

# Black Hills Sailing



Black Hills Sailing Association

Winter 2006

## Commodore's Corner



The annual Dry Dock Party was held on January 21, 2006, at Loretta Muehl's. We had a good turnout and a great time was enjoyed by all. For those of you who missed the event..wow, you blew it. The Port Captain, Dave Roth, and his trusted assistant, Holly Lamay, provided some new games for the entertainment of the fleet and creepy Uncle Dave, i.e., the port captain, provided his usual degree of comic relief. The port captain and his trusted assistant laid out the party plans for the rest of the season. This should prove to be an interesting sailing season. The Race Chair, Dik Dahlquist, has developed a race schedule for the season and announced the Admiral Cup Series for the fleet. Dik will be providing the detail for our newest regatta event. On behalf of the fleet, I would like to extend our thanks to Loretta for hosting the event.

Commodore  
 Brian Dail  
 Vice Commodore  
 Brian Killion  
 Port Captain  
 Dave Roth  
 Secretary/Treasure  
 Karen Hartley  
 Race Comm. Chair  
 Dik Dahlquist  
 Newsletter  
 Susie Menard  
 Loretta Muehl

It not to soon to be casting your thoughts and aspiration to the highly coveted and much sought after Commodore Choice Award. To the newer members of the fleet, perhaps a bit of explanation is in order so that you may fully understand and appreciate this exalted and almost mythical award.

The Commodore's Choice Award is bestowed at the discretion of the commodore to that individual, who in the opinion of the commodore, has contributed the most to the welfare and promotion of the fleet. Below are the guidelines under which the recipient is selected:

1. The commodore's choice is final.
2. The commodore's choice is not subject to review.
3. The commodore's choice award is subject only to the impressions, opinions, bias, whims and predilections, whether they be right or wrong, of the commodore.
4. The commodore reserves the right to change the selection criterion at anytime.

Since the selection criterion is so flexible, this is, in reality, an absolutely fair award, everyone, new member, old member, is on equal footing. So if you have any aspiration to join the fabled ranks and the honor rolls of the past recipient. Now's the time to plan and execute your campaign.

The Dry Dock Party marks, more or less, the half way point between when we pulled the boats and when we can launch. Now's the time to work on those projects so that you're ready to sail when the time comes. Nothing's worse than to have sailing weather and a boat that's not ready to sail.

The next event for the fleet is the annual St. Patty's day party at Sarah Danner's in Hot Springs. As with all fleet events this is one you don't want to miss. Sarah cooks a virtual Irish feast for the enjoyment of the fleet and the Irish whiskey flows freely. It may not be heaven, but it reasonably close, good Irish food and good Irish whiskey. As a bonus the port captain, and his trusted assistant port captain, have promised an event worthy of song and praise. Personally, I felt this was a rather lofty promise to make, but the port captain staked his reputation as creepy Uncle Dave on this one.

Work is in progress for a new award available to all members of the fleet. The *Magnus Gloria Triumphal* will be awarded to those sailors of the fleet who have accomplished the following. It really quite simple, sail all twelve months of the year in the fleet's home water of Angostura. We are still working the details and expect to start the award in January 2007.

B.Dail  
 Commodore

**NEW MEMBERS:****RICHARD AND TRACY  
PERDUE**

Thanks to Loretta for  
hosting the Dry Dock  
Party!



©James Photography



**March 18, St. Patty's Day Party**, at Sarah Danner's house in Hot Springs. Sarah will provide corned beef and cabbage. Bring a dish to share. Port Captain Dave Roth asks that you bring a favorite Celtic drink for yourself &/or to share. We'll have a good time eating and sipping.

**May 10,17,24, 7PM to 9PM, Basic Sailing Classes.** BHSA Members can attend for free. Contact Brian Dail to attend or assist.

**Karen's Korner:** Notes from the Secretary/Treasurer

**Reminder:** If dues have not been paid you will no longer receive newsletter and party announcements.

**Roster changes:** Dahlquist has an "h" in it.  
Muchow's e-mail is now muchow@mato.com  
Groves' phone number is 348-4321  
Cleland is at 13260 Tomaha Tr., RC 02. Email suffix is @rapidnet.com

We are working on a club bulletin board, a "No Wake" sign, and a dock box which will hold the racing equipment.

Channel 68 will be used for radio communications this year.

We will invite the Hobie Fleet to our summer Jimmy Buffett party at Breakers.

