

History  
of the  
*Amelia Island Sailing  
Club*



The Amelia Island Sail Club was created in 1976 by George Bennyhoff, Jake Mottayaw, and Tom Hall to promote the sport of both cruising and racing sailboats. It has been evolving and thriving continuously since then. There has always been an emphasis on socializing, racing, and cruising, and an active education element for members to become better sailors. This will be a brief history of the significant events through the years since then.

### **1976**

**The club was formed in August 1976.**

The club Bylaws were approved in September and club officers were selected in November. The first Commodore was George Bennyhoff. A contest was held to select the club burgee and seventeen entries were submitted. The winning entry was a design created by Jake Mottayaw. His design represented the Florida Welcome Station in Fernandina Beach, the only one on a waterway in Florida. It was a distinctive tee pee shape and once stood where Brett's Waterway Cafe' now stands. The first race was in October and had five boats participating. The club ended the year with seven members.

### **1977**

**Many firsts, which was to be expected!** The first club cruise was to Cumberland Island for a Luau and overnight at anchor. Ed Lormand departed June 6th, sailing his Yankee 28 (signifying 28 feet long), "Lormand's Second Folly", from Fernandina Beach to England singlehanded. He arrived in England in August. His accomplishment with navigation by sextant and no modern instruments was amazing. His book about his adventure is in the Fernandina Library. The Commodore was Tommy Hall and the AISC began a close relationship with the North Florida Cruising Club (NFCC). The new racing rating system was implemented, and the consensus was that George Bennyhoff could be the committee boat and still come in first. Sadly, for the club, the Bennyhoff's moved to Pennsylvania.



### 1978

**The Commodore was Jake Mottayaw.** Members continued to join, and the club began to cohost the NFCC race to Fernandina. Scheduled cruises were part of the club calendar. The community outreach continued, with the club becoming a large part of the “Blessing of the Fleet’ during the shrimp festival and getting involved with the effort to make the ICW opposite the downtown marina a ‘No Wake’ zone. Sail Magazine published an article by Fran Lormand detailing what the wife of a single hander experiences when her husband is overdue by a couple/three weeks. Ed was quoted as saying “If you’re crazy enough to do this, you don’t carry a long range radio to tell people you’re in trouble, you die with dignity!”

### 1979

**The Commodore was George Whiteside.** The AISC established Standing Committees of Cruise, Race, Membership, and Shrimp Festival Regatta. Suddenly and shockingly, Tommy Hall, one of the founding three members, died of a heart attack in June. In September, the membership voted to raise the initial fee to join AISC from \$5.00 to \$10.00 to defray the cost of the burgee. Annual dues were kept at \$15.

### 1980

**The Commodore was Bill Jenkins.** The NFCC dedicated their annual race to Fernandina to Tommy Hall, The Tommy Hall Memorial Regatta. Ed Lormand publishes his book about his solo sail from Fernandina to England. He also had a program for the club meeting with three hundred slides and two screens. He stated he had plans to sail around the world single handed and non-stop. I quote from the minutes “Non-stop is his words, everyone, I’m not editorializing!” I believe the program may have run a bit long.

### 1981

**The Commodore was Dave Fowler.** Meetings were held in various businesses. Highly active race and cruising programs were developed, with races each month March through October except August, and cruises to Fort George, St Simons, Floyd Creek and Jekyll. The AISC was a sponsor for the first annual Shrimp Festival Regatta. Fifty boats participated in six classes, and it was a tremendous success. The member’s boat list included 13 boats, the largest an Irwin 34’.

### 1982

**The Commodore once again was Dave Fowler.** The AISC incorporated as a nonprofit corporation. Eight races were planned, two in conjunction with cruises to Cumberland and St Simons. The Shrimp Festival Regatta was smaller due to a dismal weather forecast, but twenty-two boats raced in great weather. On July 4th, 10 boats rafted together at Cumberland for a picnic. The PHRF handicapping system was introduced for racers. The club became a Boat/US



partner and members received a membership discount. The close ties with the Golden Isles Sailing Club were beginning, with invitations to join cruises and discussions of club vs club races. The June meeting program was about marine safety equipment presented by Datrex, Inc, of Jacksonville. It was particularly exciting because they accidentally inflated a six-person life raft in Snug Harbor Restaurant, a very impressive presentation!

### **The Bell Trophy**

Two of Fernandina Beach's most famous residents were twins, Captains William and James Bell. They were the harbor pilots for the St. Mary's entrance bar beginning in 1867 until their deaths in the early 1900's. Of note, they learned their skills as Cape Fear, Wilmington N.C. harbor pilots beginning at 19 years old, and as blockade runners for the Confederate Navy during the Civil War. During their years as pilots at Fernandina Beach, they performed many heroic deeds, including bringing in vessels whose crews were decimated by yellow fever, and crossing the bar with vessels severely damaged by storms. These Renaissance Men were also largely responsible for the charm of historic of Fernandina. They built many of the homes that are landmarks today: the Bell-Kennard house at Beach and Eight Street, the Bell-Lowe House diagonally across, and the Captains House (the Pippy Longstocking house) in Old Town. Six other Victorian homes built by the Bell twins remain. In 1982 Samuel Kennard III, the grandson of Captain William Bell, presented the AISC with a perpetual trophy, the Bell Trophy, to honor members for their contributions to sailing and sportsmanship. All meetings since have been called to order with the ringing of "The Bell." The first recipient of the Bell Trophy was Ed Lormand for his sailing feats.

