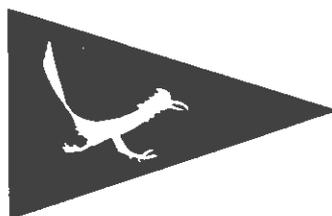


Telltale

AUSTIN YACHT CLUB



MARCH/APRIL 1993



**AUSTIN YACHT CLUB
5906 BEACON DRIVE
LAKE TRAVIS**

AYC OFFICERS

COMMODORE Roy Smith
VICE-COMMODORE Dave Henderson
SECRETARY Michal Wann
TREASURER Dennis Awbrey
RACE COMMANDER Eric Nelson
BLDGS & GRNDS COMMANDER Danny Lien
FLEET COMMANDER Ted Smith
PAST COMMODORE Dave Wahlberg
SAIL TRAINING COMMANDER Claudia Foster

AYC FLEET CAPTAINS

CATALINA 22 Pete Harper
CENTERBOARD HANDICAP Fred Stearns
CORONADO 15 Jon Fitch
ENSIGN George Dahmen
420's Jay Allen
J-22 Max Rockoff
J-24 Michael Wellman
KEEL HANDICAP Steve Vaughan
A-FLEET Ted Smith
B-FLEET Claude Welles
C-FLEET Bay Peterson
D-FLEET Nelson Reynolds
E-FLEET Dave Boerner
F-FLEET Leon Lance
LASER Fred Schroth
ONE-DESIGN Eric Nelson
SOUTH COAST 21 Steve Gay
SUNFISH Martha St. Romain

**COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF
Ty Johnson**

(Ty scanned this photo into his computer at work and started playing around with it. When you look closely you'll see what he has changed. Have fun with it. Ty certainly did!)

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MARCH/APRIL 1993

FROM THE COMMODORE ...



There has been lots of activity in and around our club recently. I'll try to cover some of the more important items in this letter.

We had a large turnout (despite the weather) at our Opening Day Ceremony on February 28. Many thanks to Rebecca Heston and the Social Committee for organizing this event for us.

Participation in the series races has been excellent this year. Better weather and improved lake conditions have helped. I also feel that the schedule and format changes that Eric Nelson and the Permanent Race Committee have instituted are a contributing factor. If you have comments or suggestions for our race program, please contact Eric or a member of his committee.

We have one fewer club staff members than we started the year with. Gary Stone has resigned so that he can pursue other career opportunities. At this time we do not plan to hire another full-time staff member. We have adjusted the staff schedules to provide office and grounds coverage consistent with your requirements and will hire temporary help when necessary.

Danny Lien's Buildings and Grounds Committee continues to work on our rebuilding plan. We have restructured the contract with the builder to allow for competitive bidding for the cabin work. The demolition has been completed, and we hope to have the reconstruction started in the near future.

At the club level, we have reconfirmed our commitment to US SAILING and its Golden Anchor program. US SAILING provides an excellent service to us in many areas. They are responsible for the preparation and distribution of the rules we compete under. They assist in training programs for race committees and judges. They are a key factor in assisting in junior training programs. They provide the framework for the ladder championship events which AYC sends representatives to each year. A membership in US SAILING is valuable to each of us in allowing us to continue to participate in a sport with a consistent structure beyond the local level.

By the time you read this the Spring Series will have concluded. Our series trophies this year are designed to highlight participation and achievement throughout the year. A plaque will be presented to each series trophy winner after their initial win, with engravings to be attached after each subsequent presentation. There are also some additional trophies to be presented at the end of the year for consistent winners and for participation. Thanks to Janis Livingston for developing this concept and designing the trophies.

Let's all have fun and sail fast.

Roy Smith

FROM THE EDITOR . . .



