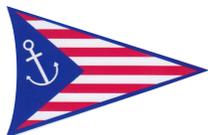


PORTSMOUTH YACHT CLUB

Newsletter | October 2022 | Volume 124 | Issue 6



View from the Bridge Commodore Whit Weller



Fall has arrived with all its splendors!

The most consistent pleasures this season have come from sharing time with members and friends at PYC. I want to thank all of the member volunteers who have worked so hard to make our club a wonderful experience for all.

At this special time we prepare for the Annual Meeting, where we discuss what we have done and what is yet to be done. Please plan on attending the meeting at the club house on Thursday October 13th at 7 PM.

As VC Soni Christensen has outlined, we still have many events to come. Take advantage of this beautiful time of year and enjoy the club with your family and friends.

RC Roger Wells and I will be working beside you to button up the club as we roll into the end of October.

See you at the club!

Weller, Commodore Commodore@PortsmouthYC.org

MEMBER NAME BADGES

New badges ordered this summer are now in! See Maddie.

FUEL AND DOCK HOURS

**Starting October 1:
10 AM to 4 PM Daily**

2022 ANNUAL MEETING

7 PM Thursday, October 13

**DOCKS OUT
Saturday, October 15**

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PORTSMOUTH YACHT CLUB

Location: Portsmouth Yacht Club

Date & Time: Thursday, October 13, 2022, 7:00 PM

Officers and Committee Chairs will present reports.

We will be voting for:

- Three members to 4-year terms to the Board of Directors
- Two members to 2-year terms to the Membership Committee
- Constitution and By-Laws Amendments
- Two Life Memberships

The Annual Meeting Notice, Reports, and Nominee Biographies are available in the front hall of the club and on our website:

[\(Member Area > 2022 Annual Meeting\)](#)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Membership Committee interviewed and approved the following applicants to the PYC Wait List.

- Doug Oxley and Amy Magnarelli (reinstatement)
- Dan Gosselin and Ellen Manero-Earley

Click here to view the latest list of [APPLICANT WAIT LIST and MEMBER CHANGES](#)

FUEL AND DOCK HOURS

Starting Oct 1:

10 AM to 4 PM Daily

DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER

October hosts:

Debby Gebow and Mary Beth Goldberg

- 10/1(S) COMMODORES CHOWDER
- 10/8(S) CLOSING NIGHT GALA
- 10/12(TH) PYC ANNUAL MEETING
- 10/15(S) DOCKS OUT *note New Date!!

Follow up-to-date information on the [PYC Website Calendar](#)

Commodore Whit Weller
 Vice Commodore Soni Christensen
 Rear Commodore Roger Wells
 Treasurer Doyle Skeels
 Communications Secretary Christina Weller
 Steward Maddie Flagg
 Dock Master Wyatt Parsons

Commodore@PortsmouthYC.org
ViceCommodore@PortsmouthYC.org
RearCommodore@PortsmouthYC.org
Treasurer@PortsmouthYC.org
Communications@PortsmouthYC.org
Steward@PortsmouthYC.org
DockMaster@PortsmouthYC.org



From the Vice Commodore | Soni Christensen

Thank you, Thank you to the amazing hosts and their teams who sponsored 24 dinners and cocktail events this season. These teams volunteered their time and talents to offer our members so many different and delicious dining experiences. The wine tasting event added to this very special year of volunteering.

Just a few years ago, when I became a member most of the dinners were catered with a few member sponsored events. This year, we only had four catered events. Please give our hosts a standing ovation for a Season well done.

Saturday, October 1, 2022 is the Commodore's Chowder. There is no charge. Please come enjoy some chowder as "Thank you" to our members for another great year at PYC.

The Closing Dinner has a Seasonal theme this year and will be Saturday, October 8, 2022 at 6:00 pm. The cost is \$65.00 pp and will feature our well received food stations by Take Away Catering. Wear your semiformal attire and dance away the evening with our favorite DJ. It will be a romantic evening with lots of sparkle. (details on page 5)

Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 7:00pm is our Annual Meeting.

Two more events to remember. We will be having a Planning Meeting for next year's Social Calendar at Laurie Clarks house the first week in December. Exact date to follow. Please come with ideas for next year.

