

The image shows two sailboats racing on a clear blue sea under a bright sky. The sailboats have large white sails and are tilted as they catch the wind. The crew members are visible on the decks, some wearing white shirts and hats. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is dynamic and energetic.

# MASTERS of the SEA

## Regatta and Sailing Tradition In The Bahamas

A Publication of  
The Ministry of Agriculture,  
Marine Resources and  
Family Island Affairs

Written by  
Patricia Ginton-Meicholas



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*Regatta and Sailing Tradition  
In The Bahamas*

A Publication of the

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, MARINE RESOURCES  
AND FAMILY ISLAND AFFAIRS**

Nassau, NP, The Bahamas

Written by

**Patricia Ginton-Meicholas**

GUANIMA PRESS LTD

A production of  
The Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs  
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Nassau, NP, The Bahamas  
Tel. (242) 397-7400  
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First published 1 November 2021

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Produced for The Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs by  
Guanima Press Ltd  
P.O. Box CB13151  
Nassau, NP, Bahamas  
<https://www.guanimacreative.com>  
[guanimapbah13@outlook.com](mailto:guanimapbah13@outlook.com)

Special thanks/acknowledgements to:

Stafford Armbrister; John Beadle; Bahamas Information Services (BIS); Camilla Cheong; Crystal Knowles-Cartwright; Dawn Davies; Eugene Duffy; Robert Dunkley; Patrick Hanna; Rolfe Harris; Dwayne Higgins; Stefan Knowles; Marysa Malone; Dr Beverton Moxey, Paul Moxey; Linda Moxey-Brown; MBBS; Reuel Parker; Jan Pehrson; Lundy Robinson; Dawn Spivey; Danny Strachan; Kim Outten Stubbs; Tribune News Media.

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# Foreword



## *The Honourable Clay G. Sweeting MP*

*Minister of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs*

The oceans have always played a vital role in the spirit of the Islands of The Bahamas. As a fisherman by trade, I have long been drawn to its beauty, mystery and wonder. In The Bahamas, we are blessed with a multitude of shades of the ocean. With nearly 100,000 square miles of pristine waters, The Bahamas has always summoned sea lovers from around the globe. Sailing throughout the nation's majestic waters is awe-inspiring. While its unparalleled beauty can be viewed from space, the depths of our seascapes are undeniably

legendary. The premier oceans of our country must be celebrated in every way possible. One of the ways this is done is through our Regattas throughout various islands. In these premier sporting events, we find a rich mix of heritage and culture.

This is why I am happy that my Ministry saw fit to produce this book, *Masters of the Sea: Regatta and Sailing Tradition in The Bahamas*. This volume demonstrates the skill and drive to generate quality boats for sailing and

the history, heritage, techniques, and fierce competition required at every Regatta held. It is said that when you are a master, you have gained great proficiency and skill at a task. One of those masters was naval officer Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth's late Consort, who was attracted to a George Town regatta event in 1959 and took the helm of the Lady Muriel with admirable skill. Many more like him, have fallen in love with sailing on Bahamian waters.

*Masters of the Sea*, reveals the details in preserving the world's last wooden sloop fleets. While there is still considerable research to be done on the sport of sloop sailing, the glories of its competition cannot be denied. This is why this exhilarating sport has progressed so magnificently over the years. As hundreds of masters instinctively defend their titles in various facets of sloop sailing, there is little wonder why regattas have been anchored as the top sporting activity in The Bahamas.

Regattas themselves are a marvel and have played a pivotal role in the economies of the islands where they are held. Born out of the events and continuing to flourish are numerous jobs such as boatbuilding, sailmaking, fisheries, straw work, t-shirt manufacturing, culinary arts, music, folk arts, entrepreneurship, transportation, hospitality and tourism—both domestic and international. Bahamians have a

deep love and appreciation for Regattas and treat them as “homecomings” – a chance to visit family and friends while enjoying great food and entertainment. Tourists, who no doubt visit the Regattas out of sheer curiosity, are pleasantly surprised at how they are also genuinely embraced as family.

I am particularly pleased that the Bahamas Government has taken sloop sailing seriously and proudly dubbed sailing the country's national sport. Therefore, the *Masters of the Sea* comes at a momentous occasion. In this book, we proudly celebrate our ancestors, boatbuilders, sailmakers, mast and jib trimmers, anchor rode haulers and pry riders, boat owners and sponsors who display a high degree of passion for the sport. My Ministry and I salute them because, without them, sailing in The Bahamas would not be the force that it is today.

I also highly commend and express my deep gratitude to the researcher and writer of the book Patricia Ginton-Meicholas and Neko Meicholas of Guanima Press Ltd, who designed and produced *Masters of the Sea*. The husband and wife team have persevered throughout a global pandemic to deliver this essential book. I also commend my Ministry's Regatta Desk Manager Barry Wilmott and staff who exercised oversight. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to Bahamas Information Services and Tribune

News Media for their cooperation. I especially thank photographers, who have generously shared precious photos notably Robert Dunkley, Patrick Hanna and Jan Pehrson. We also thank those who have allowed us to use superb paintings to display the glory of sloop sailing in this book. Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor Michael Pintard for commissioning the book for the enjoyment of all.

It is my hope that by reading this book many throughout the world would have a deep appreciation for our regattas and the magic of sailing the breath-taking waters of The Bahamas. I also hope that more Bahamians, both young and old, would seek to cultivate and preserve the future of regattas for many more generations to come.

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna



# Author's Note

*Patricia Glinton-Meicholas*

*By* 2020, a book that begins to record the people, environments and artifacts that make up the sailing and regatta tradition of The Bahamas was long overdue. Too much had already been entombed with the passing of architects and builders of the sport or archived in failing memories, endangering the continuance of a national treasure.

We are grateful to the Honourable Clay G. Sweeting MP, himself a sea master, for continuing this signal project. The Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs and former Minister the Honourable Michael C. Pintard MP must be congratulated for commissioning this work. The prevailing pandemic, because of the necessary imposition of limits on in-person interviews and access to archives of sound and video recordings, photographs and other resources constituted another obstacle. Undaunted by these and other challenges to such research, identification of potential tradition bearers, informants and copyright as well as obtaining permissions from

copyright holders, the author and Neko Meicholas, the designer and producer, forged ahead, delving deep into modern technologies to conduct interviews and search archives to be found in cyberspace. The greatest of disappointments was to learn of the paucity of statistics and the hesitance in sharing what does exist. We are deeply grateful to those who were willing to talk to us and share such information as they possessed.

It must be noted that while every effort was made to make this work as comprehensive as possible, it is not exhaustive. There will come criticisms that this person or that person, or this event or that event was not included. It is never possible in one fell swoop to include the universe of people and events of many years of regattas across our island chain. The work must be ongoing, encompassing more research and more attention to preserving statistics. There must be more publications in a variety of formats and easily accessed media, including digital. This is my hope!





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# *Introduction*

**W**ooden boat competitive sailing or ‘regatta’ in The Bahamas is one of the most marvelous and laudable endeavours of humankind in terms of identity definition, heritage preservation and transmission, tactical genius and contributions to national and world patrimony. At first, many may regard this claim as patriotic overreaching; however, a revelation of the complex parts and contributions that underlie this fiercely guarded tradition will quell scepticism in all but the most obstinate.

Regatta is nurtured in the womb of an archipelago, which produces a natural environment dominated by an inland sea replete with fascinating marine features, all embraced by the fierce Atlantic Ocean. Inevitably in The Bahamas, water became an important generator of industry, an essential highway for interisland and international communication and transport, as well as a perfect medium for sailing and other recreational pursuits. Certainly, the marine environment offers a pleasingly challenging arena for competitive watersports such as regattas.

In these islands, regattas have made a significant contribution socially, economically and culturally. They call forth the superb craftsmanship of wooden sloop builders who, using only the blueprints of tradition, fashion vessels that are mechanisms of incredible maneuverability and speed owing

to nothing more than the marriage of wind and sail, yet imbued with great beauty and grace. Also to be celebrated as natural partners of boatbuilding are boat owners, those who fund new boats and those who sponsor regattas.

Annually, regattas assemble the country's finest sailors who are distinguished by their great ability to strategize and pivot at a moment's impulse. Each of these masters of the sea tack around buoys and avoid obstacles such as sandbars and flotsam, while coaxing their boats to turn bow into the wind, driving sails and boom to change direction without sacrificing too much momentum and losing any advantage already gained and, possibly, the race.

The captains and crews of participating vessels, including bowmen, mainsail and jib trimmers, anchor rope haulers and pry riders give up time at jobs and other gainful pursuits as well as time with families for weeks to participate in race meets that stretch from January to December each year. What could fuel this degree of expenditure of tactical skills, strength and precious time but the glory of achievement and a fierce pride in being an essential part of a unique

and worthy national tradition. Certainly, the modest prize money cannot balance the ledger on this largely sacrificial contribution.

Each year, the competitions require and receive the services of committee planners and organizers who coordinate the input of various official and commercial organizations, agencies, competitors, entertainers and vendors. They secure necessary permissions, funding and transport of the racing sloops, while monitoring the weather and tides and other potential hazards and obstacles to progress. In the majority, these are dedicated volunteers.

From island to island, regattas, allied with the promotion of 'homecomings'—natives of an island returning to their roots—boost economies of small communities that are fairly static for the rest of the year.

The foregoing is merely a sketch of the complexity and significance of the entity that is regatta in The Bahamas. Like Junkanoo, the sport defines the heritage, people and nation.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

The tradition it fosters preserves and provides a theatre for displaying the magnificence of one of the last fleets of wooden sailboats in the world. It crosses barriers of race and socioeconomic status. It demonstrates how, through this medium, Bahamians preserve and extend wooden boat building and sailing styles unique to and distinguishing of a people, while reflecting the principal lines of their ethnic heritages. Regattas and the often associated “homecomings” help to promote the unique character of each island that supports one of these sailing competitions, generating pride of place in people born, descended from or resident there. Not unexpected, there are interisland rivalries, like that between Long Island and Staniel Cay.

Of greatest consequence, the regatta tradition in The Bahamas has significant value as part of the global patrimony. As such, regatta should be listed with appropriate international bodies as an element of the intangible heritage of this archipelagic nation. It is hoped that those reading this publication will be suffused with national pride, and thus inspired to seek such designations and establish a maritime museum and similar anchor points to preserve valuable knowledge and related visuals and sound. Hopefully, such provisions will extend Bahamian wooden sloop building and racing in its homeland in perpetuity for the benefit of generations yet unborn.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna





# Ocean World of The Bahamas

*The main thing for us is to sail here. The Bahamas is a dream country for sailing.* — Michel Niklaus,  
Star Sailors League representative (2016)<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Bahamas is an archipelago of 700 islands and an estimated 2,400 cays. These green gems are set in a mosaic of crystalline blues resting on plateaus in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is largely an ocean world. The country's sea territory comprises 654,715 km<sup>2</sup> (252,787 sq. miles) and the ratio of water to land is 7.03 to 1. This feature led to a need for seagoing vessels, the development in Bahamians of a superb knowledge and mastery of the surrounding, whimsical seas, boat building and sailing. This unique marine environment has also provided the matrix for a world-class tourism industry. All of these factors were critical components in the creation of

the grand sporting and competitive pursuit of The Bahamas—Regatta, which is the main subject of this book.

It should not surprise that the glorious waters of The Bahamas have exercised a compelling lure for centuries. They have been declared the clearest in the world, offering visibility to a depth of more than 60m (200 ft) in sectors. Orbiting the Earth for 340 days aboard the International Space Station (ISS), US astronaut Scott Kelly had the best seat in the world's theatre. From this unmatched vantage point, he extolled the beauties of Bahamian seas: *Bahamas, the strokes of your watercolors are always a refreshing sight, The Bahamas never fails to impress! Been hanging out with The Bahamas again, it never gets old.*<sup>2</sup>

Chris Hadfield, another American astronaut aboard the ISS, was equally awed by nature's profligate oceanic gift to The Bahamas. When asked to name the most beautiful place on earth, Hadfield replied: *The Bahamas are gorgeous. The deep trench in the ocean floor called the Tongue of the Ocean, which comes between the islands, is the most beautiful deep indigo colour.*<sup>3</sup>

A NASA website offered this poetic description in 2009: *East of southern Florida, large swaths of ocean water glow peacock blue. These*

*waters owe their iridescence to their shallow depths. Near Florida and Cuba, the underwater terrain is hilly, and the crests of many of these hills comprise the islands of The Bahamas.*<sup>4</sup>

Contributing to painting the extraordinary canvas of The Bahamas are such outstanding pelagic features as the world's third-longest barrier reef, five percent of the world's coral and the myriads of fish in colours of the rainbow that make their home there. There too is the 22-mile Long Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park, stretching from Wax Cut Cay to Conch Cut. It is the oldest land and sea park in the world, and the first protected area in the wider Caribbean. Then there are submarine caverns of unique character and population, more blue holes than anywhere else, including Dean's Blue Hole, west of Clarence Town, Long Island which, at 203 meters (663 ft), is the second deepest in the world.

*The sea is fundamental to the Bahamian concept of self—not only (as might be presumed) as a barrier to communication, but as the medium of communication as well; the sea, I contend, unites Bahamians even as it separates them. ~ Anthropologist Nicolette Bethel.*<sup>5</sup>

This predominance of water has pervaded the consciousness of all who have lived here

through the ages. The Lucayans, the first recorded Bahamians, had an intimate relationship with the sea and were, of necessity, expert divers, sailors and boatbuilders. They constructed dugout canoes fashioned from native trees and capable of traveling considerable distances over ocean. The surrounding seas and their various aspects also featured strongly in the spiritual life and iconography of the Lucayans. One of their major deities, Atabeyra was hailed as “*mother of moving waters’—the sea, the tides, the springs...*”<sup>6</sup>



**Regatta** 1966, R. Brent Malone | Courtesy of Marysa Malone. Collection of Anthony Jervis.

This marine omnipresence would continue to exercise a considerable influence on the nation’s history, economy, society and culture, especially as regards food sources and preferences, inter-island communication, industry and recreation. Notably, from the Lucayan era, seafaring to harvest the food bounty of our waters became

vital to the Bahamian diet and livelihood. In modern times, commercial fishing provides a major export.

Furthermore, up to the 21st century, no technologies existed to make practicable or wise roadways to link the major landmasses of The Bahamas. Island-to-island bridges are few and have been built only where the distance between linked points is fairly short. Elsewhere, the essential connections are made by seagoing



**Night Fishing** Rolfe Harris c.1998 | Courtesy of the Dawn Davies Collection.

vessels. As The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism has noted, boats are like the “family cars” to the people of the islands. Despite the great dependence upon the sea for food, economic development, communication

and transportation, exploitation of Bahamian waters has never been easy. Significant knowledge and skills are needed to master a unique marine-scape defined by a variety of challenges. The islands arise from a series of

underwater plateaus, topped by sandy shelves termed 'banks' which surround the islands (the Great Bahama Bank underlying the Central Bahamas, the Grand Bahama Bank to the north where sit the island of Grand Bahama and Abaco subgroups and smaller platforms fringing the remaining islands of the chain). In these areas, the waters are relatively shallow often less than 10 meters (33 feet) and are punctuated by a variety of coralline formations.

In contrast, the Bahama banks are intersected and surrounded by profound ocean channels. The great Tongue of the Ocean (TOTO) is a submarine canyon where depths vary from 1,100 m (3,600 ft) to 2,000 m (6,600 ft). Other trenches include the Northeast and Northwest Providence Channels, Exuma Sound, the Crooked Island Passage, the Mayaguana Passage, and the Santaren, Nicholas and Old Bahama Channels.

On sailing this unique and magnificent combination of waters, unexpected variations come into play. The eastern side (or 'northside' as Bahamians call it) of such barrier islands as Eleuthera, Cat Island and Long Island is bordered by deep ocean where water depth

can reach 1000m less than three nautical miles offshore and offer heavy wave action, while leeside waters can be as flat as that of an isolated pond. Additionally, the tidal range in The Bahamas is considerable and the sailor can encounter tidal flats, reefs, shoals, hidden rock formations and sandy dunes that can shift with the tides, all of which can present challenges to the unwary boater.

Of special note are the deep tidal channels or 'cuts' separating the islands of subgroups such as Exuma Cays, a continuous necklace of a reputed 365 islets. Traveling from island to island, especially the barriers, Bahamian captains of mail/cargo boats and various deep-draft vessels would run along the Atlantic side and enter leeside harbours through these inlets or "cuts". Termed 'the going through' by Bahamians, the cuts are where a large volume of water from the open ocean gets funneled through a fairly narrow space with great force to the shallower waters, or vice versa. Such passages can be attended by fierce currents, rolling waves and eddies. Some cuts, such as the notorious Whale Cay Passage in the Abacos and Galliot Cut in the Exuma chain have become legendary for their challenges.



**The Sloop, Nassau.** Winslow Homer (1899)  
Watercolor and graphite on off-white wove paper (14 7/8 x 21 3/8 in. (37.8 x 54.3 cm)  
Amelia B. Lazarus Fund, 1910 | Metropolitan Museum of Art | Accession Number: 10.228.3

# A Heritage of Sea Mastery

*In The Bahamas... seamanship is the measure of a person. There are times when it tests a person's mettle, tries their soul, and tempers both to produce a hardy breed of sailors who take pride in their power to live in harmony with the powers of the wind and waves... They set out to sea in locally built boats of horseflesh (a strong local wood ideal for inner boat timbers), and heart pine. The tradition was born soon after The Bahamas were settled. (<https://www.worldnomads.com>)<sup>7</sup>*

## **Sailing Ancestors**

If ever there was a country that needed men to match its seas, it is The Bahamas. History and migration obliged by providing settlers, free and forced, who would be equal to

mastering The Bahamas ocean world. Following the forced removal of the Lucayans by Spanish explorers, the islands of The Bahamas were resettled from 1648 by people of sea-oriented character. The first ancestors of present-day Bahamians came from Bermuda, which colony's economy was primarily maritime, producing boatbuilders and sailors. With them came to our islands the swift, workhorse Bermudian sloop. While this vessel may be considered to have provided the foundation of Bahamian boatbuilding, under the hands of local artisans, Bahamian vessels developed unique features in response to local maritime conditions.

With the next phase of settlement came the expansion of slavery in The Bahamas. The enslaved came from Africa, mainly from the continent's western side with its long coasts



**Emancipation Boat Cruise** John Beadle | Collection of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas.

and many rivers, which give rise to a strong tradition of boatbuilding and water skills among its peoples. As one writer has noted, it seems reasonable to expect that, among those enslaved and brought to America, would have been some who carried with them knowledge of boatbuilding, boat handling and fishing experience from West Africa.<sup>8</sup> In the new

environment, especially on the eastern coasts and along the rivers of North America that were so important to trade and defence, many of the enslaved were highly valued as pilots.

It is notable too that it was a common practice of the British Navy to hire blacks. Michael J. Jarvis relates the story of the Continental frigate *Deane*, which captured the Bermudian privateer *Regulator*. When the sailors of the *Deane* boarded the prize vessel, they discovered that seventy of the seventy-five-man crew were black slaves. In broad sense, service at sea offered a degree of emancipation owing to the interdependence of all aboard a vessel, which was essential to the safety and success of a voyage.<sup>9</sup>

Bahamian historian Christopher Curry mentions that such men tended to serve on naval vessels, particularly as crew of armed galleys, protecting the inland waterways of the American colonies during their fight for freedom. Such was the case of the galley *Balfour*. When captured by American revolutionaries, blacks were found aboard as crewmen.<sup>10</sup>

### **A PBS special noted:**

*In his memoirs, U.S. Navy Commodore James Barron, who served as a captain in the Virginia navy during the war, recalled several black men among the “courageous patriots who... in*



*justice to their merits should not be forgotten.” He mentions four slaves: Harry, Cupid, Aberdeen (who subsequently befriended Patrick Henry and was freed by the Virginia General Assembly) and the “noble African” pilot known as ‘Captain’ Mark Starlins.<sup>11</sup>*

American historian Daniel S. Cecelski wrote of a slave seaman named Peter, who was one of a band of skilled pilots upon whom merchants and planters depended upon to guide their ships safely through dangerous coastal passages. Peter is credited with playing a vital role in the seagoing portion of the slave-liberating Underground Railroad. The Bahamas was a destination on the freedom journey of many escaping slavery in North America and its waters provided the ‘tracks’<sup>12</sup>

Among those who migrated, forcibly or freely to The Bahamas following the American Revolution, would have come sailors, ships carpenters and boatbuilders. Among the latter group was William Paul, son of Joseph Paul who initiated Methodist witness in this country. William owned a boat in The Bahamas.<sup>13</sup>

## **Navigational Prowess**

The combination of extensive and challenging seas and an ancestry of seafarers created the blueprints for and gave rise to generations of hardy sailors, and magnificent boatbuilders,

navigators and skippers. The latter two have safely crossed ocean spaces from the remotest areas of the country, such as the easternmost San Salvador and Mayaguana with few, if any man-made navigational technologies.

Without depth sounders and satellite-enabled GPS, Bahamian mariners relied on the aids provided by nature. They became expert at dead reckoning and taking directions from the daily movement of the sun across the sky, island contours and onshore structures. They read the messages offered by prevailing winds, wind shifts and sky colours. They came to know the hazards of tidal currents, whirlpools, reefs and rock outcroppings. They knew the treachery of reefs such as Devil’s Backbone off Harbour Island in the Eleuthera subgroup and those extending more than three miles off Long Island’s Cape Santa Maria at its northern end.

One such seaman was Henry Sawyer, affectionately called ‘**Bo Hengy**’ (**Brother Henry**), born in Harbour Island in 1856. Of his prowess as a sailor, it was said that “he was familiar with almost every nook, cranny, reef and rock to be found throughout the length and breadth of The Bahamas. He could traverse the treacherous Devil’s Backbone Reef between Harbour Island and Eleuthera virtually blindfolded.”<sup>14</sup>

# *Sea Transport*

## *A Bahamian Economic Necessity*

*Every economic bounty and environmental beauty, afforded by nature's great legacy to the archipelago, have come from the sea. ~ Eric Wiberg, professional mariner and maritime historian.<sup>15</sup>*

### **Predominance of Maritime Industry**

The scarcity of arable land contributed significantly to the development of maritime activities as a major industry in The Bahamas. A strong plantation culture failed to take root in the archipelago as it did in the rest of the Caribbean region where agricultural products such as sugar and its by-products as well as tobacco, rice and indigo dominated. Booms in exports such as cotton, pineapples and sisal hemp for ropemaking tended to be of short duration, and usually short-circuited by international politics and transportation issues or the imposition of protective tariffs in their main markets.

Consequently, before the coming and rapid growth of offshore banking and mass tourism beginning in the 1950s, the yield of the sea—maritime industries, legal or illegal, provided the backbone of The Bahamas economy. Chief among these pursuits were wrecking, salvaging, scalefish, conch and crawfish fisheries, sponging, blockade running during the American Civil War and rum running.

There is abundant evidence of the Bahamian reliance on the sea for livelihood. The history of prohibition in the United States (1920-1933) offers many examples of Bahamians engaged in maritime trade following the American loyalist influx, which brought boat owners, boatbuilders and ships carpenters.



**Nassau**, Winslow Homer (1899)  
Watercolor and graphite on off-white wove paper (14 7/8 x 21 3/8 in. (37.8 x 54.3 cm)  
Amelia B. Lazarus Fund, 1910 | Metropolitan Museum of Art | Accession Number: 10.228.4

Before the age of motor-driven vessels, Bahamian seas were awash with workboats driven by sail. In her publication *Bahamian Workboats—Schooners, Sloops and Smacks*, Exumian Jane Minns offers the following descriptions:

*Fishing smacks were sloops with wells to keep their catch alive. Most smacks had at least one or two dinghies . Some dinghies had a single mainsail. Others were just sculled... The large smack was actually a*

*sloop, which was a single-masted version of the schooner with a mainsail and jib. Smaller than the latter, the sloop ran thirty-four feet overall (twenty-four feet on the keel). Like the schooner, it had sleeping accommodations, and cooking was done on deck using an open, wood-burning cook box. Costing about a third of the price of a schooner, it too was used in the sponge trade.<sup>16</sup>*



These vessels were a part of life that was not for the fainthearted; rather, it bred a hearty race of sailors. Minns noted one of the primary challenges boat crews and passengers faced on the high seas:

*Wind is free, but it's also fickle. It comes and goes. Some days there's too much and others not enough—or none at all. With a fair wind you'd be in Nassau in two days. Becalmed on the way, you might be anchored for days. With a gale or unexpected hurricane you could be holed up in a cove in the cays, fearing for your life. In some cases the passengers resorted to*

*eating up much of the produce they were carrying to sell in Nassau.<sup>17</sup>*

**Historian Gail Saunders** also described how the vagaries of wind could impact journeys in the age of sail, noting that head winds could cause a Bimini-to-Nassau crossing to take twenty-two hours, while the return passage could require a laborious ninety hours. A Nassau/Inagua journey could manage a three-day trajectory with wind filling the sails, whereas lack of nature's propellant could stretch the time to eleven days.<sup>18</sup>

## Mail & Provision Boats and Their Captains

No account of sailing and sea transport in The Bahamas should fail to pay tribute to the mail boats and their captains, who endured and overcame the many challenges of sea voyages. Some men and vessels have attained the status of legend. At first the mailboats were sailing sloops; then came motorized vessels in modern times. Many of the latter had extraordinary early lives—retired British and United States vessels—some navy, some coast guard, several having seen service in World War II.

Some mailboats were built in The Bahamas, others in countries as far removed from the islands as Germany and Serbia. Whatever their origins, mailboats have long been part of the life support system of the Family Islands of The Bahamas, certainly as the principal means of provisioning these outliers of the archipelago. So deeply enmeshed are they in the fabric of Bahamian life that songs have been written about them and The Bahamas Government subsidizes them.

In 2018, in his contribution to the mid-year Budget debate in Parliament, the Minister of Transport and Local Government noted that there were 22 mail boat routes serviced by 19 mail boat operators, all of whom received

a government subvention to undertake that service and that just over \$2 million was paid out to operators during the six months to end-December 2017.

The mailboat service across the challenging sea lanes of The Bahamas has called for masters of the sea, skippers and crew who have formed dynasties in some instances. Notable captains, often the builders and owners of the vessels they helm, have often arisen in families: William Augustus Roberts of Green Turtle Cay, Abaco and his sons Hartley, Osbourne and Rolland; Sherwin, Bobby and Garnett Archer of Marsh Harbour; the Moxey clan of Ragged Island: Edgar O. Moxey, boatbuilder, mailboat captain and sailor and sons Marcus, Boycel and Lesardo and grandson Kevin Moxey, masters of the Captain Moxey. Patriarch Ernest Alexander Dean founded Dean Shipping. His sons James, Marcus, John and Ernest Jr followed him in the business. Ernest Jr now runs the business with MV Legacy and MV Champion III as successors of a long line of vessels. Ragged Islander Walter “Big Wally” Maycock and sons Cephas and Etienne operate the Captain C; father and son Kenneth “Lenny” and Lance Brozozog own the Grandmaster. The Munson Shipping clan are Emmitt Munroe and sons Jed and Sean. The sons operate Island Link and Sherice M, respectively.

From the oral recounting of Cleomay ‘Mary’ Hall, also called Mary), we learn of the exploits of her seagoing forefathers. Her paternal grandfather, Joseph Williams (also called ‘Pa Joe’) captained the working sailboat J. S. Relief and her father Benjamin Hall (‘Pa B’), owner and captain of *B. W. Empress*. In the 1930s, both men engaged in provisioning voyages across The Bahamas and the Western Caribbean and young Cleomay sometimes sailed with them.<sup>19</sup>

Pa Joe’s nine-ton vessel made a regular two-week roundtrip transporting thousands of dried conch to be sold in Haiti. On the return journey, the J. S. Relief would take as much as 1,500 sticks of sugar cane, and 75 barrels of mangoes, oranges and many other fruits to be sold in Grand Turk. According to Lawrence Bascom, sailor and owner of the sailboat *Empress* and great grandson and grandson of Williams and Hall respectively, Pa Joe’s skills as a captain were put to the test on 13 September 1945, when he narrowly survived the now infamous, Category 4 hurricane that claimed the lives of scores of seamen.

Up to the middle of the last century, Ragged Island sailors, such as the Lockhart, Maycock, Moxey and Munroe families made regular trips in journeys encompassing islands of The Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti. Back then, the international legs of the journeys took marine

products such as dried conch and salt to the latter countries and brought back agricultural products, which the Haitians and Cubans grew abundantly in their richer soils. As Captain Noel Bridgewater noted in 2012, the significant distance between Ragged Island and Nassau, The Bahamas capital, pushed Bahamian captains to sail into Boca de Samá to purchase, through that town’s agents, goods from Cuba’s second city, Santiago de Cuba a range of merchandise as extensive as could be had from Miami, Florida.<sup>20</sup>

In the present century, along with human passengers, the mailboats of The Bahamas transport such things that passenger aircraft cannot transport—cars, trucks, boats (including regatta sloops) gasoline, propane, groceries furniture, cement, dry goods from Nassau for distribution among the Family Islands. Reverse sailings usually feature farm products, livestock and mechanical items for repair in the capital.

There is little doubt that all such captains have experienced and had to overcome challenges in the ever-changing arena of ocean and weather, and there are those who featured in history-making events. During World War II, Captain (later Senator) Sherwin Archer of the inter-island schooner *Arena*, played a significant role in saving the lives of the crew of a Norwegian cargo vessel *O.A. Knudsen*, which had been

torpedoed by a U-boat. He guided their lifeboat to a remote lumber camp on Great Abaco situated north of Hole in the Wall.<sup>21</sup>

In October 1959 the mail boat M/V Drake, with its regular crew, was the vessel used in an expedition mounted to follow the route of Christopher Columbus in his approach to San Salvador. At the helm was Captain C. Storr and Captain Enos Collie was in charge of the logline.<sup>22</sup>



Captains from the southern end of the chain, such as Ragged Island's captains Hezron Moxey and Emmitt Munroe, helmed vessels making trading runs to Cuba and Haiti and skippers from the northern and central islands traveled to ports on the east coast of the United States and even farther afield.

The Hope Town wreckers who were motivated to salvage a ship's cargo also saved countless lives by speeding to sinking ships. In 1853 Capt Robert Sands of the schooner "Oracle"

saved the passengers of the ship "William and Mary", travelling from Liverpool to New Orleans and received the Silver Medal from the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Lives from Shipwreck. (<https://www.hopetownmuseum.com/about-us/story-of-hope-town.html>)<sup>23</sup>



Photographs courtesy of © Barbara Jesubathem, 2019



# Boatbuilding

## An Archipelagic Triumph

**T**he natural partner of sailing is the construction of boats, arising, of necessity, on islands throughout the archipelago.

Before the age of motor vessels, sailmakers were essential affiliates to boatwrights. Owing to the proliferation of the sport of regatta nationwide, sailingmaking, like the crafting of wooden boats, has established a sure berth in the maritime arts of The Bahamas.

Although Abaco boatbuilding is more frequently spoken of in writings on this subject, the craft and skilled craftsmen could be found on Andros, Cat Island, Crooked Island, Exuma (particularly Black Point and Staniel Cay in the Exuma Chain), Harbour Island in the Eleuthera group, Inagua, Long Island, Mayaguana and Ragged Island.

The Abacos were indeed a frontrunner in building large vessels capable of international

travel. It is likely that this notable skill was boosted by the sizable migration of seafaring Harbour Islanders to that island group in the latter days of the 18th century. Early Abaco achievements in shipbuilding are exemplary.

1785—The twenty-one ton sloop *Huaibras* (possibly *Hudibras*?) was built and launched in Abaco, followed in 1786 by the building and launch of the one hundred-fifty-five ton *Ulysees*.

1788—Five Abaco-built cargo vessels were documented in Nassau with cargo from as far afield as Jamaica, Charleston, New York and London.

1890s—The 60' sailing vessel *Albertine Adoue* was built in Green Turtle Cay from salvaged materials. She served as Abaco's only sailing mailboat until the 1920's.

1917—In Man-O-War Cay, the construction of a three-masted 266-ton schooner, **Abaco**, began. Built with timbers from Great Abaco, it featured a 112' keel, 130' length overall (LOA), draft of 10' and 33' beam. It was launched the following year.<sup>24</sup>

1922—The **Abaco Bahamas**, said to be the largest vessel ever built in Hope Town, was a three-masted, 484 tons schooner, 158' LOA, 35' beam, draft of 8'.

The following listing of vessels built in various islands of The Bahamas and owners, was culled and abbreviated from the **British Mercantile List of 1911**. It provide evidence of the ubiquity of boatbuilding in the archipelago.<sup>25</sup>

## Nassau/Hog Island

*(Paradise Island)*

1868—**Albert**, schooner, Hog Island, Alonzo Bethel, Nassau.

1870—**Julia**, schooner, Nassau, NP, Orlando F. Pritchard, Nassau.

1877—**Agnes Louisa**, schooner, Nassau, NP, James C. Smith, Nassau.

1884—**Tropic Nassau**, N.P., Nassau, NP, Hilton C. Albury, Nassau.

## Acklins

1897—**Avon**, schooner, Acklins, Robert Brown, Nassau.

1899—**Bermudian**, sloop, Acklins, William Richard Darrell, Acklins.

## Andros/Berry Islands

1879—**Beauregard**, schooner, Andros, Richard Edgcombe, Andros.

1899—**Olga**, sloop, Stanyard Creek, Samuel Woodside, Stafford Creek, Andros.

1882—**May Queen**, schooner, Berry Islands, George B. Adderley, Nassau.

1866—**Quiver**, sloop, Bamboo Cay (Berry Islands), Bahamas, 6, Benjamin Brenner, Bamboo Cay.

## Bimini

1906—**Increase**, schooner, Bimini, Edward Wilkinson, Bimini.

1907—**Cordelia**, sloop, Bimini, Benjamin S. Brown, Bimini.

## Cat Island

1910—**Pearline**, schooner, Cat Island, William Munnings, Cat Island.

1904—**Winnie**, schooner, Cat Island, Charles W. Brownrigg, Cat Island.



## Eleuthera

1892—**Catherine**, schooner, Rock Sound, James Alexander Sands, Rock Sound Eleuthera.

1895—**Astarte**, schooner, Eleuthera, James T. Farrington, Nassau.

## Grand Bahama

1883—**Contest**, schooner, Grand Bahama, Richard Wilchcombe, Grand Bahama.



1888—**Income**, schooner, Grand Bahama, Robert N. Musgrove, Nassau.

## Long Cay

1876—**Scud**, sloop, Long Cay / Fortune Island, Richard W. Farrington, Nassau.

## Mayaguana

1882—**Alice**, schooner, Mayaguana, Robert Henry Sawyer, Nassau.



## Ragged Island

**Warrant**, sloop, Ragged Island, George Hullberton Browne, Nassau.

## San Salvador

1896—**Boy Kin**, schooner, San Salvador, 11, William E. Armbrister, Nassau.



# Noted Boatwrights

**I**n the production of formidably talented boatwrights, certain islands of The Bahamas have stood out for generations with the skills being passed down in families. Bearing the crown of this maritime craft have been Great Abaco and its satellite cays Man-O-War, Elbow (Hope Town) and Green Turtle; Long Island; Andros, particularly the settlement of Lisbon Creek; Exuma and its cays, notably Staniel Cay the settlement of Black Point on Great Guana Cay and Ragged Island. The twinned New Providence and Hog Island (the latter now called ‘Paradise’, a resort mecca) across Nassau Harbour were the site of a major shipbuilding enterprise.

*I can almost visualize Man Finley and Gentry McPhee in Andros, Prince Ferguson and Rolly Grey in Exuma, the Moxeys and the Lockharts in Ragged Island, each one asserting that they built the better vessel. I can see them discussing the lines of the stem and the way ‘she’ stood up in the water, as if they were discussing the most beautiful woman.—Margaret Tatum Gilbert.<sup>26</sup>*

**Note:** The following list of builders is by no means exhaustive.

## **New Providence/Hog Island**

*(now Paradise Island)*

Up to the mid-20th century, Symonette’s Shipyards was the major builder of vessels in The Bahamas capital. According to E. Dawson Roberts (1926-2012), a Bahamian attorney of longstanding, whose father **James Jenkins Roberts** (1886-1973) was foreman at Symonette’s, the enterprise “the largest shipyard south of Jacksonville (Florida), was never a day during the war (World War II) without boats on its marine railways.” Roberts noted that the yard constructed the vessels *Anne Bonny*, *William Sayle*, *Caribbean Queen* and *Jenkins Roberts*, all over 120’ in length. Also built at Symonette’s was the M/V *Caribbean Queen*.<sup>27</sup>

## **Thomas Winer Malone, Tradition Bearer**

*(1 November 1929 – 22 January 2018)*

Commonly called ‘Winer’, Thomas Winer Malone of Hope Town, Abaco, was a legendary crafter of the classic Abaco dinghy and a much-revered man, whom this writer had the privilege of interviewing in the 1990s. Following only the blueprints of memory and accounts passed down from generation to generation, this unassuming man of quiet humour left a precious gift to the intangible heritage of The Bahamas. Consciously and with unflinching fidelity, he used traditional materials, design and tools in fashioning over 200 vessels in the course of a career of more than seven decades. Winer’s dinghies had sails mounted or could be sculled by an oar lodged in a notch in the transom on windless days. These boats served to boost the Bahamian fishing fleet, others raced in regattas and many were used for recreational sailing. Today, they are collectors’ items, eagerly sought by connoisseurs of hand-built crafts.

Like boatwrights of old, this descendant of early settler Wyannie Malone, personally foraged in local forests to collect branches of madeira, dogwood and corkwood, which

could withstand saltwater erosion for decades at sea. He would search for natural, V-shaped crooks destined to be whittled into frames without benefit of jigs and with hand tools—hatchets, planes, saws, wooden mallets, claw hammers and the like—all powered by muscle alone. In his workshop on Hope Town’s Back Street, he began construction as his forerunners did, laying a keel and attaching stem, sternpost and transom.

While he lost his father at the age of three, Winer said he was blessed by a good stepfather who was employed at sawmills in Abaco and later moved to Grand Bahama, to which island he moved his family. It was there that the young Abaconian built his first boat. His inspiration and encourager was his maternal uncle **Clarence Bethel**, a boatbuilder, whom he observed at work in Hope Town during a visit. Bethel sent Winer back to Grand Bahama with a bundle of corkwood crooks to frame his earliest efforts. For a few years during his adulthood, Winer constructed motor-powered vessels, but eventually returned to his first passion—the sail and oar-driven wooden boat, creating an enduring legend and incurring the gratitude of heritage keepers.

Boatbuilder **Walter Archer** of the seafaring Archers of Marsh Harbour was an iconic sight when he was engaged in building a vessel at his home on Shirley Street, New Providence. He built the Tari Anne, which became a regatta champion with Marcus Mitchell at the helm.

## Abaco

### **Man-O-War Cay (MOW).**

The archives of the MOW Cay Museum note: *Boat building on Man-O-War dates back to the 1800's. In the mid-1900's, William H. Albury (Uncle Will) was known for building the large boats and Maurice Albury was renowned for his Abaco Dinghies. But there were also many other boat builders on Man-O-War turning out boats in their yards for the fishermen of the Abacos, Nassau, Eleuthera, etc. The tradition continues with the Albury Brothers Boats and the fine Abaco Dinghies that Joe Albury builds.*<sup>28</sup>

Of Uncle Will's boats, *S/V Tribute*, built in 1948 and originally called 'Safari', boasts a 38' keel and overall length of 48', was beautifully restored 2012-2013 in Edwin's Boat Yard and purchased by David Wright.

Haziel L. Albury, in his valuable book on life on Man-O-War Cay from his youth in the 1920s to the mid-1970s, wrote a chapter on boatbuilding.

He mentions that one of Uncle Will's clients was the Abaco Lumber Company, for which he built a 130-foot barge and a 60-foot tug **Donald Roberts** for hauling timber. He also built dinghy hulls for Basil Symonette of Symonette's Shipyards. Uncle Will's fame went international when his *William H. Albury* sailed in the Tall Ships parade of 1976.<sup>29</sup>

**Benjamin Pinder** of Sandy Point is reputed to have built 96 boats and repaired many.

Man-O-War artisans have built three boats, which have campaigned in the Abaco and Family Island Regattas. Two emerged winners: *Abaco Rage* (A Class) and *Lonesome Dove* (B Class).

### **Green Turtle Cay**

The Lowes of Green Turtle Cay (GTC) built schooners that would transport lumber from Norman's Castle on Great Abaco to Cuba. *Albertine Adoue*, a 60-foot schooner, the first mailboat serving the Abacos. According to GTC historian David Gale, she was built in Green Turtle Cay in 1898 from materials salvaged from a three-masted vessel of the same name that had wrecked on the reef behind Spanish Cay.

**Ernest Dean** of Sandy Point, Abaco built *S/V Margaret Rose* and *M/V Nay Dean* among other vessels.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna



## Andros

Writing in the 1970s, William R. Johnson, an experienced sailor, extolled the settlement of Lisbon Creek, Andros as the last of the “truly (sic) traditional” boat building centres. However, Andros could once boast of multiple sites. In all likelihood, this proliferation of the shipwright’s art and talent was owed to the buoyancy of the sponge and fishing industries:

**Behring Point:** Herbert Bain, Jack Longley and Jack Mackey

**Bluff, South Andros:** Daniel Rahming, Hardy McKinney, Ezekial Johnson and Watty Rolle.

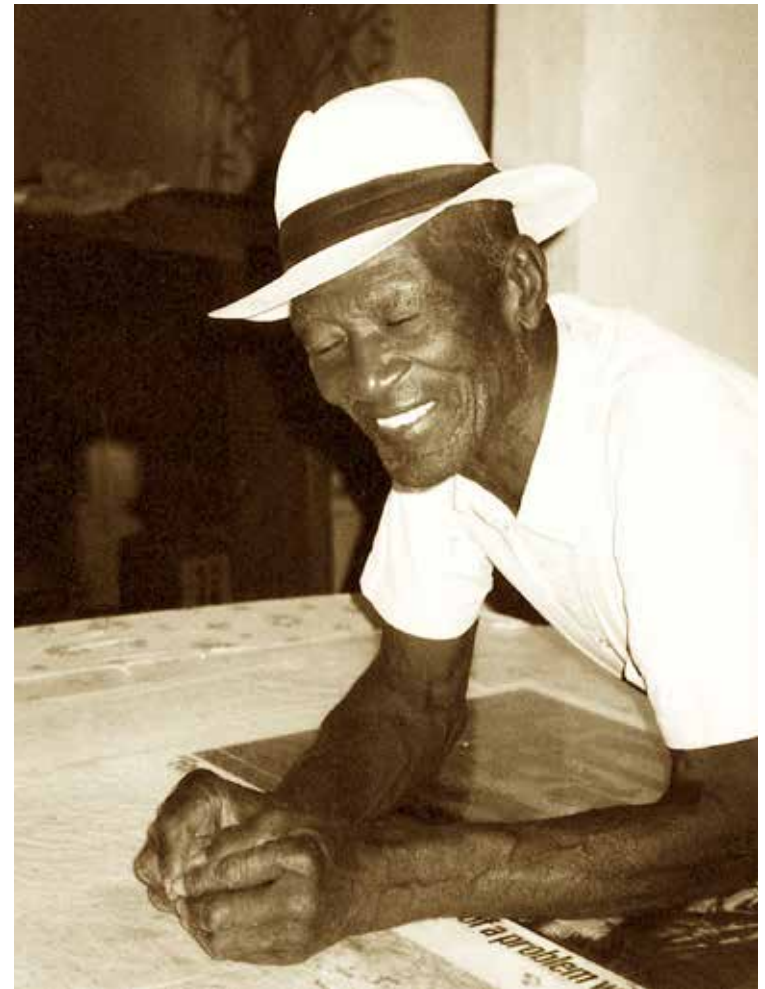
**Conch Sound:** William Pratt, 22 boats, including *My Support*, *Mervina Dove*, *Pretty Gal*, *Pratt Brothers*, *Pratt Sisters* and *Son of a Gun*.

