

BEARINGS

N O R T H E R N L I G H T S S A I L I N G C L U B

<p>Photo Contest <i>This Month's Winner and Runner-Up</i></p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>Commodore's Yarn <i>Latest Events, Clean Bill of Health</i></p> <p>Page 3</p>	<p>Why Members Are Important <i>Keith Holloman</i></p> <p>Page 6</p>	<p>Trip Night <i>New Sign-Up Procedures</i></p> <p>Page 9</p>	<p>Coming Events <i>March & April</i></p> <p>Page 11</p>
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T W I N C I T I E S , M I N N E S O T A

This Month's Photo Contest Winner:

***Deep Bay* by Susan Bosch**



BEARINGS

**This Month's Photo Contest Runner-Up:
Bayfield Marina by David Shores**



*More winners: Deadly Wind,
who captured First Prize in
the Sailing and Pirate Trivia
contest at the February 15
meeting.*

BEARINGS

Commodore's Yarn

Ahoy Sailors!

With the warm temperatures that recently passed through the Twin Cities, I thought that spring was here and I was all set to begin commissioning my boat. In fact, I did head down to Lake City to remove some wood from my boat to bring home for refinishing. While I was there I attempted to convince the marina manager that I was ready to splash. Unfortunately, he wasn't buying it and said I would have to wait along with all the other boat owners until the ice was off the lake. Well, you can't blame a guy for trying, can you? I did receive some encouragement when Punxsutawney Phil predicted we may see an early spring. I would like to emphasize the word "may." Don't hank on your sails just yet; historically, Phil has a track record of 39% accuracy. Oh well, keep your fingers crossed and hope that our sailing season will get off to an early start this year.



The month of March is when we hold our annual trip night. For many of us, March is also the month that our hibernating thoughts of sailing start to awaken. What better way is there to kick those thoughts into gear than by

attending our next meeting? Last year we had a great turnout with over 90 people in attendance. In addition, there were a number of trip destinations that were either new to the club or that we had not traveled to in a long time. Come join us on March 15th at the VFW hall to hear about some of the proposed trips for this season.

I would like to take a moment to restate our new signup policy for Trip Night. You may remember that in the past, trip chairs would usually take trip deposits the same evening. This created a lot of chaos, and the process was sometimes unfair to some members and trip chairs. To help eliminate some of the problems, the NLSC board enacted a policy whereby the official signup date is two weeks *after* the announcement at Trip Night. We hope this will provide an opportunity for those who were unable to attend the meeting to receive adequate notification of a trip. Additionally, the board hopes that this policy will help to ensure that all deposits are treated equally. You can still offer a deposit to the trip chair the evening of Trip Night; however, it will be treated as though it was received on the specified postmarked date two weeks after the meeting. In this instance, it would be March 29th. If there are more deposits than there are available positions, the trip chair will conduct a drawing for the available spots. At the discretion of the trip chair, they may substitute a person based on operational necessity.

I recently received a letter in the mail from a member who wishes to remain anonymous. This member's feeling is that the club is being "led astray" by too much emphasis being placed on growing our membership and giving preferential treatment to our new members. I shared the letter with our board members and requested their feedback. Keith Holloman volunteered to write an article expressing the views of the board and the importance of growing the membership. The NLSC board members basically share the same view; therefore, I will not reiterate those reasons in this article.

When I became Commodore we had approximately 142 members on the NLSC roster, and one of my goals was to increase the membership to at least 200

BEARINGS

Commodore's Yarn (continued)

members. One way, I thought, would be to create an incentive for our members to promote the club by waiving their dues if they brought a new member into our organization. I don't believe this policy has had any real effect on our membership because it has only been in existence since January. I would venture to guess that the increase is based on the fact that we have a fantastic club and it stands on its own merits. Another thing that may be affecting our growth is that our club has more exposure with our current website and Facebook page. I was told that the club had over 200 members in its early years. At one point in the mid to late 90's the membership roster dropped to about 60. We currently have 207 members in our organization.

Our writer also believes that new members are receiving a year and a half membership for the price of \$25. Our current dues structure is \$30 for individuals and \$45 for couples. This fee covers membership from January 1st to the end of the year. You may remember, in the past, if a prospective member decided to join our club after September they were charged \$15. The board decided since the active sailing season was drawing to a close that we would waive the \$15 if the individual paid their dues of \$30/\$45 for the upcoming year.

