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# Acton Action

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## Anniversary!

On two pieces of typing paper in 1958, HSA secretary Louise Peters listed the entire roster of HSA members two years after the sailing club began its long voyage to now.

Of the 59 names on that list, there are, remarkably, two names that most of us would still recognize today.

One is then 23 year old Jerry Callahan who must have been a recent transplant from Michigan where he grew up sailing. Jerry remains active in the club in many capacities, one of which is as director of our Junior Camp.

Another is Frank Peters, Louise's husband, who sailed a Lightning. Frank's son Pete was there, racing with dad and as a junior skipper himself. Pete is still here and so is his daughter Laura, both of whom are active members and racers.

In issues to come, we will look back on 60 years of sailing, relying heavily on the Callahan's and the Peter's along with many others.



## Saving Sailing: A Good Book Deserves a Good Look

A few years ago, Milwaukee sailor and author Nicholas Hayes decided to take a look at the state of our sport. After dozens of interviews and a good deal of research on cultural and social trends, Hayes wrote *Saving Sailing: The Story of Choices, Families, Time Commitments, And how We Can Create a Better Future*. In this issue we begin a series of articles that will attempt to give you an idea of what the book has to say so that we might learn how to move forward. We begin on page 2. (Find out more at <http://savingsailing.com/>)

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Is it because you have a smart body?  
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Park Manager Scott Fletcher's update on water at Acton Lake, pg. 4

#### Saving Sailing

Nicholas Hayes writes a column for *Sailing Magazine* called "On the Wind"

## *Saving Sailing* by Nicholas Hayes

### The Decline in Participation Noted

Sailing is, according to Bill Schanen, editor of *Sailing Magazine*, anything but irresistible. Participation has declined by about 40% in the past decade (1999-2009). From its height in the late 1970's, HSA has experienced what has been going on nationally, although it should be noted that our story is a bit different.



Official HSA records date back to 1984 when there were nearly 70 active members. Total membership, including inactive and associate members, peaked in 1990 at nearly 95 but active members declined to between 20-30 in the late 90's and has stayed there ever since. That's where HSA's story diverges from the national. We seemed to have plateaued in the past 20 years, rather than decline further. We will try to figure out not only what we need to do at HSA, but what we are doing that has helped us buck the trend.

### We Are Not Alone

Hayes tells us that the downturn in sailing is mirrored in a lot of other activities which he calls "life pastimes", ones that yield rich personal and cultural rewards like fishing, camping, hunting, social clubs, and church attendance to name a few. These activities, he says, all involve strong interpersonal connections. All have witnessed declining participation.

"To find out why, ... we have to look at what activities like sailing mean to us culturally, economically, and personally," Hayes says. (Images on this page are from [savingsailing.com](http://savingsailing.com) website)



### Time Choices and Time Charters

One of the prime suspects in the decline of "life pastimes" like sailing is the rise of something Hayes calls the "time charter". Time choice, he says, "is a slice of time that we take into our own hands, that we give shape to. It is time that we make." Time charters, on the other hand, are made for us by others. "Charters," he says, "are a general way of describing a thing that we consume, subscribe to, and are entertained by. (Think amusement parks, movie houses and television, zip line rides, tour boats, and drop off activities for kids like classes, camps, and sports.)

A charter is time we buy. "Unlike choices," he says, "we don't own our charters, so unmet expectations are someone else's fault." Time choices, he goes on, "if they don't meet expectations, it becomes something for us to examine in ourselves. It becomes a lesson."

The charter isn't bad. It's just not ours. In the next issue, we will continue to look at the differences between choices and charters as well as the other factors that influence our leisure decisions.

## Water Quality at Hueston Woods

Water is in the news. We have all heard about the problems in Flint, Michigan. And more recently, problems similar to those in Flint surfaced in Sebring, Ohio, a small community southeast of Akron. But that was lead.

Last summer, an E-coli warning went out from the state's Division of Parks and Recreation covering one third of the state's beaches, including Cowan Lake, Caesar's Creek and our own Hueston Woods.

You might also remember the "do not drink" water advisory that the entire city of Toledo experienced in 2014, a result of toxins released from algal blooms in the water from sources in Lake Erie, which has its own problems.

