PRESIDENT’S REPORT

It is with a sense of satisfaction I write this annual report sharing some of the activities and successes of the past season. While I draw attention to these activities I am sure that I shall miss some so please accept my apology for any missing detail however, this doesn’t mean anything more than a poor recollection by me!

On behalf of YSA I should begin by offering a sincere thank you to our staff of John Woollatt and Vicki Hughes for what they done on over this last season in particular. It would be remiss of me not to draw the attention of the sailing community to John’s desire to retire at the end of October this year. John has provided some 12 years of dedicated service to the needs of and the promotion, development and advocacy for our sailors, classes and clubs in SA during that time. John has always put SA first in whatever issue has arisen for comment, support or defending. We wish him well in his retirement and trust that good health and much happiness follows this decision. We also hope that his family support team can enjoy this with him. We wish to add our gratitude to Erica for the sacrifices she has made as John has followed his passion of working for our SA sailing community.

While I am offering thanks for services rendered on behalf of our sailing community there are so many of our Club and Class officials, often in the background who keep our sport functioning. Committees such as our Racing Rules committee with their team of obliging race officials and Sailability clubs with their grand band of dedicated volunteers, who ensure those sailors too can enjoy sailing at its various levels. Add to these the Team Sailing committee, the Trailerable Yacht and Sports Boat committee, our Safety representative, class boat associations and those ad-hoc committees organising National Championships in SA waters. Well done - your work is appreciated.

As I review this list, I must add that our Youth Committee (Shoot-the-Breeze) needs highlighting. Since the last report a changing of the guard has taken place. Peter Marshall, after many years of guiding programmes for our young sailors has moved sideways to allow Greg Keen to take the role of Chairman of this group, which looks after the development of our young sailors. We congratulate Greg for this appointment and wish him and his team every success.

We note too the work done late last year to review what STB was doing and seek ways to improve the delivery of activities to our young people with its focus on their personal development as well as their sailing and racing skills.

It is pleasing to record the success of STB squad members Lauren Thredgold and Megan Soulsby who had attained 1st place in the women’s National 420 Championships and a 2nd placing in the OAMPS Australian Youth Championships. Lauren and Megan will represent SA at the 420 Worlds in Athens in July 2008.

International Cadet sailors, Tahali Kutchi-Miller and James Minns, who placed 5th in the International Cadet Australian Championships are members of the Australian International Cadet Team representing SA at the Worlds in Holland in July 2008.

We acknowledge too the pleasing progress of all the other members of the STB squads who achieved personal best placing in their events; some attending their first Nationals. Congratulations to you all on your success and we trust that this is just the beginning of a long road in sailing terms. In noting the success of our Youth programs and the subsequent achievements obtained by the squad members. I feel duty bound to say that our future sailors need our support and our money (or some of it) and some hands on mentoring to maintain our position in the Australian scene.

We also need to acknowledge too the achievements of our SASI squad members. We note the success of our 470 crew of Shane Hughes and Felix Paterson who placed 2nd in the 470 National Championships and Andrew Hughes with a 2nd placing in the R-SX National Championships. Other squad members too achieved personal bests in their events and are making good progress under Brendan Todd as SASI coach. They are well supported by South Australian Sports Institute and Yachting Australia, who are the major financiers of the SASI sailing program. It is worth mentioning that Brendan invites all SA Class and Club coaches and sailors to attend monthly coach’s workshops at SASI designed to pass on coaching and tuning tips and the latest information going around that will assist, improve or educate SA sailors.

I hear from those who are involved that the Offshore scene is picking up. The cooperation between the Offshore Clubs in joining together for many of their events has worked particularly well this season and bodes well for the future. It is significant that one SA boat could fly our flag and compete in the Sydney Hobart race and Andrew Saies in True North finished 4th in his Division to demonstrated the character of our SA offshore racers and our ability to be there “when it matters”. The Adelaide Lincoln Bluewater Race this year tested the resolve of many of the 66 competitors entered this year. Some boats didn’t quite pass the severe weather test but most did. Congratulations to those who entered. It is an event well worth the effort.

The season opening dinner of YSA this year was held at the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron in September. We thank them sincerely for their hospitality. Congratulations to those who were so worthy nominated for an award on the night, in the various categories.

Awards were presented to the following and salute you on your achievements:

Sailor of the Year
Youth Sailor of the Year  Geoff Boetcher & Sandy Higgins
Volunteer of the Year  Todd Hughes
President's Award  Langdon Hamlyn
Margaret Ashton & Don Barnett
During the year as President I have attended Federal Assembly meetings where current issues for sailing are aired, amplified, debated and resolutions for further action are agreed. Some issues are long term and are still being debated and considered. Among these are:

- The national officiating programme which thus far has produced some satisfactory results but has more development to go.
- Adding SA’s support to conducting Australia wide “Come & Try sailing days” at all of our Clubs on the same day in November to try and attract more people to get involved in our sport.
- The issue of the National banding system whereby YA gathers funds from Clubs rather than individual members has been agreed and is being implemented Australia wide by all States. This discussion has taken a long time to reach a solution. It is important to highlight that Clubs can now provide all of their members with YA card which includes personal accident insurance with it.
- The MYA’s at Federal Assembly level have reminded our National body of the messages being received from our grass roots members that a fair balance needs to be seen to be taken between our high performance athletes and other sailors. To their credit YA have heard the message and believe that they addressing the issue to their satisfaction.
- An ongoing matter for YA and member MYA’s is a consultant’s review of “The delivery of sailing in Australia”. As the matter has just been tabled there is much to go through including some decisions to be made on seeking more information on current and potential membership of Yachting Australia.
- As well there are some significant governance matters, all designed to give better outcomes for members. We shall keep you informed.

The YSA Board as stated elsewhere has spent a considerable amount of time working through the YA figures for fees to the National body and determining what is a reasonable outcome for our YSA fees. This has included a number of special meetings with YA and YSA and with Clubs. These meetings were designed to give information, to explain and to clarify the new club membership proposal affecting all 341 Clubs in Australia. The YSA study has drawn a clear picture that YSA is a very lean body striving to service its members with limited money. Without Government funding we would be but a part-time body.

Other issues dealt with and ongoing are:

- Bic Techno youth sailboard program being developed.
- Seeking and selecting an SA Club to conduct the 2010 Australian Youth Championships,
- Meeting with the Bureau of Metrology before calling together a small group of Clubs to define what weather information for our local waters Clubs would like from BOM to best assist RO’s and how to contact the BOM or an internet site to provide such details.
- YA have introduced new sail training programs linked with RYA. YSA has been very vocal in getting our views to the YA that programs should be affordable as well as simple to run.
- On safety matters issues of discussion include failure of some Pains Wessex flares, EPIRB’s either 406 or PLB, the definition of a hatch, the number of PFD’s required onboard, fitting of “mid point” safety tethers, availability and cost of some medications and seeking further action on the meetings opinion that national accreditation should be required for safety auditors.

In closing I would like to pay tribute to those Clubs and their representatives who have diligently offered their support by attending any meetings called by YSA as well as those who have so courteously either rung or forwarded an email expressing their views. Thanks, that input has greatly assisted by giving substantive information to help the YSA Board in making decisions.

As President, I wish to acknowledge the support of each member of the Board for the work we do on behalf of our S.A. sailing community. To Nick Rench who is retiring thanks so much for your work with us. I also add my thanks to those supporters at Club level and those members I meet around the sailing scene.

As we head toward the new season may the winds be fair and the seas smooth and the results of your sailing be as you would want.

Bob Heywood
President