### **1983**

**The Commodore was Marge Jenkins.** Mrs. Elizabeth Hall was presented the Bell Trophy in appreciation of her husband, Tommy Hall, who was one of three key men responsible for the establishment of the AISC. Bernie Becker was the Racer of the Year. The AISC did not sponsor the annual multi-hull Shrimp Festival regatta, but instead had a giant raft up with the Golden Isles Sailing Club off the city marina. Unfortunately, at 0230 Sunday morning a six-boat raft up drug anchor and was under control by 0430. Supposedly, the party started again. Cruises were very well attended: the Jacksonville Jazz Festival, Crooked River State Park, Brick Hill River and Plum Orchard. The annual Christmas Party was at the City Golf Course Club House.

### **1984**

**The Commodore was Lee Melugin.** The initiation fees for new members were increased to \$25.00, but the annual dues remained at \$15.00. Bernie Becker was Race Chairman and Sonney Lammons was Cruise Chairman. Howard Wright on POO II began to affect the racing dominance of B. J. Viers on Chubasco. Many educational programs were held: the new navigation system Loran, racing rules of the road. George and Terri Mason got married, Howard and Krys Wright got a new boat, a Hunter 31 named "Mainstay". Ed and Fran Lormand cruised from Portugal to the Virgin Islands on a friend's boat to rejoin with Lormand's Second Folly. Chubasco cruised to the Abacos for the Race Week. Two amendments to the club by-



laws were approved which allowed full membership for non-boat owners, qualification for officer positions and offered the same to power boat owners. The Bell Trophy was awarded to one of the founders, George Bennyhoff.

### 1985

**The Commodore was B.J. Viers.** The club roster totaled forty-five members and thirty-five boats. The Cruise and Race chairs became the Cruise and Race Committees, which included very familiar names Dave and Jan Fowler, Howard and Krys Wright, Sonny and Betty Gammons, Don and Sue Klose, and Mary Holt Boswell. The First Annual Ice Bucket Regatta was a race/cruise up the St Marys River to St Marys. The race scoring system was adopted, i.e., First Place 3/4-point, second place 2 points, third place 3 points and so on. DNF (did not finish) one point more than the last place boat. Already affiliated with the Southern Racing Association, the AISC also joined the U.S. Yacht Racing Association. The AISC had a vibrant racing and cruising year and participated in the Shrimp Festival Boat Parade with a Disney theme. One cruise was a night departure offshore to St Augustine, arriving in the morning. The AISC finished the year with forty-seven memberships (83 people) and 40 boats.

### 1986

**The Commodore was Howard Wright.** The club dues were increased to \$20.00. The club had many social functions (Catfish Fry, hosting the NFCC Jacksonville to Fernandina Race, picnic on Cumberland, etc.) and an extremely competitive racing program. The same boat names seemed to be the competitors: the Millers on Bacchus, the Wrights on Mainstay, the Klose's on Klose Quarters, the Clary's on Lady Gray, and the Vier's on Chubasco. Several members cruised to the Bahamas: the Monson's on Sandpiper, an Aloha 34 and B.J.Viers on Chubasco, a San Juan 34. Bacchus lost her (his?) centerboard off Cumberland. Mainstay was notably absent as a placer in the October race, "proving once again when the depth of the keel exceeds the depth of the water, you come to an abrupt stop with the crew in a pile on the foredeck and the Captain cursing loudly!" The Monson's (Sandpiper) and the Miller's(Bacchus) swapped boats.

### 1987

**The Commodore was Ben Clary.** The AISC roster was fifty-six memberships and totaling 98 people. After meeting for two years at the Seaside Inn, a change was necessary due to the large membership and the meeting was moved to Shoney's. At the start of the St. Patrick's Day race, Sandpiper "pulled off a unique tactic by performing a ricochet tack off the FHM breakwater." Cruises were to St. Augustine, St Simons, and the Annual Cumberland Picnic. Bob Awtry finished second Fleet B at the Mistral One-Design Southeast Championship and sixth in Fleet A Masters at the Mistral Central Florida Championships. Windancer and Sea Bright cruised the Bahamas. The October 17th race was particularly challenging due to the steep close seas in Cumberland Sound, and the Nancy Lee was dismasted with no injuries. The Bell Trophy was awarded to Betty Gammons at the annual Christmas Party held at Walker's Landing.



### 1988

**The Commodore was Don Klose.** The meeting was moved to the Down Under Restaurant. The Ice Bucket was won by Steve Estes on Stray Cat II. The St. Patrick's Day race was won by Steve Estes on Stray Cat II. The club's cruise to Ft George Inlet was highlighted by being evicted from their picnic on Little Talbot Island by the state police. Participating in the cruise and eviction were eleven boats. Nineteen club members chartered in the Virgin Islands and the AISC Burgee is hanging in the Bitter End Yacht Club. Eight boats race the Ocean Triangle Race and six in the St Simons Race. Bacchus, Stray Cat II, See Adler, September Song, Klose Quarters and Sea Bright all placed. The program of the July meeting was about the Great Lakes Dredge which sank in the St Marys Entrance during a NorEaster. The club meetings were changed to the first Tuesday of each month so the Down Under wouldn't have to open on Mondays. Members attended a Fernandina Harbor Marina (FHB) workshop at which much concern was expressed by AISC members over the siltration of the marina and the inability to keep it dredged. (Sound familiar?) The annual Christmas Party was at Walkers Landing at which John Muller was awarded the Bell Trophy and Steve Estes won the racing trophy and 'Sailor of the Year'.

