

# Palatka Yacht Club

WHISPERS OVER THE WATER

March 2009

## 2009 OFFICERS &

### DIRECTORS

Commodore:

Gail Hart

Vice Commodore:

Robert Trail

Secretary:

Karen  
Blankenship

Treasurer:

Steven Huntley

First-Year Director:

Clark Hoyle

Second Year Director:

Constantine Foltis

Past Commodore:

Keith Cheshire

## Commodore's Corner .....by Gail Hart

Well, the rendezvous south this past weekend hit the big Leagues, 25 of them being the average distance traveled to our Hontoon Island destination! Besides the usual breathtaking views along our wonderful river, those attending found fun, merriment and camaraderie at all ports of call! Read more in Linda G's article below!

On a more serious note, outings like this and the other countless activities, parties, club meals and work details would not be possible without the OUTSTANDING efforts of our membership. Dorothy and Karen's wonderful meals, Bob Trail and his never ending bag of programs, David & Clark with those rendezvous, Ernie and Harry always ready with tractors, grills or just hard work. Steve always keeping us above water financially, Erica with that great Casino Night last year, the O'Connors always offering a course of smooth sailing when things get rough. Connie ever ready with pen and camera to let all know what "really" occurred. Well, the list could go on and on, but you get the idea. We are blessed with a great "crew" on the good ship PYC and I just want to tell one and all how much all of your efforts in behalf of our club are appreciated.

Last, but not least, "DON'T FORGET THE TITANIC"! No, DiCaprio will not be there, but expect an excellent presentation at this month's meeting on that great ship and many facts about her "final" voyage that I expect all have not heard. Our guest, Pat Bourgeau managed the support team for *The Discovery Channel* in the production of the documentary "The Last Mysteries of the Titanic". Please mark your calendars, invite your friends and don't miss this meeting!



## 2009 COMMITTEE

### CHAIRS

Boating rendezvous:  
David Girardin

Membership:

Facilities: LaVerne Cheshire

Publicity: Jean Morris

Barkeeper: Guion Lindsay

Dinner planning:  
Karen Blankenship &  
Dorothy McAfee

Newsletter:  
Constantine Foltis

Improvements &  
Maintenance:

Door Committee:  
Ella Lindsay

Calling committee:  
June Henley

Sunshine:  
Jeannine O'Connor

Webmaster: Keith Mehl

Programs: Robert Trail

Planning Committee:

## Past Events

### Welaka Trip February 22<sup>nd</sup>



Ray and Lana Bunton in Girardins' Gator Bait L. Girardin photo



Gilleans, Buntons & D. Girardin L. Girardin photo

— This had been advertised as either a boating or driving event, depending on the weather. The morning started out chilly and slightly overcast but turned sunny and warm by mid day. Enough people were optimistic about the weather so that most came by water. Trip leader Clark Hoyle had advised the Café Bleu to expect around 35 from our group, but 48 showed up instead: 33 in seven boats and two kayaks, and another 15 in cars. We had a quick dock party on the Welaka Town Dock as people kept coming in. By noon after everyone was sufficiently lubricated, we walked up the grassy hill to the tiny restaurant. Our group filled the dining room and spilled out onto the deck overlooking the river, where there were enough additional tables to seat everyone. The restaurant luncheon menu was limited, but service was fast



The Hart family on Hart's desire



Bob & Sue Trail

## Welaka Trip - continued



View from the café Bleu

and friendly, and the food was delicious. Afterward the staff passed around trays of chocolate-covered strawberries for everyone, gratis. When we finished lunch there was more socializing, then everyone gradually drifted back to their boats and cars and went home. It was a great day.

**Dinner Meeting - February 26<sup>th</sup>** - There were 32 members and guests at this meeting, including three speakers on two separate topics. After the usual friendly social hour and delicious pot-luck dinner, Donna Rhein, Park Services Specialist for the Florida Park Service, Division of Recreation and Parks, spoke about Palatka's

own Ravine Gardens State Park, illustrated with a slide show of drawings and photographs. She briefly described its geology, starting 10,000 years ago when underground water seepage to the river gradually caused erosion in the ground above, until it collapsed and the area became an open ravine. She said the same ground water still seeping from springs in the ravine is sweet to drink, unlike the sulphurous water from the aquifer far below. She talked about the park's history, starting with its founding late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, with all the development work done by volunteers, CCC workers during the Depression, and contractors over the years, including building bridges, putting in roads and trails and planting all the azaleas for which the park is famous.



