

Birth and History of the River District Regatta

Early in 2008 the Fort Myers Sailing Club proposed organizing an Annual Sailing Regatta as a fundraiser to benefit the educational work of the Edison Sailing Center. The FMSC has been associated with the Edison Sailing Center since its inception in 1984. The ESC is a community based, non-profit organization which uses sail training to reach out to Southwest Florida youth to develop personal skills, sportsmanship, independent thinking and self-confidence while on the water. The FMSC, which was formed years before in 1954, functions as the adult component of the ESC. It is natural for adults to mentor youth and appropriate that the FMSC would step up to the plate to mentor and support the efforts of the ESC.

During this same time the Downtown Ft. Myers Redevelopment Commission adopted the name "River District" for the soon to be revitalized downtown core of Ft. Myers, FL. The Commission was agreeable and the FMSC incorporated the name for this Annual Regatta. A date was chosen in early May and planning by the FMSC began in earnest.

The River District Regatta was established as and remains an Open Invitational Regatta. This is a worthy cause and the more sailors who participate the greater the funds to be raised to benefit the ESC. Thus all interested sailors are invited to participate. Boat owners who are not affiliated with any particular sailing club are welcome to register and race.

The 2008 Event:

Time was extremely short to establish and organize such an event in just 3 months. We were very pleased that North Star Yacht Club in North Fort Myers stepped up to act as our major sponsor and also to be host and Headquarters for this Regatta. NSYC was a new condominium/marina community with 52 boat slips for the participants to use. Because NSYC covered most of the operational costs, proceeds from registration, T-shirt sales, raffles and a silent auction were all donated to the ESC. The 2008 event was held on May 3rd, drew 24 boats and raised a total of \$4,200.00 for the general fund of the Edison Sailing Center.

The 2009 Event:

The date for this years River District Regatta is Saturday May, 2, 2009 with Sunday as the backup date. The host and Headquarters for the Regatta is the ESC's South Training Center, located at 2000 West First Street, Fort Myers, FL. Dock space will again be provided to all participants. This year proceeds from the fundraiser regatta will support scholarships for summer programs of the Edison Sailing Center. To set the bar for fundraising, members of the Fort Myers Sailing Club are providing direct support for six \$175.00 ESC summer scholarships.

A major fundraiser will be a 50/50 Cash Raffle. *This Raffle is open to any person interested in helping support the educational work of the ESC.* **The winner need not be present to win the cash award.** The ticket cost is \$1.00 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5.00. **Contact: Lyne Lockhart at 239.671.1298 or thingstosay@live.com to purchase raffle tickets.** All regatta participants and the general public are encouraged to participate in the raffle. Several large ticket items TBA will be available for individual raffles. Direct tax deductible donations to the Edison Sailing Center are also welcome.

West Marine has graciously committed to hold a Community Day Event to benefit the ESC. This one-day event will be held on Wednesday, April 29th from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm at the South Ft. Myers Store located at 12901 McGregor Blvd. All products purchased during that day will be discounted to wholesale pricing and 5% of the gross sales will be donated to the ESC. On the preceding Saturday, April 25th students and instructors of the ESC will have a booth set up in the store to answer your questions about their boating programs and also to sell 50/50 Raffle tickets. Please contact the store manager, Eddie Cedeno at 239.481.7447 ext.3 for further information.

BOATPIX.com, Inc will provide aerial photography for the sailboats participating in the River District Regatta. For more information go to: www.BOATPIX.com.

The River District Regatta for 2009 has been designated as a Boat of the Year event. This designation does not preclude any interested sailor from registering and racing. The general public is welcome to join in and watch the sailing activities and learn more about the ESC from the docks of the ESC South Training Center, 2000 West First Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901. Please join us on Saturday the 2nd of May, 2009.

Please note that a **Notice of Race** and **Entry Form** are available to be down loaded elsewhere on this Web Site. For further information please contact the Regatta Chairperson, Joanne Russ at 863.244.1928 or 239.349.5168.

Final Plug:

The Edison Sailing Center, established in 1984 is a member of U.S. Sailing and is committed to teaching basic sailing skills to young people. Their mailing address is 15880 Summerlin Rd, #300 -175, Ft. Myers, FL 33908, and Tele: 239-454-5114. The Center is located on the Caloosahatchee River near downtown Ft. Myers and also offers intermediate and advanced level courses, with an emphasis on racing. The senior students are eligible to participate in the Level 1 USSA instructor training to continue their education. The ESC is a community based, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization which uses sail training to reach out to Southwest Florida youth to develop personal skills, sportsmanship, independent thinking and self-confidence while on the water. Direct tax deductible donations are welcome, Contact: Stephanie Webb 239-454-5114. Complete information is available online at www.edisonsailingcenter.org.