

# MRYC *Tidings*

FALL 2010 VOLUME SEVEN ISSUE FOUR

## *View from the bridge*

*By Philip A. Shreffler, Commodore*

After the election of this coming year's Officers and Board of Directors and having received the commodore's flag, I made one of those "Now, how on earth did I get myself into this?" observations. I meant it to be light-hearted. But actually I think that anybody with a lick of sense would enter a yacht club's position as commodore with a bit of anxiety. And I confess that, in fact, I did.

And then something wonderful happened. Mystic River Yacht Club's assembled members—without prompting and utterly spontaneously—initiated the most dynamic, enthusiastic and optimistic discussion about the future of the Club that I have ever heard at an Annual Meeting. Really sound ideas about membership recruiting and maintenance skimmed around the room like shearwaters. Anne-Marie Foster volunteered on the spot to undertake the future design and layout of our newsletter *Tidings* as well as the operation of the Club's website. And Barry Clarkson was so passionate about helping the Club that he was prepared to pony up next year's dues early!

That, my friends, is the way to dispel an incoming commodore's anxiety. When I joined MRYC a few months after it was founded, I was delighted just to belong. I certainly had no ambitions whatever to anything even remotely resembling a leadership position. But now I can honestly say that serving as commodore looks just a little less daunting because of our truly sterling membership—a membership capable of the unbridled energy and good will that I saw at the Annual Meeting.

And so it's full steam ahead. Strategic and tactical command of strengthening our membership will remain in the capable hands of Vice Commodore Bill Volmar. Planning for next season's cruise destinations and schedule will be coordinated by Fleet Captain Jay McKernan and the able "cruise captains" who will serve with him. The Social



*Commodore Philip A. Shreffler*

Committee, headed up by M.E. Rich and Anne Wakim, have already begun laying out the social calendar (in fact, the October 29th Hallowe'en party—with Anne in charge—will be history by the time this appears). We're hitting the ground running—or to put it a more appropriate way, we've slid down the ways and now sails are set and props are turning.

But while we look with confidence toward the future, it's obviously incumbent on us to look back over the past year and thank Forrest Cramer for his excellent service as commodore. If I can even approach his success, I'll consider 2010-11 a year well spent.

Oh, and by the way: Is it too soon for me to start thinking about being a Past Commodore? Yeah, I guess it must be.... ■

# MYSTIC RIVER YACHT CLUB *2010 Annual Meeting*

*By Virginia Seccombe and Philip A. Shreffler*

With a majority of the Club's members present, the 2010 Mystic River Yacht Club Annual Meeting convened at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 17th. Commodore Forrest Cramer extended a warm welcome to the membership, and in later remarks praised Jeff Anderson for his work in the summer Family Sailing program, Bill Volmar for his significant contributions on membership and cruise events and thanked Jay McKernan for taking over cruise planning for the next year. And he presented M.E. Rich with the Commodore's Award of Merit for her outstanding efforts on the Club's social events. The Commodore also expressed his gratitude to all the members who had stepped up to various challenges that the Club faced during his tenure.

The Treasurer's report, by Dom DeGaetano, was decidedly upbeat. The Club in the past year has consistently operated in the black with a comfortable surplus of funds at present. The surplus is the result of a negotiated reduction in rent and careful budgeting. Insurance rates and expenditures for social events were carefully scrutinized and reduced where possible. In response to Dom's noting that membership dues could be reduced by \$100, a motion to keep the dues at \$1000—made by Fred Allard and seconded by Tom Hughes—was unanimously passed by a membership that asserted their loyalty to the continuing welfare of MRYC.

Following the Treasurer's report, two changes in the By-Laws that had been recommended by the Board were introduced by Commodore Cramer. The first of these was that the Board of Directors, which includes seven Flag Officers, should include no fewer than two and no more than five Directors. The second change, intended to get the fiscal and membership years on the same schedule, mandated the membership year to run from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Both of these changes were unanimously voted in by the membership.

