

# The Bullshiplog

Newsletter of the Rockford Yacht Club

August 2009

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Meeting Location: Harlem Township Hall  
819 Melbourne Ave.  
Machesney Park, IL



## No August Meeting at the Township Hall



## The Annual RYC Summer Picnic

Sat. August 22, Noon until...

Rock Cut State Park, Bay View Picnic Shelter

Bring a dish to pass and dinnerware. RYC will provide pre-cooked chicken, and lemonade.

Bring a lawn chair, your dog, your kids, your sailboat or other watercraft.

Sailors might want to get set up and sailing by 10:00 to get a few laps in before eating begins. Those who want rides can arrive early and see who is about to go out or wait until after eating to go out for a sail.

## Air Show Party Aug 23, 10 - 5



Allen & Ruth Penticoff will once again offer the use of their front lawn to those who want to watch the Rockford Airfest show. Officially, the show runs from 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., so come when it suits you. Bring a chair, snacks and beverage and relax and watch the planes go by.

Address: 6302 11th Street, New Milford  
Call for directions if needed: 815-985-1108

## Commodore's Corner



Hi fellow sailors. If you missed the last RYC meeting, we had a great time checking out member's boats at our Show and Tell/swap meet. It was like a mini boat show! Please join us at our next event, the annual picnic at Rock Cut Park (Details elsewhere in the newsletter).

I would like to personally invite all the people who attended A Taste of Sail '09. There will be good food and camaraderie. Some members will bring their small boats so you may get another try out on the water.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Commodore Ruth

## Dan and Allen's Excellent Adventure By Allen Penticoff

Dan Medler and I took my MacGregor 26, *Thebote*, to Lake Winnebago at Oshkosh, Wisconsin for three days of sailing and airplane watching July 24th through the 26th. We'd done a similar sail/fly trip last year and enjoyed both quite a lot. This year was similar.

We towed *Thebote* to the Pioneer Inn Marina at Oshkosh late on Thursday night, camping in the parking lot upon arrival, ready to set up the next morning. The Pioneer Inn is gone, but the partially full marina remains. Nothing like its glory days, but still it has an excellent boat ramp and slips. The restroom and showers have been remodeled, making the stay somewhat nicer than past experiences. Launching costs \$10 with free long term parking. A slip is \$1 per foot with the launch fee waived. >>>

(photos with PDF version)

Excellent Adventure - from page one

I try to get a slip as far out as I can, to be away from the nearby noisy railroad track, and pointing into the wind if possible. As it turned out, I switched slips for wind reasons the second night as they had not rented it to anyone else - and the first one was huge - for a sixty-foot boat. Dan sleeps in his truck to spare me from his famous snoring.

The forecast for the whole weekend included showers and storms in the prognosis, and we did get them, but they never happened in a serious way while we were out in the boat. In some cases we were able to sail a different direction to avoid the showers as they were scattered in nature. After having breakfast at a family diner, American Table, in downtown Oshkosh (and did so each morning), we came back to the marina, set up and went sailing.

Our first target after sailing down the western shoreline a bit was the harbor at Calumet. I dug out the old laminated chart I've had for twenty years and put the compass on so we could steer a course. We had a nice reaching sail towards a tall light under the wind turbine covered hills on the far side, about ten miles distant. But it was not Calumet Harbor, it was the Fisherman's Club tiny harbor, with a very narrow entrance through a stone breakwall, but a nice dock to tie up to and a couple of nice boat ramps. We asked where Calumet was, since this obviously was not it. Four miles north. Quite a miss.

We used their restroom, then went for a walk along the shoreline cottages since we were there. It has been many years since I last sailed to Calumet Harbor. We had a nice fast wing-on-wing run up the shoreline, then spying the tall tower at the harbor entrance, I recalled the place. There is a channel to follow in, then a wide area of a creek serves as the harbor with a few dozen boats permanently moored there. A nice ramp and campground are found there too. We tied up to the steel wall and went over to the restaurant, which, alas, was not open for lunch. So another walking tour before returning to just relax on *Thebote* and watch other boats come in a tie up to the long wall too.

