

# Come Sail Away Pymatuning Century Club



By Taylor Sherman

**Established in Jamestown in 1950, Pymatuning Century Club has provided sailors of all skill levels a community to share their interest with other water sports enthusiasts.**





Though perhaps not in a rock band, members of Pymatuning Century Club in Jamestown are likely to invite water sports enthusiasts to do just as American rock group, Styx, sings: “Come sail away with me.”

Established in 1950, the family-friendly, members and guests only social and sailing club on the southwest shore of Lake Pymatuning has evolved into a thriving sailing community with a mission to educate and entertain folks of all levels of sailing knowledge. “Any outdoor enthusiast, particularly with a passion for water sports is welcome to join the club,” said Ex-Officio Board Member Lidia Gray of Pymatuning Century Club. “Whether an individual or a family knows how to sail or not, and whether they own a sailboat or not, there is no place like [Pymatuning] in the summer time.”

Originally formed as a men’s club, Pymatuning Century Club has evolved over the years to a thriving sailing community, Lidia explained. “The club offers full facilities open year-round, dock space for sailboats up to 25 foot and small (low hp) power boats, a mooring bay, playground, swimming beach and small non-motorized water sports launch,” she said.

Once summer approaches, Pymatuning Century Club is in full-swing. “From May to October, PCC is bustling with activities from family picnics to social events and sailing lessons. We offer entry level sailing classes for adults ages 16 and up on small boats as well as keelboats. Some themed events include: Kids Day on the Bay and Babes on the Bay (intro to sailing for ladies only!) Our social events range from informal and free of charge hors d’oeuvre evenings to themed parties which include a meal, open bar and often live music, to anything in between,” Lidia shared, adding that the fun doesn’t stop once on land: “Our park-like setting with picnic tables scattered in the shade is a perfect location for a family gathering after a day on the water!”

An avid Pymatuning Century Club member, Lidia is an ex-officio board member, sailing school director, activities director, public relations and “Breeze” editor for the club. “Sailing has been a true passion of mine for most of my life. Born and raised in Europe, I raced

Optimist Prams at the age of 6. I have continued to include sailing as part of my healthy work-life balance throughout high school and college, eventually purchasing a family sailboat in 2012,” she said.



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– Lidia Gray

Lidia also noted that the art of sailing requires much more than meets the eye. “As a sport, sailing offers many unique benefits that range from physical and mental fitness and awareness, to lessons in resourcefulness and problem solving. It can be a very social sport where crews (often multi-generational families) work

together to decide on tactics, resolve an unexpected issue or deal with a surprise weather change. But it can also be enjoyed on a small one-person dinghy offering solitude and social distancing during a difficult time such as a global pandemic. What better place to social distance than on a sailboat in the middle of the lake with your family?” she said.

In addition to sailing for recreation, Pymatuning Century Club offers a program to educate. “PCC Sailing School is an accredited U.S. sailing school ([ussailing.org](http://ussailing.org)) offering level-1 small boat and keelboat courses,” explained Lidia.

Following a flexible “learn at your own pace” schedule, students progress throughout the summer through structured classes and practice on school-owned boats in between, Lidia continued. “When ready, a written and practical (on the water) test is available at the student’s convenience. The basic keelboat course is offered on as-requested basis as a weekend course (approximately 20 hours). This class also concludes with a written and practical exam.”

Upon completion of either course, students are issued a certificate and an official U.S. Sailing Logbook. “Although there is no pre-requisite for either class, some experience is recommended before enrolling in the basic keelboat class. Sailing lessons are open to members and non-members but members receive a discounted rate and have more options to hone their skill in between formal lessons,” Lidia added.

To Lidia, a common misconception about sailing is that it is an elite, expensive and complicated sport. “Although there are a few lessons to learn to assure safety on the water, these can be learned in a relatively short period of time. It then takes a lifetime to master those skills.”

She continued, “As for elite and expensive — it can be, but doesn’t have to be. One of the benefits for members of PCC is an ever-growing fleet of club owned boats. These boats are cared for by club members, and available at no extra cost on first come, first serve basis to all members. While one can spend tens of thousands of dollars on a new sailboat, a great condition quality used sailboat can be found for several thousand dollars and



clockwise from top:  
Jacob Gray, 10, assists Layla  
Weber, 7, with her rigging

Sofia Gray, 13, practices  
on Pymatuning Century  
Club-owned Sunfish

a sailing lesson on the  
Pymatuning reservoir

facing page:  
a sailing lesson provided  
by a member of  
Pymatuning Century Club

previous page:  
Lidia Gray and Tom Tirabassi  
during basic keelboat  
lessons

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small dinghy sailboats can be purchased for under a thousand dollars to get started. Sailors are some of the most welcoming and helpful people around. If you need some advice or help with your boat, someone is always around at PCC to lend a hand."

Anyone interested in learning more about the sport of sailing is encouraged to schedule a visit and tour Pymatuning Century Club's facilities. "The formal process for accepting new members takes place during our bi-annual membership meeting (spring and fall), but members are conditionally accepted year-round," Lidia said.

As a sailor, Lidia's biggest reward comes from the camaraderie among club members. "Sailors are a unique breed characterized by unyielding integrity and willingness to help each other. On sailboats, especially in heavy weather, there is no room for error and safety of crew and equipment is at stake. Crews must learn to work together and trust each other. All this is achieved on a daily basis through learning together, helping with each other's boats, sharing experiences and, of course, spending time on the water," Lidia said.

"One of the challenges of being a small, private club is keeping membership costs down and to still be able to accommodate the club's various needs and improvement projects. To help defer some of our costs, all the work on club grounds is done by our members. Whatever skills or talents our members bring, they will be put to a good use," she added.

As sailors prepare for a summer of sailing ahead, Lidia notes the joys of the craft: "Success for us [as a club] is seeing as many boats out on the water as we can! Whether it's racing or pleasure family sailing, or a handful of kids messing around the bay practicing capsized recovery — the more time spent on the water the better!" V

*Information:*

visit [pymatuningcenturyclub.com](http://pymatuningcenturyclub.com),  
contact membership chair Gene Soriano  
at 724.638.8001, email  
[membership@pymatuningcenturyclub.com](mailto:membership@pymatuningcenturyclub.com) or  
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### April 20 Vegetable Gardening Class

6:30pm-7:30pm

What can we plant Now? Reservations Required

### April 8 Salad Bowl Class

6:30-7:30pm

\$16 Materials included. Reservations Required

### April 27 New Plants Class

6:30pm-7:30pm

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