### 1989

**The Commodore was Bob Monson.** The club adopted a modified PHRF Club Handicap System to make the races more competitive. Steve Estes, as race committee chair, reported that all races except for two were sponsored by local businesses, making the races nearly self-supporting. Don and Sue Klose organized a Virgin Island Cruise charter, with twenty-two people going. Annual Dues were \$40. The club had eight cruises, including St Mary's, Cumberland, Bell's River, and St Simons. The Ice Bucket Regatta was won by Steve Estes on Stray Cat II. Among the new members in 1989 were Steve Ritter and Bob Canon. Orrin Main presented a safety program on recovering a 'man overboard,' with the fun fact that 75% of all overboard drowning victims have their fly open. Orrin subsequently booked the Navy School on Sea Rescue to give a presentation, and supervise actual 'man overboard' drills off of six AISC sailboats at the entrance to Lanceford Creek. Bob Awtry did the 38 mile Mug Race on a wind surfer, and won the Sportsmanship Award! Bob and Elsie Lauber aboard Pandora lost their rudder on a reef near Nassau, Bahamas, during their cruise to the BVI. The club roster included fifty memberships and over forty boats! The Rules corner for October was on rounding/passing marks, which was appropriate since the Fowler Buoy joined many others missing red or green paint, including the Staehle, Hermonson, Estes, Miller and Dennin Buoys. Steve Estes on Stray Cat II won the Racing Trophy and Ben and Carol Clary received the Bell Award.

### 1990

**The Commodore was Chuck Keith.** The AISC changed the meeting venue from the 1878 Steak House to Kraft 10 Acres, and it has remained so 20 years until the present. A full racing schedule was planned and cruises to Cumberland, St Augustine, St Mary's and Beach Marine in Jacksonville. Topper Hermanson was the race committee chair. Bob Awtry was ranked number 1 Nationally in the over 65 age group for the fourth year (1985, 1986, 1988, 1989) in Boardsailing. Stan and Mary Miller on Sandpiper returned from an extended cruise to the Keys,



and Bob and Elsie Lauber on Pandora made the turn at Grenada returning to Amelia. It was decided that smoking wouldn't be allowed during meetings (remember when it was??). The cruise to St Augustine was exciting due to a sudden storm — “three mainsails, one jib, one bimini, one dinghy and one outboard later, we made it to the dock”. Stan and Mary Miller cruised the Chesapeake on Sandpiper. The club was in contact with the city commissioners about the lack of parking and the need for dredging at the city marina. The Christmas party was at Walker's Landing, no band due to noise restrictions, and a pot luck meal. The Bell's Trophy was awarded to Don and Sue Klose for their total involvement in the club. The Race Trophy was awarded to Topper Hermonson and “Toad's About.”

### 1991

**The Commodore was Orrin Main.** Jeff Tomassetti cruised his twenty-seven foot sailboat the “Erma B” to Georgetown, Bahamas. The “ice Bucket Regatta” start got off to a ‘bang’ due to winds shifting at the start line from SW@10 to N@25, resulting in some contact between September Song and Stray Kat II, no protest flags flown. Sandpiper did get to rename another buoy during the race, the Miller Buoy #2. The AISC had 20 boats start and finish in the Shrimp Festival Regatta! The club had several Social gatherings : crab boils and play days on Cumberland. The AISC had the first Bikini Race, which required a woman at the helm, won by Free Fall in the racer division and Sandpiper in the cruiser division. The cruise to Beach Marine was marred by 'September Song', captained by Chuck Keith, being lost on the south jetties after suffering engine failure when transiting the jetties during a strong Nor'easter. Chuck and a crew member were washed over the south jetties and rescued by the Florida Marine Patrol. September's Song was the only boat choosing to go on the outside. The Christmas Party was at Walker's Landing, and the Bell's Trophy was awarded to Dave and Jan Fowler. The Race Trophy was awarded to Chuck Mitrision who built his Hermanson 38 Freefall at Topper Hermanson's yard. Chuck Keith on September's Song won the Cruising Division Racing Trophy “posthumously”. Tough crowd!

### 1992

**Steve Estes was the Commodore.** Bob Lauber on Pandora was seriously injured while anchoring just before an approaching storm, his left leg tangled in the rode. John and Lana Fields made a quick two week trip to the Bahamas and gave the program about the trip for the June Meeting. Clyde and Gerry Campbell on Altair and Steve Ritter on Windborne, two Catalina 27's, were never more than four boat lengths apart during the June Cumberland Sound Race and Altair finished first by 6 seconds, a half boat length. The Cumberland Island Play Day on the south end got blown away by a squall of up to forty knots of wind — Bob Awtrey tried to beat the storm on his sailboard but got caught in the Sound. He was picked up by a power boat but lost his sailboard. The AISC representative to the City Commission on the state of the City Marina, Stan Miller, reported that the City is reluctant to begin dredging even though a large portion of the marina is silted in so badly no boats can use the slips. Tiger Point Marina opened, owned by Bill Kavanaugh. Chuck Mitrision single handed Free Fall from Bermuda back



to Fernandina. Tom and Patty Wright on Los Amantes began being a factor in the races, with a 1st, 2nd, and third for the year.

