



2020 Year End Newsletter

BICS was Incorporated as a nonprofit 501,(C),(3) organization in 2017 by Island sailing program supporters who were intent on making the sport of sailing fun, accessible and affordable to everyone. BICS promotes a welcoming environment that encourages learning, volunteerism, and the satisfaction of supporting a true community benefit program.

Directors:

George Davis
John Doolittle
Henry duPont
Jacques Fiechter
James Gallacher
Tom Lee
Ted Merritt
Ray Torrey
Chuck Townsend

All donations to BICS are tax deductible as allowed by the IRS for charitable organizations.

Block Island Community Sailing, Inc. (BICS), the Island's educational, nonprofit community sailing organization, has had to significantly limit our sailing programs this year because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This included canceling 2020 BI Race Week which we co-host with the Block Island Yacht Club (BIYC) and the Duck Island Yacht Club (DIYC), the BICS Open House event, the BIYC Sailing Season Kick Off event, and the BICS Member Appreciation Picnic in September. It also meant that we decided not to launch our fleet of Raven 24 sloops because of the impossibility of our staff and members to properly social distance while sailing together aboard those boats. BICS is the home for the Performance Handicap Racing Fleet (PHRF) on Block Island for which we offer a number of racing events including the Thursday Night Sailing Series, the Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta, and the BIYC Around the Island Pursuit Regatta. Under the State of Rhode Island regulations for sporting events, we were able to launch our Zodiac 20 foot Race Committee vessel and to safely organize and provide expert Race Committee services to those regattas. A brief description of each of these events follows:

2020 Thursday Night Sailing Series

The 2020 Thursday Night Sailing Series, a 10 weeklong sail racing event in which the Island's most accomplished sailors face off against each other in around-the-buoys racing every Thursday evening. The Series was founded in 1999 by local sailors with the goal to foster sailing yacht racing on Block Island. This event is specifically for keel boats which sail under the Performance Handicap Rating Fleet (PHRF) rules. Now in its 22nd year, the Series is run by Block Island Community Sailing as an advanced racing clinic, with coaching and a weekly newsletter on the Racing Rules of Sailing, boat speed techniques, and racing tactics.



Thursday Night Sailing Race Start in the Great Salt Pond

The racing format is typically a windward-leeward course set in the recreational area in the northern section of the Great Salt Pond. The courses are typically about a mile and a half or twenty minutes long which allows three races to be run each evening. The Race Committee was run by BICS

Director Henry duPont, and staffed by BICS members Russ Certo, Sue Pazos, Elizabeth Moss, John Doolittle, and Erin Groll. Each of the committee members participated in setting the racecourse, timing the starts and finishes, and recording the scores for each race.

The Thursday Night Sailing Series 1st Place finish goes to John Seider sailing "Fellers," a Colgate 26 with a perfect string of first place finishes, Bob Closter sailing "Island Spirit", a J24, sailed to second place, and George Davis and Todd Crouch sailing "Slapshot" another Colgate 26 sailed to third place.

Other notable skippers who scored well in the series were Chris Hillios, and Briggs Whiteford, sailing Colgate 26s, and Michael Rock sailing his classic Herreshoff Watch Hill 15, "Whisper".

2020 BIYC Around the Island Pursuit Race

Hosted by the Block Island Yacht Club, this event was run on Sunday September 6th. A Pursuit Race is different from a typical yacht race because each yacht's handicap is applied at the beginning, with the smallest yachts getting a head start so that all the yachts, if well sailed, would finish the 17 mile around the Island racecourse at the same time. This Regatta was also sanctioned by the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association as a "points" regatta on their Offshore Racing Circuit Series. This year the regatta had a record 18 yachts competing, with 6 from mainland yacht clubs.

The race conditions featured SSW winds from 10-15 knots which meant that with an upwind start and finish, the boats were sent around the Island, in a counter-clockwise direction with the start / finish line set just outside of the New Harbor entrance channel.

