

Clark Lake Yacht Club hosts sailing classes



A student rigs up a sailboat with the assistance of a CLYC sailing instructor.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

**By John Hummer
Editor**

Have you ever wanted to experience the fun of sailing and develop the skills to make a sailboat go where you want it to go? Do you know someone that might want to learn to sail? If you answered "yes", you're in luck.

The Clark Lake Yacht Club is now offering two, four-week "on water" CLYC Legacy Learn2Sail classes, with the first session starting May 7 and the second on June 4. The "on water" sessions are preceded by two "on land" training days, April 23 and April 30. All classes start at 6:30 p.m.

"People that don't have any sailing background are welcome to attend our training classes – no sailing experience is required," said CLYC program manager and sailing instructor Craig Hamilton. "We start from the basics and build up from there. We also have enough sessions to allow people to build their expertise at their own speed. We're not in a hurry to push people through the program."

The program includes sailing lessons, a sailing textbook, YouTube referenced videos, and a certificate for each participant. Each student must bring their own lifejacket. Experienced instructors and sailing mentors teach in small groups using club and personal sailboats. Skills students will learn include setup, launching, capsize actions, setting sails, steering, changing direction, docking, and disassembly. Interested students may skipper and crew in a fun sailboat race during the last lesson.

Hamilton noted that the CLYC

is offering a tremendous new opportunity for participants who prove that they have gained enough experience and knowledge by passing the "CLYC Sailpass Test" to use CLYC club sailboats and facilities June 1-30 at no additional cost. After June 30, students can join CLYC at half the annual membership rate and can participate in CLYC sailboat racing by crewing or helping the race committee.

"We want to encourage people to use our facilities and share the fun that we have sailing with others," he said. "Our goal is getting people to be really decent, independent sailors."

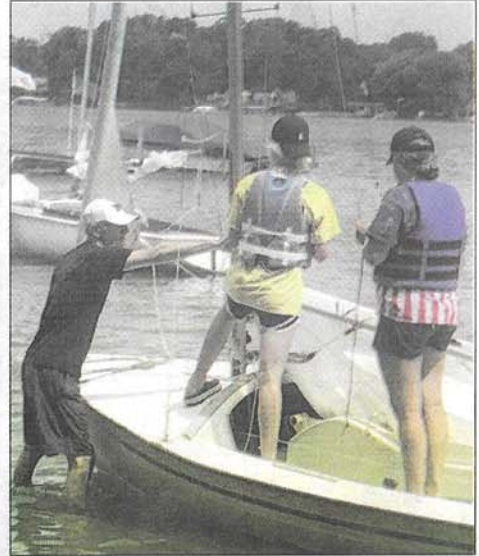
The "CLYC Legacy" terminology for the sailing course is the club's idea to share the camaraderie of the historic club which was founded in 1931.

"We're trying to promote and encourage people to sail because it's a legacy we want to pass on to others and others have passed on to us," Hamilton said. "We try to do it in a friendly and helpful way so that they can enjoy sailing as well."

The CLYC is making an effort to reach young families this year. Hamilton added that sailing is fun for him because it was something that was passed on to him by his father.

"He went out and developed an interest in sailing because it was something, he could do with us as we grew older," Hamilton said. "I hope to be able to pass the sailing legacy on to my family and other generations."

The yacht club is a family-friendly facility with a beautiful sandy beach and swimming area. It also has a fresh water spring where frogs like to hang



CLYC Learn2Sail program manager and instructor Craig Hamilton, left, begins the job of hoisting the mast with the assistance of past students Kate

out.

"You know how little kids love frogs," he said. For young children there is also a play area.

"It's a place where you can have fond memories as a young child," he added. "Probably 50 percent of our club today are people who grew up there as young children and wanted to continue that for themselves and pass that on to their families."

Hamilton encourages sailing class participants to bring along their families to enjoy the facilities while the participant is on the water in class.

"Sailing is something that allowed me to connect with my family, with nature, and to get outside and enjoy a natural hobby. It's just a relaxing way to get away from today's high-tech trappings. It's something that can be shared with other people, your friends, family, and you can meet new people along the way as well," he said.

Along with being a family and friend-friendly activity, there are many other benefits to sailing, Hamilton noted.

"It's quite thrilling when you have a nice breeze and it's refreshing because the wind is blowing in your face."

"You can just live in the moment and enjoy the things nature and God provide for you."

Speaking of the wind, the class will teach students how to react and respond.

"It's easier every time you do it because you learn from your past experiences," he said, adding that sailing is also a low-cost activity when you compare it to a lot of other activities that

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Craig Hamilton, left, inspects the sail of the *Rebel* sailboat while past students Kate O'Neil, standing on boat on left, and Madeline Maci help with the rigging.

people can pursue and is a totally "green" activity with no use of fuel needed on the water.

"Just being outside on Clark Lake, whatever the weather, is a good day," Hamilton said. "Every time you go, you come back refreshed with a clear mind and ready for the next challenge and excitement life brings you."

For CLYC Legacy Learn2Sail session fees, complete class schedules, and more information, contact Hamilton at 248-705-0312, craigwham@gmail.com; or CLYC Commodore Mike Britz at 517-420-4230, CLYClegacy@gmail.com, or visit clarklakeyachtclub.org.