

# PROFITS & Passions

By CHRISTINA KOSTA PROCOPIOU

## ROCKY CIPRIANO

SAILING PUTS HIS MIND AT EASE TO MANAGE THE CHALLENGES IN BUSINESS

**T**oday, Rocky Cipriano, owner of Insight Marketing, turns to sailing to put his mind at ease. Being out on the water, though, didn't always bring peace to the Mamaroneck native and current resident.

His first sailing experiences were as a teen with a friend whose family had a sailboat. Cipriano describes growing up at the beach and enjoying the calm that typically is associated with the sport, but one afternoon the teens made a terrible mistake of heading out on the water without first checking the weather. Cipriano says the afternoon ended in a near-death experience neither will ever forget.

The friends got caught in a storm, made some technical errors that left them unable to control the sailboat amidst harrowing 2- to 3-foot waves. His friend had jumped in and was not able to stall the boat. Fortunately, the Coast Guard came to their rescue but it was an experience that for a while kept Cipriano away from the sport.

"We were very lucky that someone was paying attention to the fact that we were actually out on the water in those weather conditions or the Coast Guard would never have been called," Cipriano says.

It was some time before he got the nerve to hit the water again. The former owner of SKC Advertising today serves as a consultant to small businesses in need of strategic planning and the development of marketing plans. Demanding work and a connection fostered from having "grown up at the beach" led him back to the water, typically on vacation when he'd rent a small Sunfish or

other small boat for fun.

Still for many years, Cipriano says he was "just able to sail in spite of myself." Without any formal training or education about sailing, he says he lacked confidence at times when he would sail and decided finally to do something about it.

Just last year Cipriano joined the American Sailing Yachts Club and enrolled in its sailing school in Mamaroneck. For six weeks two nights a week, he participated with two other students in a beginners' class under the instruction of Rob Witcomb.

"We would go out on a boat into the Sound every class. The class was fun and so valuable because I learned a lot of terminology I never knew," Cipriano says.

If the beginners' class helped him differentiate between the halliards and sails, the subsequent intermediate class took his knowledge a step further covering topics that apply to modern-day sailing like navigating with GPS.

After graduating from the intermediate class, he was able to go out on the water alone, something Cipriano says he rarely does because the 22- to 24-foot boats he sails require the help of another person on board.

"I feel a lot more confident having taken the classes than I did before. I am more skilled and more experienced," Cipriano says.

As a member of the American Sailing Yachts Club, Cipriano is able to take out different boats, allowing him to test a number of them like the Capri and Sonar to see what he might ultimately buy when he purchases his own boat.

Right now, he sails twice a week — once during the week with clients or business associates and another time on the weekend with his wife, Judith, and daughters Samantha, 15, and Olivia, 9. He sails out on the Sound from Mamaroneck to Greenwich, Conn., or to City Island and sometimes sails over to Long Island for lunch.

"I come back feeling renewed," says Cipriano. "I see sailing as a minivacation."

