

Acton Action

In this issue

2 HSA awards banquet battens down the hatches on 2017

3 Nicholas Hayes and AA revisit *Saving Sailing*

2 HSA by the numbers -Where we stand in 2017



At left, HSA Commodore Jerry Brewster speaks to dinner guests. Brewster was re-elected for 2018. At right, Leigh Ann Fulford finds Pete Peters comic sampling of spirits amusing.

Did You Know?

There are about 900 sailboats in the Chicago Harbor System and they spend about \$18 million a year. The Lake Michigan Sail Racing Federation estimates that six to ten thousand people race a sailboat at least once on Lake Michigan.

State of Sailing in U.S.? Wavy

Do you wonder what is going on with sailing outside of our own club? Are we part of a trend or an outlier?

Elsewhere in this issue we have a window into our club's membership and participation. Here, though, we would like to share some things we have found about sailing in the U. S. in general so that you can see what is going on around us and outside our little bubble.

For example. The number of people who can call themselves sailors has increased every year in the period

from 2012 to 2014 and now totals close to four million people nationwide. Of that number about 2/3 of them are what are called "casual" sailors - those who sail anywhere from 1-8 times per year.

The "core" sailing participant - those who sail more than 8 times a year - number about 1.2 million. That core group, which includes racing sailors, has declined slightly each year.

The East North Central region of

continued on page 4



Sunfish racer Laura Beebe holds aloft her trophy for 2017. The 32-year-old Beebe not only fended off all competition at home but competed successfully with some of the best in the Midwest.

HSA Puts Cover on 2017 with Awards Gala

After a season that saw drifters and screamers, the thrill of victory and the agony of the pickle boat, it all came to a celebratory conclusion on November 4th at the 61st awards banquet.

The Barn 'n Bunk once again hosted the dinner and ceremonies, which witnessed, once again, the crowning of the fleet and series champions as well as recognition of

those whose contributions stood out.

Chief among those racing awards was that of Sunfish racer Laura Beebe, whose award was barely able to hold all the singlehanded titles she gathered in 2017 - all first place finishes too: 1st Memorial Day; 1st Labor Day; 1st Spring Series; 1st Fall Series; and 1st in the highly competitive Sunfish Series. Not a second place among

them.

Another first for Beebe included sailing in a sanctioned Sunfish regatta - two of them in fact. One at home for OktoberFast and one in Michigan at Devil's Lake. The only Sunfish title she didn't take was the Fourth of July Series where she didn't compete. That title went to Jerry Brewster.

(continued on page 6)



HSA by the Numbers

- 61 families strong
- 77 who participated in an HSA event in 2017
- 36 who made it to the starting line
- 39 others who took an Intro to Sailing class in 2017
- 5 people who became certified to

sail an HSA boat in 2017

- 6 new members
- 13 boat average per Sunfish Series start
- 5 members who acquired a new boat this year
- 21 boats starting in one race (Sunfish regional regatta) 15 from club



Saving Sailing Revisited

Author Nicholas Hayes on "Yacht" Clubs and Their Growth

If I had to make a chart to represent hours of fun I've had by originating location, it would show that a big slice of my fun begins at a yacht club. So I generally like them a lot.

At the same time, I'll admit a personal bias towards the idea that yacht clubs should instead call themselves sailing clubs, and the sooner they do it, the better for sailing. For me, it's not just about marketing: if I never see, smell, hear or feel a power boat again in my life, I'll be thrilled. And I hate blazers and slacks.

But more than naming conventions and my pet-peeves, yacht clubs are generally in trouble, because their members are dying faster than they can find or make new ones. They need to make a change. I've been studying the problem now for almost 20 years; some of my research inspired the book *Saving Sailing*. Yacht clubs have an age problem: member average age is usually around 60. Of course most clubs have junior programs as a feeder, but they usually don't feed. I've written extensively about how

age segregation is part of the problem - it creates a broad chasm between young skilled, eager sailors, and the older, tiring base of a club. Consider these observations, excerpted from the book:

"In most sailing clubs today, the kids show up in the morning, and leave in the late afternoon, just about the time the adults are arriving"

"...the decline in participation in sailing is better explained as a decline in devotion to intergenerational free-time pursuits."