At length, Commodore Cramer introduced the slate of Flag Officers and Directors for a vote. The entire slate was accepted by acclamation, to wit: Commodore Philip Shreffler, Vice Commodore Bill Volmar, Rear Commodore Virginia Seccombe, Treasurer Dom DeGaetano, Secretary Janet Andrew,



*Mystic River Yacht Club Board 2010-11*

Fleet Captain Jay McKernan, Past Commodore Forrest Cramer, and Directors Jeff Anderson, Bob Davis, John Wakim and Jay McKernan (Jay being a Director serving as Fleet Captain).

After the election, new Commodore Shreffler presented each Flag Officer with the appropriate flag to fly from his or her yacht and made a special presentation to Past Commodore Cramer of a framed Club burgee embroidered with Forrest's name and term of office, recognizing the Past Commodore's service. Thanks were also tendered to Anne-Marie Foster for volunteering to serve on the Communications Committee as graphic designer for *Tidings* and as website administrator.

Under New Business, Bill Volmar thanked the various "cruise captains"—Wally Lohr, Fred Allard, Tom Hughes and Jay McKernan—for their "hosting" cruises during the season. Bob Andrew suggested an exploratory committee to look into the Club's resuming sponsoring regatta, and Bob Davis agreed to work with Mr. Andrew on this. And the members in general requested an open membership meeting to review the membership recruitment program, which Commodore Shreffler agreed would be called and which Vice Commodore Volmar offered to chair.



With the adjournment of the formal meeting, the membership turned their attention to the open bar and the table of comestible delicacies provided for the Flag Officers' Cocktail Party. Grand fellowship continued well into the evening. ■



*Above: Outgoing Commodore Forrest Cramer presented with embroidered burgee*

*Left: Camaraderie during the Flag Officers' Cocktail Party*

# Family Sailing

## O N T H E M Y S T I C

*By Jeff Anderson*

This summer, as we've done the past several summers, Mystic River Yacht Club sponsored its Family Sailing program in our fleet of JY 15's. Our mission is simple: get kids involved with sailing. We truly fulfilled our mission this summer. We had five families participate with a total fourteen kids! Each Monday we would gather, rig the boats, sail, de-rig the boats and then have hot dogs, hamburgers, soda and cookies. It's really hard to say who had more fun, the parents or the kids.

Our returning sailors this year took to the water with gusto and showed how much they had improved. Aleya, Kali, Sophia, Claire, Lily and Emmett reacquainted old friendships. And all the kids enjoyed recounting their tales of adventures on the high seas!

We want to give a very special "thank you" to our volunteers, Paul Lamontagne and Dr. Carlos Cesar, who helped out this summer. Each week they helped corral the kids and offer good instruction. Commodore (now Past Commodore) Forrest

Crammer assisted early on with the chase boat, and Barry Clarkson, one of our newest members, rose to the occasion and donated his boat and his time to be our chase boat for the second half of the season.

Though the sails are put away and kids are back in school, we are already looking forward to next year! We hope you join us. ■



# MYSTIC RIVER YACHT CLUB

## *Cruising All Summer Long*

By Joan Gannon

What a spectacular summer we have had this year on the water! As related in the Summer issue of Tidings, we had a fine beginning to the cruising season with four great weekend cruises, and it continued on with three more cruising adventures thanks to the wonderful warm weather provided to us.

August 20th started out with excitement and the anticipation of a totally new cruising experience for Bill and me since Angela and Jay McKernan invited us to join them on their Luhrs 34 *Irish Sea* to Montauk Lake. Jay was the “cruise captain” for this trip and made plans for us to stay at the Montauk Yacht Club. When we arrived, we discovered that this was not just a yacht club, but a world class resort run by IYC, a company who has resorts all over the world. There were mega-yachts all around us and amazing amenities, most of which we did not have time to partake of. We settled on taking their shuttle bus into town for an art and craft show on the town green.

