



## 2024 Spring 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 of learning, volunteerism, and the satisfaction of supporting a true community benefit program.

### Directors:

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

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

BICS Web Site by [JLG Design](#)

**Block Island Community Sailing is offering a 2024 sailing season line up with US Sailing accredited sailing instruction and a racing program designed to engage new and experienced sailors alike.**

Block Island Community Sailing (BICS), Block Island's nonprofit adult / family sailing organization, is pleased to announce the hiring of Tess Heilman, an experienced keelboat instructor to serve as our head sailing instructor for the 2024 sailing season. Tess's passion for sailing began in Maine's Casco Bay at the age of 5. Growing up, she summered in Rhode Island where she sailed dinghys out of the Newport Yacht Club on Narragansett Bay. In High School, Tess spent much of her time on the water as a coxswain for the varsity boys crew team and coaching the middle school team which further honed her skills on the water. She became a basic keelboat instructor and office administrator at the New England Sailing Center in the summer of her junior year. Enjoying the work and people, Tess made the decision to take a gap year before attending college, to join NESAC for their winter season in the British Virgin Islands teaching keelboat sailing on IC24s and larger monohulls and catamarans. Tess is an ASA Certified Basic Keelboat instructor and is currently attending the Cummings School of Architecture at Roger Williams University where she will graduate in 2026. In her spare time, Tess is also an avid surfer, including during the winter season. Tess will be teaching our BICS Woman's Sailing Program as well as our US Sailing "Basic Keelboat" sailing instruction program.



Meet Tess Heilman, our Head Sailing Instructor for the 2024 Sailing Season!

The BICS sailing instruction program which sails out of the New Harbor Boat Basin (near the Oar Restaurant) starts with the US Sailing "Basic Keelboat" course for beginners which is a 10-lesson course designed to get our students qualified to competently sail any of our 25' keelboats without an instructor on board. The course comes with an illustrated student workbook which, with our expert ground school and on-the-water sailing instruction, makes sailing easy to learn and rewarding to accomplish.

In addition to our Basic Keelboat Sailing Program, BICS also offers advanced

sailing instruction, including the US Sailing “Basic Cruising”, “Bareboat Cruising”, and “Coastal Navigation” certification courses taught by our founding Director Capt. Henry duPont on our Cape Dory 28 coastal cruiser, “Mischief”.

Cruising Sailing Instruction is also offered by BICS in the off season on one-week bareboat charters sailing out of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands each winter through the month of April. These charters not only give our members and their family and friends the opportunity to sail in one of the most fabulous cruising venues in North America, but also an opportunity to get their US Sailing “International Proficiency Certificate” which is their “License” to charter a 45’ monohull sloop, without a professional captain and crew, anywhere in the free world.



BICS March 10 Bareboat Charter Crew Sailing off Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands

In addition to expert sailing instruction, BICS also offers skippered and crewed sailing charters on our Cape Dory 28 “Mischief” for an afternoon or one of our popular family sunset sailing charters. If you have guests coming to visit you this summer, this is a perfect way to take them for a lovely evening sail and to support BICS. Book a Cape Dory sail from our website at [www.sailbi.org](http://www.sailbi.org).

BICS all about high performance sailing and sail racing and we are 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, the BICS Offshore Regatta, and the BICS Around the Island Pursuit Race. BICS is the only sailing organization on Block Island to run regattas with US Sailing Certified Race officials and we provide all the regatta promotion, race management, and scoring required to run a well-managed event. To participate as a skipper, crew, or race committee volunteer in one of these events, please let us know and we will be happy to accommodate you..

### **BICS 2024 Sailing Lesson Schedules and Cost**

BICS offers keelboat sailing lessons every day starting May 27<sup>th</sup> with 2 ½ hour group lessons for beginners starting at 9:00 each weekday morning and 2 ½ hour Intermediate lessons starting at noon. Private lessons are available each day starting at 3:00 PM. All keelboat lessons for our members are offered for \$25 per hour, which is a 40% discount over nonmember lesson rates which cost \$35/hr. Members can also save by purchasing a five-lesson package plan for \$265 which includes the course workbook and provides an additional \$60 or 20% savings. A five-lesson package plan for nonmembers is available for \$350.

2 ½ hour private lessons, for persons of any sailing ability are available, most mornings, and every afternoon at a cost \$175 for 2-4 persons for members and \$212.50 for nonmembers. This is per-boat / not a per-person cost. A private lesson can be tailored to any purpose for beginning sailing, to advanced racing tactics, or even a nice relaxing sail, around the Great Salt Pond, for you, your family, and your guests.

### **BiCS Woman’s Sailing Program, for Women by Women.**

**BICS** is working hard to increase the participation of women in the sport of sailing by offering a special Woman’s Sailing Program with sailing instruction tailored for you by our Head Sailing Instructor Tess Heilman, who is a Member of the National Woman’s Sailing Association. Look for more on this program on the “Lessons / Boat Use” webpage on our website: [www.sailbi.org](http://www.sailbi.org)

**Bottom line:** Our BICS Learn to Sail Programs offers an exceptional opportunity to learn sailing for beginners or to sharpen you sailing skills at less than half the cost of the adult sailing lessons offered by any other Island sailing organization. To learn more about our sailing programs or to book lessons select “Book a Lesson” at [www.sailbi.org](http://www.sailbi.org) You can also call us anytime at 401-741-5136 to learn how you can sail with us.

