



2025 Season Summer / Fall 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:

John Doolittle
Henry duPont
James Gallacher
Ted Merritt
Al Skinner
Chuck Townsend

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

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Block Island Community Sailing had a full season of summer sailing and looks forward to our Fall / Winter sailing programs.

Block Island Community Sailing (BICS), Block Island's nonprofit adult / family sailing organization, has had another season of member participation with US Sailing accredited sailing instruction for their "Basic Keelboat", "Basic Cruising", and "Bareboat Cruising" courses, and a full season of racing events. In addition to sailing lessons and free boat use by our qualified members, BICS offers afternoon and evening family charters on our Cape Dory 28 with USCG licensed Captains. BICS is also the home for the Performance Handicap Racing Fleet (PHRF)



One of our Winter Sailing Program charter crews becoming aspiring skippers onboard at the Cooper's Island Beach Club in the British Virgin Islands.

on Block Island for which we offer several "offshore" racing events including, the Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta, the BICS Offshore Regatta, and the BICS Around the Island Pursuit Regatta. 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 and after race parties needed to run a well-managed event. A brief description of each of our comprehensive sailing program activities follows:

BICS / US Sailing Beginners and Advanced Sailing Lessons

BICS offers the nationally accredited US Sailing "Basic Keelboat" sailing instruction curriculum, with beginner lessons scheduled at 9:00 and intermediate lessons scheduled at noon, every weekday, sailing out of the New Harbor Boat Basin. Our US Sailing Certified Sailing instructors have introduced over a hundred adults and their families to the joy of sailing in our Raven 24 sail training vessels, leading to sailing proficiency



Aspiring BICS Cruising Course Skippers at the AMTRAK Bridge on the Mystic River

certification. BICS is also the only accredited US Sailing Basic Cruising and Bareboat Cruising School in Southeast New England and we offer a 3 day Cruising Course to aspiring skippers, on our Cape Dory 28, who would like to get their US Sailing International Proficiency Certificate (IPC) or bareboat charter "skipper's license" which qualifies you to charter your own sailing yacht without a professional captain and crew, almost anywhere in the world. This course includes an overnight cruise to Mystic Seaport which features sailing in Block Island Sound, Fishers Island Sound and the two-mile trip up the Mystic River to berth in the Seaport next to the historical sailing vessels on display.



Our US Sailing Basic Cruising and Bareboat Cruising Course is also offered as part of our BICS Winter Sailing Program in the British Virgin Islands on 46' Chartered Yachts from January through April. More about that below. To learn about our sailing programs, to schedule an introductory lesson, or to purchase a discount sailing lesson plan for 2026, please visit our website at www.sailbi.org

Cape Dory Afternoon and Evening Sunset Sailing Charters

This summer BICS experienced an expansion in the growth and popularity of our Cape Dory family sailing cruises with over 30 charters booked! These 2 1/2-hour sailing excursions start by casting off our mooring on our Cape Dory 28, "Mischief", and hoisting sail for a relaxing sailing cruise out of the Great Salt Pond and into Block Island Sound. "Mischief" is a fully outfitted coastal cruiser with accommodations for 6 passengers including a galley and a head. Our cruise guests are welcome to bring snacks, like a cheese platter, and their favorite beverages aboard. The cruise finishes with a sailing tour of the Great Salt Pond before lowering sail and returning to our mooring. BICS is the only sailing club on Block



A fun family sunset cruise on "Mischief"

Island to offer sailing charters with US Coast Guard Licensed Captains. To book a family afternoon or evening sunset cruise on "Mischief" next Summer, go to our website at www.sailbi.org

Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta

Block Island's historic Mary D Fund Benefit Regatta, a popular fundraising event in the 1990s, was sailed yet again on Saturday July 14th in Block Island Sound. Three boats entered the regatta which was hosted by Block Island Community Sailing. The course this year was from the start/finish line set just north of the Great Salt Pond entrance channel up to the "R6" Bell buoy off of Coonymous and then out to the "R2" red nun buoy off of Black Rock Point, and back downwind to Finish at the Start. Race conditions had Southeasterly winds between 5 and 8 knots. Henry duPont, served as the Regata Organizer and on-the-water Race Committee Official. Top honors in the Spinnaker Class went to Bob Closter sailing his J/24 "Island Spirit" with Block Island Community Sailing's Cape Dory 28 "Mischief" Sailed by Todd Crouch sailing to. 2nd Place.



