

# The Greenport Ocean Race & The Greenport Bay Race

By Jim Ryan, Event Chairman

At the awards party, one of the Greenport Ocean Race competitors, upon accepting his trophy said, “Victory by attrition is still victory,” and I agree. Coming into the first October weekend, the wind blew hard from the east all week. I hoped that it would let up somewhat for the race on Saturday, October 1, and it did, but everything is relative. When 35-knot winds dissipate to 30-knot winds, it’s still pretty breezy out there.

Organized by Chinese Yacht Club and Old Cove Yacht Club with additional support from The Village of Greenport, New York, Shelter Island Yacht Club and Orient Yacht Club, the Greenport Ocean Race and the Greenport Bay Race comprise two races on the same day that share a common theme and a common finish line. The theme is that it’s all about enjoying Greenport, a beautiful deepwater port on eastern Long Island’s North Fork. We have \$1 per foot docking in the center of town for the race, and a pub crawl involving 10 bars and restaurants, all within three blocks of your boat, and local Greenport Harbor beer and local Lenz wine at our party.

The Ocean Race starts at 8:30 am right off the dock in downtown Greenport and goes east to Block Island. You then round Block and sail back toward Greenport, finishing in Orient Harbor. The Bay Race starts two hours later just west of the Shelter Island Ferry and goes west past Robins Island, then comes back, going around Shelter Island and finishing in Orient Harbor with the Ocean Race boats. With the Ocean Race at just over 80 nautical miles and the Bay Race at about 31nm, these are the longest races on Eastern Long Island.

While the Bay Race is sailed mostly by local boats, the Ocean Race attracts bigger boats traveling a distance to get here. A strong easterly was blowing all week and Friday was no exception. I started getting emails, mostly from boats that had to deliver east, that they weren’t going to make it. Nobody wants to deliver a boat 50-60 miles upwind in 25 knots. A couple of the boats coming from Newport were looking forward to a fast reach here, but wanted to make sure the race was still on.

The wind had let up a bit the morning of the race, as predicted, and was now just 25-30 and predicted to go into the teens by afternoon. More importantly, the wind had shifted left a bit, so that, although it would be a beat to Gardiners Island, after that, boats could fetch Block. We had lost about a quarter of our entries due to the delivery issues, but at 8:30 the rest of us were off. All of the boats had reefed, except for those that double reefed. We beat out of Greenport Harbor, and continued our -mile beat to “1GI” (Gardiners Island), where we would be able to crack off a bit.

Looking ahead, all of a sudden we saw *White Rhino 2* (a Carkeek 47) lose her mast. Immediately the radio was cluttered with offers of help, but they were too busy to answer. A few min-



*Sedgewick Ward's J/111 Bravo crosses William Hubbard's RP56 Siren just after the start of the Ocean Race.* © RJ LaBella/rjlabellaphotos.com

utes later *Siren*, an RP56, had a shroud problem and dropped out. They then motored over to *White Rhino* to offer assistance. Next out was *Dragon*, a Class40, followed by *Privateer*, another Class40, and that wasn’t the last of them. Of the 14 boats that started the Ocean Race, five crossed the finish line. It was certainly a struggle to get to Block, but the trip back was worth it: spinnaker broad reach with speeds of 15 to 17 knots commonplace. While most of the ocean boats finished between 6 and 8 pm, the last boat to finish, *Valfreyia*, a non-spinnaker Stevens 47, finished at 11:21.

After the Ocean Race started, the committee boat moved over to Pipes Cove to get set up for the Bay Race. Since the course would be going west in an easterly, they dropped a mark for a short weather leg. Thirty boats were registered for the Bay Race and 23 started. All but two of those finished. Fortunately for the Bay Racers, the wind was about five knots lighter on the inside. That said, it was still a struggle coming back upwind through Little Peconic Bay where the tide opposed the wind and the waves were steep, and across Noyack Bay toward the lee side of Shelter Island. *Team Tonic*, Jim Sanders’ Beneteau 42.7 (Westhampton, NY; PHRF Spinnaker 1), was first to finish among the Bay Racers, crossing the line in just under four and a half hours. The last finisher checked in after seven and a half hours. The overall winner of the Bay Race was decided by one second, with Marc Robert’s Etchells *Skanky Jane* (Bronxville, NY; first in PHRF Spinnaker 2) edging out *Team Tonic* by next to nothing. Complete results are posted at [yachtscoring.com](http://yachtscoring.com), and more information can be found at [greenportoceanrace.com](http://greenportoceanrace.com).

The Bay Racers finished in time to be able to enjoy downtown Greenport. Each boat was given two punch cards that were good for a free beer at 10 different restaurants. The nice thing about this is that racers were able to recognize each other and the first question was always, “What boat were you on?” In many races you don’t get to meet the people on the other boats, except

After the start of the Ocean Race, boats headed for the Greenport shore to stay out of the adverse current.

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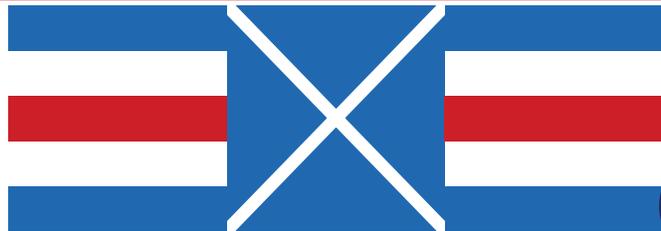


under a big tent. Here, it's a few people at a bar. The pub crawl ticket is good for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but most people are out Saturday night.

At the awards party on Sunday, held at Hanff's Boatyard/Wooden Boatworks, we announced that the overall winner of the Ocean Race for the Brooklyn Ocean Challenge Cup was *Reckless*, a J/105 skippered by Steve Marenakos (Bloomfield, CT), for the second year in a row. In fact, in the nine years

since we revived the 112-year-old trophy every winner has been a J/105. Mike LaChance's *Dark N Stormy* won it five years in a row, Steve Guyer's *Alliance* won the next two years, and now Steve Marenakos and his crew have won the last two years. I find it really amazing that with all of the different boats that have competed in this race, three different 105s skippered by three different skippers have won every time. The challenge is on. ■

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