# Racing

Here is a tentative race schedule for the 2006 sailing year...

With the exception of a couple races, there will be a five dollar entry fee per boat...

**May 21, Mothers Day Race** Yes, I know this isn't Mothers Day. Mothers Day is a time for Family and Husbands. That's why the race is being held the following weekend. All boats skippered by Mom's will be exempt from the five dollar entry fee...☺

**June 18, Fathers Day Race** Same goes here. See Mothers Day above...:)

**July 8, Island Race** This race will coincide with the Port Captain's festivities and will utilize the island in front of the dam as one of the marks. Racing is a test of a sailor's seamanship skills, what better way to show your skills than sailing around the Island. This race course will also be set as the largest of the season... ☺

**August 12, August Races** With the normal doldrums of August, this may turn into an evening race/sail...

**September 3, Labor Day Regatta** The Labor Day Regatta...

**September 23, Last Race** With the favorable winds we usually get in September, I would like to get in at least one more race for the season...

**Admiral's Cup** This year we are going to have an accumulative point system for each race. At the end of the year, the boat with the most points will take home the Admiral's Cup Trophy. Details on the point system will be available later...

## The Treasure Chest

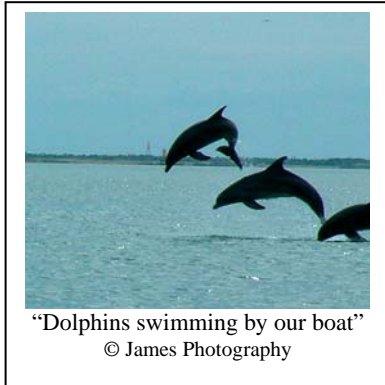


### Winter Sailing...

Well, we've been hearing what a warm winter the Black Hills area is having... but our winter sailing happens in the Tropical Tip of Texas. To find the place, look at a US map; go to the Texas Gulf Coast, and follow it to the bottom of the map. Just before you get to Mexico - that's us. Latitude 26 for those of you who enjoy maps; same latitude as Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We have green grass year 'round, palm trees, cacti (it's a rather arid climate, in spite of the humidity)... and sailing. In spite of what Scot and Marlene might tell you (they were here to experience the "Christmas Miracle of 2004" - the first snow in this area in over 100 years), the average daytime high in January is 70°. Many of the locals think that is too cold to be out sailing - we think it's just fine.

The area is also been rated as one of the top 10 windsurfing areas in the country... yeah, we have good, consistent winds. And water; lots of water... the Laguna Madre (the bay behind South Padre Island) is relatively shallow and extends 135 nm to the Corpus Christi Bay area. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is like a highway through those shallows and could be traversed all the

way to Virginia; plenty of barge traffic besides the pleasure boaters. The Brazos-Santiago Ship Channel (leading from the Gulf to Brownsville) handles freighters, tankers, shrimpers, and goes inland to the Port of Brownsville. From our dock, it is less than 6 miles down the ship channel to the wide-open water of the Gulf of Mexico.



"Dolphins swimming by our boat"  
© James Photography

Most of our sailing here is of the day-sailing variety... and never the same thing twice. A typical day on the water might be: ready the boat and leave from our dock; out our canal to the ICW. Depending on the wind (prevailing wind is SE), we turn into the bay or go out the ship channel to the Gulf. Dolphins frequently swim alongside our boat - pardon the double negative, but that is never not cool. We see pelicans and osprey hunting for fish. Great Blue Herons and lots of other waterfowl are poking around the shore (south Texas is a major birding destination). Excursion boats, offering dolphin watches, eco-touring, and fishing trips, are always out and about. You can share the ship channel with a Panamanian freighter; or if your timing is good, you may see an oil rig

being towed into the Gulf by three huge tugs. Barge traffic plies the Intracoastal... proper use of the VHF radio is important to monitor traffic and get bridge openings.

Light wind days are great for sailing the skinny water of the Laguna... if your draft permits. Imagine sailing comfortably in 3 1/2 feet of water... for miles. When the tide is up, you can put a lookout on the bow and poke your way into a hidden cove, or anchor out in sight of land, yet miles from the nearest person. The bottom around the area is all soft: sand or mud, and any hazards are well-marked on the charts. On the way home, you can motor along South Padre Island in the small-boat channel; it's interesting to see the homes and condos along the bay or wave at the smiling faces at the spring break clubs like Louie's Back Porch and Tequila Frog's. If you are hungry, there are restaurants with docks along this stretch... you can have that cheeseburger in paradise with a view that includes your boat.

