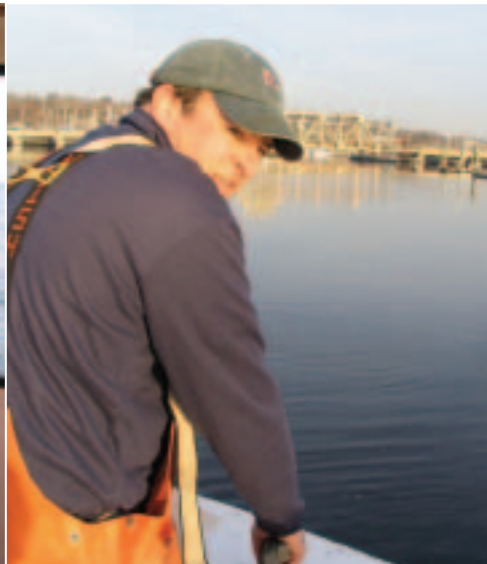


MRYC *Tidings*

Winter 2006 VOLUME THREE ISSUE ONE



YEAR 'ROUND BOATING

By Tim Guilini

(Most of us in MRYC confine our boating to the “season.” However, some of us, like Tim and Rebecca Guilini, brave even the winter elements and go to sea all year long. Our intrepid Tim Guilini tells us how any why.)

Becca and I decided to leave *Rebecca Jane*, our 25-foot BHM, in the water this winter for two reasons. First, we hadn't sold our Catalina 27 *Get Fuzzy* yet, and we didn't have room to store two boats on land at work (the Brewer Yacht Yard at Mystic). Second, between frostbiting duties, the Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, and delivering Santa Claus to the MRYC Holiday Party, I couldn't see the point in hauling out for only three months.

This, so far, has worked out well for us. We've managed to get out at least once a week since Thanksgiving. Although the weather has been abnormally warm, we've had some chilly rides, but the completely different scenery makes it worthwhile. There have been several seal watching excursions to Hungry Point, runs to Stonington Harbor, working trips to tend our lobster gear, and quick trips downriver just to exercise the engine.

You certainly have to watch the weather and pick your days. But as you clear Masons Island, Block Island's West side bluffs are



Top, left to right: Rebecca holding a mini lobster; Tim Guilini aboard his lobsterboat, the Rebecca Jane; Tim hauling lobster traps; seals on the rocks in Fisher's Island Sound.

almost always high above the horizon just past Watch Hill. Not like August's haze! The rock pile out by Sugar Reef and Wicopesset passage and the Dumplings seem to be floating, while Gates Island and the outer breakwater outside Stonington disappear into the background.

Not only are there at least 50 or more seals outside East Harbor, there are hundreds of migratory sea birds in the area.

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View from the bridge

By Michael Cavanaugh, Commodore

This machine also known as the Mystic River Yacht Club has liftoff.

As a brand new organization, we have initiated an incredibly ambitious undertaking. I don't know of any other group that has accomplished what we have in such a short period – clubhouse, website, regattas, education, cruising and much more. We have a blockbuster year ahead of us with a lot of growth to look forward to.

Our Friday Socials are growing with live music and accommodations for the kids. We'll have a float in the Mystic Irish Day Parade March 19th. We start Frostbiting March 26 in what has turned out to be a major attraction for the club. Our clubhouse is turning into a real yacht club with the blood, sweat and money of some very hard working members. We are registered with the Yachting Club of America affording us reciprocity with over 700 Yacht Clubs nationwide. We are active with the Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association and U.S. Sailing. Plans are underway for junior sailing that will get parents involved with getting on the water with their kids. The cruising calendar is chock-full of great rendezvous, including one with our friends the Corinthians.

On the business side, we are financially solvent with a positive outlook. We have a CPA that keeps us right with the world, our taxes are paid, and we are fully insured. Our relationship with the Shipyard, the Dockominium Owners, and our tenant Mystic Market is healthy. Invoices for dues will be mailed late in March, so please keep us in your budget.

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Aside from our local year round fowl, there are Old Sqaw and Bufflehead ducks and White Throated loons.