Also mentioned in the letter was that our members are not being treated equally and spaces on trips are being held exclusively for new members. It is true that we attempt to mentor our new members by making available 'old salts' that are very familiar with the workings of the club. It is also true that I offered an afternoon of sailing with priority given to members who had been with the club less than a year; however, this has only occurred once so far. The NLSC board has spent many hours discussing ways of providing a fair policy for trip signups. We hope our new policy will provide ample notification of upcoming trips and will treat each member equitably.

Contrary to what the author of the letter may think, we do value each and every one of our members. No matter how long a member has been a part of the club, we do not want anyone to step aside to make way for new members. It has been estimated that in most volunteer organizations 95% of the work is accomplished by 5% of its members. We need both new and long-standing members who are willing to help in various capacities. If this does not happen, the club will eventually cease to exist because the ones who are doing the majority of the work are not going to do it forever.

It is also important to consider that there comes a time when a person tends to get burned out. A good case in point is Tom Cronmiller. Bless his heart, he works extremely hard on organizing and running the Shrimp Boil. This is quite an undertaking when you consider that he makes many of the arrangements, recruits individuals to assist in preparation, hauls all of his personal cooking equipment down, takes it home and cleans up. Tom has not indicated to me that he is burnt out -- I am only using Tom as an example. There are many others within our club who also put in a lot of hard work so we can have great events. Think about it: How many times have I asked for volunteers at our meetings to present a simple "4 Minutes 4 Safety" topic? To date, only a few members other than board members have raised their hands. I am not advocating at this time that we reward those who take an active role in the club; however, it may be something that warrants consideration in order to get more members involved.

Our club often conducts the same trips and events annually. If you look closely you may notice that the same individuals are the ones who are repeatedly organizing these events. Wouldn't it be great if we had a number of trips taking place simultaneously, and you could choose among a variety of local, national and

BEARINGS

Commodore's Yarn (continued)

international destinations? If your answer is yes, then keep in mind that this could be possible only with a large organization.

I would like to thank the writer for taking the time to share their thoughts with us, and I encourage any member who believes the club is veering off course to please bring their concerns to the board. I would like to once again emphasize that the NLSC board meetings are open to all members, and we appreciate your input and participation.

Although warmer temperatures are on the horizon, it is still cold outside, and the potential for contracting the flu is still present.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), influenza is widespread in Minnesota and is up 17.1% in week 6, which ended on February 12th. Please take the necessary precautions and stay healthy. We want you to maintain a "clean bill of health" so you can be an active participant at club events and sailing trips.



Did you ever wonder where the term "clean bill of health" originated? Well, if you thought that it was coined by a bunch of medical professionals you would be only partially correct. This widely-used term has its origins in the "Bill of Health," a document issued to a ship showing that the port it sailed from suffered from no epidemic or infection at the time of departure. Eventually the medical profession and other entities adopted this term to mean that no problems or deficiencies have been observed.

Until next time, fair winds and following seas,
Capt. Jay A. Biggs

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Editorial contributions may be submitted by e-mail or CD. Format should be MS Word or text files. Photographs and prepared art should be submitted as .jpg or .gif files. Send to Mary Mason at marym@spacestar.net.

Copy is due on the last Friday of the month for the next month's publication.

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BEARINGS

Why Members Are So Important

Keith Holloman
Sailing Trip Coordinator

My first exposure to the Northern Lights Sailing Club was through Commodore Jay Biggs, who was my instructor for a Northern Breezes ASA Keelboat class in the spring of 2008. I was sharing with Jay my interest in learning more about sailing and finding people to sail with on larger bodies of water. Jay shared with me the concept of NLSC and provided me with the link to the website. I had several other obligations that summer and did not have the opportunity to join. Nevertheless, I remember looking at the website at least two or three times per month and thinking how much fun the members seemed to be having.

I joined the club in January of 2009 and attended my first meeting. I remember Kevin Crothers welcoming me to the meeting, Jeff Tam spent some time talking with me about my centerboard sailing experience and we discussed the differences between wet boat (centerboard) and dry boat (keelboat) sailing. I spent several minutes talking with Joan Gilmore, whom I had just read about in an article about the Black Boaters Summit and her participation in that program. It was a great night. I met a lot of people and left with a feeling of connection.

In March I attended Trip Night, and I recall Lisa Broom standing up and discussing a planned trip to the Apostle Islands and how the club was interested in mentoring new members to qualify as club skippers. I had just completed my ASA Bareboat Certification, so I contacted her about serving as skipper on that trip. During that meeting I was also able to sign up for the Ice Breaker and Lake Pepin trips. Both of these trips were a lot of fun, and I came away impressed with the knowledge and experience of our members.

