

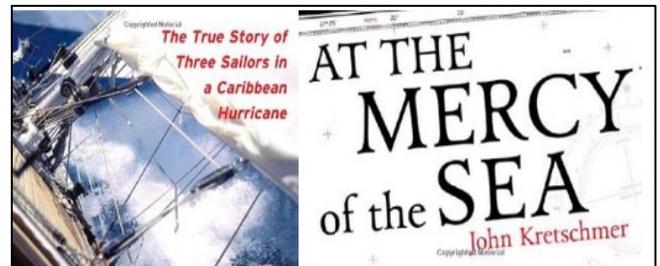
# Acton Action

The Annual Awards Issue!



## In This Issue

- ~Meet HSA's Trophy Winners
- ~HSA Sailing: The year in review, and your new officers
- ~*At the Mercy of the Sea*: A gripping sea yarn, to start your off-season
- ~*Red Dot on the Ocean*: An epic adventure film biopic
- ~U-Haul trucks, red herrings, and more!



## HSA 2022 Award Winners:



**Ken Wright – the Larry L. Johnson Challenger Award** – Ken has been sailing and racing both a Sunfish and a Capri 14.2 for the past few years at HSA. Before that, he has a long and interesting sailing career. He began sailing as a teen in the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland. It wasn't all roses and fufu juice. "I hated sailing as a young kid – scared every time the boat tipped." He overcame that, though, and went to camp and saw other kids having fun sailing so he dug out an old wooden canoe that had a sail and learned in that.

Pointing, he said, in that canoe was out of the question but reaches on the creek where he sailed were fun. "... the winds were almost always light and shifty, so I feel right at home here on Acton Lake." Ken went from the wooden canoe to a Lightning his parents got him, also wood and very heavy he recalls. He also got aboard his dad's cousin's 35 ft. ketch in Annapolis and learned a lot there. After his career brought him to GE Aviation in Cincinnati, sailing took a distant place in life. The Chesapeake Bay, he thought, had

Ken Wright missed out on the banquet and thereby also missed out on receiving his special award, the Larry L. Johnson Challenger Trophy. But it wasn't because he wasn't trying.

After his wife Theresa's sister's funeral in Roanoke on the Friday before the banquet, the Wright's left Virginia Saturday morning to come back to Ohio and were making such good progress that they thought they could still make it in time.

"Fate took care of that," Ken says. They were on US35 in southern Ohio just past Rio Grande when the check engine light came on. The dashboard also told them to pull over in the next .3 miles and that the hybrid system was disabled.

They pulled their Prius over to the side of the road and called a tow truck. The tow took them 45 miles to Chillicothe where, as luck would have it, there was a Toyota dealer. (No shops closer than that would take on a Prius.) The repair would take a few days, so they hitched a ride to a hotel in Chillicothe with a sympathetic tow truck driver.

There were no rental car businesses open in Chillicothe on Sunday, but Ken found a U-Haul that was open and within walking distance, so they rented a ten-foot truck. "It was cheaper than spending another night in the hotel," Ken told us.

In what must have seemed like shades of Home Alone's Catharine O'Hara and John Candy, who played Gus Polinski, the leader of the Kenosha Kickers polka band, the Wrights and their son (not left home alone) traveled back to Springdale. The U-Haul truck only had two seats so Theresa sat on her son's suitcase wedged between the two seats all the way back.

It would have only been fitting if the Kenosha Kickers song "Polka, Polka, Polka" was playing on the radio. We hear they are very big in Sheboygan. The source of the Prius problem? "It was the water pump," Ken said.

