Commodore's Comments

This will be an exciting season as we begin our sixty-second year of operation. The Executive Board has been hard at work since January planning for our new season, and we want to encourage everyone to get ready for another year of wind, sun, and boating fun.

So come on out! Join in enjoying the blustery, exhilarating days of spring sailing. As soon as the docks are in the water, we'll be offering our full program of activities. For our newer members, Saturday morning boat school will offer the opportunity to learn sailing basics. More experienced sailors can shake the winter snow off their racing reflexes at the Sunday races. And, of course, we'll all enjoy the best wind of the year during the months of April and early May.

As always, the Executive Board welcomes input from every member on every aspect of club operation. If you have ideas, opinions, or concerns, please share them; we want to hear your thoughts. If you have any observations, comments, or suggestions—let us know!

Opening the Club

Every year, spring means a full schedule of projects lined up to put the club in shape for the season ahead. This year, we need to build a new float for the swimming raft and work on the boats.

Dock-in will be on Saturday, April 1 starting at 9 AM; with luck, we'll be sailing by afternoon. Please plan to come and lend your support if at all possible; those docks are heavy, and we need all the help we can get. As always, there will be a party afterwards to celebrate the start of the new season.

Welcome, New Members

As I do every year, I'd like to close my newsletter article by taking a moment to welcome new members to the club and I'd like to encourage all of our current members to do the same.

I think that we need to keep in mind at all times that it's not the boat or the lake that make the club what it is—it's the people, new and old. If we want our club to continue to grow and prosper, we need to work hard to maintain a friendly, positive atmosphere in which new members will feel free to join in on every aspect of every club activity.

Regards,

Kevin Bosley
Spring Calendar

Saturday, April 1:
Dock-in, 9 AM.

Thursday, April 6:
First weekly meeting, 7:45 PM, 120 Dennison Bldg.

Thursday, May 4:
Instructors’ Meeting, 7:45 PM, 120 Dennison Bldg.

Thursday, May 11:
Open Meeting, 7:30 PM, 120 Dennison.

Saturday–Sunday, May 13–14:
Open Weekend.

Thursday, May 18 through Thursday, June 8:
Basic Sailing lecture series.

Sunday, May 28:
Dan Rice Memorial Regatta, 10 AM.

Monday, May 29:
Memorial Day. Potluck Picnic, 1 PM.

From the Docks

This year brings some changes to the club buildings, docks, and grounds.

First, we noticed last fall that the silver maple nearest the clubhouse was starting to lean towards the building. The UM Forester agreed that the tree was a danger and removed about half of the tree. We still need to drag some of the larger pieces of wood out of the yard.

Second, one of the bolts that holds the yard and gaff on the flagpole seems to have pulled partway through the pole; until we get a truck out to the club and fix it, please watch out in the pole’s vicinity.

Third, we no longer have a bare patch in the lawn in front of the boathouse; instead, we have a snazzy patio, and a much flatter lawn.

Fourth, several loads of gravel have been spread in the parking lot, to control erosion, improve drainage, and prevent excess water from washing out the path down the hill.

Kudos to Bruce Oshaben, Dockmaster, and to Bob Karolyi for their hard work on these projects, and thanks to everyone who assisted.

Racing EMAIL

To help spread racing information, we’ve established an email list server at:

umsailingclub-racing@umich.edu

If you’d like to join the list, please send email to Carey Jones. Please also contact him if you do not have email but would still like to get information.

This mailing list will be a pilot for a general UMSC mailing list for sharing club news and information. Please let Carey or other members of the board know what you think of it.

Thanks!

The end of the 1999 season saw the retirement of three club officers who between them served the club well for no less than eight years.

Hans Lawitzke served as Racing Chair during the 1998 and 1999 seasons; he’s now headed back to Germany after the completion of his work at Ford.

Steve Blanchard was Racing Chair in 1997, then Vice Commodore in 1998 and 1999.


Thanks Hans, Steve, and Lara for all of your hard work on the club’s behalf!

New on the Lake

Sailors this spring will see three new vessels on the water.

The first is a new crashboat, an 18—foot aluminum vessel made by Lowe. This boat is a twin of the one we bought last year and replaces our 30-plus year old yellow boat. Both of the old boats will be sold as soon as we can find a buyer.

