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# Competition helps BBYRA maintain its racing edge

Press Staff Report

"IT WAS A GREAT year," said Commodore Lee Egee two days before Labor Day, when the Barnegat Bay Yacht Racing Association concluded its 10-regatta season at Seaside Park Yacht Club.

"In terms of the number of boats, participation was up," said Egee on the BBYRA's 74th season.

Indeed, the total number of boats registered from the BBYRA's 13 member clubs was 2,074, which included a season high of 254 boats on July 18. The sailors participating throughout the season ranged from age 10 all the way to the late-70's.

"It's been a great experience," said vice-commodore Job Gash, who is likely to succeed Egee as the BBYRA's commodore for the next two years. "We've witnessed this year anywhere from 400 to 500 people on a regatta day out on the water. Which means 250 boats. It's a great feeling to know that this many people are out on the water and are participating. And something where they're getting what I call 100 percent evaluation of their time spent on the water."

Next year will be the BBYRA's 75th anniversary, and its future seems secure. The three original yacht clubs that organized the BBYRA in 1914, Toms River, Island Heights and Seaside Park, are still there, along with Lavallette, Bay

Head, Beachwood, Manasquan River, Mantoloking, Metedeconk River, Normandy Beach, Ocean Gate, Shore Acres, and the last to join in 1978, Pine Beach.

"The member clubs have hosted a group of regattas this year that have had nothing to do with the BBYRA," said BBYRA public relations chairman Norm Berson. "Island Heights hosted the world championships for the Albacore. Bay Head had the national women's junior championship. Toms River had the United States Yacht Racing Union's multi-hull championships. I think this is something that is a credit to the BBYRA that the member clubs are selected to run these kinds of events."

The BBYRA's summer regattas have races for 18 different classes of boats, ranging from the traditional 'A' Cat, of which there are only three, to the more prevalent Lasers, which has five different classes and up to 110 boats.

"We sail 10 regattas," said Egee, who has served his two-year term as the BBYRA's commodore and will step down after this year. "Generally starting the last week in June. We sail on what I refer to as 'up-bay' and 'down-bay.' Up-bay being the Green Island course, which is in front of Shore Acres. And the down-bay course is at the mouth of the Toms River."

Although the BBYRA's 74th season has just ended, plans are being formulated on how to celebrate number 75.

"Well, it is our 75th year and we are

planning on a major banquet in March," said Egee. "It appears right now that the banquet is going to be held at the Bay Head Yacht Club. And there we hope to have some significant people in the world of sailing."

"We'll probably try to fit in an extra race or two for the 75th anniversary next year," said Gash. "We have like what we call an off-week-end where we might fit it in, or we might fit it in with a club that may want to sponsor something special."

Egee, who looks forward to getting back into sailing next year, explained what separates the BBYRA from similar yachting associations in the country.

"I don't know of any other place in the country that does it exactly the way we do it," said Egee. "It's unique to this area where you have a number of small towns each with a small yacht club. For instance if you go into the San Francisco area, a big sailing area, they have three or four yacht clubs, all huge. By that I'm talking 2,000 or 3,000 members each. Here, each town has its own yacht club. All of these various clubs, they get together within sailing distance of one another."

"Again if you go to other areas where there are different clubs, Long Island Sound for example, clubs up there are 15 or 20 miles apart. Here we're 20 miles from the furthest club. So it's a unique situation."

"Even though we have a lot of sailors that



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Commodore Lee Egee was pleased with the results of this year's racing.

are out here year in and year out," commented Gash on the BBYRA's enduring popularity, "the challenge of coming out and winning against the other 12 or 13 clubs involved in the bay seems to be a very big challenge to these people. They come out and they want to win. Not only the young people, even the old people. They're very competitive people. And I think that does a lot to establish the character of the people in the area. They're individuals, they play by the rules, and they win by the rules."

"I think that if you go back into the rules, the way the BBYRA was set up 75 years ago, it was for the sportsmanship and the betterment of sailing on Barnegat Bay. We've been able to improve upon that a little bit."