

# Acton Action

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## The Glorious Sunfish



The boat is not just simple; it is an amazing 14 foot wind muscle machine. We sing the Sunfish anthem and regale you with memories of, uh, gales in the north Florida version of the Sunfish Masters and Midwinter Nationals that were recently the subject of HSA's Facebook posts.

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## Rules, Rules, Rules!



The Racing Rules of Sailing are kind of like Chinese take out. You can get by on just a little bit but you can also just keep gorging on them. We give you both sides now, from here and there, and the rules somehow. The whole subject is one of the great illusions of racing sailboats

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## Sails that you inflate?



Yes, take a look. Is this really sailing? Can't be. Yet it would be really fun to try it once or twice.

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## First Race Date: This Sunday!!



HSA turned out for the motor mounting and mast stepping on last Saturday, but no actual launching took place. The rain came early and often but the party went on as planned. Above, all but Ken Wright (at right) showed smiles as the group occasionally paused for conversation even as the sky fell on them with a wet thud.

## Work Partay!

Give someone a grease gun and what do you have? In addition to a mess, a little hilarity. Check out our Facebook page for that. Meanwhile, amid the chaos of a Saturday at Hueston Woods that included not only our soaking wet Launch Day activities but the Miami Invitational Redhawk Rowing Sprints, we were able to get it done. We have the damp details in this issue. Try not to let your paper touch anything. It tears easily.

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Launch Partay continued from page 1

Harbormaster Don Fecher and his volunteer group of determined workers arrived at the lake Saturday morning only to discover that the entire launch and parking area near the ramps and the park office were overrun. There wasn't even a path from the dry moorage area to the launch area unless you drove to Loop Rd. first.

Debris and mud from the recent flooding? Nope. It was the annual Miami University Redhawk Sprints rowing regatta. The parking lot and other areas were covered in the sleek 62-foot eight person and 44-foot four person rowing shells as men and women's teams from all over Ohio spent their Saturday in the rain, just as we did, and seemed to be enjoying it.

The park actually did a good job of cleaning up the roads and other areas from the massive flooding that had occurred just days earlier.

HSA proceeded with their work and weaved their way in and around the collegians, trying not to interfere with what was obviously a massive event. Only problem? There was only one nearby restroom open for the hundred or so plus rowers and sailors using the area that day.

Due to the rain and rowing shell traffic, HSA never got to some of their chores. Launching, according to Fecher, will take place next Saturday one day in advance of opening day for racing.

The Capris, Sunfish and Flying Scot didn't get their usual spring cleaning, but masts are up and boats are covered. Even the Flying Scot, which was involved in an unfortunate incident with a tree last fall, had been repaired and restored to pristine operational condition, thanks to the efforts of Joe Fulford. Likewise, the motor boats were in fairly ship shape due to the work of Fecher and his harbor henchmen Roger Henthorn and Bobbie of Bode, who had already spent time at the lake in advance of "Launch Day".

About 15 volunteers got a free lunch in the Hueston Room with Rose Schultz and JoAnn Callahan doing the lion's share of that work. The group was joined at the lunch/ice cream affair by about a half dozen more before Yours Truly gave a visual and verbal presentation on what it was like to race in Florida with a gaggle of Sunfish champions from across the U.S. and the Americas. In a word: butt kicked. OK, that's two words.



Above: 1. Rain 2. Leafless trees 3. Bow rower 4. Fuel tank 5. Engine room 6. Stroke rower 7. Lane markers 8. Water being added to by the minute.

Below, an eight man shell with, uh, nine people. The guy in the back just watches to make sure no one is goofing off.





## Sailing LaVagabonde

It's been a few years and over 50,000 miles but Riley Whiteham and girlfriend Elayna (there aren't married but she doesn't give her last name. *Editor Note: Carausu*) are living a dream.

Riley bought the boat after working on oil rigs in Australia for eight years. He really didn't know how to sail it but he had been planning it for years. Somewhere along the line he met Elayna, a diver, who had already been something of a world traveler by the time they met.

Neither went to university but their education has been robust and ongoing. The two have nothing to sustain them economically but the vlogging they do (It's a word) which brings them subscriptions from their patrons. Elayna took six months off to learn all about video editing and production so their 135 plus YouTube channel videos are well done and well subscribed to with over 380,000 followers.

HSA's Roger Henthorn is one of them. He checks in regularly with the LaVagabonde which is headed for the Caribbean this year. You can join the followers with the links below either on YouTube or on Facebook. You can also read about how Riley was able to buy this boat in Italy and download a guide they created about how to live on a sailboat. Their bios are also on their website as well as a great many more articles of interest. Then there are those 135 videos they have made. You better get going. You got a lot of catching up to do.

