

# The Washington Sailing Marina



**O**n a sunny September morning with crisp blue sky, I walked into the ship store at the Washington Sailing Marina in Alexandria, located on the Potomac between Washington D.C. and Old Town Alexandria. Phil Geishert, the manager, greeted me. Phil is a retired military man, and it was the military that brought him to the Nation's Capital. He enjoys sailing and once owned a 25 foot sailboat. He has been with the Marina for 12 years.

The Washington Sailing Marina is the largest sailing marina in the Upper Potomac. It is owned by the National Park Service and has been operated by Guest Services, Inc. since 1948. The marina houses around 673 boats, from Sunfish and other one-designs to 35 foot sailboats. The smaller boats are in dry slips, and the larger ones occupy the 200 slips that the

marina rents out. The annual fees range from \$532 for a 12 footer to dry-slip to \$2,688 for a slip for a 35 foot sailboat. The marina is constantly full. At the moment there is a one-year waiting list for space.

Although a large number of boats are not affiliated with any sailing club, there are four major sailing clubs whose members house their boats at the marina and thus host year-round events and regattas.

These are the Potomac River Sailing Association, Dangerfield Island Sailing Club, Sailing Club of Washington, and Sea Scot Ship 1942. In addition, the Georgetown University sailing team has been practicing and hosting their races at the facility for the last eight years.

Aside from the various races and regattas organized by the five sailing clubs, the marina itself hosts the Leukemia

**Leukemia Cup Regatta**

**Photo courtesy of PRSA**





The Lightnings at the Leukemia Cup Regatta

Photo courtesy of PRSA

Cup Regatta every September. It is the largest regatta held in the Upper Potomac with over 100 sailboats attending and is held in conjunction with the President's Cup. This year, 155 boats participated, and the regatta raised over \$100,000.

The marina also offers sailing school for children and adults. The children's sailing school runs from the first week of June to mid-August. Amy Zang has been the director of the school for many years. There are usually around 135 children, ranging from ages 10 to 15. It is divided into Beginner's Class, Intermediates, and Advanced, with the beginners learning how to handle a Sunfish, a Flying Scott for an intermediates, and a Hobie for advanced students. Children certified as skippers by the U. S.

Sailing Association will be qualified to rent sailboats from the marina anytime as long as they are accompanied by an adult. The fee for a one-week sailing course is around \$200, and registration starts in March. At the end of the summer, around mid-August, the marina hosts The James Morgan Youth Regatta for the children. James Morgan was the first manager of the marina.

The adult classes run from May to October. Class offerings range from a two-day course onboard a 19 foot Flying Scott for beginners to a weekend course onboard a 25 foot Catalina for experienced sailors. The fees for a twelve-hour course range from \$175 to \$220. All the classes, both children and adult, are much in demand and usually fill up rapidly.

Phil Geishert at the Spinnaker'n Spoke Ship Shop



Predictably, The Washington Marina is a very busy place, and the various sailing clubs have to reserve water space for their events with the District of Columbia Harbor Police. In addition, every Tuesday evening, The Dangerfield Island sailing Club hosts races for their larger boats. There is the Albacoe Race on Thursday evenings hosted by the Potomac River Sailing Association, and races for Penguins and Lasers held every Wednesday evening.

Other facilities at the marina include the Potomac Landing Restaurant, the Afterdeck Café, both with indoor and outdoor seating; and the Spinnaker'n Spoke Ship Shop.

The Washington Marina is designated as a Virginia Clean Marina, which means that the marina upholds and supports the Clean Water Act, improvement on the environment, recycling and proper handling of sewage and refuse. This is a designation Phil Geishert is very proud of.

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