

# The Windword

Walnut Valley Sailing Club Newsletter, February 2026



Photo by Cindy Hoedel



## Greetings From Your Commodore

Well, we are two Board meeting into the new fiscal year. We are reviewing the By-Laws and the Business Calendar to make sure we know what our responsibilities are and our limits. Most of the early business of the Club falls on the Treasurer and the finance committee- billing, sales taxes, reports to the State Park, reports to the Secretary of State and the Federal tax return. Other committees are just getting organized. Chris published the committee chairs in last month's Windword. If you are interested in getting involved in running the Club, contact the relevant Committee Chair. They would love your help.

This year I want to put an emphasis on participation. We have made our first step in that direction by consistent scheduling. Sailing activities are on the second Saturday of the Month and Social activities on the Third. We are still in the planning stages of individual events, and Bill Allman, as part of Long Range Planning, is setting up a get-together in late February to identify and schedule each event. Watch your text and Email for details. I'm hoping for a summer of good food, good entertainment, and some good prizes. As usual, Blaine is doing a great job at Racing Chair and an organization meeting is scheduled. Anyway, I always have a great time at the Club. If you're not participating, you are missing out.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the Club,

Paul

# Club News



## I love it when a plan comes together

Sailors! it's time for spring planning and you don't want to miss out! The racing committee and long range planning committee will be holding meetings this month to chart out our summer sailing events, socials, and racing schedule. We would love to hear your ideas so be sure to check the events section for dates and don't miss out!

## WVSC has a Facebook Group!

For members with facebook accounts the walnut valley sailing club now has its own facebook group. This is a private group open to club members and select prospective members only. It will be a great place to share photos, sea stories, or tips and tricks with your fellow sailors. Follow the link below to join!

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1AmdyMqtPV/>



## Dry Storage

Shiver me tumbleweeds sailors! Our dry storage committee has been hard at work removing brush and debris from the boatyard. There are plans in the works to spread new gravel this season. If you have a boat or trailer in the yard please ensure that the tires are in good condition and the trailer is able to be moved to allow the spreading of new gravel. If you need assistance getting your trailer mobile please contact the dry storage committee.

## Out On The Race Course (about the cover photo)

The wind howls on a moonless winter night as the waves crash upon the shore, breakers thunder onto a distant shoal sending geysers of spray and foam into the air. In a dimly lit tavern overlooking the shore men huddle around the fire seeking shelter from the tempest raging outside. Suddenly the door bursts open and a man rushes in followed by a blast of wind and rain "ship on the rocks!" he bellows pointing towards the shoal. The men gathered in the tavern spring into action, donning oilskins and rushing for the docks. Sails are hoisted and lines cast off, men strain their eyes against the darkness and the stinging spray looking for the silhouette of a 2 masted brig foundering somewhere in the darkness ahead. Like men possessed they challenge the scream of the wind and roar of the sea sailing like lives depend on it, and they do, their lives. These men are not rescuers going to the aid of their fellow sailors, they are buccaneers, pirates, and scavengers seeking a prize. The brig and her cargo lying just ahead in the darkness, half sunk and back broken will belong to the first crew to reach her.

It is in the spirit of these pirate voyages the "Wreckers Races" of Key West are held today. Our own Cindy Hoedel took part in one last month, sailing aboard the schooner America 2 and snapped this month's cover photo at the starting gun. The race between sand key lighthouse and sand key reef takes approximately 3 hours and thanks to anti-piracy laws the prize is bragging rights and a cup of good dark rum at the schooner wharf bar. And yes America 2 won, thanks to the excellent racing tactics of one of our own.



# Bubbles on B Dock!

Our Harbor committee has been hard at work installing bubblers on the east end of B dock! This will prevent damage to the docks caused by wind and current pushing ice against the floats and supporting structure. The bubblers also ensure we will have an ice free swimming hole for our polar bear plunge on February 29<sup>th</sup>, so come on out! Kevin, Stuart, and Troy will be showing the rest of us how its done!



## **Upcoming Events!**

**Racing season planning meeting** 02/07/2026, 3:00PM

Pizza hut, Andover Ks

**Sailing and Socials planning meeting** 02/28/2026

El Dorado Civic Center  
Exact time to be announced via text / email  
pot luck lunch

## **SOME COMMENTS ON RACING**

A multi part series by Dana Herring

It's cold out today, too cold to be working out on the boat, so I'll entertain myself by talking about sailing instead.

I'll start out by saying I don't usually win races so take these comments in that light. But I've been doing some reading and noticing things which may be of interest to others. So with that introduction, here we go.

Our races usually last about 30 minutes for the winning boat. I will assume, for this discussion, that their average speed is 5 knots. So, in 30 minutes they will go 2.5 miles or about 15,000 feet. If you or I were to sail only 0.1 kt slower (4.9 kt) we would finish the race 37 seconds behind the winner, or about 300 feet behind. So, to be the winner you only need to go 0.1 knot faster or save 37 seconds on course changes.

