

VICE COMODORE REPORT AGM

January 12, 2024

Often, we get busy and caught in small moments of stress that we lose sight of what we are really doing this all for. It's simple! Volunteerism & having a lot of fun sailing!

THANK YOU!

Before I get into speaking about both, I would like to give few people a personal Thank you for their dedication and hard work this year. As you know, this year I had the honor of serving as the Event Chair for Block Island Race Week. I could not have done it without Whitney Simon, Executive Director. For the year leading up to this iconic event, Whitney worked tirelessly to make sure it was a great event for all. We could also not have done it without our Race Director, Dick Neville, who did fantastic job. I am happy to announce that Dick has agreed to come back for Race Week 2025.

Our media team led by Kate Somers also did a wonderful job!

Last, but not least, we must not forget to thank all the volunteers that put in countless hours of hard work on this event and managed to make me look good in the process!

In 2025, Race week will be led by Rear Commodore, Ty Anderson. Ty has already started work on Race Week and I'm confident that he will build on the past events.

VOLUNTEERISM

This club runs on our Volunteers, and we have a fantastic group that help us for all major and minor events. I am proud to say that the Volunteers are what we are made of at Storm Trysail Club.

Last year, I had the opportunity & privilege to volunteer at a number of events such as Safety At Sea, Junior Safety At Sea, The IOR Regatta and Block Island Race Week. Last February, I volunteered right here in this room at a Rating Rules Seminar. These were all excellent events which showed me the true meaning of Volunteerism.

I have gotten to know a lot of members of Storm Trysail Club, we've talked and have been able to share our different ideas and viewpoints. It's a great way to teach/learn from each other, and it keeps our club "sailing forward". The Flags would certainly welcome all to Volunteer at events this coming year and I can say from experience that once you have done it, you will for sure be back!

So please volunteer when you can. You won't regret it.

SAILING FUN

Possibly a lot of us have forgotten the true reason we do this; I know I did a few years ago. At times, we get caught up with having to win the race at all costs and lose sight of our love of sailing and the ocean.

This week there was an article in Scuttlebutt Sailing News that really hit home for me. The article, aptly titled "Where Have the Boats Gone" was about the drop in participation in Caribbean Regatta's, However, it applies to most locations. The writer discussed that entries have dropped in half in recent years. In addition, a long-standing Regatta called Les Voiles de St. Barths lost their Title Sponsor this year and the event was ultimately canceled.

After reading this Article, I started thinking about why some Regattas flourish and others die. At first, I thought the short and simple answer to this question is fun. Where do boaters have the most fun doing what they love? The answer really isn't that simple, no one really knows why certain events do better than others. What we do know is that we all want our sport to thrive.

The article in Scuttlebutt Sailing News concluded with several reasons for the drastic drop in entries; having fun, cost, rating rules, family time and increase in Pro sailors in classes.

We are the leader in rating rules in this Country and we are constantly working on making them better. We have also worked extremely hard to make our events fun.

We need to address the proper balance of Corinthian and Category Three sailors and how they can race together. There appears to be races where entries are diminishing due to the Corinthian crew going up against Pro crews. It is an arms race that I believe has scared a lot of people out of great events. We need to find a way to make this work. We need Pros to help people sail better. The number of Pros on each boat is up to debate. Everyone including the Pros want to see Sailboat racing grow, not shrink. The reality is if we lose races like what happened in the Caribbean, there is no racing for amateurs and Pros. This isn't an easy topic and as painful as it is, it must be addressed. I look forward to hearing from all our members and having an open dialogue on the topic. Afterall, we are all here working hard together building the sport we love for the future.

This year, two events on the East coast have "bucked the trend" of diminishing entries in the past few years. The first event is Our Block Island Race week which had 174 entries this year, the most we have had since 2013! The second event is The Bermuda race, which as of this week has 158 entries.

I understand that's just five more than this time two years ago, however we must keep in mind that these are both expensive events to race in, yet entries are up WHY?

I think the organizers of both events worked very hard to make them fun for the participants and to give everyone a fair chance to win.

BLOCK ISLAND

We worked on the format for Race Week by adding Navigator Classes which have been very popular. We also put limitations on Category Three Sailors for some divisions, at the same time creating an open division for unlimited Category Three and Pro sailors alike. We worked hard on onshore activities bringing the fun back to Race Week. I think this is why race week has survived and GROWN in recent years.

THE BERMUDA RACE

The Bermuda Race appears to be doing very well with increased entries. It appears to be on track to possibly surpass its 2022 entries. As we all know, the Bermuda Race is not cheap, however, it truly is a once in a lifetime experience and all participants appear to have fun racing to Bermuda. For years The Bermuda Race has had a separate division for Pro-sailing teams and Corinthian teams. As we have done for Block Island Race Week, they haven't discouraged Category Three sailors, just put a few fair limitations on them. This possibly is reason why the Bermuda race has flourished and is on lot people's bucket list.

Storm Trysail club is and always has been a leader in racing in this Country. Our geographic footprint makes us stand out from other clubs that are local in nature. This allows us the ability to hear many different ideas and points of view. Hope to hear all our members' opinions on how to grow the sport.

See all of you out sailing this year! Remember to have FUN!

Respectively Submitted
Andrew Weiss, Vice Commodore