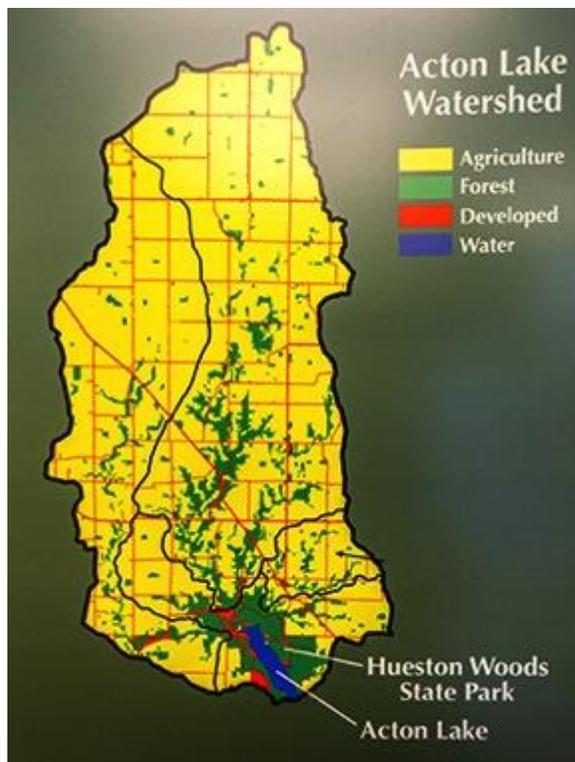
As for Acton Lake, we are not immune to these problems as some algal toxins have the

potential of appearing during drought or as a result of agricultural runoff. And there was that one E-coli reading last summer.

Since the watershed management plan was put in place in the Upper Four Mile Creek area, however, agricultural runoff has been significantly reduced. In the early 1990's, 15% of cropland in the watershed was in conservation tillage. By 2000, it had reached 70%.

According to Miami researchers William Renwick, Michael Vanni and Lesley Knoll, by 2006 concentrations of ammonium, nitrates, and phosphorus have decreased by 40-60 %. Although there have been some reversals due to a combination of weather and land management effects, the future of water at Hueston Woods seems to be pretty good.

## The Acton Lake Watershed



Watersheds, like the one that supplies water to Acton Lake at Hueston Woods, are critical areas for fresh water, shelter and food for natural ecosystems, and drinking water as well as recreation, irrigation, and flood control.

Acton Lake is only 0.9 square miles (about 600 acres), but its watershed extends 100 square miles, nearly to I-70 north of Dayton and west into Union County, Indiana. Eighty percent is in Ohio, mostly Preble County and a tiny bit in Butler County. Ninety percent of the land in the watershed is used for agriculture.

About 20-25 years ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Service targeted the Acton Lake watershed, mainly to reduce soil erosion because the lake was filling with sediment.

Only about nine percent of the watershed is forested, mostly Hueston Woods State Park. Less than one percent is developed.

## *Acton Action* Talks to Scott Fletcher, Interim Hueston Woods Park Manager

### What about water quality?

"Acton Lake has had only one time that I'm aware of when a posted advisory was required (for E-coli). That was last June. Our staff sampled after a heavy rainstorm and the results were found to be above the state standard for E. coli. A follow-up sample the following week found far lower bacteria levels and the advisory was removed. No other samples in 2015 resulted in a posted advisory. It's pretty common for bacteria levels to spike after heavy rains and winds. Historically, Acton Lake has been among the cleanest for swimming."



### Algal Blooms?

"For Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), Acton Lake has never had one. Since 2010 the Ohio State Parks have closely monitored lake conditions and no bloom has been observed. In past years as many as 21 state park lakes across Ohio have seen these blooms. Peak times for HABs is generally from mid-June to late August when water temperatures are highest and water levels are frequently more static and thunderstorms less common."

In the photo above, Interim Park Manager Scott Fletcher talks to a group at Buckeye Lake about algae when he was manager of operations, training and safety for the ODNR in 2011. His current title is Deputy ODNR Chief as well as interim park manager at Hueston.

### Sedimentation and Dredging?

"Lake sediments remain an issue. The dredging program at Acton Lake was suspended in order to transfer the dredge to Buckeye Lake for some emergency work. (We will have) to see what the timeline is for resuming dredging in the next few years. The head of the lake, as you might imagine, does accumulate considerable sediments, but that does not interfere with navigation in the main lake yet."



### Work on Dam?

"The renovation of the dam is nearing completion. The concrete walls of the spillway have been completed. The upstream side of the dam has been armored with rip-rap. An earthen bench has been added to the downstream side of the dam to strengthen it. A lake drain structure is under construction now that will allow us to control the lake level in the future. The project has had some weather delays over the last two years, but completion is approaching."