### 1993

**Clyde Campbell was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

### 1994

**Susan Klose was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

### 1995

**Shawn Hurley was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

### 1996

**John Raczynski was the Commodore.** No minutes or Scuttlebutts survive from this year, all we have are the final results of the racing season. First place, Howard Wright and Jody Stephans on Mainstay, Second, Don and Barbara Knight on Vallhala, Third, Frank Reidenger on Green Slip, and Fourth, Steve Ritter on Nightflyer.

### 1997

**Jim Rodgers was the Commodore and Mary Miller the Vice Commodore.** We only have one Scuttlebutt from 1997, the March issue. The guest speaker that month was Jim Miller, Commodore of the newly formed King Bay Naval Sailing Club which he and our member Bob Canon were in the process of organizing. They hoped to get permission to have a raft up at the Base including a tour of a Submarine. That actually came about later that year! The first cruise of the season was an overnight to St Marys in February and on the way back, on Sunday, 8 boats raced in the Ice Bucket! Mainstay won his first Ice Bucket with Nightflyer second and Traveller third. Only 43 seconds separated the first three boats. It was noted that the dockage rate that weekend was \$.50/ft and \$3.00 for electricity.

### 1998

**Stan Miller started off the January Scuttlebutt's Commodore's Corner with the statement, "Well, we are starting 1998 and you have a beat-up old sailor for a Commodore".** Stan was a hell of a nice guy and great sailor. Two traditions started that year, the set time for the happy hour, 6:30 to 7:30, and the covered dish event which for the first few years only occurred twice a year. In January, Club co-founder Jake Mottayaw gave a talk reviewing the club history and presented the club with the framed original Burgee. It was hung in the dock house of the Yacht Basin where one of our members was the general manager at the time. Anyone know where it is now? The Ice Bucket race was delayed twice but was finally held in late March with Howard Wright and crew on Mainstay first and Bob Canon on Jade second. In April Steve Ritter



departed for the Bahamas on Nightflyer, no details of the trip are recorded but, evidently, he made it back! The second Annual Coastal Cup race was held in conjunction with the Golden Aisles club - sixteen monohulls started, twelve in non-spinnaker four in spinnaker, and seven catamarans! First in the non-spinnaker class was our club's Green Slip skippered by Frank Reidinger and crewed by Charlie Steinkamp and Dick Carr. The landside committee hosted a Low Country Boil, a catfish Fry, and a Lobster cookout. Eight club races were held and three cruises, two to Jekyll and a Labor Day cruise to St Augustine with 12 boats. One St. Augustine boat, Gods Gift aboard made it to the St Augustine entrance but the motor would not start, and conditions were bad at the time. They came about and sailed back home arriving in the wee hours of the morning but could not get safety down the St Mary's channel. The Coast Guard was called and they towed them to the marina. They do not do that anymore! The Christmas Party was held at the 1878 Steakhouse.

### 1999

**The Commodore was Frank Reidinger.** Joe Geagon was race chair and 7 races were completed. Landslide had several successful events and the Cruise Committee had well attended events at Jekyll and downtown Jacksonville as well as a couple of raft ups on the Brickhill River. At the June meeting Dave Heine of the Golden Isles club gave a presentation on the Coastal Cup and welcomed our clubs' participation. The Bikini race was won by Gayle and Buddy with Gayle at the helm. Commodore Reidinger also placed well on Green Slip and gave credit to guest female crewmembers Leslie Nurse and Carrie Musselman from the tall ship Voyager. Jim Miller, head of the newly formed Windward Sailing School gave a presentation in August ending with the adage "When sailing, knowledge is power and local knowledge is absolute power". In May three vessels, Mainstay, Gayle Warnings and Green Slip, departed for the Bahamas for an adventure later titled: Bernie's Bahama Vacation. A day-by-day diary of the cruise survives and is quite an eventful read including things like; a broken transmission cable, broken fuel pump, bruised ribs and bad road rash after a rented motor bike accident, a near miss in the middle of the night with an unknown vessel, and meeting up with a three legged, half a tail dog named Lucky. A good time was had by all! 1999 marked the first annual Florida Georgia Ocean Challenge on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The race is hosted by AISC to reciprocate for the Golden Isle Clubs' annual Spring hosting of the Coastal Cup. One of the purposes of this event was, to quote the November Scuttlebutt from that year, "to enhance Fernandina's posture as a unique sailing center for sailing enthusiasts in Northeast Florida." Twenty boats entered, thirteen from GISC and seven from AISC. AISC made great showing with Jim Rodgers on Spindrifft placing first in the Spinnaker class, and we captured the first three non-spinnaker places - Buddy Kellum with Gayle Warnings, Frank Reidinger with Green Slip, and Lindsey Leckie with God's Gift placing 1,2,& 3. We still have a copy of the original entry form. The Christmas party was held at the Golden Grouper restaurant.