Running through the winter does bring some extra concerns and requirements. Maintaining extra insurance coverage does cost a little more, and regular preventive maintenance is paramount to make sure everything is in good working order. I'm always listening to the engine, and seem to be developing a super-heightened sense of diesel hearing.

It's important to keep the engine and batteries warm and keep an eye out for periods of low nighttime temperatures. When we finish lobstering, we drain our washdown/lobster tank pump and deck hoses. If we're looking at several nights of cold, it's also important to run some antifreeze through the raw-water side of the



Phew! This is exhausting work. We need your help! We are inviting you to get involved with your club by “hosting” an event. All of our events will have a host or hosts who run the show from soup to nuts. No worries: we have a checklist, and we'll be there to help you along. We really need help with Frostbiting in March – let us know if you are interested.

Also, while we may be solvent, we still have a very long wish list of improvements from moorings to plasma screen TVs. We need more members! Remember, the membership challenge is still alive! In a nutshell, if you bring in a member; your name goes in a hat for NO DUES in 2006.

Questions? Your “One Stop Shop” for information is the club website www.mysticriveryachtclub.com where you can get calendar, contact and committee information.

engine. One of the many perks of working at Brewer is the ability to check *Rebecca Jane* every day.

Will we winter in again next year? I plan on it. Would I recommend trying for a twelve month boating season to anyone? Absolutely. Especially any power-boaters with a good enclosure or lower helm station. Being able to get out on the water this time of year is pretty nice. Everything is so different from the summer season. The visibility and brightness of colors is amazing. Believe it or not, we haven't been the only boat out there. There are always a couple of other fishing boats or the occasional Fishers Island commuter cruising along. Just pay extra attention to what's happening on board and around you. If you pick up a pot warp in your wheel, it might take little longer for a tow than in July!■

MRYC ANNUAL MEETING

By Philip A. Shreffler

It may seem as though it's been months since it occurred. In fact, it has been months since it occurred. But MRYC's Annual Meeting, held on October 22, 2005, brought some substantial changes to our Club.

The most important of these was the voting in of new Flag Officers—Michael Cavanaugh as Commodore and Bob Davis as Vice-Commodore, while John McCrea continues as Rear Commodore and Virginia Secombe as Secretary. David Kelsey also retains his position as Treasurer, but since Dave accepted a temporary employment position in England at the beginning of this year, Mike Cavanaugh has graciously shouldered the Treasurer's duties until Dave's return to Mystic.

Also elected were new Board of Governors members Forrest Cramer, Tim Guilini, Gerry Leger and Philip Shreffler. Gavin Kirkpatrick is serving year two of three on the Board.



MRYC *Tidings*

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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Contributions from MRYC members & the MRYC Board of Directors.

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At the meeting, Dave Kelsey presented his usual comprehensive and understandable financial report, showing the Club to be comfortably solvent. And, after Commodore Cavanaugh reviewed a very successful year of the Club's operation, he tendered special and very much well-deserved thanks to Past Commodore Kevin Miller—presenting Kevin with a framed, custom-embroidered MRYC burgee as a token of the great appreciation we all feel for his leadership and guidance as our first Commodore.

An important change in our Club By-laws was also approved. This change establishes six distinct types of membership, each with its own initiation fee and dues structure. These include Honorary Member, Member, Non-Resident Member, Junior Corinthian Member, Junior Member and Armed Forces Member. Non-Resident Members, those not residents of Connecticut or Rhode Island, are responsible for the full initiation fee but only 50% of the annual dues. Junior Corinthian Members, those between the ages of 19 and 29 as of January 1 of the current year, owe 50% of both the initiation fee and membership dues. Junior Members, those between the ages of 10 and 18 as of January 1 of the current year, owe \$100 initiation fee and 10% of the membership dues. For other categories, consult the By-Laws or ask a Flag Officer or Board Member.

And lest this report end on a dry constitutional note, let it be said that the formal meeting was followed one of the grand cocktail parties for which MRYC is becoming justifiably famous. ■



BOAT BUYING & SELLING

...the laid back way!

