



The Old Man

The Monthly Newsletter of the Magothy River Sailing Association

Margaret Burri, Editor

February 2023

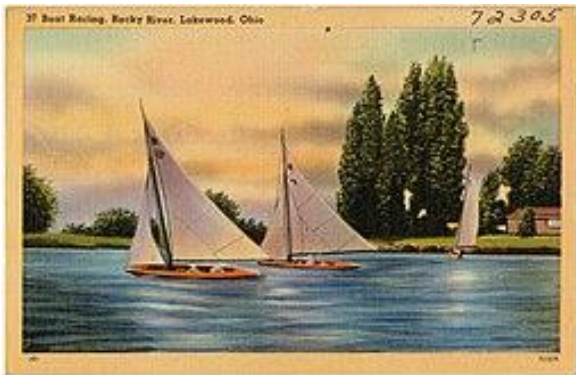


Commodore's Comments

Well... if this weather keeps up, we might have to move up our cruising and racing schedule to start at the end of March! Hope everyone is enjoying this respite from winter, though of course you know that it will be cold and rainy in April when you want to finish your boat up for launching.

Various folks are actively working on finalizing our 2023 Cruising, Social and Racing calendar so stay tuned for those dates to add to your calendar. The 2023 **Redbook** is getting ready for distribution (either hard copy or electronically) at our Annual Spring Brunch scheduled for Sunday, March 26th (stay tuned for more details on the Spring Brunch from our Vice Commodore John Ratino).

Junior training planning is also underway, and I want to thank Zoe Forsyth and Grace O'Brien for helping me keep things moving as we work towards finalizing registration and other program details. You can help by spreading the word about our Junior Training program, especially within your extended family. We are expanding the MRSA/Grachur member early registration and reduced fee benefits to include member (grand)nieces/nephews, and cousins to expand our membership benefits and help fill the program.



And finally, as a continuation on the theme from our December Meeting's speaker, Kristen Berry, about getting more folks involved in sailing I pass along this article courtesy of Chris Caswell and [Scuttlebutt](#) newsletter.

[Photo Credit: Boston Public Library Tichnor Brothers collection [#72305](#)]

I've been following the efforts of various groups to foster interest in sailing and, while I certainly applaud and support their efforts, I wonder if what we really need are more sailors who are willing to say, "Hey, wanna go sailing?"

After all, sailing is what the marketing people would label an "equipment-intensive sport." Without a boat, you're nowhere. It's not like sports such as basketball or football where a few bucks will get you on the playing field.

Youngsters in the ghettos may be able to parlay a well-worn basketball into a scholarship, and kids from the coal mining towns are able to turn their brawn into tickets to the majors, but sailing has always been controlled by those who own the boats.

As a youngster, I was fortunate enough to have a father who had been a sailor from his youth, and I was racing dinghies long before I could drive a car. But, like those kids from the barrios and steel towns, I wanted to break into the "majors" and sail big boats.

On weekends, I used to hang around the docks, shagging docklines for returning ocean racers and talking eagerly to the crews, all in the hopes of hearing the golden "Hey, kid, wanna go sailing?"

But today, our boats are protected by yacht club walls or hidden in gate-keyed marinas, so the opportunities have dwindled for newcomers to participate. And that simply has to change. Let me tell you about a couple of incidents so you'll see how you might be able to help with that change.

My first crewing slot on anything bigger than a Snipe came through the kindness of a man who was basically uneducated and who belonged to that class once derogatorily called "blue collar workers." But he did have a Six-Meter that he cherished, and Charlie also understood about the dreams of youngsters. When that first invitation, that "wanna go sailing?" was offered, I was ecstatic.

My position was nothing particularly demanding (setting the running backstays on each tack) and it didn't draw on what I considered to be my extensive knowledge of racing tactics (no one asked me anything), but I was part of a crew! The entire time, I was treated as an equal, although they had the wisdom not to offer a teenager one of their beers between races and, when we returned to the dock, I was taken to the club as part of the team.

It wasn't until years later when I realized that Charlie had bumped one of his many regular crew to give me my shot at the "majors." He was handing something back to the sport that meant so much to him. And the mere fact that I had sailed aboard his boat even once added immensely to my sailing résumé, and it wasn't long before I was in demand on a variety of ocean racers.

Another example of giving something back to the sport took place many years ago at a Star World Championship. The great Swedish sailor Pelle Petterson held a very narrow lead going into the last day of the regatta, and tensions were running predictably high. All the Stars were in the water waiting for a tow to the starting area, when a junior sailor stopped at Petterson's boat, obviously screwing up his courage to say something.

