

Sailors of the Month - Larry Stiles (aka Santa Claus)

My history in big boat boating includes a couple of rather small sail boats and one really large, wooden, motor boat. I learned how to sail on San Francisco Bay, and did the vast majority of my sailing there and up the Delta.

I moved to Seattle to learn how to work on boats. There were plenty of boats that needed work in the Bay Area but nowhere to learn how to do it. After 28 years with IBM I moved to Anacortes to take up my new career, boat building. It had its ups and downs. Get hired, design, build and launch a boat, get laid off. Repeat.

At one of the Anacortes Waterfront Festivals I ran into, and then joined, a group that built and sailed R/C boats, mostly models of tug boats. Cool. A few years latter my wife Maggie bought an R/C sail boat kit called a Halo 30 from our friend Vic Childs and gave it to me for Christmas. Very cool.

I built the Halo 30 and then tracked down a couple of gents that were sailing various kinds of R/C yachts off the old pier at Mariners Park, in Anacortes. We got our heads together and decided that sailing the same design would increase the fun factor and we settled on the Soling One Meter. Tricky to build but fun to sail.

In due course I was introduced to the International One Meter. Wow. Fast. Complicated and so beautiful. I was swept away.

In its circle I discovered that when you take simple fun sailing and add the Racing Rules of Sailing you will find yourself exposed to a sport that is exciting with infinite variations and depth with a history that is long and storied and a community that is learned and dedicated. I know of no finer group of folks. I also find that preparing and maintaining an IOM requires great skill and craft. I've just bought my fifth IOM so it looks like I'm in this for the long haul. Practice and learn. If you are learning, you are alive.

