Editorial: Three good reasons to join AMYA now

by Dick Martin

Readers of these pages will recall that, although I have always encouraged 914ers to join and support our sport and its national governing body, I have often been critical of AMYA. My personal experiences with several branches of the organization as an AMYA member and as a class secretary confirm complaints that I repeatedly hear from other sailors. And the table on page 10 of this CRonicle shows that sailors who own CR 914s have ‘voted with their feet,’ by sampling AMYA and then, well over half the time, letting their memberships lapse.

It has been quite a while since my last editorial devoted exclusively to AMYA, however, (‘Winds of Change are Blowing at AMYA — well, at least some cat’s paws have been spotted,” CRonicle 46, Spring, 2005) and there have been several developments since then. As I predicted in 2005, John Davis, the then-new managing editor of Model Yachting, has done a remarkable job. For starters he and his staff of volunteers pulled off the herculean task of getting a quarterly magazine that had fallen a year or so behind schedule back on track by producing a new issue nearly every six weeks. MY’s recent content, many of its grayscale photos, and some of its color covers now make it well worth the $25/year price of an AMYA membership. And, of course, Issue 153 featuring the CR 914 Class will become an instant collector’s item for every 914er that all by itself would justify paying that $25 this year.

In 2002, hoping that I could help bring about needed changes in the organization, I became the AMYA Director for Region 4 (I was appointed; very few of AMYA’s offices have been truly contested and the elections that are conducted via Model Yachting every two years have been largely ceremional). But I gradually became frustrated with its good-old-boy leadership network and their inadequate and sometimes divisive communication with directors, class secretaries and the membership at large. And my active involvement effectively ended when, dismayed by the hubris I perceived and things that transpired at the quadrennial meeting of the AMYA Board of Directors that I attended in San Antonio in the fall of 2006, I resigned from the Board a few months later, convinced that I could make little if any difference.

A real opportunity to turn things around is now about to present itself, however. The next AMYA election is scheduled for this fall (the ballot will be published in the same issue of Model Yachting in which our class will be featured, coincidentally). A ‘reform ticket’ of officers and director candidates plans to contest many of the positions, headed by Rick West, the current EC-12 Class Secretary. Our own Chuck Luscomb is the ticket’s candidate for Region 1 Director. Quoting from an ad that this group has submitted for the Summer issue of Model Yachting, their team will have “administrative management and Internet technical knowledge” and “is in planning to upgrade the American Model Yachting Association into the 21st Century.” Their ambitious platform includes “a marketing presence on the Internet,” “fiscal business management and planning,” “web provisions and communications support for class secretaries,” “near real time database management for managers and class secretaries,” “real time communications to the members,” and “building the model sailing playground for the future.”

So there you have three very good reasons for 914ers who have never joined AMYA and the large number who once belonged but quit, to join up now: (1) to support our national organization for RC sailing, (2) to receive Model Yachting and this year’s CR 914 Feature Issue, and (3) to have an opportunity to vote in an important election that can make a difference. Fill out the AMYA membership form that you will find on page 17 of this issue and mail it to the AMYA membership secretary (not to the CR 914 class office) right now. And talk this up among members of your fleet who do not subscribe to the CRonicle too; make copies and give them application forms so they can join as well. It sometimes takes an inordinate amount of time for AMYA to process membership applications, so you need to move fast.