Back at the Barracuda Bar at Montauk Yacht Club we met Walter Lincoln and Lynn Noyes on *Iolar*, Seamus, Cathy and Madeline O’Brien on *Blue Persuasion*, and Tom and Sara Hughes on *Unconditional*. They brought along Sara’s sister Paula and Sara’s boss Jack and his aunt from New York City. Kevin Miller and Holly Phelps on *Silverheels* joined us unexpectedly on their way back from a week of cruising. What a pleasant surprise! We did expect Sue and Fred Allard on *Seascape*, who were venturing on their first cruise of the season after all the electrical problems they had due to an earlier lightning strike. What a disappointment for Fred and Sue when they were trapped on the north side of the Mystic River drawbridge after it had gotten stuck!

From the Barracuda Bar, we all moved to the Gulf Coast Kitchen next door for a gourmet dinner. We sat at a beautiful marble topped table that seated 16 of us comfortably. After dinner we were invited for dessert and after-dinner drinks on Tom and Sara’s *Unconditional*.

Sunday morning was foggy with the forecast of rain for the afternoon, so most of us headed for home early. Walter and Lynn decided to stay another day to explore Montauk.

Fast forward to September 10th for the Sixth

Annual MRYC Wine Cruise. This year we did it a little differently by combining it with the Corinthian Annual End of Summer Yacht Rendezvous since the dates coincided and a lot of MRYC members are also Corinthians.

Friday morning was sunny, but cool with a strong southeast wind. Bill and I packed our provisions for the weekend and headed for *Miracles* at 10:00 a.m. We were looking forward to a wonderful time as we have had on the previous wine cruises. Well, *Miracles* wouldn’t start! Bill worked for several hours trying to solve the problem with no success.

But we couldn’t miss the wine cruise, especially since Bill was “cruise captain.” We grabbed our bags and food, raced to New London and barely made the 3:00 p.m. ferry to Orient Point. We called everyone on the way to Orient Point to cancel the 5:00 p.m. cocktail party on *Miracles*, since neither we nor the boat would be there on time. Peter and Candy Pappas on *Moko Jumbie* were the first to arrive followed by Walter Lincoln and Lynn Noyes on *Iolar*.

Things always have a way of working out: MRYC members are always there for each other when there is a need. When Tom and Sara Hughes arrived on *Unconditional*, they graciously offered to have us stay on their boat for the weekend—a good example of why MRYC is called “the friendliest yacht club in New England.” Also, Jay McKernan and Angela Valliere brought their friends Jim and Debby over on the New London ferry. We all rallied at the Greenport Ferry dock and had a Dark and Stormy tailgate party followed by dinner in Greenport.

Saturday was a lovely day for the wine cruise. We







Left:  
*Shelter Harbor Yacht Club launch ferries Wine Cruisers*

Below left page:  
*A vineyard luncheon on the Wine Cruise*

Below this page:  
*Dinner on the Montauk Cruise*

traded in our usual big yellow schoolbus for an inconspicuous grey 14-passenger van. Off to our first stop at Pellegrini Vineyards, we sat around patio tables in an open air courtyard filled with sunlight. It felt as if we were in an Italian piazza somewhere in Tuscany. After our selections were purchased, we drove off to The Old Field, our favorite of all the vineyards on Long Island. We were personally greeted by Perry Baiz, daughter of owners Chris and Rosamond Baiz. She led us down to some picnic tables in the field where we ate lunch and chatted with Perry and her mom about their wines and the latest gossip. The film *The Romantics* with Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes had been recently filmed at their farm and we got some of the behind-the-scenes info. What a relaxing place to spend the afternoon, this quiet, peaceful place, watching some children playing with the chickens, ducks and geese.

Sadly, we had to move on to our next appointment at Pindar Vineyards. The tasting room was small and cozy, but very crowded. The contrast between The Old Field and this one was so great that we hurried

through this tasting and went on to Wickham Farms Fruit Stand. We “oohed and aahed” over homemade doughnuts, pies, preserves, gourmet cheeses and varietal ciders. The fruit and vegetables were good too.

Having been energized at Wickham Farms, we were ready for our last stop at Osprey’s Dominion Vineyards. This was, again, very different from the other vineyards. This vineyard was bustling with two live bands on the lawn beyond the patio. There was a raw bar that we all enjoyed along with our wine.