If you remember, an earlier issue of AA told about another couple on SV Delos who are doing something similar. Yep, dream big and then go do it. It happens all the time.

Web = <http://sailing-lavagabonde.com/>

Facebook = <https://www.facebook.com/SailingLaVagabonde/>

YouTube

= <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZdQjaSoLjzFnWsDQOv4ww>

## New Members

### Steve and Suellen Albert

After a few lessons last year in a Capri, an outing on a Y-Flyer, and a surprisingly quick certification, Hamiltonians Steve and Suellen Albert have become HSA's newest sailing members.

The couple has two daughters, Victoria and Hannah. Victoria graduated from UC last year and is working as a pediatric nurse in the cardiac ICU at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Hannah is in her 3rd year of bioengineering at UC.

Steve is a Navy veteran and has been working as an IT security program manager for the Department of Treasury for the past 15 years. Suellen is an elementary school teacher in the Hamilton City School District and is working on her Masters in Field Biology at Miami.

Steve and Suellen have been interested in learning to sail since they were teenagers, calling it a "bucket list" item for the both of them. They want to continue their learning on a Capri 14 but Steve has ambitions much larger than that in the form of perhaps a 30 foot plus cruiser some day.

The two are also avid outdoor people in other ways with a lot of travel, hiking, camping, and horse riding listed among their favorite pastimes.

"We like to have fun," Suellen tells us. Steve and Sue plan to do more sailing this summer on one of the club's Capri 14's. If you see them, give them a hand. Welcome aboard, Alberts!



## Inflated Wing Sail? Can't Wait.

Imagine this. A sailboat that tacks without having to trim sail. Imagine the absence of shape controls and battens; a deck with no hardware; a sail that never luffs; no stays or shrouds; a gybe where the sail goes forward around the mast.

It is an IWS! The developers are two men named Edouard Kessi and Laurent de Kalbermatten. Kessi is a Swiss sail loft owner, known for his work on inflated textiles, some of which protected the Solar Impulse aircraft on its round the world trip last year when it wasn't in the air. He and Laurent came up with the concept in 2015. Kessi is a champion sailor himself having set the record for the Lake Geneva Bol d'Or, one of the most famous sailboat races in the world.

Kalbermatten is a hang gliding champion and is considered the father of paragliding. He invented in 1999 something called a "Woopy Wing", the first inflatable winged aircraft. Check out the boat in these pictures at:

<http://inflatedwingsails.com/en/concept/>

No, we didn't crop the picture above left. You are seeing the retractable, telescoping mast raise the sail. No halyards, just push a button and the mast rises while the wing shaped sail inflates. All hydraulics.



An IWS sails along side a Laser



## All Hail the Sunfish: An Ode to Racing in the ISCA's Midwinters/Masters and to the Humble Boat Itself

*Editor's Note: So much to share, so little column space. Nevertheless, here is a little glimpse of what it is like to sail at the Nationals and be in a Sunfish.*

Oh, Sunfish! You deserve a skipper who is better prepared for the battles you are thrown into. What a marvelous boat though! One of the best product designs of the 20th century, we are told. (Did you know the Sunfish is in the American Sailboat Hall of Fame for being the most popular fiberglass boat ever designed?) (Neither did I!) There are close to 400,000 of them in the world. We could wax on poetic stanza after poetic stanza about the delights of sailing and racing this giant surfboard with a sail, but some of you might wax off.

The boat has been around since the early 50's. Its virtues are many, and its very form, to this racing mind, is voluptuous. The lateen rig with its proud, highly adjustable spars; the way the boom bends under upwind pressure; its simplicity - just one sail, one halyard, one sheet, one block; its hard chines and soft curvy gunnels - I like to run my hand along the side while I am sailing. Gulp.

The recent trip to the Sunfish Midwinters and Masters made me appreciate the boat even more and reminded me why I got into racing this boat in the first place. First and foremost is that I can rig this boat in about five minutes and be in the water. And like many singlehanded designs, it is all up to you. You are the driver, the crew, the skipper, the sole responsible party for what happens on the water.

Ok, I did capsized three times in Panama City and got hit in the head by the boom twice. But for everything that went a little wrong (which were all my own bloody fault), there was a good deal to be pleased with.

