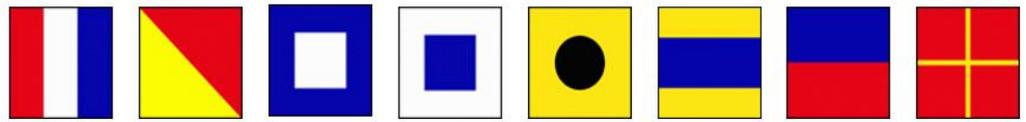


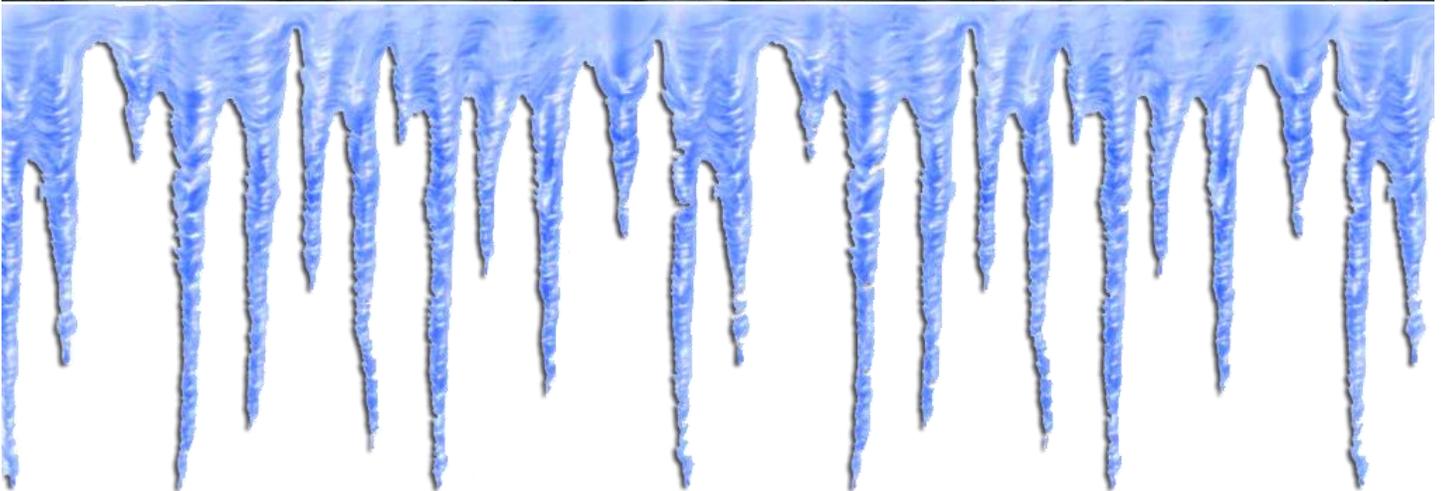
FEB  
2020



# TOPSIDER



## ICICLE RACES



FEBRUARY 2020

*Welcome*

New Board Members

Happy  
Valentine's  
Day

LEAP  
YEAR

## Past Commodore - by Jay Leggett

Congratulations to the newly elected 2020 TASS Board and my heartfelt thanks for their continued service to TASS. For the many years I've served on the TASS Board over my 20 years of membership, I've been blessed to serve alongside many great TASS Members, to whom I'm eternally grateful for their participation and friendship. Our great sailing club would not be what it is today or perhaps even continue to exist without the tireless contribution from our members that volunteer their time. Please consider volunteering some of your time, whether it's to host a single event, serve as a skipper, or on the TASS Board.

2020 things YOU can do to support TASS –

- 1) make sure your Membership is current,
- 2) where / when can I volunteer some time to help.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

2020 Board of Director Contact Information		
<i>Board</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>
Commodore	Urs Rathgeb	commodore@sailtass.com
Vice-Commodore	Andrew Clark	vicecommodore@sailtass.com
Membership	Patricia Gumps	membership@sailtass.com
Secretary	Emily Farris	secretary@sailtass.com
Fleet	Mike Vaughan	fleet@sailtass.com
Social	Joanne Moschella	social@sailtass.com
Purser	Nancy Welch	purser@sailtass.com
Treasurer	Charlie Holcomb	treasurer@sailtass.com
Webmaster	Thann Dauterive	webmaster@sailtass.com
Race Czar	John Klumb	regatta@sailtass.com
Blast Editor	Secretary	secretary@sailtass.com
Topsider Editor	Kirk Dunham(ad-Hoc)	topsider@sailtass.com
Historian	Webmaster	photos@sailtass.com

## Commodore by Urs Rathgeb

First off, I hope that you join me in thanking Jay Leggett, our outgoing Commodore, for his dedication and hard work for TASS over many years, in various functions, including for the last 10 (ten!) years as Commodore. Thanks to his stewardship, of course with the support of capable boards over the years, TASS has remained an active and vibrant organization.