Speaker Donna Rhein

Following were two additional speakers, Janet Smith and Linda Smith (not related), from the Welaka Woman's Club. They spoke about the desires of Central Florida municipalities to use fresh water supplies from the Upper St. Johns River and why we, downriver in NE Florida, should deny it. The St Johns River Management District (SJRWMD) is considering permits for same at present. The essence of the two Ms. Smiths' talk was that this was a critical issue facing the river that required action NOW. The Conservation Department of the Welaka Woman's Club has mounted a petition campaign called the "**St. Johns No Water Withdrawal Petition**". It will be presented to the governing board of the St. Johns River Water Management District at the April 13th 1:00 pm meeting for the public in Palatka. At this meeting the board will hear comments from the public on a consumptive use permit for Seminole County to withdraw 5.5 million gallons of water a day from the St. Johns River. They plan to use this water primarily for irrigation, including golf courses. The petition, accompanying detailed literature and map of a proposed pipeline system, all provided by the Welaka Woman's Club, is being transmitted by separate e-mail to those who can receive it. If you agree with the intent of the petition, print out your copy, sign it and send it in. Members without e-mail who are interested, call Connie Foltis at 328-6783 for paper copies.



Speakers Janet Smith & Linda Smith

Afterwards, Commodore Gail Hart made some announcements and brought up some questions for a vote by the membership present or by the Board of Directors, who were all present.

1. The membership approved the club joining the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, at an annual cost of \$100 for a non-profit organization.
2. The membership approved the club's participation in the Radical Boat Reunion on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Details were in the February newsletter.
3. We would like to move the clubhouse to the city dock for the Mug Race again this year, to offer hospitality to the participants and in the process receive some much-needed exposure to the public. A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers to help. There are still problems, however; see the Board of Directors' Meeting write-up below. City Manager Woody Boynton agreed to this and further suggested that we leave the clubhouse at the city dock for the Blue Crab Festival, a month later. There was much discussion pro and con, and it was finally decided to have the clubhouse downtown only for the time of the Mug Race and its pre-race festivities. The reasons for this were: (a) the clubhouse will not be secure while tied to the city dock and is subject to vandalism - there was some minor vandalism there last year; (b) the Wolfson Bass Tournament takes place after the Mug Race and before the Blue Crab Festival, and that organization does not want us in their way; (c) availability of utilities is questionable - last year we used someone's generator for electricity (without air conditioning), and the heads were off-limits because there was no convenient access to fresh water or sewage hookups.



Commodore Gail Hart

The meeting ended with the 50-50 drawing, and Connie Foltis won \$21 of the \$42 collection.

**Board of Directors Meeting - March 5<sup>th</sup>** - The Board covered the following topics at this meeting:

1. Secretary Karen Blankenship and Treasurer Steve Huntley read the minutes of the previous meeting and the monthly treasurer's report, respectively. The Board discussed the various points of each and approved them as written.
2. Members present discussed the problems with the electrical hookup, water supply and the rutted entrance road. We feel the electrical and road questions are the landlord's responsibility, and Bob Trail will follow up on that. The water pump has failed and will have to be replaced. At present our fresh water is temporarily provided by artesian-well ground pressure. (Editor's note: Steve Huntley advised on March 10<sup>th</sup> that the landlord was undertaking electrical improvements and is repairing or replacing the pump.)
3. The Board approved our participation in the June 13th Radical Boat Reunion. Keith Cheshire will coordinate (lunch sales, etc.) We will serve preordered hot dogs, hamburgers and iced tea inside the clubhouse. No alcoholic drinks will be sold or allowed at or in the clubhouse.
4. Steve has still been unable to find an insurance company to renew our coverage. He is still looking and will check into the costs of various levels of protection.
5. The Board approved getting an '800' phone number for the club that will answer with a recording directing the caller to the commodore or other officer of the year. The cost will be \$12.95 per month plus tax (will be less than \$15 total). Keith Cheshire will arrange for it. The number will not be in the phone book but will be on all our correspondence, our website and any other publicity about the club.
6. The blue plywood fascia around the upper deck edge is badly in need of maintenance. Rather than scrape and paint it, the Board decided to cover it with sheet vinyl. Steve is looking into its availability in the proper color blue. He thinks we will need about 350 sq. ft., at a cost of about a couple of hundred dollars. We are checking prices.
7. The Board approved reimbursing Connie Foltis for the cost of engraving the punch bowl set donated to the club by an old sailing friend of Gene O'Connor and Connie Foltis. It is now on display in the clubhouse and available for use.
8. We discussed projects planned for the coming work party: (a) exterior painting, (b) complete the electrical wiring for lighting throughout the hold, (c) repair broken welds on the gangway handrails, (d) remove the old inoperative freezer from the hold. Karen Blankenship announced she will prepare a memorable lunch for the workers. Contact Bob Trail (649-8710 or [griffinaero@yahoo.com](mailto:griffinaero@yahoo.com)) if you are interested in helping.
9. The Board approved getting a contractor to the clubhouse to re-weld the damaged gangway handrails, so we don't have to remove it and bring it to a welding shop as we did before. So far, no members have said they could make the repairs.
10. Gail has arranged for a program about the Titanic at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> dinner meeting. No details were available at that time, but Gail said that the speaker is an expert in undersea research. Steve Huntley will speak at the April dinner meeting. His subject will be a short talk entitled, "The GPS System: How it Works and What it Can't Do."
11. Barkeeper Guion Lindsay requested that the Board authorize him to replace the Christmas-tree-type liquor-shot dispensers we are now using at the bar. They are worn out and no longer function properly. The Board approved the expense to purchase bottle-top shot dispensers for all the liquor bottles used at the bar, which should not wear out.
12. Steve is checking up on membership dues and will bill those who have not yet paid.
13. It was decided to have an Oktoberfest and a Christmas party this year at the clubhouse, but no dates were set.
14. There was some discussion about raising the pot-luck dinner prices, but the Board did not come to any conclusion.
15. The Board collectively wished to thank all the other silent workers and contributors to our club's success.



