Rescue Regatta surpasses its $20,000 fundraising goal by several thousand dollars

by Larry Chowning

The Rescue Regatta (RR), a fundraiser for the Middlesex County Volunteer Rescue Squad (MCVRS), exceeded its fundraising goal of $20,000 by several thousand dollars, said MCVRS officials.

"We expect more than 95 cents of every dollar will go directly to the rescue squad towards a new ambulance or to support the new station house in Urbanna," said Tina Mennett, one of the regatta organizers and a rescue squad member.

"Out on the water, I heard from sailors and spectators alike that the chatter on the water was an emphatic, "yes Rescue Regatta!" and "we'll be back next year!" she said.

"Both commodores of the two involved yacht clubs, Mark Wensell of Fishing Bay Yacht Club (FBYC) and Acting Commodore Lisa Wright of Stingray Harbour Yacht Club (SHYC) both seemed more than willing to be a part of the Rescue Regatta next year.

There were 38 registered sailors, though three dropped out of the race due to mechanical or other issues. There were 18 boats from FBYC and 11 from SHYC. Rick Klein, the principal race officer from FBYC, said 35 on the water "was a great number of boats," including 15 in the cruiser class.

Craig Wright of FBYC took first place on SV Afterthought and naturally so, as he is a seasoned racer with light air strategy and equipment. Mr. Klein admitted the "wind gods were not in our favor, but it was a testament to the rescue squad that the sailing community showed up with such support, said Mennett.

Friday's fundraising event hosted by Safe Harbor Stingray Point, and SHYC boasted nearly 200 in attendance. Midnight Coal Company played rock and roll and Dave Rockafellow, a member of SHYC, emceed and kept the audience engaged, she said.

Kendall Webre of Norton Yacht Sales was seen behind the bar mixing up our new signature drink, the "Rescue Me" along with Dark and Stormies. "Despite the good vibes and tasty drinks we wrapped up fairly early as the sailors had to get ready to sail the next day. The Skipper Welcome dinner was a literal blast and the band played for the last holdouts until 10 p.m," said Mennett.

Apart from the dinners and the race, there were other numerous side stories to tell – not the least of which was how the community came together on such late notice, said Mennett. In May, the planning committee was still uncertain that our regatta was going to come together. But it did. After we lost our initial photographers, people such as Paul Almany of FBYC, Bob Waldrop as well as Whitney Law from River Realm and her crew Meghan Hall and Mark Smithson with TB Marketing came out to shoot photographs with barely a day's notice.

Other things came together, literally with a day or two to spare: a trailer to use as a stage from the Urbanna Oyster Festival Foundation, a big tent from the band Rip Tide, old sails from Norton's hung in the ambulance bay as decorations and a functioning opti class sailboat to ice down all the beer. In addition to our Signature Sponsorship from Norton's Yacht Sales, so many stepped up to support us including the Urbanna and Deltaville Hometown IGA, the Moose Lodge as well as numerous local businesses and individuals.

Luna was docked in the marina and gave tours to the public all weekend. The Colonial Seaport Foundation donated a firing of one of Luna's cannons to the auction. The donation raised $200 for the rescue squad.

Gordon Inge of Deltaville Yachting Center on Broad Creek donated and skippered a brand new True North 34 as a spectator boat to host photographers and the press.

The awards dinner was presented at the Middlesex County Volunteer Rescue Squad station house in Deltaville. Dinner was lovingly served by the MCVRS Auxiliary. Nearly 200 were in attendance. Items were auctioned, donations were made and some very good times were had as Beth Justice and Lee Fenical of Justice Goldstar kept it real and soulful.

"By every measure this was a huge success from the money we raised, to the interest and awareness we generated," said Mennett. "The RR Planning Committee wants to keep our momentum going. The importance of our success must not be overshadowed by the exhilaration of crossing the finish line (several rescue squad members were in the race) or pulling off a multi-day event without a road map.

"The important thing is keeping our Rescue Squad doing what it does best. We might rest today, but we are already beginning to plan next year, including the hunt for more sponsors," she said.

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