Second, I would like to thank you, our members, for putting your trust in me and electing me Commodore for this coming club year. It will be difficult to fill Jay's shoes, but I am excited and motivated to take on this role, and I know I have an equally motivated board to support me in that quest.

I know I have not met all of you (yet), so here is a bit about myself (I will keep it short). I was born and raised in Switzerland, sailing Laser and the family cabin cruiser all over Lake Constance while growing up. While still living in Switzerland, I went on several sailing trips taking me to the Mediterranean, the

Baltic and the North Sea. After moving to the US in 1997, I sailed on the Columbia River in Portland, OR and crewed on J-24's in the Staten Island Sound in New Jersey, before I moved to Houston in 2005 and started sailing in Galveston Bay. I joined TASS in 2016, became a TASS Skipper in 2017 and served as Vice Commodore for the past two years.

While I have no intention to change the fabric of TASS, I do have some priorities that I want to share with you. The order in which they are listed below is not meant as an order of importance.

**Membership Drive** – The basis for an active and vibrant club are its members. While we have a great core of long-term loyal members, one of the signs of the time is that people move around more, have more on their plate, and more distractions. This makes a constant membership drive necessary. The past year has brought many new members that enjoy being active in the club (I hope you have met them), and we will need to continue that constant effort.

**Boat Owners and Social (Sailing)** – I know you have seen me push the racing activities over the past couple of years. That was one of my roles as Vice Commodore. Plus, my dad told me at a young age that if there are two sailboats on the lake, it is a race – even if the other guy doesn't know it is. But I digress. At least equally important is our emphasis on social sailing activities, with the inclusion of on the water events that are attractive to our boat owners in the club, and with continuation after we step off the boat for those who just want to meet old friends. We have planted the seed for another edition of the Amazing Race this year, and hopefully a couple of flotilla sails.

**Training and Safety** – I am grouping these two together because I know that any kind of training makes us safer sailors, even if the training topic does not include the word safety. Not only that, but it also supports our membership drive.

**Skippers** – TASS has been fortunate over the years to have a knowledgeable, experienced and safe group of skippers, and we need to make certain that this tradition continues. Over this past year, we had several weekends where we needed a skipper for a second (and in one case a third) charter boat. While this is a great development for the club, we don't want to burn out the current skippers on the roster, and it would help to have a couple more qualified skippers.

You can be certain that as a board, we will work hard on these priorities, as well as many other aspects of our club life. Also, we are always open to suggestions. If you make suggestions for events or activities, I hope that at the same time, you will be willing to take on an active role.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to attend our **Annual Business Meeting**, on **Thursday, February 20 in Houston** (at Barry's Pizza) - [register here](#) and on **Thursday, March 5 in Seabrook** (at Iguanas Ranas) – [register here](#). Please follow the link and register to put either of those dates into your agenda. During these meetings, the board would like to share with you the most important highlights of the past club year, as well as an outlook of events for the coming year. We promise we will keep it short and to the point.

I look forward to serving TASS and to see you at one of our events, be it on or off the water.

Your Commodore,  
Urs Rathgeb

## Astarte edges out Nightwind in the GBCA Icicle Race Series (Club Handicap Class)

Even during the winter, TASS members are competing, during the first five weeks of the year in the GBCA Icicle Series. Participating in the series were Astarte (Cheryl Morvillo), Nightwind (TASS Skippers Jay Legget/Gavin Gerondale/Urs Rathgeb), Ox-Bow (Andrew Clark) in the Club Handicap Class, and Hobgoblin (Marty Pedowicz) and Stellar of Course (not a TASS boat, but with John and Nancy Welch on board).



*The Spinnaker field on the first leg of GBCA Icicle Race #5 on February 1*

The Icicle Races this year have been a mixed bag in terms of wind and weather: While the first Saturday in January was characterized by practically no wind (and only one boat across all fleets finished), the second Saturday brought winds over 20 knots during the race, gusting to 25 knots. Astarte and Nightwind sailed in the Club Non-Spinnaker Class, finishing 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively. Hobgoblin and Stellar of Course finished 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in the Club Spinnaker Class. The third Saturday in January again brought very low wind conditions, with once more very few boats actually crossing the finish line, none of them crewed by TASS members. The race on January 25 was sailed at near ideal wind conditions between 10-13 knots from the Southeast. This time, Nightwind finished 2<sup>nd</sup>, ahead of Astarte in 3<sup>rd</sup> place and Ox-Bow ranking 4<sup>th</sup>. In the Club Spinnaker Class, Hobgoblin took a 4<sup>th</sup>, and Stellar of Course a 7<sup>th</sup> place.



