



# Soundings

Newsletter of the South Port Sailing Club

March 2006

## Einstein the Sailor, by Jamie Halpin

Have you ever had your beautiful summer day of gliding silently through the waves turn into a sweat drenched, knuckled skinning, day of hell in your engine compartment? It's at times like that when you wonder if this sailing stuff is a smart thing to do. Well, Einstein thought so!

2005 was the International Year of Physics, in honour of the centennial of Einstein's Miracle Year. In 1905, he published his doctoral dissertation and four groundbreaking scientific papers: The Photoelectric Effect, Brownian Motion, Special Relativity, and the famous  $E = mc^2$ . Because of this, I made it a point throughout 2005 to learn a little bit more about the 20th century's most famous physicist. In so doing, I made a fascinating discovery: Einstein was a sailor!

In 1896, Einstein moved to Switzerland and began studying at Zurich polytechnic. The 18 year old soon learned to sail and began borrowing his landlady's boat for excursions on Lake Zurich. His frequent sailing companion was Fraülein Markwalder, the daughter of his landlady. Markwalder recalled that whenever she sailed with Einstein it seemed that the wind would die. He would then lean toward her ever so slowly and... get out his notebook to begin scribbling physics theories. As soon as there was a breath of wind, he was ready to start sailing again.

After graduating, Einstein worked in the Swiss patent office. One of the most notable patents he approved was that of the Toblerone bar. He wrote all of his 1905 papers in his spare time.



With the successes of 1905, Einstein moved from university to university until 1914, when he accepted a professorship in Berlin. It was there that he began sailing again, by borrowing boats, on lake Havel. Einstein eventually purchased his own boat. Little is known about it other than it was heavy, had no motor, and sailed poorly in the light air that Einstein sought out as the ultimate challenge to the sailor (and a great excuse to get out his notebook). He would have loved summers on Lake St. Clair!



Rowing the heavy boat back home, when the wind died out completely, became too much of a strain on the heavy-smoking, middle-aged Einstein, and he collapsed of heart failure in 1928. His doctor sent him to a small seaside resort on the Baltic coast north of Hamburg to recover. Worried by Einstein's slow recovery, the doctor began investigating and soon discovered that Einstein was sneaking out onto the Baltic to continue his sailing.

Sailing had grown to be the third passion in his life, behind physics and the violin. His friends knew that he would not stop sailing unless it killed him, so the following year they bought him *Tümmeler* (porpoise). She was a 23-foot custom-built wooden sloop, with a magnificent mahogany cabin that could sleep two and hold many notebooks. She was designed such that Einstein could easily single hand her and had an engine to get him home on those calm evenings. By

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Einstein's request, the engine was hidden beneath the floorboards. He hated those infernal contraptions and didn't want to see it.

Einstein loved what he referred to as his "thick sailing ship" and spent many hours single handing her and pondering the mysteries of the universe. Unfortunately, it wasn't to last long. A year later he was forced to leave Germany to escape the Nazis. He wrote to friends in Germany asking them to save his boat by sailing her to the Netherlands. They were too scared to take action and *Tümmler* was confiscated by the Gestapo in June of 1933. Interestingly, in the Nazi paperwork the boat was transformed into a speedboat and her value was doubled.

In 1934, after establishing his new home in Princeton, Einstein purchased a 17-foot day sailor to sail on Carnegie Lake. He christened her *Tinef*, meaning worthless. The name may have been a statement about how humble she was in comparison to *Tümmler*. This time he refused to have an engine. He went so far as to politely return an outboard that was given to him as a gift.

It was on a 1939 sailing trip to Long Island Sound, that Einstein decided to write his first letter to FDR urging him to start the Manhattan project.

Those who sailed with Einstein aboard *Tinef* said that he sailed as he lived: absentmindedly. His love of light air and disdain for outboards meant that he often had to be towed home. His mast fell down regularly and he frequently ran aground. When lost in conversation, he would forget to keep a lookout for

other boats, but always veered away at the last minute to avoid a collision. He was fearless in rough conditions. In 1944 when he was 65 years of age, Einstein was sailing with three companions on Saranac Lake, in the Adirondacks. When he hit a rock in choppy conditions, the boat quickly filled with water and capsized. Fortunately, the water was warm and a motorboat was nearby. Einstein was trapped beneath the water under the sail, and had his leg tangled in a rope. Without knowing how to swim, he managed to free his leg and claw his way to the surface, where he was rescued. Had he panicked, he undoubtedly would have drowned.

