



watch the Gold Cup races for several years. They also took many cruises to different areas on the river and would join other boat clubs for parties. It was always a family affair. There were Halloween parties, Christmas parties and picnics in the rain.

In 1969 the county took over the management of the ramp and the road. The road was black topped and the ramp was redone. Slowly the area improved. The people who remember the mud hole that it used to be cannot believe the changes that have taken place. Even so, because it is a river that floods every year and the swift current is constantly making changes to the embankment, there is always a lot of work to be done before the yearly race.

It wasn't until 1972 that the race was changed to a two-day affair and was scheduled for the Saturday and Sunday prior to Memorial Day. There were three reasons for doing this. First, it would enable the racers driving any distance to have Monday, Memorial Day, to drive leisurely back home. Second, the boat club members would have Monday to tear down equipment, store it away and eliminate taking another day off work. Third, it would

There is a trophy in the Newberg Boat Club's (NBC) possession that reads, "Newberg Regatta, 1920." Information and history about these early regattas, however, has not been attainable. This trophy does show that the interest in boating, and particularly in boat racing, has been an ongoing affair with the local Newberg, Ore., folks for many years.

The Newberg Boat Club was formed in 1946 when a small group of men with a love for both water and boating were in need of help maintaining the local ramp area. John Paola, who we believe to be the only remaining member of the original founding group, said, "We thought forming a boat club would enlist the help we needed."

The minutes of their meetings detail a lot of hard work improving the road down to the river that, in the beginning, was nothing but wagon wheel tracks. The ramp was small and muddy with room for only one vehicle to turn around at a time. Every year they had to have the road regraded and new gravel put down as the flood waters would wash it away.

Two other founding fathers of the club, Al Christie and Charles Shirley, had their own special reasons to be involved. Shirley built a runabout style of boat called the Phantom that eventually acquired quite a reputation in the world of speed boating. Christie liked to race fast boats. For the most part it was a family oriented pleasure boat club that sponsored an annual regatta for outboard racing. The regattas were marathon style and just about anything that would float could enter. Rafts, canoes and non-motorized crafts were started first at a place south of Newberg around the Salem area. Later, the motorized crafts started so all entries would hopefully arrive at the Newberg ramp around the same time.

In 1948 two milestones were set. The club members voted to join the APBA and run a sanctioned race following APBA rules. Also, in July of 1948, the ladies were admitted to the club and invited to the meetings for the first time. Shortly after that, the minutes mentioned the ladies provided coffee, dessert and even full meals after the meetings. Now, you don't suppose there was an ulterior motive involved, do you?

It was decided in 1949 that the regatta would be run on May 31, Decoration Day (which later became Memorial Day). The regattas continued to be marathon style but were run on a shorter course closer to the Newberg ramp. They did away with the non-motorized boats as the new engines became more popular. At a meeting held in July 1949, a well known racing figure by the name of "Rocky Stone" visited to advise the club further on running an APBA sanctioned race. Finally, in 1953, it was decided to abandon the marathon and run circle races. The club produced a few other racing drivers along the way. Early on there was John Groff. A little later John Paola's son Denny began to race. As the years went by there were others.

Eventually the club members poured a cement ramp and a dock was built. But it was a constant struggle to maintain it as the high water in the winter months would wash away much of their hard work.

Mixed in with the frustrations and work were good times! The minutes mentioned the members caravanning to Devils Lake to watch the races that were held on July Fourth of every year and they assisted when the Stock Nationals were held there in 1955. They mentioned going to Seattle to

50 Years Of Racing

by Lauren Thorsen



These Phantoms built by Charles Shirley set world records and raced as part of the Newberg Regatta long ago.

bring in extra income. What a novel idea! Also that year was the first year the OPC category was scheduled. A few Mod and PRO classes were added along the way with the Antique C Service Runabouts being our greatest supporters.

This article would not be complete without mentioning one other person. Floyd Rader came into the picture when the club was about two years old. He and his buddy Ray "Smoky" Schmoie had a PA system and for a couple of years the club hired them to set it up for the regatta. Eventually the club made them honorary members. Both men did so much for this club for so many years, but Rader always did that little bit extra. He was a real "get things done" kind of person. The other members looked up to him and soon nicknamed him "Big Daddy." He served as commodore and race chairman many times over. In 1974 Rader died at a fairly young age. The following year the club members set up a perpetual trophy in his honor to be presented to the member who gives the most to the club throughout each year.

Reading the NBC minutes of the past 50 years has made me realize that sponsoring the yearly Memorial Weekend boat races is what this club is all about. It seems that so much has always revolved around the races. Members who are not seen during the rest of the year turn out to lend a hand. Each and every member works extremely hard. Without the races, I wonder, would there still be a Newberg Boat Club?

Come join us and help us celebrate our 50 years of APBA racing. ♣