

## **A Brief History of the Georgia Tech Sailing Club**

In 1961, a group of Tech students got together to form the Georgia Tech Sailing Club. They had the common goals of wanting to continue their hobby of sailing while at school and to interest others in the sport. Many of the early members were avid racers and competed locally on a regular basis. About the same time that GTSC formed, the Lake Lanier Sailing Club was formed. LLSC was dedicated to promote one design racing in the Atlanta area, and helped the Tech club immensely in the first few years.

The sailing club's first years were busy and productive ones. The club was instrumental in forming SEISA, the Southeastern Intercollegiate Sailing Association [SEISA was the forerunner of the current SAISA], and was very active in local collegiate racing. Tech hosted her first regatta at Lake Lanier with the help of LLSC. The race was held in borrowed Thistles, and the racing team took a third place. The club realized that they needed their own fleet of boats in order to regularly host regattas, as well as for practices and just plain sailing. When Notre Dame put their fleet of Flying Dutchman Juniors up for sale, the club jumped at the opportunity. The club had no cash reserves, so they borrowed the \$3000 that was needed.

GTSC enjoyed a period of prosperity, racing against local schools and occasionally travelling to others. The club started the tradition of the Bahamas cruise in the summer of 1963. Needless to say, this tradition has continued into the present. Membership reached a high of 60.

Unfortunately, membership began to drop off and the financial reserves were drained by the monthly payments on the loan. Dues had to be raised from \$5 per quarter to \$10. Membership dropped alarmingly and hit a low of 8. There was no money available for improvements on the boats, and they fell into disrepair. The club was even forced to drop out of SEISA for lack of funds.

In the spring of 1966, things began to look better. Several of the members took it into their own hands (and Pockets) to repair the Flying Juniors and recruit new members. The club petitioned to rejoin SEISA and began once again to compete intercollegiate. During this time, the club became part of the Tech YMCA, an organization which has supported the club ever since.

By 1973, the Flying Juniors had gotten very old and were constantly in need of repair. The club looked into many new boats, and decided on a fleet of Banshees. They used these boats for regattas until 1976. As far as boat acquisitions go, 1976 was an auspicious year for the club. Not only did a generous alumnus donate a fleet of six Ghost 13's, but the club was given The Goose. The Goose, a 15 ft. Feathercraft launch, served as committee boat and runabout for the club regattas until it was laid to rest in the winter of 1985. In 1980, the club purchased its current fleet of Coronado 15's. Various boats have been acquired since then, and the club holdings now include a Hobie 16, 2 Force 5's, a Laser, and an ex-Marine Patrol powerboat.

Through its existence, the club has had trouble with finding places to meet and store equipment and boats. The club eventually reached an agreement with LLSC allowing boats to be kept in an area near the boat ramps. After joining with the YMCA, most of the equipment was stored in the old YMCS building. The Y was not, however, an ideal location, and over a break most of the club's equipment (sails, life jackets, etc.) was stolen. This left the club sorely needing a safe

storage place. The club also lacked a place to repair boats. Many boats suffered even more damage due to weather while a place was being found to fix them. Meetings were at this time being held in the Student Center, and everyone agreed it would be better to meet as well as work in the same place. After much searching and working with the administration, the sailing club was allowed to occupy the downstairs of the Drama Tech building (formerly the Church of God). Burdell's Basement, as it used to be known, has proven an ideal location. There is plenty of room inside for storage, working on boats, and meetings. Outside is the impound lot where the club is permitted to keep boats while they are at Tech for repairs. The building is, unfortunately, condemned.

In recent years, the club has become especially active, acquiring newer and better boats and getting rid of older ones. Right now the club is looking into purchasing a fleet of sailboards. Membership is high and expected to get higher. The club is looking to rent a house near Tech for meetings, parties, and overnight housing for regattas. The club is continuing the tradition of Bahamas cruises and island parties. The racing team has done extremely well, winning SAISA for the first time ever this year. The club is prospering and is working hard to keep things going well.

#### **A Brief Update on the History of the Georgia Tech Sailing Club July 18th, 2000 - Justin Preyer (Commodore '98 - '99)**

Well, some information in the Brief History of the Georgia Tech Sailing Club is outdated. First and foremost, Burdell's Basement was condemned and finally demolished in spring of 1992. This obviously necessitated the move of all the club's equipment and meetings. A house on Tenth St. on campus was provided for all the watersports at Tech to store equipment. This became known as the Watersports Clubhouse since it was home for the scuba club, the crew team, the waterski club, as well as the sailing club. This proved to be a wonderful place to hold meetings as well as store whatever equipment the club had. It even has a large parking lot little known to people on campus where the waterski club and sailing club store boats and trailers. However, like the YMCA, it has not proven impervious to breakins. Luckily, those who try to rob this house are of a more stupid nature and seem to never take anything of value. Regrettably, this house is also condemned (notice a trend here in what Tech provides) and awaiting the purchase of other houses so that Tech can convert the block into another large research building.