*Nightwind between Marks #1 and #2 right after a tack during Icicle Race #4*

The last race of the series was sailed this past Saturday, under a clear blue sky, but with somewhat challenging shifting wind conditions around 7-8 knots. In the Club Handicap class, the three participating TASS boats finished in 1<sup>st</sup> (Nightwind), 2<sup>nd</sup> (Astarte) and 5<sup>th</sup> place (Ox-Bow). Hobgoblin finished 5<sup>th</sup> and Stellar of Course 7<sup>th</sup> in the Club Spinnaker class.



*Nightwind Crew Race #5*



*Astarte's Crew Race #5*

Congratulations go to Cheryl Morvillo, (Astarte) who took the series in the Club Handicap Class with 12 total points scored, edging out Nightwind (TASS Charter Boat) in second place with 11 points total. GO TASS!

Once again, sailing the Icicle Series was a blast, and I for one look forward to next year. But in the meantime, we have the whole 2020 season ahead.

### **FLEET NEWS**, Michael Vaughan

February has a mix of sailing events. There is one last GBCA Icicle race, leisure sails, a moonlight sail, and a men's sail training class. There should be at least one event that you may want to participate in.

Signup early for these sails, as we have been filling up and you may miss your opportunity if you wait. We are lucky in Houston to be able to sail year-round so let's get out on the water.

**REGISTRATION REMINDER** – We try to have some type of sail each weekend unless there is another event that overrides sails. Windward Sea Venture, our charter company, is getting busy and we will have challenges to reserve the boats that we want if we are not able to reserve early. Normally, sign-ups for sails end at midnight on **Thursday** night. If we do not have enough people registered by midnight on Thursday, the sail may likely be canceled. So, please sign-up early so that we can all spend more time on the water.



## **SOCIAL** by Joanne Moschella

Each month in the Topsider gives you a brief recap of the previous month's activities. Yes, January we began the year with the Black-Eyed Pea contest hosted by Lois but we already told you about that.

Meet & Mingles kick-off of the new year. January took us to a Houston landmark establishment – Christy's Steak & Seafood said to be George H.W. Bush's favorite place to eat.

Realizing it was a NEW DECADE!!! the TASS members have begun to emerge from hibernation and overall our 3 meetings have had good attendance. Always a big thanks to members who RSVP.

February Meet & Mingle returns us to Maggiano's Little Italy. Many people gave feedback as they enjoyed the area where we gathered and the relaxed atmosphere in which we are free to move about and **"MINGLE"**. Remember **MINGLE** is what these events are all about so if you sit with the same persons each week, make an effort to sit with someone new and get to know them better. TASS has some fascinating people, diverse backgrounds and WOW the stories are book quality. Everyone has something of value to share so let's **MIX & MINGLE**.

February 13<sup>th</sup> [\[REGISTER HERE\]](#) & February 27<sup>th</sup> [\[REGISTER HERE\]](#)

**6:00 PM • MAGGIANO'S LITTLE ITALY (2019 POST OAK BLVD, HOUSTON)**



March "In Like a Lion" as the saying goes, TASS social activity picks up. We are planning a new location for Meet & Mingle March. Check THE BLAST weekly for updates or visit the calendar. March is also the beginning of our race season and RACE DAY always means AFTER-RACE Party! Our March **CRAZY IRISHMAN PARTY Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> [\[REGISTER HERE\]](#)** will follow the race @ Sundance Grill. **WEAR GREEN** Celebrate the **IRISH!**

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS** by Patricia Gumbs

Wow, can't believe we are already approaching Valentines. I hope all is well with everyone.

A new and exciting sailing and the social season are upon us. I would like to us all get involved in Planning Activities for the club. Please share your ideas with the board if you have an event you would like.

## **FEBRUARY – BRING A FRIEND TO A MEETING MONTH**

February is a month to share love – share with friends your love for sailing and the amazing friendships you have made through TASS. So, I invite and challenge you to bring a friend to the next meeting or MEET & MINGLE event. Introduce them to sailing, help TASS grow our membership. New members bring new perspectives and ideas and the possibility for new friendships. Show your support for your club by renewing your membership.

To all who voted for me in the election this year my Thank You goes out in advance. I will continue to put my best efforts forward in support of this club. I look forward to seeing you all on the water or at an event.



