

TN SAILS

The monthly newsletter of Tamil Nadu Sailing Association



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Annual General Meeting of the TNSA



Members at the AGM

The TNSA held its Annual General Meeting on Sep 26th at its affiliate club, the Seafarer's close to our sailing premises in the Port. There was enthusiastic participation as this was an election year and there were a lot of exciting things happening in the near future like the India International Regatta, the Optimist Coastal Nationals and members wanted to hear about them straight from the Commodore.



Ashok welcomes members to the AGM

Welcoming the members, our Commodore spoke about the need to take the sport to schools and requested parents and children who were already in the sport to be its brand ambassadors and get more children into sailing. He also highlighted the India International Regatta that will be held

in November at the TNSA and requested members to come forward and volunteer for the event as a number of hands will be needed for manning its various stations.

After running through the agenda of the AGM, the elections were held wherein the following contestants were elected in the new committee of the TNSA



Commodore Ashok and incoming Hon Sec Ajit

Commodore : Mr. Ashok Thakkar
Vice Commodore: Mr. Ravi Santhanam
Hon Secretary : Mr. Ajit Diaz
Hon Treasurer : Mr. S.V. Balachander
Capt of Boats : Capt Ravikumar Manian
Official Handicapper
and Measurer : Dr. Mushtaqh Ali

Inspiration comes to TNSA!



Inspiration II at the TNSA

On a beautiful Saturday morning, end of September, out of nowhere, a 29 foot sailing keelboat appeared at the mouth of the Chennai Harbour unheralded. When the Marine Police and the Coast Guard stopped her for inspection, it transpired that there was a lone German sailor in the boat and he had no papers to either berth his vessel in an Indian Port or step on Indian soil. Soon the knowledge that a sailboat had reached Chennai and was waiting outside for clearance set TNSA abuzz with activity as Commodore Ashok Thakkar set about trying to help the lone seafarer get his clearance from immigration and Customs to berth his boat at TNSA. And that is how TNSA made the acquaintance of a wanderer of the world, Scholz Gerhard Horst from East Germany and his mobile home 'Inspiration II'.

By the end of the day, temporary permission had been obtained from the Customs, Immigration and Port Authorities to bring the man and his home inside and Horst, after securing his boat alongside our Maxis, was able to join us for the AGM dinner. Fascinated by his journey across the oceans, throughout the evening the TNSA sailors plied him with questions, which he was only too glad to answer. Feigning regret he apologized for his loquaciousness which made him "speak like a waterfall" and blamed it on his preceding period of forty-four days of *sagarvas*.

Fifty-nine year old Scholz Gerhard Horst had set sail from Berlin on July 5th 2008 on his Inspiration II, a 29 foot keelboat made of steel and painted blue and white, on a journey around the world. Sailing west, he stopped at England, Spain, Portugal, French Guinea, Canada, Columbia and the Galapagos Islands before reaching Thursday Island, the northernmost township of Australia and his last port of call. From Thursday Island, he set sail on the 2nd of August and spent 45 days crossing the Indian Ocean to reach Chennai on the 26th of September. Unlike most of the sailors who set out to create records of some sort or other, this man set out to just see places and meet people and get to know the different cultures of the world.

Unlike the record setting adventurous souls, this man had no support teams to ensure his safety on the high seas and arrange logistics on landfall. In a spirit of true adventure, he had set out in a small boat all by himself braving the elements equipped with a GPS and sailing knowledge of a lifetime. "The idea of sailing around the world occurred to him when he was only twenty years of age. But as East Germany was a Soviet Bloc country, it was expressly



Horst recounts his voyage in his living room next to the kitchen

...Annual General Meeting of the TNSA

Eight Committee members

Mr. Ashish Mehta
Mr. V. Chandrashekar
Mr. Bijoy Pillai
Ms. Nilma Shah
Mr. Mylai Prabhakar
Mr. Sarath Reddy
Mr. James Kurian
Mr. Patrick K Vetrivel.



Most promising young sailor Ashwin receives his award from Commodore Ashok

Part of the evening's program included honoring and recognizing members who had worked untiringly to support the efforts of the TNSA to raise funds, run national championships and participate in the Day out at Sea programs. It was a time to say a big thank you to Deepak, Ashwini, Murali, Shantha, Rajaram, Sidharth C and V and award the most promising young sailor of the TNSA - Ashwin M.



