



Celebration and her crew underway during the Stamford/Denmark race at the end of last season.

Photo by PhotoBoa

## Sea Scouts get deserved recognition

While most New England sailors are bundled up snugly as they remain in dry-dock mode, the skipper and crew of the sailing vessel Celebration have been busy getting a jump start on the upcoming 2008 sailing season.

During the typical winter hiatus, this particular Sea Scouts boat crew continues to run straight on through until the spring thaw. Their agenda while their 41-foot signature green-hulled boat is under wraps consists of weekly get-togethers focusing on such important aspects of boating as navigation, chart reading, splicing, knot tying, trimming, rules of the road, CPR and first aid.

In addition to the obvious educational advantages of increased knowledge and a more intimate understanding of the ins and outs of sailing, these skull sessions also help to keep the enthusiasm amongst the ranks at a peak level.

This year, however, the powers that be had a little extra surprise in store for the hard-working seafaring troop that would take the off-season energy to a whole other level.

On Sunday, Feb. 10, the Rex Marine Ship Store II, located at Norwalk Cove Marina,

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hosted a rather impressive event in the Sea Scouts' honor. With Norwalk Mayor Dick Moccia, State Representative Larry Cafero, and members of the Norwalk Sail and Power Squadron in attendance, skipper Kai Horan, along with five of her crew, were recognized with the prestigious Youth Safe Boating Award.

As if that was not inspiring enough, they also received a State of Connecticut General Assembly Official Citation in observance of their desire and dedication to developing their sailing skills and their commendable efforts to gain valuable experience in teamwork, responsibility, and navigation.

Pretty admirable for what is unarguably a young nautical team.

So young, in fact, that this coming season will mark only the third year that skipper Kai Horan will be in charge, following the retirement of former skipper Bill Austin.

"It was really nice to know

that there are folks out there who recognize all the efforts that the adults and kids (crew members) do and that it is a valuable experience for all," said Horan, reflecting on the recent ceremony.

Mayor Moccia added to the mid-winter highlight by referencing to how fortunate Norwalk is to have the volunteers from the Power Squadron and supporters such as Cove Marina and the Gardella family to help keep programs like this active and providing an environment for Norwalk's youth to develop skills and build character which ultimately benefit the entire community.

Horan agrees whole-heartedly as she shares, "We are very thankful to Cove Marina for their continued support."

State Representative Cafero said the Republican delegation in the House was proud to declare the proclamation and that the Sea Scouts program not only assists these young adults in their ventures at sea, but in their endeavors on land as well.

So, with such an encouraging and motivating beginning to 2008, how does Celebration plan to continue to move onward and upward?

"Every day I think how can

I make each effort work harder," says Horan. "I want to network more and make the program stronger. Ultimately, it's all about the kids and everything that I do is with that priority in mind."

"Since we are in what I consider a 're-building' phase, this year, especially, needs to focus on fundraising and increasing crew membership," continues Horan. "I would ideally like to have a crew of 16 to 18 and would like to see us competing in more Long Island Sound races."

With all of the work that Horan and her young crew have ahead of them, I asked this driven leader what she felt would be the idyllic situation.

"With everything that I would like to accomplish with the program, the best scenario for me would be a 48-hour day," she said.

Even with the stresses that accompany running a successful program, Horan still has time for a little humor.

To learn more about Celebration and the Sea Scouts sailing program, check out their website at [www.norwalkship6.org](http://www.norwalkship6.org).

*Karen Jewell's Water Views column runs Thursdays in The Hour.*