



## Getting it Right: Edgartown Yacht Club's 'Round-the-Island Race

### *John Kerry Wins Venona Trophy*

EDGARTOWN, MASS., (August 3, 2020) — Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (Chilmark, Mass.) claimed the coveted Venona Trophy at Edgartown Race Weekend's 82nd 'Round-the-Island Race, sailing his classic Alden Cutter 44 *Lark* to win his class and post the best corrected time from among all entrants in the Spinnaker Division. A fleet of 46 boats competing in eight classes started and finished its circumnavigation of Martha's Vineyard on Saturday, August 1. In a virtual Awards Ceremony, held Sunday afternoon, Kerry (who also is a former U.S. Senator for Massachusetts) praised host Edgartown Yacht Club for pulling off the regatta during the Coronavirus pandemic, which sadly has caused the cancellation of many other regattas.

"The Club did a brilliant job -- thoughtful and well executed, without onerous but, nevertheless, clear restraints," said Kerry, mentioning particularly the restriction of no social gatherings at the club. "That's a hard thing to give up in sailing, but it was hugely appreciated that they covered all the bases and it allowed us to get out on the water."



Former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator (Mass.) John Kerry receives his welcome bag from Chairman Alex Nugent before Edgartown Yacht Club's 'Round-the-Island Race. Kerry and team went on to win their class and the coveted Venona Trophy.

photo by Stephen Cloutier

Kerry and his team of five were squeezed out at the start and had to circle back to restart behind the eight other boats in his class; however, over the course of 54.7 nautical miles, they were able to “work the current and the calm” to find little breaths of air that helped them make up for lost time.

“Some of it was luck being in the right place; there are all sorts of variables in sailboat racing, and they were all at play here,” said Kerry.

The light northeast wind at the start became a stronger southwesterly by the time the fleet reached the south side of the island. Kerry said it was a pleasure to get going at a decent pace from there until the finish. “We thought we might have a shot at the class victory, but we were totally surprised with being awarded the Venona Trophy,” he said, adding that Lark, built in 1932 and older than the race itself, was recently re-launched after some work, and this was her maiden race.

Stephen Besse (Vineyard Haven, Mass.), sailed his J/120 *Apres* to victory in the PHRF Doublehanded A Class, the second largest class with eight entrants, to collect the Eolis Trophy. He says he has been second in his class here at least five times out of ten previous tries but has never won, and this year was the first time he sailed without a full crew.



Scenes from the 2020 Edgartown Race Weekend 'Round-the-Island Race. Clockwise from upper left – top-three class finishers *Cepheus*, *Bella Sirena*, *Kanga*; PHRF Spinnaker A winner *Christopher Dragon* (foreground) leading top-three class finisher and Martha's Vineyard Ocean Race Trophy winner *Money Penny*; top-three class finisher and Hobart A. H. Cook Award winner *Vamp* (foreground); a happy Race Committee; PHRF Spinnaker D and Venona Trophy winner *Lark*, Ralph D. Osborne Trophy winner *Aurora*, and M32 One-Design and Commodores' Concord Cup winner *Midtown Racing*.  
**(photos by Stephen Cloutier)**

“I did it that way because of Covid-19,” he said, “knowing there would be only one other person to worry about instead of eight people.” Besse, like Kerry, played it right at the most critical juncture in the race: “The wind dropped out where Muskeget was narrowing down and some boats got sucked across Wasque Shoal. Having done this race before, I stayed farther east and drifted by Mutton Shoal on the right side of the buoy by just a boat length. Others had gotten carried past it and were anchored. We had enough of a lead that if we didn’t do anything stupid, we’d be good. We sailed the rest of the race hard, however, and we loved sailing from The Hooter (a government mark that makes a hooting sound) to Squibnocket in seven knots of breeze.”

Edgartown Yacht Club’s ‘Round-the-Island Race — one of America’s oldest distance races — originated in 1938, and except for the years of World War II, has been an annual event since then on Martha’s Vineyard. After an 0800 start, the fleet sails between Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket along the east beach of Chappaquiddick. At midday, it is in the open Atlantic Ocean with views of the south coast of the Vineyard. In the afternoon, rounding the famously gorgeous cliffs of Gay Head, the fleet sails up Vineyard Sound. If the tidal currents or wind conditions make the going slow, the Race Committee can shorten course. (This year, Doublehand B and PHRF Non-Spinnaker classes sailed an abbreviated course of 45.52 miles.)