Members gyrate to the music

Following the AGM was the Club Nite where a number of members participated in an evening of good cheer. There was music and a lot of dancing to complement the hogging and quaffing making it an enjoyable evening for all.



Dinner on the lawns

Immiscible amongst them was a slight figure burnt red and sporting a beard and glasses enjoying himself tremendously in the midst of such a community of families and children who were into sailing.

Read on about this wayfarer in the next story.



His reference library next to his navigation station

forbidden to buy a keel boat otherwise a whole town would have sailed out hanging like fenders, spreaders and for all you know like the big gymnastic mast rising to the matka that one sees in Mumbai in connection with Ganesh Chaturthi holding a collage of canvas to make a sweet getaway. Luckily for Horst, the Germany's united in 1989 November, a day when the Berlin wall came down and Germans on either side of the Brandenburg Gate could claim that they belonged to the same nation. As this is not a story of German Unification, we shall move on to Horst who came here even as early as 1982 with a trade delegation to N Delhi. You can very well imagine the frowning Talibanized structure of Communist party discipline but our German friend got enough opportunity to meet Indians and sample food that was deliriously good. All the while nursing his ambition to set sail he finally got to buy a boat and set sail.



Leaving for Sri Lanka and beyond

Inspiration II is a Swedish made boat and the cabin is designed more or less like our maxis, though a little larger. A small kerosene stove takes care of his cooking needs while a kerosene engine with a 120 litre tank helps navigate in and out of ports. A solar panel provides sufficient power for his GPS and Laptop and he has a mini library with some essential books like 'Medicine at Sea', an English Dictionary and a few other books to spend those lonely hours with.

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A Winged Fantasy



Winged fantasy flies in Chennai

She is sleek, she is fast, she skims over the water lightly and she is unforgiving with inattentiveness. Unimaginatively named 29er, she flies faster than the wind and has captured the heart of many Indian sailors. After Yachting Association of India imported twenty of these super-fast skiffs, her Australian designer and producer Julian Bethwaite sent across a company representative who was a skiff sailor, to train the Indian sailors. Clynton Wade Lehman, a South African now settled in Australia and an Olympic sailor, reached Chennai on the fourth of September to train about 25 or so eager sailors in the exciting new boat for a whole week. Luckily, British skiff sailor Mathew Grant currently on deputation in India, also chipped in for the first 3 days of the camp and ended up being appointed the National Class Coach for the 29er class.



Clynton totally involved with his students

After rigging the boats most of the first day, when Clynton asked how many thought they could take a boat out, several hands shot up confidently. There was about 8 to 10 knots of wind and Clynton made the decision to take out only 2 boats, the wisdom of which became apparent to us only later. That day Clynton and Mathew gave a familiarizing ride to all the trainees and the first lesson was learnt. This boat was different from everything else we had ever sailed before! All prior sailing knowledge seemed to go topsy turvy along with the sailors and the boats. Even Mathew, who was perhaps a little rusty with skiff sailing or perhaps the extra portion of the delicious lunch had something to do with it, found himself overboard on many occasions. One sailor, after spending most of the afternoon swimming, put her hands up, "will someone who knows something about this boat take it over please?" At the end of the day all cockiness had evaporated and the sailors considered the boat with such respect that when Clynton decided to take only 2 boats out the next day also, there wasn't even a murmur of protest!



Mathew shows how to sail the 29er like a board

It was really fortunate that Mathew was present for the first three days as it might otherwise have been difficult for Clynton to handle the entire bunch of sailors all by himself in their initial learning days with the boat. As such at the end of a training day, trainee and coach were deadbeat and the noisy and rambunctious crowd of the first day had mellowed into a quiet and reflective one within just two days. But as winds stayed light, confidence returned and one could see remarkable progress in just three or four days. When the Gennaker was rigged up, (the gennaker is a sail that is a cross between a spinnaker and a Genoa in that it goes past the jib as a Genoa does but functions only as a spinnaker for downwind sailing; technically it is known as asymmetrical spinnaker and this is the rage of most of the newer class of boats as it is very easy to hoist and lower, and can be seen even on the Volvo Ocean going 70 foot skiffs!) the sailors were ready for it though one sailor did manage to accomplish what nobody else had been able to, capsize Clynton! The high point of the day was when Clynton put up a one-man show with the Gennaker and all; there was not a single soul present who wasn't wowed by this display of sailing expertise.