Bonnie & Gail - More club members following



Harry & Andrea Gillean's High Times



View from the Bridge (Scraps' bridge, that is)

## Hontoon Island Trip - March 6-8 ..... By Linda Girardin

And so our journey upstream on the St. Johns River began on a beautiful Friday morning in March. My husband David and I in "Gator Bait" started our trip at the Elgin Grove boat ramp. The O'Connors, with the Cheshires on board "Scraps" and the smaller Panga in tow, started at the O'Connors' river front home in East Palatka. The Gilleans (Harry and Andrea) trailered their boat "High Times" to Browns Landing boat ramp and launched just downstream from the clubhouse. The Hoyles left their dock in Satsuma on board "Triple Play" as fellow club members motored by. Gail Hart with her friend Bonnie had left Acosta Creek Marina earlier in the morning on "Harts Desire."

The swamps along the river were busting out in new foliage. Ospreys chased eagles. Ospreys chased each other. Eagles soared high in the sky. Alligators sunned on the banks or cruised the water. Turkeys grazed on the shore of the river or on lawns at private residences. At Georgetown Marina, the O'Connors needed to fuel their boat. So, David Girardin took the Panga from its tow and skippered it on to Hontoon Island, while I skippered "Gator Bait" to our destination. Lake George was "flat like a mirror"; the only ripples on the water were from boat wakes. The lake is notorious for being rough in crossing due to its relatively shallow depths compared to its length and width. So, all were thankful for such a beautiful crossing. At the State Road 44 bridge west of De Land, we started picking up manatees along the riverbank. They were everywhere.



Alligator Gar Fish



Cruise Ship American Princess

Although everyone started the trip at different times, we all arrived within an hour - at about 3 pm. David and I had traveled the greatest distance - about 71 statute miles. For the transport, we had six boats with a total of twelve people on board, representing five past commodores, two of whom served two terms, the current commodore, a past treasurer, a current director, and a past director of the club. We tied up on a "T" dock at Hontoon Island State Park near one another for the weekend. The trip down was so beautiful and relaxing that no one wanted to cook an evening meal. So, we piled into three of the smaller boats, four people to a boat, and motored back downstream to "Shady Oaks" restaurant at the State Road 44 bridge. Steve Huntley drove down from his home on Federal Point to join us for dinner. The ride back on the river after dark was beautiful. We almost did not need our 40,000-lumen "Q" beams to navigate, as the moon was bright for the trip. Although the afternoon was warm, the night chilled down such that no one needed air conditioning, rather we needed warm blankets. The marina is in the middle of a no-wake zone, so we did not have lots of wake to rock the boats interfering with our sleep. Only the bright moon would make us think that someone had left a light on.