It is hard to explain why it seems we've gone to such lengths to create this gap -- separating the generations unnecessarily -- accept to suggest that:

continued next page

1.) it is a passive response to a general trend towards youth-sports and away from intergenerational activities everywhere, because youth-sports are easier to market, coordinate and scale, or...

2.) we've come to depend on active, age-specific marketing for everything, and we're lacking the pop culture hero willing to twitter to inspire both 11 year olds and their moms to try sailing. After all, marketing to parents means marketing to their kids, right?

And then some new data hit my desk, suggesting that it has nothing to do with marketing at all. We have it backwards.

Last month I was planning a Saving Sailing presentation at a 110 year old club, and working with a smart, relatively young (40's) member of the club's board of directors to ensure a relevant talk. He suggested that in advance he would survey members to understand age, tenure, interests and value delivered.

As with most club surveys, he drew an adequate sample of his members, and it confirmed some common findings: average age, 60-ish; average time of service, 20-ish years; outgoing members outpacing incoming members. It is easy to predict that this pace will quicken, and see tough times ahead. Thus the talk. On a hunch, I suggested, and he agreed, that instead of concentrating on turnover trends, we should find the mean age of club newcomers at the time of entry and chart it over the years.

And the cause of the age segregation gap popped into view, as did this club's chief

challenge and some suggested solutions, which may be useful elsewhere. For me, these data suggest a clear, new path to sustainability.

Notice that in 1960, the average age of a new club member was 32 years old. By 1993, the average newcomer was over 60, and the age has hovered around 55 ever since. So during the heyday, when sailing was growing, its advocates were right in the middle of the years of active parenting. They were bringing their kids. And they were recruiting their friends who were often about the same age. And they were bringing their kids.

Over the years, as the core group aged, the same advocates no longer had kids at home and their good efforts to introduce new friends resulted in newcomers of about the same age (and also without kids.) So clubs (and sailing) began to shrink when the typical club newcomer became an empty-nester or a retiree, and now sailing is no longer a sport enjoyed by families.

It's also telling that at this specific club, where today there is a strong commitment to a junior sailing program, there is only one member child in it. The rest of the kids who participate arrive via schools or other youth clubs, or their non-member, non-sailing parents drop them off.

While there is no overall market statistical significance to these data, since this club's age demographics and member make-up are similar to those found in all of sailing in the US, it is safe to use the data

anecdotally to make a point.

What's wrong with Yacht Clubs? Members aged, and as they did, they seemed to forget that they were once young. One of the keys to Saving Sailing is



"Sailing clubs must re-open their doors to people in the active parenting years. "

that Yacht (cough) Sailing Clubs must re-open their doors to people in the active parenting years. Of course, this has much broader implications and creates a new set of needs. Most families don't have sailboats.

Often kids take to sailing earlier and more naturally than parents. Families often have less disposable time than they had 40 years ago, or at least, their schedules are more complex. It'll be hard to break the youth-sports habit. Most clubs plan parties for adults, and day care for kids (some just say no to kids altogether.)

The Sailing Club of the future will have found great solutions to these challenges. And then it will be younger, and more vibrant, and more fun for everyone.

(reprinted from Scuttlebutt News)

State of Sailing? Wavy continued from page 1

of the country, of which Ohio and the Great Lakes are a part, has about a half a million total sailors, 316,000 of whom are casual, and 209,000 of whom are hard core.

The most active region is the South Atlantic region (which includes Florida) where they have 833,000 total sailors. That region is followed by the Pacific and Middle Atlantic regions with 751,000 and 729,000 respectively.

It is interesting to note that while the upper Midwest is 4th in total sailors, we are second in number of core sailors, those who are most on the water and many of whom are racing.

The sailboat market too has some interesting ups and downs. The number of new sailboats built in the U.S. from 2012 to 2015 is over 22,000, which is fairly constant at about 5000 + boats per year. (About two out of every ten boats built are sailboats.) So the market has stabilized but it is still a far cry from the numbers in the year 2000 when there were 22,500 new sailboats every year or, if we go farther back to the heyday of sailing, the 73,100 new boats in 1980.

