

February 2021

Volume 17, Issue 1

# Port Tacks

The Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Village Marina, Watkins Glen, NY

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Please send any comments, questions or corrections to:  
editor@flyc.us

## 2021 FLYC Planning Meeting

Your club officers, directors, and committee members will be meeting on Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, to begin scheduling this year's club activities.

If you have any suggestions or opinions that you would like to have considered, please contact any of the club officers with your ideas or concerns as soon as possible.

## Commodore's Comments

by Terry Stewart

SV Syren

### Managing Change

As we know, we are experiencing some exciting changes in our marina environment. The past changes we have seen certainly have proven to be a good thing. The old flea market area became the Harbor Hotel, the cinder parking area became the "Seneca Harbor Park" and the brick walkway along the docks are examples of what began around 2005. Now, the newly proposed ideas are equally exciting and offer more big changes to our environment.



When it comes to pass that improvements begin, which is still pending, marina tenants are depending on tenant bathrooms, showers and a "pump out" dock to remain operational. Some form of vehicle parking and enough space for winter storage area are also critical. These concerns are basic for the regular annual cycle to remain normal.

There are many moving parts to these impending ideas. If the end result turns out as nice as the previous changes have, our space where we spend so much time will only be better. To help work toward that goal we should stay current with discussions in all the arenas. There are many. The Watkins Glen Village planning board, the Schuyler County Planning Commission, Industrial Development Agency, the Schuyler County Legislature and private enterprises such as the Village Marina are all "players" to some degree in the ideas of how things will unfold.

It may be an appropriate plan to ask for interested FLYC members to volunteer to form a small group to stay current with developing plans, similar to what happened in 2013 when the Village Marina was before the county legislature requesting a contract extension. These members could then make sure the yacht club is informed of accurate information and, if appropriate, the club could properly voice an opinion to the plans in a timely fashion. The Finger Lakes Yacht Club has gone through many changes in 30 years and remains a solid group that contributes to the Schuyler County community in many ways. We would hope to continue in that tradition.

-Terry

# Vice Commodore's Comments

by John Chesbrough

SV Aquarelle



Another winter to look forward to and make plans for. Our habit for the last few years has been to travel south, into the Florida Keys, and move onto our boat *Contessa*. In the past we've flown down but this year the Covid situation led us to rent a car for a one-way trip. Good choice, it turned

out, as we had to extend the rental period to sleep in the car several nights rather than in the boat.

The reason for that was when we arrived and climbed into the boat and opened the hatch there was 2½ feet of water inside with barely recognizable objects floating. Our first thought was to get back in the car and drive back home. Adventures come with challenges. Gradually we got a grip and started into a plan: go straight to home depot for a pump, two jugs of degreaser, bleach and lots of rags and cheap wipes. A friendly mechanic at our marina loaned us a pressure washer which made an additional mess of the interior paint. We had to throw out a fair amount of stuff but the plastic bags we had used for cushions, clothing and bedding were quite successful as we had piled them all above the water.

The cause of the flood was two things: One of the four cockpit drain hoses broke its hose clamp and drained to the bilge, and then the bilge pump died. I had in the past considered putting in a Garber plug for draining the bilge. Too late now. There had been extraordinary rain in southern Florida from near miss hurricanes last fall.

The engine had been entirely under water. That friendly mechanic sensed an opportunity and requested permission to find out if the engine would roll over. It did, easily. As soon as possible I drained the oil, and water, then over filled with new oil, all the way up to the fill cap. We let that sit for a day then the mechanic took the job. Several hours later plus a new starter, new alternator and new relay (Yanmar engine) he had that engine running, but the starter kept spinning. The main ignition wire harness has a plug connection in-line, and it was still full of water. Draining and drying that seemed to solve the problem, or so we thought. Two days later Jim and Lynne McGinnis arrived just as *Contessa* was being put into the water. Jim thought it would be a good idea to drive the boat out of the canals, into the ocean, and see if the sails still work. Everything went flawlessly, including the motor back into the canals, or so we thought again.