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EDITOR Vicki Bremer
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SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Roy Smith, David Wahlberg, Michal Wann, Eric Nelson,
Dave Boerner, David & Gail Bernstein, Ted Smith, B&G Committee,
Claudia Foster, Vicki Bremer, Norma Carson

FLEET CONTRIBUTORS

Ted Smith, Claude Welles, Dave Boerner, Leon Lance,
John McBride, Max Rockoff, Ray Shull, Tom Groll, Fred Stearns,
Jon Fitch, Fred Schroth, Bruce Foster

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES ...

by Dave Wahlberg, Past Commodore/Membership Committee Chairman

Good news on the membership front -- membership numbers for the first quarter show an upward trend. Not only have we had a fairly steady number of new member applications but we have also had former members apply for reinstatement (Carolyn Marshall and Tom Pollock). In addition, our "Old Salt" discount appears to be helping us keep members, and we have had two associate members upgrade to full senior membership (Steve Wesson and Ravi Subramanian). Not enough to brag about, but certainly some reason to be optimistic.

New members accepted for senior probationary status in February and March were:

Greg Buck -- Mr. Everything at Yacht Harbor who has been racing his dinghy and crewing on a variety of boats (and who has already agreed to help with the junior program boats this year).

Bruce Fox -- a local lawyer who has been racing with Tom Groll in the Ensign fleet.



Richard Diaz -- a Laser and SC-21 sailor who works at Jones and Neuse and has been sailing with Ray Shull for several years.

David Halter -- son of long-time members Pat and Ed Halter, and IBMer who has been making Richard Whitehill's Cal go fast recently.



NEW MEMBERS (cont'd)

Robert Halter -- (yes, another one) an Applied Research engineer who wants to get the Thistle fleet rejuvenated as well as race the family J-24.



Dennis & Carol Mills a geophysicist and artist, respectively, who have recently been racing their San Juan 24.



Steve McKinley -- the manager of Trinity Publications who has been a very active multihull racer and has recently been crewing with the McClungs on their J-22.





Michal Wann

IN A NUTSHELL ...

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY 28, 1993 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

- The 1993 AYC operating budget was approved along with proposed budgets for several scheduled events and standing committees.
- Discussion of plans for Spring Regatta included the question of whether or not classes for multihull boats will be included. Race Commander Eric Nelson asked that the regatta committee review the matter and include multihull classes if the committee feels that is appropriate considering the desired focus of the regatta.
- Mark Rylander presented a proposal that a junior sailing boathouse be constructed in memory of Norman Rylander with the purpose of providing a safe environment for children and boats and a specific area where junior sailors can gather. Funding for the facility would include a \$7,000 donation by the Rylander Estate with additional amounts to be contributed by club members or provided from existing AYC funds. The Board referred the proposal to the Sail Training Committee and Buildings and Grounds Committee for further study and recommendation.
- The Board approved the expenditure of \$1,400 for landscaping.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 1993 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

- The expenditure of \$300 was approved to fund the evaluation of the club's computer system by the Daven Group and recommendations for any changes considered appropriate.
- Detailed plans for activities of the Junior Sailing Program were presented and discussed. The junior program will feature the Peanut Butter and Jelly Series, three week-long summer camps and a Junior Racing Team. Joanne Weberlein stressed the importance of continuity in the junior program. Discussion followed concerning the need for a small power boat for use with the junior program and the most appropriate design for this purpose.
- Janis Livingston recommended and the Board approved the expenditure of \$6,350 for 1993 series trophies. This is a significant increase over prior years and acknowledges the need to provide more attractive and desirable trophies to encourage better race participation. A decision on the request for an additional \$1,000 to subsidize trophies for Governor's Cup and Turnback Canyon regattas was deferred until the first quarterly budget review.
- The club will paint names on all trailers in the dry sail area which do not have proper identification by May 15. Members will be charged a fee of \$25 per trailer.
- A capital expenditure of \$1,600 was approved for work necessary to close the abandoned water well in the work area.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR ...

In twelve years of racing at AYC I have had the dubious honor of having worked on numerous race committees, both for the series races and regattas. It has been my unfortunate experience until last week to have worked with a number of PRC representatives through this time who have been essentially incompetent to provide the guidance necessary for the smooth operation of the race committee yet who have almost universally attempted to bluster their way through the process by their title instead of being able to offer the right answer at the right time and offer constructive guidance to the committee.

