

ROAD TO THE CUP - HOLIDAY EDITION

DECEMBER 2020

Dear Santa,

How are you holding up way up there in the north pole? Crazy year, right? Are you and the missus staying safe?

I’ve been thinking a lot about how you get the job done in a COVID world. Must be tough. I assume all of your elves are wearing masks. How do you run a big manufacturing operation while social distancing? Of course with elves, maybe the distance is less, but it’s still got to be hard. And how about the reindeer ? I hear animals can get it too. Then of course, there’s the big trip. Sure, you’re safe enough when you’re in the air, but it has to be risky dropping into so many houses. No doubt you have your work cut out for you, but I know you won’t let us down.

Anyway, as I hope you know, I’ve been good again this year. I suppose that’s probably more for you and my wife to judge (not necessarily in that order), but I check all the big boxes. I haven’t killed anyone, I’ve tried to be kind, been a good dad, no cheating, no stealing, kept my lies to the little white variety, wrote a check to Pleon, did my circles – you know, the big stuff. But honestly, after the past four years, the bar for good seems lower. There must be a lot of confused kids out there wondering how telling lies can be all that bad when the role model-in-chief does it daily. Hopefully you’ve kept your bar high and will hold our kids to your usual high standard. I also hope you have a healthy stash of coal to drop in his stocking. If you don’t, I’m sure the reindeer could contribute, but I digress.

You’ll be glad to know that I really have everything I want so no need to wrap anything for me. Really, I want nothing. However, to the extent I have any good-boy chits, I’d like to use them on my friends if that’s okay. So here’s the list.

First of all, my pal **Jim Taylor** did a bang-up job as Fleet Captain for the last three years, for which all his friends are appreciative. And as you may have heard, he recently stepped down, for which his wife **Anne** is appreciative. I’m sure nothing in your bag would adequately demonstrate our thanks, though I have it on good authority that he can always use more pickle dishes. So if you have any of those, please drop off a few with my compliments.

Speaking of Fleet Captains, my friend **Elise Nash** stepped up to take the helm for the next couple of years, and that’s a big deal. I mean the woman has a young son, a business, she volunteers for everything, and of all the people I know, she has the least bandwidth to take this on. But she did it because that’s how she’s wired. She’s been contributing to Marblehead sailing for close to 20 years, through CYC Sailing Committee, team racing and virtually every Fleet 5 job you can do, including by the way, co-chairing Nationals. And now she steps up to the big job. I don’t know if you have any sainthoods in your bag, but that would be a good place to start.

**Jeff Shoreman** supposedly had no official role in fleet administration this year, but contributed a bunch nonetheless. He loves sailing so much, but between running software companies and being a good husband and dad, he never seems to find the time. Maybe you can give him an extra day or two every week.

**Jeff’s** co-skipper **Dave Reynolds**, who has been capably stewarding the fleet’s finances for a few years now. I’m sure he could use an abacus or something useful like that, but like Jeff, what he really needs is more time. Maybe throw in an extra day for him too.

**Martha Martini** took over Jeff’s secretary responsibilities last year, and stepped up to do it again this year. She manages the fleet mailing list, sends out the newsletters and generally keeps the trains running on time, and that’s a big deal. Of course to do that, she relies heavily on technology so maybe get her some strong tech support.

Fleet social chair is one of our most important jobs, and **Larry Ehrhardt** has been crushing it, toting the fleet bar from virtual party to virtual party (kidding!). But that reminds me that he might want to find a safer place than my house to store the bar, where it’s been since the winter party last year. I’m not suggesting that’s it’s being pilfered, but when you run out on a cold winter’s night, shit happens. We owe the fleet only one bottle of vodka so far, but the winter is young, though again I digress. So for Larry, I have it on good authority that he could use a little fresh paint on his bow, so please arrange for that and extend my apologies.

**Stefan Thibodeaux** took over as measurer last year for **Peter Sorlien**, who was in the job for years. Boy, those guys are close. They sail together. They measure together. Stefan even officiated Peter’s wedding – it’s crazy. Stefan got off easy last year as there wasn’t a lot of measuring to do. But this year, with so many people working on their boats and with nationals coming, he’s likely to compete with **James Brown** as the hardest working man in show business. Not sure if you saw the video of Peter’s wedding, but Stefan revealed himself to be a pretty snappy dresser - I’m talking right up there with **Cam Newton**. So while he seems to be all set with the dressy stuff, I know he likes to swim and hear he could use a bathing suit. And for Peter, maybe you could get him a honeymoon after all of this craziness winds down.

Oh, and let’s not forget **Nat Taylor**, who has been minding the fleet website for years. As you know, Nat recently became a dad so has had competing priorities. Despite that, he has hung in there, solid as a rock. I’m sure he could use a little sleep so maybe get him some noise cancelling headphones and a bottle of melatonin.

