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Friendship Cup Perpetual Trophy established between Key West and Cuba

Key West - the prestigious Club Nautico International Hemingway De Cuba has added some new hardware to its trophy room recently; a perpetual trophy, named the Friendship Cup, for the Conch Republic Cup race between Key West, Florida, and Cuba.

The two race founders, who first met in the 1990s, met again recently to sign a letter of intent to hold the race annually. Receiving the Cup(left) is Commodore Jose Escrich of Club Nautico International Hemingway De Cuba, and presenting it is Peter Goldsmith, President, Conch Republic Cup, LLC.

There will be 5 starts for the 5 classes; racing A, racing B, cruising class, multihulls and schooners.

This 9 day event includes 3 distance races of between approximately 77 to 99 miles each, and two onshore regattas. This year's regatta begins with a kick off welcome reception on January 27th , 6PM at Dante's in Key West. Participants from 55 competing vessels in 5 classes will gather in anticipation of spirited sailing across the Florida Straits to Cuba. This year marks the 8th sailing of this event which, after a colorful interruption, had its first start in the 1970s.

We are preparing for the 6PM kick off Welcome Reception here at Dante's in Key West today, Wed, January 27th. Our sponsors, Pusser's Rum, Mundo Vino Wines and Illegal Mezcal Tequila are all looking forward to providing libations for the participants. Coral Reef Sailing apparel will be on hand to supply Conch republic Cup sailing gear.

About The Conch Republic Cup

From what began in 1997 as a cordial invitation from Commodore Escrich to the Key West Sailing Club (as it was known at the time) to resume our annual race to Varadero from the 1970s, this has developed into an epic event. The KWSC Fleet Captain at the time was Peter Goldsmith who, upon receiving the invitation stated "I don't care what anybody thinks, I just want to sail my boat to Cuba." The 1997 and 1998 races continued as the previous races had been run with distance sprints between the two countries. Then in 1999 Commodore Escrich

proposed the multi race format in use today. The 5 race series of the Conch Republic Cup was run by Peter Goldsmith and his partner Michele Geslin for the 7 years between 1997 to 2003. Then, with the "encouragement" of the US Government, the regatta was discontinued. Recent developments and policy changes within the US – Cuba relations normalization have made it possible to continue the annual "Cultural Exchange Through Sport" after a 13 year hiatus: the Conch Republic Cup.

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Official Event Photography will be available from Priscilla Parker at
<http://www.priscillaparker.com/>. pparkerchs@bellsouth.net

Official Video B reel will be available by contacting Jeff@MainsailNews.TV. Video provided by
Big Impact Films
T2P TV
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