

The Bullship Log

Newsletter of the Rockford Yacht Club

December 2011

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



Our Monthly “meeting” is the Christmas Party at Lino’s

Monday December 19th

6:00 to 7:00 socializing 7:00 on dinner and celebration

This is always the main event of the year - a time when nearly everyone gathers together and brings their not so often seen spouses.

We have a great time talking, making fun of the Capt. Ron recipient - we know who that is in advance this year unless you have disaster that can beat Allen’s daggerboard crushing incident. There is the Good Captain Ron award too - an honor to receive as is the Member of the Year award.

The gift swap is always good entertainment. See you all there.

November meeting highlights

Chili Contest was limited to three entries, all were winners: Linda O’Connor - hot spicy chicken; Burnie Turner - classic chili; Ruth Penticoff - sausage chili. Thanks to those who brought cornbread and brownies. In all a great feast.

Our planned guest speakers for November could not make our delayed date meeting, so we had about 30 people turn out for their presentation at Carlyle Brewing Co. the monday before. We thank Gary Burgess and Patti Holquist for their time. * New member **Marc Holdwick** joined at the event. He sails a Windrider 17 and Marc is a NWSA member as well. Welcome.

We voted to donate \$200 to the Harlem Township Christmas Toys for Tots program.

We elected new officers for 2012. They are:

Commodore: Marty O’Connor
Vice Commodore: John Kochanski
Yeoperson: Ruth Penticoff
Purser/Membership: Burnie Turner
Flotilla Captain: Bill Siegworth
Activities Captain: Marty Siegworth
Signal Officer: Allen Penticoff

* Allen wrote a Mr. Green Car column about liveboard cruising prior to knowing Gary and Patti would be speaking - the timing was perfect - their boat appears with the story:

<http://rockrivertimes.com/2011/11/30/mr-green-car-the-simple-life-afloat/>

Commodore’s Corner

Hello Everyone,

The end of 2011 is here and I would like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to be your commodore for the past year. I feel that as a club we have done pretty well. We have gotten a few new members, had pretty good turn out for some flotillas and the Taste of Sail event was one of our best ever.

The picnic was even successful considering how nasty the weather was that morning. It turned out to be a really nice day with some members getting out there for a couple of relaxing sails around the lake. All of this is only possible because of you “the members of the Rockford Yacht Club.” A big thank you also goes out to those who made the commitment to take on the positions of officers in the club this past year. Camaraderie and teamwork is what keeps us strong as an organization. The Adopt-a-road clean ups that we had this year, were great examples of that teamwork. We had a great turn out for the times that we able to get out there and the clean ups were done in record time. The socializing over breakfast afterwards is always a great way to spend a morning. The most important thing that Penny and I have gotten out of being members of the RYC is the new friendships. Learning things from each other and sharing our boats and experiences rank up there, but the friendships are something we will always cherish.

Now moving on to the new year ahead of us. A big thank you to all those who were nominated or volunteered to be officers for the coming year. The January meeting is usually used to start figuring out a flotilla schedule, what day to have the picnic and A Taste of Sail events. If you have any ideas for programs to have after meetings please don’t hesitate to mention them to the new Vice Commodore – John Kochanski. It is his first year in the club and he was willing to volunteer for the position. So lets all try to help him out. As a matter of fact, don’t hesitate to help any of the new officers out with a task. Remember it is OUR club and getting involved helps keep the club keep going and makes sure everyone has a more enjoyable experience.

Happy Holidays -

Commodore Burnie & Penny



All raft graphics & art by
Joy Tarrant

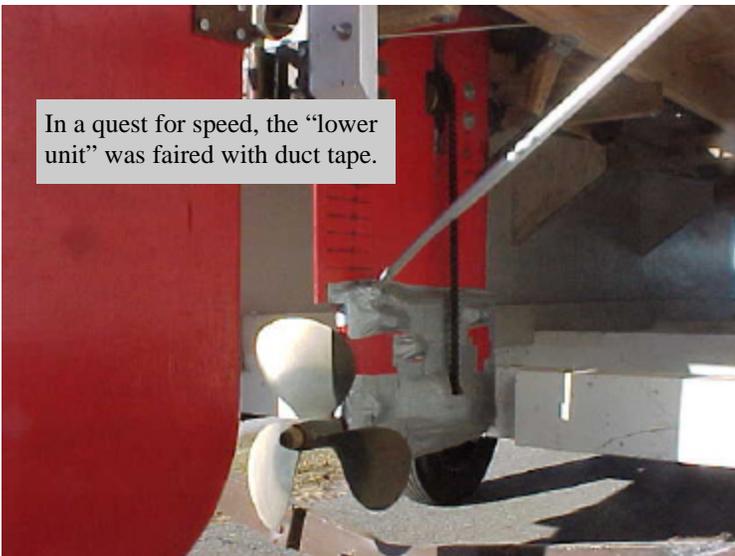
The Story of the Rockford Yacht Club “Raft”