Early next morning, preparing to sail 50+ miles to a slip waiting for us in Key West, there was no ignition, just a revolting odor

## Port Tacks

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of melting plastic. Evidently there was still enough moisture in there somewhere to cause a short. By now it was Saturday with no chance for new parts until Monday. So naturally we jumped in the McGinnis' car and drove to Key West.

The new starter arrived Wednesday, and our mechanic thought it would be a good idea to install a push button start and bypass/eliminate that first relay. Now the ignition system is simplified, and the engine again runs like a champ.

During this latest saga of boat ownership, we realized that we had had our fun with *Contessa* and that someone else should

have that privilege now. Maggie posted for sale ads online with attractive pre-flood photos. A middle-aged liveaboard from North Carolina got in touch, remained interested and three days later became *Contessa's* newest owner. We are not done with sailing just yet, but I think we're done with winter vacations in the Keys.

- John

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## Rear Commodore's Comments

by Don Swanson



Greetings to all!

My name is Don and I have taken on the role of Rear Commodore for the 2021 season. I am looking forward to another great season of racing and most of all, getting more acquainted with the members of the FLYC.

As your new Rear Commodore, I am ready to take my experience to a new level. Although there's much to learn, the past two seasons of racing have been both fun and instructive for me. I will be bringing to the table what I have gained along with the guidance

*SV Independence*

provided by those who have preceded my tenure. For the 2021 racing season we will be continuing in much the same way as in the past years (as I learn the ropes), but with time and experience I hope to offer challenging courses and introduce racing to more participants.

You can find me on *SV Independence* on Dock 1 (Slip 132). Be sure to stop by to say hello, that is if I haven't already set sail. In that case..., you can try to catch me!

- Don

# Secretary's Column

by Sue Morris

SV Sails Call



Ahoy to the FLYC members 2021! Only 4 months away until we start the process of putting our boats back in the water! Hopefully everyone stays safe and healthy!

Please send your membership application into the following address with check for \$45 for new members and anyone who weren't members for 2020.

Checks and forms to:  
Sue Morris  
PO Box 14  
Pine Valley, NY 14872

Looking forward to seeing you all in the new season! Missing all of you.

- Sue, FLYC Secretary

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Those who paid for 2020, the renewal dues are \$10 for 2021 because of our truncated events calendar last year.

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# From the Treasurer

by Denis Kingsley

SV Tark



There continues to be little financial activity with no current expenses and just a few deposits of dues for 2021. As previously noted, we remain solvent.

- Denis, still cooking the books.

## Thinking Ahead to Spring Projects...



*"There's always one annoying piece left over."*

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## Socially Speaking

by Maggie Martin & Lynne McGinnis



### Socially Distant

What a winter it has been so far!! I hope that you are all keeping warm as we prepare for the Polar Vortex – and sailing seems far off on the horizon.

I am currently sitting outside writing from Key West, returning this week to the reality of winter. If you have read Vice Commodore John's article, you know that we have given up our Florida winter boat life. Arriving here and finding it full of water and the associated damage and effort and expense did us in this year. We are relieved to have been able to clean it up and pass *Contessa* along to a new owner in the best condition that we could.

We renovated five years ago when we purchased it, three years ago after hurricane Irma, and again this time, caused by nature

SV Aquarelle & SV Brewster and design. So many ways to go wrong! We will miss the boat and sailing on the ocean and mostly the warm weather. It has been a wonderful adventure and full of our best memories. We were happy that we could share some good times with friends from FLYC who have dropped in to visit!

This year has been hard for all of us – some more than others. Happily, there is much to look forward to. High on the list is spring and the return of sailing on Seneca Lake. Hope that you are all well and warm and living peacefully.

Lynne is going to yell at me for sending our new photo, but it is pandemic appropriate. 😊

- Maggie & Lynne

Contact: Maggie 607-621-7247

Lynne 607-426-7914

Email both at [social@flyc.us](mailto:social@flyc.us)

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## Meet Your Directors – Nancy Sisbarro

By Nancy Sisbarro

SV *Amazing Grace*



Ahoy mates!

My name is Nancy Sisbarro of *Amazing Grace*, a 36-foot Pearson. I am excited to serve as a director for the Finger Lakes Yacht Club for the next two years.

