
The Bullship Log



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

Upcoming Events:

7/23/2016
ANNUAL RYC PICNIC
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Bay View Shelter
Lunch at Noon.
Hopefully sail before and after

Commodore's Corner

Ahoy mates,

Can't believe July is halfway done. But that means there is plenty of good sailing left to do.

Thursday (7/14) was a date I'd scheduled weeks ago to take a gal from DeKalb (Debi) and two gals from Dixon, Carolyn and Melissa, out sailing since they had missed A Taste of Sail. The forecast had looked good up until that morning - with gloomy predictions of winds to 30 mph by one TV weatherman.

So I intently studied various forecasts online. Should we cancel. The wind was supposed to be steady at 17-18 with gusts to 25 from the WNW. The morning started out breezy but okay. The forecasts called for the stronger winds to arrive about noon - just before our 1 o'clock meeting. So I called the gals and indicated I was thinking of cancelling, but Debi thought we just ought to go to the lake and see how it is when the time comes. So that's what we did.

It was windy. Very. I set up our American 14-6 Thelittlebote when all had arrived. I rigged it to be a reefed main only and left the jib in the VW camper. I've never sailed it like this before or in this much wind. We added to the paddling power with half a kayak paddle that I happened to have along - and between it and the regular wood paddle the ladies were barely able to make way against the wind blowing at the dock. With two paddling and one steering we finally got out where I could get the main up and start sailing.

At first it did not tack to windward very fast with this little bit of sail. But as we got out into the body of Pierce Lake - it was more than enough. It was not, as I suspected, a good day for teaching sailing as the winds were gusty and from varying directions. Yet we were able to demonstrate tacking to windward and some speedy broad and beam reaches. I managed one controlled jibe demonstration and thought better of doing that again. Jibes in small un-ballasted boats in strong winds are when they are most likely to capsize. We had no interest in swimming.

So far the wind had been in the 15 mph range but about mid lake it really started to blow. Probably 25. The lake surfaces was frothing and bigger waves were building. Needless to say I took over steering in addition to handling the main sail. The ladies served well as bio-ballast. We all were catching regular dousings of "spray." So Thelittlebote stayed on its feet, but tacking was difficult as the minimal sail and low boat weight meant that

going through the wind just about stopped all forward speed. Each time I had to bear off considerably to regain speed and rudder control.

After the last tack in the protection of the campground cove, I let Debi handle the tiller again. I thought the worst was over and tried to let her tack it one time - nope - the 25 strong wind came back. We eked through another tack and called it a day. I took down the main in the protection of the point over by the concession stand - then Debi's hat blew off (surprised this had not happened earlier). So with a few paddle strokes we were able to drift down on the hat and retrieve it much to Debi's delight. We then let the boat drift bare poles to the boat ramp dock. Debi was at the helm, and our speed was such that I had to have Carolyn put the canoe paddle in the water and hold it to slow us down as we neared the dock!

The gals were satisfied despite so little time spent on the water and the few minutes they got to helm Thelittlebote. Two were celebrating their birthdays, and felt it was a great present. Debi and Carolyn want to learn more about sailing and we may see them at the picnic coming up on July 23.

I expect the O'Connors will have their newly acquired American 14-6 there too. Any others want to race us?

See elsewhere for details about the picnic - and look forward to seeing all our pals at the meeting this Monday night (7/18) at 7:00.

Commodore Al

Taste of Sail Report – Marty O'Connor

Our annual free introduction to sailing event went smoothly this year. Wind was weak and variable early on, with a more reliable breeze building in the afternoon and then waning during our last sail of the day. About 18 guests were hosted aboard three boats, provided by Allen Penticoff, Burnie Turner and myself. A fourth skipper, Nick Scheuer, arrived later to relieve Burnie of his Tanzer14 command. Dave & Joy Tarrant, Preston Aylesworth and Linda O'Connor kept company with Ruth Penticoff and Bergie at the welcome table, while also crewing or assisting at the dock. Due to time constraints, Kevin Wenzel wasn't able to launch his little boat. Hopefully we can help him get it in the water soon, maybe at the club picnic.



