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HSA welcomes new members Glen and Annie Nesbit and their two sons. Glen and son Logan have already crewed this year and are looking for more rides.

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We review Erskine Childers 1903 spy novel *The Riddle of the Sands*. - A spy novel aboard a cruising boat pre-WWI? Yes!

## Race Clinic This Sunday

In this clinic instructors will go over the basics of the race course, tactics, starting sequence and mark rounding as well as learning the basic four rules of racing.

The race committee clinic that was to be a part of this weekend has been postponed and instead of a two day clinic, it is just one on Sunday, May 23.

Fourteen new and relatively new skippers will be joined in a boat with veteran racing sailors who will be on board to give advice as the competitors go through several practice starts and practice races.

# Action Action

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## The Sailing Life: Will the Wind and Water Get You Where You Want to Go? Yes.

When I was young, my brother sold me his Triumph Spitfire. I remember driving up the street after I had turned out of the neighborhood and hit the main road for the first time. When I had finished shifting into fourth gear and was flying along, I just let out a shout. It was an exclamation of top down, purring engine, pure joy.

I do the same thing every spring the first time I go out on the water. Just before hitting the corner out of the launch area and heading out onto the lake, I let out a whoop.

Ask anyone who sails or races sailboats and you will likely get an impassioned reply. There is simply nothing like it. When the wind and sail combine for that surge of power and all you have is that tiller and mainsheet, it is a thrilling sensation.

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# HSA Welcomes New Members: The Nesbit Family



**The Nesbits' project boat: a canoe of the stitch and glue design with 1/4 inch fibreglassed plywood**

## Learn to Sail - Become Certified to Use HSA Boats

**Intro to Sail:** One day learning the basics, one hour classroom; three hours on the water in a singlehanded, doublehanded or cruising boat: \$75 (add spouse for \$50; add child for \$25)

**Learn to Sail:** Three days, in our boats: \$175; \$75 per lesson afterwards

**Certification to Sail HSA Boats** (Sunfish or Capri 14.2) One day \$75 (Learn to Sail class prerequisite or demonstrated proficiency)

*Editor's Note: Glen and Annie Nesbit are among the newest members of the HSA family. They have two teenage sons – Logan and Bane – and, being ex-military, the family as lived all over the U.S. Glen and son Logan sailed with Diane Pierok in her Capri 14 on opening day and are friends with Jerry and Darrilynn Brewster, also Capri owners.*

*We asked Glen to tell us about his family and their interest in sailing.*

Learning to sail is on my bucket list. I grew up near the ocean in South Florida. I have been around boats my whole life. I was in the Navy and we have owned a handful of powerboats but I have always wanted to learn to sail.

My wife, Annie, and I have been married for 22 years. We have 2 teenage boys, Logan and Bane. Our family has lived all over the United States as Annie and I both served in the military. Before moving to the Dayton area, we spent 3 years in Anchorage, Alaska. Annie is a nurse and I work in cybersecurity.

I want to build my own sailboat. (pictured at left) I

plan to take a Chesapeake Light Craft class and build a boat with Annie.

**"We love all things outdoors: camping, hiking, and any water sport - paddling, scuba, wakeboarding, fishing. We just love to be on the water."**

Racing is a means to an end for us. We want to learn to sail well so that we can enjoy cruising and day sailing with confidence.

Originally, Annie and I had planned this as an adventure to take-on together. Unfortunately, a skiing accident in February led to knee surgery in March and Annie will miss this sailing season. Hopefully, she will join us next year. Until then, Logan and I will represent the Nesbit clan. We are willing and eager (if not yet rated Able) to crew for anyone with an opening.

We love all things outdoors: camping, hiking, and any water sport - paddling, scuba, wakeboarding, fishing. We just love to be on the water. We also have a small pop-up camper that we enjoy.

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I personally never use the word passionate when describing sailing, but my friends use it to describe me and the sport. Doesn't everyone have something that they are consumed by? Ok, full disclosure. I **am** passionate about it.

Sailors in our club are, I have decided, equally passionate. Why else would they turn out week after week, Sunday after Sunday (and then some) in both rain and sunshine, foul or fair weather, in a Beaufort scale 6 or a drifter, just to be on the water and grappling with gusts of wind?

Its allure is mysterious, but I suspect it is as romantic as cruising blue water and as prosaic as Acton Lake. In both you pit yourself against the forces of nature and become master and commander. (Most of the time.)

Want to learn how to sail? To feel the exhilaration, the spiritual healing of a heeling wind machine? The technical prowess that goes with a smooth, efficient tack? The sinful sensibility of a successful race start? Most people can begin doing that (in friendly air) in three days, starting from zero experience.

Our club is rebounding from the restrictions of the pandemic. This season we have a full Intro to Sail weekend class coming up in June and a long wait list. We can teach people to sail any weekday this summer, though, and get them into a boat on their own.

# The Sailing Life

(Continued from page one)

“Want to learn how to sail? To feel the exhilaration, the spiritual healing of a heeling wind machine? The technical prowess that goes with a smooth, efficient tack? The sinful sensibility of a successful race start?”