We will have a New Year Day celebration brunch at Grill 28, January 1, 2023. Plan to attend. Last year the food was delicious.

Finally, it has truly been my pleasure to be your Vice Commodore this year and again, thank you to the many, many friends that supported the Club and me this year.

Soni Christensen, Vice Commodore
ViceCommodore@PortsmouthYC.org

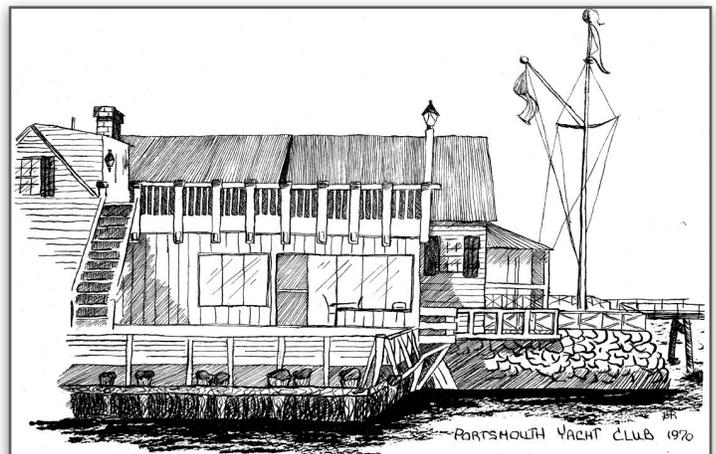
COMMODORE'S CHOWDER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 ~ 12:00 - 1:00
Hosted by Commodore Whit & PC Christina Weller

*Come enjoy some Chowder as a
"thank-you" to our members for
another great PYC season!*

*No Charge, but please sign up so that we
know how much Chowdah to have!*

Sign up by Wednesday, September 28



*Pen and Ink Sketch of PYC - 1970
Presented to the club by the family of
Fred and Pat Boronski, former PYC members*



From the Rear Commodore | Roger Wells

Wow, September is almost gone! Biggest news is the new wonderful big fridge in the shed compliments of the Ladies Committee. Also thanks to David Wadja for organizing the removal of the old rusted out fridge and the installation of the new one. The operation required moving lots of heavy material and removing and later replacing two joists. One of the two grills has been replaced by a very nice commercial grade grill.

Many of the young staff working the docks, launch, and fuel are back in school, but Maddie has managed to keep things running including some reductions in operating hours.

Plans are underway for the Docks-Out and Work Party on October 15th. We are looking for lots of volunteers from the membership and membership applicants. Sponsors – please contact your sponsorships to come and help. You will note that the Floats-Out date has changed from 10-22-22 to 10-15-22 due to the tides and mostly for safety concerns. Boats and dinghies must be off the docks no later than 10-13-15. I am sorry that this change will be inconvenient for some. Haul out will begin about 1145 hours with coffee, donuts, and hotdogs to keep us going. The potluck lunch will begin about 1400 hours.

I hope to see many of you on Saturday, October 15.

Respectfully,

Roger Wells, Rear Commodore
RearCommodore@PortsmouthYC.org

PS: We are making progress, but I must remind all members to please clean up after yourselves after your private get togethers....R



Have you wondered about the history of The Lady?

Turn to page 6 for an article written in 1998 by Club Historian Clare Murray

GLITTER AND GOLD GALA

A Celebration of the Coming Holidays!

Saturday, October 8, 2022 | 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Catered by Take Away Cafe

Passed hors d'oeuvres

Mini crab tostadas dressed with salsa and guacamole

Vegetable dumplings with sesame chive dipping sauce

Icelandic cod cakes with coconut curry

Orange ginger chicken tarts with caramelized onion and cilantro

Stations/buffet (Small plates)

Sliced beef tenderloin with wild mushroom bordelaise and horseradish sauce

Potatoes au gratin and scallion roasted Roma tomatoes

Pan seared salmon with roasted red pepper sauce and béarnaise sauce

Vegetable ravioli with Alfredo sauce

Grilled chicken

Parmesan focaccia

Assorted mini desserts (fruit tarts, chocolate chip cookies, brownies, eclairs and cream puffs)

Semi Formal Attire

\$65 person

Sign Up / Cancellation Deadline: Oct 2

The Portsmouth Yacht Club And *The Lady Member*

by Clare Murray, Club Historian

(Originally published in PYC Centennial Yearbook, 1998)

During its 100 years, the Portsmouth Yacht Club has been the recipient of a number of historical artifacts. The Club has some models of well-known ships, early signal flags, a very large oil painting of the ship *Frank Jones*, and the most outstanding of all, a larger-than-life female ship's figurehead.

