

Cave Run Sailing Association
Club History: Updated September 2023

On December 11, 1977 a meeting was held in Lexington, Kentucky by several local sailing enthusiasts to discuss the formation of a sailing club at the newly formed Cave Run Lake. The Licking River dam was completed in 1973 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a means of downstream flood control and to provide a reliable supply of water to local communities. Surrounded by the Daniel Boone National Forest, the 8,270-acre lake and its environs provided opportunities for outdoor recreation including boating, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. At the initial meeting of the sailing club, 10 families were represented and membership, by-laws, and racing committees were established.

The first official meeting of the Cave Run Sailing Association was held March 1, 1978. Thirty-two charter members, several of whom remain members of the club, attended this meeting and they elected the following charter officers to manage the association:

Commodore..... Jack Brown
Vice Commodore..... Charlie Curry
Rear Commodore..... Jerry Goldberger
Secretary..... Tom Elsert
Treasurer..... Charlie Jett
Harbormaster..... Ken Miller
Social Chairman..... Beth Jett

The first sailing event, “All Sails Day”, was held on Saturday, May 1, 1978 and the first race was held the next day. Six boats participated and the Race Committee managed with borrowed and make-shift equipment. The Sunfish was the most popular sailboat in the newly formed CRSA (seven charter members were Sunfish sailors) and no more than two of any other boat type was represented. Sporadic racing events were held throughout 1978, which culminated in the first Grand Annual Regatta in October of that year. Eighteen boats sailed in the Regatta in a mixed handicap fleet. A more active social and racing schedule was established in 1979, including a spring and fall racing series with separate starts for day sailers and cruisers, while various cruisers served as the race committee boat. Discussions with the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began in 1979 to ‘officialize’ sailing at Cave Run Lake.

By 1980 the membership of the Cave Run Sailing Association had grown to 67 families. CRSA is the only recognized sailing organization in Eastern Kentucky, with the majority of members coming from Kentucky and West Virginia. The explosion in club membership resulted in the racing schedule expanding to 16 races and a pre-owned pontoon boat was purchased to serve as the race committee boat. A chase boat (aptly named *Big Ugly*) was acquired a few years later. In 2006, CRSA acquired a new committee boat and motor, a modern 24-foot, industrial-strength pontoon boat. The boat was christened the *Margaret Mary II* after the wife of Don Shultz, the membership chair at the time.

A mooring field was installed at the Scott Creek Marina in 1981 in response to the increased popularity of sailing at the lake. This resulted in the attraction of larger cruising boats (up to 30') that routinely would be kept in the water, as opposed to trailerable 20' – 23' boats. Those members who chose to keep their boats on trailers (mostly one-design sailers) were fortunate to have "Captain Hooks" boatyard located adjacent to the Scott Creek Marina and launching ramp. Without the Hooks boatyard, sailing opportunities at Cave Run Lake would not be as successful.

The first major regatta hosted by CRSA, the Midwest Regional Sunfish Championships in 1980, led to additional racing events hosted by the club. In addition, in 1983 Skip Hunt became the first CRSA member certified as a Race Official by the U.S. Yacht Racing Union. This certification further enhanced the club's abilities to host and manage other major invitational sailing events, including:

- 1980 – Midwest Regional Sunfish Championship
- 1981 – Force 5/Apollo Regional Championship
- 1982 – North-American Sunfish Doubles Championship
- 1983 – US-1 National Championship Regatta
- 1988 – Volant National Championship Regatta
- 1988 – National One-Design World Championship
- 1991 – Flying Scot Ohio District Championship
- 1992, '93, '94 & '95 – Thistle Thoroughbred Regattas
- 2000 – Blue Grass State Games Sailing Competition
- 2004 – Flying Scot Ohio District Championship
- 2017 – Catalina District 4 Regionals

CRSA's Grand Annual Regatta continues to be the club's major sailing event, typically drawing 25 to 30 boats for the weekend affair, and more than three times that many participants. Sailors frequently come from nearby lakes in Ohio and Indiana, and occasionally other states such as Michigan and New York, to compete. These sailors (many from established one-design fleets) have historically done quite well due to their sailing experience.