HSA has a fleet of Sunfish and Capri 14's available to any club member who can demonstrate the ability to rig, launch, and sail that boat. For free. All you have to do is learn to sail and join the club. The lessons and club membership are among the best adventure bargains available. After that, the club's boats are yours to use at your leisure.

The June weekend, as we mentioned, is full, but HSA's instructors are available all summer to go one on one. Time to get yourself a new passion? You couldn't pick a better one. Sail.

# Racing Season Off to a Fitful, Sputtering Start!

First it was too much wind. Then it was too much rain (cold rain at that). Then it was too little wind. Regardless, HSA is off and running in 2021, kicking off its Spring Series and kicking the pandemic to the curb.

Week one saw a boat capsize while another man fell into the frigid water. Week two was a windy but chilly challenge. Week three saw winter return with the only difference being no snow.

Now week four, just in the books last Sunday, brought sunny skies, warm air and water, and a tempting, lusty forecast of good wind. But no sooner was a mark placed in zone 6 and the three lap cards hung on the committee boat than the wind went South. And we don't mean southerly – we mean South! As in disappearing.

As a result, the one and only race held was a 90 minute slog that was only rescued somewhat by the race committee's merciful shortened course flag/horn and the peaceful calm of it all.

The only one that might have been pleased with the outcome was Sunfish racer Brian Callahan who somehow ghosted his way around the

course and managed to pass every boat starting in front of him – Hobie and Y-Flyer – save one. And that was Hobie guy Mike Wier who somehow escaped Brian's pursuit.

Rose Schultz was on race committee and sent us this report:

"It was a low wind day except for before the race and one nice breeze of about 7 mph somewhere in the middle. When we had wind it seemed to blow from mark 3 to mark 2. The rest of the time it was from all over the place, but it was only a whisper. Sometimes we recorded 0.0 wind speed on the wind thigamajiggee."

Roger Henthorn sent us this: "Sunday's race (no one was interested in a second race, especially after Pete picked up the marks as the last boat rounded) was a very long two laps. It was about 1 hour and 25 minutes for us to finish in the Y.

"However, following Brian, we were lifted past Charlie and Amy and finished first. Scott Eversole and Eric Anderson sailed about the whole time side by side. We could hear them talking the entire race.

"Not much other action with the boat barely moving at times. As you saw on the score sheet, three of the wind readings were 0.0. Not sure where the R/C got the 7.7 reading. It wasn't near our boat."

Out of four weekends in the spring series which should total eight races, we have only raced five with the Y's only getting four in.

Still, we seem to be out of the chill of winter's shadow. Here we come, Summer.

**"Sometimes we recorded  
0.0 wind speed on the wind  
thigamajiggee."**

**Rose Schultz**

## Spy Novel Takes You On Board: *The Riddle of the Sands*

You have heard of Ian Fleming, John le Carre, Ken Follett, Tom Clancy and other masters of the spy genre. How about Erskine Childers? No?

Well, you are in for a treat. Childers is the author of what some call the first spy thriller. And, as a little bonus for you, it takes place almost entirely on a sailboat.

The book is called *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service*. Published in 1903, the book is probably the most famous spy novel that you have never heard of. It was, according to critics, immensely popular in the years before WWI and an influential pioneer in the genre of spy fiction.

The action takes place mostly in the Frisian Islands that border the northern coast of Germany and Holland where the author himself spent a good deal of time on his own boats.

Sailing in these waters requires a great deal of skill due to the nature of the “sands” of the title. The area is covered with shallow water sand banks where

few channels exist. It takes a good deal of skill to navigate them.

Childers's main characters are two Brits. One is Charles Carruthers, a low level official in the British Foreign Office, who is contacted by an old Cambridge acquaintance, Arthur Davies, and asked to join him “yachting” and duck hunting in the Baltic Sea. Davies is the one with the considerable sailing skills.

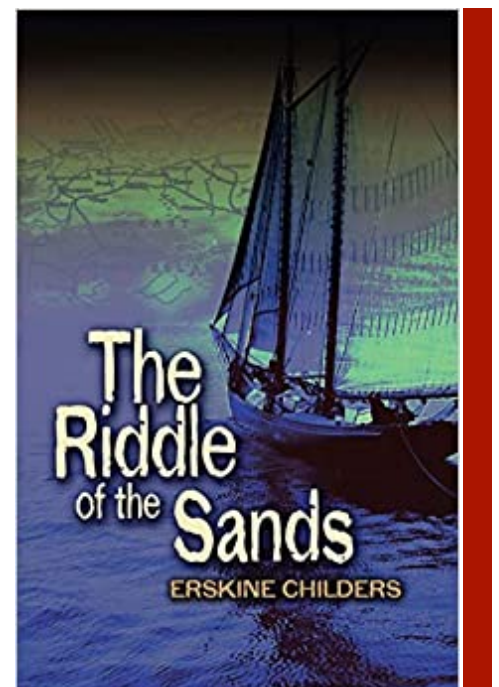
Davies boat, a former lifeboat converted to a cruising yacht is called the *Dulcibella*, a two masted cutter rigged yawl that weighs about 14 tons. Carruthers, who is used to sailing on other people's nicely appointed yachts, reluctantly agrees to meet Davies in one of the Frisian coast towns and join him for a couple of weeks on board his frumpy boat. He has

nothing better to do, and he has recently been jilted by a woman and needs an adventure. Carruthers soon finds out that the “yacht” is more of a working boat and that he and Davies are the only crew.

