



# MEMORIES OF A CORINTHIAN SUMMER

BY DICK ENERSEN

IN LATE SEPTEMBER, we held a reunion lunch of the still upright members of the crew of *Constellation*, the 12 Metre yacht that defended the America's Cup for the New York Yacht Club in 1964. The crew—Steve Van Dyck, Putter Brown, Buddy Bombard, and I—were joined by our wives and girlfriends as well as two supporters from long ago, Davey MacFarlane (who took care of *Nereus*, our pre-war trial horse) and Jimmy Gubelmann, also a regular crew member aboard *Nereus*, where all of the alternate *Constellation* crew trained. The venue was a private dining room at Castle Hill Inn, which had served as our residence in the summer of '64.

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COURTESY OF DICK ENERSEN



This page, from above: Aboard *Constellation*, 1964; an invitation to *The RTYC at The Breakers*; crew celebrating their Cup victory, 1964; 12 Metre *Intrepid* sailing by Castle Hill Inn. Opposite page, from above: The crew, practicing for the America's Cup; *Constellation*, on the water; crew member and author, Dick Enersen, 1964.







## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMODORE



THE HEYDAY of 12 Metre racing in the U.S. ended in 1983 when we lost the America's Cup to Australia in Newport. The "second coming" for the fleet took place in 2001 when the Queen of England attended the Jubilee Regatta at Cowes, U.K. There were 39 12 Metre yachts at the starting line for that week's long celebrations of America's Cup boats, beginning with the original (1851) racecourse around the Isle of Wight. In recent years, our fleet of "twelves" has dropped from the 17 yachts assembled for the Jubilee celebration, to a present-day fleet of 10 boats. The mission of the 12 Metre Yacht Club, Newport Station is: "To provide and facilitate discussion and a social environment for 12 Metre owners and others interested in the history of the 12 Metre Class and to encourage continued

*This page, from above: Bannister's Wharf during the 12 Metre North American Championships; 12 Metre Commodore James Gubelmann; Gary Jobson and Ted Turner at the 12 Metre North American Championships in 2012.*

involvement in preserving, restoring and racing 12 Metre yachts in the Newport area"—which means that our board is dedicated to supporting the North American Fleet headed by Herb Marshall, with events on and off the water and exposure for the class in general.

We are currently organizing—with the International Twelve Metre Class Association headed by Commodore Dyer Jones—the next World Championships to be held in the U.S. in 2019. We plan to renovate and restore numerous "twelves" in our own Narragansett Bay Fleet, bringing them up to par to race against the very proactive Northern European Fleet headed by Patrick Howaldt out of Copenhagen, and the slick Southern European Fleet headed by Luigi Lang in Milan. This will be a spectacular event with 12 boats from America, eight boats from the Baltic, and six boats from the Mediterranean. Our modern rules allow each boat to carry 14 crew on board, with the



typical size of these boats ranging from 62 feet to 70 feet. This will be a spectacular series of regattas, as we are planning to invite the 12 Metres from around the world to put aside two and a half months in May, June, and July with races planned in four or five venues in New England, preceded by an inaugural regatta in the Caribbean!

Of interest this year, was our 12 Metre nationals in Newport, where we had a dinner for 100 crew at the Clarke Cooke House, our "12 Metre Yacht Club." From the original crews who raced for the America's Cup in 1964 and 1974, over 55 people attended an additional event held at the New York Yacht Club's Harbour Court. Be-

lieve you me, the 12 Metre class is coming back strong, and the heroes of yesteryear are back to support our mission! May the force (winds and tides) be with us.

*Commodore James Gubelmann  
12 Metre Yacht Club, Newport Station*

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Most of us had seen the others over the years, including at a 40th reunion dinner at Harbour Court, so there wasn't much catching up to do. The conversation at the table centered around what a wonderful time we had had in that house, in that town, and on that water—half a century ago.

One of us recalled our crew dinners in the spectacular glass-walled dining that still juts out in the direction of Beavertail State Park. Blazers and ties every night and, once a week—and with specific permission from the wife of our skipper—we could bring a date. Those were some of the best sunsets, ever.

That evening, we joined other veterans from the campaigns of '64 and '74 for cocktails and dinner at Harbour Court. Counting plus-ones, there were about 50 people and, again, most of the chatter had to do with the good old days. Interestingly, there was almost no discussion about the current state of the America's Cup. Most of us had written it off as a failing commercial endeavor, having little or nothing to do with the event we had experienced.

Like most of the crew from that era, I had been a college student at the time and had a good deal of sailing experience and size as well as a free summer vacation. The letter I got in December 1963 from our skipper, Eric Ridder, welcoming me to the crew, asked for my clothing dimensions and saying that everything would be provided. (It went on to add that all I would need to bring would be "socks, underwear, and a tuxedo.")

