

2018: Year in Review



ALAMEDA COMMUNITY SAILING CENTER

As President of ACSC I would like to take a few moments to share with you what we have accomplished in the last year, and to reflect on our very beginnings 6 short (and long) years ago.

Our first sailing classes were in the summer of 2013. Ballena Isle Marina, still one of our strong supporters, donated dock and slip space for our sail and safety boat fleet. Founding board member Kevin Berry took our “land sailer” to parks in Alameda to attract kids (and their parents) to discuss the opportunity for sailing over the coming summer. Our focus would be fun on (and in!) the water rather than competition. We would provide the boats, sails, wet suits and life jackets. That first summer we had 75 youth sailing, nearly all of them for the very first time. As their skills increased, we allowed the kids to sail out from behind the breakwater at Ballena Isle. And there, across open water, sat San Francisco. No boundaries, no fences, no signs, nothing (except our instructors) to prevent them for striking out on a large scale adventure. That first view was a big lesson: This playground they are sailing on is very nearly limitless, until you get to Japan or China. But a good sailing adventure is one you come home from. Not in a helicopter. Our job is to provide these kids with the beginning of an education to develop the sea-sense, weather-sense and common-sense to safely take on a lifetime of ever-increasing adventures. To teach them about situational awareness.

We are still working on developing and refining the fundamentals from that very beginning. Be sure the kids have fun, learn about the water, learn to treat the equipment and each other with respect. We are aware that the learning is also a top to bottom process. Everybody is learning from the first-time kids to our Counselors in Training, to our instructors, our Program Director, and our entire Board of Directors. Be open-minded and be ready to grow!

How have we grown over the last year?

People in management positions

We added one of the premier national experts in community sailing to our board, Morgan Collins. Morgan has volunteered on a national level to lead community sailing in all areas, from product development and marketing, to non-profit governance and skills training in both safety boats and sailboats.

Emily Zugnoni, a long time ACSC instructor, was selected as our new program director, bringing wisdom about humans (she has a psychology degree), tons of empathy and compassion for kids, a great ability to read people and determine how to get the most from them, including a logistical mind that keeps things ordered in our program, and an indefatigable work ethic. She has multiple instructor certifications as well as a US Coast Guard License.

Broadening of classes offered

- After watching the interaction between boys and girls at this young age, we decided to try a ‘girls only’ summer camp. It filled up almost immediately. We will be doing this again!
- We held several STEM camps which were quite successful. Lots of science, like calculating where the waterline will be on a floating cardboard boat when the student is sitting in it.
- We started an afterschool sailing “club” which is open to all who have completed our classes. We had quite a few kids sign up for this. Kids are encouraged to bring a friend or neighbor.
- Adult “learn to sail” and family classes are drawing a large enough group that we will be expanding these classes in 2019.

Participation: Over the course of the year we had 296 registrations covering our various youth classes, after school sailing club, and adult/family programs.

Scholarships offered: We gave out nearly \$22,000 in full and partial scholarships. We are particularly proud of this because we can share the joys of sailing with youth who have fewer resources, and try to change the stereotype that ‘yachting is for the wealthy.’ For 2019 we will endeavor to increase funding for our scholarship program and look to further diversify our youth.

Boats added: We added 3 more CFJ's so we now have 9 of these great sloop-rigged dinghies. We also added a Topaz Omega, somewhat larger at 15.5 feet long, and capable of carrying up to 7 (smallish) crew. At the end of the year we were able to add another 13 foot Boston Whaler to our safety boat fleet.

Change ground cover: This year we were able to buy used artificial turf, complete with yard line markers and numbers, and cover our entire site, changing it from blue (and weeds) to green, and making an excellent surface for cartwheels and summersaults.

Increase in Dry Storage Membership: In an effort to develop an ongoing funding stream, we have a program called Dry Storage Membership by which people can store dinghies in our yard. We now have 25 Dry Storage Members helping to keep the price of our programs as low as possible.

After 6 years of development, our armada consists of the following:

Sailing (for training program)	Safety/power boats
24 SailCubes / JY Trainers	2 8' Caribe RIB's
9 CFJ's	3 13' Boston Whalers
4 Capri 14.2's	2 16.5' Zodiac 500 RIBs
3 Lasers	1 21' Zodiac 650 RIB
2 Bytes	
1 Topaz Omega	
43 total sail boats	8 total safety boats

And as always, we provide wet suits and life jackets for all our youth participants.

What are our current limitations?

Even though we expanded our site (by 130%!) a year and a half ago, we are already feeling the pinch of needing more space. We will be holding more classes this summer than ever before, and we need another "class room." We will likely be sawing up some of our oldest boats to make a little more space. Anybody out there want to buy an 8 foot long JY Trainer cheap?

And our future?

Controlled growth is always front and center in the view of the Board. To add more students, we also need to add more sail boats, wet suits, and lifejackets. But we also need to add more safety boats to watch over everyone. Couple this with the knowledge that during any given week, some percentage of the motor boats will not be operational, and it means we need to add even more safety boats! And we need more qualified instructors. We have a program which encourages our teens to consider becoming CIT's (Counselor in Training), get credentialed with USSailing, and then become instructors with us. It is a good plan, but it will take some time.

There is a possibility that we may be able to move to Seaplane Lagoon. This will be a long and circuitous process involving permits from government agencies and getting support from the City of Alameda. If we can get past all that, great things can happen. The water depth in the lagoon is much deeper than at our current site, so launching and sailing at all tides will be possible. And if we can move to Seaplane Lagoon, the greater Bay Area community will benefit because Alameda Community Sailing Center will be there to provide boats and lessons to the public, and everyone can have low cost access to San Francisco Bay waters. Even people who choose not to go out on the water will have an enhanced experience provided by the view of the boats and sails and kids moving across the lagoon.

Thank you all so very much for what you have helped to make possible. We feel fortunate that through broad support, ACSC has developed into a community asset that is bringing more people out onto the water each year.

Kame Richards
President, Alameda Community Sailing Center
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