By Philip A. Shreffler

When Gerry and Amy Leger bought—and then later sold—their 34-foot double-cabin Marine Trader trawler *Of Mice and Men*, the last thing on their minds was rushing the process. Living in western Massachusetts at the time, they wanted a floating summer home on the Connecticut shore that they could take out on weekend coastal cruises. Having settled on a Marine Trader, they joined the Marine Trader Association, thereby learning a lot about what to look for in purchasing one. And then to find just the right trawler, they set out on an odyssey around New England that took them as far as Maine.

“We took probably a year and a half to look for the boat,” Gerry said. “And it was the good, the bad and the ugly. We saw terrible boats, terrible, in various states of disrepair. The very first boat we saw was the one we bought—but we went back to it much later. The owner had put so much money into the boat that it was beautiful, but we were afraid there was something glaringly wrong with it. But there wasn’t. While we looked at lots of other boats, we used that one as the standard to judge by. And when it came up on a broker’s internet site, we bought it, and owned it for four years. We’d drive down on Friday afternoon and be underway by 5:30, and we’d come back early Monday morning.”

After a few years, the Legers moved down to Noank and, as Gerry said, “We didn’t need two summer homes.” After the move, the Legers found that they used *Of Mice and Men* less than they had before. They also knew they wanted more speed, the trawler making a top speed of 9 1/2 knots, while the lobster yacht that they’re thinking about now can do a comfy 14.

The need for speed, though isn’t a matter of cowboying on the water. The Legers once got caught in a storm coming back from Massachusetts just on the Rhode Island line. Quartering seas from the southeast and winds building to 35 knots actually threatened to drive them onto a lee shore near Watch Hill. And that was when they saw a lobster boat 300 yards to the south, chugging past them at some 16 knots. “Oh, man,” Gerry said, “just another six knots. That’s all I’m asking. And it was clearly a comfortable ride.”

“Before the trawler,” Gerry said, “we had a Seafarer sailboat, a Sparkman and Stevens design that

was beautiful. It’s a matter of esthetics; there are just some boats that are proportionally right—maybe with a nice shear and some tumblehome in the transom. And that’s why we want a lobster boat now, because so many of them are so esthetically pleasing. We know we don’t want a modern power boat because a lot of them look like angry kitchen appliances, like a four-slice toaster with a grimace.”

“So when it came time to sell the trawler, we started going to Marine Trader rendezvous. And because we had carried the torch for the previous owner in keeping the boat in great shape, these guys—some of them with huge, 50-foot pilothouse trawlers—came over and said, “That’s a beautiful boat; can we come aboard and look inside?””

So having bought the best boat they could find and after all the work Amy and Gerry put into it, he knew that he had a first-rate product to sell. “I priced it accordingly,” Gerry said. “And I soft-peddled it. I put a ‘for sale’ sign on it in the boatyard over the winter. And I put it on the internet—Trader On-line was a good site, and so was Soundings. I looked into boat brokers, but they want ten per-cent. And I said, you know, for ten per-cent of the price of this boat, I’ll keep it. It wasn’t as if Amy was pregnant with triplets or we had to send a kid off to Harvard. So I decided to sell it myself. There was no sense of urgency. Well, I got calls from all over. But a guy came up from Maryland who’d looked at six Marine Traders, put down a deposit and then backed out. Another couple came to see it and mainly just took pictures of each other at the wheel.”



