

For Immediate Release

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The Clagett Receives Reeve Foundation Grant

Quality of Life Grant Underscores Event's Mission

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 4, 2011) – For the second time in its nine-year history, the C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Regatta is the beneficiary of a grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. The foundation awards grant monies to non-profit organizations in recognition of programs that enable people with disabilities to live independent and active lives. The Quality of Life grant underscores the mission of the C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta which was created to allow sailors with disabilities to reach their personal competitive goals, which in turn has a direct impact on their quality of life.

“It [The Clagett] has really improved my quality of life, my independence, and what I’m going to do with the rest of my life,” said Jody Hill (Seabrook, Texas). A professional yacht skipper before his spinal cord injury in 2006, Hill frankly admits that during his first two years post-injury he was depressed and getting into trouble. That changed once he found he could get back on the water and his appearance at the 2010 Clagett Regatta was his second-ever disabled sailing race. “It’s just been a real boost for me mentally and physically.”

Hill’s story is familiar to the organizers of the C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta which has become North America’s premier event for sailors with disabilities. The ninth annual edition will take place August 20-23, 2011, once again at Sail Newport, Rhode Island’s community sailing center. The Quality of Life Grant will allow the event organizers to purchase a hydraulic-powered lift that facilitates the transfer of a wheelchair-bound sailor into a boat.

“The Clagett” has a stated mission of assisting sailors in realizing their potential on the water by providing them both the knowledge and tools to improve their skills through the one-day clinic that precedes racing, and then the opportunity to test them in competition. The water provides a level playing field for sailors to challenge themselves both physically and mentally in a sport that is frequently described as chess on water.

The pre-race clinic on Saturday, August 20, will again be run by world champion sailors: US Sailing Team AlphaGraphics Paralympic Coach Betsy Alison (Newport, R.I.), 2004 Olympian Stan Schreyer (Northampton, Mass.) and 2008 Canadian Paralympic Coach Craig Guthrie (Halifax, Nova Scotia). They will be joined by Tornado National Champion Jonathan Farrar (New York, N.Y.) and 2004 Olympian Isabelle Kinsolving Farrar (New York, N.Y.) for the on-the-water coaching that will take place during the three days of racing, Sunday through Tuesday, August 21-23.

The event is conducted in the three boats that have been chosen as the equipment of the Paralympic Regatta: the three-person Sonar, the two-person SKUD-18 and the singlehanded 2.4 Metre. Participation by able-bodied sailors in both the 2.4 Metre and Sonar fleets will raise the competitive bar even higher. Blind sailors are also

included and they will race J/22s with sighted guides for the Sail Newport Blind National Sailing Championship.

The C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta honors the late Tom Clagett (1916-2001), a U.S. Navy World War II veteran who learned to sail on the Chesapeake Bay. As a youngster he suffered temporary paralysis as the result of a bout of meningitis; it was an experience that left him with a deep respect for the accomplishments of people with disabilities, especially athletes.

The Notice of Race (NOR) is now available online, as is information on logistics and previous editions of The Clagett. Discover more at the event website www.clagettregatta.org

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