

AMERICAN Sailing

The Journal of the American Sailing Association

Inside This Issue

- Short Tacks
- Broadreach
- Around Alone Update
- Join Us in Paradise
- Treasure Hunt

Using Tall Ships and the Sea to Educate Youth for Life

It's hard to argue with the success of a program for at-risk youth about which one attendee has said, "...[it] is like a dream that you never want it (sic) to end." Two classic schooners are used as the unique educational venue for the Los Angeles Maritime Institute's TopSail Youth Program, an experimental program aboard tall ships which offers young people the opportunity to learn skills and behavior necessary to live successful, healthy and productive lives.

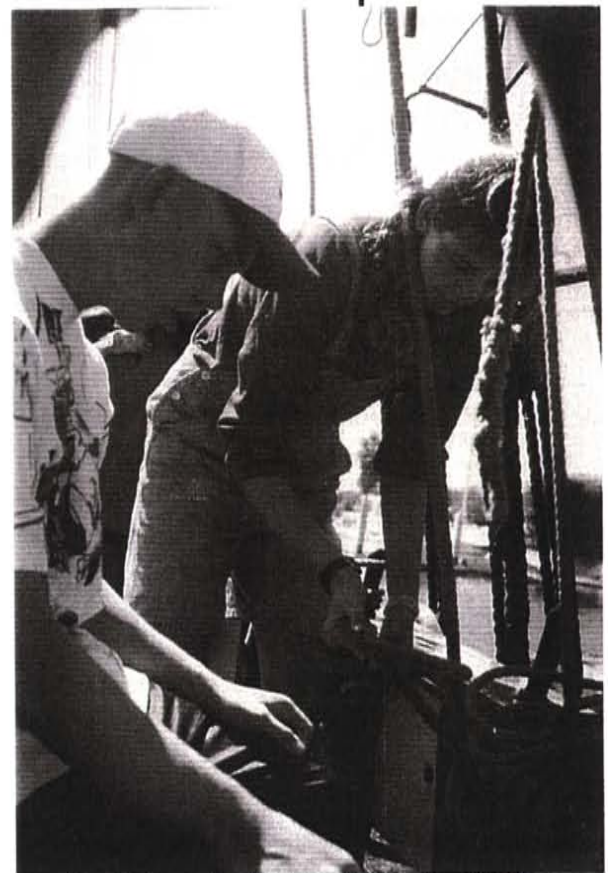
The sail training adventures take place aboard the tall ships, *Swift of Ipswich* and *Bill of Rights*. Before becoming classrooms, these schooners were either privately owned (actor James Cagney owned the *Swift* for 20 years) or used for commercial purposes. Today these floating classrooms serve to teach notions to at-risk youth which are difficult to convey in land based classrooms.

Founded in 1992 by Captain Jim Gladson, a retired science teacher, TopSail has been remarkably effective with young people who are not coping well with the demands of society and have been identified as being "at risk." The participants generally range from ages 11 to 20 and are referred to TopSail by social service organizations, youth groups, churches, middle schools and high schools. The City of Los Angeles is a co-sponsor through its commitment to gang prevention and intervention. Says Armand Almarez, a teacher whose students have participated in the program, "All of the kids from our school that sailed with *Swift*...are still in school now. You have no idea how atypical this is of our

student body. And remember, those kids were picked because we didn't think they'd make it without intervention. ...Overall, the grade point averages of these students rose by a full third."

The *Swift of Ipswich* is a 70' square topsail schooner and the *Bill of Rights* is a 94' gaff-topsail schooner. The *Swift* was built in 1938 by William Robinson in Ipswich, Massachusetts. She is representative of a famous privateer of the American Revolution, and has total sail area of 5,166 sq. ft. The *Bill of Rights* was built in 1971. Her design is based on the *Wanderer*, a schooner built in 1856 as a racing yacht. The *Bill of Rights* has a total sail area of 6,300 sq. ft.

For the troubled youth who participate in TopSail, the ships supply a mobile laboratory for science, mathematics, physics, biology, geography, history, literature and even poetry. The students are encouraged to explore the world around them by asking questions. There is no set curriculum; there are no lessons and no exams. As Debbie Gonzales, volunteer coordinator for TopSail, explains, the program is not designed to teach the young people how to sail, it makes "growth and learning a joyful experience," and, in the process, participants "develop a



Youth from the Hillside Home for Children experience challenges aboard the *Swift of Ipswich*

spirit of teamwork and accomplishment." Awareness, understanding, communication, cooperation, respect, patience, caution and teamwork are stressed. Each crew member is given certain responsibilities while on board and must learn to act independently.