After a few moments, Petterson broke the ice by grinning at the youngster, whose question spilled out about some piece of rigging. This was long before we knew that athletes must "center" themselves before competition, but that was obviously what Petterson had been doing before his big race, yet he promptly invited the youngster to step aboard his Star.

Stunned, the kid's face wreathed into a huge grin as Petterson pointed out what all the various lines controlled. I strolled past 20 minutes later and Petterson was still talking, his soft Swedish accent going on about sail shapes, mast bend, and vang.

Enraptured, the youngster had obviously found a new hero and, I have to admit, so had I. Petterson had taken that one extra step to give something back to his sport and might even have started a future Star champion on a new course.

Perhaps, considering the cost of sailing today, it's hard to think in terms of owing something to the sport. After all, you plunked down your hard-earned coin to buy the boat, you spend more money than you want your spouse or banker to know in maintenance, and here's someone talking about "owing" something to the sport? But think back. Sometime, someone gave you a hand, showed you a kindness, opened a door. And for that generosity, you need to pass the torch along to a new generation of sailors.

Over nearly four decades, my memory has filled with the people who have given me breaks, starting with my father who crewed with such patience for a mercilessly demanding son that I realize now what a bond we have had for so many years.

There was Charlie with his Six-Meter, who treated me as an equal and made me part of the crew. George with the 50-footer, who actually gave me a key to his boat, and Ed, who took a youngster on an 1800-mile ocean race.

There are many others and occasionally I think about them, especially at the end of the sailing season when the halyards are tapping a lonely tune in a chilly marina. George and Charlie are long gone, as are many of the others, but I'm almost sure I can hear them saying that now it's my turn to do the giving.

It is almost embarrassingly easy to find your targets: they're standing next to you at a cocktail party looking at your faded boat shoes, they're a fellow worker studying the photograph of your boat on your desk, or you'll glance up from scrubbing your deck to find them simply staring longingly at your boat.

Go on, now it's your turn.

Say it.

"Hey, wanna go sailing?"

Thanks to everyone that renewed their membership as we appreciate your continued support of MRSA.

Ed Tracey, Commodore

Racing Corner



We're two thirds of the way through winter and in another month most of us will begin the task of getting our boats race-ready. So, what do we do for the next month to feed our passion for sailing? I assume many are working on boat projects that can be done from the comfort of their home workrooms; splicing rope for new halyards, main sheets, and travelers; drilling pedestal guards for running wire for new electronics; refinishing floorboards and other cabin woodwork that can be detached and carried home. [Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons]

But for those interested in the excitement gleaned from following a long-distance sailboat race, there is often a round-the-world single-handed race taking place during the winter months that you can follow. Currently the 2022-23 version of the [Golden Globe race](#) is taking place. This race was first held in 1968-69, when 9 boats started but only one finished. Sir Robin Knox-Johnson, sailing a 32-foot wooden ketch, finished in 312 days, becoming the first sailor to circumnavigate the globe nonstop, singlehanded.

The Golden Globe race was held again in 2018 on the 50th anniversary of the first race and is being held again this year on the 54th anniversary. Entrants are limited to sailing similar yachts and equipment to what was available to Sir Robin in the original race. That means sailing without modern technology or the benefit of satellite-based navigation aids. The race started in Les Sables-d'Olonne, France on Sept 4, 2022, and ends in the same port. Sixteen boats started, skippered by fifteen men and one woman. Now, 5 months into the race, only five boats remain. As of this writing, the boat skippered by Kirsten Neuschäfer, the only woman in the race, has moved into first place as she rounds Cape Horn, 10,000 miles from the finish.

One big problem facing the remaining racers is the lack of drinking water as there has been little rain in recent weeks. All boats have emergency desalinators but competitors are disqualified from the race if they use them. You can follow the progress of this amazing race at <http://goldengloberace.com>.

I've distributed a winter survey to last year's racers and thus far have received 7 responses. If you haven't already done so, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey with your ideas on how to improve the Wednesday night racing experience.

Hope to see all the racers at the pre-season meeting on March 29th at Ledo's Pizza in Severna Park.

Jim Bradac, Race Committee Chair

Cruising Corner



It's great to catch up with friends during the off-season. Mike and Laura Bonham, Rich and Toni Hughes, John and Debbie Lund, Gabriela Belli and Bob Krapfel caught up for lunch in FL!

SAVE THE DATE

MRSA SPRING BRUNCH

Maryland Yacht Club

March 26th, 11:00 am

Cost: \$40 Plus a Cash Bar

Speaker: Tim Herzog

More Details to Come



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Magothy River Sailing Association
P.O. Box 1135 Pasadena, MD 21122

Please do your part to restore the Bay and *actively make it cleaner.*