

## Midland Bay Sailing Club

Contributing to a stronger and healthier Midland community

### Introduction

As is the case with all strong, not-for-profit community organizations, Midland Bay Sailing Club (MBSC) was founded by local residents who had an important,



much needed vision. In cooperation with the Town of Midland, members have worked for more than fifty years to create what has become Georgian Bay's most successful Community Sailing Club. Since MBSC's designation as a community Parks and Recreation Facility, members have not only developed a shore facility out of "swampland," but

also have created Georgian Bay's largest and most successful Sailing School for local youth, as well as Georgian Bay's only AbleSail program for individuals with

special needs. Today, MBSC means so much to so many in the Midland community.

MBSC's members have invested over two million dollars in the Club site to date. The Club is currently budgeting to spend an additional \$530,000 in capital costs, to improve and maintain the community sailing program and the Club facilities over the next 5 years. Part of the projected capital cost is a \$100,000 dredging reserve set aside to ensure that the channel that services the Town's public launching ramp remains functional in future times of low water.

The Club has been operating without a renewed lease with the Town since 2015. A reasonably long-term renewal is needed to give Club members the confidence they need to continue their path of success. There have been two leases signed in the past: the initial 20-year lease in 1975, and the renewal in 1995 for a further 20-year period. Given the substantial investment in the property to date and the current financial planning to ensure that the facility remains viable, the Club proposes a further 20-year renewal at an annual rent to be negotiated. Members will be able to continue their work in partnership with the Town to ensure that this facility and its programming continue to form the successful and well received Midland asset that MBSC has been over the years.

What follows is an overview of how the MBSC began, how it became so successful, and why its secured future is important to the local community and to the Town. MBSC is a well-known Town resource, and the Club hopes that this

document will enable all to see the true value of this community treasure and Town partner.

## History of Midland Bay Sailing Club

In 1967, a group of local sailing enthusiasts who had been participating in a new racing program on Midland Bay gathered to form Midland Bay Sailing Club. While



**Formation of MBSC was big news in the Midland Free Press in 1967**

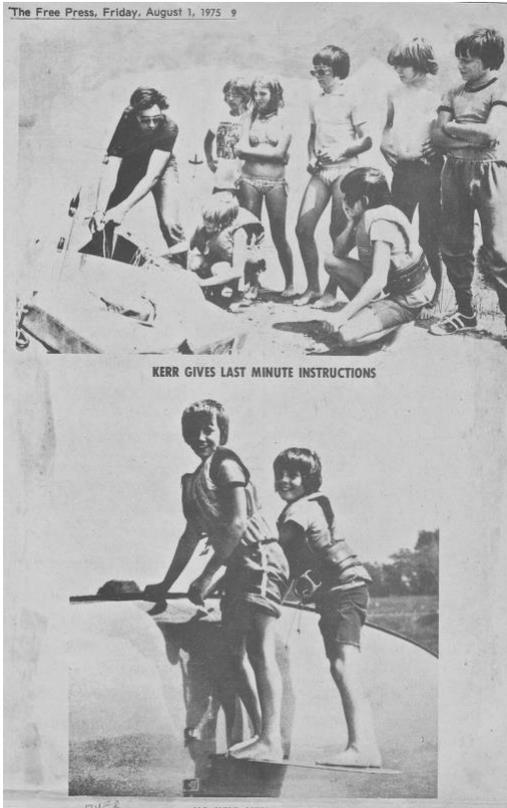
racing would remain a core activity of MBSC members, many also cruised Georgian Bay. No land base was initially imagined: members continued to use private properties and local marinas for shoreside activities.

By the early 1970s, MBSC was incorporated, and talk turned to finding a shore-based home. Midland lacked an organized sailing venue to attract sailing

enthusiasts and a club atmosphere where all members could gather, which was not possible to promote when the boats of members were scattered among different commercial marinas. A shore base became especially important with the founding of the sailing school in 1972, the first for the greater Midland area.

Initially, the school was operated out of a beachfront property owned by members Harvey and Marg Payne at what was then Portage Park, and then out of nearby Gawley's Beach. The sailing school became an anchor feature of MBSC.

Overall, the club was becoming a focal point for connecting Midland's residents to the surrounding waters.



*MBSC Sailing School in the Midland Free Press, 1975*

Around 1973/74, the Town retained consultants to conduct a study of Midland's parks and recreation facilities. Such facilities were then governed by a Parks Board, whose members were appointed by council. The consultants' recommendations included fostering a sailing club that could offer a sailing outlet to augment the Town's recreational opportunities. No club-oriented sailing facility existed at that time, and as noted, the MBSC was operating the only sailing school in the area.

Around the same time, the Parks Board acquired land that was part of the old winter ship berth at the west end of Midland Bay and now accommodates Pete Pettersen Park and MBSC. The Club entered into a lease with the Parks Board in 1974 for its portion of this town land, and construction of the present MBSC facilities began. (See "How MBSC has Developed the Leased Property" below for details.) The initial lease cost was set at \$1 per year, which recognized the value that a sailing club would be to residents and the substantial investment that MBSC members would have to make to meet the Club's obligations of creating a community-based facility.

The initial development was daunting. The land was swampy, and it was a challenge for the Club to get members to agree to contribute the capital necessary to begin development. At the time there were about 100 members. Most of them were local, but without the participation of non-resident members, funding and maintaining the building and property improvements, and ensuring future growth, would have been impossible. As it was, the Club lost close to half of its membership in the face of the need for everyone to contribute to the capital needs.

After the original assessment of members, and some borrowing that was personally guaranteed by a group of members, the process of turning an uninhabitable expanse of wetland into a shoreside sailing facility began. Then as now, the volunteer labour of members was critical. From there, the Club instituted a five-year capital planning process, which has allowed the club's maintenance, improvements, and sailing school assets to be properly funded. The planning process includes the creation of reserves to ensure that maintenance and capital renewal are adequately funded going forward. The plan is reviewed each year and approved by the membership so that the Club always has a five-year outlook.