Last week was a very different experience. I wish to commend PRC representative Jim Casto for his excellent assistance and guidance in helping E-Fleet when we provided the race committee for the second race of the Spring Series. He truly helped us snatch success from the jaws of disaster as we were understaffed, late, most of our committee was inexperienced, and we had to use temporary marks and courses due to the west wind. Jim offered active support to the committee by answering questions when asked, more importantly looking up the answer in the rules when he didn't know the answer instead of "winging it." and generally providing guidance through suggestions and questions instead of an "all knowing" attitude. We made our mistakes as all volunteer race committees do, but through Jim's assistance we both learned as a race committee and were able to provide successful races for the fleets on time and with a minimum number of problems.

Since generally the fleets provide race committee only a couple of times per year, many fleet members serve on race committee no more than once a year. As such with just an annual race committee seminar for guidance it's not uncommon to field race committees whose only experience "under fire" for many of the committee members is that once a year "duty." It is little wonder that many of the details are overlooked, especially since we run two very different types of courses with the round-the-buoys courses and the long distance courses. The assistance of knowledgeable permanent race committee representatives is essential to the smooth operation of our racing activities. It is a pleasant change to see the selection of the PRC reps by the Race Commander for their experience and competence. With a small fleet such as ours with only twelve boats to draw upon and four series races plus regattas to provide

committee members for we definitely appreciate the competence demonstrated by PRC representative Jim Casto and 1993 Race Commander Eric Nelson.

Dave Boerner, E-Fleet Captain

1993 SERIES TROPHIES

OK, let's go over that explanation again ... here's how the 1993 Series Trophies will work.

If you win any place in your first series of the year, you will receive a plaque and a plaque bar with the appropriate series info engraved on the bar to hang down from the plaque (attached by chains and brass hooks).

If you win any place in your second series of the year, you will receive ONLY a plaque bar to attach to the one already on your plaque.

If you win any place in your third and fourth series of the year, again you will receive ONLY a plaque bar.

If you don't win a place finish until the last series of the year, what do you get? Right! A plaque and a plaque bar ... now you've got it.

If you happen to win a place finish in all the series this year (so that the plaque hanging on your wall will have four bars proudly hanging from the plaque), you will be eligible for a special trophy at the end of the year. And, I promise you, these trophies will be primo.

There will also be special trophies for participation.

Janis Livingston has done an outstanding job in trying to find unique trophies. The Board of Directors liked her idea, and we hope you will too. If you still have any questions please call Janis or your Telltale editor. I would've drawn you a picture of the plaques-with-bar, but then that would've really confused you!

FROM THE RACE COMMANDER ...



In my last article I discussed some broad goals I had for this year's race calendar and its management. This installment, I would like to update you on where we are with this direction and to make some comments about some early experiences we have already had on series scoring.

First the race calendar ... Hopefully everyone is now familiar with the approved 1993 race calendar. There is a fair amount of open time (relative to years past) and some people have expressed concern that some event or other they liked was now "missing." The Saturday Evening Series in particular is usually mentioned during a discussion on this topic. Well, the most wonderful thing is happening. People and their fleets are getting together and developing summer racing programs that meet their particular fleet's needs! I see these events as being great catalysts for both bringing the current fleet members together more as well as offering an opportunity to club members that are active in different aspects of AYC racing to get involved in areas of AYC racing they had not had the chance to check out before. This could help bring all the fleets closer together also! You mean give a one-design sailor a chance to sail with the centerboarders or even a PHRF crew and visa versa ... WOW!!! The Friday night PHRF series is already booked and the Catalina 22, J-24, J-22, and South Coast 21 one-design fleets are discussing running a Saturday afternoon/evening series. The Coronado 15 fleet is also working on a summer series proposal. The neat thing about this is that more racing options are going to be available and these options will be more "tuned" to the type of racing each fleet likes best ... and for those crazy enough to want to try it all, they can!

