

2016 GWBR
By Pat Kuntz W3814

Lake Eustis Sailing Club hosted its 46th George Washington's Birthday Regatta on February 13th and 14th, 2016. The race, a scheduled event for the Flying Scott fleet, opened its venue to Wayfarers and a Portsmouth race, and provided a smaller course for youth, who sailed Optis, 420s, and Lasers. The dates signaled the closing of the "Wayfarer Fortnight", 17 days of Wayfarers that began with the Midwinters/US Nationals.

Very strong winds during the week prior to the race settled down to 10-12 mph, with frequent gust to 16 mph, on Saturday, and 8-10 mph with occasional gust to 15 mph on Sunday.

Forty-one Flying Scotts, 21 from LESC, populated a 1000 foot starting line, a remarkably beautiful site. Also visible on the lake, on a smaller course to the south and east, were the Lasers, Optis and 420s. Waiting to start after and on the same course as the Flying Scotts provided an almost 360 degree view of sails. Stunning!



Optis, 420s and Lasers prepare for racing on the Sam Chapin Beach at LESC.

Seven Wayfarers raced in the GWBR sharing the course with 1 Hunter 23, 3 San Juan 2'1s, and 3 Mutineers. Three races were held on Saturday, and 2 on Sunday.

Two Wayfarers from Lake Townsend Sailing Club in Greensboro, North Carolina, placed in the top 3. Jim Heffernan achieved a first place win and Ken Butler took 3rd place. Jim Lingeman from the Lake Eustis Sailing Club took 2nd place. The other results were Dave Hepting in 4th, Pat Kuntz 5th, Jim Burns 6th and Peter Krueger in 7th.

All racers and the exceptional hosts from LESC shared a delicious dinner of barbecue Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon.

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Kevin and Denise O'Sullivan are all smiles as they meet and sail with Wayfarer sailors during the 2016 Midwinters at Lake Eustis.

As we shoveled the 30 inches of snow that fell a few days before our Wednesday afternoon departure, our minds were signaling We Are A Go for Florida and Ahoy New Friends! As it turns out, the drive was uneventful and we had a great time playing loudly the song "Riding with the King" by BB King and E Clapton as we crossed the GA-FL border. We didn't know it then but that was an omen of things to come.

With a heavy rain falling we opened the doors of Lake Eustis Sailing Club (LESC) on Thursday afternoon and saw a group of smiling faces sitting in chairs around tables with muffled sounds of conversation. To our left, the registration desk was open so we started the process with help from Jane Hepting, Mary Seraphinoff, and Linda Heffernan. Commodore Jim Heffernan greeted us and made us feel part of the group. Dave Hepting, the race Commodore, helped us unhook the trailer from our van, in the rain, and park it for raising the mast the next morning. We stayed at a local hotel this first night not wanting to set up camp in the rain, and prepared to get back around 8 am the next morning to get the boat ready for launch and watch the experience of the first races before getting into the fray. That was the plan. Go slow. Be careful. Be cool.

About 14 months earlier, we purchased our Wayfarer and trailer from a wonderful person in Chicago. All of May and most of June were spent on the driveway trying to "put it together" with help from neighbors passing by walking their dogs. We were able to use a nearby ramp to get the boat into the water and paddled to a mooring ball near our community dock. We "sailed" it as newcomers about ten times in 2015 in local creek, small river and small bay conditions in the