

MRYC *Tidings*

WINTER 2010 VOLUME SEVEN ISSUE ONE

View from the bridge

By Philip A. Shreffler, Vice Commodore

So here we are, boats out of the water and snuggled up under winter covers, and like our boats we're all locked in the dead of winter. That never means, however, that MRYC is inactive. We may have one of the hardest working social committees on the Connecticut shore, and under the able direction of Anne Wakim and M.E. Rich, we certainly won't go wanting for cozy and inventive club activities during this dark and frozen time of the year. MRYC always has been, and will always be, a year-round yacht club.

In fact The Dead of Winter, not so incidentally, is the name of the January social that was held on the 29th, at which we regifted and sold our unwanted books, CDs, DVDs and marine equipment to benefit earthquake victims in Haiti. The amount we raised was modest by disaster-relief standards. But this was more than a civic-minded activity. It also demonstrated the spirit of our yacht club, a club that has always been like a family. And this time it was a family that saw others in need and responded.

Into our family, MRYC would like to extend the heartiest and warmest of welcomes to new members Dick Dixon and Anne-Marie Foster of Mystic as well as Holly and Ed Riozzi of Niantic. Even before they were officially voted in as members by the Board, these wonderful folks had already thrown themselves into Club activities. And we look forward to a long and happy association with them.

Over the years, and at various times, MRYC has offered membership incentive periods, and the most recent of these was so successful that the Board has approved its extension to June 30th. The specifics of the incentive program will be distributed by the Membership Committee, but as we'll recall the program benefits not only incoming members but existing members who sponsor candidates for admission.

Additional good news is that the Club definitely now has its financial legs under it in good order and also that the Cruising Committee has laid out its usual brilliant schedule



Vice Commodore Philip A. Shreffler

of cruise destinations for the upcoming season. In addition, Bill Volmar is taking the lead in organizing a number of really excellent educational presentations this year. Now, this atypically abbreviated issue of *Tidings* may not reach its readers before we gather at the Essex Yacht Club for our Valentine's Day Brunch on February 14th, but it definitely should arrive well prior to an afternoon at Mystic Seaport followed by a special clubhouse social scheduled for Saturday, February 27th. Watch your email for the particulars.

And here's a toast (a dark 'n' stormy, naturally) to Mystic River Yacht Club as we charge into 2010! ■

Winter

S O C I A L S C E N E

By M. E. Rich

It was a dark and stormy night when MRYC members met to salute the Mystic River Light Parade on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. We had turkey soup, meatballs, pumpkin tartlets, pumpkin cheesecake, cheese chili squares, crudités, and more – particularly a delicious light bundt cake from new member Holly Riotta. What we didn't have was a boat parade, as the fleet did not venture past the railroad bridge in the dark and stormy night, except for one large vessel which tootled by the Clubhouse on its way home to Mason's Island. We scurried onto the deck to hail the glimmering apparition as it glided past us like a luminous Flying Dutchman, then scurried back toward the warmth of our flickering fireplace.

On December 5th the club we gathered for our first Melting-Pot-Luck Supper which was hosted by Candy and Peter Pappas, who supplied international flags to identify the offerings' country of origin. As a precursor to the coming holiday season, December 5th is recognized as St. Nicholas Eve in the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the United Kingdom (though none of these nations were represented on our buffet). However cuisines of Poland, Greece, Mexico, Italy, Ireland, France and various Scandinavian lands were displayed then devoured as an ambience of global heart-warming fellowship suffused the Clubhouse.

Next up the Social Committee joined with various energetic elves on December 12th for a two-fold purpose: to prepare for Santa's arrival and to continue our tradition of decorating wreaths to be raffled on the 13th. Anne Wakim did some savvy negotiations with Mystic's A & P for the gorgeous fresh evergreen wreaths we used. The store's generous discount was much appreciated and if you can remember to channel some of your household budget in their direction they'd be appreciative in return! Alas, Ms. Phelps, our usual instructress, was unable to join us as her workplace demands did not allow for craftiness that day, but she supplied us with plenty of ornamentation and encouragement. With barrels full of glue guns, ribbons, shells, flotsam and jetsam, the crew bedecked a dozen beauties ready for front door exhibition while other volunteers assembled the Christmas Tree,

bought replacement light strands and flung tinsel about with delighted abandon. At evening's end the Clubhouse twinkled and glowed in readiness for the next day's highly anticipated visit from St. Nick . . . and from St. Lucia too!

Since December 13th is the traditional start of Christmas for many Scandinavian countries we decided to invite the lovely Santa Lucia (Anne Wakim in full costume) to drop by for the party. She arrived wearing her megawatt crown of candles, proffering plenty of tasty ginger cookies for the multitudes. (Our small guests were also given smaller tiaras, but no candles, of course.) Around the windows the magnificent holiday wreaths glistened while a steadily growing heap of gaily wrapped cookies grew by the dozen on a table next to the tree awaiting raffle winners. The stockings were hung on the TV with care, the fireplace flickered, and there were nibbles on the buffet table and libations at the bar while carols rang out to cheer us. The excitement was palpable! In a flurry of raffle tickets the wreaths were plucked and the cookies seized. Still there was no sign of Santa, though Santa Lucia did her very best to keep everyone entertained. But suddenly a clatter of hooves, and a faint jingle of sleigh bells could be heard from far above us! It was the real live Santa Claus (who actually came down through the Lantern Room above our Club, though apparently he left his reindeer tied up next to *Blue Persuasion*). Is it just me or does Santa get younger and spryer each year? I must say reports of a little round belly shaking like jelly were greatly exaggerated. He listened very carefully to the children's requests for presents, gave them each an early treat and even managed to surprise Philip Shreffler with a pair of cozy slippers. Then laying his finger aside of his nose and giving a nod up the staircase he rose, calling out to wish us Happy Christmas to all, and to all a Good Night. Thank you, Santa, it was indeed a very good night!