Loaded down with our wine purchases, we returned to our boats and regrouped at Shelter Island Yacht Club for Happy Hour and dinner. Seamus and Cathy O’Brien joined us, as well as the Corinthian Yacht Club members. We had an excellent dinner on the patio overlooking the harbor. The highlight of the evening was celebrating Dan and Betsy Van Winkle’s 48th wedding anniversary with them.

Sunday was another fun day. A group of us went to breakfast on Shelter Island and strolled through town stopping at several shops on the way back to our boats. Angela and Jay drove off to sightsee at Sag Harbor, Bill and I drove to explore Shelter Island, while Tom and Sara, Seamus and Cathy, Walter and Lynn, Peter and Candy set sail for homeport.

October 2nd and 3rd saw the Essex cruise, which was our season finale. Tom Hughes was “cruise captain” this time out and put together a great weekend for us. Due to plane delays getting home from San Diego, Tom and Sara were not able to come on *Unconditional*, but still made it by car to Essex. Jay McKernan and Fred and Sue Allard drove also



*MRYC yachts moored at the  
Essex Yacht Club*



## *Cruising All Summer Long, continued*

and were helpful in getting the rest of us to East Haddam for a play. Joan and Bill Volmar, along with Bill's sister Betty arrived on *Miracles*. Bob Davis and Tom Bell sailed in on *Yankee Girl* after some engine trouble on the Connecticut River.

Forrest and Suzanne Cramer joined us for dinner with their two adorable grand-daughters. Tom and Renee Fecteau, friends of Bill and Joan, came to join in the fun also. Essex is a grand town to just stroll around, looking in all the unique shops and stately historic homes. It was a warm, clear evening to enjoy the view from the deck of Essex Yacht Club and enjoy cocktails before dinner in the main dining room. We then split up to drive to the Goodspeed Opera House to enjoy a rendition of the 1961 Broadway Musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. The play was funny, the actors lively and engaging, the sets and costumes were very professionally done. We all left the theater with smiles on our faces.

After the play, we topped of the night with a trip to the Griswold Inn for yet more drinks and music. Some of us older folks, including me, couldn't keep up with younger crowd there and retired to our boats for peace and quiet after a long day.

Sunday morning the sun greeted us again for the sail home after a delicious breakfast at Olive Oyl's. The winds picked up to 29 knots on Long Island

Sound and the going was rough and choppy. Both *Yankee Girl* and *Miracles* had engine trouble, but made it to homeport safely.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in our cruising season and for all the efforts of the cruising committee: Bill Volmar, Jay McKernan, Tom Hughes, Wally Lohr and Fred Allen: Thank you, gentlemen! I can't wait to see what next year will bring, and I hope you will all join us then. ■



*MRYC yachts moored at the  
Essex Yacht Club*

## *Boating Season That Wasn't, continued*

good idea to carry a backup handheld GPS and radio, but if you are underway in an electrical storm, you need to put them in your oven or completely wrap them in aluminum foil to shield them from the electromagnetic pulse associated with lightning. Of course, you should also have back-up paper charts and a non-electronic compass.

Hope to see you on the water next year! ■



*SeaScape and Beakle at home on the Mystic River*



*SeaScape on her way to show-and-tell at MRYC*

# The Boating Season That *Wasn't*

By Fred Allard

It all started last spring with a varnish job that got bogged down. If we hadn't fussed over a varnish job, we might have seen *SeaScape*, our Clearwater 35 sloop, splashed in time for the Watch Hill cruise (for which I was designated co-host). We hadn't figured on a wait list for the launch and as a result we were not commissioned in time. Not an auspicious beginning to the season.

And then there was the lightning strike. On June 19th, as a violent storm swept through Mystic, there was a bright flash outside our home with a simultaneous BANG! After the weather cleared I checked on *SeaScape*, which is docked about 130 feet from our house. The first indication that all was not well was the scorched base of our VHF whip antenna lying on the dock. At that point I knew we had a direct hit. Sure enough, none of our electronics worked. Time to call the insurance folks.