In the miniature society created by the vessels, the relationships between

Continued on Page 7

Featured Training Facility

Broadreach Focuses on Providing Young Adults Unique Summer Experiences

Are you wondering what your teenagers can do this summer to experience something different and to challenge themselves? How about a sailing adventure and the opportunity to explore the world? Broadreach, an ASA affiliate, offers teens the chance to grow and learn while experiencing extraordinary hands-on sailing adventures. Young adults learn plenty on a 500-mile sailing voyage across the archipelago of the Caribbean called the "Arc of the Caribbean." They can also combine sail training with SCUBA instruction in the Leeward Islands on the "Underwater Discoveries" program. The program's success can be summarized by the comments of the Broadreach participants who said, "I realized I learned about trust, working with other people, meeting challenges and accomplishing goals I set."

Last summer Broadreach sponsored 27 Arc of the Caribbean and Underwater Discoveries trips. The trips are organized in small groups of 9-14 participants, allowing the teens to learn more and do more than in most other summer programs. Participants in each trip are grouped according to age and grade for group "management" purposes. Trips are geared for young people ages 13-19 and participants come from around the U.S. and several foreign countries. Although staffing for each trip varies depending upon several factors, all Broadreach boats have at least one USCG licensed captain aboard.

Broadreach's Arc of the Caribbean program is a 31-day sailing odyssey spanning more than 500 miles of the Lesser Antilles, from the Leeward Islands to just off the coast of South America. Participants embark on a complete training and educational

experience in which they live aboard 48-foot Centurion yachts while building skills in seamanship, adventure travel, leadership and teamwork. Each Arc of the Caribbean trip is unique because the teenage crew of eight or nine participants,



Broadreach Arc of the Caribbean participant Victor Sopeva trims the jib.

along with the Broadreach staff, charts and creates the entire journey south, picking an itinerary that best meets the goals and interests of that particular group.

All learning on the Arc of the Caribbean trip is hands-on. On board, teenagers take the helm, navigate by GPS and night sail guided only by the stars. They share the roles of captain, crew, mechanic, cook and safety officer. Participants learn about ocean currents and weather patterns as well as engine maintenance, course plotting and safe coastal cruising. Several ASA sailing certifications can be earned on each

voyage. By the time the final port of Trinidad is reached, participants have become accomplished sailors.

The group also ventures inland to discover the hidden treasures of the Caribbean islands and their people, exploring islands in ways ordinary tourists rarely experience. Broadreach's Arc of the Caribbean is designed for those individuals looking for a rare adventure which is both challenging and educational. As Missy Cook, Marketing Director at Broadreach, says, "It's an experiential adventure." One of the Arc of the Caribbean participants said of her experience, "My participation in the Arc of the Caribbean program was truly the most enriching experience this far in my life, undoubtedly an adventure to be forever treasured! Not only did the trip reaffirm my natural passion for sailing, but it also provided valuable experience and lessons."

Teens who wish to combine SCUBA diving, water sports and island exploration with a sail training adventure may take advantage of Broadreach's Underwater Discoveries. This 21-day live-aboard sailing and scuba voyage is designed for teenagers who have little sailing experience and have never taken a breath on SCUBA. Participants learn new skills one-step-at-a-time and at their own pace from certified sailing and PADI SCUBA instructors. Teens work toward their PADI Open Water Diver and Advanced Open Water Diver SCUBA certifications, as well as their ASA Basic Keelboat Sailing Certification. The classes are taught in small groups which promote safety and personalized instruction. Participants learn to safely handle and operate the yachts as they work toward their sailing certification.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 1

individual rights, power and responsibility come sharply into focus, providing the participants with a realistic view of real life situations. Ultimately, the lessons about self-worth and interpersonal relationships are aimed at creating a positive change in the behavior of the participants. In this environment, all of the participants are encouraged to think about their accomplishments while on the ships, and, Mrs. Gonzales says, "everyone accomplishes something."

