIYC property through the purchase of land from Benjamin and Lola Woodburn in 1962. Principal improvements made to the Club following its use by the USO were the construction of a concrete seawall, the installation of two large sliding doors, the paving of a large patio, the installation of a gaff-rigged pole, and the extension of the pier from 60 to 200 feet in length.

In those early years, SIYC was the focal point of most activities, both social and civic, in the lower end of the county. Solomons Island Boy Scout Troop # 427 was sponsored by the SIYC, as were U.S. Power Squadron courses. The major event of the Club’s first years as the Solomons Island Yacht Club was the Annual Power Boat Regatta. There were 23 regattas in all from 1937 until 1963, excluding the four war years. These regattas had wide-spread support in Calvert County through personal donations of trophies and the purchase of program ads by businesses throughout the county. In 1941, the program listed the prize money for one race as: 1st- $20.00; 2nd- $10.00; 3rd- $5.00; and 4th-$3.00. These regattas were a major event, not only for Solomons Island and Calvert County, but for most of the eastern seaboard. Spectators and boats came from as far away as New England and Florida. The Club event had Mr. C. F. Chapman, Author of Chapman’s Piloting, Seamanship and Small Boat Handling, as an advisor during the early regattas. Famous boat races included Guy Lombardo driving his “Miss Tempo” and John Charles Thomas driving his”Mas-querader”. John Charles Thomas also performed after the races at Point Patience Hotel.

In 1950, an interest in racing boats developed among the area youth. The American Power Boat Association would not sanction a race unless it was sponsored by an affiliated club, so the Solomons Island Outboard Club (SIOC) was formed and was sponsored by SIYC. Mr. Carl Breland, the first president of SIOC, instigated the Club’s first marathon race from Solomons to Benedict and back. When the fever for outboard racing diminished in the mid 1950’s, SIYC members redirected their efforts to the formation of the Solomons Rescue Squad.

Over the years, the Club has had a few rough times. On many occasions, it was the dedication of a few loyal members, whose efforts and work kept the Club’s head above water, figuratively speaking. At times it was necessary for the Board of Governors to advance their dues payments so the Club Treasurer could pay outstanding bills.

In 1975, then Commodore George Dixon originated SIYC’s first Annual Easter Sunrise Service. The event is held on the waterside of the Club, which provides a spectacular view of the sunrise and is open to the community.

In 1983, Dan Barrett started the first SIYC “Friday Night Potlucks”. These dinners, hosted and served entirely by Club volunteers, provided a substantial revenue stream. Income generated financed the complete refurbishing of the Club. They further enhanced the position and reputation of the Club and resulted in an increased waiting list of applicants for membership in SIYC.

In 1984, the Board approved an extensive three-phase improvement and expansion program. The first phase, the construction of a combination bathhouse and storage facility, was completed and dedicated in the spring of 1985. The second phase, the enlarging and complete remodeling of the kitchen, the installation of a service elevator, and the remodeling of second-level restrooms was completed in 1988. The Club continued to make improvements that included a new front entrance designed by Frank J. Matzke and constructed by Charles Loving; improved lounge space, a new deck with rain protection for the patio; the dredging of the pier, a newly designed seawall for small boat tie-up; new air conditioning, which provided space for an office on the third floor; and in February 1993, the installation of a new bar, with all new bar equipment. All of those improvements were spearheaded by the improvements committee, chaired by P/C Dan Barrett.

The *Solomons Sez* newsletter was originated in 1982 by Peggy Irish when Ernie Irish was Rear Commodore. The little logo “ol’ Salt Seaman” was obtained when Peggy took a trip to Oxford, MD, and looked for a special icon for the new SIYC newsletter. She published the newsletter for three years, followed by Georgia Jacoby for two years, and in 1987, Susan L. Stevenson became editor and publisher, continuing until 2013. Geraldine Combs took over Solomon Sez from 2014-2016, making a few tweaks and adjustments over the years, but maintained a similar format, with articles placed in the newsletter according to Bridge Rank. Sue Stevenson again published the newsletter in 2017, followed by Kate Wilson starting in 2018. It has grown from one page to a 10-20 page publication in color. Originally it was hand-folded, stamped and labeled. Today most members receive it via the club website.

In 1986, new SIYC member Warren Davis and his wife Beth decorated their boat ”Orient Express” and paraded it on the day of the first Solomons Island Walk. In 1990, SIYC became the sponsor of the annual Light Parade and its associated open house as a community activity.