My first experience with sailing was when I was in high school. I went sailing on *Candlewood Lake* in Danbury, CT. The boat was a 19-foot daysailer and it was very windy and wavy

that day. I remember my boyfriend's father yelling to me to release the port sheet and pull in the starboard sheet. I stood there not knowing what he was talking about or what I should do, until he took over and did it himself while holding the tiller with his foot. It was an experience that left me feeling inadequate, scared, and excited at the same time.

He apologized to me later, admitting that he was not a great Captain because he should have made sure that his crew knew what to do. He explained to me that we should have had a trial run on a less windy day. We did go out one more time with his daughter. This gave me the opportunity to watch a pro at work.

My second experience with sailing was with a co-worker after I graduated from college. She asked me to go sailing because I told her that I had been sailing a couple of times before. I was excited because I was interested in learning more about how to sail. I didn't really know what I was getting myself into though. Her boat was more like a Sunfish with only one sail. Lo and behold, another windy, wavy day on a small lake, with lots of boat traffic. We hadn't even been out on the lake for more than 10 minutes when she flipped off of the back of the boat into the water. I had no idea of what to do. (Surprised?) I thought that she fell out on purpose! So, with both of us screaming back and forth to each other, I finally got the boat turned around, sailed up to her, and she was able to get back on the sailboat with quite a bit of effort.

She was angry with me because she apparently thought that I was an expert sailor due to my two-time experience. I was proud of myself for getting the boat back to her. I was ready to learn

more. Needless to say, she brought us into shore right away and she never invited me again. A little bit of advice: Make sure that you know the capabilities of your invited guests, and don't expect too much of them unless you and they know what to expect!

When my husband, Bob, and I moved to the Finger Lakes to our little farm, we used to take rides in the car and drive around the lakes. We loved looking at all of the sailboats out on the water. After a few years of doing that, I was not happy with just *looking* anymore. I said, "We live among all of these lakes, why don't we have a boat so that we can enjoy them?"

We ended up buying a Catalina 22. We sailed for 30 years on Keuka Lake. Every weekend we would pack coolers of food, clothes, bedding, and our two daughters, and head off to Branchport. Our youngest daughter was in a sailboat before she could walk. We had lots of fun times, some frustrations, made numerous mistakes, listened to whiny kids after long days of sailing in the hot sun, and learned quite a bit about sailing and about our own tolerances. Once our children grew up and moved on, we had to go it alone. We stopped using our little boat as much because it seemed like more of a chore to drive there to go sailing for a couple of hours. When we arrived at the lake, most of the time it was too windy, no wind at all, or the wind would be really spotty due to the size of the lake and the hills that surround it. The boat seemed to have gotten smaller through the years and I was getting tired of hitting my head on the cabin top. Friends were always telling us that Seneca Lake was the place to be if you wanted to sail.

We decided that if we were going to have a sailboat, that it would be a good idea to be able to sleep, eat, and bathe in

comfort so we started searching for the perfect boat away from home. While searching online and in person for two to three years, we found our boat (actually, the boat found us) at the Village Marina and we made some dear friends in return.

John and Jeanne Kremer not only sold us a boat, but they also spent many hours teaching us about the nuances of owning a boat that is almost twice the size of our original boat. We are so appreciative of them and hope that we will be able to have them out on the lake with us again after this pandemic is over.

We are also fortunate to have met many fellow sailors that we can call friends. Sailing on Seneca *is* better and sailing friends are lifelong comrades. *Amazing Grace* is a great cruising boat. Life is good and we are blessed to be able to share a passion for sailing with those that we know, sailors and non-sailors alike.

Remember:

- You never know everything.
- There is always something to learn.
- The weather can change.
- The lake is unforgiving.
- Maneuvering in the marina is tricky.
- Life is an adventure.
- Sailing adventures make you feel alive!
- Safety first and fun will follow.

In three months the weather will change for the better and our sailing friends will be out working on their boats getting ready for another fun season. I can't wait to see you all there!

-Nancy

# Preparing for the “Big One”

By Tom Alley

## MARION TO BERMUDA



Whether we admit to it or not, we all have our “bucket list” – goals we aspire to before our allotted time in this life runs out. For some this is a formal list. For others, perhaps it’s just a desire to experience something when opportunities arise.