How does MRYC greet the New Year and the New Decade? With our time-honored Black Tie and Boat Shoes Gala on January 2nd, 2010. Despite some unexpected winter weather a hardy coterie of partygoers descended on the Clubhouse to dine and dance,



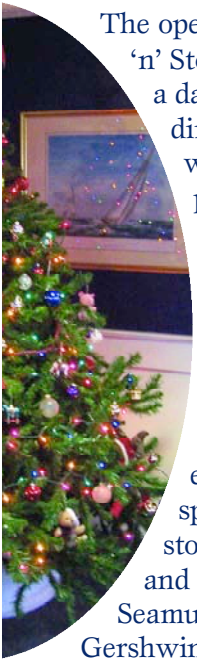
and it was grand to do so with so many good friends.

The open bar slaked everyone's thirst, with Dark 'n' Stormies in abundance, appropriate for such a dark and stormy evening. Our bountiful dinner was provided by Cloud Nine caterers who offered us a tableful of appetizers, passed hors d'oeuvres and heaps of steak and chicken entrees followed by a variety of cakes. The Social Committee outdid itself in decorating – gold, silver and blue themes predominated on the tables, votives and tinsel garlanded the windows and the buffet table was festooned with lights, frosted flowers and gauzy linen; our entry way featured the Christmas Tree sparkling on the stairway landing, a well stocked bar, skittering balloons along the floor and music chosen by our preferred DJ, Puff Da Seamus, who mixed it up with some George Gershwin and Elton John, Cole Porter and Christopher Cross, Fred Astaire and Frankie Valli. It was a night full of exhilarating conversation, exuberant dancing and uninhibited hilarity. It was a night that fulfilled the promise of continued conviviality as we enter our sixth year together, and confirmed the promise of MRYC's future gatherings to help us through the winter's long hibernation.

That promise was indeed fulfilled on January 29th when we met for our second Dead of Winter Social, which turned out to be quite the gourmet feast as well – members filled the groaning board with Quiche, Chicken Tenders, Cheeses, Antipasti, a baked Alfredo Carbonara, Sweets, Dips and a deliciously savory side of Salmon with dill sauce. We stoked our stomachs to prepare for the coming chill of February and browsed through an impressive selection of donated books, videos and assorted silent auction items. The Re-Gifting portion of the program was quite successful though someone thought we needed rules and brought along a list of confusing commandments - well, it was late, and we had been drinking. In the interests of expediency and clarity we pretty much ignored 'em and sent everyone home with a treat and a sense of accomplishment. The proceeds of our Tag Sale garnered a total of \$206.00 which was then sent to aid in the Haitian Earthquake Relief effort, for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital, funded by the Grant Foundation, established by the family of Jenifer Grant of Essex, Connecticut, in 1954. The small hospital of only 100 beds has been caring for over 500 patients since the disaster of January 12th and is, obviously, sorely in need of continued support. It was wonderful to see the MRYC members rally round to contribute to that support and to be reminded once again how lucky we all are to be among good friends

in the generous and caring community we have created. Let us declare, as Dickens declared, succinctly and with great affection "God bless us, every one!"

Coming up: Valentine's Day Brunch at the Essex Yacht Club on February 14th, a Field Day and Chowder Fest on February 27th, the Ides of March Chili Cookoff on March 12th and this year's grand Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner at the club, prepared by Holly Phelps, after the Mystic St. Patrick's Day Parade led by Grand Marshall Jessica Morrissey on March 21st. Come celebrate her coronation! ■



Top photo: A sampling of wreaths. Middle photo: Forrest and Suzanne Cramer, Philip Shreffler, Joan Gannon and Bill Volmar at New Year's. Bottom photo: Black tie and boat shoes dinner.

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Tidings is published quarterly in February (Winter), May (Spring), August (Summer) and November (Fall). Deadlines for submission of articles, photos and event announcements are January 25th, April 25th, July 25th and October 25th.

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CRUISING GET-AWAYS *for the 2010 season*

Over the past couple of years, Mystic River Yacht Club's principal on-the-water enthusiasm has shifted more and more toward cruising. While any gathering of boats crewed by good friends for a common purpose promotes wonderful camaraderie (and that, of course, includes racing), cruising always has the added benefit of a desirable destination—new or old favorites. Bill Volmar, spearheading Mystic River Yacht Club's Cruise Committee, once again has announced an enviable schedule of Club cruises. The following dates and destinations for this year's cruises are tentative at this writing, but the final calendar will be nailed down this month and posted on the Club's website. On the schedule are:

- The Watch Hill Cruise on June 25th and 26th
- The Three Mile Harbor, NY, Cruise on July 16th through 18th
- The New London, Conn., Cruise on August 8th
- The Montauk, NY, Cruise on August 20th through the 22nd
- The Greenport, NY, Wine Cruise on September 10th through the 12th
- The Connecticut River Fall Color Cruise on October 3rd

MRYC yachts moored in Essex, Conn.



Last year, MRYC was able to boast a cruise every single month of the boating season. This year, however, the plan actually provides for two cruises in August and reprises the ever-popular Wine Cruise in September—a Club favorite that can be joined by ferry if you, well, miss the boat. So that's more than a cruise every month of the season and just one more indication of MRYC's vitality and its positive response to the will of its membership. Contact Bill Volmar at bvolmar@yahoo.com (860-691-0834) for cruise details. And do check our calendar on the website for the myriad other Club activities!