Edgartown Yacht Club during Edgartown Race Weekend.  
photo by Stephen Cloutier

**A full list of 2020 'Round-the-Island Special Awards and their recipients follows:**

Martha's Vineyard Ocean Race - Best Corrected Time among entries by the EYC members Skipper: Jim Swartz Boat: MONEYPENNY

UPBEAT CUP - Overall winner Best Corrected Time of the non-spinnaker division Skipper: Joshua Dennerlein Boat: PHANTOM

EOLIS Trophy – Double-Handed overall winner Skipper: Stephen Besse Boat: APRES

Hobart A. H. Cook – Best Corrected Time among Service Academy entries Skipper: Kenneth Luczynski Boat: VAMP - U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

Yacht Club Team Trophy – Best Corrected time of a 3-boat team from any given yacht club or Service Academy: Hyannis Yacht Club, CAMELOT, Robert Labdon, RUSE, Bill Marsh, SLIDE RULE, Scott Bearse

Ralph D. Osborne Trophy – Lowest Elapsed Time of the PHRF Spinnaker Division Skipper: Gus Carlson Boat: AURORA

Commodores' Concord Cup - Lowest Elapsed Time Skipper: Sam Hallowell Boat: MIDTOWN RACING

Venona Trophy - Overall winner Best Corrected Time of the Spinnaker Division Skipper: John Kerry Boat: LARK

**Sponsors for the Edgartown Race Weekend** are Mount Gay Rum and North Sails. Supporting sponsors are Hinckley Yachts, Morris Yachts and Vineyard Vines.

For more information, visit <http://www.rtirace.org>. On Facebook follow [Edgartown Yacht Club Racing](#).

Full Results 'Round-the-Island:

[https://www.yachtscoring.com/event\\_results\\_detail.cfm?Race\\_Number=1&eID=11729](https://www.yachtscoring.com/event_results_detail.cfm?Race_Number=1&eID=11729)

(end)

(Top-three Results Below)

**Place, Yacht Name, Type, Owner/Skipper, Hometown, Results, Total Points**

---

**Class 6 Doublehanded - B (PHRF - 6 Boats)**

1. Phantom, Concordia yawl 41, Joshua Dennerlein, Westfield, NJ, USA - 1; **1**
2. Atalanta, Sabre 28 ketch 28, Richard Sides, Marblehead, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Turning Point, NY 36 35'8, Rich Gold, Stamford, CT, USA - 3; **3**

**Class 7 PHRF Non-Spinnaker (PHRF - 6 Boats)**

1. Camelot, S&S 45 45, Robert Labdon, Brewster, MA, USA - 1; **1**
2. Windigo, Sabre 426 42, George Brown, South Dartmouth, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Skandia, Hinckley Sou'Wester 51 51, Geoffrey Berger, Vero Beach, FL, USA - 3; **3**

**Class 8 M32 One Design (One Design - 1 Boats)**

1. Midtown Racing, M32 32, Sam Hallowell, Middletown, RI, USA - 1; **1**

**Class 1 PHRF Spinnaker - A (PHRF - 4 Boats)**

1. Christopher Dragon XI, Ker 40+ 41, Andrew & Linda Weiss, Mamaroneck, NY, USA - 1; **1**

2. Atlas, Beneteau First Yacht 53 57, Rick Wright, Swampscott, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Money Penny, Swan 601 60, Jim Swartz, Edgartown, MA, USA - 3; **3**

**Class 2 PHRF Spinnaker - B (PHRF - 5 Boats)**

1. Hafa Adai, J 109 35, Eliot Shanabrook, Marblehead, MA, USA - 1; **1**
2. Dark 'n Stormy, J 105 34.5, Joyce, Reservitz, and Wagner, Plymouth, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Bella Sirena, Maxi Dolphin 33 33, James Barnes, Mattapoisett, MA, USA - 3 ; **3**

**Class 3 PHRF Spinnaker - C (PHRF - 7 Boats)**

1. Wildflower, Sabre 402 40, Jonathan Pope, Mattapoisett, MA, USA - 1; **1**
2. Vamp, J 44 44, Kenneth Luczynski, Kings Point, NY, USA - 2; **2**
3. Veladare, C&C 42 Custom 42, John Myles, New Castle, NH, USA - 3; **3**

**Class 4 PHRF Spinnaker - D (PHRF - 9 Boats)**

1. Lark, Alden Cutter 44 44, John F Kerry, Chilmark, MA, USA - 1; **1**
2. Kanga, DP 34, Camden Tougas, Marion, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Toujours, Tartan 37 37, Brian Bush, North Chatham, MA, USA - 3; **3**

**Class 5 PHRF Doublehanded - A (PHRF - 8 Boats)**

1. Après, J 120 40, Stephen Besse, Vineyard Haven, MA, USA - 1; **1**
2. Ruse, Swan 44 Mark II 44, William Marsh, Chatham, MA, USA - 2; **2**
3. Cepheus, Quest 33S 32.5, Philip Haydon, Boston, MA, USA - 3; **3**