It becomes apparent to Carruthers that Davies had an ulterior motive in asking him to join him, and it is only slowly revealed to him. Davies has been sailing in the region for some time and has gradually come to suspect that the Germans are up to something sinister.

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# HSA Welcomes Nesbit Family

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**The Nesbit Family: Annie, Bane  
Logan and Glen driving.**

The boys and I build and fly RC planes and multicopters. Annie sews, and I play guitar now and then. At some point all of us will be out sailing. For this season, Logan and I will be the most regular participants

Annie is from Chicago. I am from Florida City, FL (Near the Everglades park entrance). We have lived in Florida, California, Virginia, Maryland, Texas, and Alaska together. Before we met, Annie did a stretch in Oregon, and I spent time in South Carolina. We have both also served overseas.

We plan to stay in Ohio until our boys get out of high school. We are building a "Tiny House" on a lake in Central Florida and plan to move there in about 5 years.

We are happy to join the fun with HSA! Thanks for having us and I look forward to seeing everyone on the water.

## Boat Life Surging: Families Hitting the Sea Roads

There's nothing new about people suddenly selling everything and buying a sailboat so that they can live aboard. Even without any training or experience. But according to CNN, the phenomenon is trending.

Like the van life movement (think *Nomadland?*), more and more people are hitting the seaways rather than the highways. Boat sales are booming. Some boat brokers are saying that they have never seen the market so active with inventory at an all-time minimum.

The pandemic seems to have played a role in motivating people to escape the lockdowns and opt to anchor out. Websites that offer mentoring and support for those transitioning to the cruising life are available to the novices wanting a slower, freer lifestyle.

The boats mentioned in the article were anything from a \$12,500 Pearson 35 to a \$160,000 Broadblue 38 catamaran.

Many of the people who bought these boats were first time sailors who started watching YouTube videos and sailing channels as well as taking courses in navigation and weather. Many also take sailing classes and have found ways to tap into the sailing communities around them for help, instruction, and advice.

Some just want to live aboard and may sail the hundred miles or so to the Bahamas from Florida, but others are going much further. One family is headed for the Balearic Islands around Spain before entering the Mediterranean and visiting Morocco.

Another family went from RV life to a sailboat thinking it would be a lateral move. They now describe the change as an upgrade. "Sailors have been so generous, helpful and friendly toward us, even though we had never sailed a day in our lives when we moved on our sailboat."

# Riddle of the Sands

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Davies has become friends with a man named Dollman whom he met cruising. Dollman has a daughter that Davies is very fond of, Clara, but Davies also believes Clara's father tried to kill him by luring him into a dangerous area of the sands where he should have been shipwrecked.

Davies eventually tells Carruthers what he suspects – that the Germans are planning an invasion of England and the route they will take is through the seven channels of the sands followed by a landing on the English southern coast. It is Carruthers' skill in language and his connections at the foreign office that Davies was interested in, not his companionship. Carruthers' patriotism hooks him into the plot to uncover the truth.

There are other characters who figure prominently: a German patrol boat captain named von Bruning, a mysterious German official, and a couple of mean spirited local German tug boat operators.

At a dinner with all of these people present, Carruthers and Davies play a dangerous game with their German hosts. Their suspicions are confirmed: the Germans are up to something big. Dollman, as Davies has known for some time, is not German, but a former Royal Navy officer who has become a German agent.

From there, it is a race against time as the Carruthers and Davies work to thwart the German plans, rescue the daughter, and escape from German clutches.

There is also a 1979 film version of this intriguing novel starring Michael York, he of Tybalt fame in Zeffirelli's version of *Romeo and Juliet*. On its own, the film isn't as compelling and doesn't spend as much time on the water, but after reading the novel, the movie will be rewarding as you puzzle out the choices the filmmaker made.



The author Childers aboard his yacht, the *Asgard*, as they sail the Baltic. The boat was a wedding present from his wife's father.

## The Relatively Short Life of Author Erskine Childers

Erskine Childers was an English born Irish writer and the son of an Orientalist scholar as well as the father of the fourth President of Ireland.

He owned several yachts in his lifetime after serving in the Boer Wars. He picked up sailing in his early 20's and took a long cruise to the Frisian Islands of his novel in the 30 ft. cutter *Vixen*.

The *Asgard* was his last and most famous yacht, the one he used to smuggle arms to the Irish volunteers. He was later executed by firing squad by the Irish Free State, telling his executioners to "take a step or two forward, lads, it will be easier that way."