I readily confess to the degree of vanity it takes to having a somewhat-formal bucket list. It’s formal because it is very well defined. It’s informal because it’s not written down anywhere, but that’s because there’s only a single item on it at the moment.

*I want to skipper my own boat on a bona-fide ocean voyage, go someplace relatively “exotic”, come back home, and do it using celestial navigation.*

OK, I admit that’s a bit nerdish, but hey, I’ve been teaching this stuff for over two decades and I’d like to be able to say that I’ve actually used it not just for fun, but also when it counted.

About three years ago a venue for this goal presented itself. I was flipping through an issue of *Ocean Navigator* magazine and came across a short story about a 32-foot sailboat that had just won the celestial division of the 2017 Marion to Bermuda Race. Looking at the boat, she appeared very similar to mine. “Why can’t I do that?” was the question that immediately came to mind.

Not long after that, I was having a few beers with my crew (What could possibly go wrong in this scenario?) and I shared the article with them. By the time the gathering was over (and the beer consumed), the decision had been made to pursue this goal.

### Research Phase

The next few weeks were spent surfing the Internet and collecting as much information about the race as I could find. The prerequisites were a bit daunting, but not impossible. I learned that the race had a formal mentoring program for first-time sailors interested in competing in the race. After a few more weeks of research and some emails to race organizers, I was paired up with my mentor and he started to provide me with hints and advice on how to prepare for the race in 2021.

SV Tomfoolery

Eventually, I reduced everything to a checklist with items that had to be purchased, capabilities that had to be present on my boat, and skills or training that was required for myself and my crew. It was frightening, because the list, typewritten, was eight pages long!

As the saying goes, a trip of 1,000 miles (or about 2,400 nm in this case) begins with a single step. I got to work. The logistics alone make prior trips seem like child’s play!

### Prepping – The Sailor’s Way

The boat projects started. Everything had to be “hardened” to withstand the rigors of the open ocean. Hatches, doors, and access panels throughout the boat had to be able to be secured so they would not open, whether the boat was upright or inverted. Lockers needed to be configured such that their contents would remain contained. Boat systems had to be reviewed and, where appropriate, upgraded to improve their reliability and robustness.

Boats, it is rightly said, are a conglomeration of compromises. This became obvious from the outset. Having an unlimited budget would probably have made many of the decisions much easier. However, writing monthly tuition checks for two children introduced another level of complexity to the undertaking.

Along the way the boat’s entire plumbing system was replaced. After that, the electrical system received its own overhaul. Converting from gasoline to diesel propulsion had been accomplished a few years earlier, so at least that was out of the way. The galley got an overhaul to upgrade cooking capabilities. More winches were added in the cockpit to ease crew congestion during racing and to improve versatility when cruising. The communication systems on the boat were upgraded and expanded.

Along the way there were some discoveries and unplanned detours. A rotting stringer resulted in the cabin sole being replaced in the head and forward cabin. A half-century of wear on the mainsail track triggered an overhaul of the mast and mainsail handling systems. Some previously unseen damage from a near-dismasting a few years ago triggered more repairs to a chainplate and the standing rigging. Water ingress to areas of the deck resulted in several sections getting recoated.

There was more, and as I write this there are still some things left to be done.

### Prepping – It’s Not Just the Boat

The skipper and crew required preparations as well. First aid training was acquired and completed. CPR and AED training

was sought out as well, along with certifications in fire extinguisher use. One crew member obtained an amateur radio license so that at least two of us could operate the SSB radio. Two of my crew signed up for celestial navigation courses so that we have skill redundancy in that area as well, and half of us have completed sanctioned Offshore Safety At Sea training as of this writing (a race requirement for the Skipper, Navigator, and at least 30% of the crew).

The good news is that all of us can cook to a degree sufficient to avoid mutinies over the menu, and we've all sailed together enough to be fairly certain we can withstand one another's company in close quarters for the duration of this voyage.