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29er training camp

- Ayesha Lobo



A boat like no other

The 29ers have just arrived in India. It is the first time ever that these boats have been introduced to the various sailors of different clubs spread over the country. When I first heard of their arrival I was keen to learn to sail the boat. These boats look like paper planes but move like mini rockets on the water. I noticed they have grip all over the boat and it's a single trapeze boat. We had two international coaches, Mathew and Clynton. Mathew came to assist Clynton. Clynton was from Australia, he was a 49er sailor and an 18foot skiff sailor. The camp started off with 25 sailors from all over the country, comprising 12 teams. Later, when people began to drop out for whatever reasons, we dropped in number, but we had more helms than crews, so in the end everyone was crewing for the extra helms, taking turns.

First day of the camp, full of excitement I entered the TNSA club premises to find myself surrounded by 6 brand new 29er boat rigs, it was awesome. We first got acquainted with the coaches and fellow sailors, then the coach opened out one of the rigs and we were shown how to rig the new 29er boat. We were learning to rig, practically the whole morning till the early afternoon. After final rigging in the afternoon, the coach gave us a brief introduction to the 29er's and later took us out sailing on the water. All of us spent about 15 minutes on the boat with an instructor, Oh! What a feeling. It was the first time I had laid foot on the boat



Keep her flat buddy!

and tried hard to handle it as it wanted to fly. At the end of the day, the coach told me that I was the best crew and I was thrilled to my core with the first day of the camp.

I needed to both helm and crew during this training camp, as I felt it was important for me to do both and being the only girl from Mumbai, I felt my training was to be able to coach a crew and train a team for any event, once I was back. That evening, we were divided into 2 groups and a schedule was made, in the morning the Bombay and RMYC sailors were paired and in the afternoon the IIR sailors and TNSA

A new day, I awoke early and went to the club for the morning session. Initially, I was a bit uncomfortable, but soon after getting the feel of the boat and I was able to toss around (tacks/gybes) exploring my skills with the boat, it was tremendous fun. The morning session was good but the afternoon session was much better, whereby I sailed as a crew. That afternoon, the wind conditions were light and perfect to learn. At first the instructor came with me in the boat, and showed me my various new tasks, with the main and jib but he did not teach me about the gennaker as it was too early. I was actually getting the hang of sailing the boat pretty fast, but unfortunately, I had to get out of the boat to let others try it too. We finished the day with a briefing, where everyone shared their experiences on the new boat.



Mathew elaborates a point as Deepak looks on

The next two days, I did the same routine except that with each day, I found myself one step better and faster and a little more experienced. On the 5th day, we brought out the gennaker, "Now we were talking business!" It was indeed interesting as we were made to watch a training video followed by the sailing session. The batches were now merged into one, as it was easier and there were a lot of sailors who could not continue the camp. It was getting better for the rest of us though. That day, I sailed for a major part of the session, from about 10.30 am to about 3.30 pm. We smuggled a few munchies on board our 29er, but that was not enough to last us. We were very tired but still continued quarrelling for the only boat with the gennaker. It was an amazing feeling for a team, when the gennaker was up and boat planing with the crew out on the trapeze was even better. We learned a lot that day, mainly about the gennaker, but we also learned quite a few tactics for sailing with kites in different boats.



Listening in rapt attention at a briefing

The next day our coach was unwell. I think it was partially our fault for driving him crazy on the water. We were now under the care of the two oldest and wise sailors, Shantha and Bala, who were the assistants to the coach till then. That day we were just practising our manoeuvres and having mini races from mark to mark, just amongst ourselves. We enjoyed driving them mad too with our crazy demands and our prominent request to sail outside the inner harbour.



Clynton and Capt of Boats Ravikumar brief sailors before cast off

On the last day of the camp, the coach sat down with us in the morning and went over everything we had done in the previous sailing sessions and made sure we knew our basics, our mistakes and our manoeuvres. Then we went out on the water and had an extreme final session. We raced with the gennaker and did a lot of pacing too. It was fun but at the same time a great learning experience too. We all

sailed till we dropped and when I say dropped, I mean every sense of the word. We were so tired we fell asleep either in the car or train or as soon as we reached back home.

