

NORMANDY BEACH

In about 1946 I had bought property in Normandy Beach, New Jersey. Normandy Beach was and is still basically a summer vacation area on the beach between Point Pleasant and Toms River, New Jersey. The plan was for the family to go to the seashore for the summer each year. With my brothers, Donald, Les and Percy, I built a small cottage on the property. The cottage was mostly built before we took our trips out to the May Ranch but when I came back to work full time at Whippany in 1952, I had time to complete the house. We spent every summer there while my children were growing up. We still go down and use the house during the summer.

Normandy Beach Improvement Association

After finishing the house, I got involved with the Normandy Beach community and the Normandy Beach Improvement Association (NBIA). Since Normandy Beach was primarily a summer community, there was no formal governmental structure. For that reason, a group of the summer residents got together to form an organization entitled the Normandy Beach Improvement Association (NBIA). The main purpose of the organization was to provide lifeguards for both the ocean and bay beaches. The organization also sponsored a summer recreational program from 10 am-noon and from 2-4 pm five days a week for children from about 5-12 years of age. The children would learn to swim as well as play games and do crafts, and the older swimmers (10-12) would be taken to the beach and taught how to swim in the ocean safely. All my kids from Chris up to Paul learned how to be good swimmers through this program. In addition to the swim classes, a Red Cross lifesaving class was also available to the older swimmers, and some went on to become lifeguards at the ocean beach. Robert was the only one of my children who became a lifeguard, and he worked many of his teenage summers at the beach. It is a wonderful program and it still flourishes today.

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Because I was interested in the NBIA, my neighbor, the late Mr. Maves, who lived across the street from me at Normandy Beach asked me "Cliff, how about becoming the secretary for the organization? I have been doing it for too many years and want to get someone new. It is not much work." Well, my wife and I drove over to see him during the winter in New York, near Palisades. We had dessert with him and then he came out with 2 great big bags containing the material on the Normandy Beach Club and all the secretarial correspondence and notes. I thought "Oh, no." He said, "No, there is not much to it - this just looks a little bulky." Well, I took on the job of secretary, which included paying the lifeguards, filling out tax information for the Federal and State, and buying what ever had to be bought. It was always helpful to have Mr. Maves just across the street.

After being secretary of the NBIA for a number of years, I became president. As always, we always had a number of problems trying to maintain the beach area as one of the finest areas along the shore. We set certain rules for the ocean beach, and some were not too popular. Food was not allowed on the beach, and camping overnight was prohibited. The NBIA provided a security person to supplement the Dover Police who patrolled the area. The security officer could not make arrests, but if people were sleeping on the beach, they would call the Dover Police to come and address the problem. In addition, we issued badges that allowed people to go onto the ocean beach - each home who belonged to the NBIA got about 6 badges. The cost of \$200-\$300 dollars per year per house helped to pay for the lifeguards and security. The lifeguards or the people at the entrance to the beach would make sure that people had badges for the beach. It was a way to keep the number of people at the beach at a manageable level. Most of the property along the beach was private, but the NBIA bought the ends of the roads that went out to the beach. By owning the ends of the streets to the beach, the Normandy Beach Improvement Association controlled the entrances to the beach, and that meant we had control of the people entering the beach.

Dover Township was in need of a beach for the people living in that township and since Normandy Beach was in Dover Township, they came to the NBIA and said, "We want badges to go on your

beach". The NBIA of course insisted that, because they owned the end of the streets, they controlled who went onto the beach. Well, Brick Township said that they would condemn the ends of the streets and would provide the opportunity for all the people to go onto the beach. The NBIA and its lawyers saw the problem and decided to compromise and settle the case. It was decided that the first 200-300 people to come to the Normandy Beach house and request badges could go on the beach. In the meantime, Brick Township went looking for a place to develop its own beach and beachfront, which they eventually did, eliminating the problem.