Now for the pragmatic discussion on scoring ... Let's face it, the first two weeks of series racing has not been the best examples of timely scoring. The scoring committee and the race committee have gotten together to discuss this and the situation is clearly lack of training of the on-the-water scorers (nothing personal). We had a low turnout at the race seminar and this has hurt us in scoring delays. Simple items like when did the first race start have been missing on the score sheets! These kinds of omissions don't allow us to expedite scoring by getting scores off the water sooner ... even if we faxed the sheets from the boat as long as we have fundamental omissions like start times, the scorers can't start anyway! My point is to focus as much on getting good scoring done just like the fleet RC focuses on course selection and signaling. If you feel that the RC being put together might need some extra training, contact me and I will get an RC committee person to assist in some training before the race. Focusing on this is the best way to insure timely score posting. Our crack scoring program pro's can't shine without the correct raw data to work with, right? OK, I am stepping off the soap box now ...

Here's looking for you on the water!

(P.S. Look for the 1993 Sailing Instruction changes and explanations elsewhere in this Telltale for you to clip out and save for future reference. A complete copy of the 1993 Sailing Instructions are available in the clubhouse to the left of the scoring bulletin board.)

Eric Nelson

FROM THE FLEET COMMANDER ... Ted Smith

Well, we haven't had any floods this year to recover from but we have lots of flood work planned to make up for it. For all of you who enjoy building things and taking part in all those projects which separate the Austin Yacht Club from those commercial places to keep your boat, have we got a deal for you. The Harbor Committee has put together a list of projects that is guaranteed to keep all of you busy. Have you walked out on the rigging dock lately? If you have you understand why the replacement of both the north and south rigging docks is one of our first projects on the agenda. While we're at it we're going to make them significantly wider so that during big centerboard regattas and special events board boats will have ample "artificial shoreline" to be pulled up on.

The rigging docks are just the beginning. Dock 5 is also slated for replacement this year. It's getting pretty rusted out in spots. This will be the usual contracted welding deal with volunteers doing the decking. Also, dock 6 needs a lot of reinforcement and I'm hoping that that is a totally volunteer effort. Then if we have any energy left there's dock 7 which is like the crazy aunt that no one wants to talk about including me.

Did you notice that word "volunteer" a few times? They're going to determine the success of these and other projects. We don't have any firm dates yet, but you'll see notices around when we do. When you can I hope you'll come out and join in on the fun. You can count on your efforts resulting in some long lasting improvements to our club.

On a different note, dry sail storage is a real pain right now. There are boats parked all over the grounds, some not paying, some on the waiting list for an assigned slip, some clogging the work area. A major problem is that many are not identified by a name on the trailer as is required by the Harbor Rules. As a result, if your trailer doesn't have a name on it by May 15 we'll do it for you and charge you \$25! This will help us straighten out a lot of billing errors. Your assistance in this would be appreciated.

Let's make this year one to remember for the flood of volunteer accomplishments.

* * * * *

TOKYO NEWS

By the time this article reaches you we probably will have come and gone. Originally we planned to be back in Austin by March, but our Tokyo adventure has been extended through September. However, we will be in Austin March 16-27 for a quick sail and to pick up some summer clothes. We hope to see many of you while we are in town.

Mary Lynn and Russell Painton are over here this week for a short visit. Tokyo is a wonderful city and we are having a great time sharing it with them. The lack of zoning laws provides the unexpected around every corner. You might find a small Shinto shrine wedged between two skyscrapers or a beautiful Japanese home on the smallest little alley in the neighborhood.

As we finished breakfast on ANA while flying to Sapporo for the Snow Festival, David suggested that I share with you a common Japanese practice for breakfast. I think he wants to make sure that we are never asked to plan a regatta breakfast! When on the go, many Japanese have sandwiches for breakfast. It is not unusual for office workers to stop at Wendy's or McDonald's on the way to work and pick up a tuna or egg salad sandwich for breakfast. We have been served sandwiches for breakfast on the shinkansen (bullet train) to Kyoto, the express train to Hakone, and the ANA flight to Sapporo. The sandwiches vary from tuna or egg salad to cucumber, tomato, or salmon salad. In my opinion the strangest combination we have been served was potato salad with green beans.