The 29er training camp was very well organised and all the sailors would agree with me when I say that we had a truly good learning experience. We learned stuff that we could not only use on the 29er, but on other boats too, it was indeed a worthwhile experience none of us will ever forget. From capsizing on Monday to full-fledged racing on Friday, it was a real achievement. Our coaches were very understanding and helped us to not only learn the boat inside out, but fully understand how everything in the boat works; I made a little 29er notebook full of technical notes from rigging and basic skills to racing tactics. Many thanks to him, we can now sail the boat almost like professionals. I personally would like to thank the coaches and the organisers for making this training camp at Chennai, for me, an unforgettable experience and Ashok Uncle for his warm hospitality.

...A Winged Fantasy



Keeping the boat flat at all times

Gentle and good-humoured, Clynton was an excellent coach, patient with the sailors and sensitive to individual needs, though his eyes did twinkle with mischief every once in a while. Except for one day when he succumbed to Chennai weather and Indian food, maybe an overdose of the samosas that he liked so much, Clynton was out on water all day everyday during the camp, himself sailing a fair amount too. Bala, whose Laser has been packed and put away in favour of the 29er, was there assisting Clynton every single day, it is hard to imagine how he finds time to earn a living! By the end of the training camp several pairs had become good teams and had acquired fair amount of proficiency in the boat. As Clynton explained, one had to follow the mast and keep the boat absolutely flat by playing with the sheets, one balanced with the sails, not body as in other craft. Imagine having a tennis ball in the centre of the bow and make sure it doesn't roll off the boat, and stop scampering like squirrels all over the boat he says with a much-amused glint in his eye. Simple enough as an idea but a lot harder to practice.

As to how hard it was, you will learn from the personal account of one of the trainees, Ayesha Lobo of RBYC.

In Brief



Optimists set out for their camp

First Byte

While there has been much talk about the superfast 29er, one of our sailors has been quietly pegging away at another newly introduced boat, Byte, the only one of its kind in the country so far. With a view at an attempt for qualifying for the Youth Olympics in this class, Varun Thakkar has been hard at practice in this boat which is somewhat similar to the Laser but a lot lighter and less stable.



Varun receives his gold

Varun attended a 10-day sailing clinic at Singapore in September held by the Singapore Armed Forces Yacht Club, training hard with the local sailors. At the end of the training, he participated in the monthly regatta held by the SAFYC and won the Gold in a fleet of 14 boats. In the three races held, overcoming stiff local competition he finished in the 1st, 2nd and 2nd positions to win the Gold. Good going Varun, TNSA wishes you the best for the Youth Olympics Qualifiers.

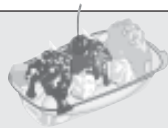
Hong Kong Optimist National Championships 2009

Eight Indian sailors left for Hong Kong late in September to take part in the Honk Kong Open Nationals to be held from Oct 1st to 4th by Hebe Haven Yacht Club at Port Shelter, Hong Kong. Five of the sailors are from TNSA, Praveen Prabhakar, Rufus Patrick and K C Ganapathy who finished in the top three positions in the Selection Trials held in May in Mumbai, Niveditha Ravivarman who finished first among the girls with a perfect score of 9 firsts and Nicholas, Rufus's younger brother. Three other sailors from RBYC, Mumbai have also left to participate in the Championships Upamanyu Dutta, Danesh Motivala and Diya Correa. TNSA wishes all the Indian sailors fair winds and great sailing.

Optimist Coaching Camp

September has been a busy month with a lot of sailors turning up everyday to sail what with several holidays during the month. TNSA chief coach Munna Jamal decided to make use of the opportunity to conduct an intensive training camp for our Optimist sailors who need to be prepared for the Nationals in October and then the IIR coming up in November. A ten day coaching camp conducted from the 18th of Sep saw several of the younger sailors improving tremendously and learning to cope with high winds and swells. The result of the intensive coaching showed when on the last day of the camp a squall hit, there was not a single Opti capsized whereas every other class of boat went belly up that day. A growing band of TNSA Tigers, hungry for honour, are getting ready to go out and show their mettle in the Opti Nationals and the IIR. Go Tigers!

