**Adult options should do more - one design classes and keelboat fleets need to be recruiting**

My intention is to get a couple of the older kids in the HS sailing team in Anacortes, WA on my Catalina 42 for the beer can racing. Don't know if they will come but I will extend the invite.

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This is a grass roots problem that is consistent with the general decline of adult sports and adult leisure activities. There is a consistent set of drivers that have changed the dynamic of youth into adult sports. These include:

\* A flip flop of who is graduating from college with women representing 64% of the degrees awarded last year. The number of people attending College has almost doubled in the last twenty years: The majority is now adults.

\*Dual Career Families changing the dynamics of Yacht Clubs, Golf Clubs and other traditional male dominated discretionary leisure/sports organizations and activities

\*Increased engagement of both parents in the parenting of children-taking their children to sporting events rather than participating

\*An almost decade long decline in the job market for those who are just graduating college making expensive sports requiring time and money more difficult.

\*The now rapid change in when and where work takes place: 24/7 is the rule for most young professionals. They fundamentally fear taking time off for loss of presence if and when downsizing takes place.

\*The decline of blocks of time in family schedules.

\* The number of people attending Colleges and Universities

Sailing is not alone being influenced by these and other changes: Volunteer Groups, Churches, Community Theatre/Music, Adult Sports (Tennis, Gold, Bowling, Fishing, Hunting, and Recreational Adult Leagues) all have seen dramatic decline.

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When I grew-up the goal of junior sailing was to increase your skill set so you can compete at the next level with adults. You transitioned from youth sailing, to crewing with your parents, to crewing with friends, to competing with your own boat.

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I would like to see the how competition numbers transition from youth, high school, college, after to find where we are losing the kids.

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We have two young men from the junior sailing program who sail with us regularly. Hopefully it will keep them involved in sailing in the future. What I know for sure is that with their enthusiasm and fresh perspective, they are helping to keep my husband and I involved in sailing.

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It's great when my Lightning skipper invites a junior sailor to join us for club racing (I am 56 and female) because my bridge to adult sailing when I was a teenager was crewing for (and with) grown-ups on Etchells, 210's, J-24's etc. I continue to be a very active sailor; I lived on a cruising boat for 13 years (including work stops in American Samoa and Guam); these days I frostbite Dyer Dhows in LIS and crew on Lightnings, Sonars, J-24's, Vanguard 15's, etc., in the summer.

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The key is to involve multiple youth sailors in the adult fleets. It won't work if just one is involved. For them to step into this new arena they will be more comfortable with some peers also involved.

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Sailing is expensive for most folks. Help from local fleets via school programs could help bring interest. Most kids in school do not even know what sailing is let alone know about a racing

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It is too easy to put the burden onto the national assn, as well as onto the clubs, there must be opportunities to crew, while one does not yet own a boat. Best is a combined effort on all levels, where clubs would also offer opportunities to rent boats or use club boats when being a member. The Nat. Assn. may cut deals with builders, like J for offering J 70s and J 80s at favorable conditions if used for these purposes,

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This is my take on Seattle. No kid is attracted to the yacht club lifestyle. Generally, that's for people who make their living associated with sailing, alcoholics, or old white guys that feel they get some sort of social status from it. It burns out most others. Kids don't go for that unless they are seeking their parent's approval on some level.

Sailing has to be fun, challenging & accessible. It needs to have people more like the kids themselves but it's dominated by hard drinking, loud, fat & unhealthy older people. Seriously, who wants to hang with that?

Hire an outside third party for suggestions.

I think the traditions of sailing hold it back.

I love sailing & racing, it's a big part of me but the whole yacht club thing turns more & more people off. It needs another avenue.

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Yacht clubs have an unfortunate reputation for being exclusive, elitist and expensive. Not always true, but they need to be more open and affordable

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The national authority and yacht clubs do a good job with the junior program although at times I think the fun component is forgotten. Not every child wants to compete. I think pushing all kids to race is a mistake. Cruising or daysailing is something one can do for life. I think adults and especially women (the ones that pay the bills) are the forgotten segment of the sailing market. Kids get the coaching but adults are largely forgotten. It is important to bring new yacht club members along (especially new or relatively inexperienced sailors) so that they can feel like they can succeed at racing. Racing is not easy and competing against people that have been sailing the same boat for years is intimidating. Helping people to feel like they can become successful in the long run will help to retain members. The fun component is especially important. The Lido fleet at ABYC is especially good at encouraging people to join the Lido fleet. They have fleet boats that interested sailors can charter to try the boat. They also sponsor training seminars to help competing sailors sharpen their skills and improve. They also have a lot of fun. I think they are doing the right things and their numbers show it.