The Club celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1989 with a number of special events. The premier event was a dinner and ball at the new Solomons Holiday Inn Conference Center. Two hundred seventy-five current and former members and their guests turned out for the spectacular event.

1993 was a banner year, which began with a ten-year anniversary of the Friday Night Potluck, hosted by (guess who) P/C Dan Barrett and his wife, Barbara. As mentioned above, the new two-station bar and new bar equipment had been installed. 1993 was also the year the membership approved the acquisition of the Thomas Property and pier to our north. In the fall of that year, Capt. John E. (Robbie) Robinson, of the fishing boat “Miss Regina II” remarked “wouldn’t it be great if the SIYC would lay a wreath at the base of the Waterman’s memorial on the Blessing of the Fleet?” His remarks were delivered to the BOG; the annual event was adopted under Commodore Gibbs in 1994, and continues to this day.

In January 1994, the Club settled on the Thomas property. January also saw the induction of its first female Rear Commodore, Shirley Duff. The Club became busier and busier with the increased use by members and a marked increase in fundraising activities. The Club was saddened when, early in 1995, Vice Commodore Shirley Duff became seriously ill and by early summer had to resign.

In 1995 the membership approved the purchase of the Harten house and a new window was installed in the Captain’s Lounge, giving us much needed light and a better view of the harbor. SIYC logo state license plates were made available to Club members and new tee-shirts were purchased. The membership also voted to make the Clubhouse a smoke-free facility.

In 1999, Rear Commodore Alva Windham, organized a Cookbook Committee and the Club published its first cookbook, the Solomons Island Yacht Club Galley Favorites, which is a fine collection of treasured recipes submitted by numerous members of the Club.

The year 2000 saw new happenings at the Club. In January, the first female Commodore, Adrienne M. Donaldson, took office. During this same year, spousal membership was established, wherein both parties of a marriage are members in their own right and enjoy all privileges of the Club: however, they still hold only one vote during elections, keeping the membership at 200.

The hiring of the first full-time Club Manager brought improvements to the Club management. Gertrude “Bernadine” Bean will always be remembered for her cooking and kitchen support. She performed her duties for over 20 years. Her specialties were fried chicken, rice pudding and apple dumplings, and good “down-home” cooking. Her meals were one of a kind! Bernadine died on August 24, 2000, at 82.

During 2001, the tall ship Sultana, a 97-foot sailing vessel built in Chestertown, MD, made its first of many visits to SIYC. SIYC acted as host for the ship’s crew, which conducted tours for Club members and the public. Also, in October of this year, SIYC, in conjunction with CMM PRAD, hosted the Pride of Baltimore at the Club, affording Club members and the public an opportunity to visit with the crew and tour the tall ship. Also in 2001, a website was established for SIYC. The site consists of a home page and numerous categories regarding the history, functions, membership news, events, marina facilities (with pictures) and Club hours of operation. The site offered visitors the opportunity to learn about SIYC through the internet and also offered a variety of pictures of activities and events. Marty Nash served as the website webmaster. The website can be visited by logging on to www.solomonsislandyachtclub.com. During this year, Commodore Alva Windham established the first Volunteer Coordination Committee, headed by Nancy Caton. The objective of this committee was to coordinate Club members who are willing to volunteer for various duties in the Club to improve its operations. Member volunteers have always been the backbone of the Club. In the summer of 2001, SIYC hosted the first Past Commodores’ Reception. Seventeen Past Commodores, their ladies and our first female Past Commodore, attended the reception. This event was so well attended and enjoyed by so many that it may very well become another SIYC tradition.

In 2003, the chairs and barstools in the Captain’s Lounge were given a beautiful and much-needed reupholstering. SIYC featured a float in the annual PRAD parade on which rode 14 past princesses, including first SIYC princess, Althea McKenney. The current princess, Reagan Strausser, rode in the parade in a Corvette. 2003 was also the year Hurricane Isabel hit the Solomons area with extremely high storm surges and much flooding and damage. Luckily, the Clubhouse was undamaged but the pier and most of the back lawn area were under water for several days. December of 2003 saw the last payment made on the Thomas Property, turning over control of the property to SIYC. At the suggestion of First Lady Marie Sidleck, a Christmas donation project was initiated by the Club, and over $1,300.00 was raised and donated to SMILE in the name of SIYC to help the less fortunate during the 2003 holiday season. During December 2003, the “Thomas House” was removed from SIYC property, the area then cleaned up and used for additional parking.