Stepping back into the fray this year as Fleet VP and Elise’s consigliere is my good buddy **Steve Uhl,** who has done it all. He’s been class president, fleet captain, plus just about every other job, not to mention serving on the nationals committee. He has done so much, we have no right to ask him to do more, but we do and he does. What do you get for a guy like that? With a Rhodes, a Laser, a fleet of model boats and now an old MIT tech dinghy, he doesn’t need more boats. Wait - I know. How about a couple of new blenders for his tiki bar and a lifetime subscription to Tiki Magazine?

And speaking of the nationals committee, the **Grinch** didn’t stop last year’s nationals, but COVID did, and every one of the good folks on last year’s committee generously reupped to take it on again this year. Pretty amazing, right? Doing it once is hard enough, but doing it twice in two years deserves hazard pay. We’ve already talked about **Elise**, **Stefan**, **Peter** and **Steve** but there are a bunch of others.

**Jocelyn Cook** is handling trophies, but that’s just the beginning. Did you know that she’s spearheading the effort to get Parkers back online? Lack of public access to the water is one of Marblehead’s big constraints and a contributor to one design numbers going down. When she pulls this off, she’ll have quietly done more for Marblehead sailing than you can imagine. Not sure what to get her either. I know that between her and husband **Adam Cook**, their driveway is starting to look like a boat yard, so like Steve, they don’t need more boats. I hear that she has pet rabbits so you might get her a couple more of those, though admittedly, that has a way of taking care of itself.

The **Brothers Rubin** took on the all-important job of securing the donations needed to run the event, and they do a bang-up job at it. Not sure what to get for them either, though I know they both have busy schedules and can always use an alternate skipper or crew. Maybe get them 1-2 of those.

If ever someone deserved a little recognition, it would be **Tom Dailey,** who is managing regatta housing. That’s a hugely important job, especially in a COVID world. Not sure how that will play out, but in Tom I trust. And in case you hadn’t heard, he and his co-conspirator **Patrick Andreasen** have completely revitalized the Laser fleet into the most vibrant one design class in Marblehead. Pretty awesome. Tom didn’t sail Rhodes this season because his boat was buried behind a bunch of junk in his barn. Maybe you could spare an elf this spring to help him liberate it.

My bride **Christina Pandapas** is yet another unsung contributor. For starters, she puts up with me, which by itself is a tall order. She’s another one who has a hard time saying no. In addition to running communications for Nationals, she is a long-time Pleon board member and also has recently joined the CYC sailing committee. And as you might have heard, as co-chair of junior race week last year, through sheer will and determination, against all odds, she put on the region’s only junior regatta of the season. Pretty awesome, right? And that restored a bit of normalcy for a bunch of junior sailors in this crazy whacked out year. How do you put a price on that? I always struggle with what to get her, but was thinking of a cruising boat. What do you think?

**Timmy Dittrich** agreed to sign on to the nationals committee to take on social after just one season in the fleet. That’s amazing, right? More amazing is that he also agreed to step up to take on the class secretary role. Wow! My guess is that Timmy, like most of the people on my list, is a doer. These may be his first contributions to our cause but I doubt they will be his last. As far as a gift for him, it’s a no-brainer. Please get him a crew.

Oh Santa, so many more. I’d like to get something for **Joe Fava**, who runs CYC Sailing Committee and contributes in more ways than I can name. **Mike Lane** has been fleet captain multiple times and is starting his second year as class president. **John Casler** has probably been fleet captain more times than all of us combined. Back in the day, he and **Kent Hallawell** alternated being fleet captain - for two decades or more. Mercy! And he’s still contributing by writing about Twilights every week. Oh and we can’t forget last year’s MRA chair **Mark Toso**, without whom, in my opinion, we wouldn’t have sailed a race. Or how about **Al Mckinnon** and **Jack Cochrane** and the rest of the MRA crew, not to mention the RC folks like **Susie Schneider** who never misses a race, and **David Graham** who ran every single twilight. So many people - I can’t possibly name them all, but I hope you can find a little something for each of them.

Thanks Santa, I know it’s a long list, but so many people do so very much around here, and it’s important to me that each of them knows how much I appreciate them. Fly safe, and talk to you again next year.

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***Class Association Annual Meeting*** – The Rhodes 19 Class Association will hold its 2020 annual meeting on January 13 at 7PM (yes, a little late, but we get it). The meeting will be virtual and if you are a class member, you should have received the link and agenda. If you did not, please contact class secretary **Jeff Shoreman** at jshoreman@gmail.com.

***Winter Party*** – Fleet 5 will host its winter party on Saturday evening January 23rd at 5PM - circle the date. Of course the party will be virtual so you’ll have to provide your own beverages and potluck. Details are forthcoming. Keep an eye out for the invite.

Let’s be safe out there. Please don’t let down your guard. Happy holidays. -k

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