

From the Office

David Harries

Looking toward the second half of the year, a year which many consider is the final year of the millennium, a sense of excitement is growing in the expectation that the New Year celebrations will herald something special despite the well publicised uncertainty of the Y2K (year 2000) problems and the cost and supply of champagne to toast in the new century. The Squadron too has something special to look forward to and celebrate, not the least of which is our 130th year as a yachting club.

During its history, the Squadron has experienced many highs and lows and overcome challenges, which it will continue to do. One immediate challenge will be the ability to respond to the changing face of sailing and the expectations that the community, internally and externally, has of the sport. Witness the popularity of Twilight sailing in recent years. These concerns are being considered worldwide at forums being conducted by bodies associated with the sport, in an effort to arrest the decline in participation in yachting. One such forum, *Sail America*, has identified TIME as the major threat that needs to be addressed: time, because of the pressure of work and family commitments. As a result, organisations must recognise that unless they adapt to the requirements of participants in leisure activities (ours happen to be boating) many will continue to decline. Boating will become a virtual sport, something that will be watched on television or the Internet. For example, a relatively new IT company which has been established by John

Bertrand in the US to provide sports information was required to forecast the number of visitors to a round-the-world race site. The best guess was 200-300 thousand per day. When it came to the point, the 'hits' were between 3 and 4 million, with 12 million hits on the day of the finish!

New terminology is entering the vocabulary of the sporting industry. One that is being used more and more is 'fast food sports'. Participants just want to get there, do it and go! Spouses are feeling social guilt when spending extended time away from their families on offshore races or a full day at the club. The Squadron is no longer a lifestyle: it is a lifestyle segment. That is, a block of time to be allocated, along with children's sport, grocery shopping or other family responsibilities.

This is readily demonstrated by the expressed desire for short (60 nm) races in the summer race program. So how does a sport or club increase the frequency or time its members devote to participating in the clubs activities, using expensive infrastructures and equipment? Before answering a somewhat rhetorical question, consider when you last had an opportunity to use your boat or the Squadron's facilities. There is no simple answer, but three elements are being identified. Firstly, FUN. Make the occasion of using the organisation enjoyable in whatever interest the Members require. That is, provide social yachting, but also provide competition for the 'serious' yachting enthusiast, which by implication isn't saying that cruising or twilight sailing is not a serious pastime.

Secondly, ACCESSIBLE and welcoming to all, which includes visitors. Although being accessible and welcoming doesn't extrapolate to frequent or regular visitors, such as non-Member crew receiving a free ride. Yacht clubs the world over are looking at golf club practices, where every user of the club's facilities contributes to the club's upkeep and maintenance. In this case, the contribution is called a green fee, which guests cheerfully pay but seemingly shy away from when it comes to water sports. Is this because there is a perception that boat owners are prosperous and therefore can afford to subsidise visitors? Is it because the use of waterways has always been free? Is it that oceans stretch as far as the eye can see, and therefore there are no tangible barriers such as a fence to delineate where the boundary of the sport lies? Or is it simply that yachtsmen's generosity and need for crew has created a belief that crew are needed and that to have them available so that you, the boat owner, can enjoy your sport, the other users of the boat will be excused from contributing?

Keelboat clubs in Victoria have seriously considered the introduction of a similar contribution, and I understand, are not far from implementing the scheme. NSW has also discussed similar issues, as have the Squadron and the CYCSA when changes to the Yachting South Australia affiliation fees were under scrutiny 18 months ago.

Finally, YOUTH activities and family. Without programs that involve families, and, to use the

new jargon, are equitable, which is to say offer equal opportunity for women on water and the disabled, sailing will be perceived as inflexible, and unwelcoming when in fact it is a truly egalitarian sport. Other factors that must be recognised are entry level training for adults as well as children, involving parents and easing newcomers into the sport gently.

The Squadron identified most of these issues in the Strategic Directions Report. I invite committees and Members to put the findings into practice, before discovering we are 'wallowing in the wake' of change. The Squadron must be visionary in its approach to yachting and Member services and set the pace, by recognising and meeting the challenges faced by clubs in the new century.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and unrelenting effort of the staff during the year and that of the committees. Without their contributions the Squadron would be devoid of the warmth and passion it has as a club of Members rather than people. My thanks to Mike Hambidge, Mike Fowler and Allan Sinclair, who are standing down having served terms as committee chairmen, and also their colleagues who are standing down after, in some cases, long stints on committees. To Bob and Pat Catley — we wish you well and hope you undertake your new endeavours like a 'box a birds'. ['Box a birds' is New Zealand slang for 'feeling in good spirits'.] SQ

We welcome —

New Members

Brian & Kym Bowden	Anthony Harland	Stephen Ranson	Kosta & Marie Todoroff
Desmond Buckley	Charles Homes	Richard Reeves	
Paul Caffin	Katherine Jamieson	Simon Ringwood	Jacques Tromp
Andre & Christina Daniel	Nick & Evangelia Koumbenakis	Blake Smith	Kimble Warren
		Alan Snewin	Patrick Wilkinson
Daniel	Cameron Melrose	Wayne Sutton	Peter Williams
David Gaffney	Ken Messenger	Leon Sykes	Raymond Winterfield
Donald Halley	Linda Outschoorn	Karen Tannebring	

New Vessels on the Squadron Register

<i>Allouette</i>	Les Howell	Change Of Ownership
<i>Boomara</i>	Donald Halley	<i>Cardigan Bay</i> Barry Worrall & Susan Coldicutt
<i>Catja</i>	Peter Ypma	<i>Wongga II</i> Rod Wells
<i>Lotus</i>	Paul Williams	
<i>Sapphire</i>	Robert Henshall	Name Changes
<i>Sarah</i>	Raeburn Reynolds	<i>City of Adelaide</i>
<i>Swallow</i>	John Maddock	Changed to <i>Ada</i>
<i>Thalia</i>	Lange Powell	<i>Younme</i> Changed to <i>Madiba</i>
<i>The Rose</i>	Andre & Christina Daniel	