

# The Semaphore

## Fairfield Harbour Yacht Club



Vol. 38, No. 2

35° 04' N., 076° 58' W.

March 2021



### From the Commodore

Although the club will have to stay the course for a bit longer regarding social distancing, in the spirit of this year's theme of "Adjust Your Sails" the board has appointed Kathie King to spearhead an ad-hoc committee that is responsible for charting a path back to normal operations. Instead of simply cancelling social events, the diligent insight provided by this committee will allow the club to safely adjust itineraries to accommodate necessary safeguards. As such, certain staple activities like Sock Burning, Blessing of the Fleet, and Commissioning Day Ceremony will continue as scheduled!

On the Racing and Regatta front, I want to personally thank Georgie Jackson and all the Mark/Safety boats that volunteered to attend the Regatta Committee's training class. Although boating safety mandates that I take personal precautions and wear my life vest while out on the water during a race, knowing that there are powerboats monitoring the event who can quickly react to adverse situations makes the race that much more enjoyable. Thanks for being out there!

I am particularly looking forward to the upcoming General Meeting programs highlighting new members! FHYC new members are not simply an added number to the monthly membership tally, they are in reality a dynamic augmentation to the know-

ledge, history, functionality, and comradery of the club. Showcasing new members and what they bring to the club will be a welcome addition to our yearly programs.

As a final note for this month, be aware that there are a lot of wheels turning here in February, and the FHYC Board is busy brainstorming and implementing ideas to keep our club engaged with both members and the community itself. It is an honor to work alongside such a dynamic group!

*Adrian Vergot, Commodore*

### Mark and Safety Boat Training What a Success!

January 30 certainly was a cold Saturday morning. Ten power boat owners came for a mark/safety boat training course. The trainers, John Jackson and Russ Robinson, presented the hour long class in Russ's backyard where the two dock boxes are located in the lower level of the Robinson's home. The class included where the marks and anchors are the dock boxes, how to set the marks' anchors, how to inflate and deflate the marks, the power boats' positions during a race, and how to work with the PRO on the Committee


Boat. Georgie Jackson later explained what was in the Rescue Box (dry clothes, beach towel, survivor blanket, and first aid kit for anyone who fell overboard). Joel Berberich, who put the first aid kit together for the yacht club, explained everything in the kit.

If you are planning a race, please consider calling on Ralph Azersky, Joel Berberich, Richie Thomson, Dave Miller, Elaine Albright, Earl Beard, Roger Buckley, Tim Baldwin, Mary Claire & Tom Cashwell, or George Sechrist to be your mark or safety chase boats. A huge "THANK YOU" to Barb and Russ Robinson for letting us descend on their house!

*Georgie Jackson, Regatta Chair*



### What's Happening

|     |    |    |   |      |
|-----|----|----|---|------|
| Mar | Mo | 8  | Board Meeting .....   | 1700 |
|     | Th | 11 | General Meeting .....   | 1900 |
|     | Fr | 12 | Education: Seminar  |      |
|     | Sa | 13 | Race: St. Patrick's Day Fun  |      |
|     | Sa | 20 | Sock Burning (rs) .....   | 1500 |
|     | Th | 25 | Race: Ensign Race #1  |      |

(cc)=Community Center, (rs)=Red Sail Park, (ac)=Activities Center

**Deadline for next issue is noon, Monday, March 15, 2021**

Delivery is Saturday, March 27, 2021



## FHYC Blessing of the Fleet and Commissioning Day Ceremonies April 10, 2021

It is time to get our boats ready for the official opening of the season. This is the perfect way to kick it off, and we should feel good knowing our boats have been blessed.

FHYC has many activities on and off the water throughout the year, but the Blessing of the Fleet and Commissioning Day ceremonies are arguably our most important rites. This year (2021) they will occur on Saturday, April 10, 2021, which is only two days after the April meeting, so the flyer is on the FHYC website. The flyer has detailed information and sign-up for the Blessing of the Fleet.

The current FHYC Covid-19 policy dictates the captain and crew on each boat participating in the parade will be from the same household with no other guests. This Board policy is subject to change in the future and if it does, additional guidance will be disseminated accordingly.

*Phil Katz, Cruising Chair*

### *The Semaphore*

*Fairfield Harbour Yacht Club*



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#### Deadline

Deadline for receiving files is 1200 the Monday following the meeting.  
Please email articles to the address below:  
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## Sock Burning? Yep, it's a real thing!

According to lore, the tradition started with the ancient sailors who wore their socks all winter long on the seas and burned them with the advent of spring's warmer weather. It seemed the only civilized thing to do.