The other issue that came along while I was president was that NBIA decided that it should have complete control of all the land, including the property at the bay beach and all the entrances to the ocean beach. Initially the land was in the hands of a separate holding company. However, it was decided that the control should be in the hands of the NBIA, and I remember having to send notes out to all of the people who were members of the NBIA to have them send back their certificate for the original holding company. New ones were then issued in the name of the Normandy Beach Improvement Association instead of a holding company.

Normandy Beach Yacht Club

In 1946, the Normandy Beach Yacht club was organized, and land at the end of South Court in Normandy Beach was purchased for the club. The club consisted originally of just a little hut, but soon a small clubhouse was built. As our children got older and as Paul and Robert finished the swim program at the Bay Beach, I wanted them to get into sailing, and the club president of the yacht club asked me to join. I believe the membership fee at that time (mid 50's) was \$600-\$700, but you could put down \$300 initially and pay the rest in \$100 increments.

A number of Comet sailboats were coming to the club, so we had a Comet sailboat built by Beaton Works in Mantoloking, New Jersey, where I believe all the comets in the Yacht Club were built. I do

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remember picking up the sailboat from the Beaton Yard with Paul and trying to sail it back to Normandy Beach from Mantoloking. To say the least, neither Paul nor I were very skilled sailors, and I was at the helm – maybe a mistake from the start. I figured that the winds were blowing north from the Mantoloking Bridge, so I thought that all I would have to do was to let the sails out, and eventually we would end up at Normandy Beach. We found out quickly that it was not possible to sail without tacking. All of a sudden, about halfway home, we were headed to the shoreline. I had to get turned around so we would be heading toward Normandy Beach instead of the shoreline, but I had no idea how to set the sail to come about and tack toward Normandy Beach. The solution was for Paul to get out of the boat and push the boat around aiming it back south where we wanted to go. Paul did not like that idea very much even though the water was shallow there, and I must say that the discussion between Paul and me was heated during that trip. However, we eventually got the boat to Normandy Beach and beached it properly. Paul and Robert sailed the Comet against the other members of the yacht club every Sunday, and they learned to be very good sailors. Robert crewed for Paul, and then Connie crewed for Robert when Paul was too old for the junior Comet races. Chris also sailed the Comet later on. We eventually bought a Penguin (Connie sailed the Penguin first and then Chris followed) and a Lightning (Paul, Robert, and Chris sailed it).

I became more involved with the Yacht Club. When I was Vice Commodore, I became responsible for organizing all the sailboat races on Sundays and making sure that they were conducted properly. I had been working and watching the races for a number of years, and I knew that the starting line was a problem. The Commodore of the club and all the members wanted to see their youngsters take off in the race. To define the starting line, a flag was set on a boat just off the beach, and another flag was flown on the Yacht Club deck. The starting gun was located at the club, and as we counted down, the sailors would try to go across the starting line just as the gun would go off. However, the winds were usually coming from the south, so all the boats went past the starting line with their sails full out and bunched together. When the boats got to the first marker, they were

still all going together, hitting one another, and trying to maneuver. Coming back at the end, it was fine to have the parents come back and see the boats come across a finishing line that extended from the club to a boat off the beach. However, for a sailor, it was a lousy way to have to start. For a fair start, the boats should be tacking into the wind. When the boats are tacking, they are going at a certain angle into the wind, and the boats end up crossing the starting line separated. After the gun goes off, the boats maneuver to get across the starting line and then, when they are at the first marker, they are nicely separated because of the way they sailed out to the first marker. There were very few problems with the boats hitting one another. I was always pleased with the change I made in the starting line at the yacht club.

