

OFF SOUNDINGS CLUB



William G. Gunther, Commodore
90 Uncas Circle
Quilford, Connecticut 06437

Home (203)458-3540
Office (203)481-2371

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Dear Member:

Off Soundings is a truly unique sailing organization. Our strength lies in our member's keen interest in sailing and the camaraderie that it affords, as well as its many highly competent volunteers who keep it running so smoothly. We are especially fortunate for the efforts of Race Committee Chairman Wes Maxwell and Race Secretary Dick Roberts and their willingness to risk trying new things.

Last year was a very busy one for the Club, especially for our Race Committee as they introduced many innovations to our racing format. The use of a five minute starting sequence facilitated separate and less crowded starts for Cruising Canvas Classes 1 and 2, and also allowed us to create a new class to host a match race between two guest 12 meter yachts. The Race Committee also experimented with two shorter windward-leeward courses for classes C1, C2 and the 12's on Saturday. This necessitated provisions by the Committee to finish classes on one side of the Committee boat while simultaneously starting other classes on the other side of Nor'easter. All of this meant a great deal more work for the Race Committee who did a splendid job and deserve a great deal of credit. The vast majority of the feedback we have received has been very favorable, and we intend to continue refining these ideas during the coming season.

The Board of Governors has received some helpful feedback as to how we might further improve things, and the Race Committee plans to incorporate these suggestions during the 1996 racing season. The use of the course board enables the Race Committee to choose from a number of new course variations to be determined by the Committee just prior to the start which are reflective of the existing conditions. The obvious drawback is that this creates congestion at the Committee boat while individual boats are passing close enough to read the courses. To alleviate this, the Committee is investigating the possibility of broadcasting the courses at predetermined intervals. Hopefully, this will also eliminate the infringement of non-starting classes on the pre-start stand-off area. A second concern related to Cruising Canvas 1 having been sent on the long course, and there was sufficient reaction toward this that the Race Committee does not intend to do this in the future. Finally, the issue was raised that while the "C" classes may enjoy windward-leeward courses on Saturday, the more traditional "A" and "B" classes may not. The Race Committee has been alerted to this concern and will take this into consideration in their future course selections. More feedback from "A" and "B" is most welcome.

In addition to these efforts to make our racing more exciting, we are working hard to motivate members to propose qualified people for membership in our Club. Our current membership stands at 512, which is down from a high of over 600 just 10 years back. It will only serve to improve race participation and the quality of our events if we are able to boost our membership without in any way compromising on qualifications. If a candidate is well known to the requisite number of Off Soundings Club members, the membership process may be initiated by contacting Paul van Dyke, Chairman of the Membership Committee at (860)536-2247.

There may be good sailors who would enjoy participating in Off Soundings events who currently are not well enough known to Off Soundings Club members to be proposed at this time. It is easy to remedy this by proposing such individuals for guest invitations. In order to make the process simpler, the Board has established new deadlines for the receipt of guest invitation requests: May 9, 1996 (for both Spring and Fall Race series) and August 8, 1996 (for the Fall Race Series only). Guests who are approved by the Board of Governors will then be sent First Notice packages, one week prior to the race entry deadline. Any completed guest forms received prior to April 4th will be reviewed by the Board at our meeting on April 6th, and those approved will receive their First Notice at the same time as regular members. Members may obtain a guest invitation request form by calling Race Secretary Dick Roberts at (860)443-4621.

We are looking forward to a great season in 1996 which, of course, starts with the Annual Meeting on April 6th at the Coast Guard Academy. That evening has been very well attended for the past two years, and we sincerely hope you will make every effort to be there. I wish you good sailing in the coming year.

Sincerely,



William G. Gunther