In 2004, it was decided that the “gift shop” building would become additional storage and the block building on the bulkhead will now become The Crab Shack Lounge.” The pier attached to the property also was rebuilt so that it can be used by members for easy access to SIYC. SIYC featured a float in the annual PRAD parade on which rode eleven Past Commodores. Princess Maura Glascock rode in the parade as well, in a Corvette.

In 2005, several improvements were completed. The much-needed galley floor, wall covering and ceiling tiles were replaced through a generous donation made by P/C Gordon Henderson, in the name of his “Dee” as well as donations by Club members. The outside concrete deck was completely removed and replaced due to severe cracking and uneven joints. The parking lot was regraded and new stone added as needed. A second large screen TV was added to the Captain’s Lounge fully paid for by a 50/50 raffle through the efforts of First Lady Carolyn Ward and Volunteer Chairperson, Cathy Currence. In October, Princess Jessica Ward represented the Club and rode in the PRAD parade.

On March 16, 2006, a major fire broke out and completely destroyed two famous landmarks on Solomons Island, Bowen’s Inn (1918) and the Lighthouse Inn (1985). Both establishments owned and operated by Club members.

In 2006, the “Gift Shop” on the old Thomas property was completely renovated through the volunteer efforts of Club members. Also in 2006, a beautifully landscaped island was built in the middle of the parking lot and the parking lot spaces were rearranged, making them large and easier to access. Inside the Club, the Captain’s Lounge bar stools were replaced, along with the addition of a new entrance/exit door that was needed to increase the capacity of the Captain’s Lounge in accordance with the Fire Marshall’s recommendation. In October, Princess Kayla Kastner represented the Club and rode in the PRAD parade.

In 2007, there were several improvements made on the property. New siding and rain gutters were installed on the Clubhouse and bathhouse. The flag pole was lowered and painted. New Flag hoists were installed. Upon inspecting the pole base, a time capsule was discovered which had been placed there the last time the pole was painted, about 10 years ago. The time capsule was updated and replaced. Electricity was installed in the outside storeroom (the old gift shop) and Crab Shack. At the same time, electricity was installed on the north pier (the old Thomas pier.) Water lines were installed on this pier by Club members. The south pier’s electrical service was updated at this time. In October, Princess Katy Wyrough represented the Club and rode in the PRAD parade.

Early 2008 brought serious plumbing problems for the Club. The problem was finally determined to be a broken line in the parking lot area and through the efforts of Club members was repaired and back in working order. The Facilities and Improvements Committee moved on in their proposals, plans, and efforts to improve/enlarge the Yacht Club building. In May, the general membership voted to continue with the plans and authorized the Committee to apply for a variance which would be required to make such improvements. In July, the County granted approval for the variance. In September, the Club held a huge lawn sale which was a big success in raising monies for the Galley/Kitchen Fund. In October, Princess, Molly Sidleck, represented the Club and rode in the PRAD parade. In December, a special membership meeting voted to replace the T-head of the south pier at the Club.

2009 was truly a growing year for Solomons Island Yacht Club. In May 2009 the renovation of the T-head of the Club pier, including new wiring, outlets and lights, was completed by Ward Construction. Renovations to the Old Crab Shack began to convert it into an outdoor pavilion. At the Easter Sunrise Service, the Vice Commodore’s wife, Cathy Nash, provided an opportunity for members to purchase Easter Lilies in honor or memory of a loved one. Thirty lilies were purchased and after the service many were donated to residents of Hermitage Nursing Center. At the September 12, 2009, General membership meeting it was voted to proceed with the clubhouse renovation plan. On October 12, 2009, SIYC had a float in the PRAD parade with 26 Past Princesses representing the Club. The current Princess, Kayla Kastner, rode in the parade as well in a Corvette. On October 17, 2009, there was a ground-breaking ceremony held at the Clubhouse with the expansion plan to be built by W.M. Davis, Inc. On October 27, 2009, construction commenced on the building renovations. Plans included enlarging the upstairs meeting room, with an additional bar, enlarging the lower bar area, expansion of the kitchen, additional storage and a new upper and lower deck.