## 2000

**The Commodore was Leslie Leckie.** We have all the Scuttlebutts from this year and most of the meeting minutes. It was a busy year for the club and Commodore Leckie ran a tight ship. Three cruises, three Landslide events, and nine races were scheduled. The first race of course was the Ice Bucket with Steve Ritter and Nightflyer added to the winner's Trophy. A pre-race dinner was held at Borrell's Creek restaurant in St. Marys. The Commodore took on the challenge of reviewing and updating the by-laws this year and after much discussion the revisions were approved. One controversy reared its head this year, the One family-One vote provision which took quite a while to resolve. Three boats sailed to the Abacos this year albeit not at the same time. Jim Rodgers sailed Spindrift with Eric Hughes as crew, Gary and Susan Mitchell on Traveller, and Ivy League with Claude and Lisa Chriqui. Four boats made a weeklong cruise to Beaufort, SC and Stan and Mary Miller returned after a three-week cruise to Charleston on Sandpiper. The Coastal Cup race with St Simons was held in May and our club finished second thru fifth in the Non-spinnaker class and fourth in the spinnaker class. The Second Annual Florida-Georgia Challenge was held on Oct 21<sup>st</sup>. It was a great turnout with 9 boats from each club in the race from St. Simons. The wind was great, NE, 12 to 15 knots keeping all the boats close before dropping to 5kt at the St Marys entrance. Fortunately, we had an incoming tide, and all the boats were able to finish with the first vessel over the line at 3hr 46 min. AISC boats claimed line honors in both classes but not so after corrected time. Our club finished 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> in the non-spinnaker class which gave us just enough points to claim victory for the second year in a row. Commodore Leckie won the Smurfit-Stone Regatta in September on his boat God's Gift. The News Leader published an account of race under the heading, 'Divine Win'. Steve Ritter and Nightflyer won three of the eight races that year including the first one and the last one. The Christmas party was held at the Fernandina Golf Clubhouse.

## 2001

**Buddy Kellam was the Commodore this year.** Three cruises were planned along with another eight races. Joe Geagon was appointed race committee chair after doing such a good job last year. The membership report shows fifty-two members. Steve Ritter won the Ice Bucket for the second year in a row with Jade second and Commodore Kellum third. The spring highlight was a tour at Kings Bay of the USS Pennsylvania set up by Rear Commodore Isabel Romero. The second race was the infamous Green Bush Regatta, the origin of the name of this race is unclear but there are some rumors. The Scuttlebutt reports that the winner was Bob Canon and his new wife Pamela on their twenty-two-foot TMI sailboat Jade. The cruises to St. Augustine on Memorial Day, Jekyll Island on the Fourth of July, and St Simons on Labor Day were all successful and well attended. The only incident was a tornado at the pier in St Simons that resulted in minor damage to two boats, Sandpiper and Kalen. There is no mention of the Spring Coastal Cup race that spring, weather may have cancelled it, but in October the third annual Florida-Georgia Challenge was held with eleven boats from GISC and eight boats from AISC participating. We do not have the results by boat for the race but we must have finished well



because once again we defended the Cup! Unfortunately, a couple who were longtime members of the club and were currently serving as Race Chairman and Membership committee chair resigned due to a controversy with a by-law change they supported that failed to pass! The Rayonier Regatta was won by a Gene Sokolowski on Sunday Morning Jazz. It was the first race won by Gene who joined the club last year. Also noted was that Butch and Martha Beard, who also joined last year, had purchased a Hunter 30 in St. Marys, yet to be named. These two gentlemen and their wives would come to play a large role in the club in the coming years. The final race results for the season were: Nightflyer/Steve Ritter, just beating out Valhalla/Don Knight, with Sunday Morning Jazz/Gene Sokolowski third. The Christmas party was held at the Golf Club. The last Scuttlebutt of the year ended with the adage 'It's hard to make a comeback if you haven't done anything. So get out there!'

## 2002

**Eric Hughes was the Commodore this year.** Once again three cruises were planned along with eight races. The membership committee reported forty-four members. This year marked the Club's first attempt at an internet site, set up by Vice Commodore Butch Beard in Yahoo Groups. A new member wrote about her recent offshore sailing adventure as a crew member on a 53 ft sailboat traveling from Key West to St Marys. It was her first such trip and she noted that: the 5 day trip took almost 8 days due to problems with the ocean and the boat, there is no ladies room but there is a head, no kitchen but there is a galley, no bedroom but there is a stateroom, it is possible to cook without a microwave, and you can go up to three days without a shower. She learned to man a watch, set a course, steer the boat, and that a well-stocked bar is essential. She concluded that she would go again in a heartbeat and had a lot of fun. Welcome to sailing! This was Bob Canons' first year as Race Director. The spring season included four races, a cruise to St Augustine, a low country boil, and a barbeque. Five club boats made the Abaco trip this year. The club had another good showing in the twelve boat Coastal Cup race in May, and Steve Ritter won the non-spinnaker division in the Golden Isles Sailing Club race from St Simons to Charleston. The fall season had three exciting races in addition to the Florida Georgia race in October. The final standings for the racing season were First, Gene Sokolowski on Sunday Morning Jazz, Second, Bob Canon on Jade, Third, John Brooks on Midwatch beating out Butch Beard on Cheeseboat by one point. November saw the discontinuation of the summer youth sailing program, started by club member Rhett Holden-Dodge. Initiated in 1996 with a \$40,00 grant from the county with annual donations from the city and our club, the program had eleven Optimis boats, three 420's and two chase boats. Four instructors taught three 10-day classes each summer and quite a few local students under the age of 16 got their first taste of the joys of sailing. In 2002, resources ran low, parental involvement waned, and liability issues forced the organization to discontinue operations and



donate the resources to a similar program in St. Simons. The Christmas party was held at the Golf Course once again with music by Sean McCarthy and the “Fishin Musicians.”

