

Good evening,

My name is Marko Yanishevsky and I am this year's President of ONEC. It is my pleasure to introduce to you our 2008 Board of Directors: George Ross - Vice President, Mariette Henderson – Secretary, Allan Keon – Treasurer, Micheline Ho – Social Director, Sean McFarlane – Sailing Director, Richard Vincent and Norma Strachan – Rowing Directors, John Dunn – Tennis Director and our Boathouse Director – Norm Sandre.

Distinguished Guests, Past, Current and Future Members and Friends of the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club,

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I welcome you all to this year's 125th Celebration of our Community Based Sports and Social Club that has graced this part of the city since 1883.

Bienvenue tout le monde. Il me fait grand plaisir de vous accueillir à notre club de tennis, de voile et d'aviron. Nos invites spéciaux ce soir sont le député fédéral d'Ottawa-Vanier Mauril Belanger, la ministre provinciale des Service sociaux et communautaires Madeleine Meilleur et notre Conseiller du district Rideau, Jacques Legendre.

It is my deep honour to present our distinguished guests celebrating with us today, we have: the Honourable Mauril Belanger member of Federal Parliament representing Rideau Ward, the Honourable Madeline Meilleur member of Provincial Parliament, and the Honourable Jacques Legendre Councillor of the Rideau Rockcliffe ward.

125 years..... I would like you all to step back in time..... imagine what it was like back in 1883. Canada was a mere sweet 16! The lumber industry predominated Ottawa's landscape; much of the Outaouais was still fully forested.....

ONEC had its beginnings as the Ottawa Canoe Club operating out of a floating dock facility at the base of Parliament Hill at the locks of the Rideau River. In time, the club was able to secure a more hospitable facility in Governor's Bay just east of 24 Sussex where it merged with the New Edinburgh Canoe Club to form the Ottawa New Edinburgh Canoe Club. After 30 years there, the club relocated to its present location across from flat lands to accommodate tennis courts to cater to the tennis rage of that time. The current location of ONEC was the end of the line for streetcar service, which linked this forested pine grove area with downtown Ottawa. The magnificent heritage landmark boathouse that we are in, was built between 1914 and 1923, having been designed in the Queen Anne recreational style by local architect Caldwell Powell Meredith. There are only 4 such boathouse structures remaining in Canada, the others being in Dartmouth Nova Scotia, at Centre Island in Toronto, and in Vancouver. This boathouse even has its own resident ghost; some speculate that it is the spirit of the woman who broke through the ice and drowned during one of the Governor General's skating parties held on the Ottawa River in Governor's Bay close by. Ottawa is indeed fortunate to still have this heritage landmark and even more incredibly, to have it still actively in use. The building of the Rockcliffe Parkway in the 1950s necessitated the tennis courts to be relocated and ONEC was physically cleaved in two into its current configuration spanning both sides of the parkway.

La localisation et les noms que notre club ont utilisés ont change quelques fois depuis 1883. Les sports aussi ont évolués. Debutant avec le canoe, et passant à la voile, l'aviron, le tennis et les programmes sociaux.

The locations and names under which our club operated have changed and evolved several times since 1883. The sports have also evolved from the original canoeing to our current vibrant sailing, rowing, tennis and social programs.

Despite the passage of time, it is important to note that one fundamental thing has not changed at ONEC. I am proud to say that the spirit of volunteerism and community work is alive and well. It was with this spirit that the club has gotten through some very tough times and financial hardships; and yet it has rebounded and continues to cater to and to respond to membership and community needs. It is impossible to fathom the incalculable hours of time and effort that our members and volunteers have put in over the last 125 years in organizing programs, building and upgrading facilities to make this club what it is today. Passion and camaraderie are what brings us together here regularly to enjoy our sports, and also to give back to the community, at what many of us consider "their cottage retreat".

I would like to now bring to your attention several individuals with us here today that were active in developing and promoting ONEC during different periods of ONEC's history:

We are honoured to have with us today Robert Bennett and his wife Marion. Robert was Board president during the late 60s early 70s and is responsible for us being still here today by steering the club through some of the most difficult financial situations experienced by the club. His son also worked for many years maintaining the tennis courts. Bob Martin, a tennis member from the 1950s has joined us here this evening. He is featured in one of the group photos on the tennis presentation board.

The Hurcomb family has had members at ONEC for four generations. James Montgomery Hurcomb was First Commodore of the club, his membership dating back to the early 1900s. He proposed to his future wife while they were out on the Ottawa River in a canoe. I am told that since she could not swim, she decided to accept the proposal. His son, Phillip Senior was club director in the 1960s. We have with us today his grandson, Phil Junior who worked at the Club maintaining the tennis courts when he was younger. At that time instead of tape, the lines had to be reset each and every morning using white chalk. Rumour has it that the club members would judge just how awake Phil was in the morning, after activities from the night before, based on the occasional creative undulations in the lines, which made for some interesting matches. Phil and his wife Cathy have daughters Cait and Sarah who in addition to being tennis members, have also worked in the tennis pavilion and maintained the courts. The formidable men's doubles team of Phil and brother Jim has captured numerous club and city trophies, and they still continue to impress decades later with their tennis prowess and antics.

As mentioned earlier, C.P. Meredith was the architect for our current boathouse. His grand niece, Louise Meredith, who is with us here today, has been tennis member since her elementary school days when she learned the ropes at the club. She was a board member for several years and more recently was club president at the turn of the millennium. Louise comes regularly to the club with her children Anna and Dominic and dog Sky.