The year 2010 was a changing and challenging year for SIYC. The expansion program continued with the closing of the kitchen and upstairs. The Board of Governors meetings were held off site at Back Creek Bistro and the American Legion due to the renovation. The Club was closed completely during most of February. Extreme winter weather slowed the project. In March the bar reopened with restricted usage plans, after the new water and sewer lines were completed. Due to the very diligent work of many of the Club members and W. M. Davis Company, the renovations were completed in time for the Princess Cocktail Party on May 22nd. Commodore Marty Nash had appointed two princesses to represent the Club for 2010, high-lighting the year’s theme “Our Heritage, Our Future”. Serving as 2010 Princess, Doris Matteson representing our heritage and Laura Andre representing our future. Opening Day Festivities were held on May 23rd and the completion of the front yard drainage system and relocation of the flag

pole provided a lovely setting for the event. The addition of the upstairs dining area and the new bar, which was built by P/C Daniel Barrett III, Wayne Joy, and Jack Estridge, has given a beautiful new look to the Clubhouse.

On July 3, 2010, a Dedication Ceremony for the new facility was held. It was a beautiful sunny day, with the Board of Governors and several dignitaries in attendance. Maryland Senator Roy Dyson presented the Club with a State flag, which had flown over the State Capitol, to commemorate the day. The Commodore presented the Club with a bronze plaque which was permanently affixed to the new building. A luncheon, planned and hosted by First Lady Cathy Nash, followed the ceremony in the new upstairs dining area. The new facility provides for larger functions to be held at the Club. The Club was represented in the annual PRAD Parade with both Club Princesses riding in the Commodore’s Corvette convertible, which had been decorated for the event. The annual Commodore’s Ball was held on November 13, 2010, at the Holiday Inn Select with 155 people and 13 Past Commodores in attendance. The year ended with the Commodore hosting a “Breakfast with Santa” at the Club for underprivileged children in Calvert County. Several Members donated to the event and volunteered to help with the breakfast. Approximately 75 children and their families attended and $1,600 from the Commodore’s discretionary fund was donated to the “Calvert County Shop with a Cop” program.

2011 was the first full year of operations in our renovated and expanded Clubhouse. The members put the new facility to good use and enjoyed a busy, exciting, and prosperous year. Club attendance and revenues were the highest on record. The Club exceeded financial expectations and not only covered the increased expenses for the new facility but achieved a significant operating surplus. A new budgeting system which enabled us to track actual financial performance against a monthly BOG approved plan proved effective at controlling costs. Board member support and participation produced major increases in bar sales, food sales, and rental revenues which exceeded plan and were up substantially from prior years. A number of facility improvements put the finishing touches on the Clubhouse renovations. These included a major upgrade to our bathhouse, new chandeliers and fans upstairs, grading and new landscaping in the front of the Clubhouse, the completion and decoration of the waterfront crab shack by the north pier (including a lovely river scene mural), and a much needed fully automated sprinkler system for our lawn and gardens designed and installed by Club members. Activity highlights for this year included fire tugboats saluting at the traditional Opening Weekend events, the crowning of our Princess Zoe Hemmer, a return visit from Elvis, a prize winning PRAD float (a boat carrying

23 past SIYC Princesses) about 200 people enjoying the Commodore’s Ball and another great New Year’s Eve dance party. The V/C, R/C and Fleet Captain made sure we had a busy year.

2012 started off with SIYC again sponsoring the Christmas Card Program for SMILE with a contribution in the amount of $1,390.00. The “Kitchen Cabinet” committee was suggested by R/C Mike Buchko to offer support to the House chairman and members’ needs outside the Club. On Fridays, the new “Cheap Eats” was started to offer members inexpensive meals during evenings at the Club. Miss Mary Oster was named Princess for the year. SIYC celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 2012. The importance of this year was recognized by Commodore Keefe and he requested a celebration to be held at the Opening Day ceremony commemorating the anniversary. There were special quizzes and articles in the monthly newsletter and a program with seven Past Commodores sharing the Club’s history at the Opening Day ceremony. There were displays and a time line of significant events through the years of the Club. Many articles, items, and pictures were displayed in the clubhouse. The Artists’ Corner continued with various member artists displaying their work at the Club throughout the year. The fireplace mantle in the Captain’s Lounge was decorated with art work and collections as the newly instituted “Mantle of the Month.”