"Nimble" an Alerion 28 Express sailed by Chuck Townsend is new to our racing fleet this year.

Special thanks go to the New Harbor Boat Basin for being the event location sponsor.

BICS Offshore Regatta

Our Offshore Regatta, which was held August 9th, is a mid-distance yacht race sailed around government marks in Block Island Sound. This regatta is on the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association's Offshore Racing Circuit Calendar as a "points" race. four boats entered the regatta, which was hosted by Block Island Community Sailing. With easterly winds, the course this year was a windward- leeward-reaching course, 8.2 miles in length, from the start/finish line set about 200 yards north of the entrance channel up to the "R6" buoy off of Cooneymous Cove, the R2 red nun buoy off of Black Rock Point, and back to the start/finish line. The Race Officials consisted of Regatta Chair, Henry duPont who also served as the race PRO in at the Starting line.

Light air and some signifant current made the racing conditions chalanging with regard to which side of the course was most favorable. Chuck Townsend, sailing "Nimble" his Alerion Express 28 traded the lead with Bob Closter sailing "Island Spirit", his J/24 a number of times with Bob finishing first and Chuck finishing about 3 minutes behind. Co Skippers Todd Crouch and Alan Skinner finished third on the BICS's Cape Dory 28, "Mischief".



BICS "Offshore Regatta" Skippers and Crews

2025 BICS Around the Island Pursuit Race

On Sunday, August 31st, BICS hosted the 13th annual Around the Island Pursuit Race. This Regatta sanctioned by the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association as a "points" regatta on their Offshore Racing Circuit. This year the regatta had 7 yachts competing, with 2 from the mainland, including the largest yacht ever to register for this event, "Carthage Must be Destroyed", a very powerful looking Farr 53 racer / cruiser from NY, NY. The race conditions were very light with easterly winds from 3-5 kts so the course had to be modified from around the Island to a 6.6 mile course from the New Harbor entrance buoy "R2" to the North Point Buoy "1BI" and back. This race was "pursuit" race with each of the boat's handicap used to calculate their own start time so that if all the boats are well sailed, they should all finish the race at the same time. The racing conditions were very chalanging with the light and varriable winds changing direction up to 180° and completely dropping out from time to time.



Pedro Giron and Whitney Dow and crew finished 1st place in the Spinnaker Class on "Carthage Must Be Destroyed"

The Farr 53, "Carthage Must Be Destroyed" sailed by Pedro Giron and Whitney Dow, finished first almost 13 minutes before "Screwball" an Aerodyne 38 sailed by Keven and Amy Carse, Third place finisher, and the only entrant in the Cruising Class to finish, was "Nimble" an Alerion Express 28 sailed by Chuck Townsend. Third in the Spinnaker Class was "Island Spirit" the J/24 sailed by Bob Closter followed by "Mischief" the BICS Cape Dory 28 Sailed by Al Skinner and Henry duPont, followed by "Dire Wolf" a Colgate 26 from the Block Island Club skippered by Jamie Spllone.



"Screwball" Skippers Kevin and Amy Carse and their crew finished 2nd in the Spinnaker Class.

The after race awards party, which was nothing if not spectacular, was hosted by Jill and Chuck Townsend at their residence on Southwest Point Rd. Special thanks to Jill and Chuck for sponsoring this event and also providing the magnificent trophies awarded to the winning skippers and crews.