The biggest gainer among new sailboat builds is the domestic multihull production which keeps improving. The under 30' market there keeps seeing small increases while the over 30' multihull market has jumped a neck-whipping-pitch-poling 71%.

In fact, one in every five sailboats built in the U.S. in 2015 was a multihull.

The number of sailboat builders is still in decline. Just ten years ago there were 139 different manufacturers of sailboats. Today there are roughly 95.

Sailboats under 20' swing the market most by leading rebounds and causing crashes. The largest growth in 2015 was in boats over 60' which is up 40%; the largest decline was in the 46' to 59' with a 44% drop.

Those shifts don't affect us much since we are primarily a club with boats in the under 20' range. Plus if someone buys a boat in our club or at our lake, it is generally a used boat - a very busy market for which we have no statistics. Still we do know that if we look on Craigslist that we can find a lot of used sailboats at reasonable prices.

(6 boats) 12' – 15' from \$250 to \$6,500 (this one is brand new)
 (5 boats) 16' – 20' from \$1,000 to \$7,995 (1 oddball at \$26,000)
 (4 boats) 21' – 26' from \$2,900 to \$6,600 (1 oddball at \$19,995)
 (5 boats) 27' – 30' from \$5,000 to \$11,500
 (1 boat) 37' \$42,000

However, if you were to buy a new boat, here's what you can expect to pay. The average cost of a new boat under 11' is \$3900. (A new Sunfish at 14' is under \$5000.) A boat that is from 12' to 19' averages about \$11,500 and one that is from 20' to 29' is averaging about \$55,000.

Interested in charters? The bareboat chartering service has been growing every year since 2011 with 28,206 charters in 2015 alone. Of that number, 41% are multihulls. The Caribbean continues to dominate the charter market where the average cost of a week's charter is \$3950.

(Source: 2016 Sailing Industry Report - Cruising World Magazine)

HSA Puts Cover on 2017 cont. from page 3

The Sunfish fleet was an active one in 2017 with thirteen skippers qualifying for awards. Another eight skippers participated but fell one or two races short of qualifying. (Qualifiers needed half of the 24 races sailed to qualify.) The numbers stand out in comparison to years past. It is the first time in recent memory that five Sunfish skippers received trophies for the Sunfish Series.

In the Hobie Fleet, they were much more democratic. Joe and Kelly Buchert took the Memorial Day and the 4th of July Series, while brother Charlie took first in the fall. Don Fecher captured the title for Labor Day. The Bucherts all spend time on the regatta circuit in Ohio and Michigan in addition to competing at their home club.

In Y-Flyers, the tandem of Pete Peters and Rose Schultz walked off with firsts in the Fall Series, on Memorial Day, and on the 4th of July, while holding off Roger Henthorn and Bobbie Bode who took top honors in the Spring Series and also on Labor Day.

In all, fifteen different racing sailors received racing awards. Yet another six members were given special awards for sportsmanship and contribution to the club over the past year. Their awards and exploits will be in our next issue but are already on HSA's Facebook page.



Catamarans

Joe and Kelly Buchert - 1st Memorial Day and 4th of July

Don Fecher - 1st Labor Day

Charlie Buchert - 1st Fall Series

Y-Flyers

Pete Peters and Rose Schultz - 1st Fall Series, Memorial Day, and 4th of July

Roger Henthorn and Bobbie Bode - 1st Spring Series and Labor Day

Handicap (Sunfish/Capri)

Laura Beebe - 1st Memorial Day, Labor Day, Spring Series, Fall Series

Jerry Brewster - 2nd Fall Series, 2nd Memorial Day, 1st 4th of July

Charlie DeArmon - 2nd Labor Day

Ken Wright - 2nd 4th of July

Sunfish Series (Four Regattas)

Laura Beebe - 1st

Bill Molleran - 2nd

Mike Stratton - 3rd

Kevin DeArmon - 4th

Megan DeArmon - 5th