Since 1986 One-Design Fleet Racing has been popular at Cave Run Lake. It became clear to many CRSA members that the establishment of one-design fleet racing would enhance their sailing skills. Many members of these fleets also attended activities at nearby lakes, thus gaining valuable sailing skills and spreading the word about Cave Run Lake and CRSA. The club's Flying Scot Fleet 165 was recognized as the 1991 Fleet of the Year by the Flying Scot Sailing Association for the enthusiastic support and participation of its members. One-design fleets that have been chartered by the club at Cave Run Lake include:

- Sunfish Fleet (1981)
- Thistle Fleet (1986)
- Flying Scot Fleet 165 (1988)
- Hobie-16 Fleet (1989)
- Catalina 22 Fleet (2023)

In 1988 CRSA began raising funds for the Lexington Hearing and Speech Center through a partnership with Psi Iota Xi (a national philanthropic organization) and the club's inaugural Bluegrass Charity Regatta. In 2018, this regatta was moved from the fall racing schedule to the spring. Over the years this popular event, begun under the leadership of Al Lawton, raised over \$142,685 for LHSC. In 2021, CRSA re-imagined the charity regatta, currently called the Benefit Regatta for Youth Sailing, and since 2022 all proceeds now support the Cave Run Youth Sailing Academy.

Beginning sailing classes conducted by CRSA, initiated under the guidance of Jack Brown, were designed for those interested in learning how to sail. Beginning sailing classes typically have between 15 and 30 students, and consist of two evenings of "ground school", followed by a Saturday on-the-water experience with experienced CRSA skippers. These classes have been an excellent way for more people to become familiar with CRSA and with sailing in central Kentucky.

CRSA began offering American Sailing Association (ASA) classes about 2007 as a way to provide certified course instruction to the local sailing community. CRSA has paid for a small number of members to become certified instructors, seeing this as an investment in the club. Courses offered include ASA 101 (Basic Keelboat Sailing Certification); ASA 103 (Basic Coastal Cruising Certification); and ASA 105 (Coastal Navigation Sailing Certification). Many sailing school members have since joined CRSA and these courses have provided a significant source of operating revenue for the club. CRSA has also been recognized in past years by ASA as the most active chapter.

Other continuing education classes have been offered by the club including: various racing clinics such as North U rules and tactics; boat purchase considerations; improving sail trim; and basic weather and forecasting. These courses have been held in-person and via interactive webinars. Over the years, several members have also taken the USCG certified captain's course.

Since its inception, outreach and other programs have long been a mission for CRSA, including the provision of sailing classes for the Sea Cadets, a division of the Navy for high school students; Sea Scouts, BSA; and a small boat sailing merit badge for both the Girl and the Boy Scouts of America. In 2022, Molly Sutherland kicked off the wildly popular "Let's Go Sailing — for women, by women", which includes classes (from knot tying to first aid), on-the-water instruction, and socials. In addition, long-time member Bill Jones initiated a radio-controlled sailing group in 2016, which began racing in 2021, and purchased an R-C club boat in 2023.

A Hunter 235 was purchased from Kevin Overbeck in 2009 for \$2,200, replacing the *Miss Moose*. The naming rights for the Hunter were purchased at auction by Paul and Susan Harbour, who named the boat after their daughter Kelley. The Hunter served as a club boat, allowing members to gain valuable sailing experience and was used for teaching ASA courses. In 2023, a Catalina 22 was graciously donated by Lee and Molly Sutherland to replace the *Miss Kelley*.

In 2019 a Rhodes 22 was donated to the youth sailing program by Joseph Claypool, a Superior court judge in southern Indiana. Despite the legal opinion proffered, the Rhodes had several structural issues and required significant effort to repair. While CRSA covers the costs of maintaining and insuring any and all club boats, any monies donated to CRSA for the use of these boats is evenly split between the club and the youth sailing program.

A new trailer was purchased for the Margaret Mary II in 2020 for \$4,450 from SolidCraft in Ohio. The trailer allows for easier repairs and annual hull cleaning of the pontoon boat. Long-time harbor master Brad Leslie was ecstatic.