One condition of the Club's lease was that improvements to the property would make possible a public launching ramp to be built by the Town on the adjoining Pete Pettersen Park. The channel from the ramp to Midland Bay would be through the lagoon that the Club was dredging for docks, and it would be maintained by the sailing club. Construction of the lagoon and channel took several years, and Club records reflect that the launching ramp was built by the

Town around 1980. The full cost of the channel to Midland Bay from the Pettersen Park launch ramp thus was paid for by MBSC, and the Club has borne significant dredging costs since then to address continual silting and respond to periods of low water levels. Between 1979 and 1982, the club spent \$221,605 to dredge and form the lagoon and channel. In 1989, further dredging and break wall construction cost club members \$32,480. Since 2000, the Club has paid for three major dredging projects to maintain water depths and keep the channel open from silting, at a combined cost of \$545,000.

More recent capital developments included updating the clubhouse and creating access for physically disabled and developmentally challenged sailing enthusiasts. The public nature of the facility allowed the Club to qualify for Trillium grants, and all other costs have been borne by the Club members.

Significant upgrades to the club house facilities (\$240,000), sailing school docks and boat purchases (\$410,000) have been made over the past 15 years. The value of the capital assets of the Club as shown in the 2017 financial statements totals over two million dollars. Now that the dock systems are in place, it is easier for the Club to fund current and future capital needs through membership fees, but responsible capital planning is still an important requirement.

## How MBSC Developed the Leased Property

The following photos show the present Midland Bay Sailing Club property (marked approximately in red), before and soon after the property was leased from the Town of Midland in 1974.



*MBSC property in 1973: a patch of wild land with a creek and marsh*

In 1973 (above), the property that would be offered to the Midland Bay Sailing Club for lease by the Town of Midland was a patch of wild land with a creek and marsh, which would have to be reclaimed before anything could be built. On its

north side, where Bay Port Marina now stands, was a private marina, alternately known as French's Marina and Great Lakes Machine. On the south side of the proposed Club property was the future Pete Petterson Park.



*MBSC property in 1975. The clubhouse has appeared and breakwall construction has just begun.*

The Club signed a lease agreement with Midland Board of Parks Management in 1974, and by the spring of 1975 (shown above) considerable progress had been made in reclaiming the property. The breakwall had begun and was extended 143 feet by June. The simple clubhouse had appeared.

In 1977 (below) the breakwall had been greatly extended and an inner basin in the present area of C dock was dredged. A condition of the Club's lease was that it provide a channel to an envisioned public launch ramp next door at Pete

Pettersen Park. This obligation was fulfilled in 1980 and allowed for the creation of A and B docks in the present lagoon. At this time the Club members anchored their boats in the mooring field that, with the future right-angle extension of the break wall, created the sheltered basin for F, G, H, and J docks.



*MBSC property in 1977. Dredging has begun to create a basin, with a mooring field out front.*

MBSC members have invested over \$2,000,000 to date in the development of the once swampy lands. The result is Georgian Bay's largest and most successful community sailing club that offers diverse programming to members and the greater community.

An aerial view today (below) shows how MBSC members, in developing the westernmost docking area in the lagoon, created the channel to the public launch ramp in Petterson Park.



*MBSC today, with Bay Port Yachting Centre above and Petterson Park with public boat launch ramp below*

## What happens at MBSC?

Much more happens at the MBSC than most people probably realize. Our local community is the beneficiary of several Club programs:

### MBSC Sailing School

Midland Bay Sailing Club operates Georgian Bay's largest sailing school, which has been operating since 1972, before there was a physical Club. It remains the only sailing school in the greater Midland area, and from humble beginnings is now



*An instructor and two young students in one of the MBSC Sailing School's Fusion dinghies*

much larger than the nearest programs offered in Barrie, Collingwood, and Parry Sound. Over the years it has trained adults as well as children, and is home to the Able Sail program for the physically and developmentally disabled. Through the sailing school, the Club became

committed to training community members in a pastime that in the early 1970s was soaring in popularity. People were attracted to its environmentally friendly nature and fibreglass mass production brought sailing within the reach of average families. Many sailing school graduates would go on to be local boat owners.

Sailing benefits children and young adults by building self-confidence, improving spatial awareness, and developing potentially life-long skills. Everyone who passed through its classes is more water-wise than when they started.

Registration is open to all, and children of Club members enjoy no priority. About 140 youth on average participate in annual learn-to-sail programs, taught to the standards set by the national sports body, Sail Canada. The Club owns all of the instruction dinghies, which now number 30, as well as four coach/safety boats, and about \$4,000 to \$5,000 is spent every year in maintenance, which includes sail replacement. Considerable member labour is invested in maintaining this fleet to the high standard demanded for instructing children safely. The replacement cost for new examples of many of the dinghies exceeds \$10,000. Long-term replacement of vessels is addressed in the club's five-year plan.

The Club strives to deliver sailing instruction affordably. Enrolment fees are well below the levels charged by Toronto-area clubs, and the school strives to operate on a break-even basis. With the constant capital costs of boat replacement, however, the school operates at a loss, and is subsidised by club membership fees.

The sailing school program is run by volunteer members of MBSC who, through a committee structure, oversee all aspects of the program's operations. In addition to the 140 youth who benefit from instruction, on average seven local high school/university students with the necessary accreditation are hired to teach.

Courses are offered in two-week sessions and are broken down into four levels. Most sessions are usually filled well in advance of the summer.