Hope you have sunny days and great winds.

Cheers ... Gail and David Bernstein

NOTES FROM BUILDINGS & GROUNDS ...

(John, Robbie, Howard, Phil, Tom, Dave, Vic, Jim, Kathy, & Danny)

Here are a few updates on some of our projects and some just-plain-maintenance going on around our club. We are happy to serve on the committee but we do so with the motto, "If it ain't broke don't fix it and above all let's go sailing." Feel free to corner any of us and give suggestions or tell us what is in need of repair.

Cabins: A pre-bid conference was held concerning the specifications for construction of cabins 4 through 8 on March 11. Bid opening is scheduled for March 25. Cabins 4/5 and 7/8 will be elevated with an adjoining interior duplex door between each pair. There will be screened rooms under each and the existing fireplaces will be retained. Cabin 6 will be repaired and refurbished at ground level for those of us who can't or don't wish to use stairs. Drawings are available for view in the office and we'll (Danny will) be happy to share the full specifications with you if you promise to comment. Construction should start within a week after bid opening. So please excuse the mess; we may have to rope off the area. Cabins 1 through 3 are all slated to be screened-in porches with a privacy wall along the road. We have not allocated funds for this effort yet. If you have ideas for work parties, plans, etc., you might want to talk to Phil or John.

Work Area: We proposed the following rules for the work area. They are self-enforcing and pretty much self-explanatory. If you want to change them please join Buildings & Grounds. If you just want to comment, seek out Danny, Vic, or Jim.



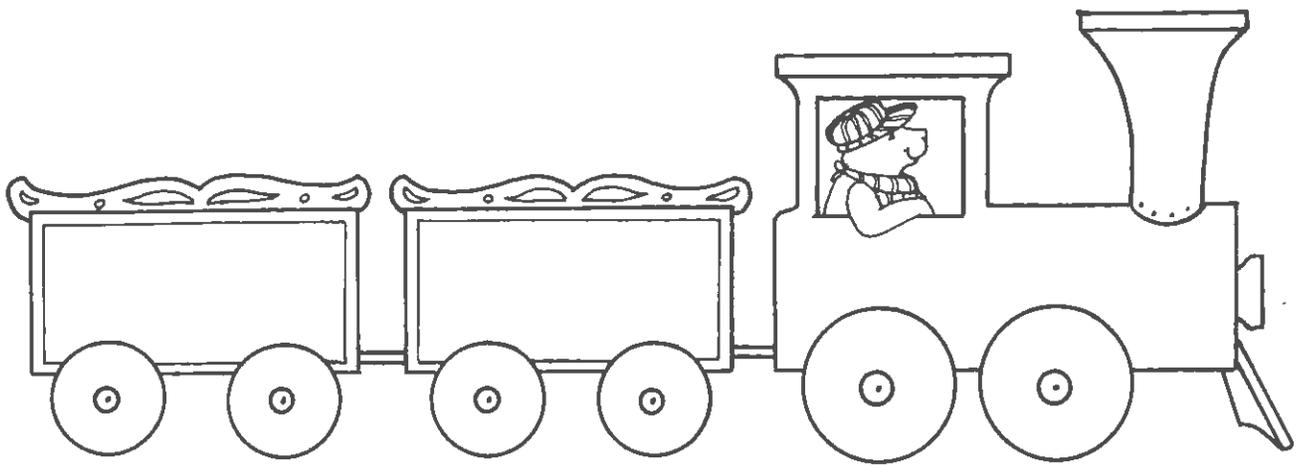
BOAT WORK AREA:

- Stay within perimeters.
- Identify your boat.
- Sand & paint on slab, sweep, and dispose.
- Areas around shed for juniors/AYC boats.
- Temporary storage through office log.
- If work area full, request a boat owner not actively working to please vacate to his/her slip.
- Active work has priority.
- Area in front of slab for day use only.