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Young sailors need to experience sailing with older sailors. Racing with yacht club fleets is a good way to get this experience.

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Start with making sailing fun, everything else will follow

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The economic realities today make a young person's first priority finding a job. If the youth/college sailing experience has been positive, the desire to sail will be there. My son, age 23, was too big for youth and college dinghy sailing, so he has focused on big boat events. He has made opportunities to race competitive big boats. His knowledge of seamanship skills, navigation, and maintenance, a great deal of which was learned on the family cruising boat, have made him a capable and sought after big boat crew. My point is that dinghy sailing is not for every young person. Strong Junior big boat programs that include navigation and seamanship can play a major role in making lifelong sailors. While some do, many young people are not interested to campaign a dinghy after school or college. The exhilaration of sailing sport boats will appeal to many, but it seems to me the reliable old one-design classes will attract many, as crew AND as owners, when finances permit. Help a young adult sailor by inviting him or her to sail with you!

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We all need to do more. Specifically to make it more fun for everyone. The social experience needs more emphasis. Having the Youth champs restricted to by invitation only may do something to encourage a few but does much more to discourage many. In addition everyone is taking everything so seriously that it really isn't fun for anyone.

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Tough, everyone needs to do more;

NATIONAL AUTHORITY - should be a clearing house of successful programs and a force to keep options for ALL sailing affordable. Yes, it is nice to have development classes, but those with the largest participation are finding ways to keep access to the sport open to all

YACHT CLUBS - should work together in their areas to encourage youth to participate even if they don't come from within their club, promote success of local champions (Get it in the media), and work with other clubs to define the progression/ladder that the youth move up with age, skill, and size so there is consistency in the area and good affordable used craft.

ADULTS- should reach out to the youth to get them involved in the slow boats (sic) as well as the speedsters (29ers, 49ers, etc.) The youth need role models who can show that they not only sail at the AC & world level, but also at the local level in the fleets that exist. Also, as adults leave the sport or become inactive for a time they should donate or sell their boat at a REASONABLE cost to clubs, youth or development programs.

I would say adults, as we are the input that will make the sport survive in the long run, donating time, money and getting sponsors to support youth and adult programs.

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The classes should either be age agnostic like snipes or exciting like 29ers.

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This is a tough one for me as well as others. My father and I learn to sail at the same time. He bought his first sailboat when I was seven, buying a 28 ft boat from Palmer Johnson in Racine WI. Three or so "lessons" from PJ and we were off. That was in 1968. In 1969 I was in Jr sailing class at the WYC. It was taught by parents - Marlin Abramson of the Thistle Fleet. THe class was comprised of all the members children - power and sailor folks. Life was grand. We grew up in the harbor - that was our life. Thistle's, 505's and Venture sailboats were the big fleets. The Keelboat fleet was rather small. Dad & I sailed together on his days off mainly just sailing Lake Michigan. I really enjoyed those afternoons. But I didnt get into baseball and latter on soccer. Sailing was my outlet. The daysailor fleets dwindled, I joined my dad racing keelboats. Sailed in college, started racing J24's and still racing today. Occasionally daysailing as time permits - not as often as I would like. We made sure our children were taught sailing. Not pushing them to do so. They liked and enjoyed it. Both were instructors at the yacht club program. My oldest did not enjoy racing the J24, liked the smaller boats. But there was no small boats around. (Oh it would be nice to have the Thistle's and 505's around still) I think the key is to sustain the small boat fleets. On the other hand, my daughter has the bug. Took her racing with me and initially did not get it. But one day walking to the boat in downtown Chicago she got it. As she stated, seeing all the sailors walking down to Montoe Street, all heading for a common purpose. Seeing all the greetings of the my friends whom I have met over the years. She got it - a sense of belonging and unconditional acceptance. It clicked for her. She is now a freshman and on her college sailing team. Going to regattas and sailing on her own. I think she will continue sailing, wherever life takes her.

Take a kid sailing! Talk to them before, during and after. Keep them engaged, not just rail meat. Who knows, they might just get the bug as well.

