

# **A Tale of Two Yacht Clubs: Success and Failure Factors for Small Community Based Sailing Clubs**



# CASE STUDY: LAKE BLUFF YC V. WINNETKA YC

## **Lake Bluff Yacht Club**

Location: Lake Michigan,

35 miles north of downtown Chicago

Town Population: 5,700

Demographic: affluent

Clubhouse facility: none

Boat Storage: fenced compound capable of storing  
150 small sailboats, kayaks and paddle boards,  
controlled by the club

Boat launch: beach

Membership dues: \$130/yr.

Boats raced: Sunfish

Membership: 150 families

## **Winnetka Yacht Club**

Location: Lake Michigan,

20 miles north of Downtown Chicago

Town Population: 12,200

Demographic: affluent

Clubhouse facility: none

Boat Storage: fenced compound capable of storing 20 small  
sailboats, open rack capable of storing small sailboats, all  
controlled by the Park District

Boat launch: pier and beach

Membership dues: \$75/yr. plus launching fees

Boats raced: Sunfish, Enterprise, Thistle, Vanguard 15

Membership: Once 100 families, now 0

## Lake Bluff Yacht Club



## Winnetka Yacht Club





# WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL SMALL CLUB?

# Factors That Can Contribute to Success

- Racing
- On Water but not Racing
- Social
- Youth
- Teaching
- Recruiting
- Local Government/Park District Relations
- Community Relations
- Big Events - District, Regional, National, US Sailing Championships
- Storage
- Leadership - People who get things done