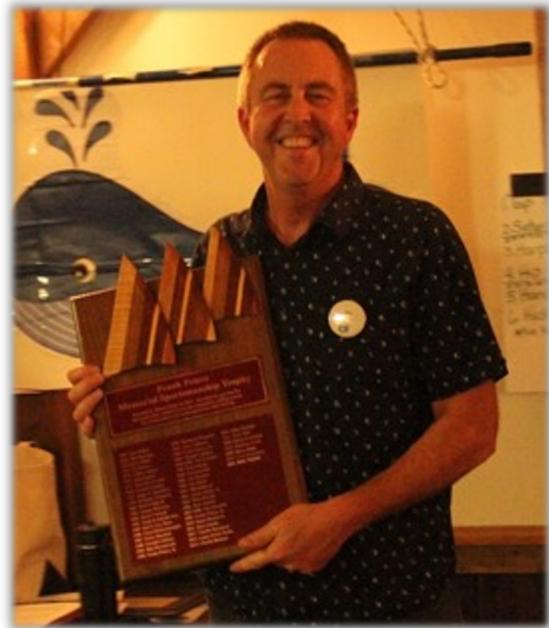
ruined him for small lakes in Ohio. His wife Theresa was working as a teacher and they had three children to raise.

In 2003 Ken retired from GE and they moved back to the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton, VA. It was there that his neighbors got him into Sunfish racing where they launched right off the beach. In 2014 the couple moved back to Cincinnati. Having been bitten by the Sunfish bug, Ken began looking around for a place to sail. "HSA was tops in my mind. They actually did not disdain the Sunfish as a sailboat and had a good family and female participation."

Since joining HSA Ken has continued his Sunfish racing and gotten into racing the Capri 14.2 as well. As his nomination letter for this award said, "When it comes to racing, Ken is obviously in pursuit of personal improvement. He has for the past few years, joined Diane in her Capri as crew and skipper both, solving both Diane's need for a steady crew as she continues her own quest for success in her fleet and his own need to expand his ability to solve the complexities of the race course."

The letter cited his quiet and steady contribution to the club in all its activities as well as his pursuit of transforming his own game as a racing sailor. It went on to say that, "As racing sailors we should all be as open and willing to learn from one another as Ken is, with the goal of enhancing not only our own level of competition but the level of the competition of the club as a whole."

Ken joined Diane Pierok as crew on her Capri 14, but they split time on the helm each weekend that they race. His nomination letter says that "Ken is obviously in pursuit of personal improvement... quiet and humble but not complacent about his evolution as a racing sailor." Well done, Ken!



**Bobby Taylor – the Frank Peters Memorial Sportsmanship Award** – Bobby is relatively new to the sport of sailing and to racing but you wouldn't know it. In less than two seasons he has gone from complete novice to an accomplished collector and restorer of all manner of sailboats from dinghies to keelboats.

Bobby seems to have developed a passion for sailboats, leading him to become a representative for a company that sells running rigging, a YouTube channel content creator for a wide range of sailboat information and repair instruction, and a frequent poster on our HSA Facebook page about his problem solving and mechanical solutions to the problems of sailboat rigging.

"No one we know of has ever gotten off to a faster start in this sport than he has," his nomination letter reads. "He seems to have a passion for understanding the details of his new avocation and may have surpassed what some of us who have been sailing for years know about how things work."



**Joe Fulford – U.S. Sailing Sportsmanship Award** – Joe, who served as the club’s Rear Commodore, has been moving around the edges of our club for years, first with his kids in two Sunfish and then in a Flying Scot. The Scot was a donated club boat that Joe took on as a personal project, devoting hours of labor and piles of cash as he remade the boat into a modern-day marvel of careful restoration.

Over the past few years, Joe has continued to elevate his role in the club, first serving as Rear Commodore in 2019. But this year has seen Joe raise his activity profile considerably. He has become a more frequent flyer on the race course but is willing to sacrifice his participation to help newcomers. It is his work particularly with the Intro to Sail and Learn to Sail programs that impress most.

“... Joe is an excellent instructor and an engaging personality. He has also volunteered his time to help new owners rig, sail, and even race their boats,” says his nomination letter. “In addition he took the initiative to rewrite and expand the club’s Intro to Sail syllabus and turn it into a comprehensive manual.”

