

Broadening Horizons

By: Don Furland

It was a dark and stormy night. The seas were angry.....

Actually, it was a very pleasant morning as Stu Karlson and I drove to Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota for day two of American Sailing Associations (ASA) Instructor Qualification Clinic (IQC). It's a challenging three day course that evaluates our ability to, not only sail, but effectively and efficiently provide instruction on the water and in the classroom.



Captain Joan Gilmore, our clinic instructor/evaluator, is a USCG Certified 100 Ton Captain with a vast amount of experience. Our class consisted of ten instructor candidates (pictured on the left) with very different backgrounds and experience levels. It was interesting to watch Captain Gilmore as she tested and evaluated each of us to ensure we were up to ASA standards. Not everyone passes the clinic the first time, and Stu and I were relieved when we successfully received our log book endorsements.

Being a good sailor is like being a good pilot. If you don't stay current and practice, you will not have the ability to fly, or sail, safely. Moreover, a healthy thirst for continued improvement through higher education should be the mindset of every sailor. A seemingly nice sunny Texas afternoon on Lake Grapevine can quickly turn on you if you are not prepared. Every sail should start with proper planning. Knowing the weather forecast, lake level, skill level of your crew, etc., and having a backup plan for everything, is a must. What would you do if your boat starts to fill with water, or a floating tree put a hole in your hull, or a family member falls overboard, or your engine quits? The answers to these scenarios lie within the training received through the various classes offered by ASA.

The American Airlines Sailing Club (AASC) offers a multitude of ASA certified classes, and our syllabus expands on the minimum ASA requirements to provide a more robust training experience. AASC 3rd Thursday Seamanship Meetings, created and hosted by our own Roy Steele, is another example of opportunities to broaden your knowledge base. Additionally, we organize wonderful flotillas every year in different locations throughout the world. These multi boat trips are not only enjoyable, but provide a platform for expanding your knowledge and experience, and makes us all better sailors. I encourage everyone to take advantage of what we, as a club, have to offer. Logon to our website: www.aasailingclub.com

Also, let us know if you have a passion to teach. We would be happy to get you on a training program to prepare you for successful completion of the ASA IQC. You can also take advantage of northern hospitality in Minnesota with Captain Gilmore at Sail Away Sailing School: www.sailawaysailingschool.com. It's a wonderful learning environment and not as hot as Texas in the summer!