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For Immediate Release

YACHT CLUB TO HOLD DAY OF BOATING SEMINARS

A day of seminars designed for folks interested in recreational boating has been scheduled by the Bellingham Yacht Club (BYC) for Saturday, March 24. Attendance is open to the public including people who are not BYC members.

Called "Boating Seminar Day in Bellingham", the day will follow an agenda that has been organized several times in recent years. There will be seminars conducted by selected leading local experts in the following subjects: *Buying a Boat; Chartering Boats and Putting Them into Charter; Maintaining Your Boat; Marine Electronics in the 21st Century; Adult Sailboat Racing; Junior Sailing; Cruising the San Juan & Gulf Islands; Cruising to British Columbia's Desolation Sound and the Broughton Islands; The Boat Trip of a Lifetime: Cruising to Alaska; Recreational Fishing in the Pacific Northwest; and Safe and Legal Boating in the Pacific Northwest.* The seminars are designed to appeal to people who are interested in boats from twenty-two feet (22') and larger, either sail or power.

In order to allow attendees to attend the greatest number of sessions, some sessions will be simultaneous with others but repeated a second time so that participants can select from the greatest possible list of subjects. In addition, during the lunch (the meal is included in the day's program) there will be "discussion tables" to allow more questioning of seminar leaders. At the end of the day, there will also be informal discussion groups.

Most of the seminars will include PowerPoint presentations and/or handouts, and each will be 55 minutes long followed by a brief break for the included refreshments. At midday a buffet-style sandwich/salad bar will be provided, and free coffee, tea, and soft drinks will be available through the day's schedule.

On several weekends following the event, BYC Members will invite those who attended the seminar day to enjoy a half-day of boating aboard their boats, giving participants a chance to get out on the water on a properly operated sail or powerboat with an experienced host. These boat rides will be scheduled at the end of the seminar day, with "rain dates" available in case of inclement weather.

There is a charge for the events, \$35 for individuals, or \$60 for two from a household, but these fees are reduced to only \$30 and \$50 if the participants pre-register no later than March 22. Full details are available by calling (360) 739-1528 or (360) 201-4460 or going to the Club's web site www.byc.org.

Bellingham's largest boating club, the BYC sponsors safety, training, cruising, sailboat racing, a number of large regional regattas, and social events each year; perhaps best-known is the annual "Opening Day of Boating" on the first Saturday each May, and the "Lighted Boat Parade" in December. The Club's most-popular social events are the twice-a-month "Friday at Five" gatherings and the annual "Commodore's Ball"; other popular social activities include a Seattle Boat Show bus excursion and special event and holiday gatherings such as a big recent Super Bowl party.

There are about 260 power and sail boats owned by club members, and the club itself owns a fleet of smaller boats for its Junior Racing training program for youngsters 8-18 years old. Members enjoy reciprocal moorage privileges with other clubs around the region and world; the BYC is one of the seven oldest clubs in the northwest, founded in 1925.

The 350 families and individuals who belong to the Club include about 1000 men, women and children who share boating as an interest, although not all members have boats. Although many among the public think of “yacht clubs” as elitist, this certainly isn’t true of the BYC: Its gregarious members represent a real cross-section of most Whatcom County residents, and about 60 families from around the country which spend their summers here also belong. Local members’ dues are only \$25 per month and include many services and benefits; non-local members’ dues are less.

Originally located on Chuckanut Bay, the Club moved in 1946 to the foot of Cornwall Avenue. Since 1965 it has occupied its big clubhouse at 2625 Harbor Loop where the seminars will be held, by Gate 3 of Squalicum Harbor at the end of Coho Way off Roeder Avenue in Bellingham; the Club leases space in its clubhouse to Emerald Bay Catering.

The BYC has made a remarkable comeback from serious difficulties in the 1980’s, when for a time it looked as though it was in jeopardy of closing. After making dramatic changes in its operations in the 1990’s, it is now thriving: It ended the club year on September 30, 2006 with over \$140,000 in the bank and a profit for the 2005-6 year of over \$34,000. Much of the success is due to the Club’s becoming an all-volunteer organization; although it contracts with instructors for its junior sailor training, all other work at the club including its 85 bartenders and most maintenance is by the members themselves. Typical of this are the two “Club Scrubs” held in October and April of each year when members gather on a Saturday morning to do necessary painting, clean-up, and landscaping. About 40 members usually participate in the “fun”.

The elected leader of the organization for 2006-7 (called the “commodore” rather than “president”) is Al Callery. He is assisted by five other officers and an eight-person board of men and women; both genders have served as commodore over the years.