

APRIL 2024

SEASON OPENERS

There's no denying that spring is coming early this year: daffodils are blooming, trees are budding, the robins are back—and so is Fleet 21 with a spring lineup you won't want to miss.

Our season opener is Saturday, April 13 at Corinthian Yacht Club, Montrose Harbor from 6 – 9 pm

After the popularity of last year's Fleet kickoff event, we're planning another social gathering at Corinthian Yacht Club. The entertainer this year is Lee Murdock, who's well known in the Chicago area for his maritime concerts. <https://leemurdock.com> Lee's songs summon the listener to take a front-row seat, to look through the eyes and into the hearts of individuals who have shaped our heritage on and around the Great Lakes including ships that have gone down and ships that have come in.

A buffet dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Lee Murdock will perform at 8 p.m. Cost is \$35. A cash bar will be available. There is free parking adjacent to the club.

Fleet members are welcome to bring appetizers or a dessert to share.

Please RSVP to Laura Pohl, Pohland57@aol.com by Monday, April 8. You can pay at the door by cash, check or Zelle® (Catalina Fleet 21 Chicago Region, capt.erik.hillenmeyer@gmail.com).

Special thanks to Fleet member Fred Swastek, Corinthian Yacht Club is welcoming us to their facility once again.

Our book club is back in session too! Please join us for our first Fleet 21 Book Club meeting of 2024! We'll meet on April 4th at 7:00 at the home of April Hansen, 7414 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago or via Zoom. The selection is *Great Circle*, by Sam Llewellyn. The Great Circle is a yacht race. The instructions are simple: sail round the world, leaving the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn to port. Completing the race is not so simple. And winning it is very, very hard – not only because of the weather, but because there are a lot of people sailing a lot of boats, and most of these people have to win battles with their personal demons before they can even think about winning races....

Improve your sailing by attending our Sail Trim Seminar on Thursday, May 16 at 7pm.

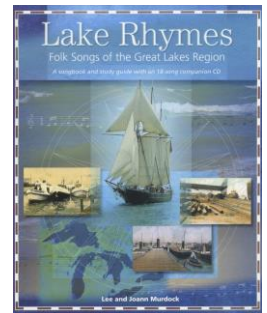
Todd Basch of Quantum Sails Chicago will offer tips and advice. Mark your calendar for Thursday, May

16 at 7 p.m. The location in the Chicago area is yet to be determined, but sail trim is something best discussed in-person rather than Zoom.

Our traditional launch party (also known as our Margarita Party) is June 1 in Michigan City. Danita's yummy taco salads are also on the menu. More details in the May Fleet Sheet, but mark your calendar now.

Also in the line-up later in the season is a Sailing Flotilla on August 3 in Michigan City and a Wisconsin Shore Cruise August 10-20. More details about these future events are in this newsletter.

Don't strike out! Hit a home run and score with this season's Fleet events.