The following summer at Saranac Lake, Einstein heard the radio announcement of the bombing of Hiroshima. He was devastated that his work had been turned into what Oppenheimer called "death, destroyer of worlds." Einstein dedicated the remaining 10 years of his life to campaigning for peace. Too busy and too frail to continue sailing, he beached *Tinef* for good.

So next time your engine acts up and there is barely a breath of wind, forget about the engine, grab a Toblerone and a notebook, and go sailing anyways. That's what Einstein would have done. And if you're becalmed don't be frustrated, the lake is just trying to give you a chance to pull out your notebook and ponder the mysteries of space and time. And besides, the slower you go, the faster time passes.

Photos of *Tümmler* from the magazine "Die Yacht" (The Yacht), nr. 50/1929, as published at: [http://www.einstein-website.de/z\\_biography/tuemmler-e.html](http://www.einstein-website.de/z_biography/tuemmler-e.html)

Photo of *Tinef* from the Princeton University Library as published at: [http://www.einstein-website.de/z\\_biography/tuemmler-e.html](http://www.einstein-website.de/z_biography/tuemmler-e.html)



## Club Roster

Lyn Turner has taken over maintenance of the club roster from Irene East. Thanks to Irene, for having kept all member contact information in line for so many years.

Please let Lyn know if you have any changes to the information printed in the SPSC Membership List. You can reach her at: [turnerlyn@mdirect.net](mailto:turnerlyn@mdirect.net) or 254.9510.

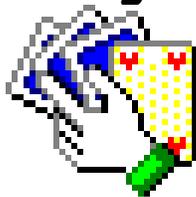
## Cruising Potluck Supper Friday March 24th 7:00 pm

Save the date, and come out to help plan the new season's activities. Everyone is welcome for this social evening. We want to meet new people interested in cruising. Bring a favourite dish (Entree, salad, or dessert) and get into cruising for 2006!

*John Bufton, Cruising Chair*

## April Games Nights

1 & 15 April  
7:30 pm



## Launch Day 6 May



## Mainstays

Next meeting will be on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Come and join us at our annual Spring pot luck supper, starting at 6:30 pm at SPSC. Come and help plan our summer activities. All ladies welcome, old and new members, sailors and non sailors.

## Summer Dockage and Release form must be in by 15 March

## SPSC Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed SPSC survey. You can either return it to the club with the Summer Dockage and Release form, or simply write your answers in an email to [renka@cogeco.ca](mailto:renka@cogeco.ca)

Thanks!

## Soundings

is the newsletter of the  
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Please get your contributions by the 20th of each month to Renka (254.5015; [renka@cogeco.ca](mailto:renka@cogeco.ca))

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# Summary of Membership Meeting, by Jackie Timothy

On Monday 24 February, Commodore John Shaw welcomed the members in attendance and discussed the following :

- Matt Baker is planning Web site Improvements
- Future editions of Soundings to include articles from our members "Why my boat is the best in the world." This will give us a look into the features of the boats in our club.
- The club is looking for a volunteer Safety Captain to review our water safety, club and harbour safety and first aid equipment.

## Property Chair

- Gobie mat repair is being scheduled for this spring from the south end of F dock and west of the service dock. Estimates are being obtained.
- Prior to Launch day repairs to grassy areas & raising some of finger docks is planned
- A sidewalk around the harbour is under discussion from A dock to E dock to the Electrical Panel. The committee plans to use as many volunteers as possible to complete this project with assistance of a contractor to keep costs down. Numerous proposals are being looked at.
- A bar is being considered and under discussion to be erected in the main club house, as a focal point for socializing. The committee will be looking for volunteers with carpentry skills. It is planned as a BYOB style and it was suggested an area to house a beer keg for larger functions would be an asset.
- Removing and replacing some of the old picnic tables is in the works
- 2 weeks after Launch..a clean up party !!

## Harbourmaster

- Carpet has been donated and is stored in the shed for those in need of new carpet for their posts
- Reports indicate the **projected water levels may be up to 8" lower** than launch day last year. The areas have been identified and dredging is being negotiated

## Racing Chair

- Marks are all set and there will be no expense for equipment this season
- The Invitational date is back to a 2-day event, August 12 & 13 th. A long-distance race is planned for

Saturday with 2 races on Sunday. A spaghetti and wine dinner will follow.

- **Pass the dates along to prospective racers to increase the turnout this year.**
- The women's challenge is set for June 24<sup>th</sup>. and one Fun Regatta is being planned
- The committee continues the search for a Fleet Captain to start the 21 races to keep consistency. Further info will follow on this matter

## Cruising Chair

- Ideas include early evening cruises to local restaurants such as The Sandbar, Lily Kazillies and Windsor Yacht Club.
- Joining with Cedar Island and LaSalle Mariners for a mid-July cruise to Pelee Island
- Long cruises to Lake Erie/Lake Huron
- Cruises to North Star, Great Lakes Yacht Club, Harsen's Island, Thames River YC and Pelee Island.