My experience as skipper on the Apostle Island trip was also rewarding. Dale Broom was my first mate, and his experience and mentoring was immeasurable. I got to know Hank Aro, who was part of the crew as well, and I learned a lot about his sailing exploits and the history of the club. Later that year I attended the shrimp boil and again learned to appreciate the diversity of our membership and the knowledge base, which is quite extensive. In March of 2009 I skippered a sponsored trip to the BVIs, and last April accepted the role of Sailing Trip Coordinator on the board. In this role I have had the opportunity to interact with many club members -- not only new ones, but also many of our tenured members as well.

What I have come to realize is how important membership is to NLSC. I think a lot about what has made this such a successful club and also what can we do to make it better. Growing and retaining membership are both critical. New members allow the club to maintain vitality, energy and infuse new ideas. Without new members, the club runs the risk of going through a period of stagnation where it seems the same folks show up at the "same-old" meetings and activities. Adding new members is important for the long-term health of the club.

BEARINGS

Why Members Are So Important (continued)

A club needs active members who are willing to take on leadership roles to ensure the club's mission is met, to manage the assets of the club, and to make decisions and plan club activities. Most clubs have a small proportion of members willing to take on these leadership roles. By recruiting new members, we increase our ability to identify individuals willing to serve in these leadership positions. We cannot expect the same individuals to continue to serve in these roles indefinitely; this will only result in burnout and decreased effectiveness. New members also bring sailing skills and access to different boats that can be used in club activities. This allows us to expand the scope of our club trips for the benefit of the entire club.

It's easy to underestimate the importance of retaining current members. There are several reasons why retaining "tenured" members is critical to our club's success.

- They provide stability and have proven their commitment to the club.
- They serve as important role models for newer members.
- They provide incentive to guests that the club has quality and experienced members that they'll be able to learn from.
- They understand the history of the club: where we have been, what we have done, and what has been successful or unsuccessful in the past and why.

The NLSC Board is looking to figure out the right balance to meet both of these goals. To help get new members engaged we have discussed ensuring opportunities for them to participate in club trips. The goal of this initiative is to make sure that new members have an opportunity to participate in at least one trip over the course of a year. When new members participate in on the water sailing activities they have more of an opportunity to get to know other members and feel "invested" in the club. Members who feel they belong will be more likely to maintain membership and volunteer to participate in other activities such as planning or even serving as a board member.

We will also look at ways to ensure that tenured members who have not been able to participate in club trips also have that opportunity. We are evaluating how to make sponsored trailer trip less of a financial burden on boat owners, and are working on a mentoring program to identify and develop club members who are interested in becoming NLSC-qualified skippers. All members should be able to participate in the organization, planning and execution of club activities. We will be looking more closely at the areas of interest that each member has indicated on the club registration form. You can expect to be contacted by Board members to inquire about your interest and give you the opportunity to become more involved.

BEARINGS

Why Members Are So Important (continued)

I want to see NLSC continue to thrive, grow and change with the times. We need to continue to attract new members and retain our tenured members who add such a wealth of experience. We cannot afford to sit still and keep things status quo. We need to continue to try innovative approaches to make this club a valuable way for people to spend their time and financial resources.

Northern Lights is your club! The board members are simply stewards of this asset and we need your help to help us shape the club for the future.

Every member is vital to the long-term success of the club whether you have been a member for two months or ten years.

I am grateful for the sailing opportunities that NLSC has provided me. Even more important has been the opportunity to develop new friendships and share a common passion for sailing. I hope you feel the same as I do and will join me in working together to keep our club strong and viable.

Keith Holloman

Keeping Everyone Informed

Several members of our club don't have ready access to email. At the last Board meeting, someone brought up the idea of having a phone tree so that we could make sure that those members aren't missing out on any information that normally would go out via email. The Board members present at the meeting liked the idea, but as is frequently the case, the devil's in the details. We're looking for someone who would be willing to coordinate this project. We don't have that many members without email, so the time involved shouldn't be all that great.

If you would like to increase your participation in the club by helping with this project, please contact Tom Cronmiller at 612-729-6094, or contact any of the board members at next month's general meeting.

