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The 2023 Ms. Race: One of the Great Races in Sandy Hook Bay

By Marion
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In August of 1870, the first America's Cup race in United States waters took place in the Sandy Hook Bay area of New York and New Jersey. Hosted by the New York Yacht Club, eighteen schooners were registered to race. The New York Yacht Club's schooner *Magic* won the 40-mile race. In August of 2023, the 19th Annual Ms. Race took place in the same Sandy Hook Bay with a record thirteen boats registered, and by all racers and spectators, was just as exciting as that 1870 contest. Only this race was likely more resounding and more meaningful to its participants, for many, many reasons.

A sailboat race for women only, the Ms. Race, hosted by the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club (AHYC) in Atlantic Highlands,



Thirteen all-women teams competed in the 19th Annual Ms. Race. © Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

and to helping rebuild shattered lives. Since the first Ms. Race in 2005, the Ms. Race has proudly given all proceeds from the race and associated events to 180.

This year's theme was 'Women Wind Warriors,' and the racers in Sandy Hook Bay on a beautiful Saturday, August 19 proved themselves to be not only Women Wind Warriors but

determined, dedicated competitors in an event that hones sailing skills and builds self-confidence on the water. Maybe that 1870 race did some of that, too, but no women were on board those boats. The Ms. Race also partners with the Atlantic Highlands Sailing Education Program (AHSEP) to include young women as crewmembers on participating boats.

The Ms. Race is a Pursuit Race with Spinnaker (three boats registered) and Non-Spinnaker (ten boats registered) classes, in which each boat has its own start based on its PHRF-MA rating. And it was a "just right for racing" summer day with temperatures in the high 70s, sunny, and winds at 12 to 14 knots gusting to 17. Before

the race, on the water, the thirteen Ms. Race teams from different clubs around the Bay Area did some picturesque last minute



Saint of Circumstance took first place in the Non-Spinnaker division for the second year in a row.

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NJ, is an annual charity event to benefit 180 Turning Lives Around (180nj.org), a local non-profit organization committed to ending domestic violence, providing a safe haven for victims,



AHYC Past Commodore Elaine Haber and her crew sailed A Better Hair Day to first place in the Spinnaker division. © Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

maneuvering as their start times drew near while friends, families and guests watched on spectator boats to take photos, cheer on the racers, and monitor the race's progress. The officiating crew gave the starting signal promptly at 2:00 pm for the 7.0 nautical miles course around the Bay. Team confidence was visibly in place as each boat crossed the starting line. With the race off on a fine upwind leg, the Women Wind Warriors steadily made their way around the course without incident. The 'cut of their jibs' was good. The winners were:



Non-Spinnaker Division

1. *Saint of Circumstance*, Diane Kropfl, Tartan 3700, Atlantic Highlands YC

2. *Eduam*, Laura Dunn Grode-wald, C&C MK V, Raritan YC

3. *Celtic Star*, Sue Mulholland, Sabre S34, Keyport YC

Spinnaker Division

1. *A Better Hair Day*, Elaine Ha-her, J/24, Atlantic Highlands YC

2. *Aviato*, Karen Harris, J/109, Atlantic Highlands YC

"It was one of the best days we've had this summer for racing in the Bay," reported Diane

Kropfl after her second Non-Spinnaker Division Ms. Race win. "We practiced hard and every crew had a great team spirit. Best of all, we were able to raise a good amount of money for 180."

Following the race, exuberant captains and crews made their way to the AHYC clubhouse for a celebration and the Awards Ceremony. The award presentations were made by Ms. Race committee co-chairs Diane Kropfl and Emily Smith, along with Caitlin Tamayo, 180 Turning Lives Around Special Events Com-