Editor Emeritus Note: Once in a blue moon, an award recipient is the same person who handles the nominations and has the trophies engraved. That was exactly the situation for Joe Fulford and explains why Dave Judy got a bottle of wine for the U.S. Sailing Sportsmanship Award. Dave was the decoy and Joe was the real winner this year. Here is his story of red herrings and Executive Committee chicanery in Joe’s own words:

I shook Jerry Brewster down for his car keys because I was convinced that the missing trophy for Dave Judy had slid out of the box and under a seat. Not finding it there, and getting only a shrug from Jerry, I built a theory regarding it being back at the engravers because the trophy shop had misplaced it. Maybe I could rush back to Dayton and fetch it!

Amy calmly suggested we could sort it out later as Charlie had a bottle of wine set aside to present to Dave, who was in on the plot, instead. Even our Treasurer, Roger Henthorn, a man of integrity, when asked if he knew where Dave Judy's plaque was located (as the box of plaques was under his sound table) said he did not (a true statement as he didn't see it moved to Darrilynn's bag). Fearing Amy's discovery of her own special trophy, I agreed and took the wine.

Leigh Ann kindly said I needed to chill out and enjoy a glass of wine because I was stressing out Darrilynn who was in charge of a big night and had enough venue worries—worries that were a complete fabrication to discourage any further Barn-n-Bunk explorations.

My brain played back a text from Darrilynn as we returned from Ottawa earlier that week. She had picked up the trophies and narrowly averted having Amy collect her own trophy. It was only due to a chance conversation with Amy and some quick "story-telling" regarding her and Jerry looking for a good place to get robot trophies was a trophy disaster averted. I thanked her profusely.

I still couldn't figure out why the engraver called Amy but then Leigh Ann volunteered, in a moment worthy of an I Love Lucy episode, that she slipped an envelope to the engraver behind my back with a note saying the name was not Dave Judy but Joe Fulford. Dave was the very deserving red herring I took in... hook, line, and sinker.



**Amy Marks – Bob Darlin Sportsmanship Award** – Amy, our club Commodore, received this award for distinguished service for her ability to step into a leadership role in the club and handle the difficult transition out of Covid 19 restrictions on junior camp and the transition to a new dry moorage scheme with the Park.

Amy was able to take on the duties of Commodore with little preparation or knowledge of the workings of the executive committee and despite experiencing injuries received in skiing in the off season as well as other personal challenges which conspired to keep her away from the race course much of the season.

The person who nominated Amy said that, “you can find (Amy) nearly every nearly every Sunday crewing, working on race committee, and helping newcomers and visitors feel welcome. (She) is seemingly involved in all the club’s activities and events!” Amy is committed to this club.

She led the Junior Camp program and assembled HSA volunteers to support a women’s outdoor sailing adventure program put on by Hueston Woods. She was very meticulous with the details and delivered a successful experience for the participants and volunteers.

Amy now heads into her second year as Commodore. She continues to demonstrate she is more than equal to the task of reconciling opposing viewpoints and building further a good working relationship with the Park while leading HSA into a new and exciting future.



**Landon Robertson – Richard Saunders Memorial Trophy** – Landon is a regular on the race course both as crew for his grandfather Phil, a long time Y Flyer racer, and in his own Sunfish where he has distinguished himself this season. His ninth-place finish in a fleet of twenty Sunfish at the Camptown Races in July are testimony to his burgeoning sailing abilities.

He has also participated as a crew in his first ever Y-Flyer regatta in Indianapolis and as a member of HSA’s junior sailing camp for his fourth year. He wins this award almost 30 years after his father Mark won the same award as a junior in 1993. Landon has consistently been a dedicated crew on his granddad’s Y Flyer as well as managing to finish thirteenth out of twenty-six Sunfish in the season long Series, finishing ahead of many who are his seniors by age and experience. A big congrats to Landon Robertson!

# The Year in Sailing – 2022 Numbers

~ and ~

## Your 2023 Officers



If the first part of November had you wishing we had extended the sailing season, the second half surely reminded us all that summer is over, having been kneecapped by two inches of snow and low temps.