Making faster tacks, etc. is where practice comes in. There are techniques which help but the idea is to keep the boat pulling forward through the turn. Don't just dump the sails, turn the boat, and then reset the sails. The one ton boat will come to a stop and take a long time getting back up to speed. I know this because that is usually what I do and I watch the other boats sail away while I'm sitting there.

Making up the extra 0.1 kt in speed is what I'll address next. Here I'll draw from the aerodynamics of airplanes. It's all the same physics so it is okay to do.

A sail is an airfoil like a wing. The force it produces is a function of only a few things. These are:

1. Area (S)
2. Angle of attack (AOA)
3. Airfoil shape; Depth of camber (t/c) and position of maximum depth (%C)
4. Wind speed over sail ( $V^2$ )

Force =  $K V^2 S$ ,

where K represents some constants the most important of which is the result of the airfoil shape and AOA.

The wind speed is squared making this the dominating factor. If you can go just a little faster the power of the sail increases by the square. That's one reason that slowing down in the turns really kills you. This is also especially true in light winds. If the wind is only 4 knots and you can go one knot faster than the next guy, the power of your sails is  $5^2/4^2$  or 1.56 times greater than his. At 10 kt a 1 kt increase in speed provides only an increase in power of 1.21 times. Here we're talking wind speed over the sail. The sail area is set by your boat so not much you can do about that except keep as much sail exposed to the wind as you can. Whisker poles can help with that. I might do another article on how to set a pole when solo.

The next most important thing to go fast is the angle of attack (AOA) of the sail. The AOA is the angle the relative wind makes with the chord of the sail. The chord is a line from the luff of the sail to the leech parallel to the streamline. The AOA for maximum lift is around 16 degrees. For high speed the AOA is somewhat lower, we'll use 8 degrees for this discussion. The effect of AOA on lift of the sail is linear meaning if you double the AOA you will double the lift. This holds until you stall the sail which will happen just over 16 degrees. Stalling the sail means the airflow can't turn the corner and separates. That shows up in the sail by the tell tales near the luff fluttering up on the leeward side. At that point the power falls off very rapidly.

The final item, the sail shape is less important but can still be significant. It's these finer points that probably separate the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places. Deeper sails, more camber, will produce more power. Less camber, flatter sails, have less drag and allow for higher speeds. Placing the location of maximum depth near the luff creates more power. Placing the maximum depth near the 50% point allows for higher speed.

Another point of sail airfoil shape that is often overlooked is the shape of the leech. The force on the sail cloth is normal to the surface. If the sail leech curves back into the wind such that it is facing towards the stern of the boat, it will be actually pulling the boat back not forwards. So, viewed from behind the boat you should not see any of the leeward side of the sail.

That's probably enough for one effort. As I said I'm not usually a winner which shows how much experience matters. This is because all of these factors I mentioned are very sensitive. Just one degree in AOA can make all the difference in getting that extra tenth of a knot, not to mention making smooth turns and saving time.

Maybe in another article I might discuss how to achieve these sail shapes. That's a real art. I hope to see you out there this year and see if I can make this work.



*"Oh wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"*

*- Percy Shelley*

# Club Contact Information

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# Committees

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Liaison</u>	<u>Chair</u>
<b>Long Range Planning</b>	Bill Allman	Blaine Van Dam
<b>Powerboats</b>	Blaine Van Dam	Bart Peace
<b>Harbor</b>	Mike Reynolds	Charlie Volk
<b>Activity Center</b>	Blaine Van Dam	Troy Oberly
<b>Membership</b>	Brenda Welch	Kate Brammer
<b>Sail Training</b>	Bill Allman	Stuart Funk
<b>Archivist</b>	Melissa Funk	Melissa Funk
<b>Public Relations</b>	Chris Duncan	Charlie Volk
<b>Finance</b>	Brenda Welch	Greg Rincker
<b>Dry Storage</b>	Troy Oberly	Stuart Funk
<b>Buildings &amp; Grounds</b>	Troy Oberly	Mike Shepperd
<b>Calling/texting</b>	Chris Duncan	Julie Barth
<b>Racing Activities</b>	Blaine Van Dam	Blaine Van Dam
<b>Socials</b>	Paul Schye	Julie Barth
<b>Government Relations</b>	Robert Fusco	Gene Nold
<b>Security</b>	Mike Shepperd	Mike Shepperd
<b>Sailing Activities</b>	Blaine Van Dam	Troy Oberly

# BOATS AND GEAR FOR SAIL

**It's official. We reciprocate with the Ninnescah Yacht Club at Cheney**

List your boat or sailing gear here!

contact: [rcpilotcd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rcpilotcd@sbcglobal.net) for the WVSC or Angela: [editor@ninnescah.org](mailto:editor@ninnescah.org) for the NSA to place your free ad:



## **Clipper Marine Corp 26**

with trailer Main plus CDI FF2 roller furling, Nissan NSF4A2 outboard, 4-stroke, 4 HP, jib, new running rigging, GPS, depth finder, anchors, cushion covers replaced in 2020 - currently in dry storage at WVSC. \$3500

Billy Nicholson 316-816-5730