Routine ongoing work of CRSA deals with efforts to improve convenience items such as tie-off docks, positioning of light poles, and trimming of trees so that masts can clear at the launching ramp; storage for dinghies and other CRSA-owned equipment; and bringing attention to the unique requirements associated with sailboats. CRSA also participated in the “Adopt-a-Highway” program by providing clean-up services along two miles of Route 801 adjacent to the lake. And the club supported the sailboat racing division of the Bluegrass State games for several years. Finally, the club has submitted several proposals suggesting the construction of sailing facilities at Cave Run Lake, as well as Jacobson Lake in Lexington. None have been successful to date.

Bareboat cruising was added to the club’s schedule of organized activities in recent years. These fun-filled adventures provide an economical way of exposing the membership to coastal sailing, building camaraderie amongst club members, and honing sailing skills. While the Chesapeake Bay had been a popular off-lake destination in early years, at the urging of Sam Moore, the club began adding popular international venues. Club-organized trips have included: the America’s Cup (San Francisco (2013)); Upper and Lower Chesapeake Bay (multiple years); Croatia (2014); British Virgin Islands (multiple years); Malts Cruise of Scotland (2014); Spain (2016 and 2018); San Juan Islands (2017 and 2018); Greece (2019); Key West and Dry Tortugas (2020); Tahiti/Bora Bora (2021); St. Lucia to Grenada (2022); both BVIs and Seychelles (2023); and Exumas (2024). (Note: Trip years may not be 100% accurate.)

CRSA faired quite well during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Outdoor activities became our outlet as we saw an explosion in boat sales (and prices) and increased demand for our sailing classes. Club meetings moved to Zoom; a Summer Sailstice race and Poker Run was held; youth sailing continued with masks; Grand Annual Lite was managed; and an All-Hollows’ Eve Sail was a huge hit. A Winter Series of on-line classes (sail trim; racing basics; sewing for sailing; boat maintenance; and all about sails) was extremely popular and was archived on the club’s YouTube page.

Socials remain an integral part of the club, bringing together old members and new. Whether it’s a cook-out on the Margaret Mary after a day of racing, organizing a moonlight sail during Summer Sailstice, or the popular wintertime “Trip Tales” at a local bar or restaurant, tall tales are spun and witty banter can be heard above the laughter. The annual meeting and banquet, typically held in November, remains the club’s dress-up event, whether it be black-tie or a luau theme.

A Lifetime Membership classification was adopted by the CRSA in 1989 to recognize outstanding service to the club. In addition, Honorary Memberships were created in 1998. Frequently, the nomenclature of these two categories has been used interchangeably. Members honored to date include:

Jack Brown
Ruth Brown
Matt Colker
June Hook
Bill Lubawy
Charlotte Lubawy

Dave Davison
Rebecca Davison
Beth Jett
Al Lawton
Ruth Lawton

In 2000, CRSA became a 501(c)4 social organization, reducing liability exposure of all members (especially officers) and reducing CRSA insurance costs.

In 2018, the Youth Sailing arm of CRSA was approved as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, officially known as the Cave Run Youth Sailing Academy. Under the long-time leadership of Chuck Emrich and a squadron of volunteers, the youth sailing program continues to expand its fleet and grow new sailors.

CRSA has established several awards to be presented at the annual membership banquet:

Charles Jett III Award – A rotating trophy and a permanent julep cup, presented to the outstanding member of the year in recognition of overall contributions to CRSA, commitment, leadership and good sportsmanship.

Commodore's Award – Presented to an individual who displays unusual dedication and responsibility to facilitating the programs of CRSA.

Best Crew Award – Presented annually to an individual who most consistently assists a captain in racing.

Captain Crunch Award – Presented on an as-needed basis.

Most Active New Member Award – No explanation needed here!

The Bylaws of CRSA were updated in both 2017 and 2022, clarifying some language and expanding the Executive Committee to include:

- Commodore
- Vice-Commodore
- Rear Commodore
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Harbor Master
- Social Chair
- Membership Chair
- Webmaster
- Cruise Director
- Youth Sailing Director
- Adult Sailing Director
- Immediate Past Commodore
- Newsletter Editor

Further history has yet to be written, but it promises to exemplify the spirit of sailing!