For the last couple of decades, ONEC has recognized pillars of the club with the George MacKellar Volunteer of the Year Award. George is here with us today – he has been at ONEC for approximately 35 years. Despite his recent anecdotes threatening retirement, he continues to work with selfless dedication on all aspects of the club and facilities on both sides of the Rockcliffe Parkway. No one to our recollection has put in as much time and effort as George and he continues to be the main lifeline of this club. Several years ago George started to refuse accepting being recognized as volunteer of the year any more. At that time in his honour, ONEC created the MacKellar Award, which George now presents annually at the YEAR END BANQUET to the person I consider to be “the 2nd most dedicated volunteer at ONEC”.

I would like to introduce to you Mike Fossil and his wife Hae Sung Yum. In particular I would like to recognize Mike for all his devotion and countless hours working at the club, and for promoting and developing the sailing program at ONEC. Mike was also a member of the Board of Directors for 10 years in several capacities, most notably as president for the past several years. On occasion you could see Mike scaling the tall light poles to replace tennis lights or scuba diving in the Ottawa River securing new mooring for our sailboats. The whole Fossil family sails and plays tennis; their son Tristan worked at the club as sailing instructor while their daughter Alissa worked the smoothie bar and helped around the club. The Fossil's are also known to all as the go to people when your tennis racquet needs restringing. Mike has also worked exhaustively with his good friend Mark Chew, also a former board member, supporting tennis programs and club house upgrades (like the patio deck expansion at the tennis pavilion, the design and installation of a one of its kind sprinkler system for the tennis courts and most recently the new tennis court lighting project).

Turning to the rowing side of the club, I would like to recognize Richard Vincent who helped establish the rowing program at ONEC in the year 2000. In addition to continuing to lead the program, he has been a long time member of the Board of Directors providing a lot of the continuity and corporate knowledge for the club. He is also founding member of the Ontario Adventure Rowing Touring Committee and past member of Row Ontario.

John Boyd has been the main ‘Learn to scull’ coach, having a major impact on our membership developing excellent sculling techniques. Aileen Girouard was the rowing program's first touring co-ordinator and she contributes regularly as a tremendous advocate of touring to our new and returning members. Betty Ward and Norma Strachan contribute each year with their efforts as touring and training volunteers and for epitomizing the fun spirit of rowing at ONEC.

Many of the photos and memorabilia that you can see on our display panels were provided to us by Nancy James of Hamilton. During the 1890s to 1920's era, her grandfather Eric Roy, was a much awarded member of the then Ottawa Canoe Club.

Our approximately 400 members hail mostly from the surrounding Manor Park, New Edinburgh and Rockcliffe communities. However, we do have members that keep returning to our club year after year travelling from as far away as Manotick, Greely, Orleans, Kanata, Aylmer and Gatineau, and many ONEC friends and past members keep returning from as far as Montreal, Trenton, Cape Breton Nova Scotia and Calgary.

At this time, I would like to extend a special warm welcome to our most recent new members to our club, from the Recreational Association sailing program SAIL RA – Commodore Mike Hardstaff and his sailing colleagues.

Cette année a été très difficile, particulièrement l'hiver passé avec ses dégels et son niveau d'eau très élevé sur la Rivière des Outaouais qui a entraîné à la dérive plusieurs bateaux et quais.

This year has been particularly challenging – the harsh winter and unusual thaws and incredibly high rapidly rising water levels have created havoc along the Ottawa River, with many waterfront structures being swept down the river.

I would like to recognize Sean McFarlane – Sailing Director and Norm Sandre – Boathouse Director and their sailing colleagues, many of whom are our newest members from SAIL RA [Colin Fyfe, Mike Hardstaff, Bill Kerr, Alan McCullough, Dave Martin, Ross Misner, and John Mitchell], as well as members of our staff (Kevin Peralta, Ishmail Chbihi, Club Manager Mary Quinn, and Events Manager Marley Ransom, and Mariette and Andrew Norris). They all deserve a special round of applause for their many weeks of long hours of feverish work to bring the boathouse to its current beautiful condition for our club's opening and in particular for tonight's event.

Before I close, please join me in giving a hearty round of applause for Micheline Ho – Social Director and members of the social committee (Gillian Kular, Lucie KeanFrank, Karin Germann, Bill Kerr, Betty Ward, Craig Winegarden, Mark Shulist) who have been instrumental in planning and organizing this evening's event and our club Manager Mary Quinn, is responsible for preparing the presentation boards with our history on display tonight.

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Je regretted si par mégarde j'ai oublié quelques noms importants. Je suis

certain que vous comprendrez que, meme si nous n'avons pas mentionné votre nom, votre contribution au success de notre club est indispensable.

I apologize if I have missed mentioning someone important.... I am sure that each and every one of you understand that without you and your sometimes unrecognized, but highly appreciated contributions, this club would not be what it is today.

The club continues to be all about its members. Our humble Board of Directors continues to do their best to keep delivering the things you the membership need to enable the sailing, rowing and tennis programs to continue to thrive.

With your continued efforts and passion, the next 125 year Chapter of the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club has a very bright future. I would like to have us all applaud everyone among us who have volunteered their time and efforts, be it by helping at the annual clean-ups, landscaping ONEC's gardens, fixing roads, putting up drywall, painting, serving on the Board of Directors, or by just making ONEC a fun place to be at for others!

Some things should never change at ONEC, I believe that it will continue to be a place where everyone feels they belong, where everyone wants to know your name..... and may the sunsets continue to be as magnificent as they have been for the last 125 years!

Please raise your glass..... to your continued health ONEC /à votre santé ONEC!