



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Barby MacGowan](#), Media Pro Int'l, 401-849-0220, or [Marcy Trenholm](#), Storm Trysail Club, 914-834-8857

Storm Trysail Foundation's Junior Safety-at-Sea Seminars

Fun with a Purpose

LARCHMONT, N.Y. (Sept. 9, 2009) -- Building on the concept that "preparation prevents accidents from becoming catastrophes," the Storm Trysail Foundation held its popular one-day Junior Safety-at-Sea Seminars at four different sailing hotspots during July. Returning to Newport, R.I., for a fourth year; Larchmont, N.Y., for a 13th year; Annapolis, Md., for an 11th year; and taking place for the first time in Perth Amboy, N.J., the seminars are sponsored by the Jamie Boeckel Memorial Fund for Safety at Sea, which, in addition to cash, donates life jackets to the programs. (The fund was established in 2002 to preserve the memory of Jamie Boeckel, who died in an accident while performing bowman duties aboard *Blue Yankee* in the 2002 Block Island Race.)

"It's one thing for kids to learn to sail; it's another for them to handle, with skill and confidence, an on-the-water emergency," said Storm Trysail Club (STC) Commodore Jim Bishop, noting that over 350 youths, ages 13-18, took part. And while junior sailors normally spend most of their time on the water in small boats, this was no dinghy event. In sync with Storm Trysail Foundation's mission to introduce junior sailors to the lifetime enjoyment of big boat racing, the participants spent a large part of their day aboard keelboats loaned by yacht club members, with dozens of volunteers serving as coaches and helpers.

"We are fortunate that so many people in the sailing industry and these sailing communities recognize the importance of these Junior Safety-at-Sea Seminars," said Bishop, noting that local sponsors included Sail Newport, Newport Shipyard, J Boats New England Boatworks, Gowrie Insurance, Harken, Vanguard, Team One Newport, Newport Shipyard, Café Zelda, Mac Designs, PDQ Printing, PHRF Mid-Atlantic, North Jersey YRA, and Marine Safety Corp.

Newport, R.I.:

"It was a stormy day, big squalls; a good safety-at-sea day!" said Lat Spinney, who co-chaired the Newport seminar with Dan Faria and acknowledged invaluable assistance from Tom Callahan and Sail Newport's Kim Hapgood. The junior sailors had gathered at Sail Newport's Alofsin Pier where they took a tour of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's STP65 *Vanquish* (formerly *Moneypenney*), before getting familiar with the J/105, J/109, J/124 and NYYC Swan 42 that had been lent for the day's program. Several Midshipmen were on hand to share their knowledge during the seminar sessions, which reviewed safety techniques and big boat organization, before the juniors headed out to sail just as the weather turned "squally." Back onshore the juniors observed a life raft demonstration, played safety games, and listened as Jay Sharkey shared mishaps he had experienced during the Bermuda One-Two Race, before wrapping up the session with more time on the water.

Larchmont, N.Y.:

Positioned on Friday of Larchmont Yacht Club's (LYC) Race Week and as a pre-requisite for two junior big boat regattas, the Larchmont Safety-at-Sea Seminar, co-sponsored by Storm Trysail Foundation and LYC, drew close to 200 juniors. With 18 borrowed boats (from LYC members and STC friends) ranging in size from a J/46 down to a J/105, and 25 volunteer coaches on hand to share their expertise, five different classroom sessions were each led by a veteran of the Newport-Bermuda Race and followed by a full afternoon of on-the-water practice.

“The late July winds materialized for a great afternoon of sailing,” said Adam Loory, who co-chaired the event with Rich duMoulin. “The kids learned how to handle sails on big boats, how to use winches without losing any fingers, how to tail a line, jump halyards, how to trim sails and got tips on driving big boats. They practiced numerous man-overboard recoveries on all points of sail, and the first few recovery attempts on each boat showed that the kids were not used to the momentum that keelboats carry, even with their sails luffing.”

Storm Trysail Foundation’s Larchmont Junior Safety-at-Sea Seminar was introduced formally in 1997, after an incident where informal training provided to LYC juniors was instrumental in saving a junior sailor’s life after she went overboard in a junior big boat event.

Annapolis, Md.:

While the Chesapeake Bay heat was almost unbearable at Annapolis Yacht Club (AYC) during the morning Safety-at-Sea seminar sessions, the afternoon sailing was superb, with a light wind giving the junior sailors a chance to work into the size and forces of four J/105s, a J/40 and a Farr 33. A slide show -- which grabbed the attention of the juniors with sailing bloopers and a watermelon on a pole, which allowed them to see what their heads might look like if they didn’t know where the boom was at all times – provided numerous visual reminders about safety at sea. “These are your brains if you are not safety conscious,” said Louise Burke (who co-chaired the event with Dick Neville) when the watermelon splattered on the concrete after a hit from a metal pole. “A helmsman going almost dead downwind in a boat can’t get confused about which way to turn the wheel to prevent an uncontrolled jibe; he or she must remember to turn the wheel away from the danger – the boom. Dinghy sailors will push the tiller toward the boom.”

Once on the water, the boats disappeared in all directions as the juniors practiced their tacks, controlled jibes and man-overboard drills. They were required to perform each maneuver three times before they could race. The boats had left AYC in mild air for their practice time, and just as the countdown to the practice start began, a group of Opti sailors got their own safety-at-sea lesson. The Optis had tumbled through the starting gate with a now stiff breeze on their beam. With the big boats bearing down on them, they quickly sculled toward the safety side of the pin end to watch, wide-eyed, as the juniors started their race.

Perth Amboy, N.J.

Raritan Yacht Club hosted the Storm Trysail Foundation’s first Junior Safety-at-Sea Program in New Jersey, which was attended by sailors from four area yacht clubs. “With some flexible scheduling to avoid thunderstorms, the on-the-water drills and dockside demonstrations were all successfully completed by the juniors, the majority of whom had little or no big boat experience,” said Kelly Robinson, who chaired the event with assistance from Rich duMoulin. Among the boats loaned by RYC members were *Poppy*, an Olson 911, and two-time Bermuda Race winner *Sinn Fein*.

About the Storm Trysail Foundation

The Storm Trysail Foundation is a 501(C)3 charitable organization dedicated to supporting the education of young sailors, junior safety at sea, and intercollegiate big boat racing. The purpose of the Storm Trysail Foundation is to effect, promote and enhance the education of young sailors in safety at sea, safe boat handling in all conditions, and safe blue water racing and passage making, through the hosting of seminars, regattas, and other on-the-water training, and through the making of grants to other institutions to foster similar training.

For more information about the Storm Trysail Foundation's Junior Safety-at-Sea Seminars, contact the Storm Trysail Club, 914-834-8857, stormtry@aol.com or visit www.stormtrysailfoundation.org.

(end)