



## NEWSLETTER NO: 1



**Dear Friends, Sponsors - and potential Sponsors,**

It is a little over one year since our official launch in June 2010 - attended by both the Governor General (who is the Patron of the Academy) and the Prime Minister, Hon. Baldwin Spencer, amongst other guests, sponsors, schools etc.



The mission in 2010 was to raise enough funds to get us off the ground, and into the water!!

Thanks to the generosity of the yachting community and some local sponsors, we were able to:

Form the Non-Profit Organisation with a board of Volunteers.

Create our website, logo, email other infrastructure

Produce information/advertising materials



and

Purchase 12 new Optimist dinghies - the worldwide standard for junior beginners

Fund 150 courses of weekly swimming lessons - commenced September 2010

Fund 150 courses of weekly sailing lessons - commenced September 2010

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The 2011 season again saw great support from the yachting community with over 70 boats making donations to the programme. Thanks to Judy, Ash and, in particular, to Bea, for your help during the season - which was much appreciated. All donating yachts are listed on our website at [www.nationalsailingacademy.org](http://www.nationalsailingacademy.org) where you will also find details of how you may help with a donation

In addition, some yacht owners/crews as well as 3 Antiguan Companies and two 'landlubber' individuals donated sufficient funds for us to purchase a fleet of new Pico dinghies- which are now ordered & awaiting delivery. Again, the donors are listed on our website - most of the sails will bear the yacht/company logos and will be seen by all sailing in the harbour next season. The Pico is the ideal dinghy for those who progress from the Optimists but are not yet ready for the challenge of the Lasers.

We spent the season fundraising, and, apart from the yacht contributions and the Pico sponsors mentioned above, notable contributions came from:

A raffle held during the RORC Caribbean 600 week raised U\$3,000

The Alfie Perkins Memorial Fund donated U\$7,500

The Longo Mai Golf Tournament raised U\$11,500 - a fantastic way to have fun and raise money at the same time - we are very grateful to all from Longo Mai for their effort in making this event such a success.



## Donation of a 1720 Keelboat by Mr. Richard Matthews.

The 1720 keelboat gave us the opportunity to train a team of young sailors for the Premiers Cup Youth Regatta in Tortola earlier this month. The team of 6 (age 12 - 18) were selected for their sailing ability and enthusiasm for the sport. They had no previous competition experience and have never been away to any regatta before. Our most important instruction to them was that they were, at all times, to act as good sportsmen and that their behaviour should reflect well on Antigua.



Although they had several good results from the 18 races over the weekend - several 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> places - their lack of experience, and nerves, showed at other times and they finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place overall. They are all keen to learn from their experiences and train hard for the future.



It was very pleasing, after their return, to have received an email from the Regatta organisers saying: "They represented Antigua very well and we were all impressed by them"

It is hoped that we can, in time, get more financial support from Antiguan businesses & individuals - despite approaches to many, this is still a 'hard sell' as so many Antiguan do not swim, let alone sail. We hope that if we can expand our operations and more children take up swimming and sailing, awareness and support will follow.

We have been fortunate to have ECAB (previously the Bank of Antigua) assist us by making it possible for donations to be made through online banking, at ATM's and over the counter in any of their branches. Information is displayed in the branches so that all their customers will be aware of the Academy and its aims.

## SWIMMING INSTRUCTION



After one school year we have found the response from the schools outstanding. There is no doubt that we could, theoretically, be teaching 10 times as many to swim/sail. Swimming lessons are given at Swalings Swim Club (who are on the Academy Board) at Jolly Harbour and are a vital element of the Academy - we cannot teach children to sail until they have learned to swim. Sadly, in Antigua,

children do not learn to swim as a matter of course and only one (private) school - out of the 86 on the Island - has a swimming pool.

A pool is, undoubtedly, the place to teach swimming and water safety as - although we have fabulous beaches - the swells, surf, undertows, drop offs etc. can quickly ruin a child's confidence in the water. The Academy is now funding **400 children a week** on swimming courses. Recent additions have been two Girl Guide groups - a total of more than 60 students.



## SAILING INSTRUCTION

This takes place at the Antigua Yacht Club and the Academy funds the lessons. We currently



have **150 children a week** having sailing lessons. As we can, generally, only get children after school the club is at capacity as the needs of both the Academy and the club must be balanced to ensure sufficient time and resources are available to both.

In order, therefore, to increase the number of children learning to sail, we have plans to start two 'satellite' operations.



At **Parham Harbour** on the east coast at the Government Fisheries complex, we have been given permission to create the infrastructure (launch ramp, secure compound, storage facility etc) and the Sports Ministry have offered to pay 50% of the estimated costs of U\$20k. We are also discussing, with them, how the ongoing operation will be funded - the main expense being the instructors payroll. At Parham we shall also need another fleet of dinghies - 10 Optimists & 6 Picos so we shall be looking for more support from yachts/companies/individuals. We will also need a safety boat - estimated at a cost of U\$7.5k new - without which we would not be able to operate.

**Alternatively, if any yacht is replacing its tender for next season and would consider donating their existing one, we would be most grateful. We need a minimum 12 ft inflatable with a minimum 15hp outboard.**

On the west coast at **Jolly Harbour**, both CDAL & Jolly Harbour Marina are helping to create the infrastructure for the Academy to operate by providing a launch ramp and a secure dinghy storage facility. Given that there are so many visitors to the villas and resorts in the area, it is planned to offer fee paying sailing instruction to visitors in the mornings - which will help offset the cost of teaching the schoolchildren in the afternoons. As Jolly Harbour Yacht Club has been running an excellent voluntary youth training programme at weekends for some time, there is already a safety boat and a small fleet of dinghies - but we shall, no doubt need more!!

At the end of June, the Academy held its first 'End of School Year Gathering' at the Yacht Club. This was an opportunity for parents to see their children out sailing as many of them had not previously done so. The children arrive/leave on the schools bus to/from school each week so many parents had never even been to the Yacht Club in English Harbour. It was an excellent turnout which we hope will be even better as time goes on. Minister of Sport, Senator Winston Williams, attended and we presented two trophies.



The Alfie Perkins Memorial Trophy - donated by the Perkins family - was awarded to Daniel Smit (age 7) for the most enthusiastic sailor under 10 year of age, and the Jamarly Meade Memorial Trophy - donated by the Kelsey family - was presented to Rhone Kirby for the most enthusiastic sailor 10 - 18 years.



As swimming and sailing are now - albeit recently designated - national sports, we believe that if we can demonstrate demand and prove the children can excel at both, at both recreational and competitive levels, we will receive financial support from Government. We do have a vibrant yachting industry in Antigua with a multitude of employment opportunities both on & off the water -learning to sail is the way into that industry.

Sailing is the only Antiguan National Sport which offers these employment opportunities.