**Meet our Fleet:** Block Island Community has five sailboats and two service vessels in our growing fleet, and we are working hard to restore and maintain the boats we have and always looking towards acquiring additional vessels for our sailing instruction, cruising, and for and racing programs. Here is a brief description of each.

- **Two Raven 24s:** “Scarecrow” and “Raven Lunatic”. These meticulously restored classic day sailors were Built by Cape Cod Shipbuilding, and are fast, maneuverable, and fun to sail! The Raven 24 was the most popular class for intercollegiate competition in 1the 1970s and with their bench seating, and easy handling are perfect for teaching sailing for our beginners and intermediate basic keelboat program.



- **Soling: (One Design Class)** This sleek racer served as the three-man keelboat class in the Olympics for over 20 years. Our Soling, “Oh Behave”, sails with our members onboard in our Thursday Night Sailing Series where it has won dozens of races in this series over the last 15 years. This boat is also an important part of our advanced sailing and racing instruction program where we teach racing tactics and performance sailing like the art of spinnaker flying.



- **Ranger 22:** New to our fleet in 2024, our Ranger 22 is a perfect pocket-sized sailboat to “knock around” the Great Salt Pond with your family and friends. Quick to rig with its roller furling jib, our Ranger 22 can also be raced in our Thursday night sailing series. Anyone with intermediate sailing skills can get checked out by BICS instructor to get qualified to sail the Ranger without an instructor onboard.



- **Cape Dory 28:** “Mischief”, our classic coastal cruiser, sleeps five and is used for teaching our US Sailing “Basic Cruising” and “Coastal Navigation” Courses. “Mischief” is perfect for an afternoon or evening family sunset sail. She has been completely refurbished with a new diesel auxiliary engine, new standing and running rigging, new sails, including an enormous spinnaker and carbon spinnaker pole, and a digital chart plotter with advanced wind and boat speed data. Each year we take “Mischief” to the NE Cape Dory Rendezvous to meet with a dozen other Cape Dory Owners. We also sail “Mischief” in offshore regattas including the Mystic Mudhead’s “Midnight Madness overnight race and the Newport Yacht Club Cliff Mitchel Columbus Day Regatta where we took 2nd place out of 12 racing yachts last year.



## Help Us Put Block Island on the Map as a Center for Sailing Excellence!

BICS members fared well racing in the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association Offshore Circuit in 2023, scoring enough points to put our sailing club in 10<sup>th</sup> place out of the 44 clubs which entered boats in ECSA Regattas. Our racing program goal is to field competitive boats and crews and to achieve more podium finishes to move up the ladder as one of the most competitive sailing clubs in the region.

Now that Block Island Community Sailing is the only US Sailing Accredited Basic Cruising and Bareboat Cruising school in SE New England, we are helping put Block Island on the map as a center for sailing excellence. Our community benefit programs include special sailing instruction for ladies and seniors, and our new cruising courses introduce our students to the rewarding cruising lifestyle.

You can help us bring the joy of sailing to Block Island by joining BICS as a member, donating to support our charitable community benefit programs, or volunteering 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. Visit us at our web site: [www.sailbi.org](http://www.sailbi.org) or contact us at [info@sailbi.org](mailto:info@sailbi.org) for more information.

Special thanks to our commercial sponsors who donated generously to support our sailing programs:

**New Harbor Boat Basin, Sullivan Sotheby's Real Estate, The Mystic Shipyard, and The National Hotel**

## Block Island 2024 Sailing Events Calendar

Published by Block Island Community Sailing

Event	Class	Host Club / Sponsors	Dates
BICS / BIYC Sailing Season Kickoff Event	All	BIYC / BICS / National Hotel	May 26 <sup>th</sup> 5-7 PM
Off Soundings Club Spring Series	PHRF OS	Off Soundings Club, ECSA	June 7th-8th
BICS Thurs Night Sailing	PHRF	BI Community Sailing	June 27th – Sept 5 <sup>th</sup>
Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta	PHRF OS	BI Community Sailing	July 13 <sup>th</sup>
BICS Offshore Regatta	PHRF OS	BICS / ECSA	August 10 <sup>th</sup>
Around the Island Pursuit Race	PHRF OS	BICS / ESCA	September 1st
SHYC B.I.G Jack Regatta	PHRF OS	Stonington Harbor YC	September 7th
BICS Annual Member Awards Picnic	PHRF	BI Community Sailing	September 7th
Off Soundings Club Fall Series	PHRF OS	Off Soundings Club, ECSA	September 13-14th
Cliff Mitchel Mem Columbus Day Regatta	PHRF OS	Newport Yacht Club	October 12th

Notes: All BICS and Off Soundings events are sailed under the PHRF Class Rules of the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association. To join ECSA to get your PHRF Certificate go to: [www.ecsa.net](http://www.ecsa.net)

### Legend:

BIYC: Block Island Yacht Club  
BICS: Block Island Community Sailing, Inc  
ECSA: Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association  
PHRF: Performance Handicap Racing Fleet. (PHRF OS) means Offshore Rules  
SHYC: Stonington Harbor Yacht Club