by Allen Penticoff

Lurking in our book cabinet of Harlem Township Hall are a several photos of the original raft - besides these - to soon be on PicsaWeb.

Many moons ago Rockford had a Fourth of July **Anything That Floats Raft Race** event on the Rock River sponsored by radio stations WROK/WZOK. A commemorative tee shirt I have says “1995” - it was prior to that our adventure began. It was before Ruth and I joined the club - and that’s been since late 1990. Anyway - the club participated by building an 8-foot by 16-foot plywood deck on top of eight blue plastic barrels. The original raft was build by charter member - Alex Krinickas et. al. The craft had a Polynesian double canoe look & motif with a sprit sail and many people to paddle it with homemade paddles - it was slow. Every year the raft changed some - at least the “theme.”

Above: last 1995 version of “The Raft” eight pedaling stations.
Below: final drive. Will post many more photos on web & send link once I have it all sorted out. Photos will be at the Dec. party.



In a quest for speed, the “lower unit” was faired with duct tape.

Records show that Ruth and I signed up for the raft race in 1991 - that was the year of the “Honoring Desert Storm” theme - still the basic platform on barrels but redecorated. This was the inspiration to build a “better” raft - after the hard paddle against the south wind blowing up the river.

1992 saw a completely different raft. The deck materials were reused, so the basic deck was still 8x16 feet but new were the 20-foot x 2-foot wood pontoons and four pedaling stations. This was a major boat building project that took place in the Penticoff’s pole building. Dave Tarrant and Shin Katsumata were major contributors of help. A member whose name I don’t remember did the machining. Calculations were done to ensure the pontoons would carry the load. Junk bicycles located and cut up. A system was devised that involved a shaft, chains and bevel gears that put the 13” bronze three-blade propeller on the rudder - ala outdrive. The gearing proved problematic and was abandoned the next year - as was the forward steering station. In addition to the four pedalers, several persons paddled on the port side. Still not great, but better....

Our engineering philosophy was to “build it and see how it worked.” It worked okay, but the first year showed we needed to reinforce it some and that paddling had to go. Thus four more pedaling positions came aboard (all seats were adjustable). The steering station (made of a power cord reel and a bicycle rim) moved aft. The bevel gearing was abandoned and the prop moved forward ala inboard drive (as Shin originally suggested). Since we now had two counter-rotating shafts, a complex chain sprocket set up evolved - but worked flawlessly. Each pedaling station was freewheeling - which allowed anyone to stop pedaling. It also meant that we were not in sync - and watching it was hilarious as all sixteen legs were moving up and down in different paces. Nonetheless, it was a powerful set up and measured speed was 3.5 knots. We could go up the river nearly as well as down - and did doughnuts in the river just to show off - well behind the fastest and well ahead of the slower entries. One year we towed flag waving Ruth Penticoff and Shirley “Sam” Walker in separate inner tubes the length of the course. RYC - always the first “group” to finish. After each race we adjourned to a member’s house to Fourth of July BBQ dinner party.

Ultimately we were not fast enough to win on speed and not cute enough to win the other judgmental awards; although we did win the “Heart of America” award in 1992 because of our flag dressed craft. By contrast, in the same race, Preston Aylesworth and Arlene Henson won an award for paddling a twin sized inflatable mattress across the finish line at the Verdi Club. There were many other interesting entries - none more so than the great giant “Squirrel Cage” entry. Every year was a TON of FUN.

Until we bought a used trailer from Ron & Susie Bauman, each year we had to “borrow” a trailer - that was a chore! Many years now it has languished in our backyard, slowly rotting away under a new tarp every year. We’ll be sad to see it disassembled and burnt - the bicycles scrapped. But we never did anything more with it after the Raft Races ended - a sad end to a fine craft.