

Member Labor, 1970's and 80's

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By this time it had become clear that when given a choice, most members favored signs over moorings. Dockside water and a limited amount of electricity made the signs even more attractive. A major rebuilding and redesign of the upriver float plan was accomplished (and is the one we still use today). The large "Main Float" was sold, (noted that this is still considered a controversial decision) and a longer straight floating pier ("Broadway") was built which extended both to the left and to the right of the Causeway. Short finger piers were extended from both sides of this backbone. The "Old Mortuary Boulevard" was dismantled and reused as parts for "Broadway".

Although the layout has not changed appreciably since those days, all of the component parts have been replaced at least once and mostly twice. Although the Club had adopted the use of "modern" materials such as Styrofoam soon after it became available, the favored practice was to frame with large (and often salvaged) lumber. Early Styrofoam was less durable than the oil-resistant type we use today, and there was (it turned out unwarranted) concern over the action of ice on the docks. Several attempts were made to design improved dock systems before the Club settled on the light-weight modular style in 1980. At this point the generally good condition of our docks is due to a program of always building several replacement sections of dock every year, and never having to undergo a major rebuild again.

A significant part of the "Work or Pay" program's hours are spent on the dock system each year. In 1978 the steel ramp was erected from the Causeway to Broadway. During the early 80's each winter would have a dozen men under the porch building up to thirty sections of dock out of frames, snow covered tanks. The "New Mortuary Boulevard" was built in 1985 with remarkably few construction problems but an unusual amount of re-trace due to interest from new agencies, and a renewed interest from some of our old friends. Costly upgrades of the potable water, dockside electrical, lighting, and communication systems provide our members with a never ending list of tasks with which they can fulfill their work requirements.



Members earning work or pay credits repairing floats.

The Work or Pay program was started in 1978 for several reasons, foremost of which was to provide more labor for the Club's projects. It is certainly not clear from the notes that there was ever a previous "Golden Age" when all members worked hard, long, and cheerfully for the greater good of the Club. In fact, the notes repeat again and again complaints over how the same few seemed to do all the work. Some "old-timer" claim that when most of the boats were wooden, and stored at the club, that the owners were of necessity more often available at the Club during the long "fitting-out" season. Others suspect that there were probably as many owners that spent a lot (or little) time working on their boats then as there are now.

The clubhouse developed much the same way that the docks did, slowly, steadily, always through mostly the labor of the membership, and remarkably without a master plan or long-range plan. To be sure there had been a "Long Range Planning Committee" for almost as long as the Club had been in existence, but up until the Club began posting aside money attached to the "Long Range" ideas, most of the Club building projects were initiated by the individual efforts of the Commodore that particular year. (Yes, several times the notes do refer to consideration of having the Commodore serve more than a one year term, but "not this year".)

The first five years had the members finishing the interior of the Clubhouse. Floors were finished, partitions were erected, ceilings were plastered. In 1959, a member who happened to be a Carpentry Instructor at a Trade School brought a team of his students to the Club and erected a porch over the lower deck facing the river. Some "Long Range" thought process was used because it was built to be "strong enough to accept a second floor load in the future". In the mid-60's the porch was rebuilt larger and longer again with the idea of being a future extended second floor. Unfortunately, by 1983 when the second floor addition was eventually framed, it had deteriorated to the point of having to be replaced.

The lower deck of the porch provides the Club with the single most often used meeting and boating place at the Club during the boating season. Before the Winch House was built (in 1986), the area under the porch provided storage space for the Club's fork-lift and donkeys during the winter season (Polyethylene storm panels were erected and dismantled each year). A generous open upper deck was created by this porch and was highly prized for Spring and Fall use, but was a bit too sunny in the Summer.

In 1982 through 1984 saw the second floor addition built. A Contractor was hired for the footings, framing, siding, and roofing. Club members did the drywall, flooring, vinyl wallpaper, painting, electrical work, finish carpentry, and removing and reframing the original wall between the hall and the new addition.

Hard on the heels of the addition came the building of the new Winch House in 1986. Its primary purpose was to take better care of our hauling equipment. We had acquired some more and larger pieces of equipment and with this equipment came spare engines and whatnot of venerable age and somewhat uncertain lineage. The new porch created by the club-