

## ROCK HALL ROCKS THROUGH SUMMER SOLSTICE

*Chester River Downriver Race June 20, 2014*

Four Wayfarers were among the thirty boats, a mixture of mono-hulls and catamarans, competing in the 2014 Chester River Downriver Race, on a sunny and warm Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Three of the four Wayfarer skippers came from North Carolina: Ken Butler with crew Beverly Swanson of Alexandria, Virginia, Jim Heffernan with crew, Adam Wilcox, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and AnneMarie Covington with crew Linda Heffernan. New to this event and to the Wayfarer class were the fourth skipper and crew, Mike and Cathy Babowicz of Newark, Delaware, sailing the Wayfarer they bought from Richard Watterson two years ago. Competitors were dealt a downwind start against the current in medium winds and most boats started smoothly and chose their place on the river that had less current or stronger winds or maybe both.



As winds lightened, shifted and backed to the north, the fleet separated into four groups with the multi-hulls in the leading groups and mini-races occurring within the trailing three groups.

Jim and Adam in W1066 *Dawn Treader* battled with two Windmills in the second group and crossed the finish line 11<sup>th</sup>. AnneMarie and Linda in W276 *Epiphany* traded leads with Ken and Beverly in W449 and a laser and sunfish and ultimately finished 12<sup>th</sup> (under 3 hours), Ken and Beverly crossed the finish line in 14<sup>th</sup> place and Mike and Cathy finished 26<sup>th</sup>. The corrected times did not affect the finish places for the Wayfarers.

This race continues to be one of the most scenic and bucolic as the Chester River winds through the farming fields on the shore and past the fishing weirs along the edges. Overhead, Ospreys hung looking for the perfect meal while small vee's of geese moved near the fields searching for the bits of grain left from the harvest.

Jim and Linda Heffernan took advantage of the welcoming atmosphere and comfortable surroundings of the Rock Hall Yacht Club to stage a mini family reunion around the One Design Regatta on Saturday and Sunday, June 21-22. Frequent attendee, son, Mark, of Alexandria, Virginia crewed for AnneMarie Covington while his wife, Maria, joined the Shore Support Team (SST). Son, Paul, of New Providence, NJ crewed for Ken Butler and granddaughter, Claire (17) crewed for Jim. Linda, daughter-in-law, Maika, granddaughter, Gabrielle(14) and grand-nephew, Adam(13), filled out the SST.



As in past years the Race Committee set two courses. John Macielag was PRO for Course A and set a course for the multi-hulls, consisting of 8 A-Cats, 16 Hobie Cats of different lengths and 14 Comets for whom this event was the North American Championship. Lee Urbani, Commodore of the RHYC and PRO on Course B, set the course for 14 Windmills competing for the District Championship and an Open Class consisting of 3 Wayfarers, 3 Chesapeake 20's and 1 Fireball.

The Wayfarers raced near the entrance of Langford Bay just north of the deeper and faster flowing waters of Chester River. However, even in the Bay the current did have an effect especially on the slower downwind legs. With the Windmills starting first, we had a chance to watch their downwind progress as some jibed around the windward mark and then stayed in the shallower water away from the flooding tide. At the leeward mark, everything slowed down since it was placed squarely in the deeper water.

The first 3 races had consistent finishes with Jim and Claire first, AnnMarie and Mark 2nd and Ken and Paul a close 3rd. The RC threw in an extra race since winds were holding. This created some position changing as AnnMarie, W276, got the first place gun. She had managed to escape large areas of disturbed air near the Chesapeake 20's after the start and work out a good lead at the first mark which she and Mark held with fine spinnaker handling. Heffernan/Heffernan stayed in the shallower water and did not get the advantage of the now ebbing tidal flow.

The feature of Saturday evening was a June 21st Summer Solstice Party held under the Gazebo where many RHYC members joined the sailors and families (a total of 130) for the fine buffet of meats, salads and desserts. Dinner was followed with music and dancing all orchestrated by DJ Mickey G. who also happens to be the Club Manager and Chef.

On Sunday, the PRO got the first gun fired at 10 am and managed to set a decent windward leg in the light and shifty winds. A quick shift up the first leg put Ken and Paul, W 449, into a fine lead at the weather mark. They sailed a beautiful spinnaker leg and still had a handsome lead at

the leeward mark and at the finish. Crew Paul Heffernan was exuberant and stated that “Every dawg has its day!” The final race had a bit of everything. With patience and concentration, the young Claire Heffernan sailed to a first place while Ken and AnnMarie battled to a photo finish as Ken took the gun. Ken and Paul won honors for the day with their first and second and many smiles lit up the water as we were towed back to the club in the flat calm. Thanks to Lee Urbani for moving things along on our course. The A course failed to get any races completed on Sunday due to the vagaries of the winds.



*Lee Urbani presenting awards. Note Summer Solstice Sun in background.*

At the awards ceremony, beautifully engraved beer mugs were presented to the first, second and third place skippers and crews. Lee Urbani reminded winners of a tradition that he once started whenever beer mugs were used for trophies: first celebratory first beer was on the house!



*Paul Heffernan, Ken Butler, AnnMarie Covington, Mark Heffernan, Claire Heffernan, Captain Jim*

Once again all attendees enjoyed great hospitality, enjoyable June weather and fine sailing. However this year some things were missing. For one, Uncle Al, who was missed by many folks. Also the Rebel sailors we had befriended in past years were not in attendance. And finally more Wayfarers were missed and we hope that will be remedied next year!



*Trying out a three person tent, Claire Heffernan, Adam Wilcox, Gabrielle Heffernan*

W1066 J. Heffernan & C. Heffernan	1	1	1	2	[3]	1	6
W276 A. Covington & M. Heffernan	2	2	2	1	2	[3]	9
W449 K. Butler & P. Heffernan	[3]	3	3	3	1	2	12