

## From the Sail Fleet Racing Handicappers Corner

Earlier this year, Commodore Robertson and Fleet Captain Curran approached me with a unique request: serve as the BYC representative to the PHRF-NW Handicapper's Council. Having been active in the Puget Sound racing scene for almost 20 years and having been mystified by this process, I immediately agreed. This means providing race boat handicapping service to both BYC as well as CYC Bellingham sailboat racers.

Yesterday (1/25/09), I spent my first day in service, attending the 2009 Annual General Meeting, held at the Tacoma Yacht Club. There is generally only one of these meetings each year, held in conjunction with the Director's meeting. In this meeting, the Chief Handicapper presents a review of the past year, results of Regional, Council, and Sub Council meetings, and plans for the future.

All handicappers were asked to communicate the priorities of the PHRF-NW for the upcoming year. The first priority is to ensure that every member's rating is accurate and reliable for both member and race organizing committees. A software program has been developed which is capable of scanning the PHRF-NW database and reporting errors - be they measurement abnormalities, clerical or other type errors. To this end, I was requested to communicate to the racing fleet to check your certificate, to make sure the listed measurements are accurate. A benefit to this was emphasized that sails change in dimension over time, and that there may be benefit to re-measuring to take advantage of the new measurement protocol. As new boats enter the fleet, they will be measured by this protocol, so perhaps you should be, too. All handicappers were directed to request new measurements of all sails when new sails are reported as purchased and/or added to a boats inventory. So, all of you who just took advantage of the 'Boat Show Specials' in sail orders, please pay attention. As this evolves I may be contacting all PHRF rated boats to clarify and confirm some of your rating data.

The second item was to gently remind you all to renew your certificate in a timely manner-especially if new sails are involved. Renewing is easy. At last (tonight-with the most recent update of 1/22/06) check, I see that many prominent BYC racing craft are not yet current. Although the first BYC PHRF race is still six weeks away...please, let's make this easy on all of us. Check [www.PHRF-NW.org](http://www.PHRF-NW.org) for details if you have forgotten. Also, my job entails that all of your certificates are current and on-file for each PHRF race you enter.

Overall, I learned that handicapping boats is part science, part art...a blend of math and technology with intuition based observed performance. We reviewed several applications for rating change, appeals of rating changes and establishment of like rated boats into performance groups. Out of this, the only news of relevance is that there will now be PHRF ratings for One Design fleets who desire to have an official PHRF rating.

All in all, I am pleased to be involved and representing the BYC in this organization. My primary goal will be to assist BYC members with issues and problems in this area. I look forward to learning and working with North Puget Sound racers over the upcoming years.

Neil Bennett