What Everyone Needs: Membership Growth

Amy W. Larkin & Martine Zurinskas Lake Lanier Sailing Club



Ornaith Keane Richmond Yacht Club



The Universal Problems

- Aging Membership
- Net new growth of membership
- Membership engagement
- New member retention
- Attracting younger members
- Aging facility / lack of activity & diversity





Our Club Profile

- 38,000 acre lake located approximately 30 miles north of Atlanta
- 96 wet slips; 300 dry slips
- Corp of Engineers Lake (annual lease with renewal every 5 years)
- Clubhouse, bathhouse, private beach and camping area
- 1 FT employee groundskeeper (house on property)
- Regular membership cap of 275 regular members
- 2016 Dues (regular membership)
 - \$805 annual dues
 - \$906 initiation fees
 - Wet slips \$1,435/yr
 - Dry slips \$392/yr
- One design and PHRF fleets
- Strong Junior program
- Fiscally fit







The Hemorrhaging Period

- Y2013 was a bad year; a very bad year...
- Membership numbers not only at an all-time low but membership morale was even lower
- Amy was incoming Commodore for Y2014





Stop the Bleeding

- Both Amy and Martine attended the 2014 US Sailing Leadership Conference
- Keynote speaker was Gary Jobson who opened up his speech about every club have those five members at the bar that don't want any change
- We learned so much from this conference and took away some of the ideas to help rebuild our club



How we solved our problems

- Marketing & Communication
- Adding new programs / activities
- Membership engagement
- Junior Program enhancements and growth
- Community Outreach





Marketing & Communications

- We lacked consistency based on the BoG on communication to the club; no consistent media
- Internal Communication
 - ConstantContact
 - Facebook
 - Email
- External Communication
 - Constant Contact
 - Facebook
 - Meetup.com





Marketing & Communications

- Internal Communication
 - ConstantContact
 - Communicated on a regular basis about upcoming regattas, social events, fleet and membership news.
 - Tool allows you to see the level of open rate, click rates and who's looking at what.
 - Pictures will be your best friend.
 - Annual cost approximately \$400
 - Facebook
 - Easy to "share" posts from fleets, US Sailing, Scuttlebutt, etc.
 - Post pictures of events that had just passed
 - Add upcoming events
 - Email
 - I found this to be the best avenue when communicating an issue that requires details