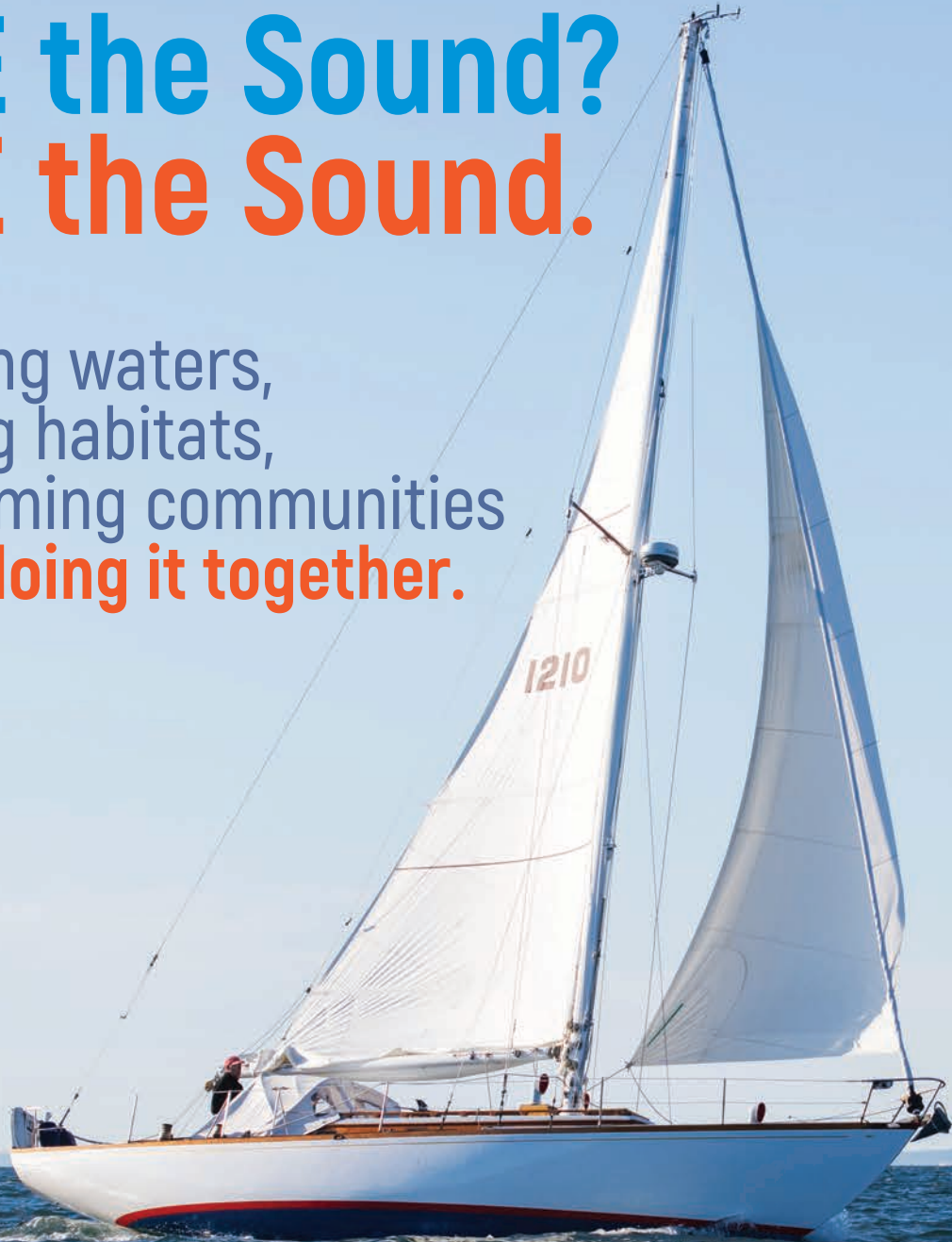
munity Engagement Coordinator. The Ms. Race committee was pleased to announce that over \$24,000 was raised this year, bringing the fundraising total for 180 over the 19-year history of the Ms. Race to more than \$250,000. That's probably more than any three boats in that 1870 America's Cup race cost to build.

If you would like to donate to 180 Turning Lives Around, please visit 180nj.org. To learn more about this remarkable event, log onto ahyc.clubexpress.com and click on "Ms. Race." ■

A sailor for over thirty years, Marion Bartholomew competed in the first Ms. Race in 2005 as the captain of My Time.

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