Bonne Bouche



PARENT - Job Description

POSITION

Mom, Mommy, Mama, Ma
Dad, Daddy, Dada, Pa, Pop

JOB DESCRIPTION

Long term, team players needed, for challenging, permanent work in an often chaotic environment.

Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work variable hours, which will include evenings and weekends and frequent 24 hour shifts on call.

Some overnight travel required, including trips to primitive camping sites on rainy weekends and endless sports tournaments in far away cities!

Travel expenses not reimbursed.

Extensive courier duties also required.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The rest of your life.

Must be willing to be hated, at least temporarily, until someone needs \$5.

Must be willing to bite tongue repeatedly.

Also, must possess the physical stamina of a pack mule and be able to go from zero to 60 mph in three seconds flat in case, this time, the screams from the backyard are not someone just crying wolf.

Must be willing to face stimulating technical challenges, such as small gadget repair, mysteriously sluggish toilets and stuck zippers.

Must screen phone calls, maintain calendars and coordinate production of multiple homework projects.

Must have ability to plan and organize social gatherings for clients of all ages and mental outlooks.

Must be a willing to be indispensable one minute, an embarrassment the next.

Must handle assembly and product safety testing of a half million cheap, plastic toys, and battery operated devices.

Must always hope for the best but be prepared for the worst.

Must assume final, complete accountability for the quality of the end product.

Responsibilities also include floor maintenance and janitorial work throughout the facility.

WAGES AND COMPENSATION

Get this! You pay them!

Offering frequent raises and bonuses.

A balloon payment is due when they turn 18 because of the assumption that college will help them become financially independent.

When you die, you give them whatever is left.

The oddest thing about this reverse-salary scheme is that you actually enjoy it and wish you could only do more.

BENEFITS

While no health or dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays and no stock options are offered; this job supplies limitless opportunities for personal growth, unconditional love, and free hugs and kisses for life if you play your cards right.

...Inspiration comes to TNSA!

He has the capacity to stock 100 litres of fresh water, which is insufficient for long hauls, but he supplements it by collecting rainwater. As for food, he says he has a lot of vegetables when he starts out but after a week or two he has to depend on rice and onions, macaroni, bread, tinned food and coffee. "I don't eat much as I am a bad cook", he laughs, "I had a paunch when I set out but now I have lost 10 kilos". A man of few needs indeed. There is also a small bedroom inside with a toilet, but sailing alone, he cannot sleep for longer than an hour at a stretch. Noticing small steps on the mast we wonder aloud if he actually can go up the mast and he obligingly shins up the mast with an agility belying his 59 years and white beard. And what if he falls sick? Very simple, "it is not allowed" he says!

And the mariner is doing this round the world trip for the second time! His first 'Inspiration' carried him 21000 nautical miles during 1996-97 before she sank in the Bay of Mexico without completing the circumnavigation of the earth. He was rescued by a passing ship and survived to tell the tale and set out on a second voyage around the world. "I lost my boat and when I reached home I found I had lost my wife as well", he chuckles, "but now I have found a new boat and a new wife". One hopes she'll still be waiting at the end of this voyage. He has faced storms and piracy to now

reach India after 21000 nautical miles once again and hopes he will be able to finish his dream trip this time. So how did he happen to land up here without the necessary visa and clearances? A storm in the vicinity of his scheduled destination of Galle in Sri Lanka damaged his sails and a head wind made it impossible for him to beat up to the West coast of Sri Lanka. As he neared the next option of Trincomalee, as attempts were made by pirates to board his craft, he managed to flee up north to reach Chennai instead. He will now go to Sri Lanka, get an Indian Visa, sail up to Cochin, Goa and Mumbai before he leaves the Indian shores to head back to his country via Yemen, Egypt and Marseilles.

So what drives a man out into the ocean all alone in a tiny little sailboat leaving his wife, son and daughter, and all that is comfortingly familiar to brave the unknown? The question was met with a simple "Oh, I wanted to see places and meet people". And doesn't he get just a wee bit lonely now and then by himself in the middle of a vast ocean? "I talk to my boat, she is my girlfriend" and he goes on to add, "I would love to have a wife who will sail with me, but in Germany I couldn't find anyone to sail with me. Perhaps I should look for an Indian wife, I see so many women sailing here" he twinkles. We hope you fulfill your dreams and sail back to your home in safety, we wish you fair weather and good sailing for the rest of your voyage.