## Membership Chair

- Encourage graduates of the Adult Sailing School to join SPSC
- Any suggestions to add to our Membership, please contact the Committee
- An open house is being discussed to allow people to see what South Port has to offer

## Treasurers Report

- No increase to current charges for launch, haul out, storage or dues
- Estimates are being obtained as more dredging will be needed this year
- Depending on the amount, an assessment may be required to defer costs

## Sailing School

- 61 Applications have been received for the upcoming year
- All boats have been serviced and repaired
- Under consideration is the addition of one, possibly two more instructors as well as the purchase of another 420

## Roster and Archives

- New membership cards and Rosters will be sent out in a separate mailing
- Lyn Turner has taken over the roster and Irene

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East will continue overseeing the archives

- To assist with keeping out records up to date, please send any changes of address, telephone number, or email to Lynn Turner at [turnerlyn@mdirect.net](mailto:turnerlyn@mdirect.net) or Jackie Timothy (mailing) at [robtim@cogeco.ca](mailto:robtim@cogeco.ca)

### Social Committee

- Discussions continue and a policy is being drafted to possibly open the Club to
- Members for small group, non sailing functions. A fee and deposit would be required.
- Sailabration is being moved to the Second Week in June
- Racing Award Flags will be presented at the Harvest Moon Race
- There are plans to hold Final Furl at a different venue this year and it will be a Christmas Party rather than an awards banquet, with an evening of entertainment



Thanks to Derek for arranging the finger food, desserts and refreshments following the meeting!

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## from the Property Committee, from the Harbourmaster, Rene Brown

If you have been to the club lately, I know it's kind of cold this time of year, you may have noticed some progress being made on a couple of projects. Work should start this month on repairs to the gobi mats just west of the service dock and the south end of F dock.

**Need any fire wood?** Three dead ash trees have been removed from the end of the drive way. Some of the wood has been cut up and left just off the driveway for anyone who would like to pick some up.

There are a number of projects on the drawing table for this spring or summer (see pg. 4). We will be looking for volunteers for these projects since we plan to complete the work ourselves.

If you have any ideas or would like to help out with maintenance or improvement projects around our club please contact Rene Brown, Property Chair, 979-7303, [rb20@dcx.com](mailto:rb20@dcx.com)

## Jamie Halpin

Thanks to Loretta Buckner for donating carpet for the posts. Unfortunately, warm weather has thwarted our efforts to get out on the ice so we will have to wait until next year to paint the posts and replace the carpet. If anyone is looking to replace the carpet on their posts, we have an ample supply in the shed.

Thanks to Bob Fuller, Jim Halpin, Andy Hellenbart, Duncan Hind, Scott Turner, and Doug Watson for once again volunteering to be on the harbour committee.

Launch day has been scheduled for May 6th. You should be receiving your Summer Dockage and Release form with this month's Soundings. The **forms must be in by March 15th** so that we can assign you a well and launch your boat.

Planning for dredging is underway. The water levels are expected to be a little lower this year so the race is on between the spawning fish and the steam shovels to see who can get to the creek bottom first.

## March 2006 SPSC Calendar

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	
<p>Club House Duties </p> <p>(Feb 26-Mar 4) Soles, P&amp;D</p>		<p>WYC seminars<sup>1</sup> every Wed. See pg. 2, Feb. 2006 issue for topics</p>	2	3	<p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>7:30 pm Games night at the club</p> 	<p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p>ECPHRF Meeting, 1:30 at CIYC</p>	
6	7	<p style="text-align: right;">8</p> <p>Men's Lunch</p> 					
<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>7:15 pm Executive Meeting</p> <p>(Mar 12-18) Staley, J&amp;B</p> 	14	<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>Summer Dockage and Release form must be in Jamie Halpin's hands</p>	16	17	<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>7:30 pm Games night at the club</p> 	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> <p>Friends of Pike Creek</p> <p>(Mar 19-25) Steel, B&amp;G</p> 			23	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>7:00 pm Cruising Potluck Supper</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> <p>(Mar 26-Apr 1) Stephenson, D&amp;G</p> 	<p>Enjoying the Feb. 24th Members Night. Photos (including photo on pg. 5) by Jackie Timothy.</p>		30	31	<p>April 2006 Club House Duties</p> <p>Apr 2-8                      Apr 9- 15                      Apr 16-22 Stratton, D&amp;D              Stridiron, W&amp;S</p>		