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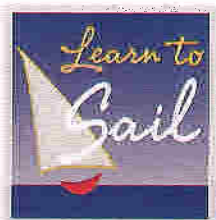
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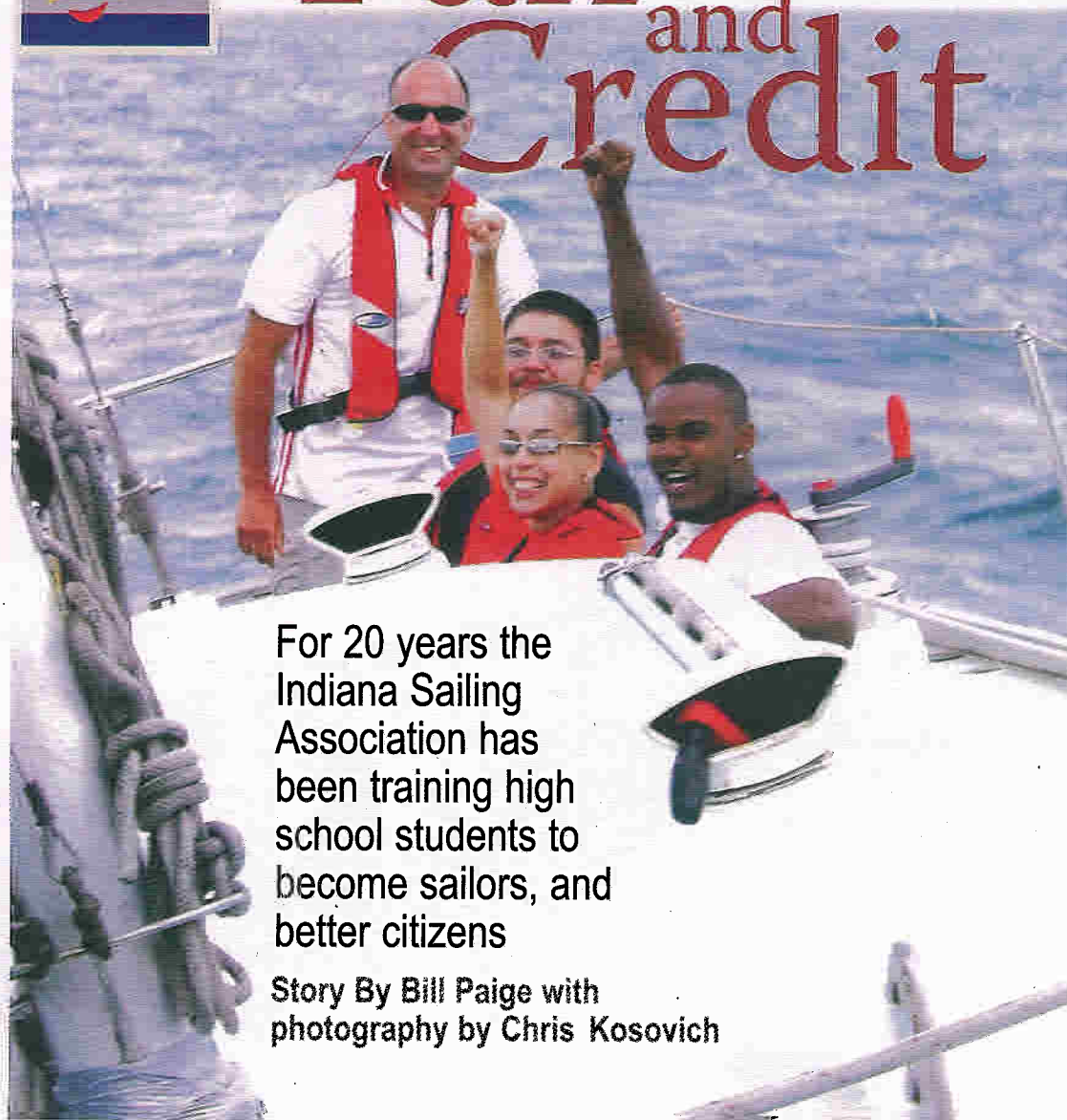
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For Fun and Credit



For 20 years the Indiana Sailing Association has been training high school students to become sailors, and better citizens

Story By Bill Paige with photography by Chris Kosovich

Part of teaching is the sharing of knowledge and experience by those instructing. This is exactly what Geoff Barrow and the Indiana Sailing Association (ISA) has been doing in Northwest Indiana for the past 20 years, teaching local youth the finer points of sailing with a healthy dose of life lessons thrown in.