### Cruise Planning – The Ultimate Test

For those of you who have taken the United States Power Squadrons Cruising and Cruise Planning (CCP) course, you probably remember some of the exercises you were asked to do. I can say with confidence, however, that anything you had to do for that class is nothing compared to figuring out the logistics for this trip.

While the trip from Marion, Massachusetts to Bermuda is relatively straightforward, getting there (and back) is not, especially when you're starting from a place like Watkins Glen, New York. In fact, the trip from Watkins Glen to Marion (~580 nm) is almost as far as Marion to Bermuda (645 nm).

For starters, one will have to traverse the Erie Canal. While the navigation is simple, the logistics are not. The canals are not open year-round and, when they are, they are only navigable during the day. Navigation aids are not lighted and many of the locks only operate during business hours. In addition, the canals can be closed by adverse weather – specifically excessive rainfall – as has happened multiple times in the past five years. Add COVID to the mix and things can change with little or no notice.

With the race beginning in mid-June, our boat needs to be in Marion by Memorial Day (end of May), meaning we would have to leave Watkins Glen at least a week earlier. Since the canals do not open before mid-May (in years when the weather cooperates), that doesn't leave a lot of leeway for things to go wrong. This meant we actually had to move the boat the preceding fall to some point beyond the canals. Well, that meant finding a place to haul out and store for an upstate New York winter!

Oh, and the Hudson River is tidal below the Federal Lock in Troy, NY, meaning that the water level changes by about 5 feet every 6 hours. Many of the marinas have depth restrictions and getting hauled out can only be done at high tide in many locations. Details, details!

You see how simple things get complicated in a hurry?

From the Hudson River to Buzzards Bay also promises to be interesting. We'll be seeing places like Hell's Gate, The Race,

Long Island Sound, and get the full experience of dealing with a fair amount of commercial traffic, weather, and some tides with notorious reputations.

What probably made me say "Wow!" the most was that, upon finishing the race in Bermuda, we'll just be halfway through our trip. Everything we will have done up to that point will have to be repeated.

That's just the trip. There's also a crew, which means they will bring clothes (for warm weather in Bermuda and cold weather in Buzzard's Bay) and will need food and drink to be sustained. Let's see, do we store the canned vegetables with the spare alternator or with the toilet paper? Suddenly, a 35-foot sailboat starts to feel really, really small!

### Anticipating the Race Itself

The race will pose its own challenges. First, it will be an open-water voyage and we'll be on our own and left to our own resources. What if...? What if...? All scenarios need to be considered and, where possible, anticipated.

While celestial navigation will be the advertised focus of the race, there will be a fair amount of piloting involved, too. Not only will we be dealing with tides, we'll be crossing the Gulf Stream, which has its own reputation for proving to be difficult at times. Aside from the squalls caused by the warmer water hitting cooler air, there is the current itself which could either help or hinder to the tune of up to 4 knots. Plus, the Stream moves around... And there are eddies...

No pressure, right?

### Some Final Musings

As I write this, I'm just a little over 100 days away from relaunching on the Hudson River and there are still a number of things left to do to prepare the boat. Our delivery to Marion will essentially be our final shakedown as we begin to test systems and crew, tune and optimize all of the new equipment and build familiarity with it, and focus on some creature comforts to make life more comfortable and fun. After all, the race will be just 25% of this entire voyage.

Early on in this process, my mentor told me that "two thirds of the race is just getting to the starting line."

I think he was being optimistic.

So, stay tuned and follow the adventures of the sloop *Tomfoolery*, and her crew. With luck and good fortune, we will be at the starting line a little over four months from now.

- Tom

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# Editor's Corner

by Tom Alley



## The Doldrums

If you read any sort of sailing or boating or cruising literature, sooner or later you'll encounter talk of the "Doldrums". Nautically speaking, the Doldrums (capitalized, thus referring to a geographic location) is the

traditional name for what now carries the more official-sounding title of Intertropical Convergence Zone or ITCZ. This is a region just north of the equator where the northeasterly trade winds of the northern hemisphere meet the southeasterly trade winds of the southern hemisphere and essentially cancel each other out, resulting in an area with warm temperatures, light winds, and frequent squalls and thunderstorms. In other words, less than ideal sailing conditions!

