

History and Purpose of the East Coast Sailing Association

In February 1966, eight sailors with a common interest met at Dickerson Marine to participate in the first meeting of what became the East Coast Cruising Association – Floyd Dickerson, Chet Williams, Andy Adams, Baxter Ragsdale, John Barnes, Jack Robbins, Gene King, and Steve Batchelor. In June of that year, Andy Adams was elected Commodore and the name East Coast Cruising Association (ECCA) was adopted.

The original purpose of the Association was defined as follows:

“The ECCA shall organize and coordinate sailing activities of its members for their mutual benefit. It shall assist and complement established yacht clubs by actively encouraging and coordinating sail-cruiser participation in open yacht club events and by organizing local and distance cruises and racing for sailing craft. Its members shall actively encourage the highest standards of yachting safety, integrity, courtesy and camaraderie.”

During the first year of the ECCA, membership increased to 24 and in February 1967, Al Hughes was elected Commodore. During 1967, the ECCA almost died because of inactivity and the loss of membership caused by job transfers. The 11 remaining members met in September, electing John Barnes as Commodore. To improve communication in the ECCA, the monthly meetings were adopted along with the newsletter, referred to then as ECCA NOTES, and a logo, two sailboats that spell ECCA. The first ocean race sponsored by ECCA was in January 1969, from Port Canaveral to Bethel Shoals and return.

In 1974, Commodore Ray Godfrey donated the Cirripedia Cup (Latin for Barnacle Cup) to stimulate interclub racing activity. The yearly team challenges for the cup proved to be a very worthwhile innovation and resulted in intensified interest in yacht racing throughout the Space Coast area.

ECCA became incorporated in 1975. Commodore Will Heisler felt that the officers and members needed protection from litigation which incorporation offers.

During the '80's, racing and cruising activities were expanded and the Edward S. Lazowska Memorial Trophy for excellence in ocean racing was made available to the Association by the Lazowska family

ECCA's 25th anniversary (1966-1991) marked a turning point in its history with the celebration of the Silver Jubilee Year. Under the leadership of Commodore Jim Parker and spearheaded by the late Robert X. Perry, an ambitious program was launched with

a theme of “Come Sail with Us.” This program was brought to a successful conclusion by increasing membership, publicity, finances, and cruising and racing activities.

In 1993, the membership approved changing the name of the East Coast Cruising Association to the East Coast Sailing Association (ECSA) to better reflect what its members do, and to include people who sail boats of all sizes. The purpose of the organization remains the same, yet opens up club membership to owners of all sailboats and provides ECSA with an even greater opportunity to encourage community participation in sailing.

In 2012, all management of the racing activities was transferred to Melbourne Yacht Club. At the same time, ECSA doubled the cruising related events it sponsors to reflect its new emphasis.

With approximately 100 sailboats in its membership, ECSA looks back with pride and ahead to the future with confidence.