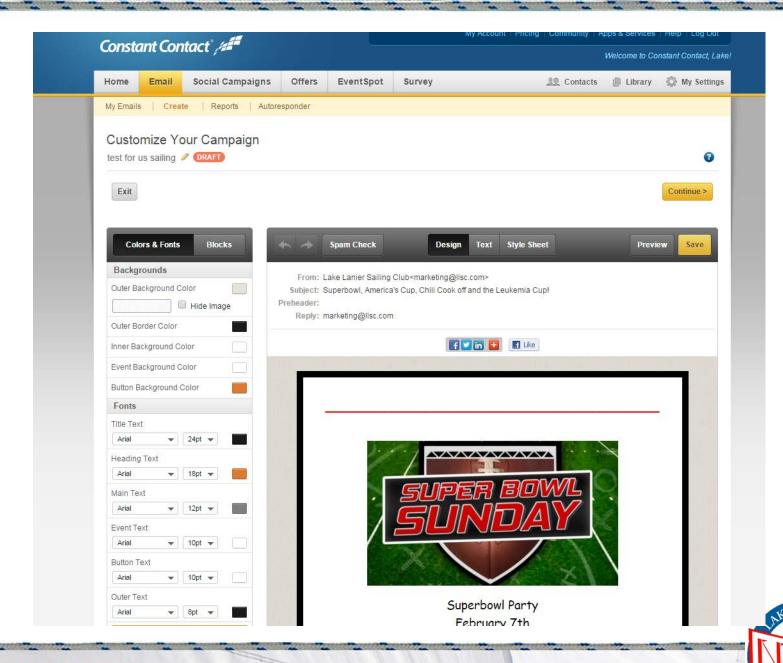


Marketing & Communications

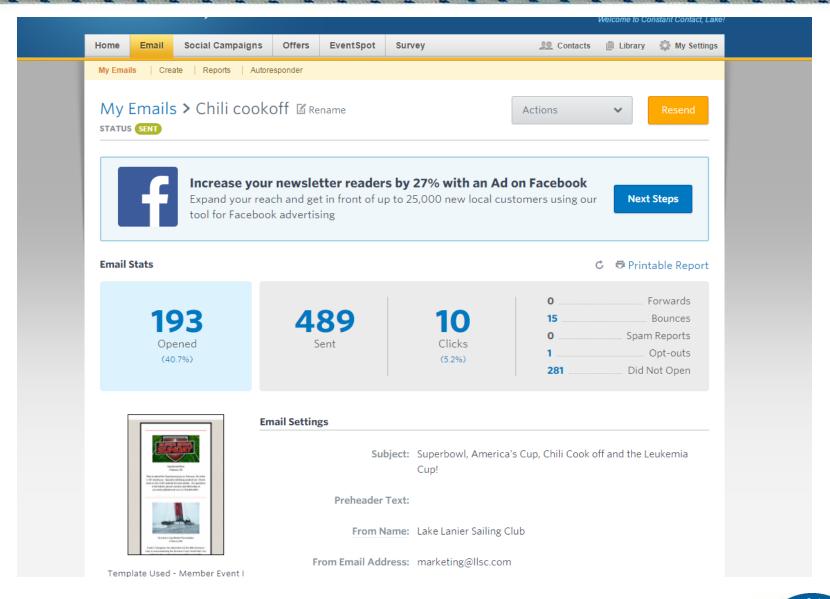
External Communication

- Constant Contact
 - Tool allows you to create separate email lists. Send out overall updates of the club to non-members including open events.
- Facebook
 - Tried a few different advertising methods, cost control and results driven. Spent less than \$800 on ads throughout the year.
- Meetup.com
 - Annual cost is less than \$200/yr. Ability to attract potential members based on similar interests. We would create a "meet up" based on an open event.





