

# WindCheck

Sailing the Northeast

**Triumph in  
Trying Times**

**Cruising Under  
the Cloud**

**Visions of Plum**



**September 2020**

[windcheckmagazine.com](http://windcheckmagazine.com)

# publisher's log

## It's all about...

This summer we saw junior program directors and instructors trying really hard to make their classes possible, never mind fun or normal. But as many have observed, this brought a lot of "old school" behaviors back into play, some of which have been called for, without a pandemic to force the situation. Fierce competition at regattas had to take a break this summer. I'm wondering how that will turn out. Will kids have (gulp!) lost a step...be stunted in their ability to roll tack into a crushing lee bow? Or maybe kids will have found some lack of structure turned them on to a lifetime of enjoyment on the water, complete with a few nautical chores.

Speaking of chores, for those of you in the western part of *WindCheck* land, that visit from Isais was a bit more than we planned for. I'm not responsible for half of Connecticut's power being out, but I did leave my community's docks in the water, thinking it would be a modest affair, gusts to 30-40k max, rapidly moving right to 180 degrees, which really wouldn't stress our docks at all. Well, at noon in Norwalk, CT, a 12-knot easterly had me feeling pretty clever. At 1500, with gusts to 60 knots and more, still from the east, I was plotting on where to move the family to avoid the wrath of the neighbors for my destroying the docks. By 1630, it was ever so slowly pulling to the right, and then it accelerated into a honking westerly...and the docks were still intact, thank God. The bimini top on the overexposed BlackFin, also smugly left up, not so much. It goes to show, as so many have told me before, they are JUST models...don't cloud your formerly good judgment based on an optimistic reading of your favorite app. Honestly, it's better to err on the side of the ever-hyping corporate weather folks. You won't hear "I told you so" if you go with their most dire warnings. Plus, it's just good seamanship. On to a few housekeeping items.

First, a clarification: *WindCheck* is NOT the *Official Magazine of The Twenty Hundred Club*. As catchy as that sounds, a.) we get zero swag from them (I think swag is forbidden in their bylaws) and b.) It's purely because they are a very active bunch who have a scribe in their midst who sends us good reports and pictures.

Guess what! You can do that, too! Yes, you can be just as famous as The Twenty Hundred Club (Well, that's a stretch goal – Ed.) All you need to do is send us your copy, results and pics and Huzzah! Every sailor from Manhattan to Falmouth will know of your exploits. And that means you too, Long Island! Just because you are tucked into your beautiful, hard to access by road, harbors, you can let *WindCheck* know what you are up to. Aside from the Huntington Waterfront Festival and the occasional report from Manhasset or Port Jeff, you guys and gals are hermits...Enough! Send us your stuff. We do get info from Oakcliffe but they are already famous, and deservedly so...read On Watch this month as a sample of why.

Huzzah! (love saying that) and see you on the water,



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## Sailing the Northeast

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# The Twenty Hundred Club Block Island Race

By Nick Bowen

The Twenty Hundred Club had their fourth race of the season on Saturday, August 1. The second of the club's two destination races, the Block Island Race starts just south of Rose Island near the G3 Gong, takes the sailors about 17.1 nautical miles (nm) south to buoy 1BI just north of Block Island. This mark is 3.5 nm north of the finish mark, R "2" at the entrance to New Harbor. The total distance for the race is 21.2 nm.

Sixteen boats competed in three classes, with ten Spinnaker boats split between two classes and six Cruising Class boats. The forecast for the day was for morning northerly winds at 5-10 knots and afternoon southerlies at 5-10 knots. High tide was at 6:40 AM, which meant the boats would have a favorable tide all the way to Block. Shortly before the 10:30 AM start, the winds started dropping in speed. The race committee made the decision to start the race because we could at least count on the tide moving the fleet towards where the southerly breeze would form. Three of the six Cruising Class boats did not gauge the wind and tide correctly and found themselves south of the starting line when the gun went off. It would take those boats over an hour to claw their way back to the starting line, fighting the strong current in very light winds.

Around 11:30 AM, the lead boats were near Ham-smith Farm in Newport when one by one, you could see their spinnakers get blown into their masts as the wind made a very abrupt shift from north to south. From that point it was about a five-hour beat to Block in winds of 12 knots, a favorable current and a perfectly blue sky. *First Light*, a Class40 skippered by Peter

McClennan, was the first to finish at 4:03 PM. Gary Venable's Freedom 30 SD *Serendipity*, one of the Cruising Class boats that got trapped south of the starting line, pulled up the rear of the fleet at 6:19 PM (they would correct to fourth of six boats).

