

The Bullship Log

Newsletter of the Rockford Yacht Club

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Meeting Location: Harlem Township Hall
819 Melbourne Ave.
Machesney Park, IL



Social Meeting
Monday April 19 @ 7:00
Harlem Township Hall

Boat Prep Tips - Bring your tip.

Adopt-A-Road
Saturday, April 17 8:00 a.m.
Harlem & Argyle Road
Breakfast afterwards
@ Steve's Maid-Rite
always a good time doing a good thing

March Meeting Highlights

We had two visitors, Jim Purdee, who has a "17 foot Slipper" boat, and previously had an O'Day Daysailor that he has sailed "all over." Tom Gentry came as a visitor too, but joined the club. Tom has a 26 foot Chrysler on Lake Michigan at Racine. Tom has been sailing for about 30 years. Welcome to both.

Bill & Marty Siegworth announced the official commissioning party for their 34 foot Hunter, *MJ2*, will be May 8th in Milwaukee at the McKinley Marina where they have a slip. Party possibly at their home in Beloit. Stay tuned.

As Flotilla Captain, Bill said he'd look at a Lake Michigan crossing flotilla on or about June 26th, departing Racine. He also talked about having a Door County flotilla in mid-July.

The schedule in last month's Bullship Log showed two days for A-Taste-of-Sail. It will only be one day, Saturday June 12. Other schedule revisions to be sent soon.

Burnie Turner was looking for a new home for a 22 gallon aluminum fuel tank he had salvaged from an old boat. Free.

No date for an expired Flare Shoot has been chosen yet.

The RYC Picnic will be held August 14th at the Bayview Picnic Shelter.

Purser, Penny Turner was absent, due to a new job in Elgin. We wish her luck.

Commodore's Corner

Hello Everyone, Penny and I have some big news. We now have a slip at Reefpoint Marina in Racine, WI. They made us a deal on the Economy Slips we just could not pass up. One of the advantages of a 26' boat I guess. Since this is an even numbered month we won't have a business meeting, but we do still a social meeting planed. Please bring some discussion items: When are you launching your boat this season, preparations needed, getting your trailer ready and etc.... I personally have a lot of questions on bottom paint, since we have always trailer sailed and never needed anti-fouling bottom paint before. Don't forget that we have the RYC Highway Trash Pickup April 17th on Harlem Rd. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.
Commodore Burnie



Saturday May 1

An evening (6:00 to ?) celebrating **Ruth Penticoff's 50th birthday** (which is May 1).

Location: "The Filling Station" in New Milford.

Band: 8:00 Southern Rock by "The Almost Brothers Band" led by former RYC member Adam St. James.

website: www.almostbrothersband.com

Pizza, salad, beer & wine on us.

No presents please - but contributions for the band appreciated. Only two weeks away!

Allen & Ruth

Rope or Line? - Teaching Sailing

by Brian Black

Have you ever noticed that the more people know about a subject, the more they will use acronyms and unfamiliar words and figures to describe what they are talking about? When I first started sailing, one of the reasons I took classes and joined R.Y.C. was because to me sailing seemed really complicated and next to impossible to somehow just harness nature and use it to go places on the water.

The classes my wife and I took at Rock Valley College (RVC) were full of terms to learn and figures to know about sailboats. Once we learned all these things and were thoroughly dizzy with technical terms we got to get out on the lake on a Sunfish and practiced yelling things at each other like “ready about”, “hard alee” and “jibe ho”. When we pulled the rope for the sail too hard, the instructor would yell things like “let the mainsheet out” all while buzzing around us in a powerboat. We managed to learn things like the difference between the daggerboard and the rudder, how to capsize the boat and the fact that although they look like ropes they are actually running rigging called lines. The cables aren’t cables they are “standing rigging.” Each cable has a name too: forestay, upper and lower shrouds and backstay.

All of this would have been quite frustrating if I didn’t love to sail so much. I once taught classes for aviation mechanics at RVC and was told more than once by students that they were having a hard time keeping up with the new terms. It was like a whole new language had been put upon them and on top of that they had to learn how it all works. There isn’t a whole lot of difference between telling someone totally new to boating how to sail in Spanish or how to sail using unfamiliar technical terms.

The next thing I did after taking classes was to get a boat and proceed to load the family in it and give orders based on the “proper” way to learn sailing. That really didn’t go over too well. In the end I got 2 people out of three that still like to go sailing. (I’m still working on the third one with a different approach).

Here is the new approach that I have adopted in the past few years - know who you are talking to and tell them what you want to do based on what they already know.

That’s it. That’s all there is to it. If you are talking to someone who has been sailing for years you can tell them to “let out the mainsheet until the main luffs and then haul it in a little.” Or you can just say “trim the main.” If you are talking to someone new you can say, “Do you see that rope that goes to the big sail? Let it slack off a little until the big sail flaps a little in the breeze and then pull it in until it stops flapping.” If they want to know the terms they will ask or learn them on their own. They came sailing with you to enjoy the day, not to be scorned for their lack of sailing knowledge.

Facts and figures are made up by people to help us communicate and understand the things around us. The things don’t care what they are called. A sailboat is still a sailboat even if we call it a rock. You don’t need to know the LWL and LOA of your boat to sail it. A beginner doesn’t need to know how much a boat draws or how to use a compass or read a map to sail.

They just need you to take them sailing, put a stick in one hand and a rope in the other and let them sail. They will figure it out while you take a nice nap. Just keep one eye open in case they want to know where the tiller and mainsheet are.