### 2003

**Butch Beard was the Commodore this year.** He started his first Commodore’s Corner with the statement ‘Captains Log Stardate Feb 2003.’ Four cruises were planned along with seven races. This year Friday get togethers were initiated at the Yacht Basin pier with three boats, Sunday Morning Jazz, Commodore Beards’ Cheese Boat and God’s Gift taking turns hosting the event. A big Inflatable palm tree announced the location. Always lots of friendly sailing banter, sea stories, and adult beverages. The Yahoo groups website went away and was replaced by Ameliainslandsailing.org. The club had yet another good showing in the Coastal Cup race in May taking first place in both divisions and Commodore Beard winning 1<sup>st</sup> place overall. In the Fall Fl/Ga Race we finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the non-spinnaker class. The final standings for our racing season were not documented this year but we do have an account of an exciting Bikini race with only women allowed as helmsman. The wind ceased completely just before the start and most of the boats dropped an anchor rather than drift back to the docks. Martha Beard on Cheeseboat got line honors at the start and first place overall. Tammy Duncan on Baygull was second followed by Mary Steinkemp on Mary Wanderer. We held the second annual Thanksgiving Feast at the November meeting, a tradition which holds to this day. The Christmas Party was held at the North Hampton Golf Club.

### 2004

**Gene Sololowski was the Commodore this year.** No scuttlebutts were saved for this year but we do have a booklet listing the planned events and a membership list. Cruise Committee chair Butch Beard, never one to forego a chance to take things a step further, planned an ambitious 10 cruises! These included one to Beaufort SC, an overnight night Full Moon cruise, and a New Year’s fireworks cruise to Jacksonville. Not to be outdone, Race committee co-chairs, Bob Canon (offshore) and Joe Bowen (inshore) planned 10 races! Unfortunately, no documentation survives detailing the outcome of these events apart from five race reports from the Newsletter.

### 2005

**Hanko Rosenblatt was the Commodore this year and was the third female Commodore in the club’s history.** Four newsletters survived from this year. The club donated money to the hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. A few exciting races were documented including what was later called ‘A Whale of a Race.’ Just after the start of the offshore Nassau Sound race, a small, but still big, whale was sighted off the starboard side of Joe Bowens’ boat. We were all looking for it when it jumped almost completely out of the water, falling back in with a huge splash. It continued to do this a few times while transiting North thru the un-nerved Southbound fleet, followed by a large group of seagulls. The close race, won by John Burns on Mast Confusion, had three of the boats crossing within 90 seconds of each other after 7 and a half hours. The



spring race to St. Simons shared the starting area with the Jacksonville based First Coast Race. We had twelve boats headed North, and they had 24 boats headed South with winds blowing 20 to 30 kts from the SW! It was an exciting spectacle to say the least. Bill and Lynn Bass on Coy Mistress and Steve Ritter on Nightflyer finished second and third respectively in the non-spinnaker class. The seventh annual Fl/Ga Race was run in October. The long run out the St Simons channel to the start was hampered by fog, wind on the nose and a strong tide but once underway it was a great race with close finishes in both classes. Four couples from the club went on a chartering trip to the BVI's.

The final standings for our racing season were not documented this year. The Christmas Party was held once again at the North Hampton Golf Club.

In documenting the history, we have written a review of the clubs' activities by each year. For some years we have several, and in some cases all, of the newsletters and meeting minutes. Unfortunately, from 2006 to 2017, we do not nearly as much documentation. If anyone has any Scuttlebutts from the missing years, please let us know.

## 2006

**Joe Blanchard was the Commodore.** The only documentation we have from this year were two race reports from March of that year. Eight boats raced in the Ice Bucket with Steve Ritter on the 34 ft Catalina Nightflyer taking first, Bob Canon and Jade second, and Buddy and Gale Kellum on Gayle Warnings third. In the second race that month, those top three finishers sweep again this time with Jade first, Gayle Warnings second, and Nightflyer third.

## 2007

**Charley Steinkamp was the Commodore.** The only documentation we have from this year is from the St Patrick's Day regatta sponsored by O'Kanes. Tom Mason on his 27 Morgan Baby Blooz finished first, Joe Bowen on Vested Virgin second, followed Gene Sololowski on Sunday Morning Jazz. Scott Ingalls was the Race Committee chairman this year and crewed on the winning vessel. A report includes a picture of Scott and Tom holding the big green O'Kanes Trophy which unfortunately disappeared a couple of years later when O'Kanes suddenly closed. It may still be out there somewhere!

## 2008

**Roger Henderson was the Commodore.** In 2008, Club members Tom and Gerry Clare completed the Great Loop Tour up the East coast, across the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi and back home in their twenty-eight-foot cruiser Sea Knight. We have a copy of an article in the Jacksonville paper about the trip, complete with great pictures and maps. Gene Sololowski on Sunday Morning Jazz took first place in the St Patrick's Day regatta sponsored by O'Kanes pub on Center St where the Amelia Island Tavern is now located. John Burns on Mast Confusion was second with race committee chair Joe Bowen third in a close race with Tom Mason on Baby Blooz. We have a News Leader picture of the of the trophy presentation



showing the large O'Kanes trophy which was on display year-round behind the bar. Bob Canon, on a work assignment in Pearl Harbor, presented one of our burgees to the Honolulu Yacht clubs' display of burgees, which according to them is worlds' largest collection.

