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Board of Governors
Off Soundings
Gentlemen and Commodore;

Just ten years ago your present Chairman was pressed into service to quell a rebellion of the Race Committee which, until then, was a completely independent and autonomous group from the U.S. Power Squadron. Since tact and diplomacy have never been an outstanding attribute of your chairman, he has often since felt like a missionary at a cannibals picnic.

The procedures and "system" inherited then were most cumbersome, unnecessarily complicated, and required too much manpower. Each segment of the operation was assigned to an "expert" without whom the whole system would have broken down. It was resolved, after some experience, to do something about that situation and leave my successor free of the problems I had inherited.

But how do you quickly convince the Inventor that his ideas are not the best? How do you keep non-sailing types on an onerous yet important job, while accomplishing the things you would like to do? How do you keep them reasonably contented, coming back?

You peck away, little by little, is what you do; applying sweet unguents to the occasional bruises, until you at long last accomplish the ultimate purpose.

An example in point is those atrocious and expensive placards showing racing number. It took two years, and finally an ultimatum, to get rid of them, thereby eliminating much confusion aboard the R.C. boat, not to mention considerable cursing of sweet young things holding the numbers upside down on tossing foredecks. But the Power Squadron, none of which had ever been on a racing foredeck in their lives, considered them indispensable.

Here I must emphasize a point which is little understood. THERE ARE NO FLEETS ANYWHERE WHICH EXERT SUCH PRESSURES ON THE RACE COMMITTEE! Nowhere do you find so many boats racing on corrected time over short courses in eight classes where complete results, even for combined races, are expected to be available within minutes after the last boat has finished. Some years ago, with fewer boats and classes, the task was not so formidable. But the logistics problems have grown more than most of you appreciate.

I state flatly that no club anywhere has equivalent problems to cope with.

For two years I have been working on what I believe to be the ultimate solution for clubs such as ours. Much of my time, and no little personal expense, has been devoted to that project. I am now confident that the aim has been achieved. After partial testing last fall, sweeping revisions have been ordered for the next race. They should leave my successor and the Club free of the many problems heretofore experienced. They should, in fact, allow a good chairman to man his committee with neophytes, if necessary.

The answer, unique to Yacht Racing as far as I know, is a push-button automatic timer which prints each time on tape. That probably sounds insignificant to most of you, not experienced with timing such vast numbers of boats, four or five of which may be on the line almost simultaneously. Therefore, I ask you to join me in a brief experiment;

You will understand, I think, the potential for reducing confusion and man-power and errors, even though the exact details need not be described here..

Concluding this report, an observation; No rational man can expect the job of Race Committee Chairman to be free of many frustrations. Critics with half-knowledge and second-guessers are everywhere. But in my case, it has all been worth it, working with a group of men and for a Club I so much admire.

Old Farts are, by definition, just so much gas. They should quit before they become something more visible. I am reasonably confident that I can handle another race before such^a lamentable transformation takes place. By so doing, it is my hope to realize a goal of many years; that is to leave Off Soundings in better shape than I found it.

When choosing my successor, I entreat you to give full weight to some vital considerations;

1. He should be a man experienced in round-the-buoys racing. Quick decisions are frequently necessary for sudden postponements, short courses, etc. No power-boater, or flunkey, can rationally be expected to make them.

2. For proper communications and understanding, he should be a reasonably long-time member of Off Soundings.

3. With some temerity, I also suggest that this person be one who loves the sport, and has the courage of his convictions. Many boats come a very long way for good racing, and it is his job to provide it whenever reasonably possible. It is all too easy to be dissuaded by timid wives who would rather sit in the harbor than suffer any discomfort. But I do not believe that Off Soundings should be run for them.

Many thanks.

Respectfully submitted.

G.L.W.

Gilbert L. Wolfe.