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Yacht clubs and the adults in the clubs need to promote getting kids onto keelboats to race club races and beer cans. Have the kids bring their friend to the beer can races. Boat owners need to fill their boats, not be concerned about weight. We have "the more the merrier policy" and it is not uncommon to have 14 people aboard for a race. Our goal is to have the fun boat out on the water. We sail the beer cans non spinnaker to keep the yelling factor down and keep stress off the boat. We even do well in the standings.

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Don't think this is a problem. Those that enjoy the life style will always find a way. Do we really need more sailors? This is a problem for the pros. They need more people to create more jobs.

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Actually, all groups need to do more.

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The yacht clubs in our area each have their own agenda. We cannot rely on them to do more than they currently do, which is a lot in the summer. But in the off season (8 months of the year), local adult sailors who are the local leaders in this sport, can do more to create fun events that would offer more opportunities (and more allure) for young sailors. Why does everything have to be an around the buoys race in this sport? Why can't we orchestrate a rally with checkpoints similar to what is done in some other sports. We could adapt from the scavenger hunt model and set up events of that ilk that include racing skills, but emphasize participation for everyone on board, not just the helmsman, tactician and sail trimmers. We could try other kinds of events as well. Like including one leg in the racecourse where the participants have to sail their boats backwards for 200 yards, or take their sails down and rock or ooch their boats to the next mark. We seem to be stuck in the conventional, and we know that the conventional isn't enough to keep our youth engaged.

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If the adults are having fun, the kids will too. Family friendly, social racing is critical for modern sailing. We need a few guys somewhere who push the limits, but we need lots of guys everywhere who go out in frequently in affordable, accessible boats that can accommodate inexperienced sailors so everyone can have a beer afterwards and tell their friends.

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I think the key is enabling young sailors to experience racing beyond the traditional youth classes. The larger boats create a sense of team that help keep people engaged and involved. Yacht clubs can assist, but the classes and boat owners are really in control.

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I think the closer to the source you are the easier it will be to fix the problem. Loosing kids from sailing school, involve parents and sailors from the sailing club.

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As an adult that tries to recruit, we need the coaches and instructors to help identify the likely candidates that can be gotten from the youth ranks. It is hard when we are at work all day and the young sailors have already left when we get to the club at 5:15 on a week night.

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About to be classified as an "old fart"; But...Since you asked...There was more cross class exposure, sailing with adults (many different adults - not just dad), sailing with other kids in different classes, emphasis on the fun/learning/discovery/independence/friendships/etc/etc ad nauseum in "my day". Yes, there was competition, but it was just another excuse to get on the water. Winning was a byproduct of those kids (myself included) who were enthused and used any excuse to get on the water in any form or platform and play. (Insert over quoted line from "Wind in the Willows"). I do know of some very talented kids in my age group who got so self focused on results (Mom/Dad did not care about the results - pre helicopter parent time frame) that they quit on their own - and never came back. Their own self induced stress of competition/result focus-only took the play and fun out of the sport. So there will always be a certain level of attrition - But...That said...US Sailing could do itself a favor by looking, a good hard look, at how US Hockey runs its youth programs. While it too runs National and Olympic programs, fully 90% (myself included) involved as a youth return to the sport in some capacity or another later in life. That is about as brief as I can be...

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I don't think you can legislate activity. I think it's best to develop interest at the grass roots level. Invite the kids to come sailing, make it a invitation open to all. Adjust the handicaps of the competitors who crew young people by a small amount. If you can make it fun, kids will come.

In a perfect world, I believe all three can do more, but exposing our youth to keelboats and working with larger crews will most certainly give them a reason to choose sailing as a lifelong passion.

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Need to promote family sailing instead of youth sailing.

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Professional training for adults who only start racing after college years

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This is the way I have built crews over the years of young people who are still sailing in their 30, 40, & 50's!

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Get the adults out of the racing and let the kids have fun. The fire must come from within, NOT from some organization pushing kids to win.

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The answer here should be all of the above. I have personally taken a young opti under sailor under my wing and have him driving my J70 at all major events. He is thirteen and already talking about what his next junior boat should be. For any who has never done this, it is the most gratifying sailing related thing I have done in 35 years of sailing. Try it out. BTW I am learning as much from him as he is from me.