Next, there was the five-week reconstruction of *SeaScape*. Within two days of the lightning strike, *SeaScape* was hauled out at Mystic Shipyard, where the hull and rigging were determined to be structurally sound, but the list of stuff to be replaced (in addition to the aforementioned electronics) grew. This included batteries, charging system, refrigeration, and a number of odds and ends, like panel meters and mast wiring. As we watched the season slipping away, we realized the silver lining in this cloud was that we were getting a lot of upgrades and we got to take *SeaScape* to an MRYC "sail tales" social for show-and-tell.

Adding to the inconvenience of it all, we took the cushions out and the sails came off before the Shipyard got her and then we reversed the process at the other end. We also cleaned and waxed the whole boat, which seemed to pick up a gray pallor from the strike. This is hardly recreational boating!

We're not done yet! All right, we'd lost a lot of the season, but we got *SeaScape* back together in time for the Montauk cruise. Unfortunately, the Mystic bascule bridge was out of commission and didn't open until four hours before the appointed rendezvous at the Montauk Yacht Club. *SeaScape*, being a sailboat, can only move so fast and the currents matter, so—long story short—we missed our window for the Montauk cruise.

The next chapter in this sad saga involves contrary winds. We were determined to go somewhere and set off to the east for Cuttyhunk late in August. The winds were light and on our stern, so we gave up on Cuttyhunk and motor-sailed to Block Island, where we had a couple of nice days. That was the week before Labor Day, and with the prospect of Hurricane Earl looming, we needed to head for home to make hurricane preparations. Once again we removed our sails and battened *SeaScape* down for the brush with Earl. Bending and unbending sails is not recreational—or did we already say that?

We're still not done yet! We were greeted on our return from Block Island by a "While you were away" email. It turns out that *Beakle*, our 23-foot walk-around cuddy cabin boat, had an encounter with a rock while we were out on *SeaScape*. Our son, who was at the helm, assumed the worst of it was a damaged prop. The bad news was the stainless steel prop transferred damaging loads to the prop shaft and gear train. Another long story short: *Beakle* has a new motor.

There's more, but we won't bore you with the repairs to our sailing dinghy.

Bottom line: we were in Mystic this summer more than on the water. With all these repairs, we've spent far more time working on our boats than sailing them. Despite good intentions for the season, we never made any of the MRYC cruises and only managed a single cruise of three-and-a-half days—and that was abbreviated because of Earl.

But there were some lessons learned that are worth sharing with our fellow Yacht Club members.

- *Number 1* is to read and understand your insurance policy. We have a proper yacht policy for our sailboat that provides for replacement of damaged equipment—without depreciation. Our substantial "agreed value" guarantees the insurance underwriters won't write off the boat if the repair costs reach Blue Book level. However, we did not realize that our powerboat policy depreciated the motor when we made our claim. We were over-insured for eight years and no one told us.

- *Number 2* is to be mindful that a lightning strike—although statistically a rare event—will take out all your electronics in an instant. It is always a

*continued on page six*



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## A NOTE FROM THE PAST COMMODORE *Forest Cramer*

We have all heard from our kids the expression "Are we there yet!?" As I write this note, I realize that the answer is "Yes!" It is with both sadness and exuberance that I have reached the "there" in "are we there yet" and found that it is the end of a rewarding year as Commodore of the Mystic River Yacht Club.

It has been a challenging year, one which saw the reduction of expenses and a bit of an increase in revenue to the point where, for the first time, the Board did not have to contribute early in order to make the last few months' rent! The other good news is that it looks as if next year will continue that trend. This all was a result of an excellent Board that worked well together and paid attention to the goal of "breaking even or making money on any event we conduct." I cannot thank them enough for the time and effort they have contributed to the success of the Club.

Thanks, in no small measure, must go out to the membership as well. I do appreciate your participation and hope each of you will find that Mystic River Yacht Club continues to provide the social and cruising events you enjoy.

The Commodore Flag has now been passed on to Phil, and I have every confidence you will enjoy a continued growth of membership and club activities under his leadership.

Thank you,  
*Forrest Cramer*  
Past Commodore