Parking: Please note a few railroad ties, new dirt and sod in locations where our cars used to cut a few corners. One reason for the "curbing" is to remind ourselves that cutting corners is hard on masts and trees and another is to slow down the loss of topsoil to the lake through erosion. Note the area around the south cove. We ask you to stop driving up the ramp and turning right over the rocks and grass to park cars and trailers. (In general we ask that you consider parking cars on the grass around the Club only during regattas.) To provide more room for cars and trailers around the south ramp, the curve left into the trailer parking area has been widened. We are considering reserving the first 10 or so trailer spaces for "day use only" and even placing a small sign. Consensus has not been reached as the Telltale deadline precedes this month's B&G meeting so you can really comment on this item. But before you do go down and look there. It seems that one can drive in, back up into a space, and it might just be deep enough for a car with trailer, especially the Wednesday variety.

Clubhouse: No comments on the placing of the flags and half hulls unless it's to thank the following folks for being around one night as Steve Vaughan handed electric screwdrivers out to everyone within sight. Thank you to Steve and Lee Vaughan, Calin Popescu and his French brother-in-law, Nelson Reynolds, and Walter Allan. We are working on cleaning and installing brass plates which signify each burgee's home yacht club. We have quite a collection from many countries around the world! If you have an unusual burgee you want to give to the Club, please call Robbie Nelson.

Thanks. Let's go sailing.



SAIL TRAINING COMMITTEE UPDATES ...

by Claudia Foster

PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY SERIES -- a parent/child participation program for juniors 4-8 years of age. The series will be held on Saturdays May 22, June 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. It will be sailed in the club-owned Optimist dinghies. Cost will be \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members. The camp will be limited to 15 campers. Tom and Karen Presswood are our administrators. We are very excited to provide this quality program to our young sailors in order to develop on-the-water confidence, teach basic sailing skills and water safety.

SUMMER DAY CAMPS -- three, one-week day camps designed for beginners and intermediate juniors from 8 to 17 years of age. These camps will be run by a director and four instructors. They will be held June 6-11, 13-18, and 20-25. Campers may use their own boats or sail on our club-owned Sunfish or Optimist dinghies. The cost is \$175 for AYC members, \$225 for non-members. A \$50 discount will apply for a second week or second child. A separate refundable \$50 boat damage deposit will be required from each camper at check-in. The camp will be limited to 20 campers with a ratio of one instructor to every five campers. These camps will be directed by Gretchen Hanover Tippit and Eric Tippit, both teachers of young children. They will focus on teaching basic sailing skills, independence for those who are ready, water safety, and boat care. Minimal swimming skills are required and this camp will be appropriate for any child 9-17 who is not yet sailing independently.

JUNIOR RACING TEAM -- has been developed as continuing training for our experienced junior sailors. The racing team will hold a clinic in May and three sessions during the summer. Training sessions will be held June 23-25, July 21-23, and August 11-13. Each racing team member is encouraged to own their boat. Joanne Weberlein is administering this program. The purpose is continuing training for juniors who want to improve racing skills and provide training for Sears, Bemis, and Smythe Cup competition. The juniors that are eligible have been contacted and registration information will be mailed in a separate flyer.

Extra Registration Forms for the PB&J Series and day camps are available in the AYC office. After we receive your application we will send a confirmation letter and a packet of related information. Registration will be on a first-come, first-serve basis so be sure to get your registration forms in early to ensure your spot in our day camps.

We are all looking forward to a summer full of fun and learning, seeing old friends and meeting new ones. We hope to see you there!

FLORIDA OR BUST -- a rudder or mast or boat or car ...

by Vicki Bremer

When I saw a car at the hotel parking lot in Key West with the soaped on FLORIDA OR BUST on the back window I should've seen what was coming for the dynamic Sunfish racing team of Bremer/Manning. Trailering our ever faithful WORLD'S TRAVELER (having been named after Pat's experience in Houston at the Worlds last year) and ALL MINE (not Jack's but ALL MINE ... well, except for the major repair department), we made it to Sarasota after a 1200-mile trek across I-10 and down I-75 for our first stop -- the Mid-Winters. We found Sarasota no problem, but finding the sailing club was a challenge. After being hailed by a passing motorist with "Hey, you're going the wrong way!" -- well, actually we knew that but rude FL drivers wouldn't let us sneak in the left turn lane -- we eventually found the Sarasota Sailing Squadron on Sarasota Bay with 101 Sunfish sailors raring to go (with Pat and me that made a total of 103 racers on the start line, yes siree).