If you really want to get away from civilization, venture out into the Gulf of Mexico. Once you clear the jetties, you can go all day without seeing another boat. As you head offshore, the water changes from an emerald green to a deep blue. Pick your days for small boat sailing in the Gulf - it can get snotty in a hurry when a front moves through.

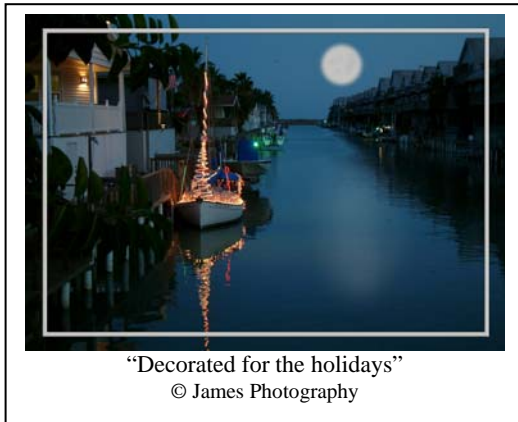
When the wind pipes up, you can head for the ship channel - a 15 mile long channel that runs generally east-west. With the wind from the north or south, you can have great speed runs along that waterway... 20 knot winds with very little wave action is a blast! Keep an eye on the markers along the channel; just north where the channel opens into the Laguna is Mexiquito Flats, a popular fishing area for the many flat bottom (bay skimmer) fishing boats. And the water depth goes from 40' in the channel to less than a foot outside the channel! You can see where the depth changes by the wave action. More than a few hapless deep-v boat drivers have tried to plow out a new channel by following those shallow draft boats into the flats; this is not a place for sailboats (you might see kayakers paddling around though). Years ago, a salty local character gave me this advice: "If you see long-legged birds standing in the water, you can take your boat in there. If you see short-legged birds standing in the water, you can't." I thought he was being a smart-ass... turns out it was pretty decent advice.



"Mixing it up with the big boys"  
© James Photography

A new event for us this past winter was entering our SunCat in the Lighted Boat Parade in early December. We've watched it for years, but never put our boat in the parade; the addition of a

2000 watt Honda generator this year made it possible. There are 5 categories for entrants: large and small powerboats (26 feet is the dividing line), large and small sailboats, and commercial. We picked a candycane theme for the SunCat and decorated her with red and white lights... a spiral around the mast, icicle lights all around the cabin and bimini, red and white rope lights outlining the sheerline, and a Santa-crossing sign (shaped like a daymark) at the rear of the boat. We tested it out the night before the parade and the neighbors on our canal gave us a very positive reaction.



When we showed up for the skippers meeting before the parade, we discovered we were the smallest entrant at 17 1/2 feet. By the luck of the draw, we were between a 65 foot excursion boat and a 55 foot sportfisher (easily worth more money than I will see in a lifetime) with more lights than the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center. Fortunately, our manly little catboat was a crowd favorite (underdog?) with plenty of cheers from the crowd as we passed the judges viewing station. We followed in single file through the city harbor area, out into the Laguna, under the causeway, along the ICW, through the swingbridge, along Long Island (where we live), back to the

causeway, and along South Padre Island. Over 10 miles. We were decked out in red outfits with Santa hats... and sweating like farm animals; despite a good breeze, it was still in the upper 70s at parade time.

It turned out that our decorating handiwork was not in vain: we took 1st Place in the Small Sailboat division and received the same CASH prize (and gift certificates) as that gazillion dollar sportfisher who won the Big Powerboat division.

And just for the record, we finalized a name for the catboat. "Time Lapse" never quite felt right; the boat finally spoke to us and her name is "Cat's Pajamas". We had a blue and gold name, adorned with cat pawprints, made up in time for the parade... she was looking fine!

Molly the catboat cat (some of you met her this summer at Angostura) has been getting more accustomed to life onboard... the projectile vomiting has ceased (she didn't much like the 8 foot close/steep rollers in the jetties). Before you accuse us of animal abuse, she loves being with us... and we spend a LOT of time on the boat. Our future plans include some extended time aboard, and Molly is family. In the meantime, we spend most days going nowhere particular, our direction dictated by the most favorable tack.

Happy Sails to You,  
Jim & Joan Bathurst