Please remember to register for events and weekly meetings this helps in securing a venue.

Also for you love birds out there Happy Valentine's day. Ladies remember this is a Leap Year! (See Trivia)

Denise Parsons	1
Jeffrey Martin	1
Emily Farris	5
Lisa Doyle	6
Pam Marrs	7
Shirley Standifird	8
Sharron Sims	8
Dick Callaway	9
Richard Volpe	9
Barbara Schindler	12
Nancy Kahlden	13
Lois Geyer	14
Laura Marlin	18

Happy Birthday to all you Valentine Month babies



"Count your life by smiles, not tears. Count your age by friends, not years. Happy birthday!"

Webmaster by Thann Dauterive



This month we received a few inquiries about the website and other Social Media Platforms we use. Great questions, thanks for allowing us to direct you and clear the confusion. We hope you take the time to read the FAQ's below and online in the website library. The TASS website library

FAQ's can be accessed through this link <https://sailtass.com/FAQs>

*We don't know what you don't know unless you ask.*

*EMAIL: [webmaster@sailtass.com](mailto:webmaster@sailtass.com)*

? Why does TASS have so many websites, I get confused about where to find information?



A Great questions! Technically speaking, **TASS only has 1 website** and that site is [www.sailtass.com](http://www.sailtass.com). This website is the OFFICIAL place for members and guests to transact all TASS related business. From this website, you can perform all related TASS transactions. The website is the MOST comprehensive information source regarding all things related to TASS. It is maintained and updated almost weekly. Here are some things to highlight the functions of the website.

- Pay your membership dues online
- RSVP to a Meet & Mingle or Monthly Meeting
- Sign up [REGISTER] for a sail or event, (free or paid).
- Follow the upcoming events on the calendar for TASS
  - Events are color-coded on the monthly calendar by event type making it easy for you to choose an event and register.
- If you are a member you can access the member directory from the website
- The website contains a library of documents related to both the organization, training and history of the club
- The website shows a list of Current Skippers and their email address should you need to contact a skipper
- Several dedicated pages within the website display various activities, updates, and information on Sailing, Regattas. and Training

**? If the website is so comprehensive why does TASS use MeetUp for posting information.**



**A** – Again, another great question that can sometimes confuse our members. TASS uses SOCIAL MEDIA platforms like Facebook, MeetUp, and Twitter for the purpose of **SPREADING THE WORD**. You can think of these platforms as **FREE Advertising**. People search the internet 24x7. Houston has almost 2.5 million people. Platforms like Meetup allow people to find an organization of interest easily. TASS has a following of over 500 people who have checked out TASS through Meetup. It may not always be what a person is looking for but we can tell you it is a source of free advertising where we have landed many new members including our commodore Urs Rathgeb who searched Meetup for sailing and landed in our great organization.

SO, think of Meetup as a RADIO advertisement, you hear it on the radio. The radio does not allow you to speak back to the speaker in your car to take action. The ads on the radio tell you to CALL XYZ.... In this case, MeetUp tells you through events posted, here are things happening and go to our website and check us out. It does not collect RSVP's or monies.

**? SO, what about Facebook? Why does TASS have a Facebook page?**

**A** – Facebook is a **FREE Social Media platform**. We have a community of TASS followers on our Facebook page. We use Facebook to allow members to SHARE, their experiences, photos from events/sails and postings about TASS. We use Facebook as a FREE advertising message board or billboard to get information out to members who follow TASS on Facebook but may not frequently read the weekly Blast or Topsider newsletters we publish. Facebook is a BILLBOARD to help us remind you that something exciting is about to take place in the club or HEY! look here we just had a bunch of fun, don't forget to join us next time.



Facebook is limited as the major vehicle of communication to members – WHY? Well, not all members are on Facebook. Facebook does not allow us to conduct business transactions such as collecting fee's etc. for events.

So, think of Facebook as your BILLBOARD as you are driving down the internet freeway which tells you that the NEXT EXIT is..... A TASS event and you need to go to [www.sailtass.com](http://www.sailtass.com) for up to date and more complete

information and registrations, even if the event is FREE we hope you will be courteous and register from the [TASS website](#).

Members, we do hope this helps you understand that any transition you wish to conduct should be initiated through the TASS website.

If you read through the weekly BLAST and TOPSIDER monthly, we include for you a LINK. It is a BOX to click on which will take you directly to the website and that particular event related to the article or announcement. These links are there to make your RSVP and registrations EASY. ONE CLICK away and you are REGISTERED.

It is important to note that you need to log into your TASS membership account. This action is NO DIFFERENT than seeking information from your bank or credit card online.