Every year, the sailing school reserves program spaces for 4 to 6 youth involved in Big Brothers/Big Sisters at no cost to them. As well, MBSC offers special accommodation to youth who cannot afford to participate without help.

### **MBSC AbleSail**

MBSC runs Georgian Bay's only sailing program for physically and mentally challenged individuals. Over 10 years ago, MBSC joined the provincial recreational program for physically and mentally challenged youth and adults known as AbleSail. The Club raised the necessary funds (in excess of \$100,000) to acquire purpose-built boats and to create suitable shoreside facilities.

The shoreside facilities included new docks with wheelchair accessible ramps, a special lift for placing physically challenged individuals in boats, and wheelchair-accessible pathways from the clubhouse to the dinghy shed and from the class pavilion to the water. The specially designed Independence 20 keelboat is the primary boat used in the program. Through AbleSail, MBSC members have been able to offer sailing experiences to hundreds of individuals in our community who never before had the chance to sail, or even be on their local waters. Community Living Huronia and Waypoint are two organizations who have worked with the MBSC sailing program to provide their clients with recreational opportunities.

## **MBSC Sail For Hope**

Sail for Hope is a day set aside to raise funds for the local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. For twenty-eight years, MBSC members have donated their time and their boats to take members of the public, who have pledged funds to the Cancer Society, out on the water for a day of sailing. Captains and crew then return to the club for a dinner prepared by local Cancer Society volunteers. More than 35 boats and their owners and over 80 members of the public take advantage of the opportunity to give back to the Cancer Society each year. More than \$85,000 has been raised to date, with all funds going to the local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society.

## **MBSC and Big Brothers/ Big Sisters**

Every year, MBSC members volunteer their time and their boats to take Big Brother/Big Sister children and their caregivers out for a very special sail. This opportunity affords the youth and their Big Brother/Big Sister a positive experience that will remain with them for years to come. After the sail, all crew are invited back to the Club for a barbecue put on by MBSC members. This program is in addition to the several Big Brother/Big Sister youth who learn to sail at no cost in the MBSC sailing school.

## **MBSC Hosted Regattas**



MBSC hosts Georgian Bay's largest and strongest racing program and operates the only racing program on the bay between Parry Sound and Collingwood. Annually, over 15 racing events are organized, in addition to Monday (dinghy) and Wednesday (keelboat) evening club races, and are open to all sailboat owners in the Midland area to enter. Race committee duties are fulfilled on a volunteer level by MBSC members. On most weekends up to 30 boats (with 90 crew and skippers) participate. Sailors from across Canada and the United States come to Midland's waters through MBSC events. Most of the visiting racers stay in local hotels and shop and dine locally. Included in MBSC's annual regatta schedule is the North American 5.5 Regatta, which sees visiting crews from Germany and the United States, and reciprocal visits by MBSC sailors to compete in those countries.

## **MBSC Friday Pub Night Dinner Socials**

Every Friday night during the sailing season, MBSC hosts Pub Night dinners that are organized by members. These dinners started out as modest affairs 28 years ago. Today, close to 100 members and guests participate weekly. Members volunteer, shop locally, and cook their house specialty to share. Leftover food is donated to local shelters.

## MBSC Boating in General



MBSC is Georgian Bay's largest community sailing club. All members are required to participate in the day-to-day operations of the Club, including running the sailing school, launching and hauling all boats, organizing racing programs, planning all social programs, and running the regular aspects of such a facility. Every member must contribute a minimum of twenty hours of free labour to Club duties each season.

## MBSC is recognized throughout Georgian Bay

MBSC is recognized beyond Midland and environs through participation in the Georgian Bay Sailing Association (GBSA). The Club and many of its members are



strong participants in the GBSA, which organizes the Georgian Bay Regatta (GBR), a port-to-port sailing event spanning five to seven days each year for the last 30-plus years. Participants are typically from Georgian Bay marinas and sailing clubs. In most years, at least two MBSC members have served on the board of directors of the GBSA. In 2017, the MBSC was the event's host

club, and 41 boats and 125 crew members enjoyed Midland's hospitality. Its organizers say: "The GBR is the premier sailing regatta on Georgian Bay. It compares very favourably to sailing regattas on Lake Ontario. MBSC is proud to be involved with this event and to bring together our local sailors with sailors from the 'other shore'". Members also have become involved in other boating organizations like the Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons, Ontario Sailing Association (Sail Ontario), and Great Lakes Cruising Club.

## **MBSC by Numbers**

- Number of members
  - Members: 192
  - Active (with boats): 165
  - Social: 14
- Number of boat slips: 147
- Number of sailing school dinghies/coach boats: 34
- Funds spent on dredging (including keeping the Pete Pettersen Launch Ramp accessible) since 1974: \$799,085
- Funds raised and contributed by members on the Sailing School over past 15 years: \$410,000

- Funds raised and contributed to Canadian Cancer Society through Sail for Hope in 2017: \$4,883
- 2018 operating budget revenues: \$346,400  
Anticipated capital expenditures: \$82,500
- 2016 taxes paid to the County of Simcoe: \$13,873

### **MBSC Membership: Philosophy and Structure**

A critical aspect of MBSC membership is the preference in the sailing world for the camaraderie and cooperation of a sailing club, as opposed to a slip in a commercial marina. As well, as a sailing club, MBSC accommodates “dry-sail” dinghies and crane-launched small keelboats, which are services beyond the offerings of most marinas. MBSC is also focussed on delivering a community-based sailing experience, including instruction and access for the physically and developmentally disabled.

