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Final Annapolis-to-Newport Race seminar will be on weather, strategy Panelists will discuss receiving weather info offshore, navigation and more

ANNAPOLIS, MD (May 20, 2015) – Participating skippers and navigators will not want to miss the final Annapolis-to-Newport Race seminar, which will focus on weather and strategy. A2N Seminar V will be held on Sunday, May 31 (4-6 p.m.) in the Skipjack Lounge at Annapolis Yacht Club.

Featured panelist for the seminar is Joe Sienkiewicz, acting director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Weather Service Ocean Prediction Center.

The Ocean Prediction Center is responsible for weather warnings and forecasts for the high seas and offshore waters of the North Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Sienkiewicz’s expertise is in the application of satellite derived ocean surface winds and waves in marine forecasting, the evolution of ocean storms, and usage of numerical models to predict ocean weather. He was one of the forecasters for the 1991 Halloween (Perfect) Storm and worked with the National Hurricane Center during Sandy to assist with storm surge forecasting.

Sienkiewicz has been with NOAA for over 25 years and served as a marine forecaster, senior marine forecaster, science officer, techniques development chief and now Acting Director. The Calvert County resident is a graduate of SUNY-Maritime College, earning a B.S. in Meteorology and Oceanography and the University of Washington with an M.S. in Atmospheric Science.

Sienkiewicz held a United States Coast Guard third mate, oceans unlimited license and Master of Freight and Towing vessels license. Joe worked for five years as mate and captain aboard tugboats based in New York and is a lifelong sailboat racer and cruiser on the Chesapeake Bay. The Huntingtown resident currently crews aboard a Beneteau 36.7 in the Pirates Cove Racing Club series on the West River.

“During a lengthy offshore race such as this it is imperative to have access to up-to-date and accurate weather information,” said Dick Neville, co-chairman of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. “We have many first-time participants and they need to learn about the various ways to receive weather and wind reports once out of VHF and cell phone range.”

Also on the panel for this seminar are two extremely experienced offshore navigators in Annapolis residents Tom Schubert and Tarry Lomax. Both veterans of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race will discuss the navigational and strategic challenges of the 475-nautical mile passage.

Lomax was a surface warfare officer in the United States Navy from 1969 through 1972, serving on three destroyers. He first competed in the Newport-to-Bermuda Race in 1976 aboard a 33-foot sailboat and that spawned a lifelong love of offshore sailing.

Lomax has served as navigator and watch captain a total of 15 times in either the Annapolis-to-Newport Race, Annapolis-to-Bermuda Race, Fort Lauderdale-to-Montego Bay Race or Newport-Bermuda Race. He was honored for being the winning navigator aboard Y2K when it finished first overall in the Annapolis-Newport Race and was also navigator aboard Raider when it was first to finish the Annapolis-Bermuda Race with a course record time of 85 hours.

Schubert is a 1969 graduate of the United States Merchant Marine Academy and spent nearly a decade as a sea-going officer in that service. He has served as navigator aboard a wide variety of boats in 17 Bermuda races – 10 Newport-Bermuda, 4 Annapolis-Bermuda, three Marion-Bermuda. He has also been navigator for 10 Annapolis-Newport races, 6 Marblehead-Halifax races, 5 Fort Lauderdale-Key West races and 5 Lauderdale-Montego Bay races

Schubert has been the winning navigator in six of the aforementioned races as well as for the Onion Patch Series on two occasions. In 2003, he was presented with the prestigious Richard Stimson Navigation Award by the Storm Trysail Club. In 1994, he earned the Bermuda Ocean Race Navigator's Trophy.

"Tarry and Tom are two of the finest offshore navigators on the East Coast and have always done a superb job on behalf of their boats and skippers," Neville said. "These two gentlemen bring immense experience and expertise to our seminar and those attending would be wise to listen carefully to what they have to say."

Adding another element to the seminar will be Mike Powers, who has spent nearly two decades as a Chesapeake Bay Pilot and is also a veteran offshore sailboat racer. Powers, a member of the Association of Maryland Pilots for 19 years, has worked for various shipping companies worldwide, primarily aboard tankers. His experience ranges from operating small self-propelled vessels in and around New York Harbor to the massive VLCC supertankers that carry crude oil in the Pacific basin.

Powers achieved a measure of notoriety during the 1997-1998 Whitbread Round The World Race when renowned skipper Dennis Conner hired him to serve as navigator aboard Toshiba for the Chesapeake Bay passage that concluded Leg 7 from Fort Lauderdale-to-Baltimore.

Annapolis-to-Newport Race participants planning to attend the May 31 seminar should contact the Annapolis Yacht Club front desk at 410-263-9279.

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The official A2N event website: annapolisnewportrace.com