

ACTON ACTION

The Social Aspect

What is sailing at Hueston Woods?



Ok, it may not be like the picture above. We aren't Tinder or Tumblr or Bumble or Coffee Meets Bagel. So what are we?

If we only look at one aspect of what we do, you might say we are a group of people who meet up each week from April to October to race. But that would be a mischaracterization. It is true that you could come up a few times a year and race and we would never see you otherwise. And that's ok. Glad to have you around. But most of us who sail know that we are stronger if we view ourselves as a social gathering who races rather than as a racing gathering who sometimes socializes.

When you start to view our club and our association with one another as the former, it can have an important and lasting effect on not only the quality of our experience but on the health and longevity of the club and the sport. Viewing our club as primarily a social gathering who races also adds strength to the argument that sailors are by nature a counterculture, one that protects an idea that sailing a small boat has social value.

SOONER OR LATER

Coming Up Sooner

Beverages and Boats - Saturday, March 16th in Glendale at 1:30

Junior/Ladies Camp Committee meeting at Hueston Woods Lodge, Sunday, March 10

Coming Up Later

Launch/Work Party on boats on Saturday, April 13 at 10:00

HSA Spring Social - Saturday, April 13 1:30

We get up, we get out, and we get together, whereas our participation in many other contemporary activities often only generates the most superficial contact with other human beings. At the lake, on the lake, we have the opportunity every week to be engaged with others in play.

I think the following are from Nicholas Hayes in *Saving Sailing*. "It is the unique nature of our sport. It is time consuming, difficult, evolving, and sometimes risky, but it is always social and always worth it."

Rule #1: Never downplay how big it is. We can't let the charter define our culture.

Rule #2: Share the grand benefits of sailing: friendship, experience, and freedom

Rule #3: Reach to the outer circle. When sailing is seen as a real intellectual and physical challenge, worthy of someone's hard effort, their commitment of time, their athleticism, and then it finds its way into our social discussion.

Your Spring Checklist! Of Course!

Condensed from the American Sailing Association website

Numero Uno: Safety ! Sailing is fun but its' more fun if you're all squared away in the realm of safety. Do you have all the mandated equipment? Fire extinguisher? First aid kit? Check out this Coast Guard list:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=virtual-safety-check>

Number Two: Life at the Bottom. Need new paint or bottom repair? Through hulls checked? Check valves and below waterline devices.

Number 3: The Iron Genny - the motor of a sailboat has to be looked at. Did you winterize? Too late for that so check it out this spring and do the right things.

Number 4: Trailers - It carries the prize, the love of your life, your muse. When the trailer is suspect, there are many concerns. Replace the bearings or at least re-grease; paint the rust, get a new front wheel crank; check the lights and tire treads.

Number 5: Running Rigging: Go through and decide how they look. Are they the correct size or have you been making do. Are they grubby, fraying and on

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"It is the unique nature of our sport. It is time consuming, difficult, evolving, and sometimes risky, but it is always social and always worth it."

Nicholas Hayes

Getting Ready for Sailing Season? Lessons from the Past



The Flying Fortress at Wright Field in Dayton in 1935

In October of 1935, Dayton's Wright Field was the scene of one of the most important flights in aviation history. And one of the shortest. But many of us have never heard of it. It was the test of a new aircraft, the Boeing 299, nicknamed the Flying Fortress.

The flight lasted only a few minutes. The plane took off, then suddenly pitched upward and fell back to the ground, killing three of the six men on board including the pilot, Ployer Hill, one of the Army Air Corps best pilots.

Boeing was in a tight race with Douglas Aircraft to get an important contract with the U.S.

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Be Still My Heart; the Birds Droppeth

"In winter I plot and plan. In spring, I move." Henry Rollins

I walked out to my barn a few days ago, and as I slid open the door, I saw it. Bird droppings on the concrete right below the doorframe. Normally, I don't get too excited about bird doo, but for this I did. It means the sparrows who nest every year under the trim above the door rail are thinking about home improvement, romance, and adding a bedroom for the kids.

There have been other, more subtle signs, all in this same week. I went to Lowes for fireplace stuff and caught two guys in the lawn and garden section secretly stocking the shelves with, uh, lawn and garden stuff. Not a Christmas wreath in sight. I said, "Aha!" as I passed them and pointed. Of course they played it off as if I were some kind of nut who didn't know what I was seeing. But I knew.

Then I drove past the mall in Farmersville (actually the Sunoco station) and saw bags of mulch stacked high in every direction. A sure sign that daylight savings time is just around the corner. And it is. This very weekend! I'm sure it will be warm enough to enjoy those extra hours of daylight.

A few days before, I had been grouching to friends about how much I detested February with its cranky melancholy, its love of frozen mud, and its preference for low scudding gray clouds that refuse to let the sun shine.

February's days were numbered (but only up to 28) and her rebellious but milder replacement, March, is here. Alleluia. I cannot chide March the same way despite its habit of throwing freezing temperatures in with its radiant days of sunshine. I would support

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Be Still My Heart

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legislation, however, to make March 28 days long also. And January.

I admit that I mostly hid inside from about December on. But I did a lot of little things in November before the deep frozen

came polar vortexing its way down here. I took the wood off the Vic 18; serviced four winches; bought the new take up reels for the Y-Flyer halyards; sent a sail to be repaired; ordered two new shrouds.

I want to be ready when the moment comes to rip the tarps off boats and climb aboard in dry dock. I feel disciplined. (Not accustomed to that feeling.) Every day lately I have added one hour to my work on set building for my wife's musical, *Mamma Mia*, to sand woodwork and add a coat of varnish. (They hang on the chalk tray in her classroom. I think they look nice.)