All the docks are out of the water and nestled into their new asphalt beds as are all the boats save one lonely cruiser that no one seems to want to claim. (What is that story, anyway?)

What kind of a year has it been? A rather busy one as the club expanded its racing schedule and returned to activities that Covid 19 had curtailed somewhat. A cursory look at the numbers shows a gain in membership and participation since 2020.

In 2020 the yearbook listed 40 families; in 2022 we had 46 listed. In 2020 there were 30 active racing members. Two years later there were 37. In 2020 there were 21 active boats regularly involved in racing. In 2022 there were 25.

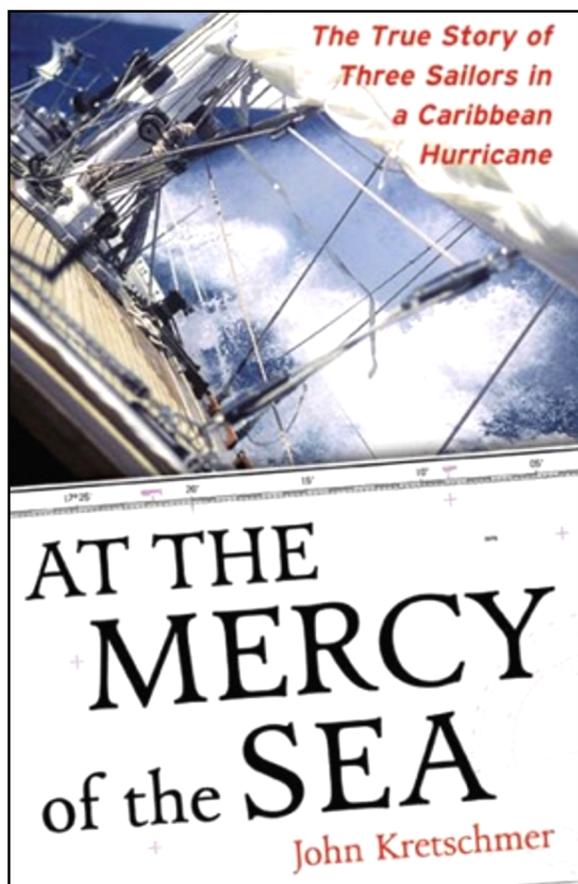
These are by no means definitive numbers that indicate growth. That might come in the winter meeting when our new officers (see below) look at membership trends more closely, but it seems to indicate general health and wellbeing.

The 2022 season added a racing weekend in both the Spring and Fall Series, sending it to seven total for each for the first time in several years. Whether or not that remains the case we will have to see. There has been some discussion about returning to six dates instead and adding another special event such as a Capri event or another CruiserFest in the Spring or perhaps adding a training weekend for racing.

The Executive Committee will likely hold their winter meeting in January to set the new schedule, so if you have ideas and opinions about the race schedule, social activities, race committee, special events, or our public programs, it would be a good idea to share them before the first of the year. Here's how to contact your duly elected representatives:

**Commodore** – Amy Marks – [amymarks00@gmail.com](mailto:amymarks00@gmail.com)  
**Rear Commodore** – Bill Molleran [bill.molleran@fuse.net](mailto:bill.molleran@fuse.net)  
**Vice Commodore** – Darrilynn Brewster [luytoreadmom@gmail.com](mailto:luytoreadmom@gmail.com)  
**Secretary** – Dom Everaet [Dominiek.Everaet@esko.com](mailto:Dominiek.Everaet@esko.com)  
**Treasurer** – Roger Henthorn [rrh@fuse.net](mailto:rrh@fuse.net)  
**Harbormaster** – Don Fecher [dfexskip@aol.com](mailto:dfexskip@aol.com)  
**Newsletter editor** – Joe Fulford [Fulford.joseph@gmail.com](mailto:Fulford.joseph@gmail.com)  
**Public Programs Coordinator** – Brett Hart [brettrhart@aol.com](mailto:brettrhart@aol.com)





Trivia: Did you know Ohio libraries consistently rank in the [top five](#) in the nation? So, if you don't want to own it, borrow it at a top-notch Ohio library like [Wright Memorial Public Library](#) or visit your local library! Near or far, they're all open to you!