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We try to get younger sailors to come racing with us. Not always possible because of jobs, other needs etc.

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It really should be all three options. Everyone has their part to play. Sailing must be presented as an activity for life not just an Olympic pathway which throws you out the moment you are not going to win a medal!

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Newport, RI (and Jamestown next door) has produced some amazing sailors. Sail Newport has an EXCELLENT junior program, as do two other local yacht clubs. But those who race one design and larger handicap must "suck" up the most promising youngsters onto their crews. In that regard, the people running the junior programs should campaign to get their stars placed on adult crews.

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Do we need more opportunities (besides racing) for the college/university students?

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The kids need to get out and race on many different boats to make it interesting and develop broader skills. Kids should also rotate through several different classes when they are young..i.e. sail 420's but also get them out in 29ers and other fun boats.

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Back when Jesus was a kid and I started sailing we grabbed a boat and had fun no coaches no structure. We learnt about boatspeed & handling by having sponge fights between boats. While the Club programs are great too many parents are trying to vicariously achieve in sailing through their kids. If you want the kids to go on to Olympic & AC level allow sailing to be a passion for them and discover it for themselves (worked for me). We started in dinghies and also sailed on the harbour & offshore crewing for fun and learning a lot from the "old" guys who had learnt the sailing laws of Physics from Noah (or his Australian counterpart).

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Education and curriculum should be organized and promoted from the top down including national advertising and social media campaigns, YC's should work harder to keep people interested by offering greater variety of membership options and different sailing opportunities (too many dinner clubs, not enough sailing clubs). OD and fleets need to find ways to get new people involved via sponsored introductory events and fun regattas, too many hot shot pros who don't have time to sail with less experienced sailors.

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In Annapolis we have dedicated boats or spots for juniors in some adult classes. Getting them involved helps build their network of racers and future emotional investment in the sport.

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Need to keep them sailing not necessarily racing!

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One design are the classes that seem to maintain the most of the age group we are seeking yet little money is given to assist them provide boats at a subsidized cost

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This is a bottom up / top down problem - kids are now hooked on thrills - new classes - foiling - competition - there needs to be a sea change in the system. We Old Farts define sailing on our own experiences, racing and our enjoyment is static and our expectation is something that everyone should enjoy it our way. Its an outdated thought - our vision of sailing is old and everything will evolve. Kitesurfing displaced windsurfing - foiling cats will displace monohulls - canting/movable keels will replace fixed keels - this is a sport on the move changing and evolving. There is more to come to increase efficiencies and speed will redefine the thrill.The experience that kids want will be different and we need to adjust to that. I grew up racing and love the process - but now I cruise and there is nothing greater than arriving in an anchorage in a faraway place, that is a huge thrill for me - but I have evolved from FJ's and I14's - the Transpac, a college match racing nationals win - a 1 ton NA win - SORC wins and Mexican race wins - We built a number of race boats from scratch - and now my boat is in a foreign yard in the Med waiting for the summer to start. I have been extremely lucky to have been this fortunate in my experiences. Wanting kids to like what we like about sailing is unrealistic, it will get redefined. Now what do we do to encourage some really fun stuff to happen is what we should be talking about.

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Effort needs to be focused on the demographic that can afford sailing. How do we make sailing more appealing to 30- to 50 year old professionals?

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The Islander 36 Association of San Francisco Bay is attempting to organize a youth outreach program designed to introduce older junior sailors to bigger boats. The thought is to schedule 3 - 4 days where we have 2-4 Islander 36s assemble at a yacht club with a sailing program, and have invited several other clubs to send a few juniors to that location. With 1-2 adults aboard each of the Islanders, and one sailing school chaperone, that would leave room for about 5 youth per boat or 20 total. The first session would be to introduce kids to big boat realities: winches, cleats, multiple halyards, different crew positions, the need for teamwork, and above all the increased loads and safety required on bigger boats. Wrap up the day with some on-water experience with what they have been taught. The next session would be at a different participating club with a youth program. Introduction to starting on a big boat, handling current issues, navigation to marks or waypoints. More sailing practice and maybe a first practice race. Round 3 can be more practice on the things taught and several either practice races or how to navigate to a destination. (As you noted, some kids don't necessarily want to become dedicated racers!) A 4th round could introduce spinnaker gear and handling on a bigger boat, including some spinnaker practice. If things went perfectly, maybe a 5th session with spinnakers in a simple race. Stay tuned. The few sailing programs we've mentioned it too so far think it's great.