Book Club

April 4

7pm

In person /Zoom

Kick-Off Event

April 13

Corinthian Yacht Club

Sail Trim Seminar

May 16

7pm

Location TBD

Launch Party

June 1

Michigan City

Sailing Flotilla

August 3

Michigan City

Wisconsin Shore Cruise

August 10 - 20

COMMODORE		
Pete Pohl		630-319-3207
VICE COMMODORE		
Cat Hillenmeyer		630-915-8163
TREASURER		
Erik Hillenmeyer		630-915-8163
SECRETARY		
Maria Rayson		815-735-9266
PAST COMMODORE		
Harold Hansen		773-480-7412
HARBOR CAPTAINS		
Belmont	Cat Hillenmeyer	630-915-8163
Burnham	Maria Rayson	815-735-9266
DuSable		open
Hammond	Pat Reynolds	773-972-2177
Jackson Park		open
Kenosha	Deborah Ruxton	630-279-4533
Michigan City	Leo Beer	708-304-6771
Monroe	Cathy Bredlau	708-807-2165
Montrose	Fred Swastek	773-578-6852
Waukegan		open
Wilmette	Jim Graham	847-477-1491
DIRECTORY		
Bill Thompson		630-373-3594
MEMBERSHIP		
April Hansen		319-321-9751
OUTINGS		
PROGRAMS		
Laura Pohl		630-682-3204
RIGGING & EQUIPMENT		
Captain Leo Beer		708-204-6771
Michael Reed		773-480-7412
PUBLICITY		
Fleet Sheet	Carolyn DeAre	630-842-8545
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MARINER'S FUND		
Ted Kuenzli		773-517-1576
WEB SITE		
Brett Boas		812-343-7389
CYA REPRESENTATIVE		
James Graham		847-477-1491
BANQUET		
PHOTOGRAPHER		
Ed Kita		847-226-5286

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMODORE

As I write this, we're still many weeks away from taking winter covers off our boats. But as commodore, my thoughts, as well as those of the Board, have already gone far into the sailing season as we plan ahead.



Past Commodore Harold Hansen would often reiterate, "This is your club," meaning we're open to ideas, tell us what you want to do, be involved. The 50-year success of Fleet 21 is due to so many members volunteering their time, talents and ideas. This is not a column for accolades, and the following list is certainly not exhaustive, but rather, it gives examples of what members do and have done for the good of the Fleet:

- Carolyn DeAre and Bill Thompson dedicate themselves to producing the Fleet Sheet and the Membership Directory
- Leo Beer wants a group day sail, so he has voluntarily organized another flotilla out of Michigan City, the second such event and a source of new members
- Fred Swastek graciously hosts and bartends events for us at Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club
- Stones and DeAres maintain the tradition of season-opening Margaritas and taco salads
- Cat and Erik Hillenmeyer helped us novice cruisers develop an itinerary for last year's Fleet shore cruise
- Danita Stone and Kelly Boas organize (herd) Tour da Boat
- Randy Carrie took on the shopping, chopping and cooking for Omelets-in-a-Bag over Labor Day weekend
- Mary Beth Cybul designed the 50th Anniversary logo
- Cathy and Patrick Bredlau hosted a tour and meeting at Columbia Yacht Club
- Madalyn Duerr managed the Awards Banquet for years
- Deborah and Brian Ruxton have hosted sail-ins to Kenosha
- Ted Kuenzli finds worthy causes for Mariner's Fund donations
- Jim Graham represents the Fleet at Chicago Yachting Association meetings
- April Hansen took over membership from Pat Shereyk who handled it for many years

Former members Larry and Pat Meekma used to do a wonderful shrimp boil in Hammond that everyone loved. It would be great for us to do it again.

Like I said, this not a complete list and thank you to all who serve and have served. The point is, it takes a lot of hands to maintain and propel an organization like ours. And there's always room and need for more help and ideas.

Well, I better go online now and spend money on things for *CopyCat*. That winter cover will be off in no time.

Commodore Pete
Pete Pohl
Commodore
Catalina Fleet 21

CYA

Reported by James Graham

Some highlights from the February 29th monthly meeting of the Chicago Yachting Association, hosted by the Chicago Yacht Club:

- John Crowley of Crowley Yacht Yard reports that Michigan City will be losing the services of a Coast Guard vessel that had previously patrolled that area.
- We can again expect some high traffic events this summer, including
 - Nascar Chicago, July 6-7;
 - Chicago Air & Water Show, Aug. 10-11;
 - Democratic National Convention at the United Center, Aug. 19-22, which will create major security and logistical issues throughout the area, what with motorcades and such.
- There was much discussion about Westrec, the company that manages Chicago's harbors. Previously they communicated well with the Chicago Yachting Association, but their representative did not attend this meeting. Some concern was expressed about Westrec's reported involvement in an effort to revive Venetian Night. A date of July 20th for that event is being discussed, but many association members expressed a desire to know details because this was previously a major Chicago event that the city cancelled some years ago. CYA and the Chicago Yacht Club led this event in the past.
- The CYA's support of the National Boating Federation was called into question. It was generally felt that the association was getting little of value from its affiliation and should withdraw after this year. In the meantime, Sonny Lisowski, CYA's representative with the federation, plans to attend an upcoming meeting, and that may be the last.
- Chicago's police marine units did not send a representative, as they have for some past meetings.