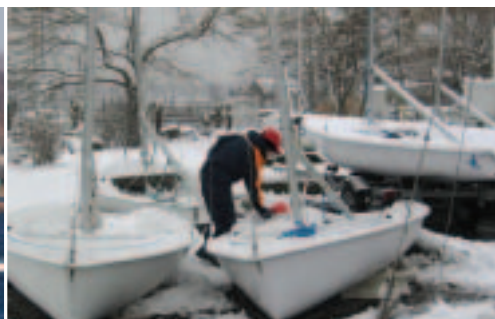
Gerry Leger

So the Legers decided to keep the boat listed but at the same time to keep on enjoying it themselves. “We had a ball all summer long,” Gerry said. “We kept a ‘for sale’ sign on it and just kept on driving it around. Then out the blue this past fall, an older gentleman from Groton whose wife had passed away came to see it. He’d always wanted to take a boat to the Bahamas. He was selling his house in Gales Ferry, and he bought our boat. Literally, the day he closed on his house sale, he moved onto the boat. He signed a check and started loading his possessions aboard the trawler. Two weeks

later, he was off to the Bahamas_finally. The irony is that when I bought the boat, I said, ‘This is just the sort of thing we can jump on and head to the Bahamas.’ So our old boat is going to the Bahamas-finally.” And the Legers are going to be taking their time in finding that perfect lobster yacht.

What’s the lesson in all of this? For an agreeable buying and selling experience, stay cool, have patience, do your homework and don’t allow yourself to get forced into rash decisions. There’s a boat out there for all of us, and, sure as there’s a tide, it’ll come sailing in. ■

Fall Frostbite Racing Wrap Up



Left to right: A common sight in breezy conditions; a snowy Sunday; Vicki Cathcart & Jeff Morgan receive trophy from Vice Commodore Bob Davis

By Michael Cavanaugh, Commodore and Philip A. Shreffler

There was only one weekend of truly unsailable weather during the eight-weekend MRYC Fall Frostbite Racing Series. Otherwise, while there was often enough wind to cause numerous knock-downs and some pretty heart-pounding action, the series was blessed with sunny skies and moderate temperatures. Over the course of the series, the Race Committee managed to stage a total of 50 races in eight regattas, sailed in JY-15s.

The final regatta, in particular was wild and exciting with a solid 15-knot southwesterly, gusting to 20 knots. The water temperature was 39 degrees, and numerous sailors found out just how it feels to go swimming in December.

The first of the five races in the regatta resembled a NASCAR start with carnage all over the course. The sailors that avoided the melee came out on top in that race. In the second race—a series first—one team actually crossed the finish line while not actually being in the boat! The officials weren’t quite certain how to finish them, not knowing whether a crew with one leg over the transom and the rest of the body looking for clams constitutes a finish.

Overall during the series, we had not seen competition get as heated as it was for the final regatta. In terms of scoring, cumulative finishes for all eight regattas determined prizes for the top three finishers, with six races of the 50 thrown out.

The top prize went to Mystic River Yacht Club’s Vicki Cathcart and Jeff Morgan with an incredibly low 55 points—that’s 21 firsts in individual races! Taking second place in the series was Ram Island Yacht Club’s Woody Bergendahl sailing with Ben Wilkenson and also Patrick Murphy with 97 points. And in third overall was Mystic River Mudhead Axel Mahlke sailing with Keith Horspool scoring 117 points.

It was a truly outstanding series, and MRYC is looking forward to an even larger Spring Series. The Spring regattas will be sailed on March 26th; April 2nd, 9th, 15th, 23rd and 30th; May 7th and 13th. All of the race dates are Sundays, except Saturday, April 15th (the day before Easter) and the final race on Saturday, May 13th (the day before Mother’s Day).

MRYC members are urged to drop by the clubhouse to watch the races, share post-race stories with the sailors, and to enjoy fare assembled by our hospitable Social Committee. ■

A C R O S S T H E A T L A N T I C *by clipper ship*

By Philip A. Shreffler

Few people can say that they've sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in a New York Yacht Club-Royal Yacht Squadron race, but fewer still can say that they've done so in the world's only sailing clipper ship. Yet that's just what Ray Peterson and Charlie Weiner did.

Peterson and Weiner, of the Storm Trysail Club and The Corinthians, presented a slide-illustrated talk on their adventures on Sunday, January 29, an event hosted by The Corinthians Mystic Fleet and the Mystic River Yacht Club at MRYC's clubhouse.