MBSC could be perceived as being in competition with commercial marinas but, in reality, that is not the way the Club is seen, foremost by most of those local marinas. To begin, the number of boats that the Club can accommodate in slips is

small in comparison to the commercial side, and as noted, the club accommodates dry-sail craft that have no place in commercial marinas. The club also has a maximum permitted size, dictated by slip dimensions, boat weight, and keel depth, and so owners with any boat generally over 40 feet in length must secure dockage in a commercial marina (as some members with larger boats do). Some members also choose to haul, launch, and store for the winter at commercial marinas as they are unable to participate in the fixed haul and launch dates of MBSC. We also do not allow powerboats, which are a staple of commercial marinas.

While it is common practice for sailing and yacht clubs to extend reciprocal privileges to boats from other clubs, MBSC offers extremely restricted courtesies to such transient visitors. No more than two days of dockage is generally permitted (if it is available), and visitors are not allowed to use the pump out facilities or mast crane. We direct visitors to neighboring marinas for these and other services.

MBSC also is not a “resort” facility. The clubhouse is a simple building with a kitchen, washrooms, an office, and a large common area that is used for everything from social events to sailing school instruction on rainy days to sailing school boat storage in the winter. As there is no swimming pool, tennis court, or



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restaurant, boaters who desire an all-amenities “destination” experience look to commercial marinas. MBSC also does not operate a chandlery, gas dock, or service department, and its members patronize local marina businesses for those needs. As well, our immediate neighbour in particular, Bay Port Yachting Centre, recognizes that the programs offered by the club are important to the community, and their customers often participate in the MBSC sailing events. Bay Port is a strong supporter of the sailing school and also provides free launching and hauling to all out-of-town participants in the

annual 5.5 Regatta. Certainly, the large majority of sailors who lease slips in the area do not opt for the “community club approach” to boating, and it is recognized and understood that there is room for all of us.

A “basic” sailing club like MBSC is often thought of as an inexpensive way to keep a boat and enjoy a community of like-minded sailors. To be sure, one goal of



*Launch day at MBSC. All club members launching are required to volunteer their labour in work parties.*

MBSC is to offer affordable access to Midland’s waters for people in our community. However, there are costs and expectations to membership, beyond an initiation fee of \$3000 and the annual membership and services costs for haulout and launch. MBSC is foremost an organization based on volunteerism, in support of the club itself and the greater

community. Each full member must contribute a minimum of 20 “work hours” each year or pay a penalty of \$50 for every deficit hour. (These hours are above and beyond the mandatory labour that members provide in work parties on haul and launch days, which includes installation and removal of the sailing school’s floating dinghy docks.) Members also take on the collective responsibility for management and governance of the Club, instead of paying a commercial marina for similar services. Prospective members are interviewed prior to acceptance to ensure that they understand what is required to be a MBSC member.

Our membership is not limited to Midland residents. When Midland Parks Board first leased the land to MBSC, the notion of limiting membership to local residents was discussed. It was recognized that doing so would not provide a member base that was large enough to raise the money to make the necessary improvements to the property, nor would it provide enough volunteers to build the initial facility,

let alone to cover future financial and labour needs. Understandably, the Parks Board did not impose any member restrictions. At the same time, the Club has recognized that membership should be largely limited to Midland and the surrounding area if the local community were to benefit the most and if members were to be readily available for volunteer labour and to fulfill the many tasks of running the facility.

MBSC's constitution requires at least two-thirds of members to live within a 32-km radius of Midland proper. The Club often has a waiting list for membership of people from outside this zone, as the Club ensures that the one-third component is not exceeded. The two-thirds/one-third membership minimum split has worked well for the Club, ensuring that the facility is always available to Midland residents. No Midland resident has ever had a membership application refused. Lately, across all membership categories, about 28% of our members have been Midland residents, with another 47% living in the neighbouring North Simcoe communities of Tiny, Tay, Oro-Medonte, and Penetanguishene, and about 25% residing further afield.

A practical side of the membership ratio concerns the club's self-funding status. Unlike other recreational facilities that are operated by the Town and require subsidies, the MBSC pays its own way, and there has never been a cost to the Town. Members from outside of the Town cover most of the cost. In fact, in accommodating the public launching ramp at Pete Pettersen Park, the greater share of the cost has been paid by non-Midland residents, which continues to be the case today.

Lastly, MBSC pays an annual lease to the Town of Midland for use of a property that the members have developed. The Club also pays County of Simcoe land taxes that, in part, come back to the Town of Midland.

### **MBSC Brings Permanent Residents to Midland**

Midland Bay Sailing Club long has been an important feature of the Town of Midland, and has been instrumental in attracting many families to the area. Rather than simply be a client of a commercial marina, many sailors prefer the sailing club atmosphere, with its social interaction, sailing school, community programs, and the opportunity to participate in the day-to-day operation of the facility. Although the sailing season is much shorter than we would like, the Club is active throughout the year, with committee work and social gatherings at restaurants and Midland's curling club. The Club even enters a float in the Santa Claus parade. This structure and community has encouraged many people to move to and remain in Midland.

### **What our members say about the importance of MBSC**

The following testimonials are but a few of the stories told by MBSC members about the impact that the Club has had on their lives and, in many cases, on their decision to move to Midland. MBSC has become a strong drawing card for those

looking for an active community with diverse recreational and social offerings. Appendix A has the full statements cited.

### **Wolfhard Family**

The Wolfhards moved their business from the Kitchener area to Midland primarily for the sailing and MBSC. Their business, Central Spa Supplies, a wholesaler of pool and spa supplies, grew to occupy a 25,000 square foot facility and to employ 25 full time local employees. The business, which continues to flourish, has been sold to new owners but the Wolfhards have remained local residents and active members of MBSC. Peter Wolfhard says: “my wife and I have always felt part of the community at the Sailing Club and then in the Town of Midland...and have sat on boards [including] the Midland Curling Club, Quest Art, Midland Golf and Country Club and the GBGH Foundation.” Their commitment and contributions to the community have been largely the result of their experience as members of the Midland Bay Sailing Club.