**Kemp’s Bay:** Thomas Miller.

**Lisbon Creek:** Norris Rolle, Alfred Bain – *Avenger*, *Unity B* and *Mystery J*.

**Nicholls Town:** Bertram “Bulla” Murphy built 12 boats, including *Lady Inn*, *Takeaway*, *Andros Gal*.

**Mangrove Cay:** Moxeys, Elgin Forsythe, Commissioner, historian and boatbuilder—*Thunderbird*.



Leroy Bannister | Photograph courtesy of © Reuel Parker, 2020

**Leroy Bannister**, renowned boatbuilder and sailor, Lisbon Creek, Andros. (3 July 1917 - 26 Sept 2008). Norris Rolle was a contemporary boatwright operating at Lisbon Creek.

## Bimini

Up to 2020, the best known boat building son of Bimini was Ansil Saunders, a bonefish guide and island historian.

## Harbour Island

To Harbour Island shipbuilder **William E. Roberts** is given the honour of having designed and constructed the largest ship ever built in The Bahamas. The vessel, the 697-ton, four-masted schooner *Marie J. Thompson* was commissioned by Key West businessman Norberg Thompson for transporting timber, the basic material for his cigar box manufactory in Key West, Florida. Getting necessary materials to tiny Harbour Island was one of the challenges encountered, but construction of the *Marie J. Thompson* finally commenced in August of 1918. Named for Norbert Thompson's daughter, the vessel was christened by none other than Maud Cordeau, wife of Bahamas Governor Harry Cordeau. The *Marie J. Thompson* sank off Key West in 1935.<sup>30</sup>

Among the motor vessels Harbour Islanders **Earl and Gerald Johnson** built out of Symonette's Shipyard were *Captain Roberts*, *Gary Roberts*, *Noel Roberts* and *Liberty*, which served as mailboats.

**T. Berlin Albury** crafted the *Patricia K.* Another notable Harbour Island craftsman was Henry Sawyer (Bo Hengy) who built smack boats with wells for live fish, which are used extensively by Bahamian fishermen. Bo Hengy also built inter-island freight boats like the *Lola B.* Another of his creations was the *Dorothy S.*, a

35 ft. wooden yacht, one of the first of its kind to be built in The Bahamas.

## Exuma

**Reverend Granville Hart**, Rolleville, Exuma



**Reverend Granville Hart** | Photograph courtesy of © Reuel Parker, 2020

**Clarence Edward Fitzgerald**, The Ferry, Little Exuma, Bahamas (Born 28 Oct 1896, died?). Built *Endeavour* for his brother Raymond 'Ray' Fitzgerald.

**Hughrie Lloyd**, Barraterre, Exuma. Among his creations, this gifted contractor and shipwright crafted *Fisherman's Inn* and the "C" Class

*Warrior*. He sailed the latter with his son Kesium in the 2017 National Family Island Regatta. He also built the beautiful *Lady B.*, which he created for the Exuma Sailing Club for training junior sailors. Lloyd's skills won him a 'C' Class NFIR championship with *I've Tried*.

**Aulice 'Tommy' Thompson**, Steventon, Great Exuma

Primarily, a masterful rebuild and repairer of regatta boats, Aulice Thompson, he rebuilt *Lady Ruthnell* and repaired *Cobra*, *Queen Drucilla*, *Rosalie II*, *Thunderbird*, *Ed Sky*, *Flash*, *Southern Cross*, *Lady Margaret* and *Ants Nest*.

## Grand Bahama

**Luther Ferguson**, member of the South Andros Sailing Association, Grand Bahama. He built *Lady Myrtle*—'E' Class and *I Can't Believe It*.

Acklins native, **Delworth Gibson** built *Barbarian I* and *II* and **Albon Gibson**, *Unca John*.

**Samuel Collie**, a descendant of Acklins who lived and worked in Mayaguana, built 'B' Class Storr's #2 and Trade Winds as well as Original Silent Partner.

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna



# Legendary Regatta Sloop Builders

## Kingston Brown

Kingston Brown was the son of a mother of Andros and a father hailing from Exuma. These two islands of his heritage have long been leaders in seafaring and boat building in The Bahamas. He was fascinated by carpentry and developed an outstanding expertise in that trade. It has been said that, as a boy, Kingston would wander around boatyards where craftsmen such as **Herbert Bain**, **Jack Longley**, and his own uncle **Jack Mackey** from Behring Point were fashioning boats.

With this infusion of salt life and exposure to boat building, it is surprising that Brown did not immediately gravitate towards



that occupation as soon as he was old enough. Yet, He would spend more than 40 years in building construction industry between New Providence and Grand Bahama. In light of what unfolded consequently, one might say that the first employment was a period of refinement of the craft that made him a legend and to which he would dedicate the rest of his life.

Kingston Brown built his first sloop, an 18-foot sailboat named the *Olive Leona*, in 1946. When he left general construction in 1970, however, he threw his all energy into the design and construction of sturdy workboats for fishermen,



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

as well as regatta sloops of beautiful lines that could cut gracefully through any resistance of wind and wave to challenge the fiercest of competitors and emerge champions.

The socioeconomic status of his patrons give evidence of the quality of his creations and their performance. Consider *Southern Cross*, which he built for Long Island businessman **George Knowles**, and the *Lucayan Lady*, crafted for **Edward G.P. St. George** and **Albert Miller**, principal movers and shakers of Grand Bahama Port Authority and FOCOL, respectively. Despite this the recognition accorded him by people of means and power, stories told about him attest that his pride and joy lay with the champions that he forged to engage in battle in regattas.

## Vernon Elliott Lockhart

The circumstances of his birth augured greatness for Vernon Lockhart, who was born in Ragged Island to Eugenia and Edward Lockhart on 23 December 1926 in the aftermath of one of the most devastating hurricanes to scourge The Bahamas. His mother, a daughter of Horace A Wilson, seaman and boatbuilder, inscribed her name in Bahamian history as a leading member of the women's suffrage movement, who earned the Order of the British Empire Award (OBE) for her contributions.

Young Vernon manifested an aptitude for carpentry and, early on, took to furniture and cabinet making. When he moved to Nassau in his twenties, however, he found employment in the building trade constructing houses, work which took him to other islands.

He eventually embraced his Ragged Island maritime heritage, building his first vessel, *Ragged Gal* in 1954, skippering her in the second Out Island Regatta in 1955. With his brother Edward, Vernon engaged in building boats, notably racing sloops, booms and masts for the likes of regatta champions *Southern Cross* and *Thunderbird* in the Lockhart boatyard that sprang up in Oakes Field, New Providence.

The Lockhart enterprise also crafted other outstanding sloops such as *Lady Eugenia*, named for the matriarch and *Intrepid*. Vernon was at the tiller of many of them in regattas.

What must be mentioned is Captain Lockhart's extraordinary experience in international sailing. He became one of the Ragged Islanders sought by maritime interests for their seamanship. For four years from 1955 to 1959, the year he returned home, he served as mate on the 72-ft. yacht *Ticonderoga*, which was owned by John Hertz, Jr, passionate award-winning yachtsman and advertising executive. John D. Hertz Jr was the son of the founder

of Hertz Rent A Car and Yellow Cab Co. In 1952, *Ticonderoga* set a record of 31 hours, 36 minutes, 15 seconds from St Petersburg, Florida to Havana, Cuba. John Jr also won the Walter Sullivan Trophy in 1953. Vernon Lockhart became part of the crew who picked up the *Ticonderoga* in Spain to sail her to Miami.

Vernon became disabled sometime in the 1960s, but Edward and others of the Lockhart team carried on the tradition. The Ministry of Tourism commissioned them to build the sloop, which would travel to Spain to represent The Bahamas in the Quincentennial Celebrations.

Vernon Lockhart fathered six sons, including attorney-at-law Elliott Lockhart, all of whom chose careers in the professions.

## Horace Alkin Lockhart

*13 December 1935 – 5 December 2014*

A professorial navigator, sea captain, diver and entrepreneur in the fishing industry, Horace Lockhart perfected his sailing with his father Edward Lockhart on the *Basil Blackett*. He was the owner of the regatta boat *Intrepid*. Edward was nephew to Captain Vernon Lockhart. In his adulthood, he worked full time on the seas and was an aficionado of regattas. As his contribution to the latter, he sailed such sloops as *Intrepid*, which he owned, and the championship vessels *Lady Eugenia* and *Unca*

*Boss*, the latter built by Horace's brother **Vivian Lockhart**. Lady Eugenia and Unca Boss were made famous by the great Hezron Moxey, a Ragged Island compatriot of the Lockhart clan.

The following, who combined sailing with regatta sloop building/rebuilding, are profiled elsewhere.

**Leslie 'Buzzy' Rolle**, Mount Thompson, Great Exuma.

**Edgar O. Moxey**, Ragged Island

**Rupert Knowles** and sons **Earlin**, **Bertis** and **Elijah "Mack"**: **Laurin Knowles** and son **Mark** of Mangrove Bush, Long Island.

**Harold "Herbert" Lamont King**, Knowles, Cat Island.



**Rupert Knowles** | Photograph courtesy of Crystal Knowles.







# Sailmakers

**A**s sail was the major power source for boats before steam and motor, there had to be sailmakers. As materials had to be imported they were expensive and consequently scarce. Sails creations were often based on canvas salvaged from ships that came to grief on Bahamian reefs. In poorer out island communities, sails could be, literally, a patchwork quilt.

## **Edgar Albury**

Haziel Albury records that Edgar Albury was active as a sailmaker on Man-O-War Cay from the 1890s and his son Norman followed him in the trade at the age of ten. Initially, Edgar built 'Leg-O-Mutton' (Jib-headed or Marconi sails and later gaff sails). He was also engaged in sailing-making for two famed three-master Abaco vessels—*Abaco* created with his son Norman and Hope Town's Tom Stalin and *Abaco Bahamas* with Norman. Edgar often used second-hand materials, some from

wrecks. Following World War I, he began using Woodberry canvas and Vivitex circa 1955. The largest mainsail built was of 1200 square feet. Over time, the sail loft evolved into Norman's Sail Shop producing personal items such as jackets, bags and hats.<sup>31</sup>

## **King Eric Gibson**

For many years, "King" Eric Gibson, musician and sailor, was the primary sailmaker in The Bahamas, operating from his building on West Bay Street, New Providence. During the hayday of his sail loft more than 90% of the sails were made by Gibson.

## **Stephano Kemp**, "The Sailor Tailor" of Windward Sailmakers, Nassau.

Stephano Kemp's story is one of the most remarkable in Bahamas regatta history for reflecting the sport's ability to spark entrepreneurship and regatta spinoffs for advancement in the sport and economic

diversification, as well as for transmission of skills and crafts and for generosity.

Kemp's career as a sailmaker began as many good regatta developments start—with King Eric Gibson, around whom young Stephano grew up. Gibson was highly regarded for sailmaking among his many contributions to regattas in The Bahamas. He offered to teach the youth the craft, but the boy resisted because, as he has said, it looked like too much hard work. When he was older and wiser, Kemp decided to take up Gibson's instructional offer and eventually mastered the craft, adding his own "tweaking" and innovations along the way and launching Windward Sailmakers in Nassau and giving himself the appealing label of "Sailor Tailor".

In a video uploaded to the Web by the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, Kemp has revealed very important information about the changes in sails and sail making occasioned by regatta sailors' determination to coax more speed from their sloops. He said that where the boats of the earlier days of regatta rigged a single sail, their 21st century counterparts can incorporate as many as five of varying sizes, some as small as a napkin. The object is to take advantage of varying wind conditions—light, medium (social) or heavy.<sup>32</sup>

Kemp made another valuable note when he speaks of how his sailmaking has benefited from his sailing. He said that competing in races allows him to study the sails and rigging of the boats that are performing well, resulting in advances to his own product. Kemp has a laudable aim—to return King Eric's favour by passing on the sailmaking craft, whether to family or to others.

As a sailor, Stephano has skippered boats owned by King Eric Gibson. In the 2016 King Eric All for One Regatta, he captained B Class Bahama Grill, B Class *Queen Drucilla* and C Class *King and Knights*. The Nassau Guardian quoted him acknowledging his debt to Gibson: "King' was my teacher from a lil boy, so I'm honoured to be sailing his boats." In 2017, Kemp helmed *King and Knights* to finish second in all three of the "C" Class races capturing the overall trophy at the 5th Defense Force Regatta in Montagu Bay, New Providence.

Two years later, again sailing *King and Knights*, Kemp and his crew won the first place overall championship trophy, having topped a field of nine other sloops in the C-Class Division at the Grand Bahama Regatta and Homecoming held at Smith's Point 19-20 July. By 2020, Stephano Kemp, with **Calvert Stevens**, was serving as chairman of the Acklins Regatta.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

### **Phillip Sailmakers**

Phillips Sailmakers was founded in the 1990s by sail enthusiast Larry Phillips, who, according to the company's website, started it as a home business with a sewing machine on loan from none other than noted sailor, parliamentarian and businessman Robert 'Bobby' Symonette. In 2020 Phillips Sailmakers was said to be capable of handling mainsail with 100-foot luff. Boasting

of being the largest sail loft in the Caribbean region, the company employed a staff of 16 measurers, sewers, welders and installers, while the owner himself provided "the vision, drawings, skill and careful engineering."



# Regatta

## *A Global Phenomenon*

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

**A** regatta, a sporting event that occurs worldwide, consists of a series of boat or yacht races. Participating vessels are powered by wind filling sails or may be rowed by human muscle pulling at oars. Whatever the driving mechanism, such races call for strength, strategy and endurance on the part of the human contestants and the craftsmanship that fashioned the racing vessels.

Regatta is also an age-old endeavour. According to an online etymology dictionary, the word “regatta” comes from Italian of 1650s and was the name of a boat race among gondoliers held on the Grand Canal in Venice, from Italian (Venetian dialect) “regatta”, literally “contention for mastery”.

Before European colonization, Regattas also developed as part of the maritime tradition of the delta and riverine peoples of Nigeria to celebrate victories in wars and trade. Such events consisted of colourful ceremonies featuring parades of large fleets of canoes decorated with flags and buntings and displays of the skills and dexterity of rowers. Over the years, the practice changed to serve recreational, tourism and transport purposes.<sup>33</sup>

Regatta, riverine and maritime, sprang up as a sport of the British nobility. The very first organized regatta was a contest between two members of the royal family in October of 1661. *Katherine*, King Charles’ newly constructed

yacht and *Anne*, the Duke of York's new yacht engaged in a race on the Thames River for a prize of £100. It is said to have been the first authenticated yacht race in British waters. Before that, the nobles of the Netherlands enjoyed sailing in vessels they called *jaghts*. Following Oliver Cromwell's seizure of power, King Charles II spent nine years in exile in that country and came to enjoy boating.



Photographs © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

Over time, British colonials spread the sport to territories across its once globe-circling empire, including India (1830), The Bahamas (1831) Singapore (1834) and Australia (1837).

# Regatta

## *In The Bahamas*

### **Competitive Sailing**

#### **A Brief History**

In 1672 John Darrell complained that Bahamian men preferred to “run a-coasting in shallops which is a lazy course of life.” This 17th century criticism of an idle Bahamian habit might well have been the root of the silk-cotton-strong Bahamian maritime tradition of regatta, considering that the report was produced just a few years following the initiation of the tradition in Britain, whose empire encompassed The Bahamas.

In a discussion of sports in the mid-1800s in The Bahamas, Craton and Saunders commented that most of the sports introduced to the country were first reserved for Europeans and black Bahamians could look on only. Sports where the latter could be active players or competitors usually involved the sea. It is known that sailors of various kinds of workboats would compete against their peers from settlements throughout their home islands as a part of the Emancipation Day and other significant celebrations.<sup>34</sup>

Promoted by the formation of yacht clubs, organized sailing continued into the 20th century, although with participation circumscribed racially, socially and economically. Enjoying British royal assent, the members-only Royal Nassau Sailing Club was founded in 1924 by Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman and members of the New York Yacht Club. The club was first granted Royal Patronage in 1926 from King George V and again in 1936 and 1952 by King



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

George VI and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, respectively.

In 1931, the Nassau Yacht Club (NYC), another members-only organization, was founded to promote adult and youth sailing. In this regard, the success of the NYC is evident. It cultivated the prowess of Bahamians who first put their homeland on the international map of competitive sailing. Out of its membership came Durward Knowles and Sloan Farrington, Silver Medalists in the 1946 World Championship, Havana, Cuba and 1956 Bronze Medalists at the Olympics, Melbourne, Australia. Durward and Cecil Cooke brought home the Gold from the 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan.

## **Birth of the Organized Bahamian Workboat Regatta**

To a royal governor of The Bahamas's colonial era must go the crown of formally initiating in this country of islands an organized regatta embracing Bahamians at the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum. In 1831, during the governorship of **Sir James Carmichael Smyth** (1829-1833), an annual regatta was launched, featuring races of working sailboats and rowboats. The governor himself presented the prize of a silver cup to "first class sailing vessels of fifteen to forty tons". By the 1880s

more frequent races were being organized by a 'Yachting Club'.<sup>35</sup>

It is known also that workboat skippers and crews continued to engage in informal races between ports well into the 20th century. President of the Mangrove Cay Regatta Committee David Rolle made a plausible claim that working boats had been raced for more than 100 years in Andros. He said that most people think that Exuma was the first, but sloop racing started in Andros in 1896 with the sponging boats. It then spread to Cat Island, Long Island and Exuma.<sup>36</sup>

A 91-year old Charles Hall provided details of the strategies and maneuvers his grandfather Joe Williams and father Benjamin Hall would employ as they raced their respective vessels, *J.S. Relief* and *Empress*, from Nassau to Providenciales in the Turks & Caicos Islands, with the faster *Empress* usually winning the friendly competition.

It was, however, in the 1950s when a number of international and local trends were intersecting to influence the active development and promotion of regatta in The Bahamas, elevating the competition into a well-organized and enduring maritime tradition.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>





The seeds took root in the opportunities perceived in the postwar economic boom in the United States and a growing desire among Americans to shed the restrictions imposed on travel abroad during the war years. With proximity of The Bahamas to the North American mainland, Bahamian decision-makers saw an opportunity to develop a year-round tourism industry, by promoting the very real attractions of our islands, particularly the fairly untrammelled Out Islands and the pristine marine environment, exemplified in the Exuma chain.

Secondly, there was a concern that the number of workboats was diminishing and their condition deteriorating. Furthermore, boatbuilding in the islands was on the decline and promising to become a lost art without the injection of powerful incentives.

According to **Howland C. Bottomley**, who was chairman of the regatta committee from (1962-1992) and named Commodore Emeritus in 1995, thoughts turned to the establishment of a regatta in the Exumas that would serve all the foregoing perceived economic opportunities and preservationist

concerns. In an essay on regatta, Bottomley noted:

*It was felt that the material condition of the boats would be improved by the preparations necessary to ready the vessel for racing competition. A regatta would also offer a fine opportunity for Bahamian sailors to all gather in one place, have some sport, and a chance for cruising yachtsmen to witness one of the last working sailing fleets in action and at the same time introduce them to the magnificent cruising grounds here in The Bahamas.<sup>37</sup>*

In The Bahamas today, regatta refers to sporting events with their focal point being a series of races featuring sloops built in the style of the traditional Bahamian workboat, but crafted for greater speed. These events are hosted by islands throughout the archipelago. In order to ensure and protect the original intent of the sport, boat characteristics and race procedures are governed by a set of strict rules.

Admitting participants without restrictions of class, race or creed, the regatta exemplifies the democracy,



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which the nation claims. The race meets have also become fixtures on the annual calendars of individual islands, and generate island pride, smack talk and fierce competition for prizes and bragging rights. Now firmly incorporated in the tradition is the organization of special regattas to mark national events and to honour icons of regatta—sailors, boatwrights, boat owners and regatta founders and organizers, especially in the naming of events. As common adjuncts to regatta time are contests of boat-scuttling (another Bahamian tradition).

To say that Bahamian regatta competitors are enthusiastic about sailing would be understating the case. One regatta champion notes:

*There is also the mental aspect of when racing you can get totally involved for hours at a time with only thinking about the race. There are the tactics of how to deal with the other boats, reading the wind and the weather, navigating around islands and shallows, reading currents, and constantly thinking about adjusting your boat and keeping it going as fast as possible. This can all be very intense and totally engrossing. I enjoy it.”* – Jeff Gale, Abaco, skipper of Abaco Rage.<sup>38</sup>

What raises even greater passion among skippers and crew is the fact that the

competition is among islands of The Bahamas archipelago and is as fierce as that of rival nations in the Olympic Games.

Over the years, the tradition gave rise to an on-land festival, which, along with the original and foremost purpose, has evolved to encompass celebratory, recreational and social aspects. These events provide for the staging and preservation of Bahamian culture and folk traditions and are an important element of international and domestic tourism development. With the promotion of the concept of ‘homecoming’, regattas attract Bahamians to enjoy a vacation on the island of their birth or from which their family descends.



Skipper Jeff Gale of Abaco Rage.  
Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph



Photograph courtesy of Bahamas Information Services (BIS)

# *Regatta*

## *Significant to Tourism Promotion and Island Economies*

Regattas actively support tourism and hospitality in welcoming domestic and international visitors, the latter including many yachters, who are themselves sailors and have established annual “cruising regattas”, such as those in Abaco and in Exuma at George Town and Staniel Cay.

Of inestimable value, native sloop sailing has attracted a host of journalists, writers and photographers, who, since the 1954 launch of what became the National Family Island Regatta, have extolled the spectacle, Bahamian culture, boatbuilding and other maritime traditions. They have emphasised the preservationist nature of this complex entity which encompasses sport, craftsmanship and entrepreneurship. For decades, reams of copy have been written and published in respected newspapers and magazines, which have included *Wooden Boat* and *Southwinds*. As important, many of the authors and

photographers have been sailors who could cogently write on sailing and boats. It is to this contribution The Bahamas owes much of the recording of our regattas and the sailors, boatbuilders and championship vessels. Furthermore, local journalists are assigned to the regatta beat to great advantage.

Although regattas are eagerly anticipated sporting and festive events in communities the length of The Bahamas chain, they have an even greater value to these areas. The Bahamas Customs and Excise Department has declared regatta to be the “economic cornerstone of Family Island economies”.<sup>39</sup> The regattas have steadily expanded entrepreneurship and brings money into islands where economic activity is restrained for the rest of the year. It has been said also that these sailing events have attracted international spectators to become property owners and build houses.

# Government Support of Regatta

**F**rom 1967 the Bahamas Government established a defined presence in support of native sloop sailing regattas by creating the Regatta Unit, which was attached to the Department of Sports in the Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture. Around 1993, **Minister Algernon Allen**, who was making a concerted drive to make the sport truly national, formed the National Regatta Committee. About the same time, the Regatta Desk was launched. In 2011 this unit put out a highly informative magazine “Regatta Boat Builders & Skippers Calendar” during the tenure of **Hon. Charles Maynard, MP, Minister of Youth, Sports & Culture**.

Regatta oversight was next added to the portfolio of the Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs (MAMRFIA) in 2012 and the government gives financial support to twenty-four of the annual events.

In the same year, the Regatta Desk was established in the Ministry to focus on the oversight and development of the sport. The main function of this unit is to coordinate all activities as they relate to regattas, homecoming and festivals in The Bahamas. The Desk personnel are responsible for organizing and executing the Annual Best of the Best Regatta.

In carrying out its mandate, Regatta Desk personnel advise, update and make recommendations to the MAMRFIA’s Minister and Permanent Secretary on related matters.

A racing sloop owner, former banker and teacher, **Rev. Dr Philip McPhee**, once served regatta development in various capacities from 1992 to the printing of this book. His major contribution began when he became assistant director of Community Affairs during

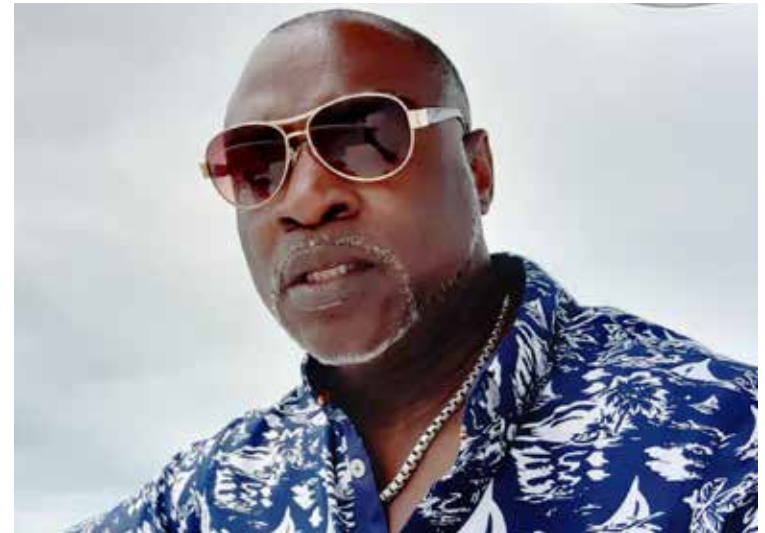
the tenure of **Hon. Algernon Allen as Minister of Youth and Sports**. During the initial phase of the Allen's "**One Bahamas**" programme, Rev. Dr Philip McPhee played a foundational role in the formation of the Regatta Desk and several Family Island regattas. He was also highly active in fundraising. Rev. McPhee, an avid sloop owner and regatta competitor, served as a consultant from the inception of the Regatta Desk to 2017.

At the time of this writing, the team comprised **Barry Wilmott**, Manager, Angelique McKay and Shanteria Taylor. Wilmott assumed the post on 1 February 2018.

Year round, Regatta Desk team members work closely with regatta planning committees, sailing associations and junior sailing programmes throughout the archipelago. They also review local committees' event budgets and make recommendations for Government financial assistance where the assessors deem it necessary.

## Regatta Desk Officers

Before the incumbent (up to 2020) took up the post, he had been preceded by three women as Regatta Desk Officers: **Michelle McPhee**, **Angelique McKay** and **Sindy Gay**.



Barry Wilmott, Manager, Regatta Desk



Michelle McPhee



Angelique McKay



Sindy Gay



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At the conclusion of the 2016 regatta at George Town, Exuma, **Hon. V. Alfred Gray, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources** (2012-2017), spoke to the essential nature of government sponsorship:

*We have boats from every island in The Bahamas generally participating in these races. Wherever the sailboats are housed they have to bring them in one place for the regattas. Generally, the government's sponsorship is the main way of bringing these boats here because the cost of bringing them here is very high. If it was left to the National Family Island Regatta Committee, many of the boats in the races today would not be here because they don't have the means of paying for the transportation from island to island and back to the islands from which they would have come.*

Gray termed the government financial injection “a joyous obligation” to contribute to the cultural tradition.

## **A New George Town Regatta Village**

In time for the staging of the 64th National Family Island Regatta (24-25 April 2018), The Bahamas Government began renovations on the regatta site in George Town, Exuma at an estimated cost of over \$1 million. For this purpose, just over an acre of the seabed was reclaimed in the vicinity of the George Town Dock to erect stalls for vendors to sell their wares. Previously, this group of festival participants were obliged to set up along the roadside between Queen's Highway and the George Town Dock.

The 3-phase construction was carried out by G and L Construction between January and March 2017. For further enhancement of the NFIR site and amenities, it was projected that 20,000 square feet next to the Regatta Park would be used to construct a new George Town Straw Market, replacing the facility that was destroyed by fire in 2015. Straw vendors were forced to operate under a tent next to the Police Station in George Town since that time.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>



# *Towards Official Recognition as The National Sport of The Bahamas*

**A**t the 22nd Farmer's Cay Regatta, Members of Parliament, including **Most Hon. Hubert A. Minnis**, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas addressed, with remarkable consensus, the matter of making sailing the national sport of The Bahamas.

*I love traveling through the Family Islands when they have activities like these regattas. I enjoy the sailing because we're now debating whether sailing versus cricket should now be the national sport and that is an active discussion now going on. It gives me an opportunity, as I go through the islands to hear the voices of the people.—  
Prime Minister Hubert A. Minnis<sup>40</sup>*

*The Prime Minister (Hubert A. Minnis),  
much like previous prime ministers before*

*him, has indicated that there is a singular commitment to regatta and sailing as to elevating sailing as the national sport that would in no way disadvantage the core sport and other sports that are dear to Bahamians, who poured their energies and expertise into the different genres of sport over the years.—Hon. Michael C. Pintard, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources.<sup>41</sup>*

*I'm on record as supporting sailing as the national sport of The Bahamas. It has been a long time coming. I think it has wide-ranging support across the country. Sailing and sailors—sailing everywhere has made a prominent feature in the lifeblood. Across our islands, it's very appreciated. Every island identifies with it, and it's important that we now move and move post haste to cause it to happen. So, as soon as the bill is brought*

*to Parliament, I can commit to the government that the Opposition is in full support as the national sport. – Hon. Chester Cooper, MP for Exuma and Deputy Leader of the Opposition. (Since September 2021 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investment and Aviation).*<sup>42</sup>

It seems the time had indeed come. Regatta permeates and colours the very fabric of Bahamian life and for long years to 2020, there had been increasing calls for parliamentary recognition of this marine sailing event as the national sport of The Bahamas. Post-1954, these native wooden boat sailing races gradually spread throughout the major communities of the archipelago, from north to deep south, save for Inagua. In some island subgroups, regattas proliferate, as with Eleuthera where there are three and in the Exumas, where there are five listed on the annual national regatta calendar.

Moreover, regattas are entrenched in island economies; they are significant to domestic tourism and inter-island networking, thereby bolstering the concept of “One Bahamas”, in a country where large stretches of ocean separate

islands one from another, where islands are sufficiently diverse in heritage and culture and could increase insularity and lead to separatist notions.

*There is no other event that bonds the entire Exuma family as does the National Family Island Regatta. Indeed the George Town Regatta is not only Exuma’s Regatta but the Nation’s Regatta. – Elliott Lockhart, son of Vernon Lockhart sailor and boatbuilder.*<sup>43</sup>

Regatta, by its very nature is integrative, bringing together sailors from many islands as competitors. Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources Michael Pintard said:

*It has been a wonderful honor to follow many ministers, namely **Algernon Allen, Renward Wells** and **V. Alfred Gray**, who have placed great emphasis on regattas in the country.*

*We are stronger when we work beyond the political divide seeing only the colors of the Bahamian flag.*<sup>44</sup>



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## REGATTAS & FOUNDING DATES

(Where Known)

	ISLAND	DATE
National Family Island - <b>1954</b>	Exuma	April
Cat Island - <b>1956</b>	Cat Island	August
Long Island - <b>1967</b>	Long Island	May/June
Black Point - <b>1963</b>	Exuma	August
Acklins - <b>1973</b>	Acklins	March/April
Barreterre - <b>1983</b>	Exuma	May
Valentine's Day Massacre - <b>1987</b>	Nassau	February
King Eric All For One - <b>2015</b>	Nassau	January
North Eleuthera - <b>1989</b>	Eleuthera	October
All Andros & Berry Islands - <b>1993</b>	North Andros	
Grand Bahama - <b>1995</b>	Grand Bahama	
Farmer's Cay - <b>1998</b>	Exuma	February
Bul Reg - <b>2002</b>	Exuma	January
Sandy Point, Abaco		
Sir Durward Knowles, Jr - <b>2010</b>	Grand Bahama	April
Mangrove Cay	Andros	May
South Andros	Andros	June
Bimini	Bimini	June
All Eleuthera - <b>1988</b>	All Eleuthera	July
Rolleville	Exuma	August
East Grand Bahama	Grand Bahama	October
Rock Sound - <b>2013</b>	Eleuthera	September
Best of The Best - <b>2016</b>	Nassau	December
All Mayaguana - <b>2016</b>	Mayaguana	June

# *The National Family Island Regatta (NFIR)*

## **First of the Modern Sloop- Racing Regattas in The Bahamas**

### **Vision**

In 1954 a small group of American yachtsmen, all sailing enthusiasts, including J. (John) Linton Rigg, resident in Exuma at the time, and friends Arthur Harrington and Ward Wheelock of the eponymous and influential Pennsylvania advertising agency, conceived the idea of holding a regatta for the Bahamian working sailing craft. It is interesting to note that Wheelock conceived of “This I Believe”, the powerful series of radio shows and newspaper articles. Sadly, in 1955, he, members of his

family and friends sailed from Bermuda on the admiral’s 60-foot schooner and were never seen again.

### **Out Island Squadron Committee**

To realize the vision, it was important to attract the local influential support and establish a dedicated committee to plan, organize and attract sponsorship for staging the event and, if successful, to foster its growth and continuance. As a result, the Out Island Squadron came into being and would serve in this capacity from 1954 to 1967. Comprising avid sailors from The Bahamas and the United States, the Squadron’s membership included R.H. Symonette, Member





of the House of Assembly (MHA), J. Linton Rigg, Commissioner D.H. Burrows, Campen Heilner, Donald MacKinney, MHA, Ward Wheelock and Bud Mulloy.

Linton Rigg, an inveterate and accomplished sailor, became chief organizer. All the foregoing should be recognized as forefathers of what came to be called the 'Out Island Regatta' and, later, the 'National Family Island Regatta, a yearly event held in Elizabeth Harbour, which lies between Great Exuma's George Town and the barrier Stocking Island.

## Establishing Regatta Rules

Early on, organizers realized the imperative of creating governing rules for the new creation, if the main objectives of the regatta were to be achieved. Rules were developed in three main categories, the design and construction of participating vessels, the crews and racing procedures from start to finish. In the first two instances, the rules insisted upon clear Bahamian identity. In the case of the nature of the boats, their pattern had to be the Bahamian workboat in all its essentials.

## The First Races

About seventy to eighty working sailors gathered in George Town to compete in the

Robert Keir, a writer covering the first NFIR event for The Nassau Guardian, said of the experience:

*This assignment was a highlight of a fascinating six-month stint in The Bahamas in 1954. Many, many memories remain with me, among them my brief visit to Exuma, a truly beautiful place on this planet.*

He recorded some important details of the regatta of that year, which took place over three days, 26-28 March 1954.

1954 races. The vessels they helmed that year and in many of the subsequent regattas were a variety of work sloops, smacks, a schooner and dinghies. Except for the three days of the regatta, these men and boats would be engaged in fishing and freighting goods.

In addition to their naturally competitive spirits and the desire to display their sailing skills, entrants were probably attracted by the prizes offered— First prize in each class was 100 pounds sterling, 50 pounds for second, 25 pounds for third and 10 pounds for fourth. Also to be contended for were the special prizes to be awarded in the dinghy races. Racing began on Friday, 26 March 1954 and ran through the



weekend. According to **Robert Kier**, stringer for The Nassau Guardian, the day was sunny and the wind was out of the southeast at 15 miles per hour.

The original entry list showed that 67 boats had registered but reports came that other vessels were on the way but being delayed by heavy seas. Subsequently, the 1:00pm start time was pushed to 2:00pm. Even with the extension, a number of vessels did not arrive in time to participate. Furthermore, the turbulent conditions of the open seas caused the organizers to cancel the run around Stocking Island and restrict the racing to the harbour.

From the beginning, the racing was to be rule governed to further the mandate of event—the promotion and preservation of the Bahamian workboat. As noted by Robert Kier:

*At noon, a special meeting was held in the parade grounds where the race committee set forth the rules and the revised course.*

*There was some dissension among the skippers over the rules. In light of this, it was decided to handicap the boats on the basis of ten seconds per mile, per keel footage.<sup>45</sup>*

Winners were to be selected on a point system with ten points awarded for first, six for second, four for third and two for fourth.

The first race began at 2:00pm. Divided into two classes, the large and intermediate-class workboats, competed over a four-mile long, triangular course. Shortly after, there followed the dinghy race, with 30 or so of these smaller boats running a three-mile course inside the harbour. Saturday, the same courses were run twice again.

By all reports, a crowd packed the Government dock and lined the shores of Elizabeth Harbour. They were locals and visitors who came by air and sea, doubtless gladdening the hearts of the regatta founders, who wagered on the event's ability to boost tourism. As many as 40 visiting yachts gathered, giving this first contest a bevy of international sailors as spectators. Despite the slow start occasioned by the novelty of organized racing, the Bahamian seamen and their motley craft managed to awe the visiting yachtsmen with their mastery of wind and boats, undaunted by the unfamiliar situation.

In anticipation of the first visit of the Governor to Exuma, and the attendant pomp and ceremony, excitement increased in George Town. **His Excellency Thomas Daniel Knox, 6th Earl of Ranfurly** and his party arrived Saturday morning aboard *H.M.S. Cygnet* after a tour of the Southern Bahamas. The distinguished visitors were met with fanfare by a group which included parliamentarians **Donald McKinney**,

## 1954 Race Results

### First Race

#### 'A' Class

Marie S, a 36-foot sloop, sailed by Bertram 'Rolly' Gray of Staniel Cay, Exuma

#### 'B' Class (Intermediate)

Alert, owned by I.D. McPhee. of Mangrove Cay, Andros

#### 'C' Class

Sea Hound, Rolly Gray, Staniel Cay, Exuma

#### 'D' Class

Sea Cloud, Walter Robinson

...

March 27, 1954

Member of the House of Assembly (M.H.A.) for Exuma; **Robert H. Symonette**, M.H.A., also representing Exuma, **J. Linton Rigg**, chairman of the race committee; **Commissioner D.H. Burrows** of Exuma and **Bahamas Police Commissioner R.J. W. Verrall**. To the delight of Exumians, Lord Ranfurly made an inspection of the settlement, after which he watched the last major races in the regatta.

Following the picnic supper put on for regatta captains and their crews, the Governor presented prizes and awards to the regatta victors.

Onshore festivities—games, music, dance and food offered by roadside stands—following the presentations were to become an enduring and ever-expanding feature of future regattas. Closing out this first modern regatta were the special church services held on Sunday, 28 March.

On the fifth anniversary of the Out Island Regatta in 1959, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Consort of Queen Elizabeth II, visited and took the helm of the famed Lady Muriel. His prowess earned the admiration of local sailors. Writer Carleton Mitchell called the regatta “somewhat like transporting the Milwaukee Braves’ bleachers to a tennis match at Wimbledon.” In fact, a photo of H.R.H. hanging in the bar of the pink Club Peace & Plenty shows a cartoon balloon coming out of the royal mouth as Philip steps into the dusty George Town street. It reads, “But

I thought the Wilmington crowd [the yachting Du Ponts] was here.”

The 10th anniversary of the Out Island Regatta fell in 1964, an auspicious year for the British colony when the island group won internal self-government from Britain. Several of the brahmans of government and society were present in George Town to mark the event. Among them were none other than **Sir Roland Symonette (the Premier)**, his son Bobby (the Speaker of the House of Assembly), and Sir Harold Christie (probably the largest single landholder in the islands), as Benedict Thielen recorded in his *The Bahamas—Golden Archipelago*, calling the three “and a few dozen other key figures of the ruling caste generally known as the Bay Street Boys.”<sup>46</sup>

The Police Force Band was in town as part of the celebration, which was enlivened by multiple parties at various locations, The Ministry for Tourism gave a small cocktail party for the press. In Government Yard the Commissioner for Great Exuma gave an enormous cocktail party for apparently anyone, black or white, who wanted to come. Across the harbour on Stocking Island there was an Out Island Squadron party, followed the next day by a Squadron luncheon down the road at Goat Cay. No doubt, the events featured the ice and beer brought from Nassau on the freight boat

*Lady Baillou*. Rounding off the festivities were the ceremonial speeches and the presentation of trophies and cash prizes on The Green.

## Emergence of Regatta Skipper/Sloop Powerhouses in NFIR

### ‘A’ Class

From the beginning of what became the National Regatta, there emerged men and sloop combinations showing the sailing world that their award-winning successes were not a matter of mere happenstance, but an unmistakable, balanced marriage of fine boatbuilding skills and the skippers’ sea and sail mastery and gift for keen strategy.

#### Alfred Bain | **Mystery J**

The first pair to come to notice was Alfred Bain and *Mystery J*. From 1956, they came to own second place in the ‘A’ Class through 1964 with a single exception. In 1961, Bain and *Mystery J* took the crown. It was a victory, which, in retrospect would be regarded as formidable—they beat Rolly Gray at the tiller of *Lady Muriel*.

#### Clement Fox | **Southern Cross – Class ‘A’**

Clement Fox announced his presence as a contender to be respected when he and *Southern Cross* sailed to overall victory in 1978

and 1980. His switch to skippering *Lucayan Lady* was also a winning ticket, rewarded by the first place prize in 1987 and 1988. In 1993, Fox helmed *Southern Cross* again for second place.

### **Rolly Gray | Tida Wave**

Following his historic win in 1954 with Marie, Rolly Gray began a regatta ascendancy in 1959, taking first in that year and second on the sea wings of *Lady Muriel* and *Sea Hound*, respectively. He switched partners to *Tida Wave* (no 'l' in the mighty sloop's name) in 1969 and man and vessel went on to dance over the waters to the top rank through 1976, bested only by none other than Rolly's cousin Hezron Moxey who, with *Good News*, took first place.

### **George "Shorty" Knowles | Jacqueline | Golden Hind | Martha K.**

Sailor George Knowles sailed to 'A' Class victory in 1958 with *Jacqueline*, *Golden Hind* in 1967, 1968, 1969 and *Martha K.* in 1980.

### **Laurin Knowles | Susan Chase | New Susan Chase**

With Laurin Knowles at the helm, two sloops—*Susan Chase* and *New Susan Chase* turned in phenomenal performances. Knowles and *Susan Chase* took first place at the National Family Island Regatta 1967-1972, 1976 and racked up second in 1997, 2002, 2005 and 2006. With the second sloop, Knowles was again dominant, winning in 1993-1996, 1998 and 2003.

### **Brooks Miller | Tida Wave**

Brooks Miller took over the helm of *Tida Wave* (rebuilt) from his uncle Rolly Gray and extended the man and vessel victories in 2011, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019, taking an already legendary status to even greater heights.

### **Emmitt Munroe | Courageous**

At the tiller of *Courageous*, Emmitt Munroe accumulated a string of victories across just about all The Bahamas regattas, encompassing the meets of eight islands: Andros, Eleuthera, Harbour Island, Cat Island, San Salvador, Abaco, Long Island and New Providence. He won the race for the Prime Minister's Cup several times in NFIR.



**Lundy Robinson | *Silent Partner* | *Peacemaker*  
*Eudeva* | *Tradewinds* | *Red Stripe***

Lundy Robinson established mastery in sloops of the three major regatta classes, 'A', 'B' and 'C'. In 'A' Class, Robinson and *Silent Partner* took the championship in 1989 and 1997. In 2013, Robinson topped the field with *Red Stripe*. This formidable skipper did the same in 'B' Class with *Trade Winds* in 1988. With 'B' Class *Peacemaker*, built by Mark Knowles, he secured wins in 1992 and 1997 and with *Eudeva* in 2008. With *Peacemaker*, he took second place in 1995, 1996 and 1998.