# Factors That Can Contribute to Failure

- Lack of Money
- Inertia
- Indifference

# Racing



# On Water but not Racing





# Social



# Youth

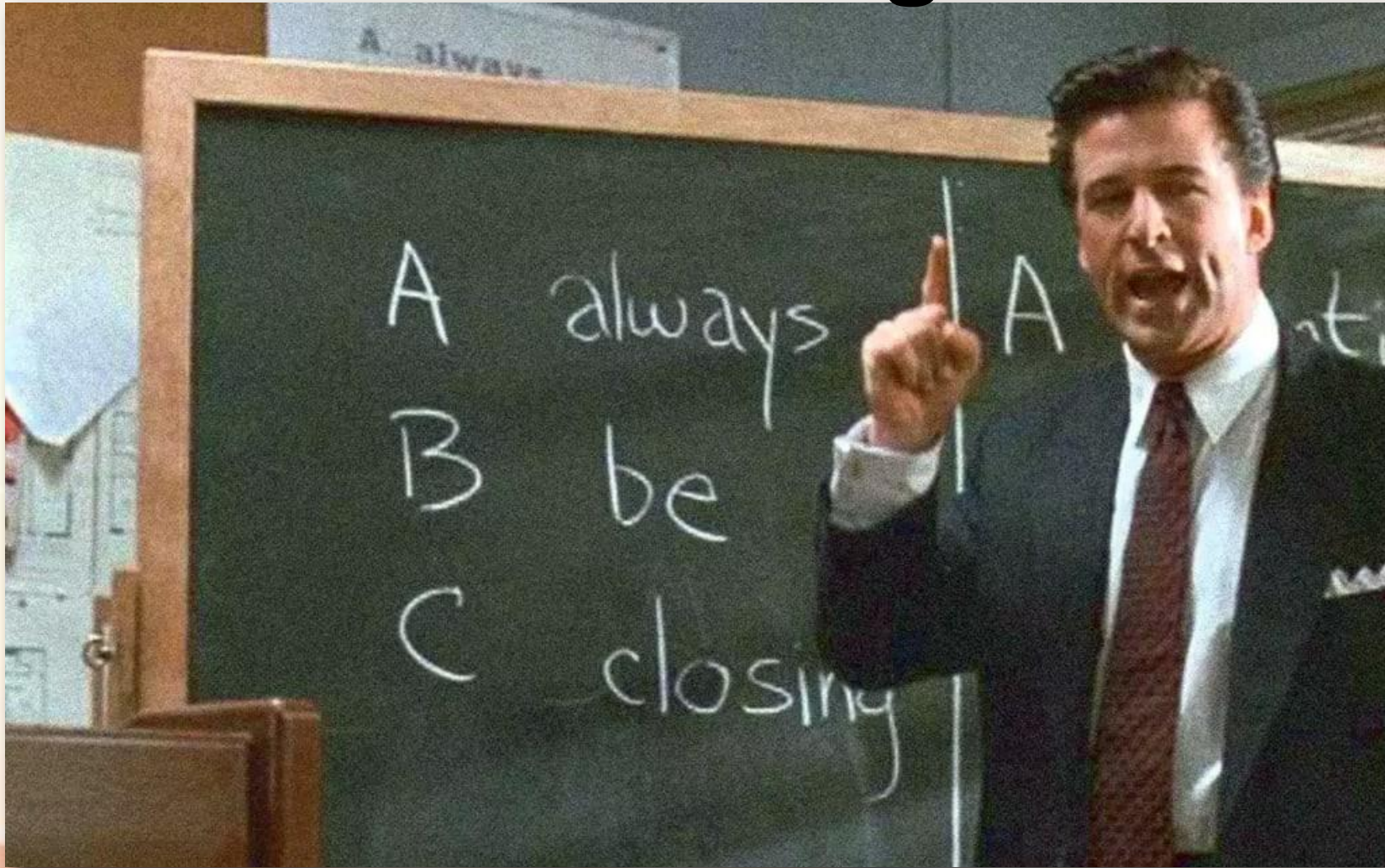




# Teaching



# Recruiting





# Local Government/ Park District Relations



# Community Relations



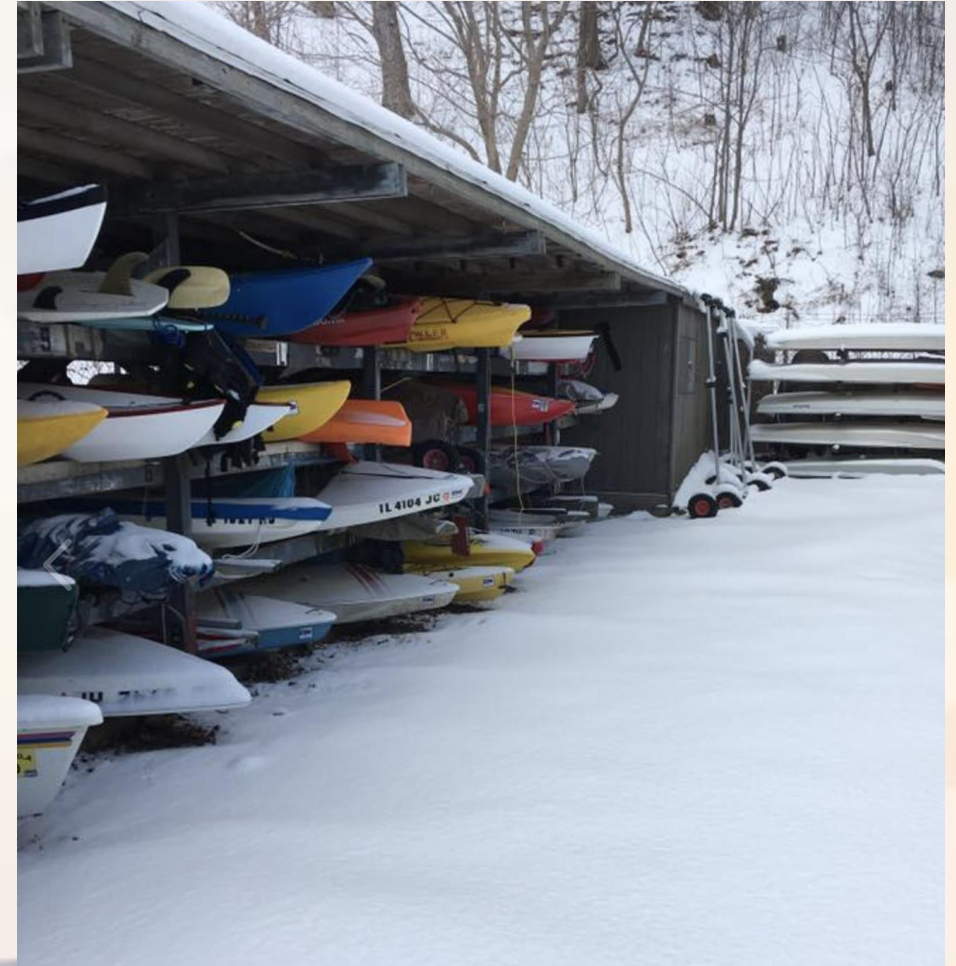


# Big Events





# Storage





# Leadership



# Pulling it All Together

Factor	Lake Bluff	Winnetka 1990s	Winnetka 2000s
Racing	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
On Water, not racing			
Social	<b>X</b>		
Youth		<b>X</b>	
Teaching	<b>X</b>		
Recruiting	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Park District	<b>X</b>		
Community			
Big Events	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Storage	<b>X</b>		
Leadership	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

# Key Takeaways

- There are many factors that can contribute to the success of a club
- Clubs are not flamingos - you need more than one (or even two) success factors
- More elements will result in a stronger foundation for the club
- These things happen over time - it's usually a gradual erosion
- It's not ALL about what happens on the water or within the club
- Nobody can do it all - everyone brings different skill sets to the party
- The more the merrier

# IT IS TIME FOR THE **SOCIAL MEDIA MINUTE**

Please take 60-seconds and post one takeaway, picture or thought from this session on a social media platform of your choice and tag

@USSailing

@(presenter)

#SailingLeadership





# 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*





STORAGE

LEADERSHIP

WHO IS COMMANDORE?

YOUNG MEMBERS ON BOARD?

# BIG EVENTS

HOST CHAMPIONSHIPS



# COMMUNITY Relations

GIVING BACK

SEMINARS

BOATING SAFETY

FLOATS IN PARADE

CLUBHOUSE USE

WOUNDED WARRIORS EVENT

CPR TRAINING

BLOOD DRIVE

VA, REHAB PROGRAMS

THERAPY CAMPS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT/  
PARK DISTRICTS RELATIONS

COLLABERATIVE LEADERSHIP

TRANSPARENCY

HELPING PARK DIST W/ Cleaning Beach  
walkways, etc

BRINGING People to Parks

PAYMENT IN KIND

# RECRUITING

MOST IMPORTANT

BOARD MEMBER who is responsible  
for recruiting

Open Houses  
- Vendors

Discover Sailing Day  
RIDE ALONGS

Newsletter

OPEN SAILING

PACKAGE MEMBERSHIP with  
SAILING PROGRAM



# TEACHING

LEARN TO SAIL PROGRAM  
ADULT

GOOD FOR RECRUITING

EXPERTS

# YOUTH

Jr Program

# SOCIAL

POTLUCKS

ANNUAL Barbecue

HOT DOGS FROM COMMITTEE BOAT

BRIDGE CLUB

Flea MARKET (NAUTICAL ITEMS)

NONMEMBERS AS GUEST



# RACING

- ORGANIZATION
- FUN!
- GOOD COMPETITION  
MENTORS?
- SEA LAWYERS (—)
- VARIED RACE COURSES
- # OF BOATS ON THE LINE
- GOOD RACE COMMITTEE
- FAIRNESS
- EVENTS ON THE WATER  
FAMILY  
SCAVENGER HUNTS