



*Alaska Sailing Club, Inc.  
Big Lake, Alaska*

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# The Sheet

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## Spring Work Party 2000

By Paul Willing - Sheet Editor

Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> was the annual spring party. Drainage canals, the usual leaf raking, cleaning and dock launching were accomplished.

Many thanks to contributing members Curtis Dunkin, Ellen, Ben and Birgitt Robar, Mark Weissler, Alan Adrian, Joe Ofner, Paul Willing and Steve Anastos. A slim showing to say the least – we can do better.

Late season ice in the boat ramp cove prevented launching of any large boats. The same ice made for the coldest late May water this reporter has felt! While connecting the dock anchor lines, thirty seconds per arm in the water was max.

A surprise visit by Matt Flickenger brightened the day. It's always good to see long time members return. Matt is currently assigned to the USS Pennsylvania. It's a boomer (guided missile submarine for all you non-Tom Clancy readers). He goes to sea for 90 day tours and then does 90 days of light shore duty.



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## Memorial Day Weekend 2000

By Paul Willing – Sheet Editor

Work commitments delayed my departure from Anchorage until Saturday morning. My son Taylor and I arrived at the club site at 11:30 am greeted by a fresh breeze and glorious sunny skies – A Big Lake sailor's dream. It looked to be a perfect day for some on the water time with the students. But then looks can deceive.

After some unpacking and during a quick lunch, Birgitt Robar stopped by, I assumed for a social call,

"The dock is coming apart." she said.

I replied that I'd be right down to take a look, as I finished some reheated kung pao chicken. I visualized a loose piece of wood. A couple of nails should take care of that, no problemo.

The fresh breeze had increased to a stiff one (20-25 mph). Steve Anastos had his boat, the *Midnight Sun*, at the end of C dock, mainsail up, ready to take students Nancy, Debbie, Azul and the others out for their first on the water session.

To my alarm, I saw the center B dock section's outboard (north) 2"x 10" x 20' frame had broken completely in half. The north wind and Steve's boat were pulling C dock and half of B dock toward the hoist and opening a two foot gap at the break. While we evaluated the damage, whitecaps and pounding waves made standing on the dock a new and exciting challenge.

Birgitt and I shouted to Steve to shove off ASAP. A piece of line between cleats on either side of the break provided a tenuous fix and the wind seemed to increase even more (only when you don't need it). My wife, Jody, arrived from Anchorage about this time. By then B dock was rocking a foot or more side to side. Jody and Birgitt held the straps of my life jacket while I leaned over the water and lag bolted a section of chain across the break. With great relief we found this was working, then added a come-a-long and an additional line to bring the dock back together. Just another quiet moment at the club.

Meanwhile out on the water, Steve took the class for a real eye opener of a first (for some) sail. They couldn't say they were bored! Wide eyed and exhilarated they recounted the high winds and fast sail, some thrilled and others relieved to be telling the story instead of experiencing it.

The next day began bright and beautiful with no hint of the wild ride we had all experienced...

### Day Two

As day two of the instruction began, we were joined by Ben Robar, a.k.a. Mr. Skipjack, who provided technical and water training for our emerging sailors. As always, Ben did a great job and the students took giant steps forward in their abilities.

Sunday morning was calm and Rick Gillmore helped me install a 2" x 6" x 8' repair plate with lag bolts. It seemed good at the time but this is really only a temporary repair. The whole plate is rotten. We must build at least two dock sections this year or risk losing the whole thing in the next storm.



Here is a material list for one dock section:

Note: All wood is Cedartone Wood with water repellent by Exterior Wood, Inc.

2 ea. 2"x10"x20'

2 ea. 2"x10"x8'

14 ea. 2"x4"x8'

5 ea. 3/4"x4"x8' plywood

28 ea. joist hangers

4 ea. corner fittings fabricated from 1/4"x4" steel plate 88"

32 ea. 3/8"x2" coarse thread bolts for corner fittings

Decking screws

Paint

If anyone has contacts to obtain these materials at a reduced rate or is willing to make a donation for construction, please email this web site or phone a board member.

Keys to dock longevity:

- Strong corners, hence the steel angles
- 16 inch centers for the 2"x 4" deck studs
- Screws – not nails
- Keeping the wood out of the water with sufficient floatation - The Styrofoam floats work well when new but tend to absorb water over time. When the lower edge of the main frame begins to touch the water it is time to replace the floats. Plastic floats are available, and while more expensive than Styrofoam should last much longer.
- Use Grade 2 (soft) bolts for all hinge connections. These bolts wear fast and require annual check/replacement but they extend the life of the corner fitting by not elongated the hinge bolt holes.
- Don't tie up big boats on B and C-sections for extended periods – too much strain on the dock system.

## Editorial

**By Paul Willing – Sheet Editor**

The club is at another lull in both membership and activity. That's not really news to long time members. The infrastructure is aging and in need of constant maintenance. I think we need to offer a free membership to a valley resident who could perform light maintenance and provide caretaker services by camping onsite or checking every couple of days. Hmmm, sounds familiar.

I try to repair something every time I visit. Vice Commodore Steve Anastos has been up virtually every



weekend maintaining and setting new moorings, repairing the RL and cutting firewood. Way to go Steve. Dave Johnson roofed the new shed, added some missing floatation to the B-C dock intersection and installed some fire hose on C dock.

A presence onsite is important. The new paved road is great at reducing dust, but it increases pressure on the club site from uninvited guests. Every time I camp at the club I have to explain to people that it's not a public beach or a fishing hole, but a private sailing club. I think a sign at the entrance would help a great deal. Some people just need direction, others will rudely intrude anyway unless there is a physical barrier. We've all discussed the gate issue before, too many cons and liability issues.

So to open the basic sign dialog:

### *Alaska Sailing Club*

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Membership information available online <http://members.aol.com/aksailclub>

or Phone Commodore at 907-222-2222

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