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I am a lifer, learned from my father. I take my grandchildren racing and one of the three is really into it!

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As I was growing up in a suburb of Chicago we would go to the beach. At the end of the beach was a sign that said "Private Property Members Only. This was the beginning of the local yacht club's property where they launched small centerboard boats off the beach. It was only by circumstance when I was in grammar school that a boy moved in down the street and the family were all sailors. If it wasn't for that initial introduction to sailing I probably would never have learned to sail. After learning the basics with my new friend Scott I was able to meet a man who bought a house across the street and sailed with his father. Because he knew I liked sailing he invited me out to sail with him and his father. This was my first introduction to racing. All in all we as adults we have to do our part to introduce the sport of sailing to young people. We need to be cognizant that all young people may not take to sailing, may not take to racing, or to cruising. We have to let them enjoy the part of our sport that suits them. In other woods make it fun! The Open Bic does a great job of it. Just look at the smiles on their faces!

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This is definitely a bottom-up problem. U.S. Sailing has done quite a bit, as have yacht clubs, and while they've done a lot to keep the competitive kids continuing to race, not much has been done to keep the "pipeline" filled with all kinds of sailors, including knockabout day-sailors, cruisers and adventure-seekers. There is no one size fits all solution here - everyone just needs to look around and decide where the opportunities are to get kids into boats and keep them wanting to be in boats. At one local, that might be one-design racing. At another it might be an overnight cruise, and at another still it could be short adventure sails in a hodge-podge fleet of small boats. Kids aren't going to ask their parents if they can borrow a boat; it's up to the parents and other adults to make the opportunities happen on their terms.

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Inviting youth onto mature crewed boats is the bridge to gap.

Kids = dingy and Adults = keelboats.

Integrated keelboat crews with youth and adult sailors is the long term solution. And as such the keel boaters need to set aside one or more spots for youth. Doing so in one or more annual regattas will help and has helped clubs bridge the gap, improve skills, increase attendance and make memberships flourish.

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My 2 kids went thru jr sailing with my son continuing thru college.. He sailed with me a bit after college until I lost my job and had to sell the boat and drop from the yacht club. Neither sail anymore because:

1. Owners tend to be 2 generations older so socially there is no fit especially for cruising.

2. They can't afford it both because of time and finances

3. None of their friends sail any longer often because they can no longer afford to live near the coast nor belong to a club.

4. Rental boats are either unavailable, unaffordable or burdened with requirements.

5. If I was able to have a boat again, they would sail but economically it no longer makes sense for me because while I can again afford a purchase, fees, taxes, rules and Restrictions no longer make it an enjoyable activity.

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How about a program to bring non-sailing adults into sailing. After all, they have the money to keep on sailing once they have gotten their feet wet.?

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Really - it's all of the above.

Would love to take more under 18 yr olds sailing in one-design- but just try to get them away from the helicopter parents' agenda of sailing team practice. I've tried with no luck. I wonder how many kids would stick with it if they were exposed to sailors who race because they love it, have fun, develop lifelong friends, and never win a race.

PHRF could offer a 3 sec bonus for every boat that races with an under 18 during club races.

US Sailing needs to make racing fun - ease up on 3 page NORs and 8 page SIs. They also need to serve the grass root membership. We are not just losing youth sailors - we are losing sailors at every level. WHY?

I'm not saying that the Olympic Sailing Team isn't deserving of support - but it sickens me when Iook at a US Sailing financial report and see where the money goes.

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I think this poll oversimplifies a very complex problem. The basics are that it takes both time and money to sail, especially competitively. Yacht Clubs and racing clubs can help reduce the cost to a greater or lesser extent, but can't do much about the time. The time commitment can be made more fun through more interesting races, fun events, active efforts to welcome newcomers and building a strong social component. The trends driving employment, disposable income and other demands are all working against young adults and sailing. We need to do what we can - I wish there was a better outlook.

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What is the correlation between the growth (or decline) of the sailing industry and the youth dropout rate?

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There should be a clear, inexpensive pathway for kids to move up. Kids only boats like the Opti should be phased out in favor of a boat structured like the Laser or the RS100, with the only new purchases as the child ages is a bigger sail.