The top half of a big fleet Sunfish regatta like the Masters or the Midwinters or any regional is made up of some awfully good racing sailors, women and men, young and old, blue collar and corporate. And much of the bottom half isn't that bad either. While many of the best Sunfish racers today come from South and Central America, there are still a goodly number of Americans who can do quite well against them. I think I counted six or seven current or former World, National, or Masters Champions, both American and South American, among the competitors, maybe more. You can learn a lot just watching them, but they are also good teachers on shore.

Another pleasing part of the experience was to discover that my boat will just about keep pace with the others, including those champion sailors, both upwind and down. In the Masters (no PanAm competitors there), there was more than one race where every one of the 35 boats were on the last leg to the finish when someone got the horn at the finish line. Everybody was fast. With the South Americans in the Midwinter Nationals, the fleet was a little more spread out.

It's the little things that make a difference in how well someone does against really good competition. The clothing you wear; the comfort you have with the important features of your boat like the tiller (length, pivot point); the daggerboard bungee rig, the mainsheet (line size, block size, the presence of a cleat); the halyard set up. The bailer!

But it is also about technique. I have seldom seen a Sunfish tacked in wind and wave conditions as I saw them there. The South Americans are smooth and fast. But it was American Paul Jon Patin, a world Sunfish champion, who made my jaw drop. I watched him and eventual 2018 Masters champ Eric Oetgen in a tacking duel up wind to the finish line in one race. The tacks were quick and fluid. Not a wasted motion anywhere. Even the false tack Patin made near the end was something to behold. (It didn't work, but it was beautiful.) (continued next page)

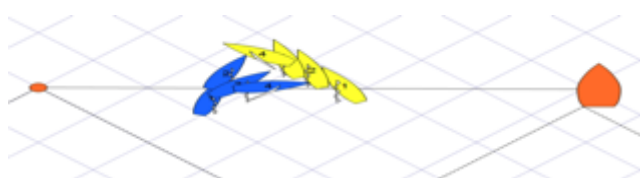
## Ode to Sunfish (continued from previous page)

I will likely keep trying to get that one perfect start, which is what I am convinced is the biggest little thing among all the little things. I had a couple of good ones down there, but the more you sail in these kinds of events, the more you see that you can exploit. I come back convinced that whether you are in a 44 boat start with a line a hundred and fifty yards long or a club race with just 10 boats, starting well likely means a good finish.

You might be able to recover in a smaller fleet start, but I fear that too much inattention about starting (and thinking you can catch up) will lead to some rather pathetic starts in a big fleet. I know. All racers know that nothing improves your spirit or your focus or fires your competitive spirit more than to get a good start and be one of the leaders at the windward mark.

Attending these two events in March down there was in many ways like going to a professional conference or symposium where you sit in on seminars and listen to the ideas and methods of some of the best in your line of work. When I did that as a teacher, I always came back to school energized and ready to innovate and feeling renewed. Going to a regatta is like that. You come back charged up no matter what you experienced.

I will continue to enjoy the Y-Flyer. It is double handed sailing at its best. But I am so looking forward to our first Sunfish contest on June 3rd. We have some of the best Sunfish racers in the Midwest right in our club. They are aggressive starters. It will feel like Florida all over again. And I intend to treat it just like that.



## Rules, Rules, Rules!

I have a book on the racing rules of sailing. It is a couple of hundred pages long. And I am falling in love with it.

Ok, you may find this a little ironic considering my racing history, but I think I am becoming a rules nerd.

It all started with **Beverages and Boats**, our winter social meet ups where we playfully took out our little model boats and our illustrated rule books. (Mine is *Paul Elvstrom Explains the Racing Rules of Sailing*)

The rules have always been a little abstract for me. And opaque. The language is difficult to parse and they have a habit of referring to other rules so that you constantly have to switch back and forth between multiple pages.

For a long time, I have been telling people you only have to know four rules to sail and race. You know: port/starboard, leeward/windward, inside overlap, and maybe overtaking/clear ahead. I still do. And you could sail/race a long time with just those four rules in your cockpit. I did. (I heard that.)

But there are many more. We just mostly don't need them or, more likely, those situations rarely come up. If, however, you want to become a little more proficient; if you want to be able to tell Don what he is doing wrong (fun); if you want to nerd it up a bit, well, there is some joy in the undertaking.

My Elvstrom book has pictures. (*You need 'em.*) But if you want to go even further, you can sign up for emails from the [RacingRulesOfSailing.org](http://RacingRulesOfSailing.org).

It is a delicious little thing that comes almost daily where you are given a rules situation and then a few international judges interpret. Their latest is titled "What is the Support for the Steel Balls Call?" Now, who can resist that?