Besides the Normandy Beach Yacht Club, yacht clubs existed all around the bay. The clubs formed an association called the Barnegat Bay Yacht Racing Association (BBYRA). When Normandy Beach joined, there were eleven different Yacht Clubs: Normandy Beach, Bay Head, Mantoloking, Shore Acres, Lavallette, Toms River, Seaside Park, Island Heights, Metedeconk River, Ocean Gate, and Beachwood. Every Saturday the BBYRA would hold a joint sailboat race at one of the member clubs with that club being responsible for the entire race for that one day. The individual clubs would make up their own racing course and provide food for the committee and sailors. To put on a race for sailors from 10 different clubs would require everyone in that club to get involved. Food, transportation, parking, and race courses would all have to be organized. If everyone coming brought their boat and car, the congestion at the club would be horrendous. Usually, if you were transporting your boat by trailer, you would drop off your boat and then someone would let you know where you could park. For Normandy Beach, the parking was out by Central Avenue. A person running a shuttle between the parking area and the club provided rides back to the club.

Everyone at the Yacht Club putting on the race signed up to work that day, and it was a big and tiring day for the individual club. Members of the Yacht Club would arrive early, and coffee and

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doughnuts would be put out for all the workers. The club would need to arrange for a boat for the BBYRA Racing Committee on which to conduct the races. An appropriate starting line would be set up between the main committee boat and a buoy, with the boats set to tack into the wind. When the races were held at Normandy Beach, the Normandy Beach courses would be used. It was quite an affair for the local club. Junior sailboat races (under 18 years old) were held in the morning and senior races (all ages) in the afternoon. At the end of the morning races everyone would come in for lunch. The racing committee (composed of all men) would get a fine luncheon provided by the wives in the club. It gave a chance for the commodores to talk to everybody, to handle any current business, and to comment on the races in the morning. The sailors would come in too and get boxed lunches or some other food provided by the Yacht Club. One time at Normandy Beach we set up a great big coal grill and cooked chicken. Everyone who signed up for a race got a half of a barbequed chicken. Normandy Beach was considered to be one of the clubs that provided the best food for the sailors. The club, of course, did not do that every year, but it was an especially good lunch that year.

Finally the Barnegat Bay Association decided that it took too much time for the racing committee to come in to the club, get lunch, and then go out again for the afternoon. The afternoon sailors would have to wait until the main boat left, because they would not know where the afternoon starting line would be. However, because the committee took too long for lunch, a lot of times the starting boat suddenly would go out at full speed after lunch and get ready for the start, leaving most of the sailors behind. It was decided that the boat with the committee on it would stay out all day with lunches and coffee being sent out to the committee boat during the day. The sailors would either have their own lunch or come in and pick up their lunch when they signed in. Thus the celebration at each Yacht Club changed. One other change was that the courses specified by the individual Yacht Clubs were not necessarily the best courses for a good race. It was decided at a winter meeting that the Barnegat Bay Association would have three course charts: one for races at the northern end on the bay, another course chart for races at the southern

portion of the bay, and one last one for races in between. They would choose a course chart that was best for each of the races at a particular Yacht Club. That avoided all these separate course charts put out by each club, which was not the best for good solid competition. I still have memories of these events with everyone helping, whether it was the women preparing the luncheons or the men signing up the people, directing traffic.

After having been a commodore at the local yacht club, I was asked to become a member of the BBYRA as the representative of the Normandy Beach Yacht Club and to be the secretary of the association.. I served as Secretary for 2 years, Vice Commodore for 2 years, and then Commodore for 2 more years. Basically, I gave up my Saturdays 6 years during the summer to the Association. It left Allie pretty much alone on Saturdays because Paul and Robert were sailing in the Comet class, and then later Connie and Chris sailed in the Penguin. When we came back from the races on Saturday afternoon, if someone didn't win, he or she was grumpy. There was a lot of complaining about people not doing the right thing, taking the wrong tack, etc. It took awhile for everyone to calm down.

Paul and Robert did win the Junior Comet championship for Barnegat Bay in 1959, and Robert won the same championship the next year. Connie won the Junior Penguin championship for the Bay with Barbara Eler in 1962. Chris came in second in the Comet a few years later. We had a lot of fun with the Barnegat Bay during those years, and a lot of time was spent sailing.