It's time to cozy up next to the fire with a good book about sailing! And adventure! And storms! And death! Well, ok, the last one doesn't sound all that inviting but still it is a good yarn.

The author, John Kretschmer, is a good one and my favorite. Kretschmer is a seasoned blue water sailor and offers off shore training passages that have introduced hundreds to ocean sailing. He is also the author, most prominently, of *Sailing a Serious Ocean*, an international best seller.

In this book, titled *At the Mercy of the Sea*, published in 2007, Kretschmer tells the story of three men who were sailing in the Caribbean when Hurricane Lenny struck in 1999. One of these men was Kretschmer's friend Carl Wake.

Lenny, a category 4, was the strongest hurricane of the 1999 season and the strongest Caribbean storm in seventy years with winds that built to 155 mph and causing nearly \$800 million damage. It was a rare and unprecedented storm that traveled west to east instead of the usual path. That anomalous trajectory led directly to the three boats being in the storm's way.

Wake was sailing solo from Virginia to the Virgin Islands in a 41 ft. sloop. Steve Rigby was sailing solo on a 21 ft. racing boat, and Guillaume Llobregat was sailing a 65 ft. schooner with one crewmember aboard out of St. Martin.

Kretschmer reconstructs each man's voyage to tell their stories. All three skippers and their boats met their storm driven fates within 20 miles of one another. In fact, Wake's boat and Rigby's came alongside one another during the storm as Wake attempted to rescue Rigby from his tiny 21 ft. craft.

The book is a compelling read and makes clear how unforgiving the sea can be even in the relatively calm Caribbean. Of the three skippers and single crew caught in this storm, only one would survive.

When Matt Rutherford was 13 years old, he was in drug rehab. At 17 he was sitting in a jail cell in Ohio, one of many times he was incarcerated as a juvenile. When he was jailed that last time, he found himself back in the same prison in the same cell and was joined a few days later by his former cellmate.

It was then that he had an epiphany. He could continue this cycle of drugs, crime, and prison or he could do some good. He did what many of us would do. Or did. He bought a sailboat.

He wanted to see the world and enjoy the freedom that the open ocean offered. He bought the sailboat on the internet sight unseen and learned how to sail it by doing it. "I bought a book called *Sailing for Dummies*," he said. "But I never read it."

Four years later he was on his way to Europe, West Africa and then back across to the Caribbean. After returning he went to work fixing up old boats for the Chesapeake Regional Accessible Boating (CRAB), a group whose mission is to get disabled folks out on the water in sailboats.

It was there that he spotted an Albin Vega, a 40-year-old blue water cruiser that had seen better days. He asked the CRAB program leader if he could have the boat to fix up and sail, but he had bigger plans. What if he took the boat and sailed around the Americas to help raise money for CRAB?

Matt was now 30 years old and looking for a way to help others. In 2011, he had outfitted the boat and left Annapolis, Maryland on a historic solo, non-stop 27,000 mile journey that would take eight months.

The trip would eventually become a book, *Red Dot on the Ocean*, and a documentary film which chronicled his early life and his record setting voyage through the Northwest Passage and around Cape Horn, the most dangerous sailing in the world.

He would return from that voyage with the same \$30 he left with and a boat in which nothing worked anymore, including the engine and a hull which "leaked like a sieve", but he would also raise over \$200,000.

Few of us would ever think about such a dangerous trip through ice packs and the storm strewn Southern Ocean, but that's what also makes it remarkable. You can get it at your local library or watch it on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). For free: <https://reddotontheocean.com>

## *Red Dot on the Ocean: An Epic Documentary Film and Book*

