

# COLLABORATION IS KEY

*Youth2Adult - Y2A - is a series of articles celebrating sailing's role in youth development.*

"Collaborative apprenticeship." That is what Anita Sutton calls the work that the Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG) has started in conjunction with the American Boating & Yachting Council (ABYC) to bring formal marine service certification to Grenada. A recent report from MAYAG states: "The American Boat & Yacht Council worked with the MAYAG group in an effort to certify competency of marine service technicians using the ABYC certification training and examinations as a basis. It is relevant to note that ABYC created these certifications over a 20-year period working with a well-known certifying body in the US known as NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute). ABYC is the pre-eminent engineering and construction standards writing body in North America for the marine small craft industry."

Grenada has had a need for formal certification in technical skills for some time. This bodes well for youth who want to make a livelihood in the marine industry as an adult.

From March through May of this year MAYAG conducted certification tests on the current marine service workforce to find out where Grenadian workers stood compared to ABYC standards. After initial testing, in areas including composites (hull repair), diesel engines, marine electrical technician, gasoline engines and marine systems, Grenadian workers scored below the required 80 to 84 percent passing mark. But, after three and a half days of exam preparation classes, scores came in ranging from 74 to 90 percent. Of 51 participants attempting certification, 31 achieved success. It is noteworthy that the marine industry is held to higher standards in order to receive certification than its cousin industry automotive. For example, in the US automotive certification process, 60 to 65 percent correct are passing marks.

Marinas, boatyards, boatbuilders of Grenada rejoice. Here is a summary of the number of newly certified professionals in each field: three in Composites, ten in Diesel Engines Support Systems, five in Marine Electrical Systems, nine in Gas Engine Support Systems and four in Marine Systems including air conditioning and refrigeration. Oscar Cain obtained ABYC Master Technician status by passing in three different disciplines.

Going forward there will be approximately 40 Grenadians in pilot programs based on eligibility for apprenticeship. Instead of bringing five ABYC instructors in annually, Grenada is training their own to run things. The Marine Institute of Newfoundland is assisting with an apprenticeship model. Grenada's TA Marryshow Community College will offer a series of courses. Boatyards and other on-site facilities will also be utilized for training.

Having earned certification, participants will be able to legitimize their worth to employers. Employers, in turn, will be able to charge customers hourly labor fees that are commensurate with offering professionally certified work. This is a win/win.

Grenada's youth can look forward to well-paying careers by availing themselves of marine apprenticeships that can now lead to professional certification. For young people, junior sailing can be an introduc-

tion to the marine world and, with well-trained, well-informed instructors and coaches, become a gateway to gainful employment as adults.

### Y2A Featured Youth

*Morgan Thomas, 16 years old  
Student: Good Hope Country Day School,  
St. Croix, USVI  
Favorite boat: J/36*



Morgan Thomas is crewing aboard a J/36 regularly. "I started sailing about two and a half years ago when Stan Joines, who was then my band teacher, introduced me to his sailing team. I have been racing with him since," Morgan says. Using an all-youth crew, the J/36 *Paladin* races actively in the Virgin Islands area. Sponsored by St. Croix Marine, the racing campaign includes practicing on Saturday mornings.

"Morgan is a huge asset to our crew. He is the biggest and the strongest and a fine sailor, too," says Stanford Joines.

Stan has taken student crews racing in the Puerto Rico Heineken, BVI Spring, STIR and St. Croix regattas. Stan has applied to the Boy Scouts of America for Explorer Scout status for *Paladin*. This will, at least, cover the insurance-related costs he experiences.

Stan continues, "The J/36 is a good fit because it is competitive but it can also sleep the whole crew aboard when we are at away regattas on the different islands. The fractional rig is great; with a masthead rig, the kids would have to be handling bigger jibs and downwind sails that could overpower them." In May, the team took fourth in a tightly contested PHRF Jib and Main Class at the Puerto Rico Heineken International Regatta.

"I really enjoy the tactics that go into winning a race and being part of a team, but just being out on there, seeing all the other boats on the water and the landscapes of the new and always beautiful islands has to be my favorite aspect of sailing," Morgan says. After school and weekends, Morgan works in his mother's shop when he's not working on the charter boat *Jolly Mor*. "Growing as a sailor and being part of the team has helped me to mature and to develop leadership skills."

### Y2A Featured Adult

*Kevin Banfield, 28 years old  
Employment: Boat repair and  
youth sailing instructor, Grenada*

Kevin Banfield is a son of the parish of St. John in northwestern Grenada and has lived the majority of his

life in Gouyave, which he describes as "the fishing capital of Grenada, the town that never sleeps." Kevin has two daughters. He lives with his mother and sister.

"In my community, you must know how to swim. You go to the pier and watch. Then you jump in!" Self-taught to swim at age nine, it was also seeing other children sailing Mosquitoes (a locally produced fiberglass one-design dinghy), that launched Kevin into sailing. "I live near the beach. I saw them and asked if I could have a boat to sail. They said yes." Those boats were part of the newly formed Gouyave Sailing School (GSS). At 12 years of age, Kevin crewed on local workboats. By 15, he was at the helm with a five-person crew.

At 14, Kevin traveled for his first off-island event to Trinidad's Guardian Regatta. Remembering the thrill of being on a starting line with 50 other Optimist sailors: "It was the first day of the event. I was feeling nervous. All different countries, France, Martinique, were there. I did pretty good the first race and felt comfortable for the next races." He came in 35th over all.

He's raced in Tortola, St. Lucia, SVG and "at age 16, I went to St. Maarten; I was the only junior sailor. It was match racing in Sunfast 20s (keelboats). I learned a lot because I was the only teenager. Now, I really understand it. I prefer match racing to any other racing."

Of sailing throughout his formative years, Kevin says, "It made me a more mature person. Kids came from different communities. Teaching them and winning their respect were benefits for me."



Kevin took electrical and plumbing classes at a local college but returned to the marine industry fiberglassing Mosquitoes and, later, Catfish (a two-person/two-sail dinghy). For several years, Kevin was the director and instructor for GSS. Currently, he is doing big boat repairs and paint jobs. "Starting July 18th, I'll be the instructor for junior sailing in Woburn" (on Clarke's Court Bay, southern Grenada). Volunteering on regatta organizing committees, he has forged relationships with the Grenada Sailing Association. With his level of commitment and enthusiasm for the sport of sailing, he has made a name for himself.

Kevin shared his one-year goal: "to have two new clubs in two communities." Beyond resurrecting the Woburn youth sailing program, which has been dormant for years, he wants to develop similar programs in St. Patrick (on Grenada's north coast) and St. Andrew (on the island's northeastern coast) parishes. "Right now they have working boats, no youth sailing."

"I wish that kids would take sailing more seriously in whatever boat (one designs or local workboats). I want to see our kids in the Worlds and Olympics. The Caribbean should be taking over these events."



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