

WindCheck

Sailing the Northeast

- [The 2019 Ms. Race – Sailing Strong for 15 Years](#)

The 2019 Ms. Race – Sailing Strong for 15 Years

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By Diane Kropfl & Eileen Campbell, Ms. Race Co-Chairs

The Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club on the beautiful Sandy Hook Bay in Atlantic Highlands, NJ hosted their 15th annual Ms. Race on Saturday, August 17. This race is hosted by and for women sailors, with the support of the entire club and local community. This all-women event supports the local charity, 180 Turning Lives Around, that is dedicated to protecting, advocating and supporting victims of domestic violence and rape in Monmouth County.



Previous Ms. Race winner Elaine Haher's J/24 A Good Hair Day (left) next to Karen Harris' J/120 Cygni Photo by Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

The race definitely lived up to this year's theme, "Sailing Strong for 15 Years." The event is empowering for women who build their confidence with seamanship and teamwork and by racing on an all-women crew. This race is emblematic of the transformation of women who have changed their lives with the help of the 180 organization. The race brought together teams from three local yacht clubs and represented multiple generations of sailors.

Captains and their crews gathered at the yacht club to start the race day with a delicious breakfast spread from local sponsors and an instructive Captain's meeting. The sailing seminar was led by Elaine Haher, a seasoned J/24 racer, past AHYC Commodore and previous Ms. Race winner. Elaine coached the sailors with her illuminating sailing instructions peppered with stories from her wealth of racing experience. After the seminar, the race teams cheerfully gathered to make their way to their boats and prepared for the race ahead.



This year's Ms. Race winner, Kim Sinatra, with her crew on the J/29 Smokin' J Photo by Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

Out on the water, we thanked the sea gods for a little breeze to start the race and hoped that afternoon thunderstorms would not interfere. We were not disappointed. The teams sailed up and down the start/finish line in the 6-knot oscillating breeze, awaiting their turn for the Pursuit Race start. At exactly 1:00 pm the race began with the ten participating sailboats crossing the start at their designated times.

The conditions on the selected racecourse had mostly gentle breezes and occasional light air and fog on the horizon that made maneuvering a challenge in the downwind leg out to the buoy at the end of Sandy Hook. Out on the water with the racers were friends, families and guests on spectator boats, tracking the sailboats around the course, snapping photos, shooting video and providing the women with cheers and shouts of encouragement.



Ann Myer's J/105 Magic placed second with her team decked out in pink. Photo by Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

After the successful race, everyone convened at the club for the Ms. Race Event and Awards Ceremony that showcased the presentation of the trophies and prizes. Lynn Lucarelli, Director of Development for 180 Turning Lives Around, gave her sincere, wholehearted thanks to Ms. Race participants and many sponsors and donors, then the Ms. Race trophies were awarded to the cheers of the onlookers.

This year's Ms. Race turned out to be a family affair. The top two positions on the podium were claimed by a mother and daughter from the Raritan Yacht Club, each on their own boats. First place went to Kim Sinatra on the J/29 *Smokin' J*, and second place was claimed by her mother Ann Myer, last year's winner, on the J/105 *Magic*. Third place honors went to Karen Harris and her team on the J/120 *Cygni*, after a close match and

exhilarating 45-second showdown at the finish with two other boats, the Tartan 3700 *Saint of Circumstance* and the Beneteau First 40.7 *Overlap*. Donna Syers, the seasoned captain of *Overlap*, hosted twenty-four sailors including nine juniors from Toms River Yacht Club and Island Heights Yacht Club.



The 2019 Ms. Race captains and crews enjoying themselves at the post-race event Photo by Jeff Smith/jeffsmithphoto.net

The early evening celebration featured chance and silent auctions with donations from local sponsors, and a 50/50 with proceeds all going to 180 Turning Lives Around. It was a wonderful day at the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club, and best of all the generous sponsors and donors contributed to the \$15,000 raised through this year's Ms. Race. Since its inception, the Ms. Race has raised more than \$155,000 for 180 Turning Lives Around. For additional information on the Ms. Race, visit ahyc.net and facebook.com/MsRaceAHYC. ■