

# KANAWAHA, 1944-1947

Written by  
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further recommended that the Club apply for a permit to erect the building per the submitted plans. It was further recommended that money for the building and its maintenance be raised by selling shares of stock to the members with a goal of \$15,000. The first MDC lease would eventually be signed in 1948 and as part of its documentation, the outline plan of the proposed Clubhouse in its present location is shown on the Surveyors plan.

The planning work seems to have gone well enough. They had hired an architect and asked him to design a modest building. It was identified as a single-story building with a full basement. (One can suspect that the plan used for the first proposed location upstream on Charles River Road had already been paid for so when the proposed location was moved downstream and to a flat site, they merely used the same plans to make what was in effect a two story building.) The main



WYC FIRST CLUB HOUSE "KANAWAHA"

In the interim, a former officer and 14 members presented their views on the matter of securing a suitable place for meetings. They proposed purchasing a House Boat, the "KANAWAHA", of 37 tons, 65' length with a beam of 15'. It had been fitted out as a club room for parties or "something". (We can suspect that the "KANAWAHA" had something to do with Prohibition. She had seen her best years during that time.) The members voted \$750 for this purchase. In as much as the Treasury did not have this amount of available ready cash, a collection of \$5.00 each was taken up among the members at that time. Within a few days, 31 members had contributed more than \$150.00. The Treasurer and two members with business experience made an early Sunday morning trip and made a \$50.00 deposit on the house boat.

On September 25, 1944 the "Kanawaha" was towed to Watertown using members boats. An "Open House Night" on October 12th was declared to allow families and friends to inspect the "new" Club Boat.

The years from 1945 to 1950 were spent planning and building the Clubhouse. The War had ended and building materials were once again available. Materials that were "for sale" were not nearly as desirable as those that were "for free". Many men felt it was their mission to "find" things that would be useful in the construction. Sometimes the previous owners didn't even know they had lost the things we found. Many of us who have worked behind the walls and above the ceilings of the Clubhouse can attest to the odd sizes and evidence of second use.

floor was to be the meeting hall, and the "basement" was intended for lockers for the Members. Space was to be set aside for an office for the Commodore.

Armed with these plans, the Club dutifully applied for and got a Building Permit from the MDC. After the foundation was poured (Fall, 1947) some of the local neighbors objected to the idea of a Clubhouse on the River and were able to get the MDC to suspend the permit pending public hearings. Both sides (the Club and the neighbors) retained counsel and showed up in force at the hearing. The hearing was apparently acrimonious but was decided in favor of the Club by Commissioner William T. Mortisey. Highlights of the exchanges heard at these hearings were:

- The neighbors were fond of using words like: evil... drunkards... playboys... obscene language... may have to sell our homes...
- The spokesmen for the Club were fond of using words like: businessmen...professionals...families...credible... attractive...Democracy...
- The Mass Bay Yacht Club Association furnished us with their Chairman of Legislative Committee to help plead our case.
- Sunset Bay had already been in use for 30 years at that time for Summer Moorings and Winter hauling and storage on the beach.