



November 8, 2016 (Chicago, Illinois): Today, five of Chicago's premiere yacht clubs announced the formation of an alliance designed to organize and grow sail racing in Chicago. The new organization will be known as the Chicago Area Sail Racing Association ("CASRA"). Founding members of CASRA include Burnham Park Yacht Club, Chicago Yacht Club, Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club, Columbia Yacht Club, and Jackson Park Yacht Club. Through CASRA, these five clubs seek to provide outstanding sail racing across Chicago's 18-mile lakefront, and coordinate their various regattas and events to generate maximum participation by Chicago's boating community.

"Our sport is changing quickly. We need to work together to deliver great sailboat racing to the Chicago boating community, and to get more people on the water," explained Greg Miarecki, Commodore of the Chicago Yacht Club, adding "The five member clubs have already seen substantial benefits from early collaboration."

One of CASRA's primary goals is to make sail racing simple and more accessible to Chicagoland's boating community. In discussing current complexities of the sport, "Jackson Park Yacht Club believes that CASRA will offer a race platform that will offer competitive racing to the various fleets in Chicago and encourage those individuals that have previously been intimidated by the complexities of prior governing entities to experience the fun, exhilaration and camaraderie that sailboat racing offers.", noted Jim Webb Commodore of the Jackson Park Yacht Club.

CASRA will provide a laser focus on growth of sail boat racing. Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club Commodore Steve Fink stated, "Our sport seems to intimidate people who don't have experience on the water as well as some sailors who never raced before. Growth in sailboat racing will be come about by reaching people who are interested in trying sailboat racing and getting them on racing boats. We want to let everyone know that it's not difficult to get involved in racing and that racing is a great way to enjoy Chicago's greatest asset- Lake Michigan."

Collaboration among the five member clubs is a CASRA top priority. Scott Gordon, Commodore of the Burnham Park Yacht Club stated. "We believe that CASRA will increase cooperation between the yacht clubs and focus on continuing the past successes of Chicago sailboat racing. It will be beneficial to all the yacht clubs' sailing programs, from junior sailing to the high caliber racing programs competing at the highest level."

As part of its planning process, CASRA's member clubs intend to survey previous regatta participants to learn more about what sailors want to see in their sail racing activities. "We are confident that we can get more people on the water if we listen to ideas and suggestions from the fleets," explained Craig Horton, Commodore of Columbia Yacht Club. CASRA has already launched its first participant survey, and expects to present the survey results at a Town Hall meeting, scheduled for December 10th, at Columbia Yacht Club. "We look forward to hosting the first-ever CASRA town hall meeting, and are excited to discuss new ideas with fellow racers," noted Horton. CASRA clubs are also in the process of scheduling discussions with representatives of Chicago's numerous one-design fleets, which actively participate in many of Chicago's regattas.

Mike Hettel, an active racing sailor in Chicago's J-105 fleet, will serve as the inaugural President of CASRA. Combining what Chicago offer with CASRA's creation Mike states, "Chicago is a fantastic sail racing city. The creation of CASRA will grow and improve the sport via collaboration among the five member clubs, benefiting owners & crew, whether One Design or PHRF fleets, all clubs, and the city."

CASRA intends to publish its 2017 schedule of events on or before January 15, 2017. To learn more, visit www.chicagosailracing.org.

About CASRA: The Chicago Area Sail Racing Association is an alliance formed by Chicago's major yacht clubs. CASRA'S purpose is to collaboratively coordinate the sail racing activities in the City of Chicago, and to promote, grow, and foster sail yacht racing in the Chicagoland area. Visit www.chicagosailracing.org for more information.

About the Burnham Park Yacht Club: Burnham Park Yacht Club has advocated the sport of Sailing since inception in 1938. We are proud of our charity events, races, and regattas. Our junior sailing program has introduced young sailors to the basic principles, safety and fun which has resulted in participation in all aspects of sailing events throughout Chicagoland. Learn more at bpyc.com.

About the Chicago Yacht Club: Chicago Yacht Club is one of the oldest and most respected yacht clubs in the world. Today, the club boasts a membership of nearly 1,500 boating enthusiasts and is one of the preeminent organizers of regattas, races and predicted-log events in the United States. The club offers an array of spectacular off-the-water amenities, including fine dining and full-service catering at both its Monroe and Belmont stations. The club has dedicated itself to promoting the sport and perpetuating the values of camaraderie and community since 1875. Learn more at chicagoyachtclub.org.

About the Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club: Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club was founded in 1934 and has a rich tradition as an all-volunteer yacht club. Every year, CCYC members race in regattas around the world and include many regional and national champions. Learn more at corinthian.org.

About the Columbia Yacht Club: Columbia Yacht Club is a member run not-for-profit organization formed in 1892 with the mission to promote the sport of yachting, the sciences of seamanship and navigation, and to conduct sailing activities. The club achieves this mission via the Columbia Sailing School, sponsoring and organizing several races annually, the Cruising and Power fleets, and several social activities. With some of the best views of the Chicago skyline from the water, the club offers full bar and dining room services. The current club ship, Q.S.M.V. Abegweit, the fifth floating club, launched in 1947 was the world's largest icebreaker at 372 feet in length. Learn more at columbiayachtclub.org.

About the Jackson Park Yacht Club: Founded in 1896, the Club was built in the lagoon originally dredged to house the replicas of the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. JPYC organized its first sail racing fleet in 1900 and has remained active as a Race Organizing Authority to present. Numerous fleets have called Jackson Park Yacht Club home including the Qs, Dragons, Tumlarens, Penguins, and Stars to name a few. Our Race Management team has organized races from our easy going Wednesday night series to the 1964 Star Olympic Trials Final. With all of this history, we remain the best kept secret in Chicago. Learn more at jacksonparkyachtclub.org.