**Kenneth Rolle | *Lady M***

Kenneth Rolle broke through the ranks with *Lady M* in 1970 with a second place finish, repeating that accomplishment with the same sloop in 1973, 1974, 1975, 1993 and 1994. For decades to come, some of the foregoing names would resound in the sailing community, among those who recognize and appreciate world-class sailing prowess.

## Class 'B'

### Jeff Gale | **Lonesome Dove** | **The Dove**

At the National Family Island Regatta in 2010, Jeff Gale entered the lists of competitors convincingly. That year he secured the Class 'B' championship and won the Governor's Cup. In the years following, Gale demonstrated that this quality of sailing was not a fluke, going on to take three firsts with Lonesome Dove and three second place rankings with The Dove.

### Stefan Knowles | **Susan Chase**

Stefan Knowles and Class 'B' empress *Susan Chase*, through the second decade of the 21st century, demonstrated that they share a common communication channel on the water, possibly because the sloop was built by Knowles' father Laurin. This seemingly unbreakable affinity resulted in eleven wins for the partnership.

### The Mitchells | **Tari Anne**

Establishing a formidable record in the National Family Island Regatta from starting, Mitchell and *Tari Anne* crossed the finish line for Class "B" wins in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, taking second place only in 2004. His son **David Mitchell** gilded the record by winning in the same category with *Tari Anne* in 2007 and 2009.



Reverend Elkin Alexander Symonette

### Rev Elkin Alexander Symonette | **Williams Auto**

26 Feb 1938 - 25 Apr 2012

Born in Pinefield, Acklins, Bishop Dr Elkin Symonette represented an intriguing combination of life pursuits. He became a consummate sailor and founder and pastor of Nassau's Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church. A Baptist by creed, he also served as Grand Chaplain of the Yoga Retreat, Paradise Island. However, no one can doubt that he was formidable contender in regatta manning the 'B' Class sloop *Williams Auto* for five wins—1977, 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1984.



## National Regatta Song Competition

In 2012 a competition was held to identify a theme song for the National Family Island Regatta, a production of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture with liquor merchants Burns House as primary sponsor. Don 'Bahamaddon' Rolle emerged the winner with 'Regatta Time', which tells of Bahamian roots. Colyn McDonald was judge. The disc was produced by Owen 'Ovadosa' Davis and Trevor 'Bigga-tea' Taylor.

Rolle explained his motivation for writing the song as a concerned that foreign cultures had infiltrated Bahamian youth through music with "devastating" negative impacts.

Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Minister Dr Daniel Johnson noted that his Ministry partnered with young Bahamian artists to promote their products "and this Bahamian-ness that we have" and to "highlight the best creative Bahamian works of expression."

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## What's in a Name?

A World of Cultural Oddities and Humour

Beyond paying tribute to worthies by attaching their name to a vessel, the naming of regatta sloops in The Bahamas is deeply steeped in the life of the islands. An examination of them can reveal much about the culture and humour of the people.

*Strong Back | Ruff Justice | Jungalist | Hog Tusk | Pot Cake | Beerly Legal | Judgment Day*

## Class 'C'

### Stefan Knowles | Whitty K

Stefan Knowles' connection with the *Susan Chase* is considered phenomenal, but an even greater superlative must be found to describe his relationship with 'C' Class sloop *Whitty K*.

Together man and sloop took command in thirty races across eight different island regattas.

### Leslie "Buzzy" Rolle | Saddam

Rolle and Saddam ruled the 'C' Class wave in 1992 and 1994-1997. His sloop *Bul Reg* was one of the champions.

## Rise of Regatta Dynasties

In general, maritime industry and sport in The Bahamas has given rise to royal families, where superb and award-winning seamanship have been passed down through generations, thereby preserving a unique tradition and related skills. Most notable among the noble lines of championship sea masters have been families from Exuma and Long Island.

From Staniel Cay/Black Point, Exuma came a network of sailors and regatta award winners including Rolly Gray and Kenneth Rolle, Brooks Miller, Luther Miller, Clyde Rolle, Hansel Rolle-Miller and Lundy Robinson and Steve Smith.

Mangrove Bush, Long Island three generations of Knowles, fathers, brothers, sons and grandsons, the majority of whom have sailed in regattas from the founding of the National Family Island Regatta and have engaged in crafting the fast sloops for which they are highly regarded.

From Ragged Island: Edgar O. Moxey's son Boycel has carried on his father's legacy of sloop sailing in addition to his contribution to the mailboat service tradition established by Edgar.

Mayaguana produced the Higgins family: Boat owner and sailor Jacob Higgins, his sons Melvin and Dwayne who learned sailing from their father. Dwayne captains the *Cobra* which he rebuilt. A third generation, Melvin's son Joshua and daughter Melisha, gained early recognition in junior sailing in Optimist races.

Providing evidence of transmission of the Bahamian sailing, boat building and regatta traditions, these groups give hope for sustainability. No doubt, the march into the future will bring modifications to various aspects, hopefully to the good. It is almost certain that there are other, similarly engaged families waiting to be recognized through further research and writing.

# *The National Family Island Regatta The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**Danny Strachan**, Chairman and Commodore

**Clyde Rolle**, Vice Commodore

**Stafford Armbrister**, Race Coordinator

## **Theme Song**

A ditty J. Linton Rigg said he heard as he sailed into Nassau Harbour is a tribute to the Exuma subgroup of islands and was adopted as theme of the National Family Island Regatta:

*Sou-Sou-East as fly the crow*

*To Exuma we will go.*

*Chorus: Sail her down, sail her down*

*(Repeated after every pair of lines)*

*Sail her down to George Town*

*Highborne Cay the first we see*

*Yellow Bank is by the lee*

*Harvey Cay is in the moon*

*Farmer's Cay is coming soon*

*Now we come to Galliot*

*Out into the ocean we must go*

*Children's Bay is passing fast*

*Stocking Island come at last.*

*Nassau gal is all behind*

*George Town gal is on my mind*

*A wiggle and a jiggle and a jamboree*

*Great Exuma is the place for me.*

## **From Working Sloops to Racing Thoroughbreds**

The 21st century Bahamian racing sloops, superbly graceful in line, sleek as dolphins and built to defy water resistance, have been described as thoroughbreds. With masts that can reach 60 feet in height and 30-foot booms, these crafts are built for speed. One writer has noted: "A huge triangular main and a bare sliver





of jib are the maritime equivalent of dropping a full-race 454 engine into a Pinto.”<sup>47</sup>

## The Rules

The masts must also be wooden and there can be no spreaders or aluminum spars, no bowsprits, no winches, no tell tales, and no wind or speed instruments.<sup>48</sup>

The regatta rules continued to protect Bahamian heritage and tradition as to boats, helmsman and crew. Using materials that preserve the traditions of the early boatbuilders as much as possible, competing vessels of the second decade of the 21st century were still Bahamian designed, built, owned and skippered. Crews, between 12 and 15, continued to be primarily Bahamian, allowing for the participation of no more than four non-Bahamians.

Class A sloops must be no longer than 28’ 3” between perpendiculars, and between 8’ and 10’ 6” beam. These vessels are permitted a midships keel depth of 24”. Building materials for modern Bahamian regatta boats must be such that the vessels resemble and function as closely as possible to their traditional working sloop forebears.

**Captain Reuel Parker**, a United States designer, builder and repairer of boats, sailor and author, described the makeup of the construction of these crafts with a seasoned craftsman’s admirable precision.

*The hulls and masts must be made of wood, though fiberglass is allowed as a deck covering (many of the newer sloops are cold-molded). The boats cannot have bowsprits, spreaders, winches, or instruments. Sails must be cotton, with no wire luff ropes.*

*Rigs must be traditional Bahamian sloop: Small overlapping jibs tacked to the stem-head; and large rounded mains’l headboards (essentially single-*

*halyard gaffs). Up to three “pry boards” are allowed—planks held to the deck by large staples, run out to windward to seat human ballast... They have inside ballast, lovely sweeping sheers, and wineglass hull shapes. Rudders are transom-hung, and tillers pass through a slot in the upper transom. Transoms are raked, wineglass-shaped, and usually have a distinctive color-stripe across them near the top.<sup>49</sup>*

One additional distinguishing feature is that the voluminous main sheet is not attached to the boom but hangs loose below it.

## **Brilliant Sailors as Competitors**

Annually, the National Family Island Regatta attracts sailors who are world-class masters of the sea, hailing from islands throughout the archipelago. Leading the racing are the skipper at the tiller and the bowman who makes the tactical calls. Both must be brilliant strategists alert and responsive to rapidly changing conditions of wind and water in races that offer an extreme test of strength and endurance. Contributing to the success of a run are the jib and mainsail trimmers, anchor rode haulers and those who ride the pry, acting as human ballast.

## **An Invaluable and Sacrificial Contribution**

As are all the major regattas of The Bahamas, the National Family Island Regatta is about fierce competition, overall excellence, bragging rights and to a much lesser extent the prize money. The \$3,000 reward for a win pales in light of time and income sacrificed in the weeks preparing for and during the events. Add to the foregoing the cost of readying sloops for maximum performance and transporting them to the regatta sites. NFR is heavily supported by corporate sponsorships and more groups are encouraged to join in to keep this national enterprise alive and thriving.

## **The Races**

By the second decade of the 21st century, the regatta races were still taking place in Elizabeth Harbour, lying between Great Exuma and Stocking Island and the entirety of features yielded a colourful feast for the senses in ceremony, magnificent vessels, masterful sailing, music and noisy excitement. The spectacle begins with the arrival of the competing vessels. Boats from nearby islands used to sail into port, while others from farther away would arrive on the cargo decks of mailboats and freighters.



From the original two, the days of racing were extended to four or five to launch youth and dinghy races (two new classes, 'D' and 'E') bringing the number to five. Each class participates in three series of races over the course of the meet, comprising First, Second and Final Series in each category. Each year, an average of seventy sloops race in classes 'A through 'E' but, in 2016, seventy-seven participated, making it the largest to that date. The daily competition schedule features one race per class per day and a total of four races for each Class. No points are awarded for performance in the first. The overall Regatta champion is the one who accumulates the best scores over the other three races.

Spectators fortunate enough to be standing at the front of the crowds on the shores of Elizabeth Harbour and watching these initial processes may not be aware of it, but they are privileged to witness the successful preservation and continuance of age-old and glorious Bahamian craftsmanship, sea mastery and a host of traditions combined. These are gifts of wonder that should be held in memory and passed down the generations.

## **The Start: A Unique Feature**

The competition begins with an equally fascinating display. Excitement can rise to awe when the participating sloops, impossibly tall masts seeming to rake the sky, line up approximately 50 yards to leeward of the start line. Ranged side by side, anchors down, sails furled, awaiting the boom of the starting cannon to begin the frantic manual hauling in, hand over hand, ropes and anchors, and the raising of heavy mainsails. With might and main, the vessels sprint through to the start line and upwind to the first mark and towards prize money and the glory of a championship snatched from a field of champions.

All except the number one on the line must start on the starboard tack. Although it may not be the most spectacular of regatta sights, the pry board action holds its own in attraction. The crew slide on and off the pry boards when the sloop tacks.—Timing, responsiveness and agility are everything when moving the boards across the boat to the other side. An unplanned swim for crew members or the boat's capsizing and going to the bottom of the harbour laden with lead that must be retrieved. All such mishaps have occurred.



Regatta sailing is a test of strategy, knowledge of the waters, navigational prowess, coordination, raw strength and endurance.

The George Town, Elizabeth Harbour race course is still triangular, its angles marked by orange buoys. Tacking is the acid test in regatta sailing, separating the champions from the newcomers, and calls for rounding the buoys three times to complete the race. A successful run requires superb and timely response to wind direction to maximize speed while preventing scuttling, as competing sloops tend to list at awe-inspiring angles in making the turns. Bowman and skipper must share a rare connection. They, with the rest of the crew, must become a well-oiled machine with hair trigger response to rapidly changing conditions.

A legendary regatta skipper once offered a comment that underscores the great demand for mastery of ‘trimming sail’:

*These boats have serious weather helm. You must balance them perfectly. Too much mainsail and she stalls; you go to tack and you cannot tack through the eye of the wind. The helm tells you if the boat has too much sail. We have been sailing Tida Wave so long, we know how much sail and lead ballast to carry to make her happy.* – Brooks Miller, captain and multi-win regatta champion.<sup>50</sup>

Just as astounding is the coordination of the pry riders, the human ballast, whose response to the tack makes an all-important contribution to the vessel’s balance. An average of nine crew members scramble between starboard and port, on and off pry boards, extending more than four feet over the water in a daring maritime ballet.

In his column, ‘From the Helm’, **Steve Morrell**, editor of Southwinds magazine described the uniqueness of the phenomenon in sailing circles:

*The practice of “riding the pry”—the practice of crew sitting on long pry boards on the windward side to help level the boat when it is on a tack—has always been an exciting and intriguing image. It’s a sailing practice that I have not seen anywhere else.<sup>51</sup>*

It needs no explanation that the pry perch is precarious and riders do sometimes fall overboard. The rules concerning such an occurrence are strict. A boat must stop and retrieve fallen crew members from the water. Rescues tend to be blink-of-eye fast. Those vessels failing to stop are disqualified from the race.

Pry riders and other members of boat crews are drawn from all strata of social and economic status and are not restricted by gender.

## PRIME MINISTER'S CUP from 1975

YEAR	BOAT	CAPTAIN	HOME PORT
1975	Good News	Edgar O. Moxey	Ragged Island
1976	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1977	Rough Waters	Scott Weatherford	Man-O-War Cay, Abaco
1978	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1979	Tanqueray	Kenneth Albury	Nassau
1980	Southern Cross	Clement Fox	Nassau
1981	Abaco Rage	Scott Weatherford	Man-O-War Cay, Abaco
1982	Abaco Rage	Scott Weatherford	Man-O-War Cay, Abaco
1983	Silent Partner	Walter Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1984	Silent Partner	Walter Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1985	Lady Eugenia	Hezron Moxey	Ragged Island
1986	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1987	Jiffy	Roy Bowe	Rolleville
1988	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1989	Pieces of Eight	Edgar O. Moxey	Ragged Island
1990	Courageous	Emmitt Munroe	Ragged Island
1991	Rupert's Legend	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1992	Rupert's Legend	Earlin Knowles	Long Island
1993	Lady Muriel	Kenneth Rolle	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1994	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1995	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1996	Running Tide	Mark Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1997	Tida Wave	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma

1998	Running Tide	Mark Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1999	Rupert's Legend	Mark Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2000	Rupert's Legend	Mark Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2001	Silent Partner	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2002	Original Courageous	Ivan Stuart	Ragged Island
2003	Abaco Rage	Chris Thompson	Abaco
2004	New Courageous	Ivan Stuart	Abaco
2005	Abaco Rage	Jeff Gale	Hope Town, Abaco
2006	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2007	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2008	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2009	Running Wave	Roger Fox	Salt Pond, Long Island
2010	New Courageous	Emmitt Munroe	Ragged Island
2011	Red Stripe	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2012	Red Stripe	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2013	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2014	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2015	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2016	Running Tide	Stefan Knowles	Salt Pond, Long Island
2017	Red Stripe	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2018	Running Tide	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2019	Tida Wave	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma

Sailors, boatbuilders and patrons recognized by a national programme of honours or by the National Family Island Regatta.

## **National Sports Hall of Fame**

**Durward Knowles, NP**

**Cecil Cooke, NP**

**Robert H. “Bobby” Symonette, NP**

**Sloane E. “Bunty” Farrington, NP**

**Rolly Gray, Staniel Cay, Exuma**

**Basil Trevor Kelly, NP**

## **National Family Island Regatta Honorees**

**Kenneth Rolle, Staniel Cay, Exuma**

**Fred Finley, Andros**

**Alfred Bain, Andros**

**Clarence Edward Fitzgerald, The Ferry, Little Exuma**

**Knowles Family, Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

**Rupert Knowles, Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

**Laurin Knowles, Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

**Mark Knowles, Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

**Earlin Knowles, Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

**George Knowles, McKanns, Long Island**

**Hezron Moxey, Ragged Island**

**Clement Fox, Fox Town, Abaco**

**Emmitt Munroe, Ragged Island**

**Scott Weatherford, Man-O-War, Abaco**

**Jeff Gale, Hope Town, Abaco**

**Sheldon Gibson, Landril Point, Crooked Island**

**Joshua Green, Mangrove Cay, Andros**

**Henry Harding, Salt Pond, Long Island**

**Eleazor “Barber J” Johnson, Lovely Bay, Acklins**

**Brooks Miller, Staniel Cay, Exuma**

**Efford Kemp, Black Point, Exuma**

**Hughie Lloyd, Barreterre, Exuma**

**Marcus Mitchell, Samson Cay, Exuma**

**Edgar O. Moxey, Farmers Cay/Ragged Island**

**Shirley Rolle, secretary of the National Family Island Regatta Committee.**

**Lundy Robinson, Black Point, Exuma**

**Leslie “Buzzy” Rolle, Cottage, Exuma**

**Stevin “Steve” Smith, Staniel Cay, Exuma**

**Ivan Stuart, Moore’s Island, Abaco**

**Elkin Symonette, Acklins**

**Aulice “Tommy” Thompson, Steventon, Exuma.**

**Stafford Armbrister**

**Delworth Gibson, Gibson, Acklins**

**Jacob Higgins, Pirate’s Well, Mayaguana**

**W.G. McPhee**

**Lee Armbrister**

**Wycliff Albury**



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

Although men predominate, women have participated.

A pry rider noted of his sailing experience:

*Don't pay attention and you are swimming and your boat is losing. Usually, there are conversations going on about when to tack between the captain and the strategist, also called the bowman. You must pay attention to the discussion and make sure you are aware of when the captain has decided to tack because he doesn't consistently say 'tacking'. He might say 'okay' or 'let's go' or he might just put down the helm.—Lawrence Bascom, private equity investor, education philanthropist.<sup>52</sup>*

Bascom is the owner of the “E” Class sailboat *Empress* and a member of the crew that won the Sir Durward Knowles Cup for a first place finish in the “Catch Me If You Can” 2016 St Valentine’s Day Regatta.

## Mishaps

It is not all song and dance gliding over the main in regatta contests. Vagaries of wind, wave and tides and even the slightest miscalculation or mistiming of crew movement upsetting a hair’s breadth balance can bring competitors to grief.

Losing the tall masts and mainsails of the racing sloops, their 'engines' and speed control, has been one of the most distressing of mishaps. Such an occurrence leaves the vessels dead in the water and out of the race. At some point, Rupert Knowles's *Stormy Weather* lost its mast in a race. At the 2015 National Family Island Regatta, a "C" Class boat suffered a broken mast.

Similar complications arose for *Rupert's Legend*, skippered by Edsel Knowles, son of Earlin 'Earlie' Knowles in the first Ocean Race at Long Island's 46th Annual Regatta. The next day, during the second race, *Legend* came to grief in a collision with *New Courageous*, which resulted in a broken mast, ending *Rupert's Legend's* run for the prize.

One of the most distressing of calamities has been boat sinkings and the urgency of refloating these valuable and central elements of the regatta mechanism. The Class C boat *Two Friends* went under during the 1st series race at the 58th Family Island Regatta in 2011, giving its sailors a salty baptism.

In the First Annual Best of the Best Regatta, 1-4 December 2016, members of the Sailors League skippering the Bahamian sloop *Sacrifice* received an unforgettable lesson, which they took in stride with good humour. Though Star

**In 1973**, in celebration of independence from Britain, The National Family Island Regatta was held in Nassau, The Bahamas capital. This was the first and only time to 2019 that NFIR was held in a location other than George Town's, Elizabeth Harbour.

boats are "notoriously difficult to sail", the Bahamian racing sloop is in a 'league' or two beyond.

The "C" Class *Termite* went down into Davy Jones locker in George Town, Exuma's beautiful Elizabeth Harbour as it pursued victory in the 2018 edition of the Bul' Reg Regatta. The raising of the boat, led by Valiant Marine Salvage, demonstrated the determination, seamanship and camaraderie of the salvagers and the Bahamian sailors.

While there have been these mishaps and others, some as simple as pry riders taking an unplanned dunking in the sea, superb skills and tactical ability have kept the racing remarkably safe.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photographs.

## Recognizing Excellence

### Prizes and Awards

Prize money has increased steadily for the winners in the five classes, as well for other awards for excellence: The reward for winners of the major trophies have also increased.

#### A Sampling of Cup Winners

##### 2016

Prime Minister's Cup – *Running Tide*  
Governor-General's Cup – *Lady Sonia*  
Commodore Emeritus Cup – *Bul Reg*

##### 2019

Prime Minister's Cup – 'A' Class – *Tida Wave*  
Governor-General's Cup – 'B' Class – *New Susan Chase*

Commodore Emeritus Cup – 'C' Class *Whitty K*  
Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources  
Cup for Class 'E'.

### Recognition for the Royal Bahamas Defence Force

In 2017, at the 5th Annual Defence Force Challenge Cup Regatta, held 31 March to 2 April 2017 at Montagu Bay, the then Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the **Hon. V. Alfred Gray** awarded the Royal Bahamas

Defence Force a signal recognition. The Minister announced the Government's decision that Commodore of the Force was to have added to his title "Honorary Commodore" at all government-sponsored regattas.

Thirteen C-class vessels and 14 laser class vessels participated. It was noted at the event that the late Defence Force Chief Petty Officer Vincent Wright was once a skipper of the 'C' Class native sloop, the *Lady Eunice*.

### Race Results

#### Lucayan Race for Peace

Lady Eunice emerged winner of this first race of the weekend. It was termed a fitting tribute to Wright's legacy.

Overall Winner 'C' Class: *King and Knights*  
Laser Category: **Spencer Cartwright**.

### Cultural Extravaganza: Regatta Onshore Activities

The internationally travelled and recognized Royal Bahamas Police Force Marching Band has drawn the lens of some of the most noted photographers across the globe. Band members, strikingly and always immaculately arrayed in crisp white tunics, black trousers with a distinctive red stripe down the sides



and spiked pith helmets and their performance have been an eagerly anticipated feature of the National Family Island Regatta since its first event. Attracting particular attention are the drummers adorned with leopard skin aprons led by the drum major expertly twirling his mace, which has long been the symbol of military music and discipline. The musicians of this distinguished corps are among the most talented of The Bahamas, who add to their instrumental expertise, fine dancing and singing.

The similarly gifted and attractively attired Royal Bahamas Defence Force Band and local

island bands have also participated in opening ceremonies. More and more, stars of Bahamian music world have contributed. Attendees can also enjoy events such as a float parade, fashion and cultural shows, as well as expositions of traditional skills, displays and games.

Over the years, from the original 1954 event, Exumians perceived that the regatta could continuously increase the economic opportunities that could be derived from providing non-competing visitors with festive land-based activities. Consequently, in the environs of Elizabeth Harbour, a festival village sprang up, comprising makeshift bars and food





and souvenir stands at the waterfront as well as along the roadsides. While offering traditional fare—seafood, mainly conch and fish in many renditions, peas and rice and other age-old Bahamian dishes, regatta cooks and vendors, compete, year by year, to create culinary delights, heavily influenced by American fairground novelty exploits, but still based mainly on locally produced fruits of the sea.

Increasing in volume and variety, electronic and live, music continued to be laid on for dancing and to heighten the party atmosphere for Bahamians and visitors in chance-engendered camaraderie and democracy.

## **ESSENTIAL ROLE OF BOAT OWNERS**

Those who commission and own boats play an essential role in the staging and sustainability of regatta in The Bahamas. In a figurative sense, they, along with the boat builders are the chassis of regatta, sails and sailors are the fuel and engine, while organizers and race coordinators are fuel pumps and tires. Sponsors, vendors and spectators are the lifeblood of regattas. To these, cooperating seamlessly, The Bahamas owes the driving force, preservation and sustainability of a precious tradition and essential piece of the nation’s economic engine.

A sampling of boat owners appears in the following list.

<b>BOAT</b>	<b>OWNER</b>
Angie M	Carl Treco
Avenger	Alfred Bain
Barbarian I & 2	Delworth Gibson
Blue Shadow	Ivan Bowe
Bul Reg	Leslie “Buzzy” Rolle
Bullardo	Bullard
Cay Princess	Roy Bowe
Cobra	Dwayne Higgins
Diamond Head	
Dream Girl	David Rolle
Ed Sky	Joseph Brown
Exuma Way	Rufus Stuart
Eudeva	Sheldon Gibson
Flash	Denrick Miller
Fugitive	Tyrone McKenzie
Good News	Wycliffe Albury
Heathcliff	Larry Bastian
Inheritance	Arthur Brown
Intrepid	Horace Lockhart
Irene Goodnight	Lewis Hart
It Ain’t Right	Jeffrey Gale
Jacob’s Ladder	Dwayne Higgins
Jiffy/ Palm	
King and Knights	“King Eric” Gibson
Kleerer Noami	Kirk Culmer
Lady Eunice	Vince Wright
Lady Nathalie	Eleazor Johnson
Lady Ruthnell	Larry Bastian

**BOAT**

Lady Sonia  
 Lonesome Dove  
 Lucayan Lady  
 Man O War  
 Melva B  
 Mona Lisa  
 New Legend  
 Peacemaker  
 Pieces of Eight  
 Revelation/  
 Queen Drucilla  
 Ruff Justice  
 Running Tide  
 Running Wave  
 San Sally  
 Sea Star  
 Silent Partner  
 Slip Away  
 Smashie  
 Southern Cross  
 Storr's #2  
 Susan Chase V  
 Sweet Island Girl  
 Tanqueray  
 Tari Anne  
 Termite  
 The Brothers  
 Thunderbird  
 Revelation 3:19  
 Rosalie/Chance

**OWNER** (continued)

Leslie "Buzzy" Rolle  
 Eric Patterson  
 E.P. St George  
  
 Larry Bastian  
 George McKinney  
 Emile Knowles  
 Enos Johnson  
 Nigel Bowe  
  
 Stephano Kemp  
 Ben Knowles  
 Scott Harding  
 Cassius Moss  
 Richard Ross  
 Ron Miller  
 Lundy Robinson  
 George Knowles  
 Van Ferguson  
 George Knowles  
 Real Storr  
 Stefan Knowles  
 Sandi Treco  
 Roy Albury  
 Dallas Knowles  
 Dallas Knowles  
 Maycock  
 Rev. Dr Philip McPhee  
 Kevin Moxey  
 Cedric Johnson

Unca Boss  
 Unca John  
 Whitty K  
 Who Dat  
 Williams Auto  
  
 Wind Pioneer  
 Xena

Vivian Lockhart  
 Albon Gibson  
 Jason Knowles  
 Daniel Seymour  
 Huel Williams/  
 Elkin Symonette  
 W.G. McPhee  
 Jesse Knowles

**FUNDING REGATTA**

*Sloop sailing is a very expensive sport. In order for boats to be able to participate in over 12 regattas per year, it takes corporate companies who are interested and concerned to make those things happen.*—Rev. Philip McPhee, former Regatta Consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture & Marine Resources.<sup>54</sup>

In a 2020 publication celebrating the 67th anniversary of the National Family Island regatta, Commodore Danny Strachan commented on the funding challenges of the sport:

*Raising money was very difficult this year due mainly to the continuing Global Recession. The total receipt for the 2012 Regatta was \$262,690,00, while the total cost was \$260,248,58. This resulted in a small surplus of \$2,441,42. It could be the onshore expenses for the Regatta are not*

*included in these numbers. However, the total onshore expenses were approximately \$59,000,00. Therefore, adding the local onshore expenses, the total cost of the 2012 Regatta was \$319,248,58. This level of expenditure is unsustainable and both the National and Local committees will have to find ways to reduce overall costs where possible. (Commodore's Review)*

Funding for established regattas is derived from multiple sources. Up to 2020 The Bahamas Government provided annually \$1.5 million, which is shared among regattas. In addition, there is a commitment in terms of the maintenance and funding of the Regatta Desk. Moreover, the Ministry of Tourism has been a promotional sponsor of regattas for many years.

Pre-event fundraisers, cooperate groups and sailing enthusiasts provide substantial support for keeping the regatta tradition alive, developing and expanding.

Danny Strachan expressed gratitude for government and the many persons and institutions, both local and international, who have made generous and ongoing financial contributions to support the National Family Island regatta, and the various other regattas.

## **Corporate Sponsorship**

Bahamian regattas are heavily dependent upon private sponsorship, including that of generous individuals but particularly corporate groups, most prominent among which have been large merchant enterprises, especially purveyors of wines and spirits, breweries, communications companies—ALIV and BTC, principally, the gaming companies, accounting firms and commercial and offshore banks.

## **A Historic Challenge**

In April 2020, while the coronavirus still prevailed globally, the National Family Island Regatta was cancelled for the first time in its 67 Years as the nation's premier maritime festival. It was a decision taken by the Minister of Agriculture & Marine Resources Hon. Michael C. Pintard in concert with NFIR Commodore Danny Strachan and other members of the organizing committee as a measure to stem the spread of the virus and protect public health. With great optimism, the group initiated planning for mounting the festival in 2021.

It is this spirit that has ensured the continuance of the George Town enterprise through the many changes at home and abroad that have threatened to scuttle this embodiment of the finest element of the skills, spirit, pride and fortitude of the Bahamian people.

## **The National Family Island Regatta: Cacique Award Winner**

Regattas are one of the last places to see sailing vessels, which are exemplars of unique Bahamian boatbuilding and sailing traditions. These events permit the spectators the unalloyed pleasure of witnessing the confluence of maritime history, sailing, entrepreneurship and rollicking good fun wrapped in camaraderie and island and national pride. For this reason, the Ministry of Tourism bestowed upon the National Family Island Regatta its prestigious Cacique Award.





Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

## Enduring Value

As Danny Strachan commented a number of years ago:

*“What began 60 years ago as a weekend of braggadocio and a sporting test of the skills of a few work boats and their skippers has evolved and prevailed to become the premier regatta on the sailing calendar and a much anticipated event by locals and visitors alike.*

*“From the initial Out Island Squadron who organised the first regatta...to today’s dedicated National Family Island Regatta Committee, this truly Bahamian event could not have endured without the dedication and commitment of the government, organisers, skippers, volunteers, sponsors and fans alike.”<sup>153</sup>*

## The National Family Island Regatta Jubilee Regatta - 2014

### Members of the Organizing Committee

Danny Strachan  
Clyde Rolle  
Eulamae Morley  
Chris Kettel  
Charlene Brown  
Warren Rolle  
Craig Symonette  
John Lawrence  
Sir Durward Knowles



# *National Family Island Regatta* *Winning Sloops &* *1954-2019 Skippers*

**S**ince the launch of the modern era of regatta in 1954, a select group of Class “A and Class “B” sloops and skippers have led the cavalcade of winners. In the former group, the lead vessels have been *Lady Muriel*; *Tida Wave*; *Rupert’s Legend*; *Running Tide* and *Red Stripe*. Both sailors and sloops have come mainly out of Andros, Exuma and Long Island. The Classes “A” and “B” princes at the tiller have been Rolly Gray (winner of the 1954 regatta), Brooks Miller of Staniel Cay, Exuma, one of the Knowles clan of Mangrove Bush, Long Island, whether Rupert, Earlin, Laurin or Stefan. Also counted in this stellar group have been Lundy Robinson, Elkin Symonette, Ivan Stuart and Alfred Ferguson. This must be said: These are first among peers, because from 1954 to 2019, all participants in the National Family Island Regatta have been masters of the sea

and formidable competitors. Equally skilled boat builders have been their essential partners in winning.

In Class “B”, the Long Island-built *Susan Chase* has dominated the field with one of the Knowles, primarily Laurin Knowles, as winner. The *Tari Anne* skippered by either Marcus or David Mitchell has been a formidable challenger as has Hope Town’s *Lonsome Dove* captained by Jeff Gale.

Whatever placement achieved when marks are tallied at end of race day, sailing experts and aficionados will declare every helmsman a master sailor and leader and every vessel a champion of the boatbuilders’ art.

## **“A” CLASS WINNERS 1954-2019**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>BOAT</b>	<b>CAPTAIN</b>	<b>HOME PORT</b>
1954	MARIE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1955	RAGGED GAL	Vernon Lockhart	Ragged Island
1956	KLEERER NAOMI	Livingstone Miller	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1957	MYSTERYJ.	Alfred Bain	Lisbon Creek, Andros
1958	KLEERER NAOMI	Fred Finley	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1959	LADY MURIEL	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1960	MYSTERY J.	Alfred Bain	Lisbon Creek, Andros
1961	THUNDERBIRD	Samuel Stubbs	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1962	MARGARET L.,	Rupert Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1963	MARGARET L.	Rupert Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1964	THUNDERBIRD	Richard Hepburn	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1965	TIDA WAVE	Rupert Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1966	THUNDERBIRD	Fred Finley	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1967	MRS.MAYCOCK	Lincoln Maycock	Farmer’s Cay, Exuma
1968	THUNDERBIRD	E. Green	Mangrove Cay, Andros
1969	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1970	TDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1971	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1972	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1973	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1974	GOOD NEWS	Edgar Moxey	Duncan Town, Ragged Island

1975	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1976	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1977	GOOD NEWS	Hezron Moxey	Nassau
1978	SOUTHERN CROSS	Clement Fox	Nassau, New Providence
1979	TANQUARAY	Kenneth Albury	Nassau, New Providence
1980	SOUTHERN CROSS	Clement Fox	Nassau, New Providence
1981	PIECES OF EIGHT	Edgar Moxey	Duncan Town, Ragged Island
1982	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1983	ABACO RAGE	Scott Weatherford	Man O' War Cay, Abaco
1984	ABACO RAGE	Scott Weatherford	Man O' War Cay, Abaco
1985	LADY EUGENIA	Hezron Moxey	Duncan Town, Ragged Island
1986	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1987	LUCAYAN LADY	Clement Fox	Nassau, New Providence
1988	LUCAYAN LADY	Clement Fox	Nassau, New Providence
1989	SILENT PARTNER	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1990	UNCA BOSS	Hezron Moxey	Ragged Island
1991	RUPERT'S LEGEND	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1992	RUPERT'S LEGEND	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1993	LADY MURIEL	Kenneth Rolle	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1994	LADY MURIEL	Kenneth Rolle	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1995	RUPERT'S LEGEND	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1996	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1997	SILENT PARTNER	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma

1998	TIDA WAVE	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1999	LADY MURIEL	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2000	RUNNING TIDE	Laurin Knowles	Salt Pond, Long Island
2001	ORIGINAL COURAGEOUS	Ivan Stuart	Ragged Island
2002	RUNNING TIDE	Laurin Knowles	Salt Pond, Long Island
2003	LADY MURIEL	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2004	RUNNING TIDE	Laurin Knowles	Salt Pond, Long Island
2005	RUPERT'S LEGEND	Mark Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2006	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2007	RED STRIPE	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2008	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2009	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2010	EARLIE'S RUPERT'S LEGEND	David Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2011	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2012	LADY MURIEL	Steve Smith	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2013	RED STRIPE	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
2014	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2015	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2016	LADY MURIEL	Steve Smith	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2017	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma
2018	RUNNING TIDE	David Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2019	TIDA WAVE	Brooks Miller	Staniel Cay, Exuma



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

## **“B” CLASS WINNERS 1963-2019**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>BOAT</b>	<b>CAPTAIN</b>	<b>HOME PORT</b>
1963	EASTERN WAVE	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1964	SUSAN CHASE	George “Shorty” Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1965	SUSAN CHASE	George “Shorty” Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1966	EASTERN WAVE	Roy Albury	George Town, Exuma
1967	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1968	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1969	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1970	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1971	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1972	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1973	(Nassau) BROTHERS	Patrick Maycock	Ragged Island
1974	ANGIE M.	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1975	ANGIE M.	Earlin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1976	SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1977	FOXY LADY	Pat Goodwin	New Providence
1978	WILLIAMS AUTO	Elkin Symonette	Acklins
1979	WILLIAMS AUTO	Elkin Symonette	Acklins
1980	WILLIAMS AUTO	Elkin Symonette	Acklins
1981	BLACK DIAMOND	Julian McKenzie	
1982	STORRS #2	Alfred Ferguson	Black Point, Exuma
1983	STORRS #2	Alfred Ferguson	Black Point, Exuma
1984	WILLIAMS AUTO	Elkin Symonette	Acklins

1985	STORRS #2	Alfred Ferguson	Black Point, Exuma
1986	STORRS #2	Alfred Ferguson	Black Point, Exuma
1987	WILLIAMS AUTO	Elkin Symonette	Acklins
1988	TRADE WINDS	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1989	COBRA	Ivan Stuart	Moore's Island, Abaco
1990	COBRA	Ivan Stuart	Moore's Island, Abaco
1991	COBRA	Ivan Stuart	Moore's Island, Abaco
1992	PEACEMAKER	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1993	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Long Island
1994	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Long Island
1995	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1996	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1997	PEACEMAKER	Lundy Robinson	Black Point, Exuma
1998	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Long Island
1999	TARI ANNE	Marcus Mitchell	Samson Cay, Exuma
2000	TARI ANNE	Marcus Mitchell	Samson Cay, Exuma
2001	TARI ANNE	Marcus Mitchell	Samson Cay Exuma
2002	TARI ANNE	Marcus Mitchell	Samson Cay, Exuma
2003	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Long Island
2004	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Laurin Knowles	Long Island
2005	ROWDY BOYS PIN-AH	Mark Knowles	Long Island
2006	LONESOME DOVE	Jeff Gale	Abaco
2007	TARI ANNE	David Mitchell	Exuma
2008	EUDEVA	Lundy Robinson	Exuma



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna





2009	TARI ANN	David Mitchell	Exuma
2010	LONESOME DOVE	Jeff Gale	Abaco
2011	LADY SONIA	Leslie 'Buzzy' Rolle	Exuma
2012	LADY SONIA	Buzzy Rolle	Exuma
2013	EUDEVA	Lundy Robinson	Exuma
2014	LADY SONIA	Leslie 'Buzzy' Rolle	Exuma
2015	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Stefan Knowles	Long Island
2016	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Stefan Knowles	Long Island
2017	LONESOME DOVE	Jeff Gale	Abaco
2018	LONESOME DOVE	Jeff Gale	Abaco
2019	NEW SUSAN CHASE	Stefan Knowles	Long Island

## **“C” CLASS 1954-2019**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>BOAT</b>	<b>CAPTAIN</b>	<b>HOME PORT</b>
1954	Sea Hound	Saney Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1955	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1956	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1957	Sea Hound	Alphaeus Kelly	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1958	Jacqueline	George Knowles	Deadman’s Cay, Long Island
1959	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1960	Blue Wing	Terevas Smith	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1961	Jacqueline	Ignatius Burrows	George Town, Exuma
1962			
1963	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1964	Jacqueline	Ignatius Burrows	George Town, Exuma
1965	Golden Hind	George Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1966	Races Cancelled		
1967	Golden Hind	George Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1968	Golden Hind	George Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1969	Golden Hind	Cyril Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1970	Iris	Sherwin Gray	Williams Town, Exuma
1971	Golden Hind	Cyril Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1972	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1973	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1974	Golden Hind	Cyril Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island

1975	Spray Hound	Alphaeus Kelly	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1976	Iris	Sherwin Gray	Williams Town, Exuma
1977	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1978	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1979	Sea Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1980	Martha K	George Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1981	Mrs Lloyd	Jack Wright	Barraterre, Exuma
1982	Exuma Way	Sherwin Bain	Nassau, New Providence
1983	Martha K	Cyril Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1984	Mrs Lloyd	Jack Wright	Barreterre, Exuma
1985	I've Tried	Anvil Lloyd	Barreterre, Exuma
1986	I've Tried	Anvil Lloyd	Barreterre, Exuma
1987	Exuma Way	Sherwin Bain	Nassau, New Providence
1988	Spray Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1989	Spray Hound	Rolly Gray	Staniel Cay, Exuma
1990	I've Tried	Hughrie Lloyd	Barreterre, Exuma
1991	Patriot	David Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
1992	Saddam	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
1993	White Ghost	Marcus Mitchell	Sampson Cay, Exuma
1994	Saddam	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
1995	Saddam	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma

1996	Saddam	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
1997	Saddam	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
1998	I've Tried	Anvil Taylor	Barraterre, Exuma
1999			
2000	Sacrifice	Colin Cartwright	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2001	Sacrifice	Colin Cartwright	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2002	I've Tried	Anvil Taylor	Barraterre, Exuma
2003	Sacrifice	Colin Cartwright	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2004	Bul Reg	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
2005			
2006	Bul Reg	Leslie Rolle	Cottage, Exuma
2007	Beerly Legal	Mark Knowles	Salt Pond, Long Island
2008			
2009	Lady Diane	Don Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2010	Beerly Legal	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2011	Whitty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2012	Lady Eunice	Morris Rolle	Black Point, Exuma
2013	Whitty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2014	Whitty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2015	Whitty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2016	Whitty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2017	It Ain't Right	Jeff Gale	Hope Town, Abaco
2018	Witty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island
2019	Witty K	Stefan Knowles	Mangrove Bush, Long Island

# Cat Island Regatta

**Patrick “Pat” Strachan**, Past President  
**Maxwell Burrows**, Chairman of the Race  
Committee

Founded in May 1956, the Cat Island Regatta is the second oldest of the modern era of the sport in The Bahamas, after the National Family Island Regatta.

The idea for creating the event arose among a group of Cat Islanders, some of whom were sailors like boatbuilder **Harold King**, who had sailed his sloop *Palmdale* in the 1954 Exuma event and for some time thereafter. The notion caught the attention of prominent Nassauvians, including brothers **Godfrey and David Kelly**, both businessmen and Snipe Class boat racers, real-estate tycoon **Harold Christie** and **Peter Christie** to form the organizing committee.

Providing support services were the island **Commissioners Raymond Harcourt Culmer** and **James Campbell**.

**The Racing Committee** consisted of Commissioners R.H. Culmer, James Campbell and **Leslie Armbrister**, along with Harold King and **Richard King**. Sir Harold Christie, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Cat Island at that time, was also instrumental in organizing that first event.

The first Cat Island Working Boat Sailing Regatta was held on Thursday, 31 May 1956 in Knowles, Cat Island with events clustered about the dock and the house of **Eunice Strachan**, grandmother of **Patrick ‘Pat’ Strachan** and **Garth King**. It was intended that the regatta would later move to other settlements over the

years, so that each community might benefit financially. Later on the event was moved permanently to New Bight settlement.

The first races of the 1956 event were held at the settlement of Knowles in the month of its founding, but later became a fixture of the Emancipation Day holiday weekend in August.

It was planned that competitors would be drawn from among Cat Islanders who had sailed in the 1955 Exuma regatta and their boats; Japhet King and *Hunter*, Joseph Lightbourne and *Sea Queen*, Emmanuel Larrimore and *Miss Cat Island* and Harold King and *Fear Not*, along with other locals and those that traveled from other islands.

In 2015, Godfrey Kelly pointed out that the competing vessels played a practical role as a means of communication on an island where the roads were very bad. Often, travel from one settlement to another was by boat. So, 48 boats, all work boats from the various Cat Island settlements, participated.

