



President's report to the 2017 AGM

This is my third and final report as your President. It has been a privilege to serve the Bermudian sailing community and I would like to think that over the past three years we have made some progress in terms of national standards and transparency so that all sailors in Bermuda now understand how the BSA works, how we can help, as well as what is further needed to support the sport of sailing in Bermuda. It is time to step aside to make way for younger members of the Board of Governors and I know that I leave the BSA in capable hands.

Neil Redburn has agreed to take on the mantle of President after his term as Commodore of the RHADC is completed in March 2018. I have agreed to stay on as President until March when Neil will take over. Hence, I am not seeking re-election to the Board of Governors at this AGM, but will be appointed by the elected Board of Governors to serve until March 2018. At that time a new Governor will be appointed to serve until the next AGM – and hopefully thereafter.

Martin Siese has agreed to remain as Vice President and the BSA will benefit from his years of experience and steady hand at the helm, so we thank him for his service and I would like to personally thank Martin for his support and wise counsel during the term of my office. I could not have done it without him and it is fitting that the Association of National Sports Governing Bodies (ANSGB) is honouring Martin with an award to celebrate his commitment to volunteering for the sport.

We thank George Hayward for his service and want him to know how much he will be missed on the Board of Governors. Without George representing them, the West End Sailboat Club and the Mid Atlantic Sports Club lose their voice on the Board of Governors and so we would encourage any member of those clubs (indeed from any club) to volunteer to serve; we would welcome their participation. The vicious rumour that the reason George is no longer on the Board is because he left his previous job at Burrows Lightbourne and moved to The Supermart, so we are vexed at him for making it more difficult for us to get product from Burrows Lightbourne for prize givings and other events is untrue. We still have Susie Stan on the Board of Governors and we believe she may have some influence at Bacardi!

In my report to the members at the 2015 AGM I reported the unfortunate (for us) retirement of Sally Browne from her position as Office Administrator for the BSA; Sally was the capable face behind all the responses to emails sent to secretary@sailing.bm and she has been much missed. She has valiantly stepped up to the plate to fill in for us during various vacancies and in thinking about this report I counted up how many attempts we have had to replace Sally. In two years we have had no fewer than five attempts at replacing Sally. Unfortunately, none of them had both staying power and ability – until now (at least, so we hope). During the summer months Lesley Wollman stepped into the breach and, for my part at least, I have noticed an immediate improvement in the quantity and quality of the help and we are very grateful to Lesley. I would reiterate what I said two years ago: without consistent help in the office, the burden on the members of the Board of Governors is huge. We are all trying to run our own lives, cope with busy jobs, other extra-curricular responsibilities and other commitments and it is very hard without adequate back up. The members of the Board who stepped up and helped to shoulder these additional responsibilities have my eternal gratitude.

We have been unsuccessful in our continuing attempts to have sailing recognized as a National Sport by the Government of Bermuda. It is my earnest desire that the Board continue this mission in the hope that one day we might be successful. To do this we will need to work more closely with the Board of the Endeavour programme to coordinate a joint approach and this should be a priority for the incoming Board of Governors. I fear it is a numbers game and even with the published numbers of 1,600 Bermuda school children having participated in the Endeavour programme, Government will still consider sailing to be a minority sport. It is gratifying that World Sailing is prepared to work with us on this initiative and it is to be hoped that through this collaboration we are able to keep more of those 1,600 school children involved in the sport than would otherwise be the case. Of course, if the Endeavour programme would take the first step and become a member of the BSA, then the joint approach would be perhaps easier to bring to fruition.

We were, however, successful in persuading Government to reinstate the bursaries for summer and year-round sailing. This has assisted the smaller clubs to offer summer sailing programmes and indeed there are now two year-round sailing programmes in the West End thanks to Sandys Boat Club's partnership with the Bermuda Education Network and the formation of the Visionary Sailing Academy at West End Sailboat Club. It is to be hoped that once the Endeavour parents realize that sailing cannot continue to be free forever, they will encourage their children to continue sailing with support from the BSA with the Government bursaries.

It would be remiss to end this report without mentioning the outstanding achievement of Team BDA in the Americas Cup Red Bull Youth Challenge. When the team was first mooted it seemed an insurmountable challenge: to raise how much money so five youth sailors can sail for a week? Wow! Weren't they fantastic? They made the whole of Bermuda proud and so they should be rightly proud of their achievement. They are to be congratulated for all the hard work they put into the training as well as the team behind them who tirelessly fund raised, coached, solved problems and just made it happen. Our thanks go to all of them. For

some of the team members it has been a life-changing experience and we hope it will lead to many more doors being opened in the sailing world. I believe it is the first time we have had two young Bermudians involved in the Volvo Ocean Race; Emily Nagel sailing on the Akzonobel entry and Mustafa Ingham attached to the shore team of Turn the Tide on Plastic.

In closing, please may I repeat my plea to all sailors competing outside Bermuda to PLEASE advise the BSA well in advance of your intentions as it does impact the bursary funding from Government if we don't declare our competitors going overseas and the BSADA may require you to attend for drugs testing. We have to check all sorts of boxes, let's help them check theirs.

Respectfully submitted.
Elspeth Gray
November 2017