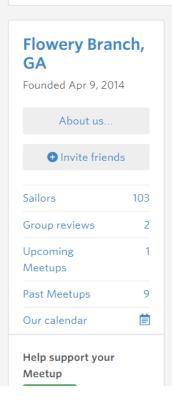


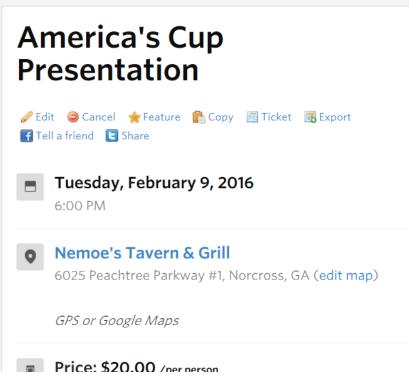


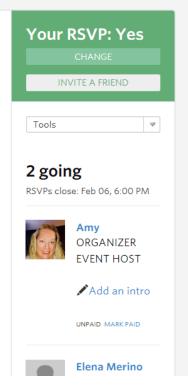


Lake Lanier Sailing Club - Racing Capital of Georgia

Home Members Sponsors Photos Pages Discussions More Group tools My profile

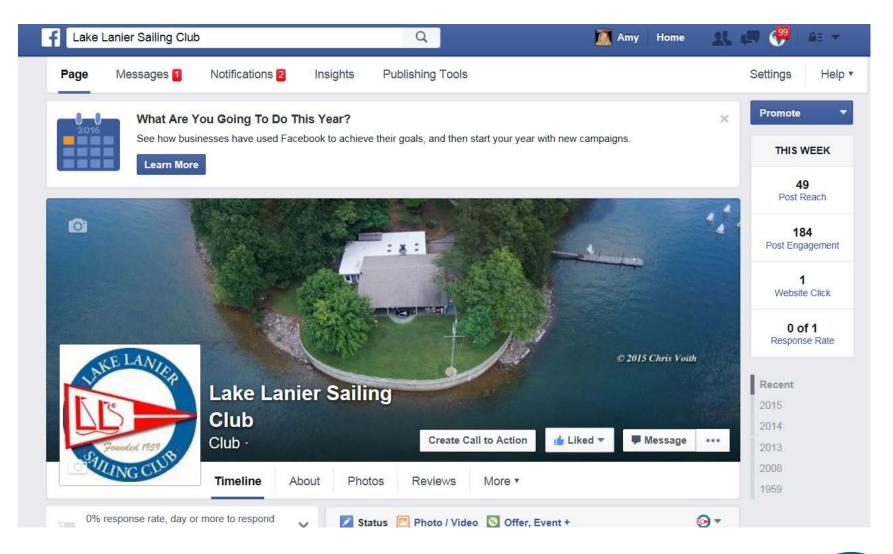




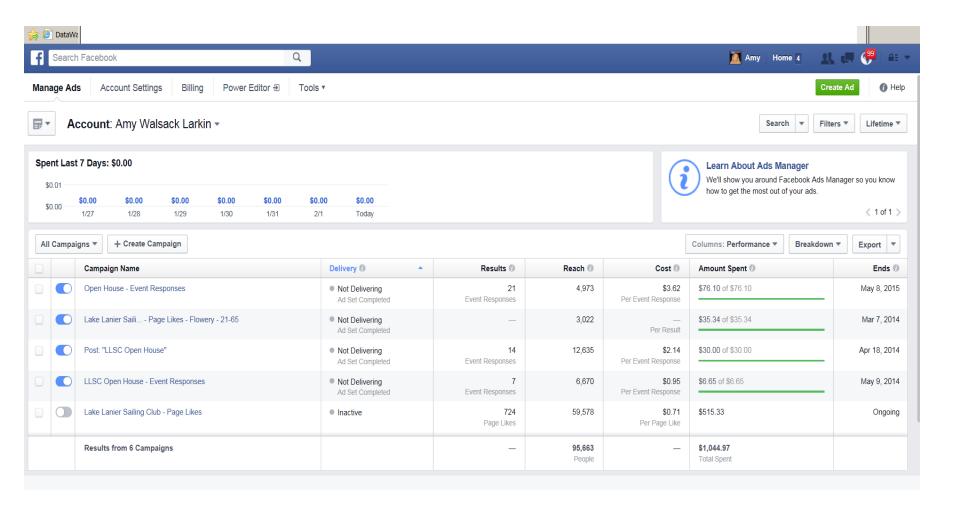














Adding New Programs / Activities

- Added an Open House event
- Refreshed our brochure
- Strong membership committee chair and support group
- Created a monthly potluck event that was open to non-members
- Added an adult training program for members and non-members



Open House

- Annual Event
 - Tours of Club
 - Hotdogs, snacks, beverages
 - Fleet boat rides
 - Knot making table
 - Mock races
 - Boat staging area
- Audience
 - Adult and families in the metro area
 - Advertised on Facebook, meetup.com, membership referrals
 - 2014 attendance approx. 80; 2015 approx. 150
 - Gained big interest in Junior Sailing and Adult learn to sail; many converted to membership
- Biggest reward membership bonding







The Numbers

- New Membership Growth from 2014 & 2015
- 49% in Y2014 and 58% in Y2015 of memberships were driven from the Junior Program
- Total Revenue Impact over two years = \$81,288*
- 2016 Net Revenue for Dues = \$39,997*

Year	Regular	Associate	Intermediate
2014	19	7	1
2015	18	16	1
Total	37	23	2





^{*} Excludes storage fees

Other Marketing Efforts

- Updated the application
- Updated the welcome packet
- Created an ambassador program
- Attended the Atlanta Boat Show
- Created new membership orientation
- Additional social events not associated with sailing





Membership Strategies

- Focused on "updated" membership definition
 - Student age and student incentive
 - Raise age of Intermediate membership
- Adding additional "groups"
 - High School Sailing
 - Sea Scouts
 - College Sailing





The Scorecard

- What worked?
 - Communication changes
 - Potluck Dinners
 - Adult Sailing Program
 - Additional support to the Junior Program
 - Open House
 - Additional club usage
- What could use improvement?
 - Communication more consistency
 - Onboarding process of new members
 - More Community Outreach





Next Steps & Summary

- Continue to push advertisements and new membership
- Approval to adding second employee –
 Waterfront Director
- Increase in Marketing budget
- Growth of adult sailing
- Membership team building / participation