Keith & LaVerne Cheshire



Clark Hoyle and friend

## Hontoon Island - continued



The O'Connors' *Scraps* and Panga

Lazily we all awakened on Saturday to heavy dew on the boats and another beautiful day in paradise. We finally "broke anchor" and motored further upstream to Blue Springs State Park. Along the boardwalk, we spied "lions and tigers and bears, oh my" or rather "manatee, gar, tarpon, and snook, oh my." Most of the manatees had already left the spring run and were out in the river. However, we had a beautiful hike to the spring boil, where some adventurous souls were swimming in the cool spring run. Some of us grilled a lunch of hot dogs, sausage or chicken, while others ate previously-prepared luscious meals. The weather was approaching summertime weather. Not a cloud in the sky, warm temperatures, bordering on being hot. The only dead giveaway that it was not summer was the 65 degree river temperature.



Swimming in the Blue Springs boil



Alligator



Jeannine and the PYC flotilla

On the return trip to the marina, spotting gators was the entertainment. Once back at the marina, we noticed fire and rescue vehicles at the park entrance on the mainland. It turns out that a wildfire on Hontoon Island broke out while we were gone. The park rangers had evacuated the campers on the island and closed the hiking trails that we were hoping to use. We were warned that the boaters might be evicted from the docks. Because David is so familiar with this part of the river, he was not concerned about finding us a safe anchorage for a raft-up.

only disappointed that the rendezvous would soon end. Waking on Sunday to more dew, mist rising off the river, and the smell from yesterday's fire, we were all thankful for yet another gorgeous boating day. The last of our boats left the dock at the marina around 10 am for the journey home. Lake George had small ripples on it, so the passing across the lake was as beautiful and easy as before. The ride to our homes was actually quicker than going to the island because we had the current at our sterns most of the time

Tall tales and other stories plied the end of the "T" dock during the afternoon siesta period, while some actually took a siesta. No one was disappointed that they had made any of the side trips so far this weekend,



Train on Buffalo Bluff Bridge

The trip did not end for the Girardins as we had hoped, however. Within eight miles of home we ran out of gas. David had miscalculated how many hours he had run the boat before the trip. He contacted a friend to bring five gallons of gas; however, they passed us thinking we were someplace else on the river. Meanwhile, the O'Connors motored up and let us take their



Out of gas - David in the Panga towing *Gator Bait*

Panga to tow "Gator Bait" until our fuel supply arrived. Then, with fuel in the tanks, we returned the Panga to its slip at the O'Connors. Being broken down on a beautiful day was a pleasure compared to what it could have been like under worse boating conditions.

**Coming Events** - All events scheduled for the remainder of this year are shown below. Details of each will be shown in the newsletter just prior to the event. Weekend events may be subject to later change, or new ones may be added.

**March 21<sup>st</sup> (Saturday) - Work Party at the Clubhouse** – Painting, electrical wiring, gangway, discard old freezer. Karen Blankenship will serve a memorable lunch to the workers. Contact Bob Trail (649-8710 or [griffinaero@yahoo.com](mailto:griffinaero@yahoo.com)) for further information or if you would like to help.

**March 26<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner Meeting** - - Aboard our floating clubhouse at Browns Landing. Social hour starts at 6:00 PM, and dinner starts at 7:00 o'clock. The club will provide the entire meal, which is still in the planning stage at present. No potluck is needed, and there will be a \$10.00 charge per person, to cover the club's costs. No reservations are necessary, but the traditional calling committees may poll the membership to remind everyone about this meeting and to give the cooks an idea of how many are expected. The door committee will be Ella Lindsay and Connie Foltis. The program for this meeting is on the subject of the passenger ship *Titanic*, lost at sea in 1912, to be presented by Mr. Patrick Bourgeau, a long-time member of the Canadian Navy and now retired. In 2004 and 2005 Mr. Bourgeau participated in expeditions to the sunken *Titanic* 12,500 feet below the surface, the results of which were used to produce the Discovery Channel documentary "Last Mysteries of the Titanic" and retrieval of \$22.5 million worth of artifacts. This promises to be very interesting evening.

