

MindJibe



Newsletter of the Triangle Boardsailing Club, Vol. 24, No. 5 September, 2006

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Trip 10/28/06-11/04/06 at Summerwinds, Mirlo Beach, Rodanthe on the Outer Banks. Cost of the trip is a whopping \$97.24 per person for the week. What a deal! Contact Debbie (debpt2b@yahoo.com) to see if space is still available.

A **Winter Party** is being planned. Stay tuned!

New Club Officers: Perhaps their identities will ultimately be revealed. A mystery to the Editor.

The Windsurfing Sailor, by Charles Livaudais

Long ago, in a time before cell phones, internets or iPods, an unusual form of windsurfer ruled the waters. She (yes, many women sailed in those days) obsessed about such arcane things as pivot jibes, fast tacks and pinhead sails. She practiced tilting her board to leeward for better upwind bite, wet sanded the bottom of her board, and debated the merits of harness lines. She was known by a term that was a badge of honor then, but is pejorative today: she was a board sailor.

Board sailors roamed far and wide in the 1970's and early '80's. Their gathering places, known as regattas, would draw hundreds at a time. Then, with little fanfare, their numbers began to dwindle. What happened to the board sailor? Was it global warming? Deforestation? Bird flu? No -- internecine warfare did her in. The sport's overlords cast her and her gear aside in the craze for "short boards." Where board sailors once grabbed the lion's share of industry attention, they were now faced with second-class status. The sport was marketed with ever-increasing emphasis on the beach lifestyle, and wave sailing was supposed to be every sailor's ultimate goal. Boardsailing was out, windsurfing* was in.

Well hey, marketing geniuses, how'd that work out for ya? Since 5% of the world is suitable for high-wind wave or bump 'n jump sailing, I guess it should be no surprise that our sport has shrunk by about 95% since 1987**. For a while, when non-sailors still knew what windsurfing was, the industry was sometimes used as a business model on how not to expand your market.

It was more than stupid for windsurfing to turn its back on its sailing roots -- it was a real shame. A few of us (yes, I am one) still approach this sport from a sailing, rather than a surfing, perspective. We value the speed and efficiency of the modern windsurfer. We like to measure our sailing ability (or lack thereof) against objective benchmarks, be it our peers or our GPS. We obsess over gear and technique. We are, in short, the exact opposite of the surf-god archetype we are expected to revere.

It is time to re-establish the historical bond between windsurfing and sailing. There are, after all, far more places (and people) suitable for flat-water sailing than for wave sailing. Thankfully, the industry

now agrees. Flat-water windsurfing is experiencing a renaissance. Formula, light-wind slalom and freeride, and even performance-oriented long boards beckon to those who value speed and efficiency. Indeed, with boards such as Starboard's Serenity or Exocet's Warp-X, we can again challenge the yachties in non-planing conditions. Toss in a sub-100 liter board for the rare high-wind session, and today's board sailor can truly have it all.

If wave sailors are windsurfing's jocks, then we are the band geeks. That's fine with us! So call us dorks, call us BAF'ers, call us what you will -- just be sure to call us brother (or sister). We are windsurfing's past... and, if windsurfing has a future, we are it as well. We are the board sailors.

* It's ironic that the term Windsurfer was at first a registered trademark of the company that started it all... with a 12 foot long, 50 lb, daggerboard-equipped sailing vessel! Not until that company's demise did windsurfing come to be the generally-accepted term for our sport.

** 1987 -- the year in which I first planed using a harness and footstraps - was the high-water mark for windsurfing sales. Little did I realize that my bliss was the sport's doom.

Let's All Learn To Windsurf by Sonja Thalheimer



(left) Sarah and Dana Thalheimer at Rolling View

If you've ever considered windsurfing too difficult of a process to teach someone, or to easily learn, stop. It's not true. If my father can get people tacking in the first hour of ever being on a board, if I can even teach a few of the basic steps after only truly sailing for a week, it's really not hard. (This is not to say my dad isn't an amazing teacher, of course he is.) This summer, my dad taught my cousins and me how to windsurf over a couple of days -- and by the end we could actually control where we were going, turn, and go pretty far without even worrying about having to abandon ship and walk back.