### **Baker Family**

The Bakers moved to the area to be closer to Denise’s family and they joined MBSC in 2006. Bruce is proud to have been closely involved with the installation of the Club’s accessible sailing facilities that were funded by a Trillium grant, and he applied his design and carpentry talents to rebuilding the clubhouse kitchen. They continue to be active in Club activities including the Learn to Sail program, Big Brothers and Big Sisters events, and Sail for Hope. “Our involvement with the

sailing club has connected us with Midland where we do the great majority of our shopping and access our non-sailing recreation and entertainment.”

### **Raymond Svazas**

Tales of sailing adventures on Georgian Bay brought Raymond Svazas to Midland in 1986. His engineering practice kept pulling him away to various parts of the globe for months at a time but he returned to Midland and Georgian Bay whenever he could. It was not long before he met friends who were MBSC members and Raymond joined soon thereafter. When it came time to retire, his connection with area, the Club, and sailing made him choose Midland as his home. In summary, Raymond says: “Georgian Bay was the attraction that brought me here, the Sailing Club is what has kept me here as a resident for the last thirteen years. Thank you.”

### **Donaldson Family**

Larry Donaldson is our current Commodore. His home with his wife Janet was Toronto, but they wanted something more in tune with their love of sailing and the water. After a wide and varied search for a new home, Georgian Bay became the chosen destination. They moved to the Midland area and kept a boat at a commercial marina until they became aware of Midland Bay Sailing Club. Larry says that “the Sailing Club became a centre for our sailing activity. We have met some of our life-long friends through the Club and have had many memorable experiences because of our time spent here.” They have been involved in many

Club projects over the years and have made major contributions to the facilities which have made MBSC what it is today. "The Midland Bay Sailing Club is a very special place that brings together a community of like-minded sailors in a unique setting...Coming together, we have helped many young sailors experience the thrill of sailing and we have watched young sailors develop into long term members of this club."

### **Shawcross Family**

Jeff Shawcross and his wife, Dawn, were Midhurst residents in 2000 when they became interested in sailing. They had heard "that the MBSC had a very respectable sailing program for both youths and adults wishing to learn." They took advantage of the learn-to-sail program and were "very impressed" with the friendly nature of their instructor and his "wealth of knowledge." They were "drawn to the area and the general feeling of community." Jeff says "Midland is a hidden gem" and that "Midland is very lucky to have a club of this caliber. The knowledge and experience of its members is a valuable resource that is available to all members of the community. I can personally attest to that!! Because of the club's openness and friendly attitude you don't have to be wealthy to enjoy some of the finest fresh water sailing in the world." As a result, they are now residents of Midland, having purchased a house which they have renovated "top to bottom using all local contractors and suppliers...purchased two new cars from local dealerships" and have met "some amazing people, and have introduced many of our friends to the area."

## **Proctor Family**

Jeff was on the teaching staff of Georgian College before he retired and he and his wife, Barb, had lived in Barrie and Orillia before coming to Midland in 2014. They owned a powerboat while in Orillia but decided to return to sailing and wanted to keep their sailboat on Georgian Bay to “cruise the wonderful waters here.” They had heard about MBSC from friends and its policy to restrict two-thirds of its membership to the local area. They also liked the idea of participating in maintaining the facility and participating in the life of the club. Midland has been to their liking: “We plan to continue living in Midland, even if we eventually have to give up sailing.” They believe MBSC “is a vital part of the city landscape, and it was a key driver in [our] decision to relocate here.”

## **Jay Family**

Barb and Graeme Jay are currently out-of-town members of MBSC and were attracted to the area by Georgian Bay and the opportunity to enjoy cruising its waters. Since their arrival in 2014, they have purchased a building lot in the area and plan to retire here in another two to three years. They have found the Midland area has much going for it with its recreational opportunities, the local hospital, and revitalized downtown, with many other options nearby. They have found MBSC “is much more than just a sailing club to us as well. It harvests the sense of community and belonging...We know we have many years ahead to be active and involved in the workings of the club as we grow our full understanding of it and lay down the roots for our retirement here”.

## Hunter Family

Douglas Hunter is an author who lives in the Midland Bay Woods area and has been a member of the MBSC since 2003. His children, now adults, learned to sailing in club dinghies, and he and his wife Debbie now cruise Georgian Bay in a keelboat, while Doug participates as a crew in club races. Doug and Debbie's eldest son, an adult with high-needs autism, has benefited from Able Sail recreational outings through Community Living Huronia. Doug is passionate about the volunteer aspect of the Club and its value to the Town, whether or not all of its members are Midland taxpayers. He has been closely involved in the operation of the sailing school for most of his years in the Club and sees it as an "affordable recreational service to youth and the disabled" who may reside in the town or outside of Midland's boundaries. He has "long said that the sailing school is the single most important thing the MBSC does to justify its existence as a community organization...Able Sail participants are a combination of individuals and clients of local service agencies...They have nowhere else to turn for this recreational opportunity. The school's reliance on volunteer labour (which is considerable) helps ensure that the program is affordable. You could never run such a comprehensive program out of the YMCA...or a commercial marina for the simple reason that you would not have access to the large pool of volunteer labour to keep the instruction boats, docks and land-based infrastructure in safe working order." Doug is a strong believer in the MBSC and its contribution to the community.

## **Takahashi Family**

David and Lynn Takahashi became familiar with the Midland Bay Sailing Club while sailing their boat on Georgian Bay as a getaway. They lived hectic lives during their working years in various parts of Canada and were used to camping and fishing, particularly when in the West, and relished the solitude it provided them whenever they were able to escape their day jobs. When they moved to Toronto, camping within a couple of hours drive did not provide the same solitude it did in western Canada and they turned to sailing. They met many like-minded people, including members of MBSC, while discovering Georgian Bay and formed strong friendships with them. When retirement time came, they were drawn to Midland and joined the sailing club. "We have been very happy to participate in the activities the Club supports and we have strengthened our involvement in the Midland community...What better way to support our community and introduce people to safe boating than through the Sail for Hope and Big Brothers and Sisters volunteer programs...we feel that [MBSC] is an excellent addition to our community and we are proud to support the Club and its commitment to the Town of Midland".