Also, the fleet of Coronado 15's mentioned in the Brief History were sold to the Lanier Sailing Academy in the late 1980's. In 1990, with help in funding from the Student Government Association and the sale of the old Coronado 15's, GTSC purchased a new fleet of Coronado 15's. As of 2000, these boats are doing great and have proved to be the ideal college sailing club workhorses. They are the boats that we provide instruction on and are used for most of the general cruising in small boats. Also, there is a very active southeastern fleet of Coronado C15's that GTSC members have raced with for many years.

Throughout the 1990's, GTSC concentrated efforts on creating fleets of boats maintained by the club. Through the late 1980's and 1990's, the club acquired various used Hobie 16's and a Hobie 18. The club also purchased 4 new lasers to go with Buzz, the affectionately named beat-to-hell Laser that the club has owned for at least 15-20 years of hard life. Also, in the late 1980's, the club was able to purchase a fleet of four Mistral windsurfers. The club has maintained these four fleets as the primary small boats of the club throughout the 1990's. The club has also owned various keelboats stored at Aqualand through the years. The main two keelboats as of 2000 are a C&C 25 donated in the mid-80's and a J/24 purchased used in 1997. Other keelboats have been owned by the club over the years and sold. These include a Soling, a Santana 20, an American, a San Juan 24, and a Spirit 23.

It seems that Mother Nature is not always a fan of our sailing club. In 1994, Hurricane Opal turned a Hobie 16 the club owned, that permanently resided in Ft. Walton, into a few pieces. Also, in the spring of 1999, a tornado in downtown Atlanta dropped a tree along the parking lot of the Watersports Clubhouse. This impressive sized tree shattered a Hobie 16 in the parking lot, as well as two Mistral windsurfers on a trailer. Luckily, later that spring, Student Government allocated money for the purchase of a new Hobie 16 and 4 new Mistral windsurfers. These purchases revitalized these two fleets and more than made up for Mother Nature.

Between the C&C 25, the J/24, the Coronado 15 fleet, the Hobie 16 fleet, the Laser fleet, and the fleet of Mistral windsurfers, the club has current fleets in better shape and more numerous than ever before.

The club is thriving in numbers with membership peaking around 75 people per semester (Tech converted to semesters in the fall of 1999). Dues were raised in the 1999-2000 year to \$40 per semester from \$30 per quarter of the year before. The club is in good financial situation with all the fleets in good repair and well-maintained and great membership numbers. GTSC is currently the largest student club at Georgia Tech.

In the 1998-1999 school year, GTSC helped both Emory University and the University (sic) of Georgia start sailing programs. Emory currently sails out of the Atlanta Yacht Club on Lake Allatoona and UGA sails out of Lake Lanier Sailing Club as well as GTSC. Our agreement with LLSC has been modified to include no special provisions for GTSC beyond our normal student memberships (held at 10 for decades) and dry slip space (10 dry slips for an equally long time). Ultimately, there has been rocky times between LLSC and GTSC over the years. The tradition of island parties had to be discontinued in the mid-80's due to a large fall-out with the Department of Natural Resources and LLSC over the "illegal" island parties.

Other traditions have been maintained as much as possible. The Bahamas cruise tradition was dormant for the early 1990's, but was reborn in the late 1990's. Also, the club has continued to

tow boats down to the Leaside Inn in Ft. Walton Beach, FL for three Florida Trips a year. The club tows all the Hobie 16's, windsurfers, and Buzz down to Ft. Walton for wonderful party trips. These trips have grown into large parties of 30 or so people. A Florida Trip tradition is a shrimp boil on the beach for the Saturday night dinner. Also, since Florida trips do not happen in the winter, the club organizes a Ski Trip each year to Snowshoe, West Virginia. This tradition has been going on for a decade and has grown into a huge trip (typically drawing around 30 people). Also, the club hosts club regattas throughout the year known as the Frigid Digit in winter, the Spring Fling in the spring, and the Summer Bummer in the summer. These are always competitive and fun regattas.

In terms of racing, GTSC petitioned the intercollegiate governing body in the 1980's to be included in SAISA instead of SEISA due to proximity of schools in which we race against. SEISA became mostly the southern school in Texas, Louisiana, and neighboring states, while SAISA consisted of Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Georgia Tech has typically competed in SAISA South versus the Florida schools. The intercollegiate racing has not attained the levels reached in the mid 80's, but has raced competitively throughout the years. Also, the club has actively raced the keelboats, lasers, newest Hobie 16, and Coronado 15's over the years with many great results. The club hosted the Coronado 15's North American Championships with LLSC help in the fall of 1998 and had members place 3rd and 5th in the competition.

Overall, things are looking great for the club. The membership is truly at its all-time high. The maintained fleets are in great shape. The racing is good and competitive. And of course, the parties are great.