If you haven't started with 103 boats on the line (a very long line by the way) ... if you haven't tried to find some kind of clear air somewhere in air so light you're not sure if you're being blanketed or it's just plain light ... and if your head is still in la-la land because you can't get over finally being here with all the best-of-the-best Sunfish racers then you haven't lived. If you haven't raced the last 2 1/2 races of a 7-race regatta with a rudder pin ready to fall out because the stupid nut disappeared, you haven't missed a thing. Lesson learned? Use a bolt with a hole at the end so that a cotter pin can be inserted to prevent that from ever happening again. If you haven't installed the outhaul system on your Sunfish so that you can power up and depower those fuller new sails while on the water, you are definitely at a disadvantage. Thanks to having Pat out on the water to loosen up the tie-lines at the end of my boom, I was able to race competitively in light air at least as far as sail shape went anyway -- tactics and choosing the correct side of the course and properly working equipment ... well, that's another story. I did manage to get it all together in one race, however, and managed a respectable 11th place finish. Another lesson learned? When you get close to the finish line make sure you've gone high enough above the committee boat end so that 20+ Sunfish don't go higher than you (taking every breath of any air in the area) and leave you sitting 10 feet from the pin-end of the line dead in the water and kicking yourself for being so anxious to finish that you went brain dead at a crucial moment.

One nice thing about this well-organized event was that a lot of us stayed with families rather than having the added expense of hotels. This Sunfish crowd does a lot of that and many of them camp out in tents or vans. Pat and I stayed with a nice retired couple and their German Rottweiler, Rocket, and their Siamese, Shitty Kitty (true story, I swear). We were spoiled rotten with freshly squeezed grapefruit juice the first morning then the prized family show horse developed colic which meant Pat and I were free to help ourselves to anything. Don't worry, we were polite and left the family silver.

What we didn't leave behind, however, is the memory of the famous paddlewheel cruise on Sarasota Bay. If you think there's a magic way to keep 103 Sunfish sailors amused during the off-hours, forget it. Lesson learned? Don't put a bunch of Sunfish sailors on a big boat with no free keg and no music or other entertainment to cruise around the same bay on which they sat all day in almost no air. Before we even left the dock the Sunfish hooligans were tying us back up and unscrewing the light bulbs on the boat. That didn't keep the captain from leaving the dock, but it did prompt him to make the following announcement in an exasperated tone, "We do not need your help with the docking lines, thank you, and whoever took the light bulbs please put them back -- NOW." After an hour of what was one of the most boring cruises we've ever been on, one of the more rowdy hooligans knocked on the captain's door and said, "We won't be bad anymore if you take us back, sir." The captain's response was something like, "Son, I'm being paid to keep you out here two hours and that's what I'm going to do." Sounds like the folks at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron were trying to get rid of us all at least for two hours.

But get rid of us they did, finally, after a successful regatta despite the mostly light air (the first day we had winds 8 to 12, perfect). So Pat and I packed up and headed for Sanibel Island where we were going to stay for a few days before heading for Key West. Friends of the Manning's (Pat used to babysit their children when both families were stationed in Germany with the Air Force) were gracious enough to let us stay there while decompressing and desalting everything we owned. We basked by the pool; we paddled a canoe around the canal and saw dolphins playing

(almost close enough to touch); we got the oil changed on the ol' Toyota, and we took long walks along the beach and down country roads. And we each had our own room which, at the time, we didn't realize what a luxury that would be. But we had to leave, like it or not, and journey to Key West for the Masters.