## **Avery Family**

Gloria Millar and Chris Avery both had lost their spouses to cancer and set out to make a new beginning together. Gloria had grown up in Midland and she and Chris were inclined to get into boating on Georgian Bay. They bought a boat from a family who were members of the MBSC. "When we helped to launch the boat

that first spring, with the Club members, we felt the camaraderie and friendship of local Midlanders that made us want to make the Midland Bay Sailing Club our boating home...Thanks to the Midland Bay Sailing Club, we are now considering Midland for our retirement in a few years...We feel that the Midland Bay Sailing Club is an important part of Midland's heritage and social flavour."

## **Conclusion**

In many respects, MBSC is well known, but is not known well. Hopefully this document has illustrated just how successful and important Midland Bay Sailing Club is to Midland.

MBSC has a long and remarkable history in partnership with the Town of Midland. MBSC's members look to the Town to work with the Club to finalize the next 20-year lease, to continue the community partnership that has worked so well for the past 40-plus years.

There have been two leases signed in the past; the initial 20-year lease and the renewal in 1995 for a further 20-year period. Given the substantial investment by the MBSC membership in the properties development to date (in excess of \$2,000,000) and the current plan to invest a further \$530,000 over the next 5 years to ensure that the facility remains viable, the Club proposes a further 20-year renewable lease at an annual rent to be negotiated in the spirit of this strong, long-established partnership. When the rent is determined for the first year, a cost of living increase to apply every five years will avoid the need to

return to the table at five-year intervals, a condition that has worked so well in the past.

This approach will allow MBSC and its members to continue to work in partnership with the Town of Midland, to ensure that the facility continues to be successful and of significant value to so many in and around the Midland community.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Larry Donaldson, Commodore, and all members of MBSC*

## **Appendix A**

The following is the full text of the testimonies of MBSC members referred to in the section on what our members say about how MBSC made them decide to move here:

### **Bruce and Denise Baker**

Denise and I are happy to share our sailing club story with you.

We moved to the area in order to be closer to Denise's family and to take advantage of the best fresh water sailing in the world. In 2006 we were accepted as members of the Midland Bay Sailing Club community.

That first year the club had applied for and received a Trillium grant to provide Accessible sailing opportunities to the Midland community. We plugged in as volunteers and nearly tripled our required 20 Work Hours to 56 hours, to build a ramp from the clubhouse to the docks. An accessible boat was purchased and a lift installed. This, along with the Learn to Sail program, has offered the opportunity for many people to enjoy this terrific pastime.

We have continued our commitment to the club through involvement in the kitchen renovation and participation in the slips, launch and haul committee, as well as Sail Past, Big Brothers and Sisters events and Sail for Hope.

Our involvement with this sailing club has connected us with Midland where we do the great majority of our shopping and access our non -sailing recreation and entertainment.

**Peter and Lyn Wolfhard**

I am submitting this note to explain the impact of the Midland Bay Sailing Club not only to the Town of Midland but on a personal level, to my family.

My family is from Kitchener and we started sailing in the Midland area in the early 90's. We were familiar with the sailing club but not members. I had started a business and in 1997, moved it and ourselves to Midland. Our choice of Midland was for sailing and the Midland Bay Sailing Club.

Over the years, our business, Central Spa Supply, grew and employed over 25 full time local employees with substantial wages and benefits. Central's building is in Midland and at 25,000 sq ft, pays its fair share of taxes.

I have sold the business but it still flourishes and is responsible for over 25 local families. I am still an active member of the Midland Bay Sailing Club and feel it is worthy to attract folks and companies to settle in Midland.

The Midland Bay Sailing Club is run by their volunteers. Because of this base, my wife and I have always felt part of the community at the Sailing Club and then the Town of Midland. As well as the Sailing Club, we have sat on boards at the Midland Curling Club, Quest Art, Midland Golf And Country Club and the GBGH Foundation.

**George Will and Committee, MBSC and the GBSA/GBR**

The Georgian Bay Sailing Association (GBSA), a non-profit Ontario Corporation, organizes the annual Georgian Bay Regatta (GBR). The GBR is a port to port sailing event over five to seven days every summer for the last 30 plus years. As well as supporting boating safety and preservation of the environment, the GBSA promotes the sport of sailing and the islands, harbours, water and the port communities of Georgian Bay. Participants are invited from sailing clubs and marinas here, as well as on the Collingwood/Wiarton shore.

In 2017 MBSC was the host club for the registration and the opening BBQ for the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the GBR. Most years MBSC hosts the opening or closing venue. There were 41 boats this year and approximately 125 crew members that enjoyed Midland, Christian Island, Collingwood and Thornbury’s hospitality and camaraderie.

Most years at least two of our members serve on the Board of Directors of the GBSA. Other members volunteer on the regatta Organizing Committee and another group volunteers for our hosting responsibilities. In recent years about 50% of the participants from MBSC and our locale, joined up with crews from Collingwood, Thornbury, Meaford and Wiarton.

The GBR is the premier sailing regatta on Georgian Bay. It compares very favourably to sailing venues on Lake Ontario. MBSC is proud to be very involved with this event to bring together our local sailors with sailors from the “other shore”.