*That was why we had so many boats to compete in that first regatta. They also used the boats for fishing, but the main form of transportation was by these same work boats.* —Godfrey Kelly, one of the Cat Island Regatta founders.<sup>55</sup>

**Harold King won the race at the helm of *Miss Cat Island* at the first Cat Island Regatta.** Over the next five to six years, the King brothers, Harold and Richard, along with Harold's sons, would win numerous regattas in their sloops, *Miss Cat Island 1* and *2*, *Catherine*, *Mayflower*, *Palmdale*, *Fear Not*, *Invincible* and *P.D.Q.*

## Towards the Future

In the second decade of the 21st century, the Cat Island regatta organizers applied for a parcel of crown land on which to build a community center featuring a computer room, a library, a banquet hall, reception area and offices.

*I think this will be vital to the development of the young people in Cat Island. I have no doubt that this center will assist in developing the kids and ensure that they have a bright future,—Patrick Strachan.<sup>56</sup>*



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

## **60th Anniversary Regatta**

29 – 31 July 2014

### **The Presidential Citation Award:**

Past president, Sammy Smith.

### **Sailing Results**

The Cat Island Regatta continued to attract top sloops and sailors across Classes A, B & C.

Overall Winners:

#### **'C' Class**

*Sacrifice*

#### **B Class**

*Susan Chase*

#### **A Class**

*Red Stripe*

#### **Class A – Founders Cup Race, 31 July 2016**

1st – *Ed Sky*

2nd – *Red Stripe*

3rd – *Who Dat*

#### **Class A – Series Race**

1st – *Red Stripe*

2nd – *Ed Sky*

3rd – *Who Dat*

#### **Class B – Series Race**

1st – *Susan Chase*

2nd – *Eudeva*

3rd – *Cobra*

4th – *Ants Nest*

#### **Class B Cup Race, 30 July 2016**

1st – *Susan Chase*

2nd – *Ants Nest*

3rd – *Cobra*

4th – *Eudeva*

#### **Class B – 31 July 2016**

1st – *Cobra*

2nd – *Susan Chase*

3rd – *Ants Nest*

4th – *Eudeva*

#### **Class C – 29 July 2016**

1st Place – *Dream Girl*

2nd Place – *Catch Da Cat*

3rd Place – *Sacrifice*

#### **Class C Cup Race – 30 July 2016**

1st Place – *Irene Good Night*

2nd Place – *Sacrifice*

3rd Place – *Catch Da Cat*

#### **Class C Cup Race – 31 July 2016**

1st – *Sacrifice*

2nd – *Catch Da Cat*

3rd – *Dream Girl*



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna





# Long Island Regatta

## **Organizers**

**Tania Farquharson**, president of the Long Islanders Association

**Henderson Burrows**, a director and chairman for the Association's regatta committee

The Long Island Regatta features Class 'A', Class 'B', and Class 'C' boats, which, adhering to the nationally imposed regulations for such vessels, are all made in The Bahamas. Begun in 1967, this sailing regatta is the third oldest and second largest in The Bahamas, next to the National Family Island Regatta held in the Exumas, and is the major fundraiser on the island. The Long Island Regatta is celebrated every year, during The Bahamas Labour Day holiday weekend in June, lasting for up to three days. First held at Mangrove Bush for a number of years, the event was transferred

to the Salt Pond settlement, influenced by educator **Hugh J. A. Cottis**, who first served as a teacher and superintendent in the Ministry of Education system and later headed a continuing education centre of The College of The Bahamas.

As with the regattas held throughout the Family Islands, the Long Island attracts families, friends, and visitors from all over The Bahamas and around the globe. Skippers from throughout The Bahamas compete for cash prizes and trophies in A, B and C Class races. A number of the competing sailing sloops are built on the island in the settlement of Mangrove Bush.

Land-based attractions include: a competitive triathlon (swimming, cycling, and rowing);

artisans displaying their handmade crafts, jewelry, and straw goods and the sale of a number of Bahamian dishes: peas and rice, baked/barbeque chicken, pork, fish, conch, shrimp and lobster fritters, conch salad, as well as coconut cakes and coconut water.

Like many events planned for 2020, the Long Island Regatta set for June 3 to 6, was cancelled in support of national restrictions to curb the spread of the Coronavirus. Naturally, many of the usual participants were disappointed. As is the case with other regatta-supporting communities, the sailing competition, along with its closely associated boatbuilding industry and homecomings, is of significant economic importance to the island.

### **49th Annual Long Island Regatta**

1 – 4 June 2016

#### **Main Series Race Results**

1st *Tida Wave*/Brooks Miller, Exuma  
Sponsor: Long Islanders' Association  
Grand Bahama Branch

2nd *Running Tide*/Roger Fox, Salt Pond, Long Is.  
Sponsor: Long Islanders Association Grand  
Bahama Branch

3rd *Rupert's Legend*/Cameron Knowles,  
Mangrove Bush, Long Is.  
Sponsor: Express Food Market (Grand Bahama)

4th *Southern Cross*/Denrick Miller, Nassau, N.P.  
Sponsor: Long Island Petroleum

#### **Results of Cup Races**

##### **CLASS 'A'**

Roy Harding Memorial Cup Race  
Sponsor: Long Island  
Island Petroleum, Salt Pond, Long Island

**Winner:** *Sacrifice*/Colin Cartwright

##### **Governor's Cup Race, 3 June**

Sponsor: Caribbean Bottling (Bahamas) Ltd

1st *Tida Wave*/Brooks Miller, Exuma

2nd *Running Tide*/Roger Fox, Salt Pond, Long Is.

3rd *Rupert's Legend*/Cameron Knowles,  
Mangrove Bush, Long Is.

4th *Southern Cross*/Denrick Miller, Nassau

##### **Prime Minister's Cup Race, 3 June**

Sponsor: SOL Petroleum Bahamas Ltd

1st *Tida Wave*/Brooks Miller, Exuma

2nd *Rupert's Legend*/Cameron Knowles,  
Mangrove Bush, Long Is.

3rd *Running Tide*/Roger Fox, Salt Pond, L.I.

4th *Southern Cross*/Denrick Miller, Nassau, N.P.

**Hollie Cartwright Memorial Ocean Race, 1  
June**

Sponsor: Fair Family

1st *Tida Wave*/Brooks Miller, Exuma.

2nd *Ruff Justice*/Stefan Knowles, Clarence  
Town, Long Is.

3rd *Running Tide*/Roger Fox, Salt Pond, Long Is.

4th *Southern Cross*/Denrick Miller, Nassau.

**Hugh J.A. Cottis Memorial Cup Race, 4 June**

Sponsor: Cottis Family

1st *Tida Wave*/Brooks Miller, Exuma.

2nd *Ruff Justice*/Stefan Knowles, Clarence  
Town, Long Is.

3rd *Running Tide*/Roger Fox, Salt Pond, Long Is.

4th *Southern Cross*/Denrick Miller, Nassau.

**CLASS 'B'**

**Susanna Cartwright Memorial Cup Race, 1  
June**

Sponsor: Cartwright's Garage

1st Place Tie

Trophy: *Lady Sonia*, George Town, Exuma.

Prize Money: *Susan Chase*, Mangrove Bush,  
Long Is.

3rd *Tari Anne*/Marcus Mitchell, Staniel Cay,  
Exuma.

**Carl G. Treco Memorial Cup Race, 3 June**

Sponsor: CGT Contractors & Developers

1st *Susan Chase*/Stefan Knowles, Mangrove  
Bush, Long Is.

2nd *Lonesome Dove*/Andrew Wilhoyte, Abaco.

3rd *Lady Sonia*/Leslie Rolle, George Town,  
Exuma.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

# *New Providence Regattas*

## **“KING” ERIC ALL FOR ONE**

A history of name changes: Initially the “New Year’s Day Regatta when started by King Eric Gibson, changed to “All for One” during the tenure of V. Alfred Gray as Minister responsible for regattas. Then, in honour of the late King Eric, his name was added. Held in January, the “King” Eric All For One regatta is the first regatta of the season.

## **BEST OF THE BEST REGATTA**

Launched in 2016, the annual Best of the Best Regatta (BOBR) is the final race meet of The Bahamas regatta season and is staged in the month of December in Montagu Bay, New Providence. The four-day event represents a collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs Regatta Desk and the three Nassau-based sailing associations.

Despite its late entry on the regatta calendar, the BOBR quickly emerged as a premier event. By the time its second meet was being planned in 2017, organizers had received 54 boats and more than 200 sailors confirming intent to participate in A, B and C class races.

In 2016, a unique collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Star Sailors League brought a notable benefit to the Best of the Best Regatta. This hands-across-the water venture brought one hundred and fifty sailors, including Olympic-class sailors from twenty-four countries around the world to participate in the inaugural event in December.

The following year saw expansion and an increased variety of events. It featured competition among ten A-Class, nine B-Class and 32-C class sloops, and fifty (50) world class sailors and the registration of more than two hundred Bahamian sailors from such islands as



New Providence, Grand Bahama, Long Island, Exuma, Acklins, Ragged Island, Andros, Cat Island and Mayaguana. With live-streaming via internet, visuals and sound of the exciting events unfolding in the waters of Montagu Bay, New Providence went global.

On 7 November 2018, **Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, Michael Pintard** announced a further advance in communication. Calling the development “a giant leap for the sport of sailing and, indeed, sloop sailing,” He said that the year’s Best of the Best Regatta would be the first regatta to be broadcast on live television for which the Ministry was partnering with Rev Cable Bahamas. In the past, the racing had been streamed on his Ministry’s online platforms.

*Bahamians throughout the country will be able to tune in to Rev Channel 212 and Channel 242 for live coverage of four days of sloop sailing. Veteran broadcaster and sailing instructor, **Reg Smith** and boat owner and member of the Knowles sailing clan, **Tony Knowles** will host the live broadcast. We believe that by putting sailing on the screens of televisions, laptops, tablets and cell phones, we are making the strongest possible argument that the time for this sport is now and I am pleased that the Best of the Best Regatta will play host to history.*—Hon. Michael C. Pintard, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources.<sup>57</sup>

#### Race Results

6 – 8 December 2019

#### **‘A’ Class**

1st *New Legend*

2nd *Running Tide*

3rd *Ed Sky*



### **'B' Class**

1st *Susan Chase*

2nd *Eudeva*

3rd *Lonesome Dove*

### **'C' Class**

1st *New Slaughter*

2nd *It Ain't Right*

3rd *Xena*

## **ST VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE "CATCH ME IF YOU CAN" REGATTA**

Dedicated regatta enthusiast Eleazor Johnson, a barber by trade, established the St Valentine's Day Regatta in 1987. Stafford Armbrister became the race coordinator. Held in Montagu Bay, New Providence, the competition features sloops from throughout the archipelago in 'A' to 'E' Class categories, as well as traditional dinghy sculling. The 'Catch Me If You Can' Race, in which the Class 'A' sloops try to catch Johnson's Class 'B' sloop, *Lady Nathalie*, which is given a 15-minute head start on a 10-mile course. This crowd-pleaser injection was born out of Johnson's whimsical nature and a desire to show off his beloved boat.

Usually emerging the winner, *Lady Nathalie* was overtaken in 2005 by *Red Stripe* with champion

sailor Lundy Robinson first to cross the finish line.

In 2008, the 21st event was held in honour of Hezron 'White Head' Moxey at Montagu Bay. Boats representing the Commonwealth Sailing Association (CSA), The Bahamas Boat Owners and Sailors Association (BBOSA) and the National Sailing Association (NSA) participated.

### **28th Annual**

#### **St Valentine's Day Massacre**

Montagu Bay,

14-15 February 2015

Overall

1st *Ed Sky*

2nd *Running Tide*

3rd *Lady in Red*

#### **'E' Class Race, 14 February 2015**

Participating boats were *Blue Bird*, *High Rock*, *Strong Back*, *Sands*, *Lucayan Tropical*, *Sands Light* and *Ole Faithful*.

1st *Blue Bird*/Steven Rolle

2nd *High Rock*/Corey Knowles

3rd *Strong Back*/Clayton Bain

4th *Sands*/Sheldon Gibson

#### **"Catch Me If You Can" Race Participants**

*Ed Sky*/James Wallace; *Running Tide*/Marty Fox; *Lady Nathalie*/Clyde Rolle; *Red Stripe*/





Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph by Patrick Hanna

Lundy Robinson; *Lady Muriel*/Brooks Miller;  
*Rupert's Legend*/David Knowles; *Southern*  
*Cross*/Joshua Green and *Good News*/Wycliffe  
Albury.

### **Results**

1st *Ed Sky*/James Wallace  
2nd *Running Tide*/Martie Fox  
3rd *Lady Nathalie*/Clyde Rolle  
4th *Red Stripe*/Lundy Robinson

### **Sands 'Man in The Boat' Sculling Race Featuring four heats, including an all-female heat:**

1st Luda Nester  
2nd Steven Rolle  
3rd Josh Green

### **Prize Money**

The prize was money was generous and included allotments from a first-place win to ninth-place finishes.



### **“A” Class**

Winner—\$2,000

Second Place—\$1,500

Third Place—\$1,000

Fourth through Eighth Place—\$600 each.

### **“C” Class**

First Place—\$800

Second Place—\$600

Third Place—\$500

Fourth through Ninth Place—\$300 apiece.

## **COMMANDER DEFENCE FORCE REGATTA (CDFR)**

In 2017, **Commodore Tellis A. Bethel**, MALIC (7th Commodore 15 March 2015 – 21 May 2020) relaunched the annual Commander Defence Force 'C' Class Regatta, as part of the RBDF's 37th anniversary celebration. Not staged since 2009, the meet featured three challenge cup races and an ocean race designated the "Lucayan Race for Peace". The latter was

intended to serve as a means of promoting community peace through the maritime sport of sailing. Taking place March 31 to April 2, the event was coordinated by Robert Dunkley of The Bahamas Sailing School.

On that occasion the Minister with responsibility for National Regattas, Hon. Alfred Gray, announced that the occupant of that post of Commander Defence Force would also be the Honorary Commodore of National Regattas.

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.



# Special Occasion & Tribute Regattas

## **Sir Durward Knowles**

### **100 Regatta**

27 October 2017

The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, Regatta Division, joined with The Bahamas Olympic Association (BOA), Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA), the National Family Island Regatta (NFIR), 'One Bahamas' Foundation and the Sailing Association Commodores and Sailors at Nassau Yacht Club to celebrate the historic occasion of Sir Durward Knowles' 100 birthday, marked by a regatta bearing the great sailor's name.

In his congratulations to Sir Durward, **Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries the Hon. Renward Wells** remarked: *You are a national hero. It is not often that one lives to witness a nation affirm his life as legendary. You are blessed beyond measure. You are our first Olympic gold medalist*

*(with Cecil Cooke), our most ardent sailor, our philanthropist, our humanitarian. It seems that you have been and remain involved in almost every aspect of our Bahamian society.<sup>58</sup>*

## **Cecil G. Cooke**

### **Memorial Junior Regatta**

Montagu Bay, New Providence

Established by his daughter Sandra Cooke 1-2 October 2014, the Cecil G. Cooke Memorial Regatta honours the man who crewed for Durward Knowles in the Star Class races at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. The pair brought The Bahamas its first Olympic Gold.

## **C.V. Bethel Senior High Sailing Club Regatta**

Started 2010 in Montagu Bay.



[L to r] Durward Knowles and Cecil Cooke in the 1964 Welcome Home parade. After winning the Gold Medal (Star Class Sailing) in the Tokyo Olympics . Image courtesy of Tribune News Media.  
<http://www.tribune242.com/news/2014/oct/21/home-are-heroes/>



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.

# Visitor Participation Cruising Regattas

## Lure of the Lucayan Sea

Each year, hundreds of private and chartered yachts converge on The Bahamas, attracted by the world-acclaimed beauty of its waters, variety of cruising grounds and marine rarities, such as the peerless national marine parks—that in the Exumas being the first in the world. While the most favoured areas are the Exuma chain with its reputed 365 islets, yachters travel the length of the archipelago. In so doing, they bring valuable business to some of the remote and sparsely populated communities in the country.

Excellent sport fishing opportunities cast a powerful lure for yachters as well: Big game fishing brings repeat visitors to tiny San Salvador on the eastern border to battle giant marlin and wahoo. The thrill of this elemental contest drew Ernest Hemmingway to build a

house and write in Bimini, which influenced the creation of his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Flyfishing on flats in the north, central and southern Bahamas lures visitors to compete in strategy with the permit and the wily and swift bonefish. The sport has attracted world leaders and business giants and created legends of masterful guides like Abaco-born Charlie Smith who, in 1977, created the Crazy Charlie lure, which is famed worldwide among flyfishing connoisseurs.

Exercising the most powerful magnets for visiting sailors of competitive spirit are the cruising regattas of which members of this cadre have been accounted founders, promoters and contributors to community development through fundraising and volunteerism.







## Value to The Bahamas

On 11 August 2020, in light of the global pandemic, The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation mounted a webinar to inform potential yachting visitors that The Bahamas was still safely open to them. Kenneth Romer, executive director in the Ministry commented on the value of this visitor segment:

*The yachting community contributes significantly to our economic success, and yachts are still here in our country, contributing to our economy. Right now, the only active segment of tourism is yachts moving around our country. We, more than ever, need you to partner with us to clear this hurdle.<sup>59</sup>*

Joy Jibrilu, Director General of Tourism said:

*You are important to us, and we are confident we can provide the experience you are seeking. Boaters and yachters are definitely welcome to come discover The Bahamas.<sup>60</sup>*

## Big Three of Cruising Regattas

### **Regatta Time in Abaco (RTIA)**

In 2019, RTIA celebrated its 44th event. This longevity indicates the popularity of this regatta where the race course markers are five coastal towns.

### **George Town Cruising Regatta (GTCR)**

Launched in 1980, the ten-day George Town Cruising Regatta can draw a hundred and more yachts to Elizabeth Harbour, Stocking Island and environs. This event offers activities for visiting cruisers and locals on Stocking Island, Elizabeth Harbour and George Town. Incorporated are two days of sailing and onshore contests that include conch shell blowing, softball competitions and even foot races. GTCR celebrated its 39th anniversary in 2019.

### **Staniel Cay New Year's Day Cruising Regatta**

Located in Exuma's beautiful chain, Staniel Cay is a focal point of the cruising community and the focal point of the New Year with traditional festivities.



*Kings of Regatta*

*Master Sailors &  
Boat Builders*



*Bertram  
Rolly  
Gray*

*Grand  
Master*

Photograph courtesy of the family of Bertram Rolly Gray, Brooks Miller and Dawn Spivey.

22 August 1922–17 February 2007

**“I comin’ to come first.”**—Rolly Gray’s answer with his big laugh when asked how he thought he would do in the next regatta.

Captain Rolly Gray was born on Staniel Cay in the Exumas in 1922 to Richard Gray of Staniel Cay and Blanche Smith-Gray of Farmer’s Cay. His decades-long and varied experiences, achievements and contributions to sailing as mailboat captain, boat builder and regatta skipper in The Bahamas amply justified his designation as “Grand Master of Sloop Sailing” in 2000. By the time he died on 17 February 2007 at the age of 85, he had been inscribed in the country’s sailing hall of fame, accounted a national hero and a man worthy of respect and great admiration.

The roots of Rolly’s maritime dominance sprang up in the nurturing ground of a family tradition of sailing and of a community for which boat building and sailing prowess were fundamental to survival. Enterprising, he taught himself to scull a boat when he was just ten years old. At the age of 15, he went to sea for the first time with his uncle on an 18-foot boat to fish conchs in the Exuma Cays.

## **Captain**

At 16, he sailed as crew with Capt. Manny Adderley of Ragged Island on *The Return*, a 36-foot sloop. By observing Adderley, the teenager acquired the skills of a captain. At age 18, he took the helm of the 25-foot *Dolly*. Gray would also captain several mailboats including *MV Grand Master*, *Staniel Cay Express*, *Marie*, the first regatta winner and the *Lady Blanche*, named for his mother. In the mid-1940s, Gray turned to boat building and produced *Sea Hound* in Staniel Cay.

## **Champion Regatta Skipper**

Turning his attention to sloop racing, he achieved a never-to-be surpassed feat at George Town, Exuma in 1954, just shy of his 32nd birthday. In the first Out Island Regatta, he captured the championship in the ‘A’ and ‘C’ divisions aboard *Marie* and *Sea Hound*, respectively. In 1959, he won at the helm of the Long-Island built *Lady Muriel*, a Class ‘A’ vessel that would create its own legend.

Thereafter, for nearly six decades, Rolly Gray became a fixture and the skipper to watch in what evolved into the National Family Island Regatta, evoking a complex mixture of awe and envy for his vessel handling skills and, ultimately, liking and respect commanded by Rolly’s sportsmanship and sense of humour.

What made his accomplishment even more impressive was the fact that he helmed several different vessels in Classes 'A', 'B' and 'C'. In the pairing with *Tida Wave* in George Town, Rolly Gray controlled the Class 'A' championship with an incredible eight-year run from 1969 to 1976. After a second place in 1981 (bested by Edgar O. Moxey), Gray and *Tida Wave* continued their command performance in 1982, 1996 and 1998.

Even more remarkable, mastering the tiller of the "C" Class *Sea Hound*, a boat that he built in Staniel Cay in the mid-1940s, he would ace ten first place finishes, the first one in the historic 1954 regatta. He also scored two first place wins in *Spray Hound*, 1988-9.

Furthermore, Captain Gray proved convincingly that, in sailing, he was not just a local phenomenon. In 1980, besting several of the world's champion sailors, he won The Marlboro Championship of Sailors in Montagu Bay, on the east coast of New Providence, Bahamas.

### **Awards**

Not surprising, Rolly Gray received many recognitions and honours for his sea mastery and community contributions. Among the first was **a plaque in 1972 from Prime Minister Lynden O Pindling** and **an award in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1977**. In 1980 he received a plaque from the Governor General

and the Ministry of Tourism's Outstanding Achievement and Community Work Award representing The Bahamas Government and people of The Bahamas.

Two years later, the people of his home island followed suit in acknowledging the value accruing to their community through his ascendancy in sailing. **The Staniel Cay Development Association paid tribute** during a banquet acknowledging his contribution to the sport of boat racing In The Bahamas. Recognitions accumulated from local and international organisations, including honours from the National Regatta Hall of Fame, All-Exuma Association, Burns House, Long Island Sailing Club and the Long Island Association.

In 1983, in the New Year's Day Honours of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, he received the Member of The British Empire (BEM) Award.

In 2007, Gray was inducted into The Bahamas pantheon of sports heroes and his name placed on the 'Wall of Fame' at the Lynden Pindling International Airport by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture.

On Thursday, 15 May 2015, honouring this legendary Bahamian sailor, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force commissioned HMBS Rolly Gray, the fourth of its Damen Stan Patrol 4207 fleet

during an official ceremony held at the Marina at Emerald Bay, Exuma. Lieutenant Commander of Granville Adderley was given the command.

On that occasion, **Prime Minister Perry Christie** paid tribute: *I am satisfied that all Bahamians alike, will unquestionably agree, that Rolly Gray is deserving of this great honour. This is a man who dedicated his life to promoting his country and his craft. He deserves this honour, posthumously, from a grateful nation.*<sup>61</sup>

The great sailor was also celebrated by singer Basil B.J. Smith in “Sailor Man Song/This One’s for Rolly Gray” backed by a traditional rake ‘n’ scrape band.

Captain Gray was married to Maggie nee Bodie of Black Point, Exuma and the couple had eight children: Veronica, Barbara, Penelope, Yvonne, Ruel, Tony, Freddie and Sandy.

On the occasion of his passing, this tribute was paid him:

*Much to his credit, Captain Gray was as fine a gentleman as he was a champion skipper. Stories abound of his honesty, integrity and respect for his sailing colleagues and associates. He was known to lend assistance to his most heated rivals, never losing sight of the bigger picture that how one wins, causes the sport of regatta to win, demonstrating his understanding that hot competition need not lead to personal animosity. In that regard, the Grand Master resisted the urge to flaunt his accomplishments although he possessed all the credentials to justify doing so.— Statement of Condolence by Hon. Byran S. Woodside, MP, Minister of State for Youth and Sports.*<sup>62</sup>

# “King” Eric Gibson



23 September 1934 - 28 December 2013

*“The King is always right.”*

A native of Mason’s Bay, Acklins, Eric Gibson was one of The Bahamas’ most famous musicians and a significant contributor to the development of regatta in his homeland.

His prominence in music began with his formation of King Eric & His Knights in the late 1950s. The band played in nightclubs and hotels in Nassau and soon built admiring fans among Bahamians and tourists. Gibson deepened his incursion into the field of entertainment with the opening of King & Knights Club. With the

band as centerpiece, the nightclub featured a Las Vegas-style multipart extravaganza, well-steeped in Bahamian culture with acts of fire juggling and limbo dancing. Bahamians were the stars. King Eric sought and promoted new talent and many Bahamian singers, dancers and musicians benefitted, including singer, guitarist and band leader Ronnie Butler who went on to create his own legend. King Eric is also credited as a founding member of The Bahamas Musicians and Entertainers Union.

The promotion of sailing, boatbuilding and regatta would loom as large in the firmament of King Eric’s expansive life. Not only did he



become a legend in Bahamian entertainment but also in regatta development, which he saw as a valuable booster of island economies. He led the establishment of the regatta in Acklins, his home island, and became an enthusiastic supporter of its events and also of the New Providence **All for One Regatta**, which his sons renamed in tribute to him, after his death in 2013.

Gibson was an owner of regatta sloops as well, among them *King & Knights* and *Palm Cay Princess*. His *Queen Drucilla*, sponsored by Coca Cola and captained by Leslie “Buzzy” Rolle, sailed to an overall championship at the 18th Grand Bahama Regatta in 2012. He was an avid and cheerfully boastful sailor. He said of his upcoming participation in 60th Family Island Regatta:

*I promised my sponsors a winner and that’s what I’m going to deliver, first place for the Palm Cay Princess. We tested her out a few times in the other events, but now we are ready to go and you will not want to miss this one. I aim to win, I will win - the ‘Palm Cay Princess’ can take on all comers.—“King” Eric Gibson.<sup>63</sup>*

Palm Cay, an upscale waterfront development on Nassau’s eastern shore sponsored Gibson’s pride and joy and also introduced the **Palm Cay**

**Sir Durward Knowles Cup**, the only regatta competition to bear Sir Durward’s name to that year.

Gibson was credited with developing the notion of the pry—the long narrow board or boards which extend from the sailboat and are critical to balancing a racing sloop, keeping it from scuttling in the tack.

He was long accounted one of the country’s premier sailmakers for regatta boats and maintained a sail loft on West Bay Street, just beyond downtown Nassau. Generously, he taught the craft to young Stephano Kemp, which allowed the latter to establish a sailmaking business. Kemp also skippered Gibson’s boats.

King Eric Gibson received many laurels during his lifetime. In 2011, he was honoured at the 58th National Family Island Regatta in George Town, Exuma. Many tributes were paid following his passing. A regatta, King Eric’s All for One, bears his name. Nassau businessman Craig Flowers, commissioned the fashioning of three bronze statues, executed by Nigerian sculptor Michael Maghiro, to memorialize three internationally famed musicians Ronnie Butler, John Berkeley ‘Peanuts’ Taylor and ‘King’ Eric Gibson.

# Sheldon Gibson

Sheldon Gibson, educator (principal, district superintendent), a sailor, designer, boat builder and owner and youth sailing instructor, was honoured at the 63rd National Family Island Regatta for a wide-ranging and valuable contribution to sailing. In 1992, he was founder with Eleazor Johnson and Margaret Tatum-Gilbert of the National Junior Sailing Programme.

Among Gibson's greatest contributions to sailing has been his involvement in youth programmes. When The Bahamas National Sailing School was launched in 2005, Gibson helped to recruit students from the Ministry of Education schools H.O Nash, D.W. Davis and C.V. Bethel where he was a member of the staff. Of great importance, he established the Sheldon Gibson Summer Youth programme (SGSY), governed by

the founder's personal motto—"If you build it, you should know how to sail it."

The initiative is dedicated to extending the art of sailing to young Bahamians, especially to those whose circumstances would not ordinarily permit them to access such instruction and practice.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs (formerly Agriculture and Fisheries), has always sponsored the sailing club programme started by Gibson and, in 2015, partnered with C.V. Bethel Senior School to expand the programme, which incorporates instructors of swimming, sailing, first aid, craft making, and sea survival.

C.V. Bethel has been a pioneer in the promotion of youth sailing in other ways. The school's C.V. Bethel Sailing Club launched a regatta in 2010 and Sheldon Gibson built the "E" Class boats that would race in the competition, planned as an annual event in Montagu Bay. The school also owned a boat called *Ole Faithful*. Each of the students participating in the sailing programme had to assist with repairing the boat, as well as practice the skills they learned in the summer programme, encompassing how to build boats, sew sails, and race the crafts.

In 2012, as Junior Sailing Coordinator at the National Family Island Regatta, Gibson announced that a new class of sail boats would be launched at NFIR, the E-class, designed especially for the juniors, replacing the C-class boats used previously. He expressed the hope that all Juniors would eventually captain the “E” boats, which are rigged and designed suitably for the junior sailors.

When on 29 July 2012, Bahamian Brewery & Beverage Company held their first E Class regatta and “Man in the Boat” sculling race at Fort Montagu, Nassau, the company announced it as a celebration of sailing and the art of sculling. The event also paid homage to the Sheldon Gibson Summer Youth programme, which Gibson established to teach young Bahamians the art of sailing and the construction of boats hand-built from wood, such as wild tamarind found in the Bahamian forests. The initiative not only benefitted participating youth, but also the adults who assisted.

Sheldon Gibson contributed fundamentally to the launch of boat sculling as a competitive sport. When Bahamian Brewery decided to revive this Bahamian tradition, the company’s president James ‘Jimmy’ Sands commissioned Gibson to build the four E Class boats—*Sands*,

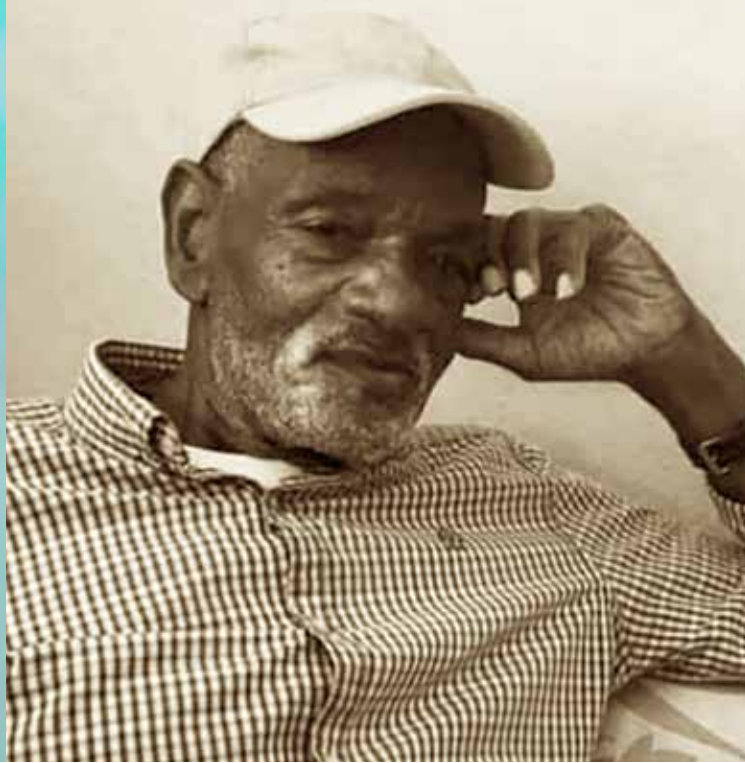


Empress built by Sheldon Gibson. Owner Lawrence Bascom stands next to it.

### *Sands Light, High Rock and Strong Back.*

Sheldon Gibson furthered his own commitment to the revitalization by participating and triumphing in the Bahamian Brewery’s Sands Beer ‘Man in the Boat’ Sculling Championship race in Montagu Bay, which was a feature of the 26th St Valentine’s Day Massacre on 17 February 2013.

Gibson, along with the students of his boat-building club, also fashioned Sir Durward Knowles’s 12-foot dinghy *One Bahamas*, which Knowles christened at the Nassau Yacht Club on Saturday, 14 April 2012.



# Higgins Family of Mayaguana

## **JACOB HIGGINS** | Mayaguana Sailor and regatta founder

Jacob Higgins began his professional life in the culinary field. In 1973, he was the first Bahamian to be appointed as an Executive Chef. He served in that capacity at the Sheraton British Colonial Hotel, Bay Street. He was said to have become The Bahamas' first executive chef, after working in prestigious positions in the international sphere.

Fundamentally, however, Jacob Higgins was a man of the sea, a sailor and boatbuilder, who crafted such sloops as *Jacob's Ladder* and the powerful, award-winning *Cobra*, which has

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Photographs courtesy of Dwayne Higgins.

been captained by some of the best skippers in Bahamian regatta, including Ivan Stuart, "B" Class champion 1989, 1990, 1991. Jacob founded the All Mayaguana Regatta and became its commodore.

## Melvin Higgins

### Commodore Harbour Island Sailing Club

Eleuthera

Son of Jacob Higgins, Melvin was born to a sailing heritage and taught to sail by his father aboard *Cobra*, which the elder Higgins had built.



Melvin became involved in junior sailing, which he saw as an avenue to sustaining the peerless natural environment of The Bahamas as well as positive youth development. He became especially concerned about the rootlessness of young males once they aged out of the Optimist class. He changed the focus of the junior programme of the Harbour Island Sailing Club to boosting self-esteem of this group of his membership, pushing the establishment of Laser and Sunfish sailing to keep them advancing in sailing and demonstrating the opportunities for employment in maritime industries. Another form of assistance was training in coaching and offering employment in roles such as traveling to sailing meets with younger sailors.

*By looking in-house, we have begun to solve the challenge of retaining older youth. I think holding national coaching clinics and having teenagers become internationally certified coaches would definitely be a positive boost for their confidence. – Melvin Higgins<sup>64</sup>*

## Dwayne Higgins

### Boat Owner, Sloop Sailing Advocate

By profession, Dwayne Higgins, another son of Jacob Higgins, is a teacher and school principal in the Ministry of Education system, where he is well-regarded as an active and vocal developer of educational community



Dwayne Higgins working on refurbishing *Cobra*. Photograph courtesy of Dwayne Higgins.

advancement programmes. In the latter case, the focus is on sloop sailing and the cooperation of bodies invested in sailing and regatta for the sustainability of the maritime enterprises of The Bahamas.

With the aim being the formation of The

Bahamas Sloop Sailing Federation, and with the support of such sailors as Dallas Knowles and Stefan Knowles, Higgins organized a two-day (18-19 January 2018) 15-delegate conclave of relevant and interested parties for discussions towards finalizing such a body. On the agenda

was the formalization of the formation of the association and establishment of national racing rules. The concept of forming a national governing body was Higgins'. It was he who, accompanied by sailing master Stefan Knowles, formally introduced it to the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources Hon. V. Alfred Gray in 2017.

## **Melisha and Joshua Higgins**

Daughter of Melvin Higgins—See Melisha's profile under "Women...Champions in the Making".

**Joshua Higgins**, Melvin's son, is also a sailor. He placed third in the KPMG Youth Winter Championship (Laser) and was the Junior National Laser Champion 2021.



Photograph courtesy of Robert Dunkley.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>



# Eleazor “Barber J” Johnson

## “The Sailing Barber”

1930 – 16 January 2019

Growing up in Acklins but moving eventually to New Providence, Eleazor Johnson set up a very modern and well-equipped barbershop in the Over the Hill community for which he gained a wide clientele and fame. Barber J was a well-known entrepreneur and a legendary sailor with incredible wit, humour and zest for life. Some would add to the description “braggadocio” for his constant and fulsome extolling of his beloved “Lady in Red”—his regatta racing sloop *Lady Nathalie*, which was named for his mother.

Eleazor first sailed in the National Family Island Regatta in 1980 aboard the *Avenger* with

Captain Fred Green of Lisbon Creek, Andros who took him on to handle the mainsail. He became a sailing enthusiast and, in 1986, he commissioned Elijah ‘Mack’ Knowles of the famed Mangrove Bush, Long Island Knowles family to build the sloop *Al’s Angel* which was eventually renamed *Lady Nathalie*. By its owner’s preference, the vessel was most often skippered by Johnson’s friend Captain Clyde Rolle.

Johnson’s *Lady Nathalie* won the overall title at the inaugural North Eleuthera regatta in 1989. In 1992, however, in a special regatta held in Montagu Bay, New Providence, Johnson helmed his “Lady in Red” *Lady Nathalie* to victory. The race was special because all the competing



sloops were skippered by their owners. In 2005 *Lady Nathalie* captured the Governor's Cup in the National Family Island Regatta.

Over the years, for the most part, it performed well enough to be considered a strong competitor.

Eleazor Johnson was, perhaps, best known as founder of the "Catch Me If You Can" St Valentine's Day Massacre Regatta, which was,

in reality a showcase for the *Lady Nathalie* but attracted some of the finest sailors and sloops to participate.

Johnson was an innovator in other ways as well. He was among the first boat owners to utilize the media to promote not only his enterprises, but also the various regattas in which he participated.

The Catch Me If You Can Race started in 1987 as a witty and boastful challenge to other boat owners and skippers. *Lady Nathalie* would take on some of the major “A” Class sloops in friendly competition on the fallow Sundays of the main race schedule of the St Valentine’s Day programme when little took place, but blossomed into a full-scale regatta. The race format called for *Lady Nathalie* to be given head start of 15 minutes and the challenge to the other racers was to run her down and overtake Johnson’s pride and joy. For the most part the ploy succeeded to give Johnson unrelenting bragging rights, until the year Lundy Robinson and *Red Stripe* shattered the dream.

Eleazor Johnson was so much more than the regatta he founded. He made several important and generous contributions to sailing and especially to the development of youth sailing. The Sir Durward Knowles Junior Regatta is an event that was started in 2010 via a collaboration of three like-minded men: Eleazor Johnson, Sir Durward Knowles and Jimmie Lowe. It became a fixture on the annual sailing calendar in The Bahamas with the ongoing support of the Regatta Desk of the Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs.

Of equal importance, The Bahamas National Sailing School was launched in 2004 through an

alliance between “Barber J” and sailing legend Jimmie Lowe to institutionalize opportunities for junior sailors to be able to train and participate in regattas.

Ever concerned with the welfare of his home island. Johnson was always involved in its development in some way or other, especially as concerned the Acklins Regatta. As with all his causes, he was masterful in finding sponsors and raising funds.

Following the death of their father, Johnson’s sons decided to keep his regatta tradition alive in his honour.

The 2019 St. Valentine Regatta “Catch Me If You Can” Regatta was held in honour of the late Eleazor “Barber J” Johnson. On 20 February of that year, at a ceremony for the presentation of awards to race winners, the Hon. Michael C. Pintard, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources remarked that

“Barber J” was “an outstanding icon in the Grove community...an important entrepreneur for young black kids who had aspirations of doing something significant and a great flamboyant sailor who promoted the sport.”<sup>65</sup>



# Rev. Alphaeus “Ali” Kelly



Rev. Alphaeus “Ali” Kelly was born in Nassau and raised in Staniel Cay, Exuma, which meant that he grew up in a community with a long and intense relationship with the marine environment and seafaring. This minister of religion was accounted a gentle man who loved sloop racing. He sailed in regattas and was usually among the top four crossing the finish line. With *Seahound* he won ‘C’ Class Championships in 1957 and 1975 in *Sprayhound*, which he built.

Alphaeus Kelly’s forte was designing, building and sailing traditional Bahamian dinghies, helping to keep alive a Bahamian cultural heritage that was precious to him. In 1956, he crafted his first sailboat, a dinghy *Verna K*, in

partnership with young Rolly Gray and Tim and Ruben Rolle. Among his other creations were the 12ft *Merlene*. Competing in the 1954 Out Island Regatta, he and Rolly Gray sailed *Spray Hound* together.

It was said of Kelly that he was a role model. With a 43-year involvement with the National Family Island Regatta, it was evident that he loved the sport and its people.



Pusan  
LONG

Chase



# *Knowles Clan*

## **Mangrove Bush, Long Island**

### **Boat Builders and Sailors**

The patriarch of the Long Island Knowles family is believed to have been George Richard Knowles, who is buried in an unmarked grave, half a mile from the residence of Mark Knowles. Originally from England, he migrated to the American colonies. He was a loyalist during the American Revolutionary War when the colonists fought for independence from Britain. When loyalists were exiled from the new United States, George migrated from South Carolina first to Eleuthera and then to Long Island, thereby founding a sailing and boatbuilding dynasty, which became a pillar of the Bahamian regatta tradition.

Through the years, trophies have abounded in Knowles family homes, a material testimony to the maritime industry, extraordinary boatbuilding skills and sailing prowess of at least three generations of these hardy Long Islanders. Members of the Knowles family have often swept the board in regatta races, as was the case at the 66th National Family Island Regatta, when Whitty K won the Commodore Emeritus Cup Race in Class C; Crazy Partner followed in 2nd; and It Ain't Right was 3rd.

Even more amazing has been the emergence of a fourth generation of Knowles sailors, such as Garrett, Meko, Cameron, Luke and Don (Jr) Knowles and Colin and Celine Cartwright.

# Rupert Denzie Knowles



1915 - November 1988

The oldest of the 20th century Knowles boatwrights and skippers of Mangrove Bush was Rupert Knowles, the son of Hartman and Susana Knowles and brother to Earl Knowles. As was the case for generations of Long Islanders, he attended Buckley's Public School, which formed the foundation of the N.G.M. Major High School. Like many of his compatriots, he was one of the many who sought employment on the "Contract", a deal between the U.S and Bahamas governments for the supply of agricultural labour beginning during World War II and lasting into the early 1960s. Except for this brief period, Rupert Knowles spent his entire

life on Long Island earning his living in maritime trades—fishing, boatbuilding and sailing competitively.

With his wife, Muriel, after whom he named his first Class "A" winning sloop, he produced daughters Gloria, Ivy and Madeline and sons Rupert, Earlin, Bert, and Elijah "Mack" who all walked in his footsteps and successfully engaged in the same occupations.

Of the sloops that Captain Rupert turned out, each was speedier on the waves than the one before because this sea master was given to watching the action of other vessels during the races in which he competed and, from





Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph

such keen observations, he took stock of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the products of his artisanry were widely admired for their grace and ability to dominate their racing class for years.

Using only hand tools and often assisted by his son Bert, Rupert fashioned the original *Lady Muriel*, *Tida Wave*, *Stormy Weather*, *Jiffy*, *Ocean*

*Wave* and *Gem*. Also emerging from his boat yard were *Running Tide*, *Eastern Wave*, and *Angie M*.

Rupert was also an excellent sailor. He captained *Margaret L* to Class “A” victory in the National Family Island Regatta in Exuma in 1962 and 1963 and skippered *Tida Wave* to victory in 1965.

# Earlin “Earlie” Knowles

14 January 1939 – 20 August 1996

First son of Rupert and Muriel Knowles, Earlin Nathaniel Knowles, known affectionately known as “Earlie” and later “Uncle Earlie”, was born at Mangrove Bush, Long Island.

His home island being economically challenged in the post-war years, Earlie left school at the age of fourteen to find better opportunities to help provide for his family. He secured a job in Nassau as a storekeeper for T. J. Knowles. Whenever he was paid, he followed dutifully an admirable Bahamian custom that defined the life of economic migrants. He would pack boxes of groceries and clothes to send by mailboat to his family. This giving nature was to continue throughout his life, spreading to benefit his community generally.

