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For Immediate Release:

## **Buzzards Bay Regatta finds a Successful Formula for Growth**

2011 marks the 39<sup>th</sup> running of the Buzzards Bay Regatta, an iconic multi-class sailboat racing event held in Southeastern Massachusetts each year during the first weekend in August. Despite a chilling economic climate that has hindered growth among larger boating races nation wide, the breezes have blown prosperity towards this annual race with entries topping 450 boats and nearly 1500 competitors in 2010. Racers are offered competition in 13 different classes and the venue alternates on a yearly basis between the New Bedford Yacht Club in Padanaram, MA and the Beverly Yacht Club in Marion, MA. Both can claim the broad expanses of Buzzards Bay as home waters. This year's race will be held on August 5-7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 under the auspices of the New Bedford club and despite the adage that you can't depend on the weather anywhere in New England, the prevailing Southwesterly breezes always seem to be evident during the regatta in early August.

"We offer a unique opportunity to race in some of the best racing conditions anywhere," says Kenneth Van Colen, the Regatta Committee Chairperson for the 2011 event. "Whether it's the concentration of sailboat racers native to the area or the reputation of the regatta for fierce competition, we've been fortunate that racers keep coming back, and typically tell their friends to join in the fun". The event is a popular stopover for those competing at the collegiate race level as it typically is held in between other events that are classified as required preliminary regattas for budding collegiate racers. As many as 140 boats will enter the two person 420 class of sailboat, and when regatta registration opens in March, racers scramble to sign up or risk being left out of the event.

Diversity amongst entrants is another key ingredient in the success of the event. While racing in nearby Newport, RI or Marblehead, MA is typically focused on either smaller sized dinghy racing or larger yachts with deep keels, the Buzzards Bay Regatta is one of the few events that combines the two, creating a festival atmosphere of young and old competitors. There are 5 distinct racing areas or "circles" laid out with buoys outside the harbor with race courses ranging from a few hundred yards in length up to several miles long. The boats in competition are also vary greatly in size, with the smallest being the popular single handed 13' Laser one-design class up to the PHRF Racing Class where boats as large as 55-60' compete using a complex handicapping formula to even the speed differential between boats of different design. PHRF boats are often sailed with crews of five to ten people. Multi-hulled racers add an element of danger and excitement as they offer high speed challenges to the athletic sailors urging the boats to sail faster than the wind suspended high above the water on special harnesses. Each level of competition is run concurrently, making for dazzling images of multi-colored spinnaker sails and race action spread out over 15 square miles of the bay.

In past years, individual racers and teams have journeyed from as far as Australia and Ireland to take part in the event and several racing class associations utilize the regatta to serve as national or regional championships for particular types of boats. In this year's event, no fewer than three of the thirteen classes designate the Buzzards Bay Regatta in this manner. The symbiotic relationship exists between class associations and regatta management helping to increase participation for both entities, with the net result being tougher competition for the sailors.

Unique amongst larger regattas, the Buzzards Bay Regatta is run entirely by a volunteer group of sailors and enthusiasts. Even on water race officials and judges are compensated only with complimentary sandwiches and a hearty thank you, whereas at other events, they are often handsomely paid for their time and expertise. Perhaps the Corinthian spirit amongst racers or the absence of flashy advertising at the regatta grounds creates the aura of friendly competition, as no prize money or product subsidies are provided to race winners. Bragging rights and modest trophies are the reward for competing at the highest level in New England sailboat racing, and this formula has been successful for nearly 40 years at the Buzzards Bay Regatta.

For more information on the 2011 Buzzards Bay Regatta, visit [www.buzzardsbayregatta.com](http://www.buzzardsbayregatta.com)

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