The sail back to Oshkosh got to be quite exciting. Leaving Calumet Harbor we could see whitecaps on the vast lake. *Thebote* usually handles whitecaps well enough under genoa alone, so that is all we set. Soon it was apparent that the genoa was too much sail, but having gone a mile or two from the harbor and not being keen on doing a sail swap in the building waves, we stuck with the genoa all the way across. Also, the mast-top wind indicator had disappeared -???! We had true 2 - 3 foot waves and gusts of winds well into the 30s. Some sort of frontal passage seemed to be taking place. Dan stayed at the tiller the whole time wrestling against repeated roll offs and round ups. I was surprised that we rounded up so often with the genoa. I figured what was happening in this beam sea, was that as we rolled off down a big wave, the rudder was not getting enough flow to hold us steady, then the wind and wave pushed on all that plastic and rounded us up. Pointing up a wave, we regained control. This happened a lot and Dan got quite a work out... but it was fun. In hindsight - sailing with just the working jib is what was called for on this crossing. Although there was plenty of day left, once we crossed, we decided we'd had enough sailing for one day and went to hang out at the airport and watch airplanes arrive for the biggest airshow event on Earth.

The other two days were less dramatic. Still lots of wind, but we'd wised up and used the reefed main and working jib, especially after the leech of the genoa tore and we had to go buy clear duct tape to effect a repair. With storm threats, we chose not to cross the lake again either. Both days we spent time at the "party cove" - but there were fewer than normal boats there (and fewer bikini clad girls) because the temps were only in the 70s. Saturday I'd sailed across the mouth of the Fox River and managed to drag the daggerboard through some rocks. I thought we were far enough out, but 200 yards from shore it was still only 4 feet deep. A dive with mask at the party cove found the board had significant damage, so we only used half of it for the rest of the weekend. Not the first time I've had to replace our "depth finder."

A funny moment came at the end when we were de-rigging in the face of an approaching thunderstorm. With the mast down, but not secured, the rain was coming. I scrambled to get into the marina office, but it was closed (at 5:00 on a Sunday!). Quickly I unlocked the men's room door since we had not been able to turn in our keys. I grabbed a deck chair on the way in as it looked like it might be a wait. Before long it poured down, and five guys and one woman were seeking shelter in the men's restroom. The door was held open by a rope, so we could peer out and watch people scampering in the rain. It was over in about twenty minutes and we got back to tying up the rigging before the next storm came along. Headed back to the airport on the way home to watch the goings on a bit more too.

Lake Winnebago is a great sail. Ten miles wide, thirty miles long, twenty feet deep - makes for long reaches with several nice destinations. Sailing during the EAA convention is just icing on the cake for us. Try it sometime. - Allen

At the July meeting boat show, Scott Foster brought one of his two Hobie "Mirage" pedal powered kayaks - including the sail. It is propelled by two fish-fins that swing in 180 arcs below the hull, yet fold flat against the bottom for beaching or shallow water. When straight down they form sort of a "keel." Paddling simultaneously with the pedal action can make them go quite fast.



Dan Medler waiting with *Thebote* at the dock at the *Fisherman's Club* harbor on the east shore of Lake Winnebago. He's sitting on a wall, the dock is below, out of sight. The harbor is quite small, only about twice what you see here in the photo. I would not try to enter with a draft deeper than 3 feet. Good place to wait out a storm, but no facilities for the public other than the ramps, parking and restrooms. Their "lighthouse" is what lead us astray - visible from quite a way out.

**Party Cove** on Lake Winnebago is a few miles south of the Oshkosh downtown waterfront. Just the other side of the narrow peninsula is the bay where the EAA seaplane base is located. Coast Guard or Sheriff's boats will chase you out, but if you anchor off to the side you can still catch plenty of seaplane takeoffs and landing action. At right is the "party barge." Lots of loud island tunes issued forth from beneath its thatched top. With about 20 people aboard on the bow, we could only assume it had been run aground. It is a nice shallow sandy area that is popular with area boaters. They often form very large raft-ups in waist deep water.