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors Meeting** - At 6:30 PM aboard our floating clubhouse. Board meetings are open to all PYC members.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

May 2<sup>nd</sup> (Saturday) - Mug Race (PYC participation tentative)

May 7<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

May 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday-Sunday) - Raft-up at Silver Glen Springs - contact: Larry Hayes

May 28<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

June 4<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

June 13<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Radical Boat Reunion (See February newsletter)

June 25<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

July 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> (Friday-Sunday) - St. Marys, Georgia - contact: David Girardin

July 23<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

August 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

August 9 (Sunday) - BBQ at the Redneck Riviera sandbar - contact: Clark Hoyle

August 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

September 3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

September 13<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) - Canoe Haw Creek in Flagler County - contact: David Girardin

September 24<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

September 26<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Las Vegas Night - contact: Karen Blankenship

October 1<sup>st</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

October 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> (Fri-Sun) - Bull Creek Marina - contact: Gene O'Connor or Clark Hoyle

Oktoberfest at the clubhouse (no date set)

October 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thursday) - Dinner meeting

November 5<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) - Board of Directors meeting

November 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> (Saturday-Sunday) - Outback Crab Shack - contact: Gene O'Connor

November 14<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Oyster and Shrimp Bash - contact: Clark Hoyle

Christmas Party/Commodores' Ball (no date set)

## Miscellany

**Lost and Found** - Dorothy McAfee is looking for a good chef's knife that disappeared during the Oyster Roast. It may have been placed in the smoker/grill.

**Dinner Meeting Programs** - Our dinner-meeting program Chairman Bob Trail sometimes has a hard time finding presenters for after-dinner programs. We club members could probably contribute some interesting topics ourselves. We have all taken some interesting trips and done some interesting things in our lives, or know someone who has. Many of these experiences would make entertaining dinner-meeting programs. They don't even have to be recent. Any member who would like to present or suggest something along this line, contact Bob. And remember, dinner is free. Also, up to two presenters from outside the club will enjoy their meals as guests of the Palatka Yacht Club. Audiovisual resources are available, and all necessary assistance will be provided.

**PYC Library** - Anyone who has surplus books, VHS tapes, DVDs, pictures, or whatever, that relate to boating or boats, or even past club memorabilia, could donate them to the club, where they will be kept in the clubhouse for anyone to look at or sign out and take home. Contact Bob Trail (649-8710 or [griffinaero@yahoo.com](mailto:griffinaero@yahoo.com)).

**Publicity** – For anyone who missed it, there was a very nice article about the Palatka Yacht Club, including three photographs, in the February 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Palatka Daily News, page 3C

**Test Your Yachting Knowledge** – What happens if a yacht is 'taken aback'?

- (a) It has sailed the wrong side of a mark on a racing course.
- (b) It is caught with the wind on the side opposite that for which the sails are set,
- (c) It has been hauled out of the water for scraping and cleaning.
- (d) It is sailing against a current so strong it cannot make any headway.

**Interesting Stuff you may Never Need to Know** - Many years ago in Scotland, a new outdoor game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only - Ladies Forbidden', and thus the word **GOLF** entered into the English language.

**For sale** - Antique .18-foot Crestliner motorboat with 55 hp Evinrude, on good galvanized tandem trailer. Asking \$1800. Contact Bob Trail at 649-8710. Will deal for a smaller runabout.



Trails' Crestliner for sale

**Club-owned Sunfish** – At present, the Club's Sunfish sailboat is on a trailer at Bob and Sue Merritt Trail's San Mateo property and is available for any member to use. If interested, contact Bob or Sue.

**Boat U.S. Membership** - Our club members are entitled to Boat US membership while paying half-price dues. Our cost: \$12.50. Contact Steve Huntley at 904-692-2952 or [protopterus@peoplepc.com](mailto:protopterus@peoplepc.com) if you are not already included in this special arrangement for PYC members.

**PYC Tent** - Any members desiring to reserve the PYC tent, contact Commodore Gail Hart at 386-329-8460. The tent is stored onboard the clubhouse when not in use.

**Newsletters** - If you have an e-mail address and are currently receiving paper copies of our club newsletters, we urge you to file your e-mail address with publisher Connie Foltis. He will arrange for you to receive your newsletters by e-mail as PDF files. This would decrease the cost, labor and delay of printing and mailing paper copies every month.

Contact Connie about writing an article for the newsletter (Ex: a boating autobiography or a description of an interesting trip you have taken) or to place an advertisement or digital photograph in it. Entries should be received before the end of the first week of the month to be included in that month's newsletter.

**PYC Web Site** – Our web page is <http://palatkayachtclub.org/> or [www.palatkayachtclub.org](http://www.palatkayachtclub.org).

**Answer to "Test your Yachting Knowledge"** – (b) It is caught with the wind on the side opposite that for which the sails are set.