Think of your login as your library card to the TASS website. We urge you to pick a password that you remember. If you forget your password, you can always use the feature FORGOT Password on the screen at login and follow the instructions given on the computer screen.

We spend lots of time on the website and encourage you to use this as your primary source of information and business transactions for TASS.

Please feel free to contact me at [webmaster@sailtass.com](mailto:webmaster@sailtass.com) for questions or suggestions.

## **FebruaryTECHTIPS**

### **Sailing Skippers and the "Order of Responsibility" from Captain John's Skipper Tips**

I received a note from a sailing skipper, who was shaken from his decision to sail through an inlet in dangerous conditions. He reported ten-foot seas when they returned from sailing that day. He was forced to make a 180° turn to meet a large wave approaching from astern...

If a vessel gets caught on the face of a wave, she may be turned beam to the seas and broach (capsize onto her beam). Or, she might pitch-pole. The bow punches into the trough, the stern lifts clear of the water, and the sea astern pushes the boat "head over heels" into a somersault.

Let's talk again about the responsibilities of the skipper (sail or power, recreational or professional). Passengers; Crew; Boat. This order of skipper responsibility does not change, no matter the circumstance.

The US does not require a set of standards of competence or specific training for a recreational skipper (unlicensed) to operate a vessel. I do not believe regulations are called for. We have enough of those. But, more common "sea-sense" would be nice to see.

You do not enter or exit an inlet if you suspect a breaking sea might build across the "navigable" part of the channel. If the forecast calls for building winds and seas, you can bet that a bar crossing will be much more difficult. If you have passengers or crew, they are your top priority.

What's the definition of a passenger? This has been sliced, diced, and argued about for years. I consider any person who pays even a dime for anything (food, drink, dock fees) to be a passenger. They have contributed money in some way to the day sail, cruise or voyage.

Crew--on the other hand--do not. They may be volunteer, unpaid crew (neighbors or friends) or professional delivery crew, but they have not parted with any funds to finance the event. Pretty cut and dried if you ask me.

In all cases, those aboard are our charges. We skippers bear this burden of responsibility from the time they step aboard until the moment they step ashore in a safe harbor. Whether we are recreational or professional skippers. Licensed or unlicensed. The buck stops with us.

Consider two things--exit and entry. Unless you are bound for a distant destination, you must return "through the slot" that you are about to depart. This may be an inlet, narrow channel, anchorage or slip space.

Sailboats are under-powered. They are not designed to enter or exit an inlet in rough weather. This requires timing and tons of engine power to control the boat with the rudder and propeller. If either appendage comes out of the water, even by the smallest amount, you risk losing control.

The return through an inlet can be more hazardous than the exit. Offshore swell slow and become steeper as they approach the coast. If the seabed rises to within one to two times of their height, they will form breakers. A four-foot swell can break when it passes over a sandbar four to eight feet below the surface.

**Study the inlet from a safe distance with a binocular before you attempt entry. Stay out at sea or heave to until conditions moderate. Wait for an incoming tide or slack water to make entry safer. Or, find an alternative deep-water entry point farther up or down the coast.**

Passengers or crew may complain about missed schedules or flights. But the loss of time will pale in comparison to an unnecessary risk that results in an overboard incident or worse. Passengers. Crew. Boat. The order of skipper responsibility never changes.



## TRIVIA

### LEAP YEAR

It takes Earth about 365.2422 days to revolve around the sun. So Julius Caesar rounded up to 365.25. Pope Gregory XIII came along at the end of the 1500s and decided to omit the leap year three times every 400 years. So instead of 365 days with a day added every four years, it's really done only 97 times every 400 years.

- **The idea of leap days entered Western culture via Egypt.** Julius Caesar was introduced to the system through his lover Cleopatra.
- **The Gregorian calendar year is 365.2425 days long.** It will take about 3,300 years before the Gregorian calendar is as much as one day out of step with the seasons.”
- **According to legend, it’s accepted for women to propose to men on Leap Day.** And men must accept!
- **Leap years give us an extra day to do our taxes.**
- **The Disney parks stayed open for 24 hours on Feb. 29, 2012.**



**29, 2012.** The event, called [One More Disney Day](#), marks the first time ever that both Disneyland in California and the Magic Kingdom in Florida will stay open for 24 hours.

[Leap-year-trivia-11-things-you-didnt-know](#)

Do you have any TRIVIA to share about vessels, sailing, Galveston Bay area etc.? Send your TRIVIA to [topsider@sailtass.com](mailto:topsider@sailtass.com) and get it published in the TOPSIDER!