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It is about people and emotional relationships to boats and water.

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I'm a 16 year old from SF and no offense but keel boats are not the most fun (exceptions to Melges) so there's not much to look forward to when I'm older so I think if they got kids on the big boats earlier and mix big boats with dinghies that may help.

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Actually, ALL OF THE ABOVE!! Many develop competitive interests at different stages in life. Embedding sailing as an avocation will boost the broad sport as well as racing. One substantive thing that someone needs to do is develop a Certified Crew program, to give sailors a ticket to ride in the big boats, and induce owners to race or cruise more. The difficulty of assembling a crew is one reason so many boats sit in their berths most weekends.

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I'm not sure if my vote for "adult options" fits my thoughts, maybe I'd prefer none of the above. There seems to be two sailing "industries", one is the racing sailors and the other is those who sail for the pure enjoyment of being out on the water and being able to make their boat go where they want to go. From one who stopped racing in my 20's (I'm now 69) the racing industry looks to be doing just fine. Perhaps with the exception of small boat class racing there seem to be more races, more publicity, more trophys, more go fast gear, more honors for winning skippers and more youth training for young racers. This is the professional side of sailing, those who are largely interested in growth because it means more dollars in their pockets. US Sailing, in spite of it's "new" name, is more about racing than sailing. When it was known as a "yacht racing" organization it seemed to better serve both camps. Yacht clubs junior sailing programs are all about training junior racers. How long does it take for young sailors finishing in the back of the fleet, seeing all the attention given to the winners, to decide that a team sport like soccer be a more attractive alternative. Some winners go on to high school or college teams and then on to competitive racing circuits. The question seems to be how to maintain a sailing interest in the thousands of young sailors from the back of the fleet who have missed out on the winning rewards. I think that sailing not racing needs to become their reward. Going out and learning to sail a course, make the boat go up wind, be able to jibe around a reaching mark, just be comfortable in handling their boat in all conditions. That's when sailing becomes fun and can easily become a lifelong passion. While now I seldom race it was long ago that I gave up trying to keep up with the racing rules and find that my basic knowledge of them keeps me out of trouble. I've seldom used the rules to win a race or have I lost one because of them. Win or lose I just enjoy being on the water and tweaking things to make me think I can make the boat go faster or closer to the wind.

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Before my club - Corinthian Sailing Club in Dallas TX- had a junior program, we developed a half dozen national champion and even world class sailors. Families with more kids than crew space let the youths crew for anyone who needed crew. (They also let the youths who weren't interested follow their own interests - often horses -) The future champions also borrowed boats and raced in the fleet races every Sunday. 10 year olds met on the dock with octogenarians and discussed wind shifts and tactics as equals. As a friend of mine often said "you can lead a horse to water, but you will never make it do the backstroke wearing a saddle!"

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The best way to retain kids in sailing is to integrate them into adult programs as crew. Clubs should also set up a junior racing program in the “adult” one design boats (Lightings, Flying Scotts, any three man boat) on a weeknight, or weekend morning before the adult races. This will help transition kids to adult boats.

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Adult skippers of keel boats can invite young sailors to be part of their crew; permanent members of the crew, not just for a one day event. Give the young sailor a real role in the crew and treat them as equal members, albeit newbies, and give them full responsibility for their jobs. Promote them to more important roles as soon as they are ready, let them drive often. Most likely the young sailor will eat up this opportunity and they will grow the skills to meet your expectations.

Let them bring a friend.

Let them (when ready) do a delivery.

In a few years these young kids will be the mainstay and talent of the keel boat's program.

That adult skipper will be the lucky old guy in the fleet with the hot kids running his boat, and the young kids will be saving for their own boats.

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Unfortunately, this is not an either or answer. All three must synchronize their effort to product the desired results. In the days of the CCA rule and early IOR, club juniors were recruited to help sail the boats. This was in addition to their own sailing they did with the club's junior program - whatever boats they were using at the time. Although I did not start sailing until I was in my early 20's an large number of my friends were in junior programs 40 - 50 years ago. The other common trait was most of our parents sailed - so growing up in a yacht club was a natural thing. The LTS (Learn to Sail) programs are a must and including juniors in activities where adults and juniors mix is a added value step. And - Allow the kids to have fun - not everything must be structured! Let them sail without supervision - scary I know - but they will survive and they will learn and more importantly - they will stay!

