



# CSTS Notes

Newsletter of the United States Naval Academy  
Command & Seamanship Training Squadron



## DIRECTOR'S CUT

by Renee Mehl



It's a wrap!! Thanksgiving is around the corner, so it's perfect timing for a great big, heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in CSTS this year!!! Our volunteers are the engine that keeps this program running so that we can provide meaningful training to the midshipmen every summer. We couldn't do it without all

of you especially those who went above and beyond this year. Thanks to volunteer team leader and Fleet Captain **John Formisano**. We also have an amazing staff that works hard to keep the wheels turning too, so thank you to **DNAS, Nathan Hesse, LT Aiken, LT Fay** and **LS1 Gillespie**. **Jane Millman** and the **BST instructors** provided our Navy 26 training, **Craig Patterson** and **his team** from the Cutter Shed and the **crew at SCR D** kept the boats functioning. We also have great support for Navy Sailing from leadership on "The Yard" including **PRODEV CAPT Robert Johns, Commandant COL James McDonough** and our **Superintendent, VADM Sean Buck**.

CSTS ruled the waves for the fun sailing department final event of the season, the Huntington-Steele Regatta. Eight teams competed, including two from CSTS, one from the sail loft, and five midshipman teams. CSTS Blue Team led the fleet around the course after getting a great start with some outstanding teamwork (and fueled by the secret weapon of pre-race cookies). It was a beautiful afternoon on the water that finished with a full moon rising over the David Taylor Research Center.



*Blue Team Victors*

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*Blue team: Helm Renee Mehl, tactics Jim Barnes, nav Ned Ross, main trim ENS Ryan Shaw, jib trim Nathan Hesse and Larry Twele, halyards Mark Woodcock, mast Bill Krafft, mid-bow Eli McGuigan, and foredeck Katie Wolfe.*



Gold team: Helm DNAs Luke Kremer, tactics Cecily Walsh, main trim Tom Bihansky, jib trim Randy Reese and Simon Hillman, halyards LT Brendan Fay, mast LT Quentin Ezell, mid-bow Igor Bosnjak, foredeck Domenic D'Angella and floating crew Nick Weinberg and Mitch Buchman.



Shout-out to LTC Sak Sakoda who volunteered to sail with the MIDN 3/C team of varsity midshipmen as their D-qualified Skipper.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR NOTE**

by Mr. Nathan Hesse



First off, I want to give a hearty welcome to all of the new volunteers. I enjoyed being on the water with all of you this fall, and I noticed lots of progress and improvement. Well done on learning the “Navy way” of sailing. I know that while many of you attained Senior Crew, some of you still need a few more hours. There will be plenty of opportunity in the spring to catch up.

**FLEET CAPTAIN NOTE**

by John Formisano



Skipper John Formisano

I’m sure that you’ve heard the expression that there is no bad weather, just inappropriate clothing. This fall was proof that this bit of sailing wisdom is definitely true. In October we were able to test out all of our sailing gear as the weather provided a bit of everything for us to train in, which is really the best way to get an appreciation for what you’ll experience on a summer block and what the Navy 44 can handle.

It was great to meet so many new volunteers on the Navy 44s and to reconnect with our existing volunteers who stepped up to help with the training. Now that the fall training has wrapped up and the boats are migrating to the other side of the Severn River to the Small Craft Repair Depot (SCRD) for winter storage and maintenance, I want to thank everyone for the time and energy that they put into making CSTS rewarding for both the midshipmen we train and for us as volunteers. The weather will always be changing but your unchanging commitment to the program continues to make CSTS successful. I hope to see you in the winter training sessions in the new year.

**MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NOTE**

by Craig Patterson

Now that the Fall OSTS season has wound down, our sights are now set on inspecting and hauling the fleet. The team generated a list of jobs that will be performed on the entire Navy 44 Fleet. Those jobs include:

- New raw water pump for Yanmar engine.
- Fresh bottom paint.
- Replace Racor fuel filter alarm.
- Pull 8 masts for full inspection.
- Whale foot pump replacement.
- Lee cloth replacement with a breathable material.

**PERSONAL GEAR**

We gathered up the last bits of instructor gear from the boats as part of end of season wrap-up. Some of these items are from the end of the summer, while the rest are from the fall. So far, we’ve already recovered and returned a bottle of medicine and an inflatable PFD. The rest we are auctioning off to the highest bidder. Just kidding - please send me an email to claim whatever is yours.

- Orange Nalgene bottle with NOLS and USS Helena stickers.
- A small whiteboard.
- A twisty black “Tangle”.
- Carson compact binoculars.



- A magnifying glass with a light.
- A black Stanley coffee mug.
- Digital air temperature and humidity gauge branded The Weather Channel.
- Blue croakies and a cloth for cleaning glasses.
- White shower curtain rings.
- A white USB to USB-C chord.
- A black pencil bag with a leather zipper pull.

There are also lots of Friends of Navy Sailing lanyards in our office. If you'd like one, please let Nathan know the next time that you are at Sailing Cebter. Nathan will also bring them to the first classroom leadership session in late January.

### FOUL WEATHER GEAR

Please return your foul weather gear and boots if you haven't already done so. We just got a bunch of new jackets, pants and boots so we can phase out some of the older and somewhat leaky gear. At the end of every summer block each boat crew rinses all foul weather gear inside and out, makes sure they're thoroughly dried and pockets checked for food prior to turning it in. We need to make this gear last, so expect that you will turn it back in in this condition too. Rinse it in the shower in cool-warm water vice running through the washing machine. As you've seen, it gets packed into the cage so needs to be clean and dry so it doesn't mildew. Plus, there's that Rodents of Unusual Size (RUS) problem we have around the waterfront. We've seen them chew through the pocket of brand-new gear before.

