



## From the Guest Editor

When I graduated university too many years ago, I was psychologically committed to a couple of acquisitions. Firstly, a new car – that accepted symbol of ‘having made it.’ The second resulted in many a raised brow: a 24-foot sailboat, and so began a lifetime of sailing, club memberships, hardware purchases and, as any sailor can attest to, daydreaming. At the time I acquired *Jolly Tar*, I was the only person in my sailing club with a boat longer than my age. When I married a few years later, one of my sailing buddies was heard to quip from a back pew that “Bill had just given away half of his boat”! Since those times, a number of boats have come and gone with the changing responsibilities of life, family and career. The daydreaming, however, never ends; I still find it impossible to pass a yachting hardware store or a marina without checking things out.

I have been very fortunate to have spent my entire career working in various facets of the ocean technology world which has provided me exposure to the latest and greatest of marine gizmos and widgets, many of which get touched on in this ‘Technology to the Wind’ issue of the JOT. The concept of sail really has not changed much in 500 years – the wind blows, the boat goes – however, the intricacies of design, materials and instrumentation continue to advance at an amazing pace, to the point that cargo ships are now revisiting sail and racing dinghies have more technology integrated into them than many can even imagine. New technologies and materials combined with the cost of fuel and a ‘think green’ world has propped open the doorway to a transportation mode our forefathers would have assumed forgotten. Lightweight sails and hardware allow a retired couple to cruise into their twilight years; space-age materials have allowed boats to point higher and go faster than ever before; and GPS and electronic chart systems have turned every sailor into an offshore navigator whether or not they have ever heard of deviation or declination. I am a huge fan of technology; however, I do at times question whether technology has provided many with an inflated feeling of competence. Maybe that is what technology and a changing world are all about: let go the old tried and proven, embrace the new and move on.

So where can technology in sailing take us and, better yet, how can we maximize the benefits of technology for the betterment of all? Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) are now required on the majority of commercial vessels with systems on the market in a price range palatable to all but the most frugal of sailors. Imagine every vessel on the water automatically collecting meteorological information and transmitting such through its AIS for incorporation into the weather forecasting system – mobile met/ocean buoys. Imagine sonar data from vessels operating in poorly mapped regions being merged and processed to generate dynamic, high resolution charts. These concepts are on the horizon; however, I can hear the skeptics saying “what about quality control and instrument calibration”! Well I’m willing to bet that ‘technology’ can look after all that and more. Technological advancement is inevitable; do not fight it, embrace it – it is much easier on the head!

I trust you enjoy this edition of *The Journal of Ocean Technology* as much as I have enjoyed my role as guest editor.

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Guest Editor

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