Then this past weekend my family and our family friends went out to Falls Lake. After my dad borrowed the giant Start boards and the tiny sails, we were good to go. Keep in mind that this is a family who has never really sailed before, and the father tells (not-so-scary) horror stories about the one time he ever tried windsurfing. Even though I had only truly windsurfing a few times before, I was able to help to teach Kenji, the younger boy, the basics of windsurfing: stand up, pull

p the sail, fall off... Except within less than an hour, Kenji was sailing and turning and most

impressively, barely falling. One might think it's just that Kenji has natural talent, and perhaps he does, except the same thing happened with Firoz, Kenji's older brother. Sure, he fell a lot at first, but pretty soon he had complete control of where he was going. Then it was their father's turn. All day he had been complaining about how hard windsurfing had been that one time he tried 20 years ago – how tippy the board was, how horrible it had been walking around the boom to turn, etc. Somehow, though, he got onto the board and with a little instruction from my dad was sailing around in a few minutes. Maybe I didn't watch closely enough, but I didn't even see any huge splashes as he was learning to windsurf. Sure, nobody became an expert windsurfer after just one day, but everyone was able to control themselves on the board and even turn. All this in mere hours? I must say, it's pretty amazing.

(Sonja is right: how quickly you can learn on the new wide boards really is amazing! Even those old "school boards" were tippy compared to modern learning boards. –ed.)

THE WINDSURFING GURU

INTERMEDIATE: Master, have you ever noticed how when you're windsurfing you can go for hours and not get hungry?

GURE: Yes, I have noticed that.

INTERMEDIATE: Well, how do you explain it? I'm expending a lot of energy out there. Why don't I get hungry?

GURU: Simple. Adrenaline is a natural appetite suppressant.

OBSESSIVE: Master, I already have three windsurfing ties. How many is enough? How many is too many?

GURU: This is an obsession, but evidently a victimless pursuit. If there is a victim, it would be you for not using your time to practice the duck jibe. You can't have too many windsurfing ties. This is something you can pursue with all the energy and enthusiasm you can muster.

Gear Reflections by Charles Livaudais

I've purchased a lot of light-wind gear in the last few years. I suppose that's a reflection of career and parenthood... oh, and age! In any event, the vast majority of my sailing takes place with a 6.0 or larger these days. If you find yourself in the same boat, read on.

1. *Running to Stand Still*. Until recently I joked that I could plane just as early with my 7.5 sail and 120 liter, 60cm board 10 years ago as I could with my 9.0 sail and 140 liter, 70cm board. Why? Because while my gear keeps getting bigger, so does my waistline! That changed, however, with the purchase of a 90cm formula board. Even with my extra ballast, I get way more planing time these days. Do you really want to plane earlier and sail more often? Then go wide, my friend. And if you do go wide, go WIDE. Unless you weigh 120 lbs, a 70cm board and 8.0 sail won't help you very much. But you don't have to go the full formula route, either. Those new 80cm light-wind slalom and freerace boards look like they'd work great with a 9.5.

2. *What's better*. Sails! Every sail I get is an improvement over the one before. My most recent sail purchases are:

10.0 Severne Overdrive. Are you in the market for a racy cambered sail? I can heartily recommend the Severne Overdrive. It has 3 cams yet feels light (well, for a 10.0!) and rotates beautifully. It is not quite a race sail, but is still quite stable. Light wind sailing at Jordan is a challenging task that calls for extreme stability and range in a sail. (A race sail could work, but personally I will not tolerate the heavy feeling and difficult camber rotation of such a sail.) The Overdrive is easily the best sail I've ever purchased for that task -- it makes light wind sailing so much easier, and thus more fun. It is also simpler to rig than any other cambered sail I've owned. In fact, forget the "task" qualification: the Overdrive is the best sail I've ever purchased, period. One caveat: it is all monofilm, no x-ply, so those who are hard on their gear might look elsewhere.

9.0 Windwing Hammer. I loved the Hammer. It is a beautiful foil whose stability, light feel and rotation were the best I'd experienced in a big sail... that is, until I got the Overdrive. A fine sail nonetheless, its understated blue and white color scheme makes the Overdrive look fugly by comparison. It also has the option of rigging with or without its 2 cambers. I miss my Hammer, but the Overdrive made it superfluous in my quiver.

7.0 and 6.0 Sailworks Retros. It is no knock against the Retro to say it almost lives up to its hype -- it is, after all, the most overhyped sail the windsurfing world has ever seen. It has neither the tractor-like low end, nor the camber-like stability that some of its more ardent admirers would have you believe. It is, however, a well-made, light, reasonably fast and reasonably stable sail. I would not recommend getting one for your biggest Jordan sail -- get cambers for that task -- but it works extremely well as a mid-sized coastal and lake blasting sail.