The winning yacht in the Spinnaker Class was "Spectre", a J/125 skippered by Brian Prinz of East Haven CT, who started last and passed all of the boats to finish first in a circumnavigation time of 2 hours, 22 minutes. Second place went to "Screwball", an Aerodyne 38 skippered by Kevin and Amy Carse, from Clinton CT, and third place went to "Island Spirit", a J/24 skippered by Bob Closter Sr. from Block Island.



The winning yacht in the Cruising Class, was "Shearwater" an Ericson 38 skippered by Chris Griffin from Wethersfield, CT. Second Place went to "Blue Moon" a Freedom 40, skippered by Don Coxe of Block Island, and third place went to "Wild Child" a J/99 skippered by Kenn Fischburg, also from Block Island, who completed the circumnavigation of the Island singlehanded!

Other Block Island Boats who finished well were "Mallorca" a J/30 skippered by BIYC Commodore Jim Fiorato, and "RUSH" a Tripp 26 skippered by Henry duPont.

Sadly, because of the pandemic there was no after race awards party, but the top three skippers in each class were each presented a trophy for their sailing prowess.

James Gallacher served as the Principal Race Officer, assisted by John Doolittle, Amy Keeler, and Bill Penn. Race Chairman Henry duPont, helped promote the regatta, provided race management, and did the scoring for this event. Special thanks to Matt O'Hare who provided the Race Committee start/finish boat, and Justin Lewis of the New Harbor Boat Basin who provided slips for the race committee boats and the regatta landside venue.

Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta

The BICS Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta, a popular fundraising event in the 1990s, was sailed September 19th on Block Island Sound for only the fifth time since 2004. Four boats entered the regatta which was organized by and run by BICS. The course this year was a windward leeward course, 6 miles in length, from the start/finish line set just west of the New Harbor entrance channel south to the R6 bell buoy and back to the start/finish line. Race conditions had light southerly winds, which shifted to north east in the middle of the race. The Race Committee consisted of BICS Director Jake Fiechter, John Doolittle, Elizabeth Moss, Susan Pasos and Amy Keeler. Marty Shulman skippered his 32-foot sportfishing boat as the Committee boat.



Light winds precluded all the boats from finishing but Bob Closter sailing his J 24 "Island Spirit" finished first in the Cruising Class, and Henry duPont sailing his Tripp 26 "RUSH" finished first in the Spinnaker Class.

This regatta helped raise over a hundred dollars for the Mary D Fund. As the word gets out that the Mary D Regatta is a fun, well-organized, and well sponsored event, the growth in year-on-year popularity will make it one of the Island's major fundraising events.

BICS Adds a Cape Dory 28 Coastal Cruiser to Our Adult Sailing Program.

BICS announces the acquisition of a donated Cape Dory 28 to our fleet of recreational and racing sailboats. This auxiliary sloop has a roomy cabin which sleeps five and has full cruising boat amenities such as a head, and a galley with a large icebox, sink, and a gimbled stove. This sturdy coastal cruiser with its inboard diesel engine, and self-tacking jib is easy to sail. It fits perfectly in the BICS adult sailing program, which offers sailing instruction in keel boats including cruising, coastal navigation, and larger boat racing.

This boat is a perfect solution for those sailors who had to give up their own boats when they moved to Block Island because of the long waiting list for private moorings. BICS members can take their friends and families sailing, whenever our boats are available, for no extra fee above our low \$250 annual membership fee. Lessons are available for those who would love to learn to sail but never got a chance to learn the basics. All sailing instruction is taught by US Sailing Certified Sailing Instructors using the US Sailing Small Boat, Keelboat, and Cruising Sailboat curriculum.



BICS is the only Island sailing organization which sends our boats to race in mainland regattas, helping put Block Island on the map as a center for sailing excellence. Our community benefit programs include sailing instruction for the Town of New Shoreham Recreation Department's "Camp Mohegan", and special programs for ladies and seniors. You can help us bring the joy and excitement of sailing to Block Island! You can join BICS as a member, donate to support our charitable community benefit programs, or volunteer to help us work on our growing fleet of sailboats. You can also provide the gift of sailing to family and friends with gift memberships and lesson packages this holiday season.

Visit us at our web site: www.sailbi.org or contact us info@sailbi.org for more information.