This figurehead stands in the corner of the Club dining room. Mounted there, she slants forward as she would if she were on the prow of a ship. She is nearly seven feet tall. Her hair is blonde and is held back from her forehead by a circlet of gold laurel leaves. Her eyes are blue, and, although her face is noble, there is no expression. Her tunic is light blue and draped to show her shoulder and part of her bosom. The skirt is dark red. Her feet are bare and rest on the red and yellow "waves" of the base. Her right arm is extended away from her body, lifted high. The hand, with its curling inward fingers, is holding a staff about two feet long which is tipped with a gold triangular block. She is an arresting figure. She gives the impression of movement, of wind blowing her tresses and clothing. Since she was carved at the end of the Civil War, she could easily be meant to represent the figure of Liberty.

In 1994, the Ladies Group of the Club decided that, because the Club was approaching its one hundredth year, it was time to have "The Lady" restored. Her paint was flaking, and, where these flakes had fallen, one could see that her tunic was once a much darker blue. Further examination revealed that her belt, then black, used to be a gold leaf. Her right side, near a window, showed fading paint caused by the bleaching effect of ultra-violet rays. Many hair-line cracks were evident, as were some serious larger cracks. Obviously, her wood was shrinking as aged wood does.

The Ladies Group obtained three estimates from conservationists to determine the cost of her restoration. The most qualified and reasonable was the American Conservation Consortium, Ltd., of Fremont, New Hampshire. The President of the firm, Marc Williams, examined her with great thoroughness and discovered that her belt was originally gold and was able to decipher the inscription on her belt buckle. This inscription is of the utmost importance in researching her origin. It reads "*Carved by Woodbury Gerrish in 1865 and Donated to the Portsmouth Yacht Club by Josiah F. Adams in 1909*".

*"Carved by Woodbury
Gerrish in 1865 and Donated
to the Portsmouth Yacht Club
by Josiah F. Adams in 1909"*



Gerrish is a familiar name in the Portsmouth area. Josiah Gerrish is listed in early Portsmouth directories as a cabinet maker, undertaker, coffin maker, and ship's carver. His shop was located at 16 Daniel Street, and his home at #6 Franklin Street. Later directories locate him on Bow Street, Water Street, then again on Daniel Street. At one time, he shared his workshop with John Bellamy, a man well known for his carvings of eagles and furniture. (There are eight handsome and substantial chairs carved by Bellamy in the Naval Museum in the Portsmouth Navy Yard, and his eagles are in numerous public buildings in this area.) Gerrish also shared a shop and was a partner in business with Josiah F. Adams, undertaker and "furnisher". This is the man who later gave the figurehead to the Portsmouth Yacht Club.

Woodbury Gerrish was born in 1812 and died on May 11, 1898. He was apprenticed to Ebenezer Lord in 1833. In 1834 he ran away, which caused Lord to advertise for him, offering a substantial reward. This was evidently successful, as Gerrish returned and continued learning his craft. A most charming rocking horse was carved by Woodbury Gerrish for Lord's grandson, Jay. The rocking horse is said to be in a children's museum in London, but has also been reported as being in the Dearborn Museum. When Gerrish was 23 years old, he became a journeyman, the next step after apprentice.

A further note on the life of Woodbury Gerrish is an advertisement in the *Portsmouth Journal* in July 1863. "*A new ship of 1000 burthen, building by Messers. T & T is to be launched about the 1st of August. The figure and stern piece by Mr. Woodbury Gerrish are very handsome specimens of carved work. The design of the former is an alligator and needs only life to make it real. Mr. Gerrish has taken stand formerly occupied by Joseph Henderson on Bow Street. He has already established a rep as a carver and will gv satisfaction to those hom or abrd who may call him in this or any dept of his bsns. 24 Oct. - 1000 - blt by contract to JM Tredick and Salter Tredick.*" This serves to establish him as a highly desirable and skillful ships carver.