**Raymond Svazas**

Tales of sailing adventures on Georgian Bay, the Islands and the Channel brought me to Midland in 1986. I trailered and launched Voodoo Dancer at the Wye Heritage Marina and took a month to sail across and around the Bay, the Islands and the Channel. Fell in love. Decided not to return immediately to Lake Ontario but keep my Dancer at the Wye for the summer and come here on weekends.

Accidentally came across the Sailing Club where I met Len Ubbens (a club member) who briefly described the club's agenda. The racing feature was a grabber, Len noticed my enthusiasm and invited me to dinner at home on Sunnyside overlooking Midland Bay.

I made two friends (Len & wife, Joanne) in one day.

We devised a plan on how I may quickly join the Club.

For the next 18 years I maintained my membership even when away for 2.5 and 8.5 years overseas and in Western Canada.

My work project ended and I put in another one year w/o pay pursuing another project which we were granted but which we declined due to serious recent political unrest in the host country.

Upon some reflection I decided to “officially” retire; but where is home? where shall I go?

Go where you want to be, freedom at last.

I moved to Midland, rented an apartment and began to look for a location to build, and of course commenced sailing and racing again.

Raymond you are too slow; before I could finalize plans and apply for a building permit an adventurous work opportunity grabbed me; much travel included across Canada, some U.S. and back to Africa for a few durations of a month each but not during sailing season. An apartment is too convenient (lock up and go); scrap the house plans.

That was nine years ago.

Our company (H.Q. in Sault Ste Marie) does not have a crew of skilled trades nor a fabricating facility. We do the equipment designs and engineering and contract out all casting, fabrication and machining mostly to shops in Southern Ontario (Barrie, Niagara, Brantford, etc.).

In summary, Georgian Bay was the attraction that brought me here; the Sailing Club is what has kept me here as a resident for the last thirteen years. Thank you.

## **Barb and Graeme Jay**

*From Barb:*

We have been members of MBSC since 2014, and yes we have been drawn to the Midland area to sail the amazing waters of Georgian Bay. We had recently relocated back to Ontario, still needing to reside closer to the GTA for work. We very much enjoy all the aspects of the Midland Bay Sailing Club and have taken steps to put retirement plans into action by purchasing a building lot in Penetanguishene, our timeline is 2-3 years.

For us, the fact that the Midland area has so much going for it; summer sailing, winter curling, arts, revitalised downtown with great restaurants and vibe (not to mention the Butter Tart Festival!), a local hospital, lots of local shopping, and even more options not too far away in Orillia and Barrie. And then there is the close proximity to the GTA. In our opinion it is an overlooked Gem along the Georgian Bay coast with reasonable house prices, that are sure to go up!

The Midland Bay Sailing Club is much more than just a sailing club to us. As well, it harvests the sense of community and belonging. We are out of town members at this point, but we know we have many years ahead to be active and involved in the workings of the club as we grow in our full understanding of it, and lay down the roots for our retirement there.

These are our basic thoughts on the area and why we love it so much. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you require any other points, my husband Graeme had planned to share his thoughts, but won't likely have time before your deadline.

From Graeme:

I'd like to add to Barb's note.

While I looked out at the 5.5 and Shark Regatta two weekends ago, it was hard to deny the presence of the SAILS that made up the collective fleet. Similar to other fantastic images of the area such as breath-taking sunsets, a return to port by Miss Midland or the Group of Seven views, the image was quintessentially MIDLAND.

It projects a perfect connection of the people with the elements – an aspirational engagement with our surroundings. It's why we are here. Why we will work and live and participate in the community. Why others come to visit. Captured in the Town's own logo....

### **Larry Donaldson and Janet Keachie**

Janet and I have been sailing together since 1986 and first sailed in the Midland area when we chartered a boat from Executive Sailing. We quickly fell in love with

the area and when we bought our first keelboat and put it into the Executive Sailing Fleet in 1989 we did some more research on the area.

We were planning on relocating from Toronto and researched sailing communities both east and west of the GTA. We looked as far as Whitby and even considered Kingston as a new home. In all our reviews we kept coming back to the Georgian Bay area as an ideal prospect.

Our decision was cemented when we decided to apply for and were accepted for membership in the Midland Bay Sailing Club [in 1990]. We bought our first home in Penetanguishene in 1990, leaving Toronto for good. We joined the Penetang Rotary Club and began our integration into the local community.

The Sailing Club became a center of our sailing activity, we have met some of our life-long friends through the club and have had many memorable experiences because of our time spent here. We have been involved with the Sailing School, the Racing program and have tried to take part in most of the club's activities. Since 1990 we have owned or partnered in ownership of six different sailboats, five of which we kept at the club.

In 2007-08 we took our boat down the east coast to the Bahamas and spent a year living aboard. We kept in touch with the club and maintained our membership. Upon our return we were unable to keep our boat at the club due to her length but we kept up our membership and involvement with club activities. We have since purchased a smaller boat and plan to return to dock at the club as we miss the camaraderie that comes with being at the club full time.

We continue to enjoy the racing and other club functions. I currently sit as Vice Commodore of the club and hope to next year sit as Commodore [Larry is

currently Commodore]. I feel we have been well served by the Club and in turn feel we need to give back to the club in volunteer support. In past years I chaired the application for Trillium funding that helped the sailing school and the club conform to the needs of disabled sailors within the community.

The Midland Bay Sailing Club is a very special place that brings together a community of like-minded sailors in a unique setting. Sailors both from Midland and the surrounding areas and members from a distance work to promote the sport of sailing from the Club's location. Coming together we have helped many young sailors experience the thrill of sailing and we have watched young sailors develop into long term members of this club and other clubs throughout the country.

I look forward to participating in the Club and all the things the club does within the community to promote sailing as a hobby and a skill.

