

St. George's School Hall of Fame, isn't taking the slight personally.

Ed Adams, the 1987 and '91 Rolex Yachtsman of the Year and former Star World Champion, is no stranger to the front of Fleet 413. After racing, he is often greeted on shore by his happy Labrador retriever Bodie who is, according to Adams, "all brawn, no brains." Adams is quick to share his top tips and insights with competitors after sailing.

Mark Bear, a professor at MIT, is one of the many who has benefited from being a student of Ed's. In 2002, Bear finished second at the Master Worlds following numerous coaching sessions with Ed, who won the Worlds that year. Of all the sailing Professor Bear does, frostbiting Lasers in Newport is his favorite.

Then there is the man of iron, nine-time Masters World Champion Peter Seidenberg. According to Peter, the Laser is a "simple, complex boat. Little adjustments can make a big difference." The reason he loves the Newport fleet is the racing offers "simple, pure, man-against-man sailing."

Despite the presence of numerous former World Champions, Olympians and collegiate All-Americans, all of the regulars cite the fleet captains as the reason the organization has stayed strong over the years. This winter, Peter Shope and Jack McVicker share the privilege and responsibility of running the fleet.

Shope is focused on making the racing as competitive as possible. He was the Fleet Champion last season, won the Masters Nationals this summer and finished third at the Masters Worlds. His goal is to create a guide for running races so the quality is always high and people know exactly what to do, as each weekend a different fleet member is responsible for doing RC.

Jack McVicker, a real estate agent with Re/Max, has deep ties to the Newport community and is keen to get as many boats out on the water as possible. He also keeps score for the season, which can be a daunting task. Last season, more than 77 sailors participated in approximately 150 races. McVicker's duty was made easier when local computer whiz and Laser 2 Champion Avram Dorfman wrote a program that simplifies the scoring process.

The entire fleet is grateful for the race committee leadership of Moose McClintock, who runs more races than anyone else. A veteran of two America's Cups as well as a world-class sailor, Moose runs perfect races. Wearing his headphones and sunglasses, he constantly squares up the course to make sure the



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racing is proper. And when Moose is calling the shots, there is no grouching; respect is shown.

If there is a secret ingredient to the fleet's success, it may well be the gathering at the International Yachting and Athletic Club after racing. Located on Thames Street, IYAC was voted Wight Vodka's Favourite Yachting Bar in 2011 by the readers of boats.com. As the changing facilities at Sail Newport are the backseats of the sailors' cars, the welcome at IYAC feels that much warmer, the food tastes better, and the adult beverages wash away any regret from the day's performance.

With the sincerity of a competitor begging for room at the leeward mark, Ed Adam's Labrador retriever Bodie looks deeply into your eyes in the hopes you might share a bite of crust. For at IYAC, salty sailors and salty dogs are all treated like family.

At the Laser Master Worlds in Hyeres, France in October, there was some heated debate as to the location of the world's best Laser fleet. Those from Newport's Fleet 413 displayed their pride. At the same time, members of the Royal Canoe Club in Sweden stated they may well have the premiere organization.

Thomas Whitmore, the only sailor who has been a member of both fleets, dodged the issue like a wily politician hoping to get votes from both sides of the debate. On the Fleet 413 Facebook page, Whitmore wrote, "Wednesday nights are the main event at the Royal Canoe club with 50-60 boats (Lasers) on the line. It seems to be a bit different than the 413 set-up: one 75-minute race with a rabbit start (they have bunch of 505 world champions in the fleet and those 505ers love their rabbits starts.)"

To join the Newport Laser fleet, visit newportlaserfleet.org. ♦

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