

## Commodore's Notes Mid-Summer 2025

The yellow tetrahedron is a speck at 1:30 as your sailboat speeds upwind under a steady 9 knot breeze when a crew member says "puff coming". You note a cobalt blue patch of water on your right and time shows down. For a few seconds nothing changes, then a groan from the rigging vibrates your tympanic



membrane and a message is transmitted up the auditory portion of your 8<sup>th</sup> cranial nerve. Simultaneously, endolymph in your semicircular canals rotates and transmits a sensation of acceleration as the boat speeds up, yaw as the boat heels and rotation as the boat begins to round up. These messages travel up the vestibular portion of the 8<sup>th</sup> cranial nerve to your cerebral cortex. A gentle puff on your cheek is transmitted up the 5<sup>th</sup> cranial nerve while a sudden increase in pressure on your palm by the tiller races up your arm through the spinal cord to the sensory cortex. Your retina records a change in direction of the telltales and that message travels through the 2<sup>nd</sup>

cranial nerve. All these messages are integrated and processed almost instantaneously by your cortex. Your brain reflexively responds by commanding the motor muscles of your arm and chest to spill a little air by moving the traveler slightly. The pleasure centers of your brain are stimulated once again while new memories form in the hippocampi and amygdala. And now as you look at the tetrahedron which is now at 12:30 - you realize that puff generated a wonderful lift!

At moments like these, it doesn't matter whether I am leading the pack or seeing the fleet spread out before me. I find that like the Psalmist I am immersed in the wonders of creation "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands". (Psalm 19.1) Not only the heavens but the sensory mechanisms we use to experience them are worthy of awe. If we could communicate the joy this brings more clearly to people who are not yet sailors, White Bear Lake would be overrun!

Speaking of new sailors, we are pleased to welcome Bizzy-Lou (Catalina 22) and Dragonfly (Capri 22) to the racing fleet in the last 24 months. I am thankful for the many students of Island Tim



(Byron) who are experiencing their first races. The BBYRA has been a great place for me to learn and grow in my own sailing knowledge and skills; members of the BBYRA have been generous to me with coaching and practical advice. (Tom Bain continues to try to help me understand the effects of land on wind direction.) Today I read an article from Sail magazine with this quote: "Without challenges we wither, and sailing serves them up regularly, making it the supreme teacher." Let's keep up our BBYRA tradition of helping newer sailors learn and develop. And please

help your board with ideas for expanding and improving the club.

The first half of the season was marked by an excellent social on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Witthaus's beautiful new home. Thanks Craig and Peggy! We also had more cancelled races (due to low wind, hazardous air, and a committee boat motor issue) than I can remember. However, the last two Tuesday nights have been glorious. We hope for more of those conditions!

Here are a few dates to keep in mind for the remainder of the season:

Tuesday 2 Series begins July 15 (PERF's start 1<sup>st</sup>, Capri's 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Saturday 2 Series begins July 19

Ordway Cup Race July 20, let a board member or I know if you did not receive an invite

Social August 31 as a part of the Grand Finale Regatta, location TBD.

Thanks for a safe, fun and fair racing season thus far.

Steve Bergeson, Commodore