The TopSail Program is offered in two parts. The first part typically consists of several one-day sails during which the participants become familiar with the ships, the ocean, their crewmates and simply being on a boat. Although the young people are taught the fundamentals of sailing such as handling the helm, lines and sails, tying knots and climbing the rigging, the goal of the program is not to teach the participants how to sail. Daily activities focus on problem-solving, decision-making, planning, self-reliance and leadership skills. Each day brings new challenges as a result of changes in the weather, wildlife and crew's skill levels. Since there is no set curriculum which must be taught to the participants, the program activities are very flexible, making each trip unique.

In the second part of the program, the participants take a multi-day cruise. The voyage is organized and planned by the young people using the knowledge they gained in the first part of the program. They must plan not only the specific activities of the group during the voyage, but the destination, itinerary, meals and provisioning. Since the trip is planned by the participants, each multi-day cruise is unique and its results are a reflection of that voyage's crew.

One of the most unique aspects of the TopSail Program, one of several sail-training programs across the country, is that it is run almost entirely by volunteers. There are only 4 paid employees; the rest of the crew, from educators to maintenance crew, consists of volunteers - almost 300 of them. Volunteers attend a crew training session which includes a video about the TopSail program featuring Retired General Norman Schwarzkopf, a piece which was broadcast nationally on NBC Nightly News a few years ago. The volunteers are equipped with information about who the participants are and what can be expected from them. After that, Mrs. Gonzales says, "the volunteers are there to be a favorite uncle, a friend, a peer, a resource. They are not there to judge anyone." Thus, volunteers may end up listening to students' troubles, but do not counsel or lecture, only rendering their opinions as friends if asked.

TopSail seems to have proven that through the unconventional educational environment aboard a classic schooner, troubled youth can make significant progress in increasing self-esteem, and learning cooperation and leadership. A teacher who sailed aboard the *Swift* summed up the TopSail experience as follows: "...nothing we do in the classroom can ever compare to the lessons [the children] learn on a working sailing ship such as the *Swift*. ...They strained and stretched, focused and wondered. They learned."

For more information contact the Los Angeles Maritime Institute at (310) 833-6055.

Continued from page 3

The Broadreach staff has found that the tradewinds and underwater realm of the Leeward Islands offer one of the best sail and dive training grounds in the world. These volcanic islands have calm, hidden coves for all training activities and protected overnight anchorages. The dramatic contrasts of scenery, people and culture in the Leewards create a wonderful learning environment for the Broadreach participants. The French island of St. Barts, the Dutch island of Saba and the British island of Nevis lend an international flavor to the trip and an authentic backdrop for studying the history of colonial Europe.

Broadreach's 45-foot catamarans are used for the Underwater Discoveries programs. These boats are equipped for safe, comfortable cruising with specialized teaching aids, navigation equipment and full array of communications gear. A monohull support boat accompanies the catamarans and is sometimes used for sail training. At least one USCG licensed captain and one PADI dive instructor staffs each boat. Fully equipped for adventure, the yachts have 14 complete sets of top-quality dive gear, scuba tanks, an air compressor, O2 systems, two semi-rigid dive/ski boat dinghies, wake boards, knee boards and water skis. The teens do not have to share gear, so they don't have to wait their turn to dive, ski or participate in any other activity. Broadreach staff have discovered that the teens like the catamarans because they have plenty of space and great deck sleeping accommodations.

For SCUBA certified teenagers, Broadreach offers an Underwater Discoveries Advanced program. This course combines all of the activities from the Underwater Discoveries program with more intensive dive training including PADI Rescue training.

Dive and sail training are just part of the "all-around experience" offered on all Broadreach trips. Participants have the chance to explore islands rich in colonial history, trek mountainous rain forests with local naturalist guides and learn about marine biology and ecology from Broadreach's marine biologists. Participants also take one day of each trip to give something back to the islands they visit through community service. For example, last year the teens helped clean up Monserrat after severe volcanic eruptions occurred. Other community service activities have included cleaning up marine parks or beaches and taking underprivileged youngsters from St. Kitts out sailing.

The Broadreach programs are a hit with teens. One participant from Seattle said of her experience, "I loved the sailing and the wonderful people I met. I think it's important for kids to get together with their peers and embark on new experiences that push their limits. I became a much more confident sailor - which was something I hoped to accomplish."

In addition to the Arc of the Caribbean, Underwater Discoveries and Underwater Discoveries Advanced programs, Broadreach offers SCUBA, sailing, marine biology and wilderness trips for teenagers to Australia, Costa Rica, Honduras, the Red Sea, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. For more information on their unique and different adventures, check out Broadreach's web site at www.gobroadreach.com or call 888-833-1907.