After a few years, Earlin returned home. In those days, as the only means of transportation was by way of sailboat (also used as a smack), Earlin and Bert decided that they would do a family thing—build a sail/smack boat. Between 1959 and 1962, they built the *Madeline M* and the *Eastern Wave*. In 1964, the Knowles family cooperated to build the original *Tida Wave*. Very early on, the sloop achieved the status of legend for its speed and grace.

Along with *Lady Muriel*, *Tida Wave* was eventually sold to the Staniel Cay family of sailors that included brothers Rolly Gray and Kenneth Rolle, which cemented *Tida Wave*'s reputation as a phenomenon. From 1969 to 1976, except for an interruption by Captain Edgar Moxey in 1974, Rolly made the National Family Island Regatta 'A' Class his personal victory parade.

Back in Long Island, Earlin worked at Diamond Crystal Salt Company as a mechanic, and he soon gained the reputation for being one of the best. He was eventually promoted to mechanic/shop supervisor. He left the company in the 1980s to build and expand his own enterprises. He developed “Hillside Tavern” and with family members, he started Summer Seafoods, an export business.

When his father Rupert retired from boatbuilding, Earlin led the crafting of a new boat in his father’s honour. After Rupert died in 1988, they decided that they would name it, *Rupert’s Legend*. With this vessel, Earlin would bring fresh glory to the Knowles and Long Island. He captured the NFIR Class “A” title in George Town several times.

Earlin Knowles’ legendary accomplishments in sailing as captain of *Eastern Wave*, *Angie M* and *Rupert’s Legend* stretched over 32 years.

1963 National Champion Class B - *Eastern Wave*

1974 Class B - *Angie M*

1975 Class B - *Angie M*

1991 Class A - *Rupert’s Legend*

1992 Class A - *Rupert’s Legend*

1995 Class A - *Rupert’s Legend*

Earlin and his wife Eva were blessed with four children Nancy, Anthony (Tony), Judith and Edsel.

**Anthony “Tony”** and **Edsel** both sail in local regattas.



# Bertis “Bert” Knowles

27 July 1942 - 7 February 2014.

Son of Rupert and Muriel Knowles, Bertis Knowles farmed, but he also followed in the footsteps of his father and engaged in boat building like Rupert. He was so accomplished in this occupation that, at his passing, the National Family Island Regatta Committee extolled him as having “perfected the art of boat building”.<sup>66</sup>

Bert built *Ocean Wave*, *Stormy Weather*, *Ruff Justice* and *Pinta* (sometimes in partnership with his father).

# Elijah “Mack” Knowles

Died 27 July 2005.

By profession, Mack Knowles was an electrician and airconditioning technician but boatbuilding was his heritage. Mack built *Lady Nathalie* for Eleazor ‘Barber J’ Johnson and, in addition, captained the construction of *Rupert’s Legend*, *New Courageous* and *Sacrifice*. Mack’s sons **Emile, Ryan** (deceased) and **Cameron Knowles**, became another fine sailor of the Knowles family.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

# Laurin Knowles

Photograph courtesy of Stefan Knowles.  
Laurin Knowles with his wife Lillith "Sue".



Laurin Knowles was born 24 January 1938, the first of ten children born to Earl and Corabell Knowles of Mangrove Bush, Long Island.

How young Laurin began his career in sailing and boatbuilding demonstrates how intentional were the generations of Knowles men in passing on the maritime tradition to their offspring. He participated in his first National Family Island Regatta in 1955 under the guidance of his father Earl and, in the ink of consummate skill, would write an astounding personal and family history in both Knowles seafaring arts.

In crafting racing sloops, young Laurin benefited from the example and direct instruction of his father Earl and grandfather Hartman. In turn, he would do the same for his own six sons: Mark, Neil, Ian (who became Long Island's Chief Councillor for Local Government), David, Don and Stefan. His marriage to Lillith "Sue" (nee Cartwright) also produced daughters Coleen and Crystal, who, with their mother, guarded the family's distinguished history.

In a 2013 interview with the Ministry of Tourism, Captain Knowles noted:

*My grandfather got into it and then it was handed down to my father then to me. And I taught my boys how to build boats. After school and on Saturdays, the kids would help to build the boats even if they didn't want to. It was the family business, so I couldn't have six boys and they can't build a boat.<sup>67</sup>*

*Gloria K* was the first racing sloop Laurin built. In 1956, Laurin sailed in George Town again, this time as co-owner, with his father Earl and brother Cyril in the *Gloria K*. He helped his father with the construction of the *Susan Chase I*. If Laurin showed a gift for boatbuilding in his youth, he would soon demonstrate an equally formidable aptitude for sailing in 1963; the *Susan Chase* went on to win nine championships in the Class B division up until she was abandoned in 1992, only to be replaced in 1993 by the *New Susan Chase*, which was awarded best overall sloop in the Class B division during the 47th National Family Island Regatta in 2000.

There followed ten or more vessels, including *Hummingbird*, *New Chase*, *Baby Chase*, *Golden Hind*, *Martha K*, *Susan Chase III* (renamed *Sea Star*), *Running Tide*, as well as a boat ordered by Commissioner Everette Hart.

The hardy Long Islander also participated in a post-World War Two era, government programme to revive the Bahamian economy and alleviate poverty. The Bahamas colonial government commissioned several local shipwrights, the Knowles among them, to craft smacks for use in sponging and fishing to get Bahamians working and earning again following the war-related economic slump. Sponge gatherers and other fishermen could acquire these vessels on an agreed payment schedule until the debt was paid off.

Devoted to ensuring the continuance of the trade which had been part of the Knowles' family province for generations, he introduced his six sons to the splendor of the sport. Mark, the eldest, soon gained fame as a master boat builder and regatta enthusiast. Stefan, the youngest, first made the family proud with his accomplishments in Junior regattas and the Class E division as the captain of the *Baby Chase*. He also participated in international sailing in 1999 where he won a championship in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA – the home base of Bill Koch, a past winner of the America's Cup. The other sons, Neil, Ian, David and Don all mastered the fine art of sloop sailing and crewed for their father at regattas in Exuma, Long Island, Abaco, Andros, Eleuthera and Nassau.



Dedicated to community building, Laurin Knowles spent twenty-two years on the local Town Planning Committee and twelve years on the school board. He also became Vice Commodore of the Long Island Sailing Club, a position he held for twenty years. To all the foregoing, Knowles added active engagement with other sporting and community-based organizations. As a building contractor, he erected many structures in Long Island, including the Library and Museum at Buckley's.

As a designer and a builder of Bahamian sailing sloops, Laurin has personally contributed substantially to the preservation and advancement of two superb aspects of the Bahamian marine patrimony. Through his sons' own aptitude, what he taught them and by giving them an excellent example to emulate, Laurin has created an immense driving force in the collective commitment of sons and grandsons to keeping the sport of sloop sailing alive in The Bahamas.

### **Laurin Knowles' Championships**

National Family Island Regatta, George Town, Exuma.

#### **"A" Class**

2000 *Running Tide*

2002 *Running Tide*

2004 *Running Tide*

#### **"B" Class**

1967 *Susan Chase*

1968 *Susan Chase*

1969 *Susan Chase*

1970 *Susan Chase*

1971 *Susan Chase*

1972 *Susan Chase*

1993 *New Susan Chase*

1994 *New Susan Chase*

1995 *New Susan Chase*

1996 *New Susan Chase*

1998 *New Susan Chase*

2003 *New Susan Chase*

2004 *New Susan Chase*

#### **Second Place**

2002 *New Susan Chase*

2005 *New Susan Chase*

2006 *New Susan Chase*

**Cyril Knowles** (6 April 1940 - 29 January 2009) (Laurin's brother) skippering *Gold Hind* won NFIR Class "C" Championships 1969, 1971 and 1974 as well as in 1983 at the helm *Martha K.*



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>



# Mark Knowles

Born 20 May 1961

Laurin's oldest son Mark has carried to new heights the Knowles tradition of sailing, boatbuilding and industriousness. He learned how to build boats from his grandfather Earl Knowles (brother of Rupert), of whom he says that the trade was all his elder ever did. During the depressed era of the Bahamian economy before the post-war boom, Earl was engaged year round in a government-sponsored initiative to build fishing boats to give more Bahamians an opportunity for self-employment.

Mark Knowles has spoken of the pattern of his life in designing and fashioning a line of fast sloops that consistently outperform competitors across the race classes. He owns to building three boats at once in good years but, in other periods, a year or two can pass without commissions. Knowles is an artisan, who elevates his products to art forms of incredible beauty. Believing that a sloop should last for over 20 years, he concentrates on ensuring longevity.

Commenting on Mark Knowles' as a boat builder, Stafford Armbrister, the peerless

organizer and race coordinator, has said that Knowles has designed and built about seventy-five percent of the racing sloops active on The Bahamas regatta circuit of the 21st century.

Among them are:

“A” Class: *Who Dat, New Legend, Running Tide*

“B” Class: *Peacemaker, New Susan Chase, Lonesome Dove, Humming Bird, Ole Boy*

“C” Class: *Crazy Partner, Beerly Legal, Xena, Catch Da Cat, Two Friends, Whitty K, Irene Goodnight.*

Mark Knowles has won 14 regattas in his boat, the *New Susan Chase*, which pays homage to one of his father’s early boats. In the 2013 5th

Commander Defence Force Challenge Cup Regatta, he won the Governor General’s Cup. He lays claim on behalf of his family to building “the fastest boats on the island.” He does not divulge the boat building secret, but he said trophies tell their own stories.

Knowles reveals the challenges of the boat building industry. Costs are high owing to the need to import from the United States, including lead and basic materials for planks and keel. It must be noted that, in keeping with tradition and strictly adhered to regatta rules, the stem and ribs come from native Bahamian wood.



Mark’s sons Marco, the eldest and Meko, the youngest are following in their father’s footsteps and learning the boatbuilding trade. Marco has been by his father’s side in the boatyard observing and helping since he was four years old. Like many of the Knowles men he works in construction, when the feverish activity of the regatta season ends.

# Colin Cartwright

Colin, husband of Laurin's daughter Crystal is another magnificent sailor. In the 49th Long Island Regatta, sailing *Sacrifice*, he won the Roy Harding Memorial Cup Race and National Family Island Regatta Championships 'C' Class 2000, 2001 and 2003.

# Don Knowles

Brother of Mark and Stefan, Don builds boats and is a championship sailor. Skippering *It Ain't Right*, he captured the 'C' Class Championship in the St Valentine's Day Massacre Regatta of 2012. Don also built the *Lady D* which was captained by Laurin Knowles.

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph



# Stefan Knowles



Youngest of Laurin Knowles' children, Stefan Knowles was born 10 October 1983. With the backing of a superb heritage of maritime industry and sloop sailing, he developed into a formidable sailor and regatta competitor.

It became clear that, early on, Stefan was a sailing prodigy. He was just a boy when he served as bowman on the *New Susan Chase*, built and helmed by his father Laurin Knowles and undisputed ruler of Class "B" championship races. This participation was immortalized in the beautiful painting "Chasing the Waves" by

artist Art Paine, long-time friend and recorder of the National Family Island Regatta.

In 1999 Stefan won the national youth championship at the George Town Regatta in Exuma in 1999, which earned him a trip to Cotuit, Massachusetts that summer to participate in the famed Cotuit Mosquito Yacht Club youth competition at Cape Cod. At age sixteen, in the boat *Airforce* built by Art Paine, Stefan captured the overall club championship to the glory of his home community, Mangrove Bush, Long Island and

The Bahamas.

By his 37th birthday in 2020, he had achieved championships in multiple island regatta and in all the major sloop classes 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'E', a record that is surely singular and will stand for a very long time. With 'B' Class *Whitty K* and 'C' Class *Susan Chase*, two of the many boats crafted in the Knowles compound, Stefan had already created legend.

Stefan's championship performance has now outpaced even his father's phenomenal record of wins:

**National Family Island Regatta:**

2010—'C' Class, *Beerly Legal*

2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, 2018 2019—'C' Class, *Whitty K*.

2015 and 2016—'B' Class, *Susan Chase*

2018—'A' Class, *Running Tide*

1998-2002—'E' Class, *Baby Chase*

**Long Island Regatta:**

2011, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018—'C' Class Champion, *Whitty K*

2006, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019—'B' Class Champion, *Susan Chase*

2015—'A' Class Champion, *Ruff Justice*

2017, 2018, 2019—'A' Class Champion, *Running Tide*

1998-2002—'E' Class, *Baby Chase*





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### **Smaller Regattas:**

2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 Farmers  
Cay Regatta—'C' Class, *Whitty K*  
2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 Black Point Regatta—'C'  
Class, *Whitty K*  
2014 Rock Sound Regatta—*Whitty K*  
2011 Harbour Island Regatta—*Whitty K*  
2018 Bull Reg Regatta—*Whitty K*  
2019 Rolleville Regatta—*Whitty K*

### **Farmer's Cay**

*Whitty K* won all three series races and one  
ocean race and was crowned champion.

### **All Andros & Berry Islands:**

2016—'A' Class, *Running Tide*  
2017—'A' Class, *New Legend*  
2016, 2017—'B' Class, *Susan Chase*

### **King Eric "All for One":**

2015—'B' Class, *Susan Chase*  
2017—'A' Class Champion, *Running Tide*  
2017—'B' Class Champion, *Susan Chase*  
2017—'C' Class Champion, *Whitty K*

### **Best of the Best:**

2016, 2018, 2019: B Class *Susan Chase*  
2016, 2019: C Class *Whitty K*  
2017, 2019: A Class *Running Tide*

### **Cat Island Regatta:**

2016 B Class *Susan Chase*  
For his occupation, Stefan followed in his  
father's footsteps into the construction  
industry. He created SJK Engineering &  
Construction Limited, engaging primarily in  
public infrastructure in the Family Islands. In  
August 2019, SKJ was awarded the contract for  
the replacement of Long Island's Newton Cay  
Bridge. The project covered the installation of a  
60-foot-long by eight-foot-wide arched timber  
footbridge. The associated works included  
construction of reinforced concrete abutments  
and wing walls; construction of a concrete  
seawall, boat ramp and adjacent car parking  
area; reinforced concrete approach slabs to  
both sides of the bridge and road reconstruction  
in the vicinity of the site. The project was  
completed in February 2020 and officially  
opened by **Prime Minister Most Honourable  
Hubert A. Minnis** on 18 December. Another of  
Knowles' public works was the construction of a  
bridge on the island of Andros.



# Rev. Gentry McPhee

10 August 1920 - 23 September 1989

Androsian Rev. Gentry McPhee, a product of Swain's, Mangrove Cay, was the son of Samuel McPhee. He was one of several "sailing reverends" of regatta, serving as pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Cathedral for 46 years and, at the same time, helming his own boats as a fierce competitor. He contributed to the development of the sport in several important ways. His friendship with noted Bahamian sailor Robert "Bobby" Symonette and connections locally and internationally with other influential

people made him a significant fundraiser and promoter of the sport.

Rev. McPhee owned, among others, *Wind Pioneer*, *Firebird* and *Thunderbird*, which was the first boat purposefully built for racing. He was the first to own two A Class boats.

Rev. Gentry and his wife Ethel May McPhee (nee Deleveaux) were the parents of Rev. Dr Philip McPhee, who followed in his father's footsteps in his significant involvement in the native sloop sailing regattas of The Bahamas.

# Brooks Miller

Exumian Brooks Miller was born July 1962 in Black Point Settlement, Great Guana Cay, but soon after his family moved with him to Staniel Cay. He is accounted one of the finest regatta champions.

In Staniel Cay, a community defined by seafaring, Brooks, from his earliest years, was exposed to great seamen. He noted in 2020: "Sailing is a part of life for my family and forefathers. My father, Luther Miller, was a boat captain and my uncle Kendall Miller was a sailboat captain. My grandfather, Hansel Miller, was a sailor and fisherman. My uncles Rolly Gray



Brooks Millers (l) shown with Sir Durward Knowles. Photographs courtesy of Bahamas Information Services (BIS)

and Kenneth Rolle were boat captains, regatta captains and champions. Brooks was, in fact, taught to sail by Uncles Rolly and Kenneth and Rev. Alpheus Kelly. He asserts that he was too young to remember when he first took the helm of a boat.

Miller took part in his first competition circa 1972 as crew aboard *Spray Hound*. It was on this



Captain Luther Miller

same sloop that Miller first took charge of the tiller around 1978 for the “C” Class race in Black Point. His first win as captain of an “A” Class boat was with *Lady Muriel* in the All Eleuthera Regatta circa 1991.

By 2020, Brooks Miller had competed

as captain in races for more than 40 years skippering sloops, which have included *Lady Muriel* and *Tida Wave* (A Class), and *Spray Hound* and *Slaughter* (C Class). Scoring numerous championships, he has been an elemental force in the National Family Island Regatta in George Town almost every year as well as in Nassau’s Best of the Best Regatta and regattas in Abaco, Eleuthera, Bahamas Games, and local meets at Staniel Cay and Black Point.

With the partnership of the phenomenal *Tida Wave* (rebuilt in Staniel Cay and retaining only the name of the original Long Island-built craft), Brooks has demonstrated, time and again, the tactical ability and tiller artistry that has

created a superb sailor and a living legend. His performance in every race has given rise to awe in thousands of fortunate spectators.

### **National Family Island Regatta Class “A” Championships**

1999 *Lady Muriel*  
2003 *Lady Muriel*  
2006 *Tida Wave*  
2008 *Tida Wave*  
2009 *Tida Wave*  
2011 *Tida Wave*  
2014 *Tida Wave*  
2015 *Tida Wave*  
2017 *Tida Wave*

In 2016, at the Long Island Regatta, captaining *Tida Wave*, Brooks and crew made “A” Class history by sweeping all 4 days of sailing and winning every “A” Class race. He swept all the cup races: Governor’s Cup Race, Prime Minister’s Cup and Holly Cartwright Memorial Ocean Race and the Hugh J. A. Cottis Memorial.

The year span 2016 - 2017 produced a “Triple Crown”: *Tida Wave* won the June 2016 Long Island Regatta, and the December 2016 inaugural Best of the Best Championship in Nassau, and the April 2017 National Family Island Regatta in George Town.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

Miller has also contributed to the sport as owner of *Lady Muriel* and *Spray Hound* and by his participation in the Staniel Cay rebuilds of *Lady Muriel* and *Tida Wave*.

For the inspiring role he has played in regatta in The Bahamas. Brooks Miller was honoured at the National Family Island Regatta in 2013.

# Marcus Mitchell



Marcus Mitchell with Dame Marguerite Pindling, DCMG ON

Hailing from Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera, Marcus Mitchell first came to notice as a competitor in the National Family Island Regatta, when he took the Class 'C' championship as skipper of *White Ghost*. He also served as bowman on *Tida Wave* and *Lady Muriel*. At the helm of *Tari Anne*, which he owned, Mitchell would go on to earn considerable acclaim at the end of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. He recorded four Class A championships between 1999 and 2002 and a second place finish in 2004.

Mitchell's command of Bahamian waters was also manifested in his professional endeavours.

He founded Overseas Salvage & Maintenance Ltd in the early 1980s with headquarters originally at Big Sampson Cay in the Exumas. By 2020, the firm was recognized as the foremost marine salvage company in The Bahamas, providing services throughout the archipelago.

As a pilot and longtime volunteer with Bahamas Air Sea Rescue (BASRA), the elder Mitchell helped to save the lives of many boaters and divers from disasters at sea over the expanses of Bahamian waters.

Marcus' son **David Mitchell**, a third generation Bahamian, became a regatta competitor and further cemented the Mitchell and Tari Anne sailing prowess with Class "A" championships in 2007 and 2009.

The younger Mitchell took over the running of the marine salvage company. During the Hurricane Dorian tragedy, he and his wife **Karina Petroni** made a significant contribution to rescue and relief in highly challenging aftermath. David was among the first sea planes to land in the Abacos with food, water, supplies and SAT phones and flew out critically injured residents. At base, Petroni handled logistics and communications. She would help many survivors locate missing family members.

In addition to that passed down from his father, David can boast of an exciting sea heritage through his maternal grandfather Louis "Lou" Kenedy (one 'n'), who spent decades of the 20th century making freighting runs throughout the Antilles and The Bahamas. One of Kenedy's exploits is noted in a calypso song "The Sea Fox Beat Up the Mona Marie", immortalizing his winning of a schooner race at Bridgetown, Barbados by sailing perilously close to a fringing reef and thereby gaining a substantial lead over the other contenders.

# Edon "Cassius" Moss

Cassius Moss, a son of Acklins who first came to public notice in the mid-1960s as boxer in the flamboyant vein of world champion fighter Mohammed Ali (born Cassius Clay), after whom he styled himself. Gifted with the entrepreneurial spirit of a number of Acklins compatriots, he reinvented himself as a regatta sloop builder, sailor, promoter and organizer of regattas.

He owned *Running Wave*, the last boat built by Rupert Knowles and was noted for producing *Sea Plague* and *Flying Eagle* and credited with sparking interest in sloop sailing in his home island.

Moss was honored at the 1975 Family Island regatta as the leading sailing light from Acklins. A high point for him was capturing the Royal Race during the visit of Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II in 1975.



# *Captain Edgar Osborne Moxey*

15 March 1920 – 26 January 2015

If ever there was a renaissance man of the sea, it was surely Captain Edgar O. Moxey, whose contributions to maritime pursuits was extensive. He was a distinguished boat builder, mailboat owner and champion regatta skipper, displaying remarkable gifts in each sphere. So great was his passion for the latter engagement that, even when advancing age and health issues obliged him to abandon boat building and racing, he attended the National Family Island Regatta annually until he was no longer able to continue.

Edgar was born on Farmer's Cay, the son of Henry Uriah Moxey of Ragged Island and



Hattie Alberta Nixon Moxey from Farmer's Cay, Exuma and spent his first fourteen years on the island of his birth. Edgar Moxey was steeped in seacraft, going to sea in 1934 as a boy of 14 on a sponging trip with his uncle Oswald Nixon.

Sometime in the following year, his parents, admonishing that “manners will get you thru the world and you have to save”, sent him to Ragged Island to live with his uncle Hezekiah Moxey to gain experience as a mariner. His father's ancestral island was a community where the landmass was too limited to support agriculture to any economically significant level. Consequently, Ragged Islanders were heavily dependent upon the sea for their livelihood, which bred among them superb boatbuilders and sailors, who traded internationally, primarily with Cuba and Haiti.

Moxey travelled to Haiti for the first time in 1938 and would make trips to Cuba, about 60 miles distant from Ragged Island aboard Hezekiah's 38-ft sloop *Touchess*. When, in 1940, Hezekiah fell ill, Edgar took the helm of the vessel, continuing the trade between Haiti and Cuba, hauling such goods as cognac, 'ground provisions' (cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, etc.), as well as bananas and plantains for provisioning Ragged Island and for sale in Nassau, The Bahamas capital.

On the return of his uncle a year later, Edgar partnered with Roderick Munroe to purchase his first boat *Convince*, of which he became captain. He married Erma Moxey (nee Munroe) on Ragged Island on Valentine's Day, 14 February 1944. Needing a bigger vessel to expand their business, Edgar and Roderick contracted **James Wilson** to build a new boat *Heantie Marvel*, a 60-ft schooner. Its name probably was a corruption of the Spanish gente (people), *Heantie Marvel*, was tied up at the dock in Sama, Cuba to take on provisions and transport them to The Bahamas, when Fidel Castro and his band of revolutionaries descended from their stronghold in the mountains to seize the Cuban Government.

### **Fishing Trade**

In 1948, at the age of 28, Edgar stopped trading with Cuba and Haiti, turning instead to fishing and crawfishing. According to family members, Edgar was an enterprising and astute businessman, continually in search of new opportunities. He installed an engine on *Heantie Marvel* to boost his chances of succeeding in his new business. Realizing how lucrative the seafood market was, Edgar invested in several other fishing vessels *Crustacean*, *Capri*, *Headline* and *Inez B* and worked the new venture with sons Boycel and Lesardo until 1967.

### **Interisland Transportation: Mailboats**

In that year, with the mailboat *Captain Moxey*, which he and his sons Marcus, Boycel and Leonardo built, Edgar entered inter-island transportation of freight and passengers. Launched in 1967, the *Captain Moxey* served first Bimini, Great Harbour Cay in the Berry Islands and Sandy Point, Abaco. In 1976, service was extended to South Andros, Kemp's Bay, The Bluff and Long Bay Cays. The second *Captain Moxey* was built in 1982 in St Augustine, Florida. This phase of Moxey's seafaring would last for 54 years. The third and the existing *Captain Moxey* mailboat was built in 1998 at Homer, Louisiana, USA. The contract for mailboat services continues today with his grandson Captain Kevin Moxey and great-grand sons, such as Anson. Captains Boycel and Lesardo took on administrative roles post-retirement.

### **Boatbuilding**

Abandoning the high seas to concentrate on sloop building, Edgar Moxey produced a number of legendary regatta racers for prominent patrons. Among them was Senator Lochinvar Lockhart, for whom he crafted the *Jezebel* later renamed *Good News*, which he co-owned with Lockhart. He then built *Courageous* for Emmitt Munroe, owning fifty percent of this boat. He later turned over his interest to Munroe. In 1980s he built the *Pieces of Eight* for businessman Nigel Bowe. *Courageous* would be

sailed by such regatta champions as Emmitt Munroe and Ivan Stuart.

### **National Family Island Regatta**

#### **Championships**

##### **Class A**

1974 *Good News*

1981 *Pieces of Eight*

2001 *Original Courageous*

Edgar sailed *Pieces of Eight* in many other regatta races throughout The Bahamas.

#### **Honours/Tributes**

- Golden Anniversary Award from National Family Island Regatta Committee and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. Awarded in April 2003 in recognition of his contributions to the development of regattas in The Bahamas.

In a note of condolence at Captain Edgar Moxey's passing, Danny Strachan, Commodore of the National Family Island Regatta lauded him as:

*One of our favorite sons and a hero of the first order...The National Family Island Regatta was greatly enriched by him. He leaves behind a rich legacy for all of us to emulate and cherish.*<sup>68</sup>



Image courtesy of Paul Moxey Jr.

# Captain Hezron Lenox Moxey

*“My grandfather used to tell me the Devil would make a good seaman if he learned to look mas’ head. So, you look mas’ head.” – Hezron Moxey<sup>69</sup>*

Son of Hezekiah and Florida “Florrie” Wilson-Moxey and cousin to Edgar O. Moxey, Hezron Moxey was a fisherman, regatta sloop sailor, a competitor in the Miami-Nassau Ocean race for years and a navigator and guide par excellence for an international yachting crowd. During the course of a life defined by The Bahamas territorial waters and international voyaging, Captain Moxey developed navigational

and sailing prowess to superb heights. This achievement earned him the right to be called one of the greatest mariners in Bahamian history.

Born in Duncan Town, Ragged Island, Hezron was unavoidably influenced by his family of mariners and the strong maritime culture that defined his ancestral island. For a community some 400 miles distant from Nassau, the country’s capital, boat building and sailing were a necessity and thus deeply embedded in a culture where youngsters developed sea legs at an early age. It is said that Hezron began sculling dinghies in Ragged Island waters at the age of eight. Four years on, he had already mastered the skill of sailing, and was charting courses for 24-foot vessels.

He was fortunate to acquire knowledge of international waters in the company of his father and grandfather, who sailed between Haiti, Cuba and The Bahamas, trading fruits, livestock, rum, cigars and other goods.

His was the distinction of sailing in the company of royalty and with the rich and famous of the world. During the 1960s and early 70s, he made and distributed hundreds of navigational tapes to guide yachtsmen through the treacherous reefs, wrecks and shoals of The Bahamas.

At times, he guided up to thirty yachters into The Bahamas. This decorated sailor was the first Captain and Chief Inspector in the Marine Division of the Royal Bahamas Police Force. He also sailed the waters of the Mediterranean and Caribbean Seas and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The sea-faring Captain Moxey piloted vessels through Canada, Spain, Italy, Greece, the Caribbean, United States of America and the West Coast of Africa.

As the quintessential sailor and navigator that he became, “Whitehead”, as he was affectionately called for his lustrous silver locks, Hezron skippered races in Grand Bahama, Bimini, Andros, Abaco, Eleuthera and Cat island, participating as well in the National Family Island Regatta in Exuma, since its inception in 1954. In fact, he was the first man to enter

Elizabeth Harbour in 1954, on a mission to deliver ice to supply the festivities at the regatta.

Moxey was a championship skipper at the helm of both “A” and “B” Class sloops. He and his 24-ft boat *Ego* placed second in the very first “B” Class in 1954.

### **National Family Island Regatta Championships**

#### **“A” Class**

1977 *Good News*

1985 *Lady Eugenia*

1990 *Unca Boss*

These successes contributed significantly to making him a living legend.

### **Awards/Honours**

Captain Hezron Lenox Moxey was

- inducted into The Bahamas Sailing Hall of Fame in 1990.
- awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the 1997 New Year’s Honours of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame 28 November 2013.
- honoured posthumously at the St Valentine’s Day Massacre Regatta in 2014.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photographs.



# *Captain Emmitt Munroe*

A man of high achievement in seafaring, Captain Emmitt Munroe was born in Ragged Island. His capabilities and experiences ranging from crewing to captaincy demonstrated mastery in all phases. From earliest childhood, he had the opportunity to observe men of the ilk of his father Captain Oscar Munroe and Captain Edgar O. Moxey who were skilled and well-respected in various aspects of maritime life.

Emmitt went to sea for the first time at the age of 15, sailing with his father aboard *Spectator*, which was engaged in trading between Ragged Island, Haiti, Cuba and New Providence. On Emmitt's initiation voyage, Oscar Munroe sailed

to Puerto Sama in the Holguín Region of Cuba, where many of the inhabitants can trace roots to The Bahamas. It is these commercial trips that filled the young man's formative years.

Later, Munroe worked for Sir Roland Symonette, owner of Symonette's Shipyards and first Premier of a semi-autonomous Bahamas. In this employment, he transported materials for roadworks among the islands in the 1970s. He next operated a tugboat in Nassau Harbour for Sir Durward Knowles in 1987.

He would go on to become a captain and one of the most successful regatta skippers and boat owners in the history of the nation and, in that regard, his name is often spoken with those of the finest of the masters of the helm.

The combination of Munroe/*Courageous* was highly esteemed as a pair to watch in competition with the best of the best. History supports this status. The *Original Courageous* won at regattas throughout The Bahamas: Exuma, Andros, Eleuthera, Harbour Island, Cat Island, San Salvador, Abaco, Long Island and New Providence. Except in competition in Exuma, Munroe himself held the tiller when his sloop romped to victory. He won awards, capturing the Prime Minister's Cup Race several times in the National Family Island Regatta.

He always commanded respect with local and international sailors. Sailing with the outstanding international skipper Ted Turner, Munroe won a Marlboro Series in the *Original Courageous*. Assigned to represent Bimini at the first Bahamas Games in 1989, Munroe and *Courageous* captured the Gold Medal. To further cement his place in history, Munroe and that mighty regatta contender won the 'Boat of the Year' title four times.

In addition to the sailing prowess of Emmitt Munroe, the *Original Courageous* owes its great versatility to a second source—its fashioning by the hand of a master shipwright—none other than the great Edgar Moxey, himself a model of versatility on the sea. As Munroe has told the story, the winning tripartite relationship arose from a dare Munroe offered to Moxey at a time when Emmitt used to sail on the *Good News*, another product of Captain Edgar's fine craftsmanship.

After a win with *Good News*, the younger of the two Ragged Islanders told Moxey that he could not build a boat that could beat the *Good News*. Captain Moxey answered with a confidence born of generations of Ragged Island sea masters and his own peerless record. He told Munroe to supply the traditional Bahamian sloop constructing hardwoods—Andros horseflesh and Madeira—and he would

prove the *Good News* sailor wrong.

The rest is history—Munroe supplied the wood and Captain Edgar triumphed.

### **The New Courageous Was Born**

The generational transmission that characterizes and accounts for the sustainability and growth of the Bahamian regatta tradition has become evident in the Munroe family. With Emmitt's son Jed Munroe as bowman, *New Courageous* has built its own legacy and another son, Sean, skippers the *Original Courageous*. Grandson Kevin is another sailor and boat owner in this family of sailors and mailboat captains.

Like so many scions of Ragged Island, Emmitt Munroe became an astute entrepreneur. With the partnership of his uncle Cephias Maycock, Emmitt Munroe purchased a mail boat and named it the "Emmitt and Cephias". In 1995, he and his two sons formed the Munson Shipping Company. Their fleet came to consist of the *M.V. Sherice M* and the *Island Link*, and both



continue to service the communities on their assigned sailing routes well. Captain Munroe went into a well-earned retirement in 2006, but the work of his admirable husbandry continued through his offspring.

### **Awards**

In the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2010, Emmitt Munroe was awarded the British Empire medal (Civil Division) (BEM)



# Clyde Rolle

## Sailor, Vice Commodore, National Family Island Regatta

### Youth Sailing Promoter | Administrator

Clyde Rolle was another Exumian chosen by Howland Bottomley to assist with overall management of sailing aspects of the National Family Island Regatta. One such focus is the plotting of courses for the races. With the safety of sloops, captains and crew upmost, it is a weighty responsibility, which entails calculating wind speeds and direction, tidal and current shifts, identifying impediments such as wreckage, flotsam and sandbars, the locations of which can change with the tides.

Rolle is also charged with the Nassau end of NFIR business, including overseeing the loading of racing sloops on freighters for transport to Exuma, securing trophies and other necessities and confirming participants, and entertainers.

Clyde Rolle's name resounds in many aspects of sailing, as race coordinator, sailor and promoter of junior sailing.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson  
<http://www.janpehrson.com>

## **Youth Development**

A major element of Clyde's contributions is his multifarious input to youth development in sailing and other sports. In 1992, he, Sheldon Gibson and Margaret Tatem-Gilbert were foundational to the initiation of the national junior sailing programme. He was chairman of the National Junior Championship Committee and, until 2018, guided the programme in Exuma when Dallas Knowles assumed the responsibility. He maintains an active consultation and contribution to many other racing organizations. For example:

- Best of the Best Regatta 2018: Race Committee Member.
- All Together Regatta, Montagu Bay 2012: Race Commodore

## **Sailor**

This brother of Lundy Robinson, with connections to the legends of Staniel Cay, is very much a part of the sailing power, which has come to define the Exumas.

## **Championships (Sample)**

St Valentine's Day Massacre Regatta "Catch Me If You Can" Race wins:

2015—3rd Place

2017—*Lady Nathalie*, 1st Place

2019—*Lady Nathalie*, 1st Place

22nd Farmer's Cay Regatta 2020—*Crazy Partner*, 1st Place

# Leslie “Buzzy” Rolle

(Left) Leslie “Buzzy” Rolle with Sir Arthur Foulkes GCMG.  
Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.



Born 22 July 1959  
George Town, Exuma

The multitalented Buzzy Rolle is a boat builder, sailor and regatta founder. By 2011, he had built several boats, including *Fancy Fire I* and 2; *Revelation I* and *II*; *Red Scorpion*, *Jiffy Jr*, *Lady Sonia*, *W.G. Thunderbird*; *Fugitive*, *Saddam*, *Vitamalt Thunderbird*, *Thunderbird* and *Bul Reg*, named for his father Reginald Rolle.

Like many other noted boat builders and sailors, Buzzy Rolle’s father was both his trainer

and inspiration. In naming one of his greatest contributions, the founding of a regatta, Buzzy again paid tribute to his father. First on the calendar of sailing race meets, the Bul Reg Regatta is held annually on New Year’s Day in Elizabeth Harbour, George Town, Exuma. Rolle now captains ‘C’ Class vessels during the National Family Island Regatta and was named 2008 Champion of the Year.

Buzzy Rolle is the founder and chief organizer of the Bul Reg Regatta. Devoted to youth development, he also runs the Summer Youth

Sailing programme in Exuma. His sons are walking in his footsteps sailing. To 2019, Leslie Rolle Jr had won the championship for three years running in junior sailing in the National Family Island Regatta. Kristiano, usually identified as “Chris”, was already an award winner.

Buzzy Rolle was winner of the January 2020 Bul Reg Regatta, skippering *Ms Rowie*. It was one of the few regattas held in The Bahamas after the pandemic struck in March of that year. At the event, the committee honoured Rev. Reginald McKenzie, Edison Smith, Will Parotti and Buzzy’s son Chris Rolle, for their contributions to the Bul Reg Regatta and toward sloop sailing in the country.

### **Buzzy Rolle’s Race Performance**

### **National Family Island Regatta Championships**

#### **“B” Class**

2011 *Lady Sonia*  
 2012 *Lady Sonia*  
 2014 *Lady Sonia*

#### **Second Place**

2018 *Lady Sonia*



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.

#### **“C” Class**

A superb run with *Saddam* 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997.  
*Bul Reg* 2004, 2006.

#### **Awards**

**B-Class Race** Governor General’s Cup was won with *Lady Sonia* at the 63rd National Family Island Regatta in 2016.

**C-Class Dinghy race** for the Commodore Emeritus Cup was won with *Bul Reg* of Exuma, NFIR 2016.



Chris Rolle with Hon. Michael C. Pintard, MP, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources. Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.



Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.

# Steven “Steve” Smith

**Steven “Steve” Smith** of Staniel Cay, Exuma is a renowned sloop builder, skipper and contributor to youth development.

It seems natural and inescapable that Steve Smith should have taken on the character and occupation which he chose. He hails from one of the sloop building centres of The Bahamas. The cay is also the home of magnificently gifted sailors, many of them members of a family, which can boast of Rolly Gray, Kenneth Rolle, Brooks Miller and Steve himself, who has said that he grew up around Rolly and was trained by “Grandmaster”.

*Lady Muriel* is a name of legend in regatta in The Bahamas. It was borne by the boat Rupert Knowles of Long Island built, sailed to victory and then sold to the Staniel Cay clan where it was remodeled.

Steve Smith sailed *Lady Muriel* to 'A' Class championships in two years of the National Family Island Regatta (NFIR)—the first in 2012 and the second in 2016. He was continuing the undoubted racing supremacy of the boats bearing that name, which was established by Rolly Gray as early as 1959 and continued by Brooks Miller.

As a boatbuilder, he spoke of the Staniel Cay tradition that informs his mastery.

*The shape of Lady Muriel is very similar to Tida Wave, but Lady Muriel is six inches wider. In heavy wind we power more. In lighter air, 10 knots or less, it doesn't take so much for Tida Wave to move. Staniel Cay has a different design than the rest of The Bahamas. Our boat builders build a wide hull, fine entry and exit. Because of this, we can carry more mast and boom and sail.<sup>70</sup>*

*Compare this tradition to that of Black Point. We call it 'sharp flat' which means there is a harder chine. Sharper on the sides, flat on the bottom, as opposed to a wine glass shape like Running Tide. It is designed to go on top of the water instead of through it. — Lundy Robinson<sup>71</sup>*

This community-minded Smith has contributed significantly to the junior sailing programme of Exuma, helping to develop a new generation

of traditional sloop racing sailors. In 1999, he built the beautiful 'C' Class *Termite* and *Bye Gully*, two of the sloops with which young Exuma Sailing Club members train, the other being *Lady B*, the handiwork of another famed shipwright, **Hughrie Lloyd** of Barratarre.

In 2016, Steve Smith was honoured by the by the National Family Island Regatta for his contributions to the development of sailing.

### **Race Performances**

#### **National Family Island Regatta**

##### **Class 'A' Championship**

2012 *Lady Muriel*

2016 *Lady Muriel*

##### **Second Place**

'A' Class

*Lady Muriel*, 63rd NFIR

### **Awards**

- National Family Island Regatta Honouree
- Commodore Emeritus Cup in 2016
- Trophy for Second Place, Prime Minister's Cup Race at 50th Long Island Regatta 2017.



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

# Lundy Robinson

Lundy Robinson was born on 3 April 1953 in Black Point, Exuma and is the brother of Clyde Rolle.

With great modesty and even greater talents, Lundy Robinson, a masterful and versatile sailor, would also make many contributions to regatta development. His birth into a family of legendary Black Point sea warriors and their accumulated generational mastery presaged Lundy's successes in adulthood.

Robinson began his sailing career as a deckhand and learned helmsmanship by watching top sailors such as his father Walter Robinson and uncle Rolly Gray. What he took in from such observations made him a formidable competitor who has captured championships across sloop classes and at regattas of islands throughout the chain. Equally outstanding have been the sloops he



Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

has sailed:

Class 'B'—*Peacemaker, Eudeva* and *Al's Angel*;

Class 'A'—*Silent Partner, Red Stripe* and *Who*

*Dat*; and *The Plague*

Class 'C'—*Crazy Partner, Lady Eunice* and *Sweet Liza (King and Knights)*.

In September 2011, Lundy Robinson, as captain of the 'A' Class sloop, *Red Stripe* and of the 'B' Class *Eudeva* took both overall titles at the Grand Bahama Regatta, which was held off Taino Beach.



This master sailor once did what Eleazor “Barber J” boasted that no boat and sailor pair could ever do. In 2012, in the “Catch Me If You Can” Race of the St Valentine’s Day Massacre Regatta, skipper Robinson, *Red Stripe* and crew overtook Johnson’s beloved *Lady Nathalie* to win the Sir Durward Knowles Floating Trophy, in the ‘Catch Me If You Can’ race.

### **National Family Island Regatta Class A Championships**

#### **First Place**

1988 *Trade Winds*  
1989 *Silent Partner*  
1997 *Peacemaker*  
2008 *Eudeva*  
2013 *Red Stripe/Eudeva*

#### **Second Place**

1995 *Peacemaker*  
1996 *Peacemaker*  
1999 *Peacemaker*  
2009 *Eudeva*

# *Aulice “Tommy” Thompson*

Aulice “Tommy” Thompson, master boat builder from Steventon, Exuma was introduced to sloop sailing by his uncle Edmund ‘Mu’ Collie. For two years he competed as a crew member with Lundy Robinson on the *Sea Plague* (later the *Jiffy*) but soon realized his preference was for boat building.

He contributed to the building, design and repair of boats, including *Thunderbird*, *Cobra*, *Jacob’s Ladder* and *Queen Drucilla*.



(L to r) Clyde Rolle, Chester Fox, Robert Rolle, Stafford Armbrister and Ezra Kemp. Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

The background is an abstract composition of broad, expressive brushstrokes. The color palette is dominated by various shades of teal and turquoise, ranging from light, airy tones to deep, saturated blues. Interspersed with these are warm, golden-yellow and ochre tones, also rendered with visible, energetic brushwork. The overall effect is one of movement and fluidity, reminiscent of water or a dynamic sky. A dark teal horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the main title.

# *Regatta Icons*

MASTERS OF THE SEA  201



# Stafford Armbrister

Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

## **Race Coordinator, Regatta Organizer**

Born 3 July 1951

Stafford Armbrister was born to Randolph and Lillis Brown Armbrister at Johnny Hill, New Providence and later moved with family to Andros. There, in his mother's hometown, Stafford Armbrister entered a world of maritime sailing and industry. Two of his uncles, Donald Adderley and Anvil Taylor were boatbuilders. His father Randolph, in the employ of businessman George Roberts, first worked on sailboats, then went on to captain mailboats: *Alice Mable*, *Drake* and *Spanish Sea Queen*, *Lady Dundas* and finally retiring from *Bimini Gal*.