We thought we were going to travel south on 41 where at least we'd see some Alligator Wrestling spots but decided there was too much city traffic to get to the alligator part. So we headed off to I-75 again where we spent THE most boring driving experience ever. There was nothing, and I mean nothing. No gas stations; no rest stops; no exits; no nothing. When we finally saw something that resembled civilization we started looking for a gas station and continued to drive for miles before we even saw an exit that looked like it might lead somewhere -- scary especially when we could see the start of Miami in the distance. We did find a truck stop, filled up, and were off again.

When Pat and I found our hotel (the hotel where Goldie Hawn made a movie), with special prime-time rates of \$56.25 per night for Sunfishers, we didn't realize we'd have to share a small room with one small bed with no bathroom and no shower in the room. So we joined the spring-breaker crowd and ran around the hallways wrapped in towels, giggling and screeching every time a hunk saw us in our all-together (oh gross ... and NO we didn't really; we showered, yes, but with the dignity required of a Sunfish Master). Hey, the sign in the shower read "Save Water and Shower With a Friend", and Pat and I always obey the rules.

Speaking of rules ... the U.S. Navy required everything but our underwear size (for that there was a personal inspection) in order to get our cars, boats, and trailers onto the Naval Air Station where we launched and kept our boats. After the registration check-in at the Key West Sailing Club, which was done out of the trunk of someone's car, we all headed to the Naval base where we waited in line for hours while each Sunfisher's car registration, boat registration, proof of insurance, driver's license, and car and trailer license plate numbers were checked very carefully before one toe could cross that line into government territory. I suppose we did look like a group of terrorists with fiberglass explosives shaped like Sunfish. But we had all the right papers -- Pedigreed Sunfishers -- so they let us in anyway. After getting the boats rigged some folks went sailing to test the water (yup, salty) and current (of which there was none unless you went close to the shore of the islands). While Pat was out there tuning up I was on shore fixing another boat problem, a loose cleat this time with a screw that just kept turning when I tried to tighten it. Oh why didn't I buy one of those new boats at the Worlds? So I jury-rigged it the best I could with sticky stuff, pretending to know what I was doing, knowing that all that water still coming out of the screw hole wasn't normal. So off to the hardware store we went after Pat got back to shore so I could buy different gizmos to fix the do-hickey at least temporarily.

And it held together well during our three blow-like-the-dickens 35-boat fleet races the next day. The fourth scheduled race that day was cancelled due to high winds -- no kidding, after we all looked like we'd been whipped with seaweed, drenched in boiling seawater, and set out as fodder for a clam bake. I know that some of us lied about our age in order to be able to vacation in Key West with the spring breakers and to race with the old farts, but we still deserved some respect for elders. The storm that hit that night, however, had no respect for anybody or anything. The winds were strong enough to pick Sunfish off the shore and fling them into the ocean, one of which stayed lost all day until the owner went to the third floor bar of a hotel to cry in his beer about having lost his new boat when he spotted it way out in the harbor and rescued it. Those camping in tents found themselves tentless and knee-deep in water so they ventured out to the naval station to check on the boats at 4 a.m. and found many missing. Meanwhile a covert rescue mission was taking place off an enemy vessel secretly anchored in U.S. territory (that's my having-visited-the-Ernest-Hemingway-house inspirational writing message coming through). The bottom line was that all boats were eventually accounted for; some had broken rudders; there was a lost centerboard or two, and my poor boat had what looked like just a bent metal rubrail. When I got it home it was filled with water (about a gallon's worth) so Jack is now doing major repair with inspection ports, reinforcing the cleats from the inside, and repairing the hairline crack down the center of the hull from the inside as well as the outside this time. Pat had better luck. She raced better than me, beating me by a couple of points, and her boat was undamaged.

I wish I could say the same about mine and also the poor ol' Toyota which lost the bolt holding the sway bar on. Pat and I heard a funny noise in Ft. Myers, like we had a flat tire, but could find nothing wrong. So we smiled and sang (well, I sang; Pat plugged her ears) and felt pretty good about finally going home and having had a great time to boot. Then the next day in Austin the tire just flopped real funny on the way back from running an errand. And to quote Pat, "Whoops, we just used up one of our nine lives." All that and good Sunfishin' too. What a life.

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