That Selix tuxedo got a real workout from May until well into September, which speaks to a realization I had later about the nature of the America's Cup. For those who paid for the

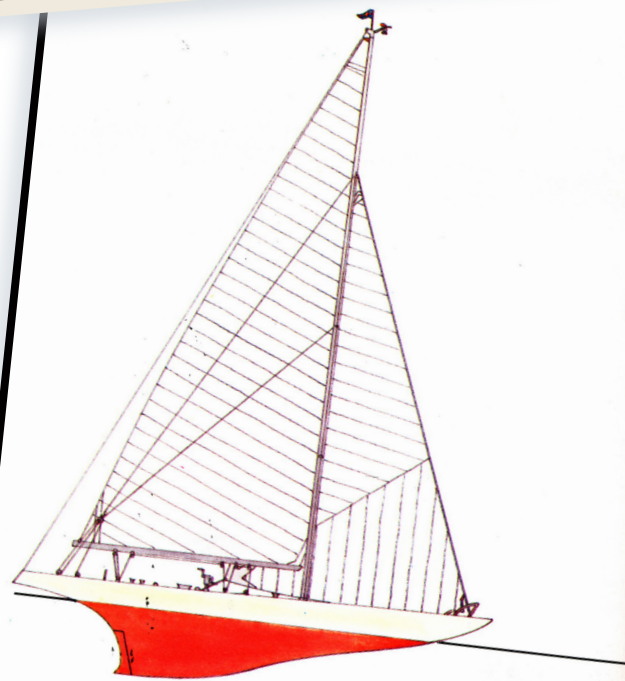
*This page, clockwise from top left: A campaign flag designed by Dick Enersen: "Beat the Bird"—a cry directed at competitor American Eagle; American Eagle, after she was reconverted to an offshore racing yacht; Constellation, engaged in a jibing duel with Nefertiti during the trial races; members of the crew with their wives and girlfriends in September 2014.*

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This page, from above: Putter Brown, Steve Van Dyck, Dick Enersen, Davey McFarlane, Bobby Connell, and Jimmy Gubelmann gathered at Castle Hill Inn to celebrate the 40th anniversary in 2004; the crew in Mighty Mac jackets, 1964; a rendering of Constellation; Opposite page: The crew of Constellation heading out to the racecourse (Harold Vanderbilt was one of the syndicate members).



	date	wind (mph)	start	finish
Constellation Sovereign	9/15	7/9	h. 12.35.08	h. 16.05.41
Constellation Sovereign	9/17	17/20	h. 12.35.10	h. 16.11.15
Constellation Sovereign	9/19	15/17	h. 12.10.21	h. 15.56.48
Constellation Sovereign	9/21	21	h. 12.10.23	h. 16.17.12
Constellation Sovereign			h. 12.10.03	h. 15.48.07
Constellation Sovereign			h. 12.10.43	h. 15.54.40
Constellation Sovereign			h. 12.10.11	h. 16.22.27
Constellation Sovereign			h. 12.10.02	h. 16.38.07

campaigns, in after-tax dollars, the competition on the water was really an excuse for more, and better, parties. But this is not to say that the sailing wasn't important. It was vitally important to us, as competitors, and to a rather small group of people who went to sea on private yachts with "syndicate flags" in their rigging to cheer on their champions. Even going to watch the racing was an endeavor. It wasn't a harbor cruise: the race course was 15 nautical miles out in the Block Island Sound.

In the evenings, after long days of sailing and caring for the boats, we went to their parties, gave them the "inside scoop," and danced with their daughters. We were the show, the circus come to town. And we couldn't have been happier.

The grandest party of the summer—and, indeed, of my entire life—was the *Sovereign* party, "at home" at The Breakers. Tony and Val Boyden, patrons of the British challenger, invited about 500 people to gather at "2200" for dinner and dancing (and whatever) until breakfast, which was served at "0400." The only disappointment was that the Beatles, who had played in Jamestown the previous night, failed to appear. Needless to say, there was no racing scheduled for the next day.

Today, grinders are being paid like first-year lawyers. but, back then, money never changed hands. On reflection, if they had asked us, we would have paid to be included. Not only were we living like princes (never mind the mildew in the basement room that I shared with Putter), but we were sailing the best boats ever—with, and against, the best sailors on the planet. Those experiences, those associations, and those friendships made that summer and have shaped and enriched my life in ways I could never have imagined. I will be thankful for as long as I live. ♦

COURTESY OF DICK ENERSEN