Barrow, a lifelong sailor and a professor of foreign languages at Purdue University Calumet in Hammond, Indiana, decided in 1989 after talking with the principal at East Chicago Central High School, a local school, to start a sailing program for students with a small secondhand sailboat. Six people signed up for the first class.

"I'm a teacher and I find it very satisfying to pass along something I like," said Barrow, who grew up in England. "I love the water, I have

spent a lot of time on it all around the world. I went on a boat before I ever went in a car."

Over the past two decades the program has grown but it retains its focus on teaching high schoolers to sail. oddslot betting tips

ISA is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization that currently operates with seven regular individuals and a host of others that lend a hand from time to time. They estimated that they have introduced more than 2,000 young people to sailing on Lake Michigan in the past 20 years.

Their fleet of boats includes a handful of midsized sailing boats, 12 Soling class racing sailboats, a powerboat tender and a collection of dinghies, sailboards, windsurfers, beach boats, skulls and kayaks.

"All the boats have been donated," Barrow said. "We have got the word out that we are collecting boats for ISA. We seem to be lucky,

we have picked up momentum. People have been very generous."

The core of the ISA program over the years has been an affiliation with one or more local school systems. In the beginning and over the past decade it has been with East Chicago Central. "It has been a good affiliation with ISA," said Maria Montoya, guidance councilor at East Chicago Central. "We really appreciate the fact that Skipper (Barrow) and everyone else involved is trying to expose our students to something most of them are not familiar with."

The course at East Chicago Central takes place each Wednesday after school and on Saturdays, starting out early each spring in the classroom where students study to take the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Boating Safety Course to get their certification. As the weather gets better later in the spring, the students head out on the water with instructors to put their classroom lessons to the test.

"In order to get the course credits they have to sail at least three times," said Jim Severa, a 20-year volunteer with ISA. "Each time out they get their hands on something. You learn to sail by learning what it takes for a boat to go across the water once the engine is turned off. As the summer goes on the kids get familiar enough to raise the main and furl the jib. They learn what it takes to snigger up in the moorings, whatever it takes to take the boat in and out."

The hope for the program is that in the process of learning how to sail, the students learn much more.

"Our goal is to encourage students to learn a variety of skills and develop a variety of strategies that help them deal with personal and social challenges," Severa said. Sailing builds physical strength, coordination and develops confidence, safety sense and encourages cooperation in pursuit of common goals. Students interact and enjoy a structured and very exciting activity."

Many of the students that take the course are doing so for the first time. "I had a friend who took the class before," said Maurice Edwards, a senior at East Chicago Central. "He said it was a good course to



Scenes from a high school sailing program (clockwise from top left): Young sailors mug for the camera; volunteer Art Levan works on a Soling; sailing coach Tom Case and board Chairman Bob Castle prepare a boat for launching, a new sailor enjoys his time on the water. Previous page, young sailors celebrating aboard *Laura*, an Alberg 37.

take, a nice new experience. I need the course to help graduate, but I also like the idea of getting the boating certification. I am looking forward to the sailing, I am going to be out there all summer."

Although many of those in the class are first timers, it is not uncommon for individuals to enjoy the class so much that they repeat it a second or even third time. "I am taking sailing for the second year," said junior Ericka Ochoa. "First I just took it for the credit, but as I started coming I really began to enjoy it. I have so much fun, especially when we are out on the lake. Skipper is fun and energetic. He makes everything interesting. I'm hooked on

sailing and plan to do it for a long time. I am also going to take the class again next year."

Funding for the organization comes from the East Chicago School System, which covers some of the normal operating expenses. Additional funding for other expenses comes from Foundations of East Chicago. "They have helped with some big capital costs," Barrow said. "This includes some engine work and upgrading our life jackets."

Support and assistance for ISA also comes from the East Chicago Marina, the Lake County Sheriff's Department, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and from the Purdue University Calumet intramu-

ral sailing program, where some of the ISA instructors and coaches developed their skills.

In addition to working with the students at East Chicago Central High School, ISA is actively seeking relationships with other school systems to develop sailing classes elsewhere and possibly future regattas among the schools. The organization also works with many civic, social and church groups in exposing more young people to sailing.

"I kept telling my mom how much fun I had in the class and how great sailing is," Ochoa said. "She thought so much of what I had to say that she had her church group come out for an outing with ISA last August."