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Big challenge. One design classes are not flush with cash to be doing huge marketing programs and members are resistant to higher dues to pay for them. Folks are not super-fond of volunteering to go to boat shows, set up learn to sail days, set up go for free sailboat ride days, etc., but those are what made sailing back in the day and it's the one on one approach that works best with advancing any activity (sales). NSA can be part of the solution, but that would divert funds from Olympic, something they are wont to do. Yacht Clubs are kinda starting to understand they have to do more than just have sailing instruction. Now to get them to understand they need to work together with other clubs in their region and pick from a variety of one-designs (perhaps no more than 10 or 15 in an RSA) to have one or two singlehand boats, at least one frostbite boat, a doublehanded boat (not 420), a triplehanded boat, a daysail keel boat, and more if the membership can support more than that. Smaller clubs might leave out a doublehanded or a triplehanded or the daysail keel boat (if launching is an issue). Different boats are better suited to certain sailing conditions than others; keep the regional flair that's made sailing in America so grand. But, PROMOTION is the key.

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It is simple. The kids need to change their peer group from kids their own age, to handing out with adults. It worked well 40 years ago. But the youth programs today have segregated youth sailing into age brackets (Opti, 420, High School, Collegiate). How is this done? Way to simple - require adults to have 20% off their crew or more, be age 21 or less. And the youth must not be railmeat, but given responsibility onboard. I promise, retention of youth into adult sailing will explode.

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In Venice Florida the Venice Youth Boating Association has been training kids 9-18 years old to sail since 1952, and in that time have graduated thousands of them. On almost any Saturday, year round, and on weekdays in the summer, you can see Optis, lasers and 420s racing in the bay. Venice has an excellent inlet from the Gulf of Mexico and is an ideal place for almost any keelboat of reasonable size. As of today, I know of only one adult who is a graduate of VYBA who ever races with us and, since I run all the keel boat races in town, I'm certain that has been the case for years. Clearly there should be some sort of community sailing club so that young people can have some chance to continue sailing after VYBA or college, and I would welcome any help from any source to get something started.

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What we need to keep the sport alive is large numbers of kids who enjoy it so much that they do it for fun when they grow up. if this doesn't happen, we will end up with a very small number of serious sailors who travel to a very small number of sponsored events and the complete death of broad based sailing competition in most of the country.

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I was a strong youth sailor, international opti teams, top 5 in multiple bemis finals, qualified for 3 college nationals and I don't sail anymore. It's not because I don't want to or can't, it because as a young adult the cost of sailing is so incredibly high that I can not afford to continue. Between cost of boats and travel expenses, it's too much compared to the other necessities I need to pay for. Expect for the well off sailors, I feel that most of my friends from sailing are in the same boat as I. I'm lost as to what to do, Bc I do love to sail and compete but i don't see how it is possible at this stage in my life.

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I really think all three should do more. But if you look at the successful one design classes, they keep juniors sailing by involving them in adult racing, through family, club or class relationships. Classes that are good at this include Lightnings, Snipes, Thistles and E Scows.

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Looking back at a lifetime of sailing, cruising and racing I believe adults getting kids, teens and young adults to crew was the driving force that got me involved and kept me interested. From the NYYC cruises to race weeks to Wednesday nights this is what worked in the past. Why not now?

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Keelboats always need crew and kids are the ideal source. As they learn more, they can be given more responsibility - including, at times, the helm. I sailed in High School at the Upper Thames Sailing Club in England. The Crew Wanted/Crew Available board worked so stray kids like me would show up knowing that there was a really good chance of getting a ride and skippers whose regular crews were not able to attend still showed up because they knew that there were keen kids looking for a ride. I started sailing in 1960 and am still involved. Aside from owning a Laser for 14 years, and a Sonar for 9 years although I only steered for 5 of those, I was happiest as crew/tactician.

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Ask the old salts. They all started sailing with their parents, their friends' parents, and their parents' friends. US Sailing Big Boat program helps, Storm Trysail Foundation IOR and Jr. Safety at Sea helps get kids to transition to big boats. One design keel boats that fail to ease the weight and crew limits for kids are not helping. Every open big boat regatta should have a prize for under 25 year-olds crewing a boat. The kids who won the Stamford Vineyard Race 2013 in a J105 should be on the cover of Sailing World.