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Dear Quinte Sailability Members

The ice is broken up and that smell of fresh water is in the air. Clubs are in the midst of lifting boats into the water and cleaning up for the season. QS is no exception. I'm writing because you've not heard much from us and there are a couple reasons for that. This season is going to be a little different and you need an update.

We're facing three challenges right now:

1. Filling Fletch's shoes. They're huge shoes to fill and QS is a fairly large organization. Behind the scenes the board is trying to work out how that all works and it's a process.
2. Local instructor shortage. QS is not able to bring instructors from afield and currently there are not enough local instructors for all the sailing programs (QS, Belleville, Picton).
3. Weeds. This year the club is changing to a weed aeration system rather than spraying herbicide within the harbour. This new approach is more environmentally friendly and should be more successful than the current approach. However it does nothing to fix the problem past the breakwater, it requires five years to take full effect, there is a small chance it will not work, and it required an approximately \$7000 investment from QS. It is very likely that in the first year or two the dock will become unreachable early in the season despite being better in the long-term. The battle with weeds over the past several years has been hard on the equipment but it's also eaten a lot of your time at the helm.

So...in February a few of us realized that QS needs to make a change. We saw that we needed to find a sailing area with significantly fewer weeds and an existing program to share instructors as well as administration with. The added benefit to pursuing such an arrangement is better integration with the able bodied sailing community - something I think is very valuable. What we did, therefore, was approach Bay of Quinte Yacht Club in Belleville about a move.

You can appreciate that showing up in February with an adaptive sailing program looking for help and a new home is a big ask. Most of their members have never seen us in action and figuring out how all this works is a huge job. But it's going extremely well and looks very positive.

The bottom line of this letter is twofold. First is to say that we simply cannot operate as usual this year. The weeds are going to provide a bigger barrier than usual and it is unlikely we'll be able to find instructors of our own. We are in the process of a big needed change. Secondly, we ask for your patience. As of right now there is no agreement with BOYC or the City of Belleville. Things look extremely positive but until there is ink on the page we simply cannot count our chickens before they hatch. Staying where we are would mean cancelling the 2019 season and moving is a very big job. The possibilities this move makes possible are very exciting. If we can pull it off QS may have more opportunities than ever. However the 2019 season will have to be a quiet one as we test out this new arrangement.

What we need from you is to tell us if you wish to sail this year. We cannot offer registration until we know we can offer a season but we need to start compiling a student list. So please contact John Stewart, our membership coordinator, at 613 962 6303 or johnstewartquinte@hotmail.com. He will keep a list and once we know what's going on we'll send out registration info to the people on that list.

In closing I want to assure you that QS is fine. The 2019 season is facing some serious challenges but the program itself is healthy. We would have preferred to approach such changes more slowly but we think we'll actually be stronger in the end. I'm looking forward to a significantly less weedy future (wouldn't it be nice to sail into the dock?), significantly more integration with the rest of the sailing community, and the benefits that all this will bring to our club.

May you have fair wind and following seas.

Steve Brown