John Crowley provided updates on a few other things:

- Plans are afoot for a major reconstruction of the O'Brien Lock and Dam on the Calumet River in 2026. This would divert shipping traffic to other waterways and could have a significant impact on navigation in the area.
- Yachtapolooza is March 23. I believe John said he would be offering discounted foul weather gear beginning at noon Friday, March 22, but call and confirm if you plan to visit for that reason.
- Fr. Michael Enright, a sailor and Catholic priest, has been appointed chaplain for Chicago Ports.

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FLEET 21 SOUTH

Some 30 Fleet members and assorted friends got together at Ponce DeLeon Park in Punta Gorda, Florida for a picnic. While not an official group, it's always a good time to rehash past Fleet adventures. The evening included live music and piping down the sun with an Italian bagpiper! If you're ever in the Punta Gorda/Fort Myers/Venice area, let us know. You never know when we'll be getting together! (Photos by Kathy Cusimano)



RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT

Spring Battery Commissioning

It's that time of year to give our boats some lovin' and get them out sailing again. One sure way to make sure your boat returns that lovin' feeling is to complete some basic maintenance protocol. Let's talk about those gems tucked away in a hidden compartment somewhere that so many sailors tend to ignore till it's too late... the batteries.

If you're one of those that buy into the 'old wives' tale of removing the batteries from the boat to bring home to keep cozy warm over the winter or disconnect the cables, that's your prerogative. If it makes you feel assured, disconnect the negative battery cables. All that is really needed, is to make sure that the batteries are topped off with distilled water, completely charged and then turn the battery disconnect to the off position for the winter. Water freezes in a discharged battery, sulfuric acid in a fully charged battery does not. As long as nothing is connected live to the batteries except for the bilge pump and the tops of the batteries are nice and clean as to not allow a pathway for any errant electrons to make their way from the positive to the negative posts, a good battery should be ready to work for you come springtime. A discharged battery will freeze and not be any good for work come springtime, but the cold is actually better for your battery as long as it's kept charged.

One of the first things on the spring commissioning list should be to check the acid level in each cell. Top off if necessary (take note of low cells), turn on the disconnect switch then allow the batteries to be fully charged before turning on any circuits. Allow the batteries to settle and cool, then conduct a specific gravity test on each battery cell. Battery hydrometers can be purchased on Amazon for \$10. Worth every cent for piece of mind to detect a weak cell and let you know if your battery is failing. Follow the directions on the hydrometer and don't ignore a bad cell that may leave you stranded with a no start or no refrigeration. Warm beer upsets me!

The liquid in a battery goes in as distilled water but becomes sulfuric acid as it's charged. Make sure to wear rubber gloves and eye protection when working with batteries.

Safe sailing,

Captain Leo Beer S/V *High Life*

BoatUS DISCOUNTS

Once again, BoatUS is offering a discount to Fleet 21 members when you use this Cooperating Group Accord #GA82275S. 10% off on unlimited towing memberships and great deals on insurance. If you need additional info, contact BoatUS directly at partner@boatus.com

HARBOR NEWS

According to newspaper reports, the U.S. Coast Guard plans to convert its station at Michigan City into a part-time facility before this boating season, and local officials have launched a grassroots effort to have the decision reversed at the federal level.

Mayor Duane Parry said a coast guard boat in Michigan City can reach a boater or swimmer in distress within minutes, but the wait for a vessel from the next closest location would be much longer.