As time went on, the size of the Comet class at the local yacht club began to decrease, but the number of Lightnings increased. A number of people changed from a Comet to a Lightning, and the club ended up with about half a dozen Lightnings. I said, "Well I think I can afford it. Why don't we get a new Lightning?" I think I kept the Comet for Chris to sail, and we ordered a new Lightning. I had one built where the other boats in the club were built - down near Trenton. Once it was built, we went over to pick it up, as it had to be brought to the shore on a trailer. We could not leave it in the water all the time or

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the sailboat would get too heavy to race. The Yacht club had a lift. All the Lightnings would be lifted out at the end of a sail, put on the trailer, and parked at the Yacht Club. Paul, Robert, and Chris sailed the Lightning for a number of years and the competition was good. Some of the skilled sailors went on to competitions outside the Barnegat Bay

As I mentioned previously, I was secretary of the Barnegat Bay. There were a number of interesting things that happened, but I just want to mention one. There was an excellent Lightning skipper from Bay Head Yacht Club who sailed both in the Barnegat Bay Races and in races in other areas in the country. He was a well-known skipper, about 20 years old. The Barnegat Bay Rules stated that there was only one man at the starting line who determined whether you had a clean start. The one person would be the one to call it if your boat was over the line before the race started. During one race, this Lightning skipper was over the starting line, and he was called back. No one is supposed to say anything to the sailor except for this starting person. However, for some reason, when the Lightning skipper came back to go over the starting line again, another committee member yelled to him "You are okay now." Well he wasn't okay, because he had not gotten back across the starting line correctly. When the lineman saw that, he called to the skipper and then actually sent a boat out to him telling him to come back and go over the starting line correctly. The sailor brought the boat back to the starting line again, but when he crossed the line this time, he used some pretty foul language at the committee, expounding on their stupidity and so forth. Of course, the members of the Barnegat Bay Sailing Committee got angry. I, being the secretary, was told to "Write a letter to the fellow and get him to come to the club and apologize." I said "Okay." So I wrote the individual, a rather carefully thought out letter. I told him that the people on the committee gave their time every Saturday and that they do that to try and help provide a good sailing opportunity for young people. However, they do make mistakes. A mistake was made here but I told him that I did not think it called for the language that he had used to the committee. I asked him to appear at the next race, come before the committee, and apologize before the start of the Lightning

Clifford Warren

race. Well he did come. He came and indicated that he was frustrated and apologized to the members for his actions. I think today people should be held more accountable for what they do and say. In this case, I suspect that the young man probably remembered it for the rest of his life, and it most likely had a positive effect on him.

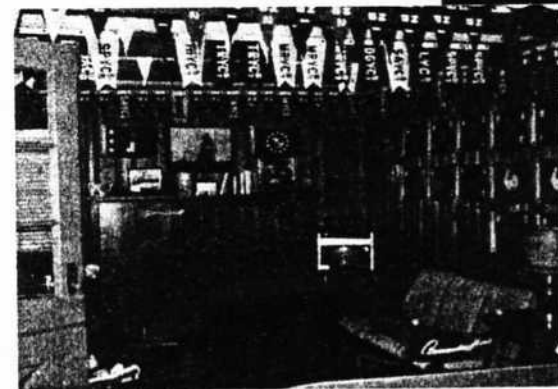


Original shore house before addition. (early 50's).



Robert and Paul at shore house.

Shore house showing the racing flags.



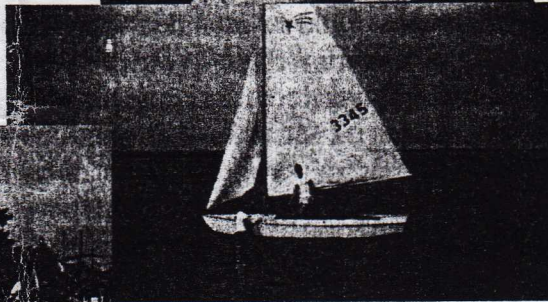
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In my commodore suit.



With my youngest son, Chris.

Paul and Robert in the comet sailboat #3345.



Connie with Nathan and Abigail, me, Leigh, Paul, Joy, Judi in front of shore house.



Alice sailing.