BEARINGS

Trip Night

Our annual NLSC Trip Night is scheduled to take place on Tuesday March 15, 2011. This year's Trip Night will involve a different process that will give members the opportunity to learn about the various trips, along with extra time to determine which trips fit their schedules. Then they can decide which trips to choose. We think this new approach will eliminate a lot of the chaos that has been associated with previous Trip Nights.

This is the new process:

- Proposed trips will be planned and approved per club policy.
- On Trip Night the trip planners will explain the trips and pass out relevant information.
- **No checks will be accepted on Trip Night.**
- There will be a two week announcement period for each announced trip to ensure proper communication via the newsletter, the web site and email.
- When the registration phase starts members can mail in checks for trips they are interested in.
- Checks received before the specified postmark will be considered received on that date.
- Registration will last for two weeks.
- Checks received with the same postmark will be part of a random lottery to determine participants and develop a waiting list.
- Each trailerable trip will allocate a proportion of slots for new members (first-time registrations received as of November 1st of the previous year).

Also, if any club members are interested in planning a trip for the coming year please contact either me or one of the Board members.

Many thanks,

Keith Holloman
Sailing Trip Coordinator
763-493-6959 (Home)
612-670-7136 (cell)

Heads up! This years' Pepin Sail will be on Saturday and Sunday, June 11-12. Cost and additional details will be published when available. Contact: Tom Cronmiller, 612-729-6094.

BEARINGS

Northern Lights Sailing Club - Membership Application

We invite you to join our fun and adventure!

Print and complete this application form.

Send the completed application and your check - made out to "Northern Lights Sailing Club" - to:

Northern Lights Sailing Club
4616 Nine Mile Creek Parkway
Bloomington, MN 55437

ALL MEMBERS MUST SIGN A NEW FORM EVERY YEAR

Note for new members: If you join after September 1 and pay your dues for the next year, you will be entitled to all rights and privileges for the next year, AND for remainder of the year in which you join.

Membership (check one):	
Jan 1-Dec 31, 2011	
<input type="radio"/> Individual	\$30.00
<input type="radio"/> Dual-Same Address	\$45.00

Type or print your name and address:	
Name <input type="text"/>	Dual Member Name <input type="text"/>
Street <input type="text"/> Apt.# <input type="text"/>	
City <input type="text"/> State <input type="text"/> Zip Code <input type="text"/>	
Home Phone <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Work Phone <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Ext. <input type="text"/>
E-mail Address <input type="text"/>	Cell Phone <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Referred by member: [optional]:

Beginning in 2011 -- Bearings, our NLSC monthly newsletter, will only be sent by e-mail.

Check this box if you wish also to receive printed copies by regular (snail-) mail.

We need volunteers to make NLSC work. Please click on any of the following to be added to duty rosters.

I Would Help:

- Organize Trips
- Organize Social Activities
- Organize Meeting Activities
- Serve on the Board
- Create Newsletter
- Other

I am interested in:

- Learning to Sail
- Racing
- Cruising
- Daysailing
- Get Captain's Certification
- Other

My experience level:

- Have Captain's Certification
- Own a Daysailer
- Own a Cruising Sailboat
- Have a USCG Captain's License

Where did you hear about NLSC?

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Dual-Member Signed: _____ Date: _____

Note: Disclaimer MUST be signed and on-file with the NLSC, as a precondition for participation in club sailing trips and events.

Disclaimer: By making application for, or attending any function arranged by Northern Lights Sailing Club (NLSC), I am fully cognizant of all risks of travel and arrangements for trips of this nature and fully disclaim, waive, and discharge NLSC, its officers, and members from any and all liability, claims, or responsibilities with regard to the proposed trip and arrangements made with respect thereto, even if caused by the negligence or purported negligence of NLSC, its officers, or members.

BEARINGS

MARCH-APRIL EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	INFORMATION
Club Meeting	Tuesday, March 15	19:00	Golden Valley VFW	Trip Night
Club Meeting	Tuesday, April 19	19:00	Golden Valley VFW	Sail Trim and Election of Club Directors & Officers

Northern Lights Sailing Club meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m., January through May and October through November at the Golden Valley VFW, 7775 Medicine Lake Road, Golden Valley, MN 55427-3501. Summer meetings are potluck dinners held at members' homes. Meeting locations are listed below and on the NLSC web site, www.nlsc.org. E-mail us at nlsc_mail@yahoo.com.

BEARINGS

Northern Lights Sailing Club

4616 Nine Mile Creek Pkwy

Bloomington, MN 55437