## **2009**

**John Burns was the Commodore.** The only documentation we have from this year is the report of the annual Poker Run social event sponsored by the Yacht Basin. As each boat rounded seven designated markers, the committee boat drew a card from a deck and put it in an envelope with that boats name on it. After all the markers were passed the envelopes were sealed and passed out to each captain at the shore party. The best five of the seven cards were played. Butch Beard from Cheese Boat played his hand first showing three of a kind which caused most of the contestants to walk away some of whom murmuring fowl expressions. But two others remained, Commodore John Burns from Mast Confusion laying down a nine-high straight, appearing to be the obvious winner until Gene Sololowski from Sunday Morning Jazz showed his ten-high straight! The crowd erupted in applause with good sport Commodore Burns leading them on. Gene also won the trolling lure fishing prize with a 22-pound kingfish!

## **2010**

**Joe Bowen was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

## **2011**

**Bill Bass was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

## **2012**

**Charlie Monroe was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.

## **2013**

**Kent Mckee was the Commodore.** A highly successful Bahamas cruise set sail in late April of this year and included several club boats.

## **2014**

**Roger Henderson was the Commodore repeating his role of Commodore in 2008.** Vice Commodore was John Lohr and Rear Commodore was Charlie Steinkamp.

## **2015**

**John Lohr was the Commodore.**

We currently have no records for this year.



## 2016

**Steve Ritter was the Commodore.** We have only a couple of race reports from this year and some newspaper pictures of the Christmas party. One interesting race report is recounted.

‘The September Around the Sound Race was interesting with seven boats racing and sometimes drifting in light winds which alternately blew from every direction on the compass. Misty had to withdraw with halyard problems and another boat was lured aground by the sirens of Fort Clinch and also had to withdraw. The first boat across the start line, Stardust, headed for the wrong mark, unfortunately followed by most of the fleet because Stardust was skippered by the race director!! Steve Ritter and Bill Kavanaugh on Volan were the only ones on the correct course. All the boats converged at the next to last mark at the same time just as the wind dropped resulting in the ‘Jamup at G33’. Ed Spang and Duffy Goodman on Darby finished first, Larry Murphy on Wayward Wind were second, with Volan third.’

First place for the racing season was shared by Commodore Ritter and Graeme Nichol.

Notable and active racers and cruisers from the years 2000 to 2016 included; Howard and Jodie Wright on Mainstay, Frank and Joanna Reidinger on Green Slip, Jim And Marie Rodgers on Spindrift, Joe and Maureen Geagon on Mo Jo, Don And Barbara Knight on Valhalla, Stan and Mary Miller on Sandpiper, Lindsey and Linda Leckie on God’s Gift, Buddy and Gail Kellum on Gayle Warnings, Charlie and Mary Steinkamp on Mary Wanda’er, and Don and Sue Klose on Klose Quarters, Butch and Martha Beard on Cheeseboat, Gene and Barbara Sokolowski on Sunday Monday Jazz, John Burns on Mast Confusion, Bill and Linn Bass on Coy Mistress, Bob and Pamela Canon on Jade and Stardust, and Steve and Leslie Ritter on Nightflyer and Volan.

## 2017

**Charley Hayes was the Commodore.** Commodore Charley Hayes brought a fresh and adventurous approach to the club leadership position. His attitude of fun on the water and his road trips based on his knowledge of the Central and West coast areas of Florida proved to be very popular. Trips were organized to swim with the manatees in Crystal River, harvest scallops over in Steinhatchie, a pontoon boat trip to Palatka (yes, sailors on pontoon boats) and they were all fun times!

Five races were held with the Fall season a bit shortened by a tropical storm and Hurricane Irma. Ed Spang sailing Darby, Larry Murphy with Wayward Wind, and Tom McKenna and Athore, captured the top positions.

## 2018

**Tom Maguire was the Commodore.** Thanks to Tom we have quite a bit of documentation for 2018 to the present time. We had a very competitive six race season that year. The Ice Bucket race featured calm winds at the start and strong winds at the finish, neither of which was forecast! Misty and Wilby Whitt was first, and we have a great picture showing the boats



heeled over near the finish. The second race was taken by Glen Stettler in Sea Esta under favorable winds followed by Misty, Darby and Wayward Wind. Races three and four were also won by Wilby with Craig Rowdon sailing Grace finishing a close second both times! Misty also took race five in light winds with Larry Murphy and Wayward Wind second and Tom McKenna sailing Athore a close third. Graeme Nichol and Fin won the last race with John Drake second On Eagles Wings.

We had great showings in the spring Coastal cup and the fall Ocean Challenge. In the Coastal, Glen Stettler and Sea Esta was first place in the non-Spinnaker class with an all-star crew of James Lohr, Al Diran and Pat O'Leer. Commodore Maguire and Lucky enough finished third in the non-spin class and Misty was third in the Spinnaker class. We won the fall Challenge race with Graeme Nichol and Fin taking first and Wilby and Misty third in the Spinnaker class. Similarly, we took first and third in the Non- Spinnaker with Larry Murphy and Wayward Wind first with his son Blaine and Duffy Goodman serving as crew. Third was Glen Steller with Sea Esta.