## **Sailing Experience**

After pursuing qualifications in bookkeeping at Technical College in Nassau, Stafford was employed in 1978 as first officer aboard *Regulate* with Edgar Moxey. He participated in the National Family Island Regatta for the first time in 1980 and sailed on Moxey's *Pieces of Eight* for four years. Beginning in 1984, he sailed aboard *Southern Cross* and *Lucayan Lady* as bowman for many years.

## **Regatta Administration**

Stafford Armbrister moved next to the administrative side of regattas, where he has made an incalculable contribution. He worked with King Eric Gibson for more than 12 years as treasurer of The Bahamas Boat Owners and Sailors Association. Armbrister found that he

was elated to be able to make a contribution to organizing the All for One Regatta (2015), so he sought to continue in this work.

Circa 1992, he received a commission from parliamentarian **Algernon Allen**, then Minister of Youth and Sports to help build up the foundations of regattas across the archipelago. Undoubtedly, this drive was intended to be a pillar of **One Bahamas**, a concept started in 1992 by Allen. One of the primary goals of the programme (# 5) was to “Foster a sense of oneness through the recognition of national symbols and the celebration of The Bahamas’ unique amalgamation of cultures and histories.” Regattas would prove an admirable platform, combining celebration, sports excitement and a link to Bahamian history, legacy and a key aspect of the country’s identity—its unique marine environment.

### **Development Contributions**

It was through the One Bahamas initiative that Stafford Armbrister made one of the greatest of his contributions—helping to build up regattas in communities of North Eleuthera, Harbour Island, Governor’s Harbour, Andros, Bimini, Acklins and Abaco. He attended all but the latter two. In the course of the programme, he would be asked to extend the relationship in several areas. He became president of the South Andros Development Association in 1995. He also became race coordinator and chairman

(2009–2013) for the All Andros and South Andros Regatta, raising considerable funds from individuals of means and corporate groups. To his credit Armbrister:

- Assisted Jacob Higgins in organizing the All Mayaguana Regatta and served as Race Coordinator;
- Was committee member for Best of the Best Regatta;
- Contributed to the development of the C.V. Bethel Senior High Sailing Club, assisting in training students. His daughter Kenya Armbrister became the club’s first president;
- With Clyde Rolle, manages the Junior Sailing Programme at NFIR;
- Helped organize Nassau regattas: St Valentine’s Day oversight for 10 years; Chairman of All for One Regatta; first chairman, King Eric All for One Regatta.

At the request of boatowner Edward St George of Grand Bahama Port Authority, Armbrister trained the crew of Lucayan Lady. With **Clement Fox** at the helm and **Ivan Stuart** as bowman, the sloop became NFIR ‘A’ Class Champion 1987–1988.

### **Race Coordinator**

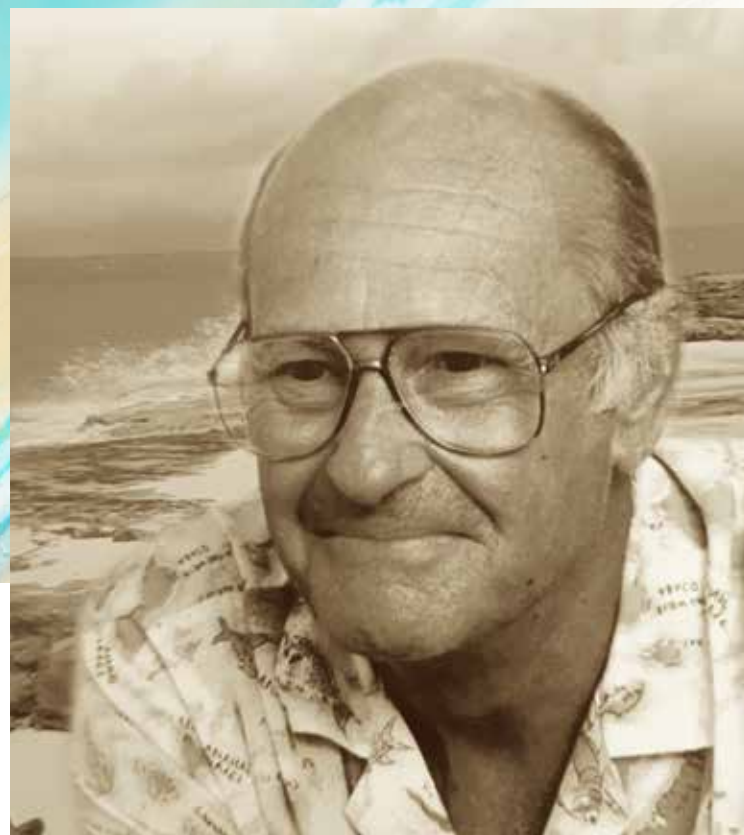
National Family Island Regatta with Clyde Rolle; North Eleuthera; Cat Island; Grand Bahama and Mayaguana as well as the Independence Regatta at Clifton Heritage, 10 July 2013.

# Howland C. Bottomley

1 May 1929 – 10 June 2009

Originally from Camden, New Jersey Howland Bottomley, a citizen of the United States and a dedicated sailor, was a 50-year resident of George Town, Exuma, Bahamas. He contributed to the development of that community's economy and its famed sloop sailing races, the annual Out Island Regatta (later the National Family Island Regatta), which was launched in George Town's Elizabeth Harbour in 1954.

A graduate of the University of Virginia, Bottomley had served his country in the U.S. Navy from March 30, 1951 to March 28, 1955. Honorably discharged, he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Navy Occupation Service (Europe) Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.



Photograph courtesy of Nancy Bottomley

In 1956, just two years after the founding of the Out Island Regatta, as the National Family Island Regatta was then known, Bottomley began cruising the waters of The Bahamas in his ketch *Albatross* and eventually built a home on Little Exuma. After eight years at “The Cut”, he moved to George Town where he built and operated Regatta Point, an all-suites hotel, making a valuable contribution to tourism development in Exuma. He was a well-known and respected member of the industry and of the local community, generally.

Bottomley served on the Regatta Race Committee for 30 years. He served as its chairman from 1962 until his retirement from that post in 1992. During his tenure in this role, he worked in close collaboration with R.H. “Bobby” Symonette, a founding father of the Regatta, to develop and implement the racing rules and requirements that govern sloop racing in The Bahamas. He was elected to the Regatta Hall of Fame in October 1990 and is featured in a related display at Nassau’s Lynden Pindling International Airport. He was later made Commodore Emeritus for his valuable services to the Regatta.

Howland Bottomley personally chose Daniel “Danny” Strachan, a native Exumian and former banker to succeed him in the post of commodore of the National Family Island Regatta, an auspicious and fortunate choice.

Bottomley returned to the United States following his retirement and, for the final three years of his life, was a resident of Easton, Maryland where he died on Wednesday, 10 June 2009 at the age of 80, at Talbot Hospice House.

Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.



# Robert Dunkley



Summer Olympics, which was to be held in Russia. However, it was the year when many nations, including The Bahamas, joined in a boycott, initiated by the United States, to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in that year.

Robert Dunkley's wide interest in the promotion

of sailing and its quality development is evident in his service to several programmes. He has served on the board of the Bahamas Sailing Association, was once Commodore of the Snipe International Racing Association and, in 2020, was serving as Commodore of Royal Nassau Sailing Club. He has provided invaluable consultation to many sailing programmes.

Outstanding and much admired for his dedication to and continuous promotion of youth sailing, Dunkley, through his role as director BNSS and his BSA membership, has coached many of the leading performers in junior sailing, including Joshua Weech, who was awarded The Government of The Bahamas 2019 Rising Star Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sports.

Born 13 January 1949

**Retired banker/investment advisor, sailor and coach**

**Director, Bahamas National Sailing School (BNSS)**

**Member, Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA)**

According to his resume, Dunkley began sailing from the age of six and was supremely active in the sport for decades. At the international and local level, Dunkley has skippered a variety of dinghy and keel boat classes, the main ones being Snipe, Star, Finn, Sunfish and Laser classes as well as PHRF 30 to 45 ft. boats. He participated in numerous World Championships, North American Championships, Central America & Caribbean Games, Pan Am Games and the 1996 Olympics. He qualified as Bahamas Sailor – Finn Class for the 1980



Dunkley is tireless in his efforts to raise funds for the junior sailing programmes and his well-prepared proposals and documentation have won the support of such philanthropic individuals and companies as well as such charitable organizations as **Cable Bahamas Cares Foundation**.

Under his guidance, many junior sailors have come into view in the wider sailing arena and have qualified for participation in international sailing. In 2012, three 12-year old Bahamians sailors, **Spencer Cartwright, Paul de Souza** and **Alande Forbes**, were selected to represent The Bahamas at the Optimist World Championships in the Dominican Republic that year to match wits and skills with 240 other sailors from around the world. Robert Dunkley traveled with Team Bahamas as the head coach, as he had done and does for other teams.

Following the destruction wrought by Hurricane Dorian, Dunkley could report to the Hope Town, Abaco Junior Sailing Club:

*Through donations from the various teams and assistance from BSA, we have secured six new boats for Hope Town Junior Sailing, fully equipped with blades, spars, sails, lines, and dollies, all ready to be sailed. The Japanese donated the sails which are slightly used race sails. We have put these in storage in a*



Image courtesy of Robert Dunkley

*container and when your club is ready for them, we will ship them to you.<sup>72</sup>*

Owing to his various sailing affiliations and the oversight role played by Bahamas National Sailing School, Robert Dunkley contributes significantly to the organization of five major junior sailing events in The Bahamas, including **The Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta**, which is organized with Nassau Yacht Club and Bahamas National Sailing School.

Proving his continued great value to sailing in The Bahamas, Dunkley has acted as advisor to the many sailing clubs and youth sailing programmes throughout the archipelago. Generally, classes sailed have been Optimist Dinghies (ages eight to 15) Championship and Green (beginner) fleets, Laser Radials and Sunfish.



# *Sir Godfrey Kenneth Kelly KCMG*

One of the co-founders of the Cat Island Regatta, Godfrey Kelly would continue to support the event financially. A competitive sailor for a number of years, Godfrey Kelly represented The Bahamas in four Olympic Games in the Dragon sailing class in 1960, '64, '68 and '72. **In the Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan in 1964, he became the first Bahamian in his class to win a race.** In the same year, Durward 'Sea Wolf' Knowles and Cecil Cooke won the Olympic gold medal in the Star Class.

The 60th Cat Island Regatta, the Diamond Jubilee, was held in honour of Godfrey Kelly

in New Bight from 29-31 July 2018. That year, Cat Island Sailing Club president Pat Strachan expressed the view that the honour could not have been given to a more deserving individual, as Kelly had given steady support to the event since its inception.

In Queen Elizabeth's 2020 New Year's Honours List, Godfrey Kelly was awarded a signal distinction. He was named Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (KCMG) for his contributions to the business and sports communities of The Bahamas.

# Chris “Teach” Kettel

**Statistician for NFIR (1968-2017)**  
**Member of the 60th Anniversary NFIR  
Celebration**  
**National Coordinator, NFIR**

**President of the Exuma Foundation (EFC)**  
Since it began 1988, the Exuma Foundation has raised over \$2 million for education and health care-related causes throughout the Exuma cays. Most of this money has been provided by generous donors who are not native to the islands, but feel a connection to the community and want to help improve it.

EFC started when a group of second homeowners connected with educators Chris and wife Jenny Kettel and the then owner of the Peace and Plenty hotel, Stanley Benjamin. Chris became the President of EFC (Bahamas) Ltd, retiring in August 2018. Jenny Kettel is also a board member. EFC maintains a six-acre campus at Hooper’s Bay where it hosts a school for Exuma’s disabled children.

Another of Kettel’s many fine contributions has been the role he has played as a Founder of Exuma Sailing school and fundraiser.

# Harold Lamont King “Herbert” “Cap”



Photographs courtesy of Kim Outten Stubbs, Dep. Director, National Museum of The Bahamas & Antiquities Monument and Museum Corp.

15 December 1906 – 31 October 1977

A pioneer of the Cat Island Regatta and son of Israel Fredmore “Britton” King and Isadora Seymour King, Harold Lamont King was known variously as “Herbert” and “Cap”. He was a resident of Knowles, Cat Island his entire life. Along with his brother **Richard King**, “Cap” was a seafarer and a builder of boats. The brothers were co-owners of the sailing vessels *Sea Serpent* and *River Queen*, which served Cat Island carrying passengers and freight.

At the helm of *Miss Cat Island*, his own boat, Harold King emerged the winner of the first memorable Cat Island Regatta, held on 31 May 1956. The King clan, including Harold, Richard and Harold’s sons, would dominate the Cat Island Regatta through the first decade, sailing their boats, *Miss Cat Island 1* and *2*, *Catherine*, *Mayflower*, *Palmdale*, *Fear Not*, *Invincible* and *P.D.Q.*

Active in many aspects of Cat Island development, Harold contributed significantly in the island’s political, social, cultural and



Harold and Richard King.



business arenas. King was a fine tailor, musician, building inspector and businessman who operated block-making plants. On the island, he was also a member of the local Board of Works.

He and his family continued to be exemplary patrons of the Cat Island Regatta, sometimes

supplying prize money from their personal funds. During regatta time, King often transported residents of settlements along the length of Cat Island so that more people would have a chance to enjoy the festivities and help to build up the event. He was honored for his contributions to the development of the sport in his home island at the 59th regatta there.



# Sir Durward Randolph Knowles “Sea Wolf”

2 November 1917 – 24 February 2018

*“Never Give Up” – Mantra of Sir Durward Knowles, accounted the country’s greatest sailor.*

Durward Knowles’ entire life was defined by the sea. His father served as Nassau Harbour Master and operated tugboats. It was a business Durward grew up in and further developed in his adulthood. Fittingly, his personal mantra was “Never Give Up” and his accomplishments, some achieved in the most challenging circumstances, attest to his lifelong fidelity to this code.

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An unknown writer posted the following tribute to Durward Knowles to the website Stories in Between:

*Sir Durward Knowles—husband, father, mentor, legend, Gold Medal human.*

*From humble beginnings to Bahamian royalty, from sailing a dinghy on Montagu Bay to winning The Bahamas first Olympic Gold Medal, from a young tugboat navigator guiding a tug around the north side of Bimini on a dark, stormy night to being Chief Harbour pilot of Nassau and safely docking thousands of ships with millions of*

*passengers onboard, Sir Durward climbed countless mountains in his 100 years. The common thread was that he always reached the peak.*<sup>73</sup>

### **International Sailing Champion**

At the acme of Durward Knowles' achievements in sailing was capturing the Gold Medal in the Star Class at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo with Cecil Cooke. This gifted sailor's resume could boast of notable milestones before and after 1964. When the islands of The Bahamas were still twenty-five years from shedding its colonial status, Knowles had competed for the United Kingdom in the 1948 Olympics. He and Sloane Elmo "Bunty" Farrington finished in 4th place in the Star Class. The two men won the bronze medal in the same class at the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne. Representing The Bahamas, Knowles also won gold in the 1959 Pan American Games Star Class (with Farrington).

With Bill Buchan as crew, Durward competed in various New Orleans and Miami regattas, as well as the Worlds in Caracas, Venezuela in 1973, finishing fifth. There followed several major regattas in Nassau, including, the Worlds of 1976 and 1985.

Knowles would also achieve another extraordinary record. He became one of only five athletes who have competed in the Olympics over a span of 40 years. The others were fencer Ivan Joseph Martin Osier, sailor Magnus Konow, showjumper Ian Millar, and sailor Paul Elvstrøm.

### **Durward Knowles, Philanthropist Recipient of Rotary's Paul Harris Award**

Danny Strachan, Commodore of the National Family Island Regatta, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the NFIR and the 40th anniversary of Bahamas Independence, paid tribute to the man he called "a Bahamian sailing icon in the regatta mix", although Durward Knowles had never skippered a boat in a native sloop regatta.

Commodore Strachan revealed that Sir Durward Knowles had donated millions of dollars to assist in the promotion of sporting activities and to help communities around The Bahamas.

Strachan noted further that Sir Durward had been especially outstanding in his interest in and donations to the sport of sailing in The Bahamas, having made generous financial contributions to the running of the National Family Island Regatta over six decades as well as funding prizes for sailing champions.

Commodore Strachan stressed that continuance of the regatta tradition was owed in large measure to the contributions of the NFIR's many sponsors and the generosity of The Bahamas Government and Sir Durward Knowles, the single largest contributor to that annual event.

Regattas throughout the country were enabled to keep going for many years owing to Knowles' generosity. Moreover, he did much to encourage younger Bahamians to learn and to compete in sailing. He was known to finance the building of boats for regatta competitors, and once sponsored the construction of an E-class *One Bahamas* craft specifically for the training of young Bahamians who are expected to become future skippers.

### **Roses While He Lived**

Knowles was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1996 and the following year was awarded The Bahamas Order of Merit. In 2014, the second Legend-class patrol boat of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force was commissioned as **HMBS Durward Knowles**.

In that year, Sir Durward received, in the presence of his wife Lady Holly, and son Randy Knowles, The Bahamas Olympic Committee's

President's Award, the IOC President's Cup and the Pan American Sports Organization Medal and the Sports Merit Award at a Golden Anniversary luncheon in the Imperial Ballroom at the Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island.

To mark Sir Durward's attaining his 100th year, the National Family Island Regatta, The Bahamas Sailing Association and the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources with responsibility for regattas, hosted the Sir Durward Knowles 100 Regatta, 26-27 October 2017 at Montagu Bay. The Sir Durward National Junior Invitational Regatta also enshrines Sea Wolf's name.

### **Glorious Longevity**

In May 2016, following the death of Sándor Tarics, Durward Knowles became the oldest living Olympic champion. The Hungarian water polo player, who won Olympic gold in 1936, dying at 103, eclipsed him only in longevity. Sir Durward turned 100 in November 2017 and died on 24 February 2018. Supported by his faithful wife Holly, son Randy and daughter Charlotte Albury he had striven to fill his century with a great love for his homeland, its waters and the sport of sailing, and gave generously to their sustainability and development.





Sir Durward Knowles shown with Phillip McPhee (left) and Eleazar Johnson (right). Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.

# Dallas Knowles

(L to r) Emit, Tamara, Dallas and Joss Knowles.  
Image courtesy of Dallas Knowles.



## Another Knowles Dynasty in Watersports

### DALLAS KNOWLES

17 January 1980—

#### Vice President Exuma Sailing Club

Bahamian, regatta sloop sailor, sailing coach and a founder of the Exuma Sailing Club (ESC), teaching sailing skills, Bahamian culture and heritage, team work and discipline, Dallas Knowles has been carrying on and extending his family's tradition of personal excellence in watersports and contributions to the development of sailing. In this, he emphasizes the training of youth in Exuma where he and

his wife Tamara and sons Joss and Emit reside. Not only are Dallas and Tamara dedicated to the management of ESC but also contribute to sustainable tourism development as proprietors of Out Island Explorers, which introduces clients to the beauties of the Exuma chain through eco tours and guided camping trips.

*The family's waterborne heritage began most notably with great grandfather Captain Harry Knowles, a Nassau Harbour pilot. Granduncle Durward Knowles was the 1964 Olympic gold medal winner in sailing. Dallas' grandfather Percival Andrew "Percy" Knowles, Durward's brother, crewed for "Sea Wolf" in many Star*

*competitions. Dallas' father, Percival Andrew "Andy" Knowles has been a world-class Olympic swimmer and coach. In 1976, Andy and brother Bruce became the first Bahamians to swim in the Olympics. Andy coached the Bahamas Olympic Swim Team in six Olympiads.*

### **Dallas Knowles, Sailor**

Dallas learned to sail at the Nassau Yacht Club beginning at the age of eight and won the end of week regattas several years in a row. He gave it up because his family were mainly engaged in swimming. He took up sailing again when he moved to Exuma in 2004 and sailed in his first National Family Island Regatta (NFIR) in 2013. In 2016, his grandfather Percy bought the famed 'B' Class Tari Anne from regatta champion Marcus Mitchell and became its skipper sailing with wife Tamara and sons Joss (b. December 2007) and Emit (b. September 2009) as crew in the National Family Island and the Long Island Regattas. To 2020, the Knowles family had achieved several top three finishes at NFIR, Long Island Regatta and Best of the Best.

### **Contributions to Sailing Development: Exuma Sailing Club**

Dallas, a Founder of the Exuma Sailing Club, says that until his move to Exuma, he had not connected sloop sailing to Bahamian culture and sailing in NFIR. That exposure, however,

ignited a passion for the sport and it became a driving force in his and Tamara's motivation behind their involvement in the Exuma Sailing Club.

Dallas has said, "One of our biggest goals and drives is to keep sloop sailing alive and get young boys and girls involved in it to get them interested and excited in this incredible piece of Bahamian Tradition".

Dallas sails on the C class "Termite" as coach and instructor in tactics with the Club's high school members handling the tiller. Yearly, they compete in Nassau's Best of Best and the Long Island Regatta as well as a range of Exuma Regattas, including NFIR and those at Farmers Cay, Barraterre and Rolleville. The ESC team have also traveled to the Grand Bahama Regatta and won it in 2018.

### **Passing on the Sailing Heritage**

Joss and Emit Knowles both started sailing in 2018 and compete in the Opti class, and Emit has won the local ESC regatta twice. Both have competed in the Optimist National Championship twice and sail the E class sloop "Riptide". Joss has acted as bowman peeking around the jib of Tari Anne to call starboard on boats and let his father at tiller know what the rest of the fleet is doing. Joss is getting ready to become crew on Termite as well.

# John Linton Rigg OBE

## **Founding Member and Chief Organizer of the National Family Island Regatta**

*The sea is in my blood, as it must have been in the blood of my ancestors, who sailed from England to the West Indies in 1795. The lure of the sea is like that of a moth to the flame, an irresistible craving to be near to it, on it or be in it. To be on a ship on the sea is a supreme satisfaction.—J Linton Rigg.<sup>74</sup>*

J. Linton Rigg, as he is better known, was the grandson of an Anglican Bishop and son of a

clergyman. He was born in 1895 in Jamaica, where the English-descended Lintons had lived for generations but grew up in the United States. He died on Carriacou in the Grenadines in 1981.

Passionate about all connected with the sea, Rigg engaged a lifelong pursuit of maritime adventure—sailing and building yachts for his personal use. He developed a yacht brokerage business and sold yachts to the rich and famous in the northeast of the United States in the 1920 and 1930s. Circa 1950, he moved to Exuma

Cays of The Bahamas and built a home on Goat Cay, no doubt attracted by the perfection of the surrounding waters for sailing. He penned the book *Bahama Islands: A boatman's guide to the land and the water*, which was published in 1951. Rigg was to become a legend in the archipelago.

Rigg is credited as an early promoter of George Town, Great Exuma as a tourism destination, particularly one that held many opportunities for yachtsmen, who began to heed the call. His crowning achievement was his participation in the founding of what was first called the 'Out Island Regatta', then the National Family Island Regatta. His varied connections, many of whom were wealthy, allowed J. Linton to raise considerable funds and support for the event. Importantly, he served as chief organizer of the regatta.

In the early 1960s, Rigg's wanderlust took hold and he moved next to the Caribbean (the Grenadines, specifically), to the island of Carriacou, in the boatbuilding town of Windward where he constructed 'Tranquillity', his new abode, and The Mermaid Tavern. To

the inveterate sailor, a sailing vessel was also necessary, so he commissioned the construction of *The Mermaid*. On the same island, J. Linton would soon create another legend. Continuing his love for competitive sailing and imitating the feat he had accomplished in The Bahamas ten years earlier, he founded the Carriacou Regatta.

Drawing upon Rigg's unpublished memoirs, Art Ross, an American sea captain from New Hope, Pennsylvania wrote *Sixty Years of Sport. Sailing from the Age of Gatsby to the Grenadine Islands*, J. Linton's biography.

Rigg's enigmatic personality ran against the grain for many he encountered. Art Ross notes in response:

*In fairness, he did so much because he loved the island's peoples, their culture, and mostly their boats and how they have evolved in the building of them. That's why he started the regattas, both Carriacou and Bahamas Out Island Family Regatta, all for the people. Did he relish and bask in the glory of it all, yes. Did they all reap years, decades of the benefits, of course they did and still do.*



## *Daniel “Danny” Strachan*

In 1992, Danny Strachan was appointed Commodore of the National Family Island Regatta (NFIR), the oldest, biggest and most influential of the famed sloop sailing races of The Bahamas. Under his administration, NFIR has grown in size, quality, in terms of attracting the participation of increasing numbers of the top sailors, the best racing sloops, and ongoing growth of spectator numbers. The associated venues and amenities, entertainment and vending have also evolved positively. Moreover, Strachan has enjoyed respect at highest levels.

Over the years, this personable gentleman has proven his ability to unite a range of individuals and agencies, public and private for the benefit of regatta preservation and the furtherance of Exuma and national causes. Of recognized ability, he has served as Consultant, in the Office of the Prime Minister of The Bahamas (2004-2007).

Strachan’s road to a monumentally successful tenure as leader of the NFIR started in 1990. By the beginning of the decade, Howland

Bottomley, who had lived in Exuma for fifty years and led NFIR for thirty, decided to return to the United States to live out his remaining years in his native land. He had a critical choice to make. His successor would need to bring to the role a keen ability and experience in managing the financial aspects of NFIR, this precious artifact of Bahamian maritime heritage, and continue to push it to achieve newer goals for the benefit of Exuma and the entire country.

Bottomley chose Daniel “Danny” Strachan for the role. There was abundant evidence to support his fitness for leadership—He was well-educated, having earned a B.A Business and Economics from Florida Memorial College, Miami (1971) and completed an M.A Economics & Business University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.

Additionally, Strachan had acquired excellent post-graduate professional training and experience in banking and financial services internationally, which would serve admirably to lead NFIR safely through high-quality expansion.

His training included a stint at Chemical Bank, New York and London: Training – Capital Marketing Products, Investments and Trading (1986); Citibank, N.A., Puerto Rico: Core credit

training (1972) and twelve weeks of Advanced Credit Analysis at Citibank, Caracas, Venezuela, (1976).

Danny Strachan held posts in banking and financial services at high levels—Vice President and Senior Credit Officer, Chemical Bank & Trust (Bahamas) Limited, wholly-owned subsidiary of Chemical Bank, New York. He was responsible for the management of Eurodollar deposit and investment—portfolios ranging from \$350 to \$363 million. He also had charge of the co-ordination, administration and control of Bank’s domestic credit and investment activities. (1981-1993).

Before assuming the post at Chemical Bank and Trust (Bahamas) Ltd, he served as Manager and Senior Credit Officer at Citibank, N.A Nassau, Bahamas (1973-1981). As Marketing and Senior Account Officer, his portfolio included credit extension, administration, guidance and control of the bank credit policies and procedures. He also served as Credit Review Officer for Latin America and Caribbean area.

Strachan has also held important directorships that abundantly demonstrate civic commitment: General Manager & Director, The Exuma Foundation (Bahamas) Limited; President & Director Bankers Club, Nassau, Bahamas (1982-84) and Vice President &

Director Junior Achievement Bahamas (1979-1985).

There has been much evidence also of an orientation towards fellowship and service: Member Alpha Kappa Mu – National Honor Society, U.S.A; Member Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity; National Family Island Regatta Committee and Member lodge St Ann's No. 1751

S.C. He has been featured in Who's who Among Students in Colleges & Universities in U.S.A

Strachan, a Founder and dedicated fundraiser for Exuma Sailing Club, has also given excellent service to the Exuma Foundation (Bahamas), Managing Director, 2018-2020 and General Manager & Treasurer, The Exuma Foundation 2014-2018.





# Patrick “Pat” Strachan

In the 2000s, the presidency of the Cat Island Sailing Club and chairmanship of the Cat Island Regatta was assumed by **Patrick Strachan**, a former powerful boxer once known as the “Centreville Assassin” and **Maxwell Burrows**, who had served for a time as president, headed the racing committee.

Under that administration, the year 2014 brought important developments. First, the 58th annual Cat Island Regatta (1-4 August 2014) held in New Bight featured an important innovation—a children’s dinghy race with the contribution of **Sheldon Gibson**, a sailor and boat builder, who became a major organizer and proponent of the event.

President Strachan led the decision to upgrade the premises of the Cat Island Sailing Club as home base for the Regatta. Valuable assistance came from a number of sources, including the Member of Parliament for Cat Island **Philip ‘Brave’ Davis**, **Mark Roberts** of FYP Builders Mall and the Cat Island Local Government administrator **Jackson McIntosh** as well as those others who patronized fundraising events. The Club underwent a significant transformation. The male and female bathrooms were upgraded, the interior and exterior were painted. The ceiling was closed, new windows and doors were installed and the Club was completely air-conditioned. In addition, four scholarships were donated to students from Cat Island out of regatta funds.

Strachan continued the tradition of recognizing individuals whose contributions, in many spheres, have helped to propel the Cat Island Regatta to new heights. In this regard, the Sailing Club was renamed the Godfrey Kelly Sailing Club and also the area set aside for listing honorees was labelled the Godfrey Kelly Wall of Fame. Strachan's presidency saw an increase in the participation of top sailing competitors—sloops and skippers. The Cat Island Sailing Club and its premises have provided an essential workforce and a focal point for regatta administration.

The Cat Island Regatta has had a positive domino effect. Most notably, it has boosted the island's economy by attracting increasing numbers of competitors and domestic and international tourists. It has been noted that, with greater inflows, philanthropy has increased, especially as regards assistance to the needy.

Through its charitable community development programme, the regatta had, by 2020, yielded almost 20 scholarships for Cat Island students to attend Bahamas Technical Vocational Institute as well as the Food 20/20 Donation Project for senior citizens. Additional inputs to community growth were the extensive renovations carried out at the Sailing Club.

Towards the ending of his presidency, Strachan said that he was dedicating his energy to ensuring that fundraising events would be successful, the regatta organised in an efficient and effective manner and ground broken for the Cat Island Cultural and Community Centre in New Bight.

*We envision this centre will be able to house a banquet hall, a computer room, a four-room motel, library, reception area and office area and kitchen. Our vision for this centre is to provide an after-school venue for kids to do their homework, provide access to computers, provide access to a library and to have a banquet hall where weddings and parties can be held. – Patrick Strachan<sup>75</sup>*

It was projected that the Cat Island Association would be able to earn revenue from the hotel rooms and banquet hall. By 2020, application had been made for an acre in New Bight to break ground Strachan noted:

*To see this come to fruition would be the icing on the cake for my presidency.<sup>76</sup>*

# *Ezekiel* *“Zeke”* *Taylor*

**Ezekiel Taylor** was the adopted son of Herbert King. At the 61st annual Cat Island Regatta, the Cat Island Sailing Club Association honoured Taylor for his contributions to the development of the event in the 1980s, when he served as its president. The Association’s president Pat Strachan described Mr Taylor as “one of those giants, unassuming, quiet, but a tower of strength and support for the regatta.”

In the fifteen years Zeke held the presidency, he effected many improvements to the Association’s premises, often directing or carrying them out himself. When he took the leadership, the Club had no electricity. It was he who provided a generator, serviced it and kept it running properly. In the same period, he installed running water and supervised the

addition of the office, bathrooms, a bar, kitchen and dining area.

Such improvements boosted patronage and earned revenue through the daily opening of the bar and kitchen and holding of dances on weekends. He was also a cook in the kitchen when the club’s chef was absent.

Under the tenure of Zeke, the Cat Island Regatta improved from a minor to a major regatta. He invited Eleazor ‘Barber J’ Johnson to sail the *Lady Natalie* in Cat Island to prove to the world that the Cat Island Regatta could accommodate the Class ‘A’ and Class ‘B’ sloops.

# MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MARINE RESOURCES

## ROSTER OF REGATTA CHAIRMEN & COMMODORES 2020

### REGATTA

Bul Reg

Farmer's Cay Exuma

Valentine's Day Massacre

National Family Island

Mangrove Cay

Barreterre, Exuma

Long Island

South Andros

Mayaguana

Bimini

All Andros & Berry Islands

Acklins

Cat Island

Black Point, Exuma

Rolleville, Exuma

North Eleuthera

Best of The Best

### COMMITTEE CHAIR/COMMODORE

Leslie "Buzzy" Rolle, Chairman || Cecil Smith

Alfred Rolle, Commodore

Eleazor Johnson Jr, Chairman || Clyde Rolle ||  
Stafford Armbrister

Danny Strachan, Chairman/Commodore

David Rolle, Chairman || Larry Bastian

Shantell Taylor || Annie Lloyd

Gina Burrows-Coakley, Chairman

Chester Fox, Commodore

Carolyn Stuart, Co-Chairman || Burnt Ferguson

Jacob Higgins, Commodore

Edward Reckley, Chairman

Rex Wilson, Chairman || Alphonso Smith, Commodore

Stephano Kemp || Calvert Stevens

Christine King, Chairman || Maxwell Burrows, Co- Chairman

Ryan Brown, Chairman || Gregory Adderley, Commodore

Maureen Musgrove, Chairman || Dwight Hart

Ricardo Penn, Chairman

Barry Wilmott

# Women In Sailing

To casual spectators it becomes obvious that men predominate in Bahamian regattas and the question arises as to why this is so in the 21st century. Regarding native Bahamian sloop sailing, a seasoned American woman sailor and friend of regatta in The Bahamas, offers the view that, while culture plays a role, there are also practical issues that may have contributed to limiting the participation of women:

*This is partially, maybe mainly, cultural, but also remember that these sloops are heavy and big and the sailors are often big big men, their weight holds down the tremendous sail area when they ride the pry board. And the boats do not have winches or other devices to use when trimming sails or pulling the anchor, so these activities require a lot of strength... The Optis are tactical .. you don't need a lot of strength to sail them. I am a racing sailor myself in the USA.— Jan Pehrson, international sailor, photographer, writer (email communication).<sup>77</sup>*

## **A Case for More Female Participation**

A 2009 graduate of St Augustine's College, Ivanna Seymour began her maritime career in her teens. She earned Bridge-Watch Certification at Holland College, PEI, Canada. She sailed as a deck cadet with Dean's Shipping. Further, she earned a Chief Officer Unlimited Licence and by June 2021, was second officer on Royal Caribbean's Navigator of the Seas.

*Ultimately they (women) make better sailors. They work hard, they listen more, and they follow instructions. Because they tend not to be as reckless as men, the dangers of sailing could well diminish... Women are also more cognizant of learning and obeying the rules... Women do not stretch the rules in the heat of competition.—Margaret Tatem-Gilbert<sup>78</sup>*

## **Breaking the Barrier**

Undoubtedly a pioneer, Gloria Patience, Exuma's own shark lady, boat owner and

skipper was a record breaker in glass-ceiling smashing. She sailed in the National Family Island Regatta with an all-women aboard. Captain and crew crossed the finish line bare-breasted.

Businesswoman **Margaret Tatum Gilbert** participated in regattas as a crew member for a number of years. Hope Town's **Rhiannon Gottlieb** was said to have been the first woman crew member ever to race in the Exuma and Long Island Regattas.

Tatum-Gilbert acknowledged the pioneering skippers who welcomed women as crew. She noted that *Unca Boss* had carried women since 1990 and Marcus Mitchell on the *Tarri Anne* could also be credited in this regard.

Although women are still woefully absent as skippers in sloop racing in The Bahamas, there has been a happy increase of the female presence in other water sports, including sailing Optimist, Sunfish, Snipe, Skiff and wind surfing, where women are well represented.

Tatum-Gilbert was a founder of junior sailing in New Providence along with Clyde Rolle, Sheldon Gibson and Eleazor Johnson who led the development.

## **Tamara Knowles**

### **Sailor**

American by birth, Tamara Knowles grew up as a self-professed “army brat”, playing softball, basketball, volleyball and rarely got to spend any time on the water. That changed when she met and married Bahamian Dallas Knowles, a son of a family of Olympic sailors and swimmers. She sailed in her first sloop race in the Bul Reg Regatta (January 2014) on the “C” Class sloop *Two Friends* with Skipper Lundy Robinson. Sailing has become integral to her life to the point where, by 2020, she was the only woman regularly crewing regatta sloops. She and Dallas’ two boys, Joss and Emit and others have been part of the crew on *Tari Anne*, skippered by Dallas since 2014. Annually, Tamara sails aboard *Tari Anne*, a “B” Class sloop in the National Family Island Regatta, Long Island Regatta and the Best of the Best Regatta. Victories racked up by the Knowles have included Best of the Best finalist (2019 and 2017); CNK Cup Winner 2018 (NFIR); tying for second place in Long Island Regatta 2017 and many fourth place finishes in a tough field of champions.

Among her contribution to increasing youth sailing, she has become an able partner with Dallas in the management of the Exuma Sailing School. She as Team Mom, assists her husband in coaching, teaching kids aged 8-18 to sail



Tamara Knowles. Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>



Jimmie and Lori Lowe. Image courtesy of Jimmie and Lori Lowe. Photographer Fried Elliott.

Optimists, Sunfish, Hobies, and Bahamian sloops. They have had the opportunity to attend a few Opti Nationals and Junior Championship Regattas around the Bahamas. Additionally, she drives the chase boat for all the “E” and “C” Class races in the Bul Reg Regatta and the events at Little Farmers Cay, Barraterre and Rolleville, and again in NFIR and Long Island.

## **LORI LOWE**

### **Snipe Sailor**

An attorney by profession, Lori Lowe is one of The Bahamas’ top women sailors, sailing Snipe out of the Royal Nassau Sailing Club. Her heritage is deeply connected to the sea. Her late father, attorney E. Dawson Roberts, once served as Commodore of the Royal Nassau



Sailing Club and the Nassau Yacht Club, noted as the only person with the distinction of having filled both posts. Her grandfather, James Jenkins Roberts, was one of the great Bahamian shipwrights.

Lori Lowe's greatest contribution to the development of sailing in her homeland has been as president of The Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA), which acts as the governing authority of the sport of sailing in The Bahamas under the supervision of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF). Of significance, BSA partners with The Bahamas National Sailing School to support junior sailing. In this regard, her partnership with her husband Jimmie Lowe, a director of BSA, has been highly productive.

Lori's earliest experience in competitive sailing came in 1982 when the Royal Nassau Sailing Club was hosting a major international Snipe Class Series (the Bacardi Cup and the Dudley Gamblin Memorial Trophy). It was during this competition that Leo Murphy, an American sailor, chose her as a crew. Thereafter, she sailed Snipe and Sunfish and, as she has noted, "occasionally anything else available in Nassau since." In Snipe, a two-man boat, she has served alternately as skipper and crew, depending on what is needed, since about 2006.

Lowe has sailed at the international level at home and abroad. She sailed in the Snipes Bacardi Cup (Nassau, 1982). Internationally, she competed in Snipes 1983; at the Pan Am Games in Snipes Indianapolis 1987 (crew for Peter Christie), and Winnipeg 1999 (crew for husband Jimmie Lowe) and Rio 2007 (as crew for Robert Dunkley). She helmed Snipes in two Women's Worlds and CAC Games Mayaguez 2010.

### **Awards/Top Performances**

- Lori - Top female in the Sunfish Nationals and Homer Lowe Memorial held since 1995, top three overall a few times.
- Snipe - World Masters 1st and 3rd place Grand Master's Division - as crew for Jimmie Lowe.
- Snipe - Bacardi Cup First - as crew for Shinich Uchida (Japan), Augie DiAx (USA) (a Rolex Yachtsman of the Year award winner and multiple World Champion in Laser Masters, Snipe Worlds and World Masters), Robert Dunkley on a number of occasions, and, most recently, Cochise Burrows (former BSA youth sailor).
- She won Race Two at the Bahamas Sunfish National Championship, held 10-11 September 2005. Lori Lowe led the fleet, which netted her eighth position overall and top female sailor honours.
- Lori certified as International Sailing Judge 2019. Before this, the last Bahamian



Nioshi Rolle Rhodriquez (right). Image courtesy of Jimmie and Lori Lowe.

International Sailing Judge was Robert H. (Bobbie) Symonette.

- In the 1987 Pan Am Games, the highly athletic Lori competed in both Snipe Sailing and 3-metre Springboard Diving. The following year, she competed in the Seoul Olympics in 3-metre Springboard Diving.

*For us (Lori and Jimmie) our greatest accomplishment in sailing is getting the BSA/BNSS community youth sailing off the ground. To allow hundreds of Bahamian youth to experience the open water and learn about the sea and their heritage as inhabitants of an*



Nioshi Rolle Rhodriquez. Bahamas Information Services (BIS) photograph.

*island nation. To take a country where youth sailing was limited to a handful of children to where our youth Optimist Nationals attract almost as many sailors as we have boats available. Our last Optimist nationals was*

*about 80 competitors. But more importantly so many young persons get a chance to experience the freedom the mastery of a sailboat brings.* – Jimmie and Lori Lowe<sup>79</sup>

## **NIOSHI ROLLE RHODRIQUEZ**

A former National Youth Sailing Champion of The Bahamas and top female junior, Nioshi Rolle Rhodriquez skippered the “C” Class sloop *Termite* in the Staniel Cay Regatta as a teenager. She sailed to a respectable 13th place amid seasoned competitors at the Sunfish Nationals at Staniel Cay, November 2005 and was named top junior. As a student in Nassau, she raced Snipes at the Royal Nassau Sailing Club, and Sunfish at Nassau Yacht Club.

Nioshi would also establish credentials in native sloop sailing regattas. She sailed in the National Family Island Regatta in 1997 on *Tida Wave*.

In 1991, she transferred to *Lady Muriel* as jib trimmer. “People have no idea what a pain in the neck these boats are to sail,” Rolle declared at 27. In her thirties, on the ‘A’ Class legendary sloop *Tida Wave*, she was part of the winning crew with skipper Brooks Miller in 1998 during the 50th Anniversary edition of the National Family Island Regatta.

## **SANDI TRECO**

Sandi contributes to native sloop sailing regattas as owner of the “C” Class Sloop “Sweet Island Gal”, which is sailed by her partner. She is a member of regatta committees, a teacher and radio announcer. Additionally, Sandi Treco has been yearly involved in running the regattas.



Sandi Treco. Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>



(Above) Paloma Cartwright. Photograph courtesy of Robert Dunkley.



Paloma Cartwright and crew.



Images courtesy of Paloma Cartwright.

# Women... Champions in the Making

It is a matter of celebration that, by 2020, the junior sailing programme in The Bahamas was made up of approximately 30 per cent girls, who were enjoying the sport and doing very well.

## **PALOMA CARTWRIGHT**

*The proudest part of sailing competitions for me was being nationally ranked as top female sailor under 18 years old from 2010 to 2018. I hope that during my time as a youth sailor, I have inspired other young female sailors to compete in this male-dominated sport... I competed in my first Bahamas Optimist National Championship when I was 6, and it was there that I met Sir Durward Knowles. He inspired me from the very beginning and told me that he could see me competing in the Olympics one day, just like he did. –Paloma Cartwright<sup>80</sup>*

This amazing young Long Island woman has proven to be a top scholar and an excellent sailor. With eight Bahamas General Certificate

of Secondary Education (BGCSE) Certificates, Paloma Cartwright was named All Bahamas Merit Scholar (ABMS) in 2017 and entered McGill University, the prestigious Canadian institution on the \$140,000 scholarship from the local ABMS Committee.