Thanks also to James Gallacher who served as Principal Race Officer and who ably started each racing yacht, on time, in the starting sequence. Henry duPont, the Regatta Chairman, provided race management, and event scoring, and the New Harbor Boat Basin which provided the regatta headquarters.

BICS Sailing Extends our Sailing Season to Warmer Waters this Winter!



"Nimble" Skipper Chuck Townsend and Crew finished in 1st place in the Cruising Class

Block Island Community Sailing is now offering our fourth year of our winter sailing program in the British Virgin Islands, one of the most fabulous sailing venues in the Americas. We are now booking one-week family sailing charter vacations which feature seven days of cruising with accredited sailing instruction aboard a chartered 46' luxury sloop sailing from Tortola to Virgin Gorda and back, stopping at some of the most spectacular cruising harbors in the BVIs. The chartered yacht offers three private staterooms, each with its own head and shower. US Sailing, Basic Cruising, and Bareboat Cruising courses are available while we are under way and those who complete these courses are eligible to get their US Sailing International Proficiency Certificate, (IPC) which qualifies them to skipper their own charter yacht without a professional captain and crew, almost anywhere in the world. The cost of a one-week charter, which includes a fully provisioned yacht is half the cost of the other sailing school programs operating in the Caribbean. We have already booked our first charter week in January, and there are a plenty of charter weeks still available over the next 3 months. For more information on pricing and availability for this sailing vacation of a lifetime, call BICS at (401) 741-5136 or info@sailbi.org.



Exciting News: BICS Accepts a Racer / Cruiser Boat Donation to Enhance our Sail Training Fleet

Now that BICS is the only accredited US Sailing Cruising School in Southeast New England there is an increasing demand for us to provide aspiring bareboat cruising skippers with a nationally recognized cruising certification course. Our Basic Cruising and Bareboat Cruising courses are mostly provided under our Winter Sailing Program on larger chartered yachts that we sail out of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and the cruising courses we provide up here on our coastal cruiser "Mischief" are not optimal because the Cape Dory 28 is too small to host a typical cruising class of six students. (We can only take 3). This situation was just rectified with the acceptance of a generous donation of "Kalevipoeg" a Palmer Johnson NY 40 which was purchased from longtime friends of BICS, at a bargain price sale at a fraction of its \$60,000 value. The New York 40 is a powerful racer/cruiser (PHRF rating 95) that is equally at home in the sound or open sea. She was designed for the New York Yacht Club in 1978 as a one-design racer/cruiser by noted yacht designer Doug Peterson and built by Palmer Johnson as a boat that could race to Bermuda or the Caribbean and keep the crew safe and comfortable. The acquisition of this yacht will be a game changer as to the quality of sailing experience BICS can offer its members and as an agile racing yacht, will put us in reach of podium finishes in all the regional regattas run by Off Soundings, the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association and the Storm Trysail's Block Island Race Week.



BICS Directors Al Skinner and Henry duPont traveled to Kalevipoeg's home port in Annapolis in September to inspect the boat and found her in good condition, and suitable for our programs, and recommended to our BICS Board that we acquire the vessel and sail her up to Block Island over the weekend of October 25th. We will welcome our members and friends to join us for a complimentary sail over the next few weeks before she sails to Watch Hill on Nov 7 for hauling and winter storage.

BICS is putting Block Island on the Map as a Center for Sailing Excellence!

BICS members fared well racing in the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association Offshore Circuit, scoring enough points last year to put our sailing club in 19th place out of 37 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 to 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 discount lesson packages. Please help us grow the sport of sailing on Block Island. Kindly visit us at our web site: www.sailbi.org or email us at info@sailbi.org for more information.

Special thanks to our BICS Volunteer of the Year awardee: Al Skinner for his exemplary service in sailing and maintaining our fleet, and to Jill and Chuck Townsend our sailing program's most generous donors and gracious regatta sponsors. Special thanks to our commercial sponsors who donated generously to support our sailing programs:

Sullivan Sotheby's Real Estate, the New Harbor Boat Basin, and the National Hotel.