It was an active social season for the club also including trips to Ichetuckee for tubing, Steinhatchie for scalloping, and Marlin and Barrel for tastings. The club also started water quality sampling this in in conjunction with the St. Marys Riverkeepers. The initial crew was skippered by Commodore Maguire with certified trainees Charley Hayes, Russ Ripley, Jann Schuuman, and Ray Mooney.

Amelia Islander Magazine published a great story about the club written by former member Terri Sopp and reprinted in the August edition of the Scuttlebutt.

The Christmas party was attended by almost 70 members at the golf Club with entertained furnished by the Macys. The race award was presented to this year's dominant racer Wilby Witt with Larry Murphy second and Ed Spang third.

## **2019**

**Tom Maguire was once again the Commodore.** The activities started early this year with a Swim with the Manatees event at Crystal River in January. The February meeting featured a presentation by Anna Laws, the new St. Marys Riverkeeper. On February 16, a highly successful and well attended Oyster Roast was held with a myriad of side dishes and desserts. Water sampling continued this year and so did an Ichetucknee tubing trip in August. A Bahamas cruise embarked in May of this year and included the boats of former Commodores Steve Ritter, Roger Henderson, and Kent Mckee.

The first race of the year was not run until the end of March and was won by Ed and Darlene Spang sailing Darby. The next race at the end of April had Wilby Whitt and Misty first, Salty Sally second, Wayward Wind third, Darby fourth and Athore fifth. The spring Coastal Cup was a big win again for the club with AISC taking all top three places in the non-spinnaker class and first in the Spinnaker class. Larry Murphy was first in the non-spinn class and also first overall in



the race, assisted by crewmembers Blaine Murphy and Bob Canon. Glenn Steller and Sea Esta was second and for the second year in a row and Commodore Maguire and Lucky Enough was third. Misty took first in the Spinnaker class. The last race in November was won by Graeme Nichol and Fin in cool gusty winds with the occasional shower! Larry Murphy and son Blaine once again took first in the non-Spinnaker class in the fall Ocean Challenge.

## 2020

**Tom Durel was the Commodore.** 2020 started innocently enough for the club with the Ice Bucket race being won by Graeme Nichol and Fin with winds gusting over 25 kts and four ft seas. We have a good picture showing Fin sailing with just the Jib and Wayward Wind sailing just the main.

Unfortunately, club meetings ended after the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and activities were discontinued due to Co-vid restrictions but the club adjusted and racing resumed on May 9<sup>th</sup> with crews restricted to the skipper and one additional crew member, five boats raced in winds gusting to 20kts for the second race with Graeme Nichol on Finn winning his second race of the season and John Drake On Eagles Winds second and Salty Sally skippered by Gary Sanders third. We have some great pictures of Salty Sally under full sail taken from the committee boat Topsy Turtle under the command of Peter Kurtis. The next race on July 1st started well but was discontinued when the fickle winds dropped to zero and the current took command, but on the last day of May seven boats participated in a great winds, with Misty, Wayward Wind, and On Eagles Wings, finishing 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and third respectively. The next race was not held until September with another good turnout of 7 boats and excellent wind conditions. Once again, Wilby Whitt and Misty were first, with Graeme Nichol and Fin second and John Drake On Eagles Winds third. The fifth race marked the debut of a fine J-105 sailboat Valkyrie owned by Justin Webb. They crossed the finish first but were just beat out on corrected time by Misty who crossed just behind him. On Eagles Wings was third. December 19<sup>th</sup> saw the last race of the season with four boats sailing in strong and gusty winds that challenged each captain. Graeme and Fin finished first with Larry Murphy and Wayward Wind second just two minutes behind. Wilby and Misty were third. Final standings were Larry Murphy and Wayward Wind taking the honors, just edging out Wilby Whitt and Misty, with Graeme and Fin third.

Race Director Cathy Eichmann deserves a Job Well Done for organizing the racing season under the duress of the Co-Vid lockdowns. While most people were stuck inside, here we were out on the water as early as May, with a season of great pictures in the News Leader for all to enjoy. A final racing note concerns the annual Ocean Challenge which our club once won on points with Larry Murphy first in Non-Spinnaker, this time with the help of wife Eileen and son Blaine as crew, and Graeme Nichol second in Spinnaker although he was first across the line.

Commodore Tom Durel deserves a lot of credit for keeping the club afloat during the pandemic. His updates, encouraging messages in the Scuttlebutts and leadership skills gave us hope that eventually things would return to normal. As normal as our club could be at least. He wrote the following in the June 2020 Scuttlebutt, "As we endure this Coronavirus it is powerful to

History of the *Amelia Island*  
*Sailing Club*



reflect on the principals of our great nation and the blessing we enjoy. Yellow Fever, Smallpox, the 1918 Flu Pandemic, Polio, N1H1, and the myriad of calamities our country has faced in its birth and life, we suffer, we fail, we learn, we disagree, we move forward, we create, we succeed, we overcome, we celebrate, we remember, we become better, we give thanks. And in this this moment of thanks I wish you ...Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness!" From the club, Thanks to You Tom.