## Embodied Intelligence? New Book Might Tell Us Why We Sail

Have we become mind rich and body poor? If you answered yes, then you have at least one thing in common with Guy Claxton, the author of a new book about human intelligence titled *Intelligence in the Flesh: Why Your Mind Needs Your Body Much More than You Think*.

Claxton says we think about “the relative intelligence of the body and mind in an archaic way”. And so says the new science of embodied intelligence. “The idea that bodies are dumb vehicles and minds are smart drivers is old hat,” Claxton writes. That idea alone would go a long way in explaining the modern drift toward offices, screens, and spreadsheets and away from the idea that lies at the heart of his book: an argument that we neglect our bodies because we underestimate their intelligence.

Just think *Wall-E*, the Pixar film, and that dystopian future where humans have relegated their bodies to simple physical tasks and machines have taken over anything more demanding than raising a fork or pushing a button.

We make, Claxton says, the mistake of believing that intelligence is thinking and reasoning. Rather, we should be thinking about the body as a “massive, seething, streaming collection of interconnected communication systems that bind the muscles, the stomach, the heart, the senses and the brain so tightly together that no part - especially the brain - can be seen as functionally separate from, or senior to, any other part.” Human intelligence, he claims, lives in our hands (and nervous systems, and organs, etc.) just as much as in our tongues and our brains.

What, you might ask then, does this have to do with a human activity like sailing?

Good question, but after hearing a brief interview with the author recently, sailing is what I thought of immediately. A central objective of Claxton’s book is the reunification of mind, brain, and body and to refute the notion that our

intelligence is located in the brain. We are so much more.

Claxton has the benefit of having reviewed and/or participated in the research into what he calls “affective neuroscience and embodied cognition” in arriving at the conclusions of the book. Despite the lofty sound of those words, we all have intuitively felt the movement over the past hundred years or so away from a more physical participation in the world to a more cerebral one, even if we can only testify to the last few decades of that shift personally.

### What, you might ask then, does this have to do with a human activity like sailing?

What is it that makes us so capable when we are physically involved in an activity, even if only unconsciously? Embodied intelligence, the idea that the “mind” is more than just the brain, is the answer. And there are a great many activities in which that intelligence has an opportunity to be fully experienced - art, athletics, cooking, the making or doing of anything, you name it.

I name sailing.

As anyone who sails will tell you, when we sail, there is a stream of information coming from all parts of our physical selves. The movement of the boat under our legs and seats; the measured response to the heel to leeward; the shifting of weight forward and aft; the tug of the sheet in our hands; the pulsating blood and emotion that comes with competing with the elements. All of these inputs are being constantly monitored and assessed by our whole being, much of it unconsciously. The brain is the coordinator. Thinking, Claxton says, “is a recently evolved tool for supporting smart action.”

(continued next page)

# 60 Years! Here We Go!



As the memories crowd in, we will take a look back at the history of Hueston Woods, Acton Lake and Hueston Sailing. Sailors in 1956 wasted no time, creating the club the very year that the lake opened for public use. One of those was Pete Peters who is show at left in a pram with his Grandma Caldwell. (The lake used to be pink apparently.) At right is one of Pete's daughters, Laura, who is show hanging on the boom of his Y-Flyer sometime in the 1980's. We have sent members digging in their archives for anything they can find. If they do, we will share it with you right here.

## Embodied Intelligence - Continued from previous page

Every decision we make on the water, whether we are just out for a casual sail or in the throes of a tight match with other boats, is the result of an unconscious operation of our embodied intelligence without supervision or awareness. "The brain is a servant, not master of the body. It's a chat room, not a directorate."

That's why you don't have to be an engineer or a mathematician or a physicist to sail and sail well. It might help to be any of those if your goal was to understand the science of foils and center of effort. But we have all known for a long time that we can sail and race pretty well and not really understand vectors or velocity made good to windward.

Even a novice can sail a boat without much more than an afternoon acquainting oneself with the mechanics of a rudder and the function of a mainsheet.

Our club's career demographics is probably testimony to the idea that our sport is open to all. People who sail and or race in our club come from a wide and diverse group of careers: English teachers, artists, computer geeks, salespeople, construction workers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, musicians, sommeliers, bankers, farmers, dispatchers, and retail businesspeople.

What do they have in common? They all sense (and perhaps deeply desire) the importance of being immersed in utilizing the whole of our abilities. We can be athletes without being athletic; we can be creators without being creative; we can be masters of natural forces without being gods.

If we wish to live fuller, more passionate and rewarding lives, perhaps we need to get more involved in something that absolutely requires us to use more than our reasoning, thinking selves and get more into craft. Make that a watercraft. Make it sailing.