You could say that we are currently navigating through the doldrums of the boating year, except the weather is much colder. Our boats are put away, the marinas are empty, and for the most part, we are hunkered down awaiting thawed out boatyards and sunnier days. Not only are spring days months away, but the major suppliers have yet to release the new year's boating catalogs. This is the time of year where we can become emotionally adrift as we look for ways to satisfy our boating "itch".

## Mid-Winter Distractions

Fortunately, there do exist some things to do as we await access to sunnier, more boat-filled days.

One way I've been dealing with the disagreeable cold weather is through some (rather casual) monitoring of both the Louis Vitton Series and the Vendee Globe Race.

The Vendee Globe is the solo, non-stop, around the world race that began in France last November. As I write, the leaders are back in the North Atlantic and only a matter of days away from finishing. There were a few exciting stories on the internet about the adventures these skippers have been having.

The Louis Vitton Series consists of multiple races to determine the challenger for the America's Cup. The new AC75 boats are a marvel to watch, but I don't know that I would ever want to try to sail one. These are 75-foot long monohulls that don't just plane, but get up and foil several feet above the water at some phenomenal speeds. There was a particularly exciting (and

*SV Tomfoolery*

frightening) video of the final race in the round robin series where the American team got caught in a puff and launched up into the air before capsizing – all while sailing at 47 knots! Fortunately, no one was hurt, but there was a 6- to 8-foot hole in the hull from the impact with the water. With help from other competitors, they saved the boat and will have it repaired in the next four days to compete in the next round of races.

Repairing that much damage in four days is what I find truly amazing!

## Bermuda Update

Preparations for the Marion-Bermuda Race continue, but in a more behind-the-scenes manner and (thankfully) without much of the drama found in the Louis Vitton or Vendee races. While *Tomfoolery* hibernates, her crew is busy attending to administrative tasks.

A major step was completed just before the Holidays when our formal application was filed along with the entry fee for the event. As of this writing, there are 46 other boats that have done the same. Additional paperwork has been filed for reciprocal radio licenses in Bermuda, an offshore racing rating certificate, and docking/mooring requests for both Marion, MA and Hamilton, Bermuda. More paperwork to meet US Customs requirements will also be filed shortly, as well as a renewal of the skipper's USCG Master license, which comes due shortly before we depart.

Crew members have also been attending the first set of seminars to prepare for the voyage. So far half of the crew has completed certification requirements for the US Sailing Offshore Safety at Sea Seminar. Likewise, a couple of us have completed required recertification in first aid, CPR, and AED use. While on the topic, the skipper is busy building out an emergency kit suitable for offshore travels.

As much as I want winter to be overwith, I have a feeling it will pass by too quickly when compared against the to-do list for this trip.

Stay tuned. More to come!

- Tom

*Well, your editor has opened his big mouth again. If you wish to agree, or to tell him he doesn't know squat, please send your comments to [editor@flyc.us](mailto:editor@flyc.us).*

# Finger Lakes Yacht Club

## Membership Application

Membership renewals are due by May 1<sup>st</sup>. **Annual dues are \$45.**  
 Please send this form and a check to:

Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Inc.  
 c/o Sue Morris, Secretary  
 P. O. Box 14  
 Pine Valley, NY 14872

**NOTE:** Due to the impact of COVID on 2020 club events, 2021 renewal for existing members has been reduced to **\$10.**

Are you also a member of the U.S. Power Squadron? If so, please check this box.

Application:       New member                       Renewal

**Important:** Please be sure to include the names of all of your "dependent" family members. This will ensure that membership privileges are awarded properly.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which areas interest you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Racing	<input type="checkbox"/> Web site
<input type="checkbox"/> Cruising	<input type="checkbox"/> Sailing classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Social activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior Sailing
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_                      Work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Boat Name \_\_\_\_\_                      Type:     Sail                       Power

Make/Model \_\_\_\_\_                      Length \_\_\_\_\_

Boat Year \_\_\_\_\_                      Location/Slip# \_\_\_\_\_

By this application, I/we promise to uphold the By-laws of the Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Inc. and to comply with its rules and regulations.

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_                      Date \_\_\_\_\_