Richmond Yacht Club of California Growing your Junior Program







Richmond Yacht Club of California

- Located in Pt. Richmond on the edge of San Francisco Bay...the "Richmond Riviera"
- Volunteer YC with three full time employees
- Dedicated to serious sailing
- Duty bound to have tremendous fun
- Members actively race all manner and size of boats – monohulls, multihulls, dinghies and skiffs
- Tradition of hosting world class championships as well as a multitude of regattas for Bay Area racers





59 Years of Happiness

- RYC Junior Program started in 1951 as a program run by members for their children
- Over the years the program expanded to include children of non-members
- For 59 years the program has operated from October through March with an all volunteer staff
- The junior program served children between the age of 8 and 18





Something Was Missing

- Loosing Juniors to other clubs because we had no junior program from April to September
- We really weren't in the High School sailing game
- We needed consistency, we needed change, we needed growth and we needed to retain the all volunteer sailing program
- We decided to hire a Director of Youth Sailing





A New Era

- The new Director of Youth Sailing was tasked with:
 - -Providing sailing programs year round
 - -Setting up a summer camp
 - -Expanding the High School program
 - -Growing the skiff fleet at the club
 - -Co-existing with the Junior Program





Growing Pains

- Some saw the Director of Youth Sailing as a threat to the volunteer nature of our club
- There was fear that our volunteer Junior Program would go away
- An expectation from a vocal few that that Youth Sailing would be a profit center
- Some expected instant success Olympic teams, major trophies, domination!





Junior Sailing and Youth Sailing A United Front

- With one goal in mind getting kids sailing, it was easy for the Junior and Youth programs to get along
- We divided responsibilities
 - Junior Program would continue operating with an all volunteer staff from October to March. The focus being El Toros, Optis, and Lasers
 - Youth Sailing would take over the High School Program, grow our fledgling skiff program, start a summer camp and if there was time teach an adult sailing class (parents had been asking for this)





The Numbers

Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Juniors	88	104*	91	95	120	121
Collegiate	39	37	38	47	46	41
Totals	127	141	129	142	166	162

Since 2011 summer camp kids are not included in the junior member count

Summer camp 2015 saw 181 sailors register for camp

In 2015 the Volunteer Junior Program limited the number of children to 80 because the club is under construction and we don't have classroom space.





Keys to Success

- Strong support from the Flag Officers, Board, and General Membership
- Get everybody involved People want to help

Flag Involvement Board Involvement

Membership Involvement Parent Involvement

- Close communication between Director of Youth programs and the Junior Program Directors
- Make the program Fun





Keep your Juniors coming back

 The program must be a mix of serious learning, sailing, racing, socializing and fun

Limit Class Time

Maximize On-the-Water Time

Build in time to try other boats

El Toros, Optis, Lasers, 29ers, 420's, Moths,

Moore's, Beer Cans, J22's, SUPs, Big Boats

Socializing – building bonds with other kids

will make them want to come back





Keep Parents Coming Back

- Let them feel like they are part of something big ask them to volunteer for junior regattas, social functions, big boat regattas
- Offer a learn to sail program for parents give them another opportunity to connect with their kid
- Invite everybody (parents, grand parents, cousins) to the end of year awards ceremony
- Invite families to non-sailing events; Holiday Parties,
 Pumpkin Carving, Crab Feeds
- Don't forget invite parents to be club members, help them get the necessary sponsors



Cross Pollination

- Junior Program feeds sailors to the Youth Programs (they get tired of little boats at about age 14)
- Youth Program Summer Camps feed sailors into Junior Program (kids want to continue sailing in winter)
- Junior Program and Youth Program provide volunteers for regattas (parents and kids)
- Youth collegiate membership keeps juniors connected when they leave for college



Membership Growth

- Junior Membership has grown
- Family membership grows by about 6 to 8 memberships per year directly from parents involved with Junior and Youth sailing
- The Galley and Bar revenue increases when Junior Program is active (no bar for juniors)
- Junior and Youth programs are the life blood and future of our yacht club





Your Opinion Matters

Please open the Sailing Leadership Forum app and complete the session survey found in the menu bar.

Thank you for attending this session