In sailing, Cartwright is a product of the Mack Knowles Junior Sailing Club (MKJSC) on Long Island, founded by her mother Zoe Cartwright and Stefan Knowles as well as the Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA) and the Bahamas National Sailing School. She began sailing at the age of five in the MKJSC programme, where her mother was the team coach. It meant that the young girl attended every practice and so quickly learned to sail. Early on, the Long Islander began to amass impressive sailing credits:

### **Optimist, Sunfish, Laser**

- 2010 – 2014: Ranked top female nationally in National Optimist Regattas, until she

aged out of the boats and moved on to Sunfish.

- 2014 and 2015: In Sunfish, placed first nationally in the Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta, Cecil Cooke Memorial Regatta and the KPMG Youth Regatta.
- 2014 – 2017: Top female under 18 in Sunfish and Laser Junior Nationals.

### **Native Sloop Sailing**

Skippering Vitamin Sea, the young sailor placed first in the ‘G’ Class Race in the Main Series of the 49th Long Island Regatta and continued to compete in the G Class Main Series in 2017 and 2018, placing first each time.

Paloma Cartwright competed in a native sloop regatta for the first time in the 2015 48th Long Island Regatta Junior Championships, sponsored by Island Wings. With an all-female crew, she won the C Class 1st Place trophy and the Don Price Memorial Trophy at the helm of Xena, a boat named in honour of a friend Paloma had lost to leukemia.

### **International Meets**

- Represented The Bahamas in the Optimist class at the New Orleans Southern Yacht Club’s Sugar Bowl in 2010.
- Represented The Bahamas along with two fellow Laser sailors at the Canadian Olympic Regatta in Kingston, Ontario in August 2016.

- By 2020, she was training with Pedro de Sousa for the 2024 Summer Olympics, hoping to form part of the Bahamas Nacra 17 Racing Team.

### **Sailing Instructor/Coach**

Cartwright was certified as an instructor by the Bahamas Sailing Association in 2014 and coached at the Bahamas National Sailing School in Nassau during the summers of 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Back home for summer break in 2018, community-minded Cartwright organized and directed the 1st Annual Mack Knowles Junior Sailing Club Summer Sailing Camp, leading a team of five instructors. The six-week programme benefited over 70 youngsters with an interest in sailing, directing them towards forming a Long Island team to compete at the Optimist National Championships. She was also an instructor at the BNSS summer camps.

### **Awards**

- National Youth Award for Excellence in Sailing
- Bahamas Olympic Committee’s President’s Cup (2015).



Photographs of Morgan Grammatico (right and below) and Gabriel Newbold (above left) courtesy of Robert Dunkley (below left).



## **MORGAN GRAMMATICO**

Up to 2020 Morgan Grammatico sailed in the Laser Radial fleet, winning in her fleet. Morgan had been sailing for the previous five years and noted that sailing has given her many opportunities.

Grammatico said sailing gave her something to be passionate about and to be proud of. She credited practicing and planning her races beforehand and looked to the winds and tides so she could use them to her advantage.

In 2016 Morgan received the coveted Robert H. “Bobby” Symonette Award for Most Improved Junior Sailor. The following year she placed





second overall in the St Valentine's Day Junior Regatta and third in the KPMG Winter Youth Championship.

In January 2018, as a 15-year-old student at Windsor Academy and a member of the Nassau Yacht Club, Morgan won the Cecil G. Cooke Memorial Regatta, beating out two of the topped ranked junior males, **Joshua Weech** and **Jaxon Parker**, The Bahamas Sailing Association's (BSA) 2017 National Optimist Champion and runner-up, respectively.

At the 32nd Annual Valentine's Day Regatta, Montagu Bay, February 2019 Morgan Grammatico was awarded the second place trophy as the top female sailor.

## MELISHA HIGGINS

Born 2002.

**Mantra:** "Commitment and dedication"

**Sailing Program:** Harbour Island Sailing Club, Eleuthera.

**Favorite Boat:** Optimist.

The draw of adventure brings Melisha Higgins to sailing.

**Sailing Club:** Harbour Island Sailing Club.

Influenced and nurtured by her sailing father Melvin Higgins, Commodore, Harbour Island, Sailing Club, Melisha Higgins descends

from a Mayaguana sailing family, including grandfather Jacob Higgins, boatbuilder and founder of the Mayaguana Regatta. She began sailing Optimists at the age of eight, racing for the first time at the Nationals in 2010 and advanced through to Sunfish and Lasers. At 14, she admitted the Optimist was still her favorite because "it is much smaller and easier to handle, and it was my first boat."

### **In-Country Regattas Performance** (sample)

- Nassau, Grand Bahamas, the Abacos and Long Island
- 2011 Optimist Nationals, Grand Bahama—3rd Place
- 2015 Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta - 2nd Place. Honoured as the top female
- 2017 KPMG Youth Winter Championship 2017

### **International Sailing**

- The 2012 Orange Bowl Regatta, Miami, Fla - 7th Place
- The 2013 Boomerang Regatta, Fort Lauderdale, Fla
- 2013 North Americans, Bermuda



Photograph of Maryetta Johnson courtesy of Robert Dunkley.

## MARYETTA JOHNSON

Sunfish Fleet

Maryetta Johnson was a beneficiary of the government-sponsored public school initiative, which affords students from public schools, who can swim, the opportunity to participate

in the junior sailing programme. Maryetta (C.C. Sweeting/BNSS) was first in the Sunfish Class.

She became a certified coach, having successfully sailed in all of the fleets, and is doing very well in the sport of sailing.

# *Into the Future... Bahamas Youth Sailing*

For some time there has been wide consensus as to the positive value of getting Bahamian youth onto the beautiful waters of their homeland as well-trained sailors. The belief is that this maritime sport can contribute significantly to personal, social and national development.

*We need to focus attention on training the new generation of sailors for the sustainability of this great sporting and cultural tradition but also to win another Gold medal in sailing as Sir Durward did in Tokyo in 1964.*—**Danny Strachan**, Chairman and Commodore, National Family Island Regatta.<sup>81</sup>

*I want to encourage those in the Caribbean and around the world to continue the good work. Sometimes it gets discouraging and you feel that you're in it alone. The benefits*

*outweigh the discouraging times. When we continue to work with young people in a positive way, we not only affect the youth, but our communities, our country, our world.*

— **Melvin Higgins**, Commodore, Harbour Island Sailing Club, Eleuthera on youth sailing programmes.<sup>82</sup>

*In our ministry, we are committed to ensuring that the sport of sloop sailing be passed down. This can only be done if we keep the youth of our nation involved.*—**Rena Ginton**, former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources Department.<sup>83</sup>

Training young Bahamians to sail is of great moment to the progress of the nation and sustaining its unique maritime heritage. However strong a tradition may be and however



Bahamas National Sailing School members. Photograph courtesy of Robert Dunkley.

great the achievements of its tradition bearers have been, this sport will disappear if no effort is made to ensure generational transmission. Happily, there have been community-minded Bahamians who have committed to ensuring that sailing mastery does not die out in The Bahamas.

As noted in an article by Ellen Ebert Birrell and Robert Dunkley, youth-to-adult (Y2A) programmes have an even wider positive

impact, which is of vital significance to maritime nations in a time when there is diminishing care for the environment. The writers opine that sailing can lead to a better understanding of the sea and the weather and contribute to overall character development, including decision-making, taking responsibility, confidence, courage, social skills and sportsmanship.



Spencer Cartwright, four-time Optimist Dinghy National Champion. Shown at the 2015 Laser Youth World Championships in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Photograph courtesy of Robert Dunkley.



*...What better method for a long-term solution than supporting a culture of education and caring? Youth sailing can be part of this process while alleviating unemployment and its associated societal ills by introducing marine skills and building self-esteem and confidence for children as they march toward adulthood. – Ellen Ebert Birrell and Robert Dunkley<sup>84</sup>*

Positively, the late 1990s and early 21st century saw a proliferation of sailing clubs, either specifically geared towards promoting youth sailing or offering programmes to that end. By 2020 there were five major youth regattas held each year in The Bahamas, attracting young sailors from several islands and both government schools and private schools: Lyford Cay Sailing Club, Royal Nassau Sailing Club, Nassau Yacht Club, Harbour Island Sailing Club and Hope Town, Abaco. Classes sailed were Optimist Dinghies (ages eight to 15) Championship and Green (beginner) fleets, Laser Radials and Sunfish.

The first decade of the new millennium brought the formation of The Bahamas National Sailing School, which is profiled under "Champions of Sailing".



### **Top In-Country Competitions for Juniors**

- KPMG Youth Regatta
- Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta (Sponsored by Bahamas Olympic Committee)
- Cecil G Cooke Jr Regatta
- Annual West End Junior Sailing Regatta (Est. 2012)
- Sir Durward Knowles Jr Championship (Est. 2011)
- Bahamas Optimist National Championship
- Bahamas Laser Radial & 4.7 Jr Championship
- Bahamas Sunfish Jr Championship
- Bahamas Int'l 420 Championship
- Bahamas Jr Snipe Championship

## **Sir Durward Knowles National Invitational Junior Sailing Regatta (DKJR)**

Started in 2010 by Eleazor “Barber J” Johnson (captain and owner of Lady Nathalie), Sir Durward Knowles and Jimmie Lowe with the support of the Regatta Desk of the Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs. Since then, the Ministry and the three New Providence sailing associations have cooperated to coordinate the event.

There is much evidence of the growing success of the scheme. In 2017 over 100 young sailors from Andros, Abaco, Grand Bahama, Exuma, Long Island, Eleuthera and New Providence participated in DKJR April 20-22, featuring “E” Class sloop sailing and Olympic style sailing in Sunfish, Optimists and Lasers.



## **Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta**

The Seventh Annual BYOR was held by the Nassau Yacht Club and Bahamas National Sailing School 15-16 February 2020 in Montagu Bay. The competition attracted 51 young sailors from a number of government schools, Lyford Cay Sailing Club, Royal Nassau Sailing Club, Nassau Yacht Club, Harbour Island Sailing Club and Abaco. Classes sailed were Optimist Dinghies (ages eight to 15) Championship and Green (beginner) fleets, Laser Radials and Sunfish.

### **Regatta Sponsorship**

- Bahamas Government allocation to sponsor young sailors from various islands to participate.
- Bahamas Youth Olympic Regatta Bahamas Olympic Committee.
- KPMG Youth Winter Championship.





(Top) Craig Ferguson. Photograph courtesy of Robert Dunkley.

By 2021, **Craig Ferguson Jr** was one of the top three sailors in the Optimist class. Craig and Joshua Weech were part of the 13 sailors representing The Bahamas at the 2021 Optimist

N. American Sailing Championship in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico (29 May - 5 June 2021). The pair reached the prestigious Gold Fleet, finishing 24th and 49th, respectively.

## **JOSHUA WEECH**

Born 28 February 2006

Started sailing 15 January 2015 at age of 9, following in the wake of brother Jonathan.

### **Championships/Awards/Firsts** (sample)

- Bahamas Sailing Association's (BSA) 2017 National Optimist Champion
- Winner Cecil G Cooke Memorial Regatta 2018
- The Geoffrey Holowesko Trophy: Bahamas Optimist National Champion 2017, 2018, 2019
- Sir Durward Knowles Junior Sailor of the Year 2019
- 28th Homer Lowe Memorial Regatta, held 16-17 March 2019 in Hope Town—Award of the Hugh Cottis Trophy for Optis.
- First Bahamian Optimist sailor to compete in the Gold Fleet at an International Optimist Dinghy Association (IODA) event.

Trophy Count: 54

38 first-place trophies (12 floating trophies); 11 second-place trophies; 3 third-place trophies and one top Bahamian honor (OPTINAM 2019).  
International Sailing

Was chosen with **Morgan Grammatico** and **Jaxon Parker** to form the team to represent The Bahamas at the Canadian Optimist Nationals in Nova Scotia, Canada, 20-26 August 2017

The 35th Campeonato Rioplatense de Optimist 2019 held December 17-21, 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay, underwritten by a number of sponsors.

### **Fellow Sailor's Generosity**

Weech's entry fee, accommodations, meals and boat charter in connection with the Uruguay competition were supported by Optimist sailor Patrick Tomlinson of the Lyford Cay Sailing Club, who gifted Weech with the Yacht Club Uruguay Regatta voucher he won in the OPTINAM 2019 Hurricane Dorian Relief Raffle.



Photograph of Joshua Weech—leading youth sailing. Courtesy of Robert Dunkley.

**Geoffrey Holowesko Memorial Trophy** is a part of the award system of the Annual Bahamas Optimist National Championships, hosted by the Royal Nassau Sailing Club. The award was established by his parents William ‘Bill’ and Evelyn ‘Lynn’ Holowesko in memory of their son Geoffrey Holowesko. Geoffrey began sailing at the age of seven. He joined the junior sailing programme at the Royal Nassau Sailing Club, showing great potential and promise of becoming a champion. Geoffrey was killed in a motor accident.

**Cameron Williams Award for the Most Outstanding Sailor** is presented at the Sir Durward Knowles National Junior Sailing Regatta. It was established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources in memory of the promising young sailor “Captain Cammy” Cameron Williams, son of Zoey Williams, who died in a sailing accident in December 2017.

### **More Top Youth Sailors: Native Sloop Sailing Regattas**

#### **48th Long Island Regatta Junior**

**Championships** – June 2015

1st Place trophy and Don Price Memorial Trophy

- Xena and Paloma Cartwright, Long Island

2nd Place trophy - *Whitty K* and Luke Knowles,

Long Island

3rd Place trophy - *Bul Reg* and Chris Rolle,

Exuma

#### **49th Long Island Regatta Junior**

**Championships** – June 2016

1st Place: *Whitty K* (Luke Knowles)

2nd Place: *Termite* (Marcus Paretti)

3rd Place: *Lady Diane* (Don Knowles Jr)

### **Optimist, Laser, Laser Radials, Sunfish Sailing Regattas**

**Dwayne Higgins**, one of many volunteers who helped recruit students to take part in the new sailing school programme in 2005, noted:

*...You look at these kids in the optis—They are sailing them all by themselves and making all their own decisions on the race course. While sailing has typically been a sport for the upper crust - either your father owned a sloop, or your family was a member of one of Nassau’s yacht clubs - there’s a drive on now to take the national sport to a wider community. – Dwayne Higgins<sup>85</sup>*

## **2004 Bahamas Sunfish National Championship**

**Alyson Myers**, dubbed the young shining star, won the junior division as well as the ladies division.

## **Fifth Annual West End Junior Sailing Regatta** 2 May 2017

Green Fleet: Reese Brown, Grand Bahama  
Opti Championship Fleet: Jaheim Russell, GB  
Flying Juniors: Tye Moss and Kai Napier

**Homer Lowe Regatta** – March 2019, Hope Town, Abaco.

### **420 Class**

Joey Gale, Blue Mertz  
Matt McCoy, Frye McCoy, Blake Cash  
Rhyse Major, Anna Scheffel  
Summer Aberle, Katie Lederhouse

### **Opti Class**

Joshua Weech  
Finley McKinney-Lambert  
Jack Guinness  
Jasmine Aberle  
Maison Koepke  
Dawson Thompson  
Zachary Osman  
Maxime Dormans

## **32nd Annual Valentine's Day Regatta, 16 February 2019 on Montagu Bay**

Participating were 35 junior sailors from four New Providence sailing clubs: the Nassau Yacht Club, Bahamas National Sailing School, Royal Nassau Sailing Club and the Lyford Cay International School, competing in Optimist, Sunfish and Laser races. The event was also of great moment to the promotion of young women in sailing, as ten participated.

### **Optimist Fleet**

1st place - Kaemen Floyd  
2nd place - Joshua Weech  
3rd place - Anton Gottberg

### **Sunfish Fleet**

1st place - Vano Rahming  
2nd place - Jacob Martinborough  
3rd place - Benjamin Joseph

### **Laser**

1st place - Robbie Carey  
2nd place - Morgan Grammatico  
3rd place - Tristan Eldon

## **February 2020 Bahamas Youth Olympic**

### **Regatta**

Top three finishers for each fleet

#### **Optimist Gold (Advanced) Fleet**

1st Place – Patrick Tomlinson –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

2nd Place – Zane Munro –

Royal Nassau Sailing Club/Bahamas

National Sailing School

3rd Place – Joshua Weech –

Nassau Yacht Club/Bahamas National

Sailing School

#### **Optimist Silver (Intermediate) Fleet**

1st Place – Petrus Maritz –

Royal Nassau Sailing Club

2nd Place – Philippe Souza –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

3rd Place – Brosnan Darville –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

#### **Optimist (Green) Fleet**

1st Place – Laurinzo Andollina –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

2nd Place – John Alexiou –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

3rd Place – Erik Jensen –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

### **Laser Radial**

1st Place – Morgan Grammatico –

Nassau Yacht Club/Bahamas National

Sailing School

2nd Place – Enrique Wells –

Bahamas National Sailing School

3rd Place – Delaney Goodfellow –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

### **Sunfish**

1st Place – Noah Simmons –

Harbour Island Sailing Club

2nd Place – Maryetta Johnson –

Bahamas National Sailing School

3rd Place – Malano Moxey –

Bahamas National Sailing School

#### **Optimist Gold (Advanced) Fleet**

1st Place – Patrick Tomlinson –

Lyford Cay Sailing Club

2nd Place – Zane Munro –

Royal Nassau Sailing Club/Bahamas

National Sailing School

3rd Place – Joshua Weech –

Nassau Yacht Club/Bahamas National

Sailing School

### **Optimist Silver (Intermediate) Fleet**

- 1st Place – Petrus Maritz –  
Royal Nassau Sailing Club
- 2nd Place – Philippe Souza –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club
- 3rd Place – Brosnan Darville –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club

### **Optimist Green Fleet**

- 1st Place – Laurinzo Andollina –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club
- 2nd Place – John Alexiou –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club
- 3rd Place – Erik Jensen –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club

### **Laser Radial**

- 1st Place – Morgan Grammatico –  
Nassau Yacht Club/Bahamas National  
Sailing School
- 2nd Place – Enrique Wells –  
Bahamas National Sailing School
- 3rd Place – Delaney Goodfellow –  
Lyford Cay Sailing Club

### **Sunfish**

- 1st Place – Noah Simmons –  
Harbour Island Sailing Club
- 2nd Place – Maryetta Johnson –  
Bahamas National Sailing School
- 3rd Place – Malano Moxey –  
Bahamas National Sailing School

Joss Knowles. Image courtesy of Dallas Knowles. Photograph by Brandon Sands.



# Championing Sailing

## **Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA)**

(A not-for-profit organization) The founders realized that BSA needed to build a broad base of young sailors and the best way to do it this was through a sailing school that would cater to residents without any artificial barriers to entry or full participation and thereby increase the number of Bahamians sailing. Through the years since, the school has enjoyed the financial support of many individuals and corporate groups dedicated to community development.

BSA is the national authority for sailing in The Bahamas and reports to the World Sailing Organization. Key members of the BSA Committee directly involved with BNSS and the junior sailing programs are:

- Lori Lowe – President
- Gavin McKinney – Vice-President
- Jimmie Lowe – Director Operations
- Robert Dunkley – New Providence Representative & Director – Bahamas National Sailing School

- Emma Tinkler – Jr Sailing Representative (all Bahamas)
  - Coolidge Cartwright – BSA / BNSS Treasurer
- This magnificent cooperative effort has yielded continuous growth and success.

## **Bahamas National Sailing School (BNSS)**

One of the most promising developments in the promotion of sailing in The Bahamas occurred in November 2004 The Bahamas National Sailing School was formed by Jimmie Lowe, John Lawrence and Peter-Bruce Wassitsch under the guidance of Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA).

To 2021, BNSS was managed by Robert Dunkley, Director and Coach, who has a deep background and experience in sailing. Jimmie Lowe, BSA Director Operations provides guidance and assistance where needed. In addition to the Directors, the school operates with a full-time instructor, who teaches and maintains all equipment.





Image courtesy of Jimmie and Lori Lowe.

According to the school's website, the BNSS opened with a single instructor and a small number of students being taught in Optimist Dinghies. By the first summer, another instructor was added and around 40 kids attended BNSS's first sailing camp. Today, the school runs year round with over 250 students attending the various programs it offers, such as:

- Year Round Program – for youngsters in all communities
- School Sports Program – for government schools primarily
- Summer Sailing Camp – for youngsters everywhere as an introduction to sailing

- International Race Team Program – for advanced, race-oriented sailors
- The BNSS programme appears dedicated not only to fostering sailing prowess, but also to nurturing the whole person:

*We believe our youth are our future and are dedicated to helping them develop not only as sailors, but also as healthy, well-disciplined and productive individuals. The school's motto is 'Making a difference in the lives of our youth through sailing'.. We teach our sailors to think when they wake up every morning of what's important and to stay focused on making it happen...Incorporating Sir Durward Knowles' saying of 'Never*



Image courtesy of Jimmie and Lori Lowe.

*give up' is also a mantra shared with our kids'. (<https://www.bahsailingschool.org/introduction>)*

With a weight of evidence backing its claim, BNSS has declared that 1) Its programme is having a very positive impact on Bahamian society at all levels and 2) that its students and their families have become passionate about sailing as demonstrated by their enthusiasm and participation in the many events/regattas held each year. Every event is always well supported. By 2020, based on skills acquired during their time with BNSS, many of the school's alumni have, gained entrance into

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colleges and obtain employment, particularly in the maritime, yachting and hotel industries.

## Premier Youth Sailing Sponsors

**KPMG** - KPMG Winter Youth Regatta  
**Graham Thompson, Attys**—Sponsorship of T.A. Thompson School's sailing programme from 2015.

**C.A. Christie** sponsorship of junior sailors Joshua Weech, Morgan Grammatico and Jaxon Parker's travel to compete in the 2017 Canadian Optimist Nationals in Nova Scotia.

## **Bahamas Youth Summer Sailing Programme – Government Sponsored**

By 2013 the roster of participating youth sailing clubs/programmes included the following:

Abaco Junior Sailing, Abaco  
Nassau Yacht Club, Nassau  
Royal Nassau Sailing Club, Nassau  
Eleuthera Sailing & Swimming School  
Exuma Sailing Club  
Harbour Island Sailing Club  
Grand Bahama Sailing Club  
Man-O-War Junior Sailing Club, Abaco  
Hope Town Sailing Club, Abaco  
Mack Knowles Junior Sailing Club, Long Island  
Bahamas Optimist Sailing Association  
CV Bethel Senior High School Sailing Club

### **Exuma Sailing Club**

The Exuma Sailing Club is an exemplar of the growing number of sailing clubs in The Bahamas, which are dedicated to bringing youth into sailing. The Exuma Sailing Club (ESC) is unique because it is the only sailing club in The Bahamas that combines sloop sailing and international class sailing, possessing Optis, Sunfish, Hobies, Snipes and also Bahamian E and C class sloops. Moreover, the ESC has probably the strongest team of young sloop sailors in the country.

Community cooperation lay at the root of the Club's establishment and development. The notion of launching the Club arose in the summer of 2013, when a group of men, dedicated to preserving and expanding Exuma's powerful tradition in sailing, gathered at a table at the Peace and Plenty Hotel in George Town. There were Chris "Teach" Kettel, longtime educator and NFIR statistician; Danny Strachan, Commodore, NFIR; Reginald Smith, "Voice of the Regatta; Ken Roberts, LN Coakley High School Vice Principal; Roston McGregor; Dallas Knowles and Joel Morton, an American resident. In October 2013 The Exuma Sailing Club was officially born.

While the initiation of the junior sailing program in Exuma with the C class Scholarship was initially successful, it soon languished for lack of people to look after the boat and contribute to training. Eager to make the programme work, Kettel and Strachan acquired a pair of smaller Junior E Class sloops, each 12 feet long with 20-foot mast and 12-foot boom. The Exuma Foundation, in which both men have played valuable roles, gifted two "E" class boats: Sir Durward Knowles' "One Bahamas" and the Scholarship 2, donated by the Joist Family.

It was also Danny Strachan and Chris Kettel who hunted for the team to lead the new crew of young sailors and maintain a junior



Exuma Sailing Club members. Image courtesy of Dallas Knowles.

sailing program on Great Exuma. Rising to the challenge were Dallas Knowles, Joel Morton, Roston McGregor, Reg Smith, and Ken Roberts. Through the years, Danny Strachan managed to add three more “E” Class: Q, Lauren and Panther, bringing the fleet to 5. Next, the opportunity presented to purchase the legendary “C” Class sloop Termite, which was built by the equally legendary Steve Smith in Staniel Cay in 1999. Michael “Croc” Meith later masterminded the design and rigging tweaks to fashion an excellent vessel for the training and discipline of the Staniel Cay youngsters.

After a feverish search for donors, the team were able to raise \$15,000, all locally, to purchase Termite for the club in October 2015, a boon for the training of older sailors to care of the boat and race and they have performed well.

Today, the Exuma Sailing Club consists of Dallas Knowles, Danny Strachan and Reg Smith, the only two original founders as well as Tamara Knowles (Dallas’s Wife), Mike Knowles and Eric Beutner. The core group of Dallas, Tamara, Mike and Eric have carried the load of the club. Traditional sloop sailing has become a cornerstone of the Exuma Sailing Club and Dallas is learning to refurbish and build sloops.



Riptide Class "E" boat—built by Sheldon Gibson and rebuilt by Dallas Knowles in 2020. It is used for training junior sailors. Image courtesy of Dallas Knowles.

## Bahamas Sloop Sailing Federation

Championing the development of and stimulating great appreciation for sloop sailing, the Bahamas Sloop Sailing Federation's mandate is to "Aid the national growth of sloop sailing in The Bahamas and to bring about a deeper awareness of how sloop sailing assists with the infrastructural development of the Family Islands, both economic and touristic. On 31 March 2017, SBOA also maintains a lobby for having sloop sailing regatta declared the national sport of The Bahamas. Representatives **Dwayne Higgins** and **Stefan Knowles** called on the then Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, **Hon. V. Alfred Gray** to brief him on the association's goal of expanding into a federation to unify like-minded organizations

throughout The Bahamas for greater effectiveness in the promotion of sloop sailing.

This meeting yielded several important developments. Under the agency of the Regatta Desk, the Ministry initiated dialogue with relevant stakeholders and held a Regatta Symposium in December 2015. The focus of the agenda was providing sound solutions to advance the goals of boat owners, sailors, and The Government of The

Bahamas.

In April 2017, Minister Gray announced that he had been presented with "a Constitution to govern the Sailing Federation, and Racing Rules, to govern the sport of Sloop Sailing in The Bahamas," and elections in respect of forming the federation would be carried out during the National Family Island Regatta in George Town, Exuma.

## Nassau Rowing Club (NRC)

NRC plays a valuable role in teaching Bahamians another form of water-born sport, the discipline of competition and appreciation of the environment. Formally established in August 2012, the Nassau Rowing Club became the first of its kind in The Bahamas and first



to develop a premier competitive rowing programme for rowers of all experience, age and fitness levels in The Bahamas.

The club states as its primary goal the development of a corps of highly technical male and female rowers to contest local and international competitions at the highest levels and to the highest standards. To achieve this goal, they have developed numerous programmes to create opportunities within Nassau communities. The “Learn to Row” sessions, Master programme and Government School programme are designed to capture the attention and participation of a wide audience of potential athletes.

Elite Bahamian rowers, **Emily Morley**, **William Stanhope** and **Lex Fountain**, have all come from Nassau Rowing Club.

NRC notes that in a first international outing in April of 2013, two young members of the Nassau Rowing Club made history at the Espirito Santo 40th Miami International Regatta. The pair was the first competitive rowing entry from The Bahamas in the history of the sport.

The Club reported that **Nicholas Mindorff** and **Tevin Creary-Roberts**, seniors at the Lyford Cay International School, composed the crew of the Nassau Rowing Club junior men’s double scull. The young men placed fourth out of nine boats in their heat, at a time of 7:05.30 over a 1500-metre course, as well as fourth overall among the junior varsity men’s double sculls division. The NRC crew represented one of four international crews at the regatta.

# *On the World's Stage The Bahamas In International Sailing*

Way back in history, men of The Bahamas have been sought for work on ships because interests in the wider maritime sphere have long been aware of their familiarity with the sea and their sailing prowess. Circa 1920, **Joshua Cockburn**, a Bahamian, was captain of the *Yarmouth* a vessel of Marcus Garvey's ambitious Black Star Line. Cockburn had served as a shipmaster with the British Navy during World War I in Africa and had received a commendation for his service. Before that, he had piloted ships traveling between Liverpool and the West Indies. In the 1950s **Vernon Lockhart** served as mate on the 72-ft yacht of the Hertz Rent A Car heir.

## **20th Century International Competitive Sailing**

Internationally, Bahamian competitive sailing prowess came unmistakably to the fore in the 1940s. The successes came early for Bahamian sailors, particularly in Star and Dragon Class competitions. A page in the ledger of history was opened in 1946 for the names of Durward Knowles and Sloane Farrington (skipper and crew, respectively). In that year the duo captured a Silver Medal in the World Championship in Havana, Cuba. The following year, Knowles and Farrington won the Star Class World Championship. The next year, the duo traveled to London and captured the elimination series to determine who would represent Great Britain at the 1948





Olympics. Then in 1956, Knowles and Farrington won a Bronze Medal at the Olympics held in Melbourne, Australia.

## The Golden Moment

Durward Knowles (later Sir Durward) and Cecil Cooke inked their names in Bahamas and international sailing history when they won the Olympic Gold Medal in Tokyo, Japan, a now legendary achievement. Knowles would be knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1996 and lionized for the rest of his long life in frequent newspaper articles and with various honours, one of which was reflected in the creation of the Sir Durward Knowles Junior Regatta.

Somehow, the limelight seemed to miss Sir Durward's first crew members in the international sphere of sailing. In his column Sports Scope, journalist Fred Sturup termed Cooke and Farrington "unsung heros". ("Magnificent Sailing Crewmen Farrington, Cooke Remembered", thefreeportnews.com)

**The then Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Dr Daniel Johnson** decried the fact that those men had never been celebrated in the manner they deserved:

*I doubt it was intended. Perhaps it's because the other man in the boat when they rose to international fame in Star Class sailing was so particularly captivating, their*

*contributions have been dwarfed... Here in The Bahamas, we always forget that we always win together. I think the theme of Sir Durward's life, which he now calls 'One Bahamas,' is what I call 'Team Bahamas.'*

In the case of Cecil Cooke, the oversight would begin to be rectified in an effort led by BOC president Wellington Miller. On 23 October 2014 Bahamas Olympic Committee, headed by Miller and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture collaborated to mount a gala luncheon paying tribute to Knowles and Cooke on the Golden Anniversary of their historic achievement.

The affair was attended by the families of the honorees as well as local and international luminaries. Also present were Governor General Dame Marguerite Pindling; Prime Minister Perry Christie; Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Dr Daniel Johnson; Dr Bernard Nottage, Minister of National Security; Dr Hubert Minnis, Leader of the Free National Movement; Danny Strachan, Commodore, National Family Island Regatta and other sports luminaries, including, Sir Arlington Butler, the longest serving member of the BOC, who celebrated his 50th anniversary in the Olympic Movement the following month.

Among the international guests were **Richard Peterkin** of the International Olympic Committee (IOC); **Steve Stoute**, newly re-

elected chairman of the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC) from Barbados, and **Wayne Russell**, treasurer of the Canadian Olympic Committee.

Fulsome tributes were paid and awards presented to Sir Durward and, posthumously, to Cecil Cooke, whose award was received by his daughter Sandra Cooke. The award presenters were **Prime Minister Christie. Richard Peterkin** and **Governor General Dame Marguerite Pindling** presenting the BOC President's Award, the IOC's President's Cup, and the Pan American Sports Organisation Medal and the Sports Merit Award, respectively.

Also in 2014, to keep Cecil Cooke's memory alive in the world of sailing, Sandra Cooke, with the collaboration of Bahamas National Sailing School and Nassau Yacht Club launched the first Cecil Cooke Memorial Junior Regatta over the weekend of 1-2 November in Montagu Bay.

## **Other Pioneers in International Sailing**

In addition to the Knowles/Cooke/ Farrington combination, there were a number of Bahamians, mostly from the moneyed merchant class, who would make their own waves in international maritime competition.

**Kenneth Albury** (born 9 January 1920) competed at the 1952, 1956, 1960 and 1968 Summer Olympics.

**Basil Trevor Kelly**, CBE (11 May 1930 – 11 August 2003) sailed in the Summer Olympics of 1952, 1960 and 1964. Kelly and crew Pedro Wassitch won all three Bacardi Cup Races in the Bahamas Snipe Class winter championships 1972.

**David Albert Kelly**, CBE (25 March 1932 in Nassau, Bahamas – 11 March 2009 in New York City, New York) was an Olympic sailor in the Dragon class. Together with Godfrey Kelly and Roy Ramsay, he competed in the 1968 Olympics, finishing 16th. In the 1972 Olympics, he finished 19th with Christopher McKinney and Godfrey Kelly as crew. Kelly also competed in the Star class, finishing 5th together with Basil Kelly in the 1955 World Championships. In 2008, David Kelly was awarded the Commander British Empire (CBE) for national development in the field of business/Bahamian retail industry and sports.

**Christopher McKinney** (born 19 March 1950) competed in the Dragon event at the 1972 Summer Olympics.

**George Leroy F. "Roy" Ramsay** (born 28 September 1912 (date of death unknown) sailed in the 1960, 1964 and 1968 Summer Olympics.



## **CECIL GEORGE COOKE** **OLYMPIC SAILING GOLD** **MEDALIST**

31 May 1923 – 1 May 1983

Cecil Cooke is best known as the winner, along with Durward Knowles, of the first Olympic Medal and the first Gold Medal for The Bahamas, which was earned in Star Class sailing in the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan.

Cooke's contribution to maritime sports included much more than his Olympic star performance. At home with the sea all his life, Cooke was a champion swimmer and was dedicated to cultivating the sport among Bahamian youth. He assisted in introducing organized swimming in New Providence schools and was credited as a source of inspiration during The Bahamas' first ever interschool swimming championships, held at the former Fort Montagu Hotel's swimming pool in 1966.

In his connection with The Bahamas Swimming Federation, he made further valuable inputs to the development of this sport throughout the archipelago, attending swim meets and encouraging young swimmers. The Government of The Bahamas website has lauded him in this way: "Aside from his Gold Medal performance at the 1964 Olympics Games, Cecil Cooke's greatest credential was the promise he held for and encouraged in the young people of The Bahamas. Cooke's name is kept in memory in the Cecil Cooke Memorial Junior Regatta, which provides an excellent avenue for junior sailor to sharpen their skills each year.

In 2014, tribute was paid to Cooke posthumously, thirty-one years after his death, when his family received on his behalf the BOC President's Award, the IOC's President's Cup, and the Pan American Sports Organisation Medal and the Sports Merit Award.



Mark Holowesko (left), Christoph Burger (not shown) and Peter Vlasov (right) won the 2018 International 5.5 Metre World Championship at the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, England. Photograph courtesy Tribune News Media. Photographer Shawn Hanna. <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2018/nov/22/holowesko-vlasov-honoured/>

**Pierre Siegenthaler**, sailing under The Bahamas flag as a member of the Nassau Yacht Club with crew James “Jimmie” Lowe, won the 1973 Sunfish World Championship in Martinique. He repeated that achievement in 1977, when the Sunfish championship was held in Nassau.

## 21st Century

In the first two decades of the new millennium, Bahamian competitive sailors would continue to prove their mettle and are counted among the best of the best globally.

## MARK HOLOWESKO

### Championship Sailor

Born 12 March 1960

By profession, Mark Holowesko is a financial services professional, highly acclaimed in the world of investments. Through love of homeland and its marine environment, he is a sailor and one who has achieved great success internationally.

In 2018, Nassau Yacht Club member Holowesko achieved the pinnacle of international sailing success—the 5.5 metre championship. With crew Christoph Burger and Peter Vlasov, he captained *New Moon* to victory at the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, UK. The achievement was sweet for the Bahamas, as another Bahamian, **Gavin McKinney** had won the Championship the year before.

The 2018 win was foreshadowed by the 2017 performance of Holowesko and crew Christoph Burger and Peter Vlasov. Then, they had sailed *New Moon* to second-place in the 5.5 Metre Class Association’s World Championship, following in the footsteps of two-time (1980 and 1986) 5.5 metre class champion Robert ‘Bobby’ Symonette.



Mark Holowesko was also top finisher several times in 5.5 metre competition: in the 2017 Alpen Cup and in the German & Dutch Open Championship and in the German & Dutch Nationals the following year.

In 2019 Holowesko and crew Swiss national Christoph Burger of Switzerland turned in respectable performances, a 16th place finish in race six, 15th place in race seven and 21st in race eight.

Holowesko again with Christoph Burger competed among 23 high-level teams from 22 nations in contention for the prize at the 2019 Star Sailors League Finals, held December 2 to 7 in Montagu Bay, Nassau, Bahamas.

He also competed in the Star Class event at the 1996 Summer Olympics, finishing 19th.

Holowesko began his career in money management when he joined Templeton Global Advisors in 1985 at the age of 25. Rising rapidly through the ranks, he was entrusted with the day-to-day management of portfolios previously managed by Templeton Global's founder Sir John Templeton. In 1992, he became the youngest person to be noted in Fortune magazine's list of the best money managers of his generation.

In 2000, he became chief executive officer and president of Templeton Capital Advisors Ltd, based in Nassau, The Bahamas and later formed his own hedge fund management company, Holowesko Partners Ltd. He has supported a number of community-building activities in The Bahamas, including the Small Business Development programme. In June of 2019, Mark Holowesko was designated Non-Resident High Commissioner of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to New Zealand.

## **DONALD “DONNIE” MARTINBOROUGH**

In the post-1960s era of Bahamian sailors in international competition, Donald “Donnie” Martinborough reigned supreme among his compatriots, Sunfish racing being his kingdom. It is an assertion based on his participation in twenty-eight (28) Sunfish World Championship in locales in Europe, Canada, the United States, South America, the Caribbean and in his homeland The Bahamas. He emerged Sunfish World Champion in three of these meets: at San Andres, Columbia, 1983; at Riccione, Italy, 1985, and at Nassau in 1988.

In The Bahamas National Sunfish Championships, Martinborough won the championship ten of the eleven times he competed.

## **JAMES Edmund** **“JIMMIE” LOWE**

Born 13 July 1947

Sailor, director of the Bahamas Sailing Association and a founder of The Bahamas National Sailing School (BNSS). James “Jimmie” Lowe is the product of a sailing heritage. His father was Homer James Lowe (b. 11 Dec. 1919, Green Turtle Cay, Abaco; d. 1991, Nassau), a charter fishing boat captain by occupation. Lowe senior used to sail competitively, often as crew for Bert Kelly in the Star Class in the 1950s and 1960s. He also sailed Sunfish winning the Duke of Edinburgh Award when Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh visited New Providence in the late 1970’s.

In his many years of international sailing, Jimmie Lowe participated in Sunfish World Championships in The Bahamas and worldwide.

*Sailing has been good to me. I’ve been all over the world sailing for The Bahamas. I’ve been to Russia for a pre-Olympic regatta in ‘79; I’ve been to Brazil, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, the east and west coasts of the United States, Canada, Japan, all over Europe, Spain and Scandinavia. – Jimmie Lowe*

A dedicated and fearless sailor, Jimmie Lowe has sailed in multiple classes, featuring many times in Stars World Masters.

### **Awards/Top Performances**

In Snipes World Masters - Grand Master, Lowe has scored first and third and placed third in Sunfish Worlds. Since 1989, he has won Bahamas National Championships on many occasions, often trading the position with Robert Dunkley and a few other winners. Similarly, sailing in the Bahamas Sunfish Nationals, Lowe and three-time world champion Donnie Martinborough have been the ones to beat for the championship on many occasions. Jimmie has performed similarly at the Homer Lowe Memorial on many occasions, trading first place with Donnie Martinborough and **Jim Kaighan**. He has won the Bacardi Cup, the Dudley Gamblin and King’s Cup (Club Trophy) several times.

Lowe has partnered with many who have sailed internationally such as his wife **Lori, Robert Dunkley, Chris Thompson, Dwayne Wallas, Pedro Wassitch, Peter Bruce Wassitch, Andrew Wilhoyte**.

### **Contributions to Sailing Development**

Jimmie Lowe, BSA’s director of sailing operations and a coach, has said that his involvement in the Bahamas National Sailing





Photograph courtesy of Lori and Jimmie Lowe. Photograph © Fried Elliot.

School is a way to give back to a sport that's enriched his life. He attended the 1996 Atlanta Olympics as Sailing Coach. **The Bahamas National Sailing School**, a programme to train youngsters in sailing, sprang out of an experience Lowe and his Snipe class crew **Peter Bruce Wassitsch** had when the two represented The Bahamas at the 2003 Pan Am Games in the Dominican Republic. Lowe and Wassitsch noticed and regretted that no young Bahamians were participating in the meet. Joined by Donnie Martinborough, who

had distinguished himself as a Sunfish World Champion, these Nassau Yacht Club members decided that the time had come to address the problem by finding a way to get more young Bahamians active in the sport.

Out of this confab was born a plan to train a new generation of Bahamians to sail competitively. It was agreed to bring to The Bahamas a new fleet of Optimist (Optis) dinghies small, single-sailor, easy-to-handle

boat. According to the International Optimist Dinghy Association, Optis are sailed and raced in more than 110 countries by more than 150,000 sailors. The Bahamas National Sailing School (BNSS) was launched in 2005.

Fund-raising was helped along by the Opti Class Association and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The latter covered the import duties on a fleet of 19 boats, bought second-hand from US boat builder McLaughlin Boat Works.

This import provided the foundation for the Bahamas National Sailing School.

The school's first summer programme was launched in 2005 and included 30 students from three government junior high schools in Nassau: H O Nash, D W Davis and C H Reeves as well as kids from the Royal Nassau Sailing Club and the Nassau Yacht Club. Members of these organizations became willing partners in the worthy venture, donating their time and facilities to host the school. By 2020, the sailing school was well rooted with rapidly growing and democratic participation, giving youngsters from all strata of life a chance to take the helm, thereby enhancing their discipline, pride, sense of identity and self-sufficiency. Ultimately, the programme is providing magnificent support for preserving a valuable part of the Bahamian maritime heritage.