“That’s a matter of life and death,” he said.

Coast guard stations at other select locations also face a similar downsizing on their time clocks.

Phil Gurtler, a public affairs officer for the Great Lakes at the coast guard station in Cleveland, said a manpower shortage nationwide forced the decision to restore staffing and other resources to levels they should be in areas where service calls are highest.

Right now, Gurtler said, the plan for Michigan City is to fully staff and equip the coast guard station on weekends during the summer when use of Lake Michigan is greatest.

He said whether it would be open from Friday through Sunday or strictly two days on weekends has not been decided.

Currently, the facility is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week year round. Gurtler said the Michigan City station averages about 40 search and rescue calls a year.

He said either the coast guard location at Calumet Harbor near Chicago or the one at St. Joseph will respond to service calls when the Michigan City station is not open.

Whichever site is closest to the emergency will provide the response.

MEMBERSHIP

Have you renewed your Fleet membership? It's due today! In order to get the Fleet directory out in a timely fashion, we need your updated information by April 15. New this year is a payment by credit card or Zelle option. You may also contribute to the Mariner's Fund with a separate check.

MARINER'S FUND

Do you know of a group or project that promotes sailing that could use a monetary donation? The Mariner's Fund was established for that purpose. Send your suggestions to Ted Kuenzli, kuenzli@sbcglobal.net.

SAILING FLOTILLA

Saturday, August 3

We're hosting a group sail out of Washington Park Marina, Michigan City. This will be a casual day cruise—not a race—to wherever the wind blows us and back to the marina again that afternoon for stories, cocktails and pizza party. Cash drawing and 50/50 raffle afterwards on the dock. BYO Booze and optional BYO Appetizers.

We encourage all boats to sail together as a group to promote camaraderie. This will also make for great photo ops. Take lots of pictures of your ship and of others, then share them with everyone on our Facebook group "Catalina Fleet 21 Chicago Region."

Skipper's meeting and event registration 9:00 a.m. at slip 8068 (800 dock). Shoving off the docks at 10:00 a.m. and returning to MC marina around 3:00 p.m.

For more information contact Leo Beer 708-204-6771 www.HighLifeSailing@Yahoo.com

Facebook group "Catalina Fleet 21 Chicago Region"

For 800 dock slip reservations, call the Washington Park Marina 219-872-1712

****Harbor Captains: Consider planning a similar event for your harbor inviting all the Catalina boats**

LET'S GO CRUISING!

Following a successful Michigan cruise last year, several Fleet members met to develop an itinerary for a Wisconsin shore cruise for August 2024. Everyone is invited to join us for all or a part of the cruise. Please note that if you need a slip in Chicago during Air and Water Show, the Dockwa system opens on May 1. We're hoping that boats needing slips just for Sunday night will be able to find availability.

Please let Laura Pohl know if you're interested in the cruise and we'll add names to future planning meetings on Zoom.

Summer 2024 Wisconsin Cruise

Saturday-Sunday, Aug 10-11, Chicago Air and Water Show

Monday, Aug. 12, leave Chicago, sail to North Point Marina

Tuesday, Aug. 13, Racine

Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 14-15, Milwaukee Yacht Club

Attend <https://irishfest.com>

Friday and Saturday, Aug. 16-17, Port Washington (Setting up transportation to visit Cedarburg and possibly Kohler Design Center)

Sunday, Aug. 18, Milwaukee

Monday, Aug 19, Kenosha

Tuesday, Aug. 20, back to Chicago or lake crossing to Michigan City if weather permits

BUY/TRADE/SELL

Fleet members may list items they want to buy, sell or trade in this column. Listings are free and run for three issues of this newsletter. Send submissions to the Fleet Sheet editor at deare30@sbcglobal.net



*"But tonight will be romantic, dear.
We'll drink wine while you watch me
work on my boat."*

Catalina Fleet 21

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FIRST CLASS