### **David and Lynn Takahashi**

What brought Lynn and I together 37 years ago was the adventure of exploring the wilderness together. When we lived in Calgary, within an hour's drive we could be in the Forestry reserves at the foothills of the Rockies camping and fishing up the mountain streams, enjoying the peace and solitude that came with the freedom of being able to get away from the hectic life we were living in the city.

When we moved to Toronto and wanted to get away, we discovered that it was not easy to find campgrounds that didn't need reservations, wasn't packed in and within a couple hour's drive. I had learned to sail when I was younger and suggested we try sailing, it was like clean camping. In 1985 we bought a 22 foot sailboat and trailered it to Georgian Bay where we moored it. Sailing around the bay provided us with the adventure and solitude we were looking for. We enjoyed sailing so much that we moved up to a bigger boat that could accommodate longer passages and more time away from civilization. After floating around the bay for some years, we met like-minded sailors that we developed strong personal relationships with. It wasn't until we moved to Midland to retire that we made an application to the Midland Bay Sailing Club.

Since joining the Club, we have been very happy to participate in the activities the Club supports and feel we have strengthened our involvement in the Midland community. We feel that the Club through its sailing school provides education, discipline and respect to young people not only from the Midland community, but to all kids from various walks of life. What better way to support our community and introduce people to safe boating than through The Sail for Hope and Big Brothers and Sisters volunteer programs.

As members of the Midland Bay Sailing Club, we feel that it is an excellent addition to our community and we are proud to support the Club and its commitment to the town of Midland.

**Douglas Hunter**

I have been hearing that some members of Midland Council want the benefits of Midland Bay Sailing Club quantified on the basis of what the club does for Midland residents—specifically for Midland residents. I am one of those people who is not a Midland resident. I have lived in the Midland Bay Woods neighbourhood of Tay Township for more than twenty years and have belonged to the sailing club since 2003. For most of my years of membership, I have served on the board of the sailing school, as I do now. A neighbour, the late, great Terry Moss, also served on that board and oversaw maintenance of the school's boats. Another neighbour, Ewan Campbell, serves on the board with me and tends to maintenance now. Steve Killing, who has done so much for the sailing school and also serves on the board, lives in Oro-Medonte. I think a comfortable majority of people who serve on that school's board and donate hundreds of hours of volunteer time to providing an affordable recreational service to youth and the disabled do not live in Midland.

For many of us, north Simcoe County is a community of many communities. As the largest community, Midland may experience some cost burdens in providing services or infrastructure that people from other communities enjoy, but it also enjoys a boost from having those surrounding communities. Midland would not have commercial development along Highway 12 or all its downtown banks without the residents of surrounding areas. Where cultural events are concerned, I have provided support to Midland causes when asked. When a Midland Reads

event was staged along King Street in 2016, I was asked as an author to deliver one of the readings. I did so at the Midland library, from a work in progress, at no charge. The organizer who asked me, incidentally, was another Midland Bay Woods resident. When the chair of the board of the Midland Cultural Centre emailed me in August, asking me to attend an upcoming A Day in the Life hosted by Fred Hacker, I showed up and paid the \$25. The chair of the board, incidentally, was John Hartman, a resident of Tiny.

I have long said that the sailing school is the single most important thing the MBSC does to justify its existence as a community organization. Others can provide hard data, but as someone who has served on the board for years and most recently has chosen to focus on AbleSail, where the students come from has never been an issue to me. Many if not most kids who attend the school are from homes around north Simcoe County. Some also have grandparents who live in the area, and the grandkids attending the school is a way for grandparents to have them around in the summer. Some are kids of cottage residents. Some I am sure have been kids of people who rent cottages. AbleSail participants are a combination of individuals and clients of local service agencies like my younger son. They have nowhere else to turn for this recreational opportunity. The school's reliance on volunteer labour (which is considerable) helps ensure that the program is affordable. You could never run such a comprehensive program out of YMCA (to which I belong) or a private marina, for the simple reason that you would not have access to the large pool of volunteer labour to keep the instruction boats, coach boats, docks, and land-based infrastructure in safe working order. Those volunteer hours come from members, and while those

members are mostly from north Simcoe County, members from outside the club's main area do contribute. One sailing school board member drives all the way from Whitby to attend board meetings on weekday evenings.

I understand that the town of Midland would not want to be leasing land for what was essentially a cheap marina for out-of-towners. I would not support that arrangement, either. But I encourage council members and staff not to think so narrowly about who benefits from the club's presence on town property. The club was founded by sailors from across the north Simcoe area, and Midland benefited from their decision to create a land base within the town's boundaries, developing a marshy tract and creating and maintaining a channel for a public launch ramp at its own expense. Whatever the property occupied by MBSC is worth today, it is worth it because of decades of volunteer labour, capital improvements, and expenses borne by the membership. The MBSC has created a service to the public out of quite literally nothing.

In evaluating the benefit of the sailing club, I encourage council members and staff to think beyond the immediate taxpayer rolls of the town. The expense to the town and its taxpayers has been negligible, but the dividends have been tremendous. The life of the town has benefitted greatly from the presence of a volunteer organization whose members do not think their civic duties stop at the border of their municipal tax jurisdiction.

**Gloria Millar and Chris Avery**

Two years ago, we purchased a boat from a family in the Midland Bay Sailing Club. The significance of this purchase is that this was a new beginning, as we had both lost our spouses to cancer. When we helped to launch the boat that first spring, with the Club members, we felt the camaraderie and friendship of local Midlanders that made us want to make the Midland Bay Sailing Club our boating home. Gloria (nee Nowak) grew up in Midland and her family lived in Midland up until her parents died. Her sister who lives in the US, still considers Midland “home,” as does Gloria. Thanks to the Midland Bay Sailing Club, we are now considering Midland for our retirement in a few years. We feel that the Midland Bay Sailing Club is an important part of Midland’s heritage and social flavour.