Jimmie and Lori Lowe have also promoted swimming through the BSA/BNSS junior sailing programmes prompted by a 2005 incident. The couple tell of the experience of one of the first boys to show up to sail, who jumped in the pool when instructed as part of the test and promptly sank to the bottom. Jimmie sourced a swim instructor and that boy, and a few others, spent their first two weeks learning to swim. Jimmie was a leading protagonist in finally getting swimming into some of the public

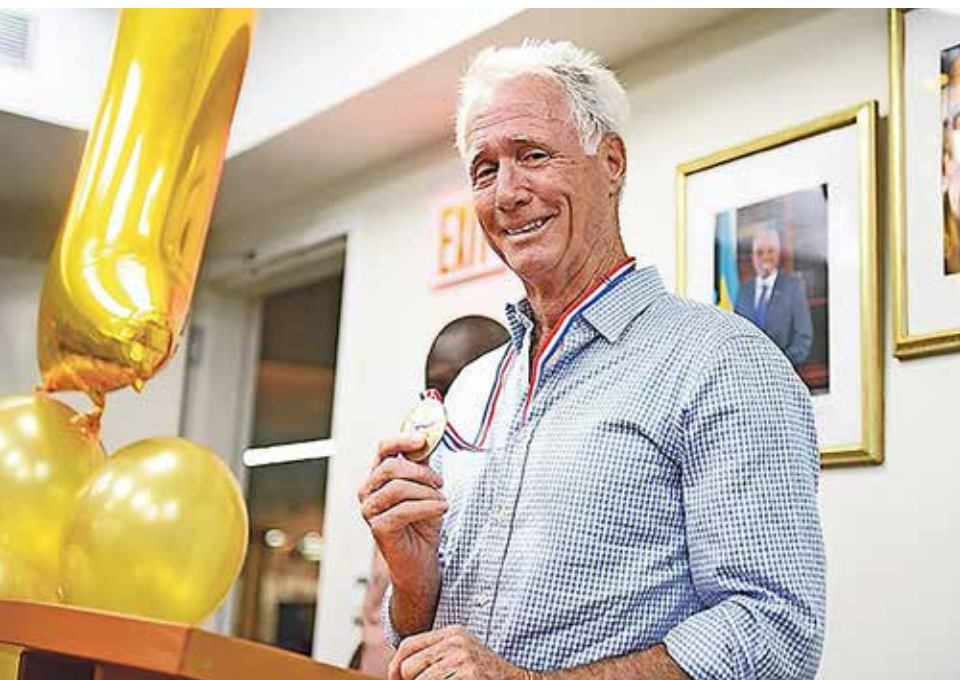
schools, something that had probably been hindered by internal politics in the swimming world.

*Not to disparage the members of the swimming association as they all are doing their best, as are we, but rather to acknowledge that sometimes it takes an outsider. Jimmie was that outsider.*—Lori Lowe

## **GAVIN MCKINNEY**

At the tiller of *John B*, Gavin McKinney sailed away with the Championship at the International 5.5 Meter Class Association World Championships, which took place in Benodet, France in September of 2017. The win put him in an elite class of Bahamian sailors. He achieved this acme of the sport, supported by Mathias Dahlman and Lars Horn Johannessen as crew. McKinney won his first medal in the class, (bronze) in 2000 with Lars Petter Field and Bahamian Craig Symonette as crew and, over time, earned a second place win and third place seven times.

Of Bahamian sailors, he was preceded in winning a 5.5 meter championship only by Robert "Bobby" Symonette (1980 & 1986). Securing the 5.5 metre championship was no holiday jaunt, but a grueling nine-race series. *John B* was once owned by Symonette, who passed it on to McKinney, whom he had



Gavin McKinney. He became the 4th Bahamian to win a world championship in sailing. Photograph courtesy the Tribune News Media. Photographer Shawn Hanna. <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2017/sep/15/heros-welcome-home/>

mentored in the sport. With the boat renamed *John B Once Again*, McKinney and Symonette had racked up two bronze medals in 2001 and 2002, with Joe Thompson and Lars Johannessen, respectively. Gavin McKinney also became the 2008 Snipe Champion.

In addition to sailing, Gavin McKinney's love and mastery of the marine environment led to an acclaimed international reputation in underwater photography and filmmaking, a career he launched in 1973, amassing credits for more than 50 feature films and television shows. He worked on five James Bond films, including *Moonraker*, *The Spy Who Loved Me* and *Never*

*Say Never Again*. He also performed as the Bond underwater double in *For Your Eyes Only* and *The World Is Not Enough*, also inputting behind the scenes to planning and logistics. In addition to the Bond franchise, McKinney's clients have included Paramount, ABC, Discovery, Playboy, Coca Cola and Kodak.

McKinney also contributed to *The Abyss* in 1988 and, in the years 2000 he has co-produced and filmed three-dimensional underwater films for the Imax Theatres.

In 2009, McKinney's achievements were recognized with Bahamas International Film Festival's first Bahamian Tribute Award given for his work as a director and photographer.

## **WILLIAM "CHRIS" SANDS**

Born in 1993 and raised in Nassau, Chris Sands, shares with his fellow Bahamians a love of the sea. He began sailing at the age of 10, participating in the junior sailing programme of The Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA), which yielded two valuable benefits. He was coached by veteran sailor Robert Dunkley and exposed to competition in various local regattas sponsored by BSA and Nassau Yacht Club.

As a teenager, Sands made waves in junior sailing. By that time he was seventeen, he had won three Sunfish National Championships

and added a fourth national title in that year. He also placed 7th at the 2010 Orange Bowl Regatta in Florida. He became The Bahamas Laser National Champion at the senior level and also captured the Sunfish senior title.

July 2010 saw Sands accepted to the ISAF Athlete Participation Programme, one of 26 sailors from 12 different nations. He became the fourth Bahamian to be so recognized. This selection led to his representing The Bahamas at the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championship 8-17 July 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey, to which he travelled with Coach Robert Dunkley. Chris finished in 28th position in the Boys Laser Radial competition.

Sands would again represent his homeland at the 2011 edition of the ISAF Youth Sailing World Championship held in Zadar, Croatia, 7–16 July. The event received 358 sailors representing 59 nations to compete across eight different classes. Also in 2011, he placed 7th at the Laser Midwinters East.

Following his graduation from the College of Charleston in South Carolina, USA with a degree in Finance and Real Estate, he began his career as an advisor in that field.

## **ANDREW WILHOYTE**

A sailor of many years experience in Sunfish competitions, Andrew WilhoYTE participated in Sunfish Worlds in 1977 (Nassau); 1978 Puerto Rico; 1979 Netherlands; 1980 Aruba; 1995 Marsh Harbour, Bahamas; 2000 Sarasota, Fla; 2007, Brant Beach, Fla and 2009. Crewing with him have been a number of the top sailors of The Bahamas.

He is a three-time winner in the Homer Lowe Regatta in Sunfish races.

WilhoYTE has also sailed in native sloop regattas in The Bahamas. In the 49th Long Island Regatta, with the Abaco boat *Lonesome Dove* he sailed to second place in the Carl G. Treco Memorial Race. He scored a third place finish in the Munson Shipping Cup Race at the helm of *Lonesome Dove* and in the Geoffrey Jones Memorial Cup and again in the Main Series Races with *It Ain't Right*.

# Regattas A Unifying Element

Regatta rivalry among the islands of The Bahamas archipelago is fierce, as competitors and natives of each island regard participation and winning as island identity-defining as well as acts of patriotism. Yet, win or lose, all concerned in the staging of these marvelous artifacts of Bahamian culture and tradition are willing to endure the challenges of logistics, weather, tide, time and physical capacity to continue these spectacles year after year.

Regatta devotion attains an even greater height in a sphere that is not normally a site of unity, either in philosophy, shared goals common ground, or cooperation. Yet, despite

the fact that partisan politics, normally so divisive in this country, Bahamians find common ground in love and support for the regatta tradition and an ardent desire for its protection and continuance. In other words, regattas are the ties that bind.

At the 18th Annual New Year's Day Bul Reg Regatta which was held in George Town, Exuma, the remarks of **Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources Michael Pintard** lent credence to this view:

*We are stronger when we work beyond the political divide seeing only the colors of the Bahamian flag.<sup>86</sup>*

# *Regattas Promoting Culture*

Islands throughout The Bahamas chain host at least one regatta each year and landside celebrations called “homecomings” and heritage festivals. These events are indeed rollicking parties, replete with music, dancing, food and drink. They are so much more, however.

Annually, regattas and homecomings generate a major economic boost owing to the influx of Bahamian and international tourists who come to view a unique sailing event, founded on the skills, strategy and sheer strength of masterful skippers and crews or to participate in an equally memorable experience of Bahamian culture in action.

The onshore activities tend to be marvels of Bahamian tradition—music, displays of folk

dancing, maypole plaiting and catching the multileg, weaponized critters called “crabs”. In this case, the pursued have much more than strength and determination on their side. They are war-ready with armaments of teeth, claws, multiple scratchy legs, Olympic speed, crafty maneuvers and permanent ire. Regatta attendants can also expect unusual contests of model boat racing for children, and, for general viewing, conchshell blowing and cracking to unseat the tasty resident mollusks, who will do all they can to remain at home and uneaten. There will also be races featuring land crabs.

Island regattas also support displays of local arts and crafts—paintings, woodcarvings, various items of straw work, the age-old craftwork of Bahamians artisans fashioned from plaited strips of local palms leaves.

The door of business opportunity opens wider and more easily to all willing to pay a modest fee for an official vendor spot at the festival grounds harbourside or become a casual merchant, who needs no more than the strength to stand or sit on a handy roadside bench or rock and a trusty arm to wave your goods (usually bottled water, native fruit, coconut water or homemade candy).

To satisfy the demand for more organized consumption, on the festival grounds will appear food trucks pressed into service as mobile restaurants. Those less-well-endowed entrepreneurs take plywood or shipping pallets, skids and crates on offer free from a dump site and fronds of palmetto or coconut palms (roofing) and skillfully forge such assemblages into tax-free, restaurants and bars. With serviceable seating and tables in some instances, patrons can dine in the splendor of The Bahamas environment.

As for food, expect seafood in traditional and annually novel forms, with conch as king of Bahamian cuisine: conch salad—‘bareback’

and tropical, crack conch, conch fritters, conch chowder being the top contenders. Bahamians love their own food and sincerely. They believe that eating the foregoing, crawfish (spiny lobster), grouper, mahi mahi and various denizens of the deep grilled, battered or plain-fried, pig roasted or barbecued or in souse (a boil-up of the cubes of meat, potatoes, spices, onions and other vegetables), corn grits, baked macaroni & cheese, peas & rice, while imbibing various creative, mental fog-producing beverages is the secret of happiness.

As darkness falls, add to this girth-expanding potpourri pulsing, giant loud speakers pushing out soca, calypso, goombay, traditional Bahamian rake & scrape tunes and race results to experience one of the mysteries of the universe—an unstoppable desire to kick off one’s shoes, dance and pledge to return another year.

Despite what elsewhere would be a ripe environment for trouble, or angry confrontations are rare, and crime is virtually nonexistent (at least in my experience). Good fellowship and happiness abound for days!

# *Telling The Bahamas Regatta Story*

## **ROBERT DUNKLEY**

### **Photographer**

Robert Dunkley has been the premier recorder of youth sailing in optimist, sunfish, laser classes. See his profile in “International Sailing”.



Robert Dunkley  
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[info@dunkleyphotography.com](mailto:info@dunkleyphotography.com)  
<http://www.dunkleyphotography.com>



## **PATRICK HANNA**

### **Photographer**

Bahamian Patrick Hanna is an internationally recognized photojournalist whose lens has captured the culture and beauty of The Bahamas for more than three decades. Born in



Nassau, Bahamas, Hanna discovered his passion for the art of photography during his early childhood. He went on to study photography at Winona Lakes School of Professional Photography located in Warsaw, Indiana.

Hanna's wide scope of photography covers weddings, portraiture, editorial, and sporting events. He has travelled across the globe and throughout the Islands of The Bahamas, bringing his unique blend and signature style of photography to recording sloop sailing. He has noted that his love for photography has given him the opportunity to combine his art, influenced by an outgoing personality, to captivate his audiences. Patrick remains a notable and respected professional among his clients and peers. He demonstrated his pride in serving his country using his gifts and passion for reaching out to the global community by generously contributing photos for this publication on regatta in The Bahamas.

## **ROBERT KEIR**

### **Journalist**

Robert Keir, a Canadian journalist, wrote features on the Out Islands of The Bahamas on a six-month contract with The Nassau Guardian in 1954. He was in Exuma in March of that year to cover the three days of the inaugural meet of the Out Island Regatta, which was later renamed the National Family Island Regatta.

Keir enjoys the distinction of being one of the first writers to publish releases on the meet and his work in this regard is probably the best known. Back home in Canada, Keir became one of the founders of The Sudbury Sun (Ontario) in 1962 and a noted figure in communications and community contributions in his homeland,

## **ART PAINE**

Art Paine, an American naval architect by profession, a boatbuilder and fine artist has extolled the wonders of Bahamian wooden sloop sailing regatta and the beautiful waters of Exuma in a series of paintings that capture the spirit of the tradition. His portfolio includes "Why They Go So Fast", "Stepping Tida Wave", "Really Love to Pry II", "Running Tide" and "Lauren (sic) and the Hat", the latter featuring the famed Laurin Knowles of Long Island and "Chasing the Waves"—Laurin sailing with his youngest son Stefan as bowboy on the *Susan Chase*.

## **JAN PEHRSON**

### **Sailor, photographer, writer, author**

<http://www.janpehrson.com>

*"Land was created so boats would have a place to visit."*

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, Jan Pehrson spends winters in St. Petersburg,



Photographer Jan Pehrson and sailing partner, Ken Kramer. Photo by s/v Slowpoke.  
Photograph © Jan Pehrson || <http://www.janpehrson.com>

Florida when she is not at sea. Her website describes her as a racing and cruising sailor, Coast Guard licensed skipper and juniors instructor.

Specializing in sailboat racing photography and journalism, Jan's familiarity with sailing and sailing communities lends depth to her prolific array of photographs and articles. Her sailing articles have been published worldwide in print and online magazines, newspapers, books, and on news sites. She is the former Sailing Columnist for the Marin Independent Journal Newspaper, published in Marin County, California.

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In 2014, Jan began photographing and writing about Bahamian wooden racing sloops and associated regattas. She has contributed significantly to spreading knowledge and spectacular images of one of the last wooden boat fleets in the world and the sailors, boatbuilders, who sustain the regatta tradition in The Bahamas.

Her sailing partner Captain Ken Kramer bought, stripped, and restored a 1974 Morgan Out Island 36 named Slowpoke.

*In 2017, Ken and I sailed the now-seaworthy "Slowpoke" from her home port in Florida to her new home in George Town, Exuma. We sail "Slowpoke" around to Bahamian Racing Sloop Regattas and anchor. Captain Ken launches and drives Slowpoke's dinghy, which I ride as a photography platform. Recently I've been flying my drone from the ship's dinghy as well, to get overhead shots of the sloops. I've named the drone "boomerang" so she'll always come back!—  
Jan Pehrson*

Jan's incredible generosity and real love of the Bahamian regatta tradition led her to give permission for the use of a number of her fine action photographs that grace the pages in this publication.

## Sample Pehrson Articles

'The Best Bahamian Racing Sloops and Skippers Sail Off' in Nassau 1-4 December  
Jan Pehrson. Southwinds, February 2017

## REUEL B. PARKER

### Sailor, boat designer and builder and writer

A designer, builder, repairer and restorer of boats in wood (traditional and cold-molded), ferrocement, steel, aluminum and fiberglass. His website (<https://parker-marine.com/>) notes that "much of his design work draws on the wisdom and pragmatism of working sail from previous centuries, combined with contemporary materials and construction techniques." He launched Parker Marine Enterprises in 1974, both as a design house and custom boatbuilding operation.

Parker first sailed to The Bahamas in early 1981, in his cutter *Fishers Hornpipe*. Later, at the helm of *Ibis*, a gaff-rigged schooner over the next thirty years, he would make four more cruises through the archipelago. His explorations of largely untrammelled Bahamian locales and his writing about them and the people he met such as boat builders Leroy Bannister (Andros) and Rev. Granville Hart (Exuma) have proven a gift to this country.

*"After many years, and numerous boats, I came to love The Bahamas more than anyplace else I have visited,"*—Reuel Parker<sup>87</sup>

Writings by Reuel Parker published in *Wooden Boat Magazine*:

"Visiting Bahamian Ruins By Boat"—Part II, 25 December 2013

"Bahamian Sloops"—Part I, 18 August 2014.

"Bahamian Sloops"—Part II, 10 September 2014.

"The Bights of Andros—Part One": South Bight, *Wooden Boat*, 21 July 2015

"The Bights of Andros—Part Two": North & Middle Bights, 18 August 2015

## Reginald 'Reg' Smith- 'The Voice of Regatta'

Reginald Smith was born 26 June 1943 in George Town, Great Exuma and resident there



for most of his life. At the age of 11, he sailed with his father **Lorenzo Cecil Smith** in what is now known as the National Family Island Regatta (NFIR). They competed in 'C' Class aboard the 10-foot-long *Merry Wing*, built by Lorenzo. Reg went on to become NFIR's long-time announcer and commentator. He was well-prepared to play this role; he was once Manager/Program Director Radio Bahamas Northern Service, Grand Bahama (1970-1976).

Smith was steeped in marine life and the early years of The Bahamas' oldest regatta. His mother, Muriel Annie Smith was housekeeper to J. Linton Rigg, who also hired young Reg to keep filled the tank that fed water into Rigg's home. Reg's father, **Lorenzo Cecil Smith**, originally of Burnt Ground, Long Island, was a boat builder, fisherman and sometime pilot of visiting yachts. Smith, the elder, had moved his family from his birthplace to George Town aboard his own creation Song Bird, a thirty-foot gaff-rigged smack boat.

In 1951, Lorenzo was asked to pilot a sailing yacht to Nassau. It was Reg who skulled his father out to the yacht in question. The yachtsman and vessel were undoubtedly advertising giant L. Ward Wheelock and the *Margot II*, a 54' yacht named for Wheelock's first wife Margot. (See information of Margot



Reginald Smith age eleven and his father Lorenzo Cecil Smith in the newly re-rigged *Merry Wing* in the "C" Class races at George Town Regatta 1954. Photograph courtesy of Reginald Smith.

II in Merchant Vessels of the United States 1  
January 1951, US Treasure Department, p. 337)

Native Exumians obviously contributed more to the early development of NFIR than is generally known. Sailing to Nassau, Wheelock spoke of his wish to organize boat racing among the local fishermen and their wooden vessels. Apparently, Wheelock asked Lorenzo to help organize on

the Exuma end and promised to send back funds to help organize the local racing.

The dream materialised when Linton Rigg received the first \$25 from Wheelock. Among Lorenzo's contributions to the legendary event of 1954 was the making of race course markers—"fifty-five gallon drums painted and tethered to anchors made of cement and old steel rods from the Navy base." Aided by James Bar, he installed them. The start finish line off the government dock, the windward marker near Rolle Town and the Leeward mark off Simons Point.

A founder, President and sailing instructor of the Exuma Sailing Club, Reg Smith helped to organize the first Junior Sailing Regatta in Exuma and by 2021 was still working at taking sailing into the high schools. Reg has served as President of the Exuma Alliance, an NGO purposed to fund and promote a Sustainable Future for Exuma and The Bahamas. Programs launching in 2021.

Reginald Smith holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Adelphi University, Garden City, New York.

**NOTE:**

Exumian Basil Minns, a noted photographer took the following elemental picture of Lorenzo

Smith, his son Reginald Smith and their boat racing during the 1954 Regatta, which appeared on the cover of Skipper Magazine, which was used to promote the then-named "Out Island Regatta".

## BOOKS

### J. LINTON RIGG

*Sailor, author, Regatta Founder*

*Bahama Islands* 3rd Edition (1 January 1959).

D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc. Princeton, New Jersey.

See Rigg's profile in the "Regatta Icons" section.

## ART ROSS

*Sailor, author*

A United States Coast Guard licensed captain, a sailing instructor, Capt. Art Ross has a great knowledge and passion for the sea and boats. He has owned and built both wood and fiberglass boats and has worked as a charter captain for a Chesapeake Bay charter business. It was by chance on one of his sailing trips in Carriacou, after Hurricane Irene, that he came upon the sailboat 'The Mermaid of Carriacou', which began the journey towards the publication of a book that tells the story of J. Linton Rigg, one of the founders of the Out Island Regatta of George Town, foundation of National Family Island, the oldest and largest of The Bahamas, wooden boat sailing events.

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“*All Together Regatta*” To Transform Montagu  
**Brent Stubbs**, The Tribune, 31 October 2012.

“Hats Off To Sir Durward”

**Fred Sturupp**, The Tribune, 24 July 2013  
Cat Island Regatta Founder Set To Be  
Honoured.

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Prime Minister Hubert A. Minnis; Minister of  
Agriculture & Marine Resources Michael C.  
Pintard and Deputy Leader of the Opposition  
and MP Exuma & Ragged Island Chester  
Cooper discuss making regatta the national  
sport of The Bahamas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReFwgwMX2ug> Uploaded by  
Ministry of Agriculture & Marine Resources

**Pull and Away** – Vintage National Family Island  
Regatta Documentary

Directed & Edited by Lewis Feldman; Writers:  
Raymond and Penelope McPhee; Producers:  
Lewis Feldman & Michael Maura; Executive  
Producer, Michael Maura.

Narrated by Anthony Foster

Sponsors: Paint Place/Mauras

**Best of the Best 2018 Sailor Tailor.** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhOPOApK\\_9U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhOPOApK_9U)

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## APPENDIX 1

### The Bahamas at a Glance

#### History

The islands of The Bahamas are generally held to have been the site of Christopher Columbus's first landfall in the New World in 1492 on an island the native Lucayans called 'Guanahani' and Columbus renamed 'San Salvador'. The explorer claimed the lands he stumbled upon for the Spanish Monarchs. The British claimed the territory in 1629 and held on for more than three hundred years as part of its 'blue water empire' across the globe. While the territory contained no in-demand minerals, the islands' strategic location near North America, Cuba and vital trade routes between the Americas and Europe made them valuable to competing powers, especially during Europe's centuries-long age of overseas empire building.

Consequently, many of the conflicts of Europe's great powers had a significant impact on this

country and its people over the centuries. From the 1600s to the early 1800s, The Bahamas would be attacked by Spanish and French forces about thirty-four times. Although the players changed, the islands continued to be a focal point of military actions and trade wars and rivalries of the dominant nations into the 20th century.

During World War II, German and Italian submarines prowled Bahamian territorial waters and even torpedoed five vessels in these precincts, notably the O.A. Knudsen, a Norwegian tanker, sunk in 1942. The Bahamas became a training ground for Allied pilots who would ferry supplies to the theatres of war. By agreement with the United Kingdom, the United States built military bases and tracking stations on Grand Bahama, Eleuthera, Great Exuma, San Salvador and Mayaguana. In 1963,

this country sat within the theatre of one of the Cold War's greatest threats—the Cuban Missile Crisis. Furthermore, from the time Cubans began their push for independence from Spain and, later, from internal dictatorship, The Bahamas has been a transit point for warring parties.

## Governance

On 10 July 1973, The Bahamas marked its independence as a sovereign state. The country became a member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations in that same year. The nation recognizes Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State with the Governor-General as her representative.

A tripartite democracy, The Bahamas can boast of having one of the world's oldest parliaments, continuously functioning since 1729. Based on the Westminster Parliament, The Bahamas Parliament consists of two chambers, the Senate, the upper chamber and the House of Assembly, the lower, together constituting the legislative branch of government. The Cabinet, comprising at least nine Ministers, inclusive of the Prime Minister and Attorney General, makes up the executive branch and administers the Government. An independent judiciary represents the third branch.

## Geography

The Bahamas is an archipelagic state with a total area of 5,358 sq. miles (13,878 sq. km). Its geographic coordinates are 24 15 N, 76 00 W. Lying on a northwest to southeast axis, the country begins just 50 miles off the east coast of Florida and extends for about 600 miles. The nation's nearest neighbours are the United States (the state of Florida and its Keys) and two major islands of the Great Antilles, Cuba and the island of Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and the Turks and Caicos Islands, with which territory The Bahamas shares the Lucayan Archipelago. While The Bahamas established, by agreement, its maritime boundary with Cuba in 2011, it has yet to conclude similar limits with the Turks & Caicos (a British Overseas Territory), Haiti and the United States. Under the provisions of its Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, the US published its fisheries enforcement line in the 1977 Federal Register and reiterated it in the 1995 Federal Register.

Thirty of the major Bahamian islands are inhabited, the principal ones being Abaco, Acklins, Andros, Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Island, Crooked Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Harbour Island, Inagua, Long Island, Mayaguana, New Providence, Ragged Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador and Spanish Wells. The largest are Andros 6,000 square km (2,300 m<sup>2</sup>);

Great Abaco, 963 km<sup>2</sup> (372 m<sup>2</sup>); and Eleuthera at 484 km<sup>2</sup> (187 m<sup>2</sup>). All told, the islands comprise 10,010 km<sup>2</sup> (3865 m<sup>2</sup>) and a water area of 3,870 km<sup>2</sup> (1494.2 m<sup>2</sup>).

The nation's capital and principal city, Nassau, and its second city, Freeport, are located on New Providence and Grand Bahama, respectively. The latter and remaining islands, known as 'Out Islands' in the colonial period, are now termed 'Family Islands'. Throughout the archipelago, settlements tend to fringe the coasts near natural harbours and many feature a single main road running the length of the island with minor branching into settlements.

## Population

At mid-year 2020, The Bahamas population was estimated at 393,244, most living in urban settings. Of that number, 69.9 percent of Bahamians live on New Providence. Together, Grand Bahama and Abaco are home to 15.5 percent, and 10.3 percent are scattered throughout the remaining islands and cays.

## Economy

The Bahamas has the second highest per capita GDP in the English-speaking Caribbean with an economy heavily dependent on tourism and financial services. Tourism accounts for approximately 50% of GDP and directly or

indirectly employs half of the labour force. Financial services constitute the second most important sector of the Bahamian economy, accounting for about 15% of GDP.

## Topography

On these porous limestone islands, there are no rivers, although bisecting tidal creeks in some areas appear riverine. Contrarily, several islands feature large lakes and marshy wetlands. Hills are low and occur primarily in the central and southern sectors of the chain. On Cat Island overlooking The Bight, the island's administrative centre, sits the highest point in The Bahamas. Mount Alvernia, formerly known as Como or Comer Hill, measures 63 m (206 ft). The next highest hills can be found on Crooked Island and Acklins. Barrier islands like Eleuthera and Long Island feature a hilly spine of up to 30 m (100 ft). The dominant plant life consists of tropical and subtropical coniferous forests ('pineyards'), blackland and whiteland coppices and mangroves.

## Climate

The Bahamas' climate is marine tropical and relatively mild, significantly influenced by the following. Two-thirds of the country's land mass lies north of the Tropic of Cancer and its islands are heavily influenced by the Gulf Stream and surrounding seas. From June to October, the

Southeast Trades prevail bringing an average daily high temperature above 87°F (30°C) and humid conditions. The hottest days of the year are in August with an average high of 90°F (30°C) and low of 79°F (26°C). Influenced by the Northeast Trades and cool dry North American high-pressure systems, the Bahamian winter lasts for about three and a half months from December to March. Year round, extremes of temperature seldom fall below the low 60s F (about 16 °C) or rise above the low 90s F (about 32 °C).

The average annual precipitation is about 52 inches (132 centimeters), falling May-June and September-October. Rainfall tends to be heavier in the North and Central Bahamas, and lessens southward, where the islands are fairly dry. Prevailing winds are easterlies for most of the year but blow from the northeast in winter and from the southeast in summer. The Bahamas islands are subject to hurricanes during June–November.



## APPENDIX 2

# NATIONAL FAMILY ISLAND REGATTA COMMITTEE GENERAL RACING INSTRUCTIONS & RULES

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND BY-LAWS REVISED April 2011

### PREAMBLE TO TECHNICAL SECTION OF BY LAWS/REGULATIONS

The principal concern with the design of Bahamian Sloops and Dinghies is maintenance of the traditional grace and beauty of the hull and rig, while also retaining familiar Bahamian building methodology that allows any Bahamian builder to construct an entry. It is recognized that there has been, and will continue to be, marked development from the former work boats and that competitors wish to continue efforts to improve speed and performance, and to employ modern methods and materials as they come along. There has to be opportunity for progress but not at such a pace that existing boats will soon be outclassed. The matter of materials can easily be voted upon or decided on a case by basis, in the same way the Committee has allowed plywood decks, micro-balloons, double clawed jibs etc.

The main purpose of this design body is to try and define hull shape and sail area limitations, but it has been very difficult to describe the essence of an allowable "BAHAMIAN" hull shape for racing. There is not one definitive "STYLE" of hull in the Islands but instead a divergence of shape from different parts of The Bahamas, it is important to attempt merely to define the acceptable limits among variations. To this effort we urge builders to refer to the drawings supplied herewith prepared by naval architect, Mr. Arthur C. Paine. To a great extent these sketches will illustrate the most desirable features to be retained in hull forms. It is our opinion that some effort should be undertaken toward limiting the ever increasing cost of the boats. An easy approach, and one which will prove less costly to existing boats, would be to limit the overall height of the mast and, particularly the extreme length of booms which proves to be a dangerous feature at times but also leads to undesirable refinements in hull shape in an attempt to gain control.

We recommend for new construction in Class "A" of an overall mast length of 60' and a boom length of 32'. Another area which deserves consideration is a limitation on the number of crew members, because increasing reliance upon the movable ballast of people on the pry will greatly influence the design of the hull itself, ultimately impelling a shape that departs from the traditional design. As a general parameter, the committee want sloops which are with crew, inherently stable so they can be towed in open waters and left for long periods on a

mooring.

In an effort toward economy, we continue to favour boats that are entirely inside ballasted. However, because outside ballast is unquestionably a desirable feature we would suggest a limit of 50% of total ballast be set and would hope in that case an effort be made by existing boats to place outside ballast in order to stay competitive. There are two features in the hull profile we are unanimous in favouring. Significant balanced overhangs be present fore and aft. There should also be a pronounced sheer line as featured in all traditional Bahamian types.

Recent tendencies, evolving from a misunderstood concept are regarding the way boat length is measured must stop and they are: Tumblehome or turned backbows and very near vertical sterns. We note that the fastest boats in the A and B Class display strong sweep of sheer and raked bows and sterns. We are in strong support of the need for all boats to exhibit positive flotation. This is sensible in terms of safety as well as limiting damage to capsized vessels. As sponsorship increases, it is important for all boats to adhere to the ban on advertising on sails and to keep hull advertising within accepted limits.

### "A" CLASS DEFINITIONS

1. The length on deck of an A sloop, measured in the traditional manner from the inside of the metal stem fitting at bow and aft end of the decking even with the outside face of the transom, shall be 28 feet 3 inches or less.
2. Any forward projection in the stem beyond plumb shall be measured and added to the overall length. Beyond this, the measurement committee may disqualify boats with extreme tumblehome, turned-back, or canoe bows even though the overall deck length complies with the above measurement.
3. Measurement at the tiller hole through the transom on all classes of Bahamian boats will be measured as described in this drawing....
4. Traditional Bahamian boats were built upon a single keel member,

and this method remains appropriate today when the committee's intention is to encourage boats whose construction can be done on the beach, by simple means, by amateurs, without undue sophistication or expense. In keeping with existing variations, the profile of keels should lie between the extremes of the many past race winners whose stems knuckled sharply in the forefoot between stem and keel, and boats that diminish the fore-foot considerably. There shall be no dips or reverses of curve in the forefoot profile so that a fin-type keel begins to be created.

5. All boats shall have transom-hung rudders steered directly by tillers.
6. There should be noticeable rake to the transom and rudder post. The boats that have this feature have proven despite shorter waterlines to be faster. The boat committee very strongly wishes to retain the general shape in the after sections that distinguishes Bahamian sloops, and a raked transom is a strong element in that shape.
7. The now customary use of a fairing false-rudder post which allows the transom to be raked yet sets the rotating axis of the front of the rudder more vertical is allowed, but extremes which make the rudder appear nearly plumb will be discouraged and when extreme, disallowed.
8. No matter what the general shape of transom, there should be some reverse curvature near centerline at the bottom, so as to give a wineglass appearance. This curvature can be slight and can be added-on by the addition of a small fillet of wood or putty at bottom.
9. The existing limit of midships keel depth of 2 feet remains in effect.
10. From the midsection of the boat aft, there should be at least a small amount of "wineglass" curvature in the hull. Beyond this minimum, boats that blend in such "S" curves in their framing throughout their length are encouraged. Hulls that take their under bodies only to a "V" at the deadwood, will bear hard scrutiny. Under no circumstances will extremely light or flat bottomed boats be allowed, even though they satisfy all other rules, such as the 2 feet keel limit.
11. Boats shall have noticeable sheer or dip through their length, the more the better. A very flat sheer alone might be sufficient to disqualify a boat's entry as a traditional sloop for the National Regatta.
12. Beam overall may not exceed 10 and a half feet nor be less than 8 feet (although existing boats that exceed this are allowed to compete.) This committee feels that there is here in ample allowance for experimentation.
13. Pinched sterns are ugly and ineffective, as are transoms that are nearly as wide as the midships dimension. As a general rule the maximum width of transoms should not be less than half a boat's beam, nor more than three-quarters.
14. Tillers should pass through a hole in the transom in the normal Bahamian style.
15. Decks should have some upward arc so as to shed water to the rails. There should be a cock-pit well, large or small. Although a few existing boats have only one deck hatch to gain entry below, ideally the committee would like to see two, as the look of the deck is thus closer to working originals. The aft hatch should either be cabin-like, have a sliding companion hatch while giving good access to the forward part of inside ballast and should while racing be capable of being secured nearly watertight.
16. One, two or three pries, any length, are allowed.
17. Shown are a few variations of acceptable styles in terms of general shape, profile, etc., along with commentary that should be very useful in revealing the intent and limits of the boat committee's opinion. In general it must be obvious that any artistic attempts to create a pretty and recognizably Bahamian hull shape as well as style of decoration will be looked upon favorably, not only by the race committee but by competitors who love to build and race A Class sloops. Adherence to the principles suggested by the drawings will allow experimentation for speed but will also foster the keen interest the general public has displayed, worldwide, in Bahamian sloop racing.

## GENERAL RACING INSTRUCTIONS & RULES

### 1. ELIGIBILITY

- a. All vessels entering the races must be Bahamian designed, Bahamian built, Bahamian owned and skippered and crewed by Bahamians. But - four non Bahamians in A Class, and three non-Bahamians in B Class will be allowed to race.
- b. Alterations to hull/rigging may effect a vessel's eligibility to participate in the Regatta. It is the responsibility of the owner or captain to report any such changes to the Race Committee for a decision on that vessel's eligibility. Any alterations made to vessels must be carried out by Bahamians in a Bahamian boatyard.
- c. In order to be eligible to race in a designated class, a vessel, whether a dinghy or a sloop, must not depart radically from the traditional Bahamian sailing vessel, either in its general configuration or in material used in construction. If, in the opinion of the Race Committee, a vessel will not offer fair competition in one of the designated classes, it will be assigned to an Open Class. provided three or more vessels are present to compete in this Open Class the Committee will arrange suitable prizes.
- d. A Committee made up of the Race Chairman, a person designated by The Bahamas Boat Owner's Association, a person designated by the Commonwealth Sailing Association, a designated member of the National Regatta Committee and a person designated by the host regatta shall hear and decide on any protests arising from the Race Committee's decision under Rules (b) or (c) in this section. The decision of the Committee shall be FINAL. Protests must be in writing and submitted by 6.00 p.m. on the day of registration.

2. **BOATNAMES.** Boat names must be painted on the transom of all vessels 3" high and spelled the same on the entry blanks. All boats must have their assigned numbers on their sails.
3. **HULL** Keel to be continuous line or fair curve, no fin keels allowed. The maximum depth of keel allowed shall not exceed the following: Class A24 in, Class B 18 in, and Dinghies 12 in. If in the opinion of the Committee a boat has committed some alteration in its stem or transom solely for the purpose of reducing its overall length so as to achieve a lower rating the Committee may assign it an overall length which would be the same as it would have been had the alteration not been undertaken.
4. **HULLS AND MASTS** to be of wooden construction. The hull may not be fibreglassed although the deck may be. The use of fibreglass in limited areas for reinforcing shall be allowed.
5. **RIGGING** No bowsprits. No spreaders or aluminum spars. No winches. No wind or speed instruments and telltales. No bending masts.
6. **SAILS** No Dacron or synthetic material may be used. Egyptian cotton and "Oceanus" sail materials are allowed. No luff tension device other than the goose neck will be used. Batons not exceeding 4 feet in length may be used. No wire luffs will be allowed in either the jib or mainsail.
7. **ON THE STARTING LINE.** All boats must be at the starting line 15 minutes before the start of the race. When the boats are lined up and officials of the Race Committee order a boat to get in line, the order has to be carried out immediately. Failing to do so results in a warning: "THIS IS YOUR LASTCHANCE TO GET IN LINE." Failure to cooperate, depending on the case, may lead to the boat sailing from that position under a one point penalty or disqualification of the boat from that particular race. All boats must start on starboard tack except the number one boat which is the only boat to have an option. If a boat tries to start on a port tack and this causes a collision a one point penalty will be imposed from each boat involved against the boat who caused the accident. There will be no penalty for hitting a marker at the start.
  - 7(b) **RETRIEVAL OF ANCHORS** All boats must retrieve their anchors at the start. Failure to do so will result in 3 point penalty. An anchor that has jammed or hooked may be left behind but the Race Committee MUST be called to retrieve the anchor and determine whether the claim is valid.
  - 7(c) **STARTING TIMES OF RACES** The published schedule gives the starting times of all races. Except in the event of an official postponement or delay, the Race Committee will adhere to the posted schedule and races will not be delayed for late arrivals at the starting line. Vessels arriving late at the starting line must keep clear of other vessels that are ready to sail and must lower their sails and anchor and start in the normal manner.
8. **THE COURSE** shall be indicated before each race and all marks must be turned in the direction indicated at the start or by patrol boat which may be substituted for any mark missing. This means that all boats must leave the mark on the same side. All marks must be left untouched until the race is over. Two (2) point penalty. A **MARKER** can be moved if the wind shifts and if moving a marker will provide for more competitive sailing. The marker must be moved before the first boat reaches the previous marker. All boats must be informed before they reach the previous marker.
9. **THERE WILL BE NO SCULLING OR SETTING.** In the event that a boat runs aground, she may use an oar to put herself about and get off; but sculling and setting beyond this will lead to a penalty. If a boat is in danger of being severely damaged and has been making an effort to get off for at least five minutes it is permissible to get outside help without penalty.
10. **RACING COMMITTEE.** The Race Committee shall consist of a chairman and three assistants who are experienced and familiar with the rules. Members of the Race Committee are not allowed to hold any personal interest of any kind in any vessel competing in the Regatta. If it is determined that a member holds such interests, any penalties added against any competing vessel by the member concerned shall be null and void, and the member will be discharged forthwith.
11. **A PROTEST COMMITTEE** shall be appointed by the Organizing Committee and shall be approved by the participants at a Skippers' Meeting if one is held. An appeal to the Appeal's Judge shall be allowed. The decision of the Appeal's Judge shall be final.
 

It is up to the Racing Committee to decide if it is too windy or too rough to sail or too calm to start a race. Their decision is final and no protest will be heard regarding this decision.
12. **BREAKING OF TIES** When there is a tie in total points between two or more boats it shall be resolved in favour of the boat which beat the other boat or boats the most times in the three race series. If this does not resolve the tie then the boat which beats the others in the last race will be the winner. The prize money shall be divided among all the boats that are tied but the trophy will be presented to the boat that wins the tie.
  - 12(b) This rule applies to cup races only. In the event of a tie in a cup race penalties shall be assessed thus: a 1 (one) point penalty shall be assessed as 1.25, a 2 (two) point penalty shall be assessed as 2.25 and a 3 (three) point penalty shall be assessed as 3.25.
13. **OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE.** No boat is allowed outside assistance except when a life is in danger or the safety of the vessel is in jeopardy. If a man falls overboard the boat must stop even though outside assistance can be engaged to bring the man back to the boat. If the boat is bedding the boom has to be pulled in right to the deck or just lower the mainsail. If the boat is checking or going to the wind, the sail must be lowered until the crew member is back on deck. Failure to observe this rule will result in disqualification. If a pry falls overboard the same rule applies, except the skipper is allowed to leave the pry without incurring a penalty. If the pry is returned with outside assistance and the sail has not been lowered a one point penalty will result.
14. **TIME ALLOWANCE** All boats have time allowance. "A" class boats start at 28 feet, "B" Class at 21 feet and "C" Class at 17 feet.

15. **DAMAGES.** If an accident involves damage the boat in the wrong is responsible for the incurred damage. The cost of such damage will be estimated by the general committee of the sailing body responsible. Any boat failing to repair damages right away, after being ordered to do so will face a fine, suspension or expulsion.. This could mean disqualification from that race.
16. **COLLISIONS.** (a) Three (3) points penalty against the offending vessel. (b) Contacts between boats of a minor nature resulting in inconsequential damage - 1 point.. (c) No penalties will be assessed at the start of a race over minor or incidental contacts.
17. **PROTESTS.** Protests must be filed within one hour after all races except where races are back to back. In the latter case all protests must be filed within one hour of the last race. While protests will be heard by the Protest Committee in the usual manner, the Committee may propose penalties without a hearing in the event that infractions of the rules are observed. There shall be no 'third party' protests. Protests will only be heard from boats involved in the alleged infraction. Only the skipper or bowman shall be allowed to file the written protest. Only the skipper and/or bowman shall be allowed to give evidence to the protest committee unless the Committee should require other witnesses.
18. **LOCALRULES.** Local rules may be added to suit special situations providing they do not conflict with the general rules. Sailing bodies may write to the National Sailing Committee with suggestions for rule amendments.
19. **SPONSORSHIP** Each Regatta Committee should set its own requirements regarding any sponsors. There should not be any reservation towards individual sponsors. The organizing committee of this Regatta should find ways and means of giving the co-sponsors the exposure needed without interfering with any boat and their sponsor. No logos or other product identification allowed on sails during racing. No restriction on crew apparel. Product, sponsor identification, logos may be displayed on the hull but must not exceed 50% of the over-all length of the hull. Vessels wishing to display advertising logos on their sails will be charged an entrance fee as follows: Class "A" \$1200, Class "B" \$800 and Dinghies \$500. The entrance fee shall be payable at the time of registration. Unless the registration fee is paid the display of advertising logos on sails shall be illegal.
20. **TACKING .** The boat on port tack must keep clear of boats on starboard tack. Failing to do this could result in a two (2) point penalty.
21. **OBSTRUCTIONS.** When two boats are approaching an obstruction, when neither can clear it, the weather boat must tack on being hailed by the leeward boat. A boat to windward must keep clear of a boat to leeward.
22. **BUOYROOM.** When two or more boats are approaching a mark all boats must give the boats nearest the buoy room to round the mark. One (1) point penalty. In a buoy room situation at a weather mark the boat on starboard tack has right to round the mark first.
23. **HITTING THE MARKER.** If a boat hits a marker there will be a one (1) point penalty. Reports of infractions can only be made by designated persons aboard designated committee boats. Certain of the patrol boats may be designated in such a way.
24. **OVERLAP** When approaching the buoy, if the boat behind cannot establish an overlap of 200 feet before reaching the buoy the boat should immediately proceed to give the other boat buoy room. Overlap means any part of the boat behind cannot swing clear of any part of the boat ahead. Penalty one point.
25. **OVERTAKING.** When passing a boat on an off wind leg or checking the overtaking boat can pass on either side, but when passing on the weather side it should be three boat lengths or more. If the overtaking boat tries to pull down the Race Committee will warn the skipper once and, if the warning is not heeded, a two (2) point penalty will result. There should be three boat lengths or more between boats. No boat can be directly behind another boat's stern. The overtaken boat shall not luff or bear away toward the other.
26. If two boats are on the same tack, the leeward boat will have the right of way. In the event of contact or collision the offending sloop will be penalized one (1) point.
27. **THE COMMITTEE** reserves the right to amend the Rules and Regulations if, prior to a race, it appears to be in the interests of good racing to do so. The decision of the Committee shall be final.







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