The two were among a group of sailors who chartered berths aboard the clipper *Stad Amsterdam*, a 250-foot, three-masted, square-rigged sailing ship, a replica, built in 1999, of the famous clippers that plied the world's oceans in the 1850s. The ship is owned by a Dutch corporation. But the charter, which cost \$7,000 per person, was scarcely a pleasure cruise. Those who signed on for the race actually worked the ship, standing four-hour watches—even swarming up into the rigging to perch on the yard arms and furl the enormous sails.

Stad Amsterdam was the largest vessel of the 19 in the Rolex TransAtlantic Challenge Race, sailed in May and June of last year. It commemorated the one-hundredth anniversary of the Kaiser's Cup race of 1905, which was won by the schooner yacht *Atlantic*, skippered by the legendary Charlie Barr who set a record of 12 days and four hours for the New York to the Isle of Wight crossing. That record was shattered in 2003 by the modern performance yacht *Mari-Cha IV*, which made the crossing in six days and 18 hours. But that hardly dampened the enthusiasm of *Stad Amsterdam*'s crew.

The TransAtlantic Challenge fleet left New York on May 22, 2005, skirted the southern end of the Grand Banks and headed for the finish line at the Lizard, a peninsula at the entrance to the English Channel. It took *Stad Amsterdam* fourteen days to cover the course. They began in light air and had to drift south of their plotted course, Peterson said, since square-riggers—unlike smaller fore-and-aft-rigged boats—cannot sail into the wind. “For two nights,” said Peterson, “we could see the lights of Atlantic City!” But by May 26th, the seas built and the wind piped up to 40 knots, gusting to 48. That was challenging, but Peterson said that a clipper like *Stad Amsterdam* sails best in about 30 knots of wind and typically makes 14 knots under those conditions.

When the clipper settled down to good sailing, the yachtsmen were able to relax a bit, spending their off-watch time reading and even staging an elaborate, acted-out murder mystery, complete with a trial and impending execution.

Stad Amsterdam finished the race respectably, in the middle of the pack, outclassed only by the modern, technologically-advanced performance boats. But it was really the once-in-a-lifetime crossing that mattered. When a sailor has traversed the forbidding Atlantic in a square-rigger and has been treated to celebratory dinner at the venerable Royal Yacht Squadron headquarters on the Isle of Wight, he can genuinely say that he's arrived. ■

Left, the *Stad Amsterdam* at sea; Right, Ray Peterson (l) and Charlie Weiner (r) of the Storm Trysail Club and The Corinthians hold a model of the *Stad Amsterdam*





C H R I S T M A S A N D
N E W Y E A R ' S S O C I A L S





MRYC CLUBHOUSE RENOVATIONS

By Bob Davis, Vice-Commodore

It's been a while since our last update on Clubhouse enhancements, and it's my pleasure to share with you some of our major and recent accomplishments. The downstairs room has experienced, and will continue to undergo, some major renovations. First of all, I'm pleased to report that Forrest Cramer's design for raised-panel wainscot is now complete. Forrest, Wally Lohr and I installed it the middle of January. The wainscot has been painted a cream color with deep navy blue walls above, and the consensus is that it looks great and is beginning to look like *our* yacht club.

We still have to build the window cornices and apply the fabric. This will take place the week following the Super Bowl party. Pat Lohr had submitted a couple of "story boards," and the one that was eventually selected comprises a deep, rich combination of blue, gold, and crimson. And thanks to a very generous donation by Amy and Gerry Leger, Pat has purchased the fabrics for both the cornice and drapes. Once this is completed, it will send the downstairs room over the top and into the Hall of Fame for shoe-string budget yacht club renovations. I certainly urge everyone to come by their clubhouse and see for themselves the outstanding improvements that are being made.



Above, Fred Chester painting the new wainscoting in the Clubhouse

I very much wish to give special praise and thanks to all those who volunteered both time and money to make this such a tremendous success. Special thanks to Amy and Gerry Leger, Pat and Wally Lohr, Forrest and Suzanne Cramer, and of course the indefatigable Fred Chester. It's all a testament to a Club operated by the members for the members. MRYC genuinely is our Club—and the improvements to the clubhouse prove it. ■