

The Bullship Log



Monthly Meeting
Harlem Township Hall
Monday - Jan 18 @ 7:00 p.m.

2016 RYC Officers

Commodore: Allen Penticoff
Vice Commodore: Brian Black
Purser: Ray Olson
Yeoman: John Kochanski
Flotilla Captain: Bill Siegworth
Activities Captain: Evans Walker
Signal Officer: Marty O'Connor

Commodore's Corner

Ahoy mates -

It was nice to see everyone at the Christmas Party in December. Some new faces too. We much enjoyed the music provided by Lee Murdoc. Thank you for your donations to the music fund - of \$164.

Congratulations to award winners: Member of the Year - Joe Rittner; The Harley Johnson Sailor of Merit Award - Preston Aylesworth; and the Unfortunate Capt. Ron Award - Marty O'Connor.

As we move into the new year and begin our plans, we can keep in mind a few things. We need to work on promotion of the club. As we plan to participate in local events such as the camping and RV show - we'll need members to step up and help. We hope you can. It will be fun.

This weekend is the Strictly Sail Show in Chicago - but its not strictly sailboats any longer - and it is quite a bit smaller, but still, if you like hanging out on big new sailboats in warm weather - this is a good opportunity. If you do attend, please stop by the Good Old Boat Magazine booth and say "Hi - I'm

from the Rockford Yacht Club." They'll be thrilled to meet you.

As for me - I hope to finally get my iceboat out this weekend for the first time in three seasons. Yet pondering a trip south in February for the warm waters of Florida and a bit of sailing there too as do several of our members and former members who take this option to escape our winter blues.

At our November meeting we voted in favor of raising our annual dues to a modest \$30 to help cover our costs. It has been a very long time since the dues were last raised. While we have plenty in the bank, we were having a negative cash flow between expenses and income, so we felt it was a time for a raise. Bring your cash or check to the meeting or mail it.

We also elected new officers for the 2106 club year. Those are: Allen Penticoff - Commodore; Vice Commodore - Brian Black; Purser - Ray Olson; Yeoman - John Kochanski; Signal Officer - Marty O'Connor; Activities Capt. - Evans Walker; Flotilla Capt. - Allen Penticoff

Hope to see you all at our January meeting.

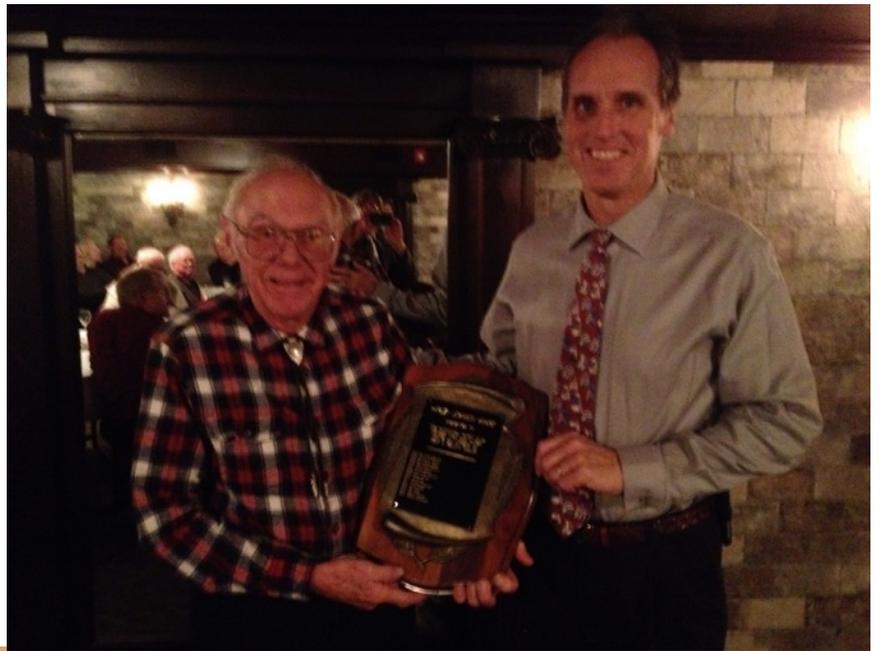
~ Allen

2016 Dues:

\$30.00 payable to Rockford Yacht Club

Mail to:

Ray Olson
4510 Crescent Circle
Rockford, IL 61108



Winter Boating – Marty O'Connor

When the days grow short and the wind chill drops, some of us non-migratory boaters fail to reach more hospitable lower latitudes. Of course, I truly relish the change of seasons, adapting plans to local conditions with as much spontaneity (read: lack of forethought) I can manage, given my short attention span and limited resources. Fortunately, we have several paddle craft, and live only a half-block from the Kishwaukee River, which often develops its most kayak-friendly streamflows between early winter snowmelts, before really frigid temperatures set in. This season has been almost ideal so far, with high enough water levels and few freezing days, so I've gotten on the water several times already since Christmas. What I enjoy most is the easy escape provided from ordinary human hustle and bustle, even when passing along railroads or under highway bridges noisily reminds you of its dominance. Most of the time, you'll find the tranquil solitude within the river banks invigorating, and evidence of nature totally captivating.

DeKalb's section of the Kishwaukee river is rather narrow, with minimal drop, so during dry spells, there is rarely enough depth for paddling, but even at flood stages, the speed of the current rarely impedes upstream travel. This works out well for me, because I can usually put in and take out close to home, no shuttle needed. In the last two weeks, I've paddled about 6.5 miles upstream and 9.9 miles downstream over four outings, which required only one retrieval by car, after a 3.5 mile downstream trip through town.

While going solo provides a casual escape, it can be very frustrating to miss an opportunity to share wonderfully unique experiences with friends. When there is snow on the ground, it can be difficult to convince someone to join you. Other times, there are minor technical problems. When I was out the first time on Dec 30th, I saw a pair of red foxes along the banks almost immediately after put-in while heading downstream. Before I could aim a camera, they spooked and ran across a busy road to the park upstream. After an hour or so paddling around backwaters of the original stream bed, an area usually inaccessible unless water levels are high enough to exit a man-made channel revision, I

headed back upstream. When I neared a footbridge connecting the park to the grounds of a nearby school, I spotted one of the foxes trotting slowly across the bridge, stopping to glance nervously back for its companion, before scampering the rest of the way when a man unknowingly approached on the walk. The pedestrian crossed, apparently oblivious to me or the fox, and I noticed the other fox scramble out of the brush toward the area I had seen them originally. Anticipating a rare opportunity, I parked myself in a spot about 10 yards from the bridge and set my phone to video. Sure enough, the first fox re-emerged and came toward the bridge in an effort to rejoin its pal. I hit record and focused as the fox trotted back across the bridge and off on a mission to reunite. However, when I stopped recording, I found that it had failed to start the first time.....ARRRRGHHH!

So, next Christmas, I'm hoping for a better camera with versatile mounting and reliable triggering.