2013 was the “Year of the Shepherd” at Solomons Island Yacht Club. One of the unique features of the year was the selection of five “Ladies in Waiting” to support our Princess Victoria Mae Shepherd. The Commodore used the “wisdom of Solomons” to solve the dilemma of his six granddaughters all vying for the honor. The members enjoyed seeing all the pretty ladies brighten up the Club during their frequent visits.

Commodore Jim Shepherd achieved his goal to have BOG meetings begin promptly and to move smoothly within the slotted time. The Club operated within budget and finished the year with a healthy surplus. Volunteers continued to support the Club by bartending, preparing meals, troubleshooting the inevitable breakdowns, and making the necessary repairs that are incumbent with the operation of any physical plant.

One of the challenges of 2013 was the serious injury to Club Coordinator Marge Martz that rendered her unable to perform her duties for over 2 months. Many members admirably filled in to keep the Club running smoothly by accepting deliveries, setting up and preparing many meals, and generally completing the numerous and varied tasks that make SIYC such a special Club. During Marge’s time away, the members recognized more fully the value that our Club Coordinator brings to us. All in all, 2013 moved smoothly. And as Commodore Shepherd never failed to remind us, “Every hour is happy hour at Solomons Island Yacht Club.”

2014 moved in with Michael Buchko as Commodore. During this year the Quartermaster position was created. The Social Club was established and brought new events for the members such as trivia, card playing, bingo, wine tasting, Elvis, pumpkin carving, a trip to National Harbor for Cirque du Soleil, a Pride of Baltimore II visit, and Christmas Caroling. Special Meal Nights such as lobster night and a New England Clam Bake were prepared by Marge, volunteers and staff, and were a big hit with the membership. Commodore Buchko kept reminding all of us that our club was “The Friendliest Yacht Club on the Bay” and the members were to thank for this. Cruising events were extremely successful with more cruises and more boaters now. The table arrangements, mantel displays, and art wall have become a wonderful addition to our club. Thanks to the enthusiasm and leadership of Commodore Buchko and his Bridge this year was a tremendously successful year both financially and socially for the Club.

The Commodore had one beautiful Princess in Kylie Egan and two ladies in waiting, his granddaughters Lux Greenwood and Jenna Edgar of whom he was very proud. We lost the unofficial mayor of Solomons, Alton Kersey and his wife Joann, to whom large credit goes for Solomons being as it is today. Buchko’s Commodore Ball outfit and stories will be hard to follow. He and Lady Carlene were deeply devoted to SIYC and loved their three years of service to the membership. Volunteers are the heart and soul of SIYC, so let’s keep it that way!

In 2015 under the leadership of Commodore Robert Luckritz, 2015 brought another year of achievements for SIYC. The updated website became a useful and helpful tool for the membership. A project to digitize the historical records from the club’s founding in 1937 was begun. Lydia Conner, granddaughter of members, Al and Cynde Redfield, did an excellent job representing SIYC. Our yearbook was improved with beautiful colored photographs. The cruises were improved to new destinations with increased participation by members. The club contributed $1500 of membership donations to SMILE for our Christmas gift. Through the efforts of the Bridge, Board of Governors, Committees and all the volunteers, 2015 was a fun and successful year for SIYC.

In January 2016, Bruce Dickinson, spearheaded an effort to buy a new big screen TV for the Captains lounge. Through his efforts we were able to have the new TV in place to watch the NFL playoffs. In March, 50 new chairs were purchased for the Captains lounge. In April, Commodore Simpson planted a cherry tree near our entrance.

Things were smooth in the club until April 24th when during a wedding party a large group of attendees all converged near the end of the pier and it collapsed. Thankfully no one was seriously injured and as luck would have it, our insurance company paid for a partial replacement. The pier was 48 years old.

Our yearbook for 2016 had a picture of the Club on its cover from the day in 1947 when the Navy turned the club back over to the members of the SIYC. A new section was also added that featured and provided great information on our veteran members from World War II and Korea.

Our barstools were refurbished in July with lots of help from the members. The Club A/C systems were replaced in September. Some members expressed an interest in building a swimming pool. A questionnaire was sent out to the members and results will be announced at the February BOG.

Our Vice Commodore, Geraldine Combs, passed away in late December and our V/C elect and our R/C elect were moved up to fill the vacant positions. On the day of our scheduled change of watch we had a snowstorm and had to postpone the meeting for one day.

