

LHBC Letter to members April 5, 2020

Well, 2020 started out as a challenging year with the Board wrestling with multiple issues, and now the uncertainty about the corona virus has made things even more difficult.

For at least as long as I have been a member, the Club's finances have been marginal. That is, we have had enough money coming in from membership, dock fees, and events to cover our essential expenses and bare-minimum maintenance, but nothing left over for contingencies or major maintenance. We did receive some cash from the merger, but most of that has been spent already on the bar.

This year we are facing some additional expenses. Maintenance on the travel lift has been deferred to the point where we really can't put it off any longer. The record-high water levels, which are likely to be the new normal for a while, require that we make some expensive modifications to our docks. We still have an obligation to bring the gas dock building up to code. And, although it is still too early to know the full impact, the corona virus will reduce our income from events. Together, these issues require that we take steps now to keep our Club solvent for the near term, and lay the foundation for building reserve funds to ensure the long-term viability of the club.

Most of our expenses are fixed and cannot be easily reduced (rent, dock loan mortgage, insurance, permits, base utilities, etc.) Most of the other expenses are tied to income sources (like events) so reducing these "variable" expenses would result in a corresponding decrease in income.

The Board has reluctantly determined that the most viable option is to eliminate the paid Club manager/book keeper position (Bobby Rhodes), effective April 1, and attempt to run the Club on an all-volunteer basis until our finances are in better condition.

Because the existing gas dock agreement was written to combine the gas dock and club manger responsibilities, the Board has also given Bobby Rhodes notice of cancellation of the current gas dock agreement (sub-lease). We intend to offer Bobby first right of refusal on a new gas dock sub-lease as soon as the details are ironed out.

Effective immediately:

- Jon Peter (Commodore) will take on administrative and book keeping duties with Jim Morse (Treasurer) as back-up.
- Ryan Pinter will take on yard manager duties, including travel lift operation, dock assignments, and outside maintenance.
- Don Kaspar will take on Club House custodial duties.

I'm sure we will be reaching out for additional volunteers to share the load as the season progresses. Meanwhile, I ask for your patience and forbearance as we make the transition to an all-volunteer club.

Please continue to mail your dues, dock contract payments, etc., to LHBC, PO Box 697, Lorain, OH 44052. Please feel free to contact me or any of the Board with questions or concerns. This is, of course, a work in progress, and we will send more information as the process develops.

In other news, Norm Scholl, Rick Case, and Ed Rico have had to resign from the Board. Consistent with our by-laws, the Board has appointed Bill Robb, Wes Scott, and Ron Rychel to serve as replacement board members until our October general meeting.

Meanwhile, it is not clear what the full effect will be of the corona virus and the stay-at-home orders on the boating season. For now, social clubs have been added to the list of things not allowed, but it still appears that docks and marinas are allowed to remain open, so long as the other social distancing requirements are followed. As we sent out last week, the clubhouse is closed until further notice, and no formal or informal gatherings are permitted, but owners do have access to their boats. Personally, I am looking forward to sailing, even more than most years, as an allowed outside activity to preserve my sanity, though I will likely have to be very restrictive about who I can take as crew.

The Board will be meeting via video conference on April 14, where we will be discussing changes we will have to make for the boat launch process, as well as other issues for this unusual season. We have a few extra connections available for non-board members who wish to participate; contact Wes Scott for the link. We will send out additional information soon after that meeting.

The dock work day/general cleanup “party” scheduled for April 25 is suspended, but the work still needs to get done. So, if you are going to be prepping your boat, or need a break from your stay-at-home cabin fever, check the list posted on the clubhouse door to see what tasks you might be able to do. We highly recommend life jackets if working on or near the docks, especially while the water is still cold. And, of course, prudence suggests having someone else in the vicinity when working out on a dock, so it may take a little coordinating to work safely.

These are challenging times that will try our patience and test our creativity! We will get through this, and we will do our best to keep you informed as things change. Meanwhile, be safe, stay home as much as you can, and wash your hands frequently.

Jon Peter
Commodore