FHYC has adopted the tradition. We hold our sock burning on a Saturday near the vernal equinox when the days are longer than the nights and the weather starts to warm. So, come to Red Sail park on Saturday, March 20 at 1500 and bring your own beverage and snack (no sharing please) and free your tootsies. Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing. For more valuable information see page 3.

*Past Commodore George Stateham*



## Ode to the Sock Burners

Fairfield Harbour folks got an odd tradition  
When the sun swings to its Equinoxical position,  
They build a little fire in Red Sail Park,  
They doff their shoes and they burn their winter socks.

Yes, they burn their socks at the Equinox;  
You might think it's peculiar, but they think it's not,  
See they're the same socks they put on last fall,  
And they never took them off to wash them, not at all...

So they burn their socks at the Equinox  
In a little old fire nice and hot.  
Some think incineration is the only solution,  
'Cause washin' 'em contributes to the Neuse's pollution.



Through the spring and summer and into the fall,  
They go around not wearing any socks at all,  
Just stinky bare feet stuck in old deck shoes,  
Whether out on the water or sippin' a brew.

So if you sail into the Harbour around  
the middle of March,  
And you smell a smell like Limburger sautéed  
with laundry starch,  
You'll know you're downwind of the Fairfield  
Harbour docks  
Where they are burning their socks for the Equinox.

*Original poem by Jefferson Holland, Eastport  
Adapted by FHYC*

## Sock Burning Etiquette

Sock burning is a weird yet endearing tradition. It's where we all get together, get barefoot, and burn stuff. It's to celebrate the spring, I swear. This is what you need to know.

First of all, remember that you're going to be exposing your feet in public months before you're actually ready to do so. Maybe clean those piggies up a touch? Maybe even plan a quick trip to the pedicurist.

Second of all, this is an event to burn socks, and socks only. Don't plan on burning other things. Don't show up thinking you can burn a pair of boxers or granny panties as a substitute. No one wants to see that. We're having a hard-enough time with you waving your socks around. And this event is solely about socks; we cannot stress this enough.

Speaking of socks, you want to bring your old wool or cotton socks. Have you ever tried to burn nylon or fleece socks? They don't burn; they just smoke and turn into charred, hard-as-rock pucks of despair for some poor volunteer to clean up. Burning your nasty old argyles is bad enough. Don't make it any worse by throwing in your heat-repellant techwear.

Even the removal of your socks requires a speech on etiquette. As you take your socks off, you are encouraged to put your shoes back on for safety and self-respect reasons. But do not even think about asking someone else to hold your socks while you tie your shoes.

After you take off your socks, move carefully and cautiously toward the fire. Place your socks delicately on the flames. Do not wave your socks around your head like a deranged cowboy. As soon as you place your socks on the fire, take your Fond Memories photo and then immediately move away from the flames. Do not stand by the fire barefoot, demanding attention and recognition.

After you've burned your socks and taken your Fond Memories photo, remember to find those volunteers and offer them a drink. They are going to be cleaning up your charred socks. They deserve a beer.

One issue that we see with sock burnings is that folks think that since their socks are off, other things should come off as well. Look. Sock burnings happen in the very early days of spring. This is not a "sun's out, guns out" situation. Your abdominal region is not ready for prime time. Keep your clothes on!

If you find your mind starting to judge the shape of your friends' feet, remind yourself that "What happens at the Sock Burning stays at the Festival." Take only Fond Memories photos, and leave only your disgusting, burned socks, charred and smoking in the ashes. It's the way springtime is meant to be celebrated.



*Photo courtesy of Bridgett Baysden*

## **Anatomy of a Yearbook**

The Fairfield Harbour Yacht Club annual Yearbook is a valuable tool for its members. Most of us keep one copy in our home and one on our boat and refer to them frequently. They arrive in our brown boxes each year, we replace the old with the new, and life goes on without much thought about it. For the past several years, Bill Green chaired the committee, collecting the updates and entering them into the template that he maintained. However, like most activities, this year was different. Not only did our club not meet in person and gather important information at the meetings, including committee signups, but the Greens' departure for Canada coincided with the beginning of Yearbook production. Seasoned committee members understood that this year was going to be a challenge and avoided taking over the leadership. But then entered the intrepid Leigh Hart, who had never been on the Yearbook Committee but assumed the position of Chair.