The year 2017 began under the leadership of Commodore Craig Wilson. Commodore Wilson hit the ground running with committee appointments and a busy calendar for the year. The first Annual Bill Keefe Oyster Extravaganza was a big success. The lounge bar was refinished under leadership of P/C Bill Glascock. SIYC sponsored a fund raiser to help Wicomico Yacht Club to help rebuild their clubhouse after a fire destroyed their building.

In May the club celebrated its 80th birthday with a time-line display in the meeting room. Discussions were held regarding the construction of a pool on SIYC property and there was input by a Feasibility Committee appointed by the Commodore. The pool was voted down at the General Membership Meeting in September.

Volunteers continued to be the backbone of the Club with many weekly and special events. The new construction of the south pier, with new decking, finger piers and floating docks was completed for the May opening day ceremonies. The Social Committee planned and managed events throughout the year for members such as a fashion show, travel presentations by members, men’s bake-off, dancing lessons and the first ever cruise to SIYC by the members. The SIYC shop was expanded to offer many new items for purchase. In August the Commodore’s Crab Feast was held and was a big success. Under the leadership of Commodore Craig Wilson, SIYC experienced a successful year.

2018 brought us Commodore Michael Snapp to lead us through another very successful year at SIYC, completing his sixth year on the bridge. The annual Bill Keefe Memorial Oyster Extravaganza at the end of January was well attended and a HUGE success. The very successful Social Committee increased participation and enjoyment for members with Travel Presentations made by members who have traveled all over the world, a Texas Hold’em tournament, a Disco Night, a Kentucky Derby Party, a Fashion Show, a Cruise to SIYC, a Ladies Bake-Off, a River Poker Run, a Men’s Bake-Off, and an Ugly Christmas Sweater contest before the annual Solomons Lighted Boat Parade awards ceremony at the Club. The volunteer Taco Team had a record sales year with their monthly Taco Nights—even with a snow-caused cancellation in March!

In May the annual Opening Day ceremonies included a talk by the Patuxent Riverkeeper Fred Tutman at the Watermen’s Memorial Service, the Opening Ceremony for the club with Commodore Snapp and Lady Carol’s great granddaughter Princess Lilly Coco in attendance, the Blessing of the Fleet and the annual Member Picnic. An increased cruise schedule for the year brought lots of participation by members. We also welcomed a record number of transients from other yacht clubs and cruisers doing the American Great Loop. The continued tradition of the Artists’ Wall and Mantle Displays made known the very many talented members of the club and memorialized the late Joan and Elliott Kocen who contributed so much to the tradition. Club members donated a new record amount of $2410 to SMILE Ecumenical Ministries in our annual holiday greeting exchange. Lucy Tonacci spearheaded the start of a member photo directory to put faces with our names. A new Senior Membership Category, with decreased dues, was added for members who had reached twenty-five years of membership and were eighty-five years of age. Six members applied for the inaugural Seniors group which starts in 2019 and is in addition to our 200 regular memberships.

2019 found SIYC lead by a “Knight, Commodore Gary D. Knight”. The Commodore’s granddaughter, Alena Martin was this year’s SIYC Princess. January 2019, the Bill Keefe Memorial Oyster Extravaganza was held, largely attended and good food were signs of another successful annual event. The SIYC Memorial Service Award was established in honor of deceased members to be awarded annually to club staff who have given outstanding service to the club, school and community. Donations can be made in memory and honor of loved ones.   Travel presentations continued by club members. Taco night is still an extremely favorite event at the club. A dedication was held for the makeover of the Crab Shack. There were numerous visits by “The Loopers” to the club this year. The first ever Casino Night spearheaded by Commodore Knight was held and was huge success. The reinstatement of the Pasta Team brought in large crowds to enjoy delicious homemade pasta meals back to the club. A proposed presentation to use credit cards at the club was addressed and will be reviewed in the new year.

Solomons Island Yacht Club, one of the oldest yacht clubs on the Bay, has one the largest burgee displays in its Captain’s Lounge. Among them is one from the Royal Cork Yacht Club, Cork County, Ireland, the oldest Yacht Club in the world (est. 1720). In 2017, SIYC received its smallest burgee from the Royal Yacht Club of Jordan, which is located on the upper breakwater of Aqaba, Jordan. There are 452 burgees from 36 states and territories within the U.S. and 43 countries. They have been provided by SIYC members returning from many world-wide cruising locations and by visiting members from other clubs.