

LOCAL WATERS



Frostbite sailors are a hearty breed

Essex, Conn.

Two days after a freak Oct. 29 snowstorm knocked out power for more than two million homes and businesses in the Northeast, a band of 25 sailors raced in 20-knot gusts in Essex Harbor on the Connecticut River.

The frostbiters did not seem to mind the conditions. In fact, the news that 10 sailboats had capsized that Sunday afternoon was taken as a point of pride rather than a demonstration of what some might consider foolishness.

The boats that competed included Etchells, JY-15s, Ideal 18s and Lasers. Most of the boats that capsized were Lasers, but a few JY-15s did, too. Once a Laser capsizes there is only one person to right the boat. Regular dunkings are the primary reason Laser skipper wear full-body wet suits.

A crash boat patrols the races, manned by Frostbite Yacht Club Commodore Scott Baker, who has the authority to send a boat back to the dock if the sailor is fatigued.

Still, the pleasure these far-from-fair-weather sailors get from frostbiting was evident at day's end. "It was an awesome, windy day," says Toby Doyle, who took first place with his Etchells. "We survived."

Charlotte Posey, who sails an Ideal 18 with her husband, Dennis, was shocked when her husband said he wanted to go



The frostbiters were greeted by a fresh coating of snow; capsizing is considered a point of pride.

sailing that day. First, they had to shovel snow out of their driveway.

Once the boats were out of the water and stored until the next week's race, the frostbiters retired to a local yacht club for hot soup and camaraderie.

— Jerome Wilson

Concord Point Lighthouse

Concord Point Lighthouse was built of local granite in 1827 where the Susquehanna River meets the tidal flow of Chesapeake Bay at Havre de Grace, Md. It is the northernmost and second-oldest lighthouse on the Bay. Automated in 1920, it was decommissioned in 1975 and restored in the early '80s by Friends of Concord Point Lighthouse. The 30-foot tower and keeper's dwelling are open to the public on weekends from April to October. The beacon is not an active aid to navigation.

New options await in Dry Tortugas

Florida

Boaters heading to Dry Tortugas National Park can now tie up at mooring balls placed within the 46-square-mile Research Natural Area. All visiting boaters must have a free permit and use one of the six moorings in the area. Vessels are limited to two hours and are no longer allowed to anchor within the Research Natural Area. Boaters hoping to spend the night are only allowed to anchor on sandy bottom within 1 nautical mile of the Garden Key Harbor Light.

Permits can be obtained at the visitor center

on Garden Key. Rangers also can issue permits.

Construction has been completed on five visitor slips on Garden Key. Boaters can use the slips on a first-come, first-served basis to unload camping gear and supplies or take a walking tour of Fort Jefferson. The harbor can be busy with small private boats, so there is a two-hour limit for slip use. www.dry.tortugas.national-park.com

Harbormaster boats get green upgrade

Annapolis, Md.

Annapolis received the first of two hybrid propulsion systems to be installed on har-