Leigh brought her leadership and organizational skills to the committee but lamented her self-proclaimed lack of technology skills. Her husband Steve stepped in and helped in that effort. Even setting up meetings was unique this year, and we met in a variety of venues from the Harts' back deck to the Community Center to our own living rooms via Zoom meetings. Each committee member assumed responsibility for a section of the yearbook to update and we set about collecting our data. However, at that point we ran into a huge snag because no one used the same program that Bill Green had used and we weren't able to integrate our information into the old template. It was at that point that Past Commodore Ritchie Thomson came to our rescue. Ritchie spent hours and hours painstakingly transferring everything to a Word document, complete with margins and pagination, so that the template will now be accessible to most of us in the future. Previous Information Technology Chair Lloyd Moore has always maintained the roster section and this year turned the position over to David Landry, who contributed that section.

Committee tasks include selecting the cover photo and creating the design, collecting the updated data for each section, and going through the entire Yearbook page by page and editing ad nauseum. Once we are satisfied with our copy, it is given to AlphaGraphics to print a proof. Committee members again go over the proofs and make any final edits before the publication goes into print. Within a couple of days, our yearbooks are printed and delivered to the Distribution Committee for delivery to the membership. This year, our first meeting was held on December 8, a later start than usual, and our final meeting was on January 13. Members received their directories before the end of January, making the process a very fast turnaround, despite the holidays and all of the hardships that we faced.

Kudos to Leigh Hart for taking on a daunting task and tackling it with patience and grace, to Ritchie Thomson for doing yeoman's work on changing the template to Word and completing the build, and to the entire committee for their dedication and commitment to getting the best possible product into your hands under difficult circumstances. We appreciate all of the positive comments that we have seen on email that let us know our efforts did not go unnoticed.

*Pam Gaskill*



*Pip Hare on Medallia*

## Vendée Globe 2020

The Vendée Globe is a single-handed non-stop yacht race around the world. It is named after the Département de Vendée in France, where the race starts and ends. It is considered an extreme test of an individual's stamina. Some argue that it is the ultimate test of single-handed sailing, unlike the America's Cup which has become more like a drag race than a sailing competition. Repairs and navigation must be undertaken by the skippers themselves. No routing services are permitted and the sailors need to make their decisions based on weather information received. Like the America's Cup, there is a large shore-based team who provide support and suggestions to the competitor on board. Also, like the America's Cup, a great deal of money is involved.

Since its inception in 1989, fewer than 100 international skippers have completed the race. By comparison, that is less than 3% of the total number of people who have climbed Everest (about 5000 climbers). Only seven women, and fewer than ten British skippers in total have ever finished the race as of December 2020. It takes a special kind of person to compete in the Vendée; someone skilled, intrepid, and self-sufficient.

This is very much a French affair; they have French Airforce flyovers at the start and French naval boats on patrol in the Southern Ocean to provide rescue services that are much needed. Amazingly, after 80 days at sea and over 26,000 nautical miles sailed, the top eight boats arrived on the same day. The winning boat with skipper Yannick Bestaven finished third but was rerouted to rescue Kevin Escoffier whose boat broke up in the Southern Ocean. He was given a time compensation of 10 hrs 15 min which took him into first place.

The boats are extremely powerful 60ft sailing machines designed for single handing. All sail handling and trimming is manual. Many have foils for enhanced upwind stability and speed, as well as some with canting keels. Most of the sailing is done from a covered cockpit, which is essential, as the boats seem to go through the waves rather than over them.

I have been following a couple of British competitors. The first is Alex Thomson (no relation). On the way out and still in the Atlantic, Alex discovered damage in the bow section of his boat, *Hugo Boss*. He was forced to bring the boat to a stop and carry out complex repairs below deck to address the issues. Underway again, he was making good progress south, sailing at 21 knots when disaster struck. One of his rudders was carried away in a collision apparently with discarded fishing gear. This forced him to withdraw from the race and he retired to Cape Town. It must have been very disappointing after his many attempts to win.

The second I followed was Pip Hare, who at 47 years old was competing in her first Vendée Globe. Her boat, *Medallia*, was built in 1999, one of the oldest, if not the oldest in the fleet. She finished in 19th place in 96 days. En route round the world, she had to go up the mast to fix her wind instrument. Just imagine doing that in the Southern Ocean. Then, in the Atlantic, a crack developed in the rudder stock of one of her twin rudders. Since both rudders are essential for sailing, she had to change out the rudder and amazingly, she had a spare on board. With a great effort, she was able to make the change and keep sailing. Her words on finishing were "It takes every part of a human being and stresses it, pushes it, and challenges it. It was the most incredible experience. I loved it."

*Past Commodore Ritchie Thomson*