### BLACKBOARD®

Proficiency examinations are currently unavailable for existing skippers and XO's. We are updating and editing all the examination test banks. Everything should be back online in January.

We will add new volunteers to Blackboard® in late November. Nathan will submit your name, email address and phone number to the USNA IT Department to give you access. Someone from their office will call you and give you a temporary password over the phone. Expect access to Blackboard® sometime in early December.

### WINTER TRAINING SCHEDULE

We're still working on the winter schedule content, but we will publish a "Save the Date" calendar for you. Classes start January 24<sup>th</sup> and will be on Tuesday and Thursday evenings through March. A four-class leadership course will kick off the season. We'll be adding a section on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) this year as part of your leadership training. We'll also be adding classes on Seamanship topics and XO preparation. All classes will be in person, available live online and recorded. We hope to re-institute our informal after-class get-together at the Naval Academy Club on Thursdays.

There will be a couple of mandatory Saturdays. The boat systems course at SCR D does not have a date yet, since we need to coordinate with them and the varsity team to deconflict, but we typically have that class in late February or early March. We do have our Safety at Sea Seminar date confirmed for Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. That course is required every 5 years. If you already have a US Sailing Safety at Sea certificate from another source, let us know so we can verify online and update the proficiency tracker. The April 1<sup>st</sup> course is free for volunteers and midshipmen since we host the event in Alumni Hall. We'll send a Google sign-up sheet closer to the event.

### SPRING SAIL TRAINING SCHEDULE (CY 2023)

We can't end the season without talking about when we get to go sailing again, to motivate us through the cold winter nights ahead. Sail training on the Navy 44s will resume on April 8<sup>th</sup> through May 7<sup>th</sup> for Saturday-Sundays. That first weekend on the water may be refresher and/or instructor training sessions. The last two weekends will have overnight sails. Weeknights will run April 17<sup>th</sup> through May 5<sup>th</sup>. We are looking at doing a couple of weeknight sails from 1600 to midnight to build night hours for the watch captain qualification. This is new next year based on some excellent feedback we received from one of our coach volunteers. DELMARVA sails are May 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Sat-Tues), and May 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> (Thurs-Sun).

### SAFETY MOMENT

As sailors, we participate in a high-risk activity. Our Vanderstar Safety Chair, **Jon Wright**, tracks all Navy Sailing incidents each year, which we review during fall debriefs to see if we need improved training in any specific area. We can also learn a lot from what's happening in the greater world of sailing. Our Safety at Sea Seminar in the spring kicks off with a summary of Lessons Learned. This is compiled by the US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee for the national Seminar series. An incident report was conducted this summer from a person overboard fatality on the Newport-Bermuda Race on a privately owned race boat, so that we can all learn from it.

The incident report can be found at:

<https://ussailing2018.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/NBR-Morgan-of-Marietta-Report-10242022-FINAL.pdf>

### YOU ARE MAKING AN IMPACT

by Rick Robey

As volunteer CSTS instructors and mentors to our midshipmen, we do not get a lot of feedback on the impacts we make to these future leaders particularly after they graduate and enter the fleet. Over the years I have been doing this, I have heard from 3 midshipmen years later that served on my block sails. Most recently I got an email from **LT Nathan Myers**. The subject line of his email was "*Greetings from an OSTS Kid*".

Nathan graduated in 2016 and went on to serve in the submarine force onboard the USS North Dakota (SSN-784) out of Groton,

Connecticut. Nathan was a Midshipmen 3/C when he was on my crew for that Block sail in 2013. A synopsis of his email read as follows:

*“Hope it’s alright I’m reaching out; it’s been about 8-9 years since I went in a summer sail trip with you. I’m sure you’ve done a ton and they probably all run together, but our trip was the one where we got way behind in headwinds off Cape Hatteras and ended up stopping off in Southport, NC. An eventful trip for sure.*

*Anyways, I just wanted to reach out to see how you were and express my gratitude for your guidance and mentorship that summer. After I graduated, I went subs and did two North Atlantic deployments on USS North Dakota out of Groton. I’ve since resigned my commission and moved back to my home state of Kentucky. I’ll always look back fondly on that sail trip and the things I learned from you and the boat.”*

The lesson here is simply what you are doing as a CSTS coach and mentor does make a lasting difference in the lives of the midshipmen we have the privilege to train and take offshore.

In closing I would like to reiterate what **Renee Mehl** and **John Formisano** stated earlier in that I also thank everyone for the time and energy each one of you puts forth into making CSTS a rewarding experience for our midshipmen.

**CSTS FACEBOOK PAGE**

CSTS has its own rebranded Facebook Page! In addition to this newsletter, we will post important information about the program to this Facebook page. Please “Like” us so you have the program information as it is released. We have 1.1K “followers” to date and growing every month. Help us get to “2,023” in 2023. Please encourage your midshipmen to send photos and video from their spring training sails and summer block sortie. Anyone can post to our Facebook page. Just let Rick know by email or text so he can approve your post. We are generating a good following of CSTS family and friends that are following your sailing experiences. Do not be shy and please post!

Please “Like” us at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/USNAOffshoreSailTraining>.

**EMAIL OPT-OUT**

If you are on this email newsletter and would like to be taken off, please let us know. If you have any articles or information you would like to share through this newsletter, please email to [richard.robey@gmail.com](mailto:richard.robey@gmail.com). As always, thank you for your support of CSTS.

We keep about 12 months of past CSTS newsletters posted on the Navy Sailing website for your reference at:

[https://www.usna.edu/Sailing/Command\\_and\\_Seamanship\\_Training\\_Squadron\\_CSTS/Newsletters.php](https://www.usna.edu/Sailing/Command_and_Seamanship_Training_Squadron_CSTS/Newsletters.php)

**THANK YOU!**

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