We’ve also purchased two new sailboards. The first is a Bic Veloce 318, similar to the Veloce 328 we purchased last year. The second is a F2 Phoenix. This board should be nearly as friendly to beginners as the Veloces, while offering a higher performance for the more experienced.

We’ll probably sell or scrap some of our older boards; some are more than fifteen years old and it’s hard to find parts.

Don’t Forget!

Dock-In

Saturday, April 1
9:00 Sharp
Don’t Miss Ice Boating!

Meg Gower, Jeff Rupp, and Carey Jones caught a Midwest regional DN Ice Boat regatta on Lake St. Claire at the end of January. The course was about one mile offshore past all the ice fishing shacks. Meg and Carey braved the cracking ice to skate to the starting line. Ironically, the racing action on the ice wasn’t much different than during the summer; there were still fishermen, hard water jet skis (snowmobiles) and sailboats. However, unlike the summer, when sailors worry about being run over by stinkpots, the fishermen and snowmobiles move out of the way unless they want to get clobbered by a sailboat moving at over 50 mph! This new perspective was refreshing.

These hard water yachts travel at 2 to 4 times the wind speed and can reach speeds of 100 mph. Iceboats have a central fuselage and a perpendicular wooden plank. The boat glides on three metal skates (runners), one in front of the fuselage and one on each end of the plank.

The race course is only two marks, windward and leeward. The starting line consists of a cable and each boat gets a section about fifteen feet wide. Each racer stands outside the boat with a runner touching the cable. On the whistle they get a running push-start and jump on board.

The UMSC has an Arrow iceboat which we would like to repair for next winter. It needs some fiberglass reinforcement near the mast and some other simple repairs. If you are interested in working on it or in organizing the repairs, please contact Carey Jones. Jeff Rupp has offered his expertise to guide us in our work.

Help Wanted

We closed the election last October with only six club officers. We still need to find a Vice Commodore for the 2000 season.

The VC is responsible for organizing the club’s instruction programs, both the lectures on Thursday night and Boat School on Saturday mornings. In addition, he or she shares the responsibility for general administration of the club with the other officers and attends a monthly Executive Board meeting. The time commitment required is probably 4-6 hours per week.

If you are interested in serving or would like more information, please contact Kevin or any member of the Executive Board.

Join Now for the 2000 Season

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Club Business

A Club Business meeting was held on October 28, 1999. The membership amended the constitution by reducing the quorum required at a business meeting to 12+(N/20) members.

The membership authorized the Board to purchase a new crash boat ($2350), two new sailboards ($3500), and a Laser radial rig ($600). The membership also authorized the purchase of new rub rail for the dock ($500).

Last year the club sold 207 memberships; revenues were approximately $22,000; expenses (as of October) were $12,441.30. Total club savings, net of the remaining 1999 budget, 2000 budget, and capital appropriations, are $35,000.

To Teach is to Learn

One of the most important club programs is Saturday morning boat school. Most people don’t know how to sail when they join the club; without boat school, we couldn’t possibly attract enough new members each year.

To make boat school happen, we need your help. You don’t need to be an expert; you don’t need to come out every week; and you don’t need to teach for four straight hours when you come out.

So please, give it a try. All you need is a crew rating and a couple of hours to spare any Saturday. You’ll meet lots of interesting people, and you’ll find your own sailing skills improving as you try to share your knowledge with someone new.

Try Racing This Year

Please join us for racing this year. It is a great way to fine-tune your sailing skills and learn from your fellow club members in a low-pressure environment. Racing this year will start on Sunday, April 30.

To continue building interest in club racing and to help everyone improve, here are some ideas we want to try this year:

1. Switching skippers and crew so we have a chance to learn from the people who are consistently ahead of us as we go around the marks. Sharing ideas will make racing more competitive.

2. Object overboard drill during the race. On a whistle signal, each boat tosses a life vest and must recover it, while still racing.

3. Racing without a rudder to build our sail-handling skills.

4. Practice starts or very short courses.

If you have other ideas or would like to play an active role please contact Carey Jones.

- Carey Jones and Meg Gower

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