Several references were found about him having carved a larger-than-life figurehead of Benjamin Franklin for the ship *U.S.S. Franklin*. It is an extremely rare piece of work because it is signed "Woodbury Gerrish", something that ship carvers rarely did. The *U.S.S. Franklin* was rebuilt at the Portsmouth Navy Yard in 1853. At this time, both Bellamy and Gerrish were working in the shipyard. At present, that figurehead is displayed at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The *Franklin* served as a flagship to Commodore Steward in the Pacific and continued in service until 1852 when she was rebuilt in Portsmouth and the new figurehead carved. (The original figurehead had been carved by John Rush, a noted carver, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.)

Ship figureheads have long been a method of identifying ships. Some 'heads represent the owner, the owner's wife, daughter, or some other person germane to the ship. Animals are occasionally used. They are a form of folk art developed from the need to identify a ship to lowly sailors unable to read as well as to represent the name of the ship, such as "The Gloria B." or the "William Jones".

The obituary of Woodbury Gerrish in May, 1898, at the age of eighty-six, mentioned that he had lived in Cambridge for the last twenty or twenty-five years.

Josiah F. Adams, donor of the figurehead, is listed in the 1905 directory as boarding at 27 Washington Street and having a warehouse at 5 Daniel Street. At this time, he was a widower. An earlier directory (1867) has a half page advertisement showing him to be a "Funeral Director, Embalmer, and Furnisher". Adam's grave site is in the South Street Cemetery. The gravestone says he was born on July 9, 1830 and died April 22, 1916. he was married to Maria Class, who was born on May 16, 1828 and died April 19, 1903. Judging by the size of his advertisement and the considerable size of his tombstone, Adams was a success in his business.

The minutes of the Portsmouth Yacht club for December 3, 1908 yield a bit more information on "The Lady". The Board of Directors voted to accept the figurehead from Josiah Adams. Mr. Daniel Trefethen and John P. Holmes were appointed to arrange for acceptance, probably meaning that they arranged the location and positioning of this rather large and unwieldy figure within the clubhouse. On March 4 of the following year, a vote of thanks was extended to Mr. Josiah Adams for the figurehead presented to the Club, and the privileges of the Club were extended to him for the coming season. Another vote of thanks was given by the Board to Mr. Daniel Trefethen and George Ducker for repairs and decoration. The Consortium doing the restoration on the figure has found that, at one time, the raised arm was broken and repaired using a dowel and several layers of wood glue and nailed with contemporary nails. It would seem that this is the reference made in the minutes. The "decorations" may refer to having her painted and gilded, which would be consistent with the Victorian style and the findings of the conservator. It is felt that, originally, she was painted all white to emulate marble, which was fashionable at the time. Further discoveries of the conservator have revealed that her hair, now yellow, was ash blond, her eyebrows were dark brown, and the gold circlet in her hair was originally green.

More references to her in the Club's minutes evoke a certain sly charm. A vote of thanks was extended to Mr. John P. Holman as one of the (word impossible to make out) in charge of *our lady member*. In August of 1909, the last reference found notes that thanks were extended to Mr. Ceppo Johnson for the new lid (?) presented to *our lady member*. (At this time in the Club's history, there were no female members.)

The connection between Woodbury Gerrish and Josiah Adams is obvious. They shared a business, possibly the undertaking establishment on Daniel Street. One can only speculate on how Adams, during the 19 years between Gerrish's death and his gift of the figure to the Portsmouth Yacht Club, acquired the figure. It would seem that he truly admired Woodbury Gerrish and felt that a donation of his work to a yacht club would be fitting kind of memorial to his respected friend.

To this day, a special mystery adds to her many charms, and that is, "Why was she carved? Was she intended for a ship which was never completed? Or for a ship which never came in for a scheduled restoration? Or might she have been a demonstration by Gerrish of the very best of his skills and perhaps a gift to his friend Josiah Adams? We may never know the answers, and perhaps we really do not want to. Nothing can diminish the singular beauty of The Lady, nor can any facts about her background further enhance her beauty.