3. *What Isn't* . Mast bases. For years I'd used the Chinook cup-style mast base and extension system. They worked just fine, but on-the-water sail changes could be a challenge. The new Chinook pin assembly appeared to combine the strength of a Chinook product with the ease-of-use of the pin system. \$225 later, I have 2 new Chinook pins and 3 Chinook extensions to fit them. Well, the pin feels as sturdy as an anvil... and about as heavy. And they are no easier to attach and detach than the cup system. Chinook manufactured the pins and extensions to such close tolerances that any dirt or sand will fuse the parts into 1 unbreakable, but unyielding, piece. Save your \$ and stick with the cups.

4. *What I Know Nothing About*. Lots of things, actually, but in this context I know little to nothing about newer high wind gear. We're still sailing a 10 year-old Electron. However, we're about to bite the bullet on an Exocet Cross 90, so stay tuned!

MindJibe is the newsletter of the Triangle Boardsailing Club. It publishes five or six issues a year.
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***MindJibe* is looking for a new editor. No one should continue in this job forever. Give me a call if you are even slightly interested in taking over as editor. Perhaps I will be able to convince you to do it.**

Road Biking and Windsurfing

By John Rutledge

[It is the Editor's privilege to inflict his enthusiasms upon an unsuspecting and defenseless public.]

If Joyce had not seen an article in the New York Times about an executive-type who had a custom bike built for her that cost \$7,000, I never would have gotten into biking again. (I say again because we logged 1,000 miles in Germany in the summer of 1976.) But the article piqued her curiosity and she soon began searching for "nice" bikes on the net; it wasn't long before she had found a "bargain" for herself. Not long after that she decided she needed me to ride with her, so she found a bargain bike for me as well. These two bikes are by Colnago, hand-painted in Italy (there is of course a Wikipedia article about the Colnago brand).

Biking gear seems more expensive to me than windsurfing stuff. You can buy a carbon fiber holder for your water bottle that will set you back \$35.00. A carbon seat post is ridiculously expensive. A sheik recently acquired a customized seat (saddle), all gold, for a mere \$50,000.

As I got dragged further and further into biking, I discovered that I really like road biking. And you don't have to have special conditions like wind to do it. When it's windy, I don't want to be riding the bike. Cycling co-exists with a work-constrained schedule much better than windsurfing. I do like to ride in the sun, however. That favors roads that run east-west.

Generally, when I'm biking, I'm not thinking profound thoughts or solving the world's problems. I'm just watching the surface of the road ahead and wondering what hills (bikers talk about "grades") are ahead. Occasionally, though, I think about the similarities between windsurfing and road biking.

Biking is lots more colorful than windsurfing (especially with monofilm sails). Neoprene is your basic black, but biking jerseys, bib shorts, and shoes dazzle by comparison. Often you bike solo, but you can do it in packs and race, of course. Bikes require more maintenance than windsurfing gear, but bike gearheads tend to enjoy the work. Not me. I just take it to the repair guy. You want to get to know your repair guy very well since your safety on the road rests in his hands.

I'm also struck by how many cyclists there are. Out on the back roads of northwest Durham I almost always see other cyclists. You can find whole movies about biking. Another advantage of a more popular sport: Chapel Hill boasts at least three bike shops and Durham supports one.

Just as in windsurfing, when I'm biking I am usually thinking about how fast I'm going. I wish my windsurfing equipment had a neat speedometer like the one mounted on my bike handlebars. While it's a Corvette bike, we are both still Ford Taurus riders, the proverbial Fred and Wilma disparaged by the road bikers. Average speed on our treks is only just above 13 mph. Highest speed achieved so far is 37 downhill—perhaps it was faster but after that I was afraid to look down at the speedometer.

And speaking of handlebars, I have not yet gone over the bike's handlebars, but it's only a matter of time and it won't be a splash-down. It took me a while to get used to the bike's clipless pedals, like a board's footstraps. I always, always wear a helmet when biking, but never when windsurfing. Cars are to biking as power boats are to windsurfing, but at least the cars are going in the same direction as the biker.

I suspect that biking is good cross training for windsurfing. I find that I'm huffing and puffing out on the bike just as I am when I'm windsurfing. Biking is still a lot more work than windsurfing and you don't get that marvelous sense of flying over the water, but as a substitute when you can't go windsurfing, biking is great!

What Sports are Growing? (Stolen from raqman on the United States Racquetball Association forum and not fact-checked by the editorial staff)

If you think tennis courts are more crowded lately, you are right. In fact, tennis is the only sport that has grown, according to numbers from the 2006 Superstudy from the Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association.