All of that helps but the thing that really made me feel as if Spring was not just a figment was a call to Dan Beckman with the Dayton Power Squadron. There I was able to confirm that DPS is offering a course in advanced piloting this Spring, so each week

from March 26 on I will be spending two hours a Tuesday on lines of position, radar, chartplotters, collision avoidance, wind and currents, and all manner of nautical haffa faffa.

I will likely lay my head down on my pillow each night from here on out thinking about shooting an azimuth of the sun at noon on the high seas with my trusty sextant. Arrggh. (I don't really have one of those, but it would be nice.) That nighttime crossing of Lake Michigan, or some other equally challenging body of water, is still a ways off, however.

I'm kind of a romantic about it all. Still, the signs that it is about time to tumble back into the great outdoors without five layers of clothing are in abundance.

Keep your eye on the sparrow. Except when they need a little privacy.

A POETIC INTERLUDE

"When all the world appears to be in a tumult, and nature itself is feeling the assault of climate change, the seasons retain their essential rhythm. Yes, fall gives us premonition of winter, but then, winter, will be forced to relent, once again, to the new beginnings of soft greens, longer light, and the sweet air of spring."

Madeleine M. Kunin

“Despite the forecast,
live like it’s spring!”

Lily Pulitzer



Lessons of the Past (continued from page 2)

military. The failure of that flight on a cold day in Dayton resulted in Boeing losing that contract. Boeing would later go on to make thousands of those aircraft, renamed the B-17, and they were instrumental in the war effort in the next decade.

So what went wrong? How could a plane outfitted with the most advanced technology of the day and with three pilots on board, each of whom had a reputation for their skill and experience, fail so disastrously and with so much at stake?

The answer is that the flight crew had failed to unlock the flight control gust locks which prevent damage to control surfaces while on the ground - a routine matter for most flight crews, but somehow overlooked on this particular day. The result was that the plane's crew was unable to stop the plane's nose from climbing, so after just gaining about 300 feet of altitude, it dropped back to the earth.

As a result of this fatal accident, the aircraft industry made a change. More training? No. More experience for pilots? No, also. A realization that flight was becoming too complicated to be safe? Almost. What they did was to revert to using an ancient and time-honored practice - the humble checklist. And as a result, the future of air travel was guaranteed and is today perhaps the safest way to travel in the world.

They realized that this ancient insight helps us to perform at our best. This realization has also transformed surgery and other medical practices and construction practices worldwide and helped reduce the incidence of injury and death simply because checklists force people, even the most knowledgeable and skillful, to slow down.

Each Spring we go about the task of rigging boats and getting on the water without too much worry about whether or not we did it right.

After all, many of us have years of experience in doing this, so what's to worry about. And yet, the possibility remains that we may omit something important. In fact, it is often the most experienced and skillful among us who succumb to error.

Who hasn't gotten on the water and discovered an important element has been somehow forgotten? A missing keeper ring on a halyard or stay; a bolt come loose from the mast; a worn halyard; a piece of safety equipment left on shore. We see several people just put their hands up. Those who did not raise a hand may be the most important audience for this. Some days, things just go wrong and sometimes terribly wrong.

Recently the NPR program "Hidden Brain" had a podcast on "The Trick to Surviving a High Pressure Job - The Checklist". Now, sailing and rigging boats is not brain surgery or flying a plane. Usually the consequences of leaving out an important item or not noticing a critical problem with a piece of running or fixed rigging are not life or death issues. But they are problematic in terms of preparing for a contest on the water where a single small malfunction can cost you a race. Or money.

Even if you are not racing and just out for an afternoon on the water daysailing or cruising, things can happen that can and should be avoided. For example, a missing ring ding on a shroud allowed the mast to fall on a Capri 14. The overlooked upper shroud that wasn't checked before raising the mast on a Catalina 250 resulted in the whole rig having to be lowered and the shroud attached and secured properly, adding labor and time to what should have been a much shorter task. A simple failure to attach the gas line to the motor properly on the committee boat led to a drifting boat and a delayed race start. Overlooking something important can lead to problems.

Many of you may already use checklists to rig your boats or get ready to go on the water. Others rely on their memory, their experience, or their daring and intellect. But accidents teach us that these are not enough. In fact those attributes may only make us more vulnerable. Simple checklists force us to focus on the things most likely to go wrong.

Your Spring Checklist. You're Welcome. (cont. from page 2)

control lines!

Number 6: Standing Rigging-Losing a mast because you felt like you could get one more season out of the 22 year old rigging is not the story you want to tell. Lightly run your thumb and forefinger along the wires of the rigging - if they are full of metal splinters and blood, you need to change it out. Check this out:

<http://www.sailmagazine.com/diy/inspecting-maintaining-and-replacing-standing-rigging/>

Number 7: Purge and Organize - Yes, it can be slightly overwhelming, but once you're knee-deep in it all, pulling everything out of the boat and assessing whether it stays or goes, you'll be feeling good. Make piles - keeper, trash, need to decide. Once it's all out of the boat and on the lawn the boat is empty and something feels right. Make the necessary decisions and return the items in the keeper pile to where they should live on board. The boat is neat and organized and feels amazing!



The Humble Checklist
In the picture below, the Flying Fortress lays in ruin at Wright Field in Dayton after a disastrous first flight. It's demise led to the rise of the checklist in modern aviation, medicine, and construction as well as many other fields where preparation is really important.
At right, on the sleeve of astronaut Neil Armstrong's suit - a checklist