The club held a COVID-safe barbeque on the beach just west of The Oar's picnic area, with 67 sailors enjoying the event. Our strategy for COVID safety was to ask boat crews to cluster in areas that were at safe distances and send single crew members to collect food. Sunday was a rest day for the sailors. With a mix of mopedding, biking, swimming and hiking, it was a well-deserved rest from the sailing.

Monday brought a southerly at 10-12 knots, perfect for a downwind run all the way home to Newport. Boats with asymmetric spinnakers needed to take a long jibe to Point Judith before heading back towards the mouth of the bay. As typically happens on these hot August days, by the time the fleet got back towards Castle Hill in Newport they were seeing gusts up to 20 knots. *First Light* was the hot rod of the day, finishing with an elapsed time of two hours, 57 minutes. Gary Venable, obviously frustrated by his Saturday start, reported boat speeds of up to 8 knots and finished twenty-three minutes ahead of the nearest Cruising Class competitor.

To learn more about the Twenty Hundred Club and to register for our unique and challenging races, please visit [twentyhundredclub.org](http://twentyhundredclub.org). ■

*Nick Bowen is the Commodore of the Twenty Hundred Club and races his Lyman-Morse e33 on Narragansett Bay. He can be reached at [commodore@twentyhundredclub.org](mailto:commodore@twentyhundredclub.org).*

*Peter McClennan's First Light leading the spinnaker fleet out of Narragansett Bay. © Nick Bowen*



# The Cuttyhunk Race

By Nick Bowen

The Twenty Hundred Club had their third race of the season on Saturday, July 25. The first of the club's two destination races, the Cuttyhunk Race starts just south of Rose Island near the "G3" Gong, and takes the sailors about four nautical miles (nm) south to buoy "R2" at Brenton Reef. This mark is about two nm south of Castle Hill and there the boats turn east for a 19.5 nm run across Rhode Island Sound and finish at buoy Middle Ground "RGN" just north of Cuttyhunk Island. The total distance for the race is 23.5 nm.

The race was originally scheduled for Saturday, July 11. On Thursday before the race, a meeting of the race committee was held to review the weather reports that included a tropical low off the coast of North Carolina which possibly could transition to a tropical depression later in the day. They were predicting Newport gusts into the thirties and a very high sea state. On Friday morning the RC met and the gusts were down to 25 but the high sea state remained. In the spirit of the democratic process, we polled the twenty entrants and only three were willing to commit.



*Phillippe Perut's Warrior at the start* © Nick Bowen

We made the difficult decision to postpone the race to July 25. Because COVID has pushed so many races to the back of the summer we had to step on another race. We set up a conflict with the Newport Yacht Club Solo-Twin overnight race. That race attracted 50 boats but the wind conditions were so horrific (low) that half the boats did not finish the race. For our rescheduled event there were eight boats that competed in two classes. There were three spinnaker boats and five cruising class boats.

The forecast for the day was southeast winds at 5-10 knots. High tide was at 12:20 PM, which meant the boats would have to fight an incoming tide all the way out to Brenton Reef. Shortly before the 10:30 AM start it looked like there would be



*E.C. Helme's Spirit rounding the mark at Brenton Reef just behind Nick Bowen's epiphany* © Nick Bowen

less than five knots of wind. Fortuitously, just before the first start at the winds kicked up to 12-14 knots.

Nick Bowen's e33 *epiphany* was the first boat to the turn at Brenton Reef around 12:45 PM. He was closely followed by E.C. Helme's J/92S *Spirit* by about thirty seconds. Two hours later, *Spirit* would be the first spinnaker boat to cross the line at 2:40 PM and *epiphany* would be the first cruising class boat to finish at 3:21 PM.

The club was able to secure several moorings in Cuttyhunk's inner harbor, so we were able to have suitable (and safe) rafting after the race. After some cooling off in the water and dinner, we had an awards ceremony at Twenty Hundred Hours (8:00 PM) at the Cuttyhunk town dock. To learn more about the Twenty Hundred Club, please visit [twentyhundredclub.org](http://twentyhundredclub.org). ■

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## Spinnaker Class

1. *Odyssey*, David Brodsky and Alfred Van Liew
2. *Spirit*, E.C. Helme
3. *Serenity*, Curt Spalding

## Spinnaker B Class (PHRF Base >100)

1. *Serendipity*, Gary Venable
2. *epiphany*, Nick Bowen
3. *Arigato*, Tom Gieseke
4. *Warrior*, Phillippe Perut
5. *Blue Skies*, Pat Tormey