Tennis, according to the study, boasted a 10.3-percent increase as measured by sales and is the only traditional sport to grow in the past five years. Adult racquet sales are up 21.6 percent, and youth racquet sales are up 41.2 percent with premium racquet sales up overall 49 percent. As of June 30, 2006, this trend continues with racquet shipments up 4.8 percent over 2005 and balls shipments up 10.2 percent.

All other sports posted decreases. Football had the smallest decrease (-.6 percent), followed by swimming (-2.8 percent), bicycling (-3 percent), soccer (-4.1 percent), racquetball (-4.8 percent), fishing (-5.4 percent), baseball (-5.8 percent), ice hockey (-6.4 percent), volleyball (-8.6 percent), gymnastics (-11.5 percent), basketball (-14.9 percent), golf (-15.3 percent), snow skiing (-18.3 percent) and softball (-23 percent).

These figures validate the findings that total participation in tennis is up 1.1 million players - or a 4.1-percent increase - over 2004 figures, according to the United States Tennis Association and Tennis Industry Association's 2005 national tennis participation study. This figure represents the largest number of tennis players since 1992. The study reports growth in tennis play was not only in total players but also among frequent tennis players. In addition to an overall increase, tennis players are becoming more ethnically diverse. One-third of all new players are minorities.

The USTA study reports that the increase in total and frequent participation also has fueled a significant increase in play occasions, from 491 million in 2004 to 559 million in 2005. USTA League play is the engine driving this increase. League participation now stands at 585,611 nationally in 2005, up from 390,000 in 2000.

[This seems like a good spot to put in a word of thanks to all those who were involved in putting on the several Learn to Windsurf Days the Club sponsored this year, particularly to Liz Workman who organized them. Faced with declining interest in just about all sports, the Club has done a lot to promote the sport of windsurfing, especially given the relatively small number of active members in the Club. (But membership is actually up, Randy Dunn reports, from about this time last year.) It takes time and effort to do any kind of LTW day. Equipment has to be hauled, gear has to be rigged; one-on-one time with students is important too. Over the years the Club has tried a variety of different styles of teaching and perhaps it is time for some public discussion of which method really works best to introduce people to the thrilling sport of windsurfing. -Ed.]

SWAP MEET. The Club sponsored a very good swap meet in August 27th combined with the annual meeting to elect officers. From a gearhead point of view, it was an excellent meeting. One kiter brought about seven boards and sold them at lower than give-away prices. One buyer got a board and complete rig for just under \$200. Thanks to Freddie Maurer and Liz Workman for hosting this event. This was one of the best swap meets we have had in several years.

ANNUAL MEETING. The Swap Meet coincided with the Swap Meet. Floor nominations for board members were accepted. Most of the current officers will remain same until next July. Paul Scrutton is willing to be the president for another year. (Thanks, Paul.)

Nominations thus far:

Michal

Harold

Matt Valentine

Dana Thalheimer

Lorraine King

Clive Thomas

Chris Navarre

Bill Bradstreet



Sonja Thalheimer jibing at Rolling View.

Triangle Boardsailing Club Membership Form

New Member: ____ Renewal: ____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Day _() _____ Eve: () _____

Email (optional): _____

Make Check Payable to:
Triangle Boardsailing Club

Mail to:
Triangle Boardsailing Club
P. O. Box 662
Cary, NC 27513

I, _____ as a member of the Triangle Boardsailing Club, do hereby acknowledge that it is impossible to eliminate all risks associated with the sport of boardsailing, and for myself, my executors, administrators, successors and assigns, waive, release and forever discharge any and all rights and claims for damages, whether they arise in tort, contract, equity or otherwise, which may accrue to me against the Triangle Boardsailing Club, its officers, directors, and members (hereinafter referred to collectively as the "TBC"), and which result from, originate and/or arise out of, directly or indirectly, my participation in TBC meetings or events, or use of TBC equipment. I do further indemnify and hold harmless the TBC against any and all liability or responsibility for any injury whatsoever, including but not limited to injury to my person or property, received, incurred, and/or arising out of, directly or indirectly, my participation in TBC events, or use of TBC equipment. My release is also given for the reproduction of any photographs taken of me or including me for use in media coverage. I understand that I am waiving rights, which may otherwise have been mine by law, and I do so of my own free will and consent.

The **Triangle Boardsailing Club** is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving the sport of windsurfing. **TBC organizes:** public service activities; Club windsurfing trips to Hatteras; Club meetings and social evenings; free instructional clinics; parties; swap meets; races.

TBC owns and maintains the local Windtalker at Jordan Lake
(387-5969).



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