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STORM TRYSAIL CLUB, BLOCK ISLAND CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF RACE WEEK

NEW SHOREHAM, R.I. (June 21, 2015) – The Storm Trysail Club’s 50th anniversary Block Island Race Week officially kicked off this evening when Commodore Lee Reichert welcomed the some 2,000 sailors on 169 boats who are set to begin competition tomorrow on Block Island Sound.

Representative Blake Filippi of the Rhode Island General Assembly and Jessica Willi of the Block Island Tourism Council were among the dignitaries in attendance at the opening party and recognized the great contributions of the Storm Trysail Club to Block Island. Through the years the Storm Trysail Club has helped raise more than \$100,000 for local charities.

“The tourist season on Block Island is only 10 weeks long and Race Week brings a big windfall for the island,” said Filippi whose father, Paul, used to own Champlin’s Marina, where race week was first hosted. “It brings visitors who might not otherwise come to the island, and they keep coming back. It’s a wonderful week for the island.”

“Block Island Race Week is a harbinger of summer and we salute the Storm Trysail Club on 50 years of excellence,” said Willi.

Founded in 1965 and held biennially, Block Island Race Week is one of the top regattas in North America and one of the oldest events in the world. The Storm Trysail Club chose Block Island as the venue because founding club members Jakob Isbrandtsen and Everett Morris thought it most closely resembled the Isle of Wight in England, where they had competed in Cowes Week. Race week regularly brings together old friends, many of whom sailed their first race week in teenage years.

“I used to do this race week on my dad’s Pearson 36 with my brother,” said Brad Read, the Executive Director of Sail Newport who’s racing aboard the C&C 30 *Nyabinghi* this week. “There used to be skeet shooting, a volleyball tournament and a tug-of-war. Just yesterday I was telling the story of (Jim Kilroy’s maxi yacht) *Kialoa* running aground in the channel. Block Island is just a special place and the racing is so varied that it never gets old.”

For A.J. Evans, tactician on the J/44 *Vamp*, race week offers an opportunity to bring together club members who are scattered throughout the U.S. The Storm Trysail Club is headquartered in Larchmont, N.Y., and operates through local stations around the country.



“Since members are spread throughout the country, they don’t get a chance to get together that often,” said Evans. “The club has so many volunteers that help with race week that it’s like a family reunion when we all get together on Block Island. Race week is the cornerstone of the club.”

This year’s fleet includes a number of new boats such as Austin Fragomen’s 44-footer *Interlodge IV*, from Botin Partners Naval Architecture, and Jack Le Fort’s Bermuda 50 *Watermark*, from the Hinckley Co. Mathew Barker’s classic sloop *The Blue Peter* is the largest boat in the fleet at 65 feet, while Volckert van Reesema’s *5 Cent* is the smallest at 22.75 feet. Other highlights include:

- 14 class winners from the previous race week in 2013
- Entries from 16 states plus the District of Columbia
- Foreign entries from Bermuda, Canada, South Africa and the U.K.
- Crews from the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Coast Guard Academy

“This race week represents 50 years of family fun and good competition, and that’s what brings people back year after year,” said race week chairman Peter Rugg. “There are two key issues that make it great for the sailors: the 120 Storm Trysail volunteers that work tirelessly to make the event run and our generous sponsors.

“We’re using the same old formulas but have added a few tweaks,” Rugg continued. “We’re making a big push with the sustainability program, we’re doing as much administration online as possible, and we’re using an app for all race week communications. We’re taking a classic event and moving it into the 21st century.”

The Block Island Race Week app is available for both [iOS](#) and [Android](#) operating systems. It is the primary communication vehicle for race week, which is committed to being a paperless regatta as part of the sustainability program.

About Block Island Race Week

Founded in 1965, the Storm Trysail Club’s Block Island Race Week is one of the oldest race weeks in the U.S. The regatta is held in odd-numbered years on idyllic Block Island, about 13 miles off the coast of Rhode Island. Measuring less than 10 square miles in area, Block Island has been named one of “The Last Great Places” by the Nature Conservancy. The Storm Trysail Club wishes to thank its many supporters and partners, including sponsors [Mount Gay Rum](#), [North Sails](#), [Block Island Wind Farm](#), [Caithness Energy](#), [Vineyard Vines](#), [New England Boatworks](#), [Bainbridge International](#), [Gill](#), [Hall Spars](#), [Gowrie Group](#), [Trident Studio](#), [JS Watercraft](#), [PhotoBoat.com](#), [Heineken](#), [Newport Vineyards](#), [WindCheck](#), [Sailing World](#), [Utz Potato Chips](#), [Bitter End](#), [Commanders’ Weather](#).

About the Storm Trysail Club

The Storm Trysail Club is one of the world’s most respected sailing clubs. Established in 1938, its membership includes skilled blue water and ocean racing sailors, who have flown a storm trysail (a small



triangular sail flown in very strong winds) or severely reduced canvas during an ocean voyage. The club is headquartered in Larchmont, N.Y., and has regional stations throughout the U.S. The club hosts Block Island Race Week in odd-numbered years, the annual Block Island Race and Fort Lauderdale to Key West Race, Quantum Key West Race Week, the biennial Miami to Montego Bay Race and many other events. The Club's affiliated 501(c)(3) organization, The Storm Trysail Foundation, holds annual junior safety-at-sea seminars and the Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta for college sailors using big boats. For more information, visit [Storm Trysail Club](http://www.stormtrysailclub.com).