

Meet Your 2021-2022 AYC Board of Directors

Commodore – Debra Heisler

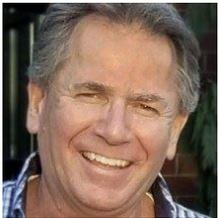


Like many, I began sailing as a kid - on a Sunfish. Growing up in SW Michigan and spending summers at a lakefront cottage provided the perfect location for sailing. In 2014, I met my husband Emory and joined him as crew on our Buccaneer 18. For the past five years I've crewed in the AYC Racing Series, two Club Championships, most AYC regattas, two Long Beach Race Weeks, competed in the Buccaneer Nationals twice, and only capsized once. I hold ASA certifications for 101 and 103, and I'm an approved powerboat operator. In 2017-18 Emory and I sailed almost 5000nm crewing for several boat deliveries. It would not be a career choice. My other passion is backpacking and hiking. I've packed all over Arizona, several national parks, completed the John Muir Trail and trekked in the Himalayas for almost two weeks.

This will be my third year on the Board, having held the positions of Vice and Rear Commodore the previous two years. I enjoy volunteering my time to great organizations like AYC. Since retiring, I have spent countless hours with various other clubs and programs, with my most current as a life skills mentor for women and occasionally giving rides to homebound seniors. I also provide lodging, taxi, and cafeteria services to my grandchildren on an as-needed basis.

During my career days, I wore many hats: Internal Consultant, Course Developer, Project Manager/Administrator, Process Improvement Facilitator, and Lead Instructor for several internal courses. My educational background is in HR & OD and I hold an MA in Adult Instruction & Performance Technology. I'm excited about serving this Club as Commodore and continuing as part of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors. I'll do my best to help create a memorable year!

Vice Commodore – Bob Naylor



I've been sailing for 10-years, and have been an AYC member for 4-years. We have a Catalina 22 which I race at Lake Pleasant and an old Sunfish that I enjoy sailing at Tempe Town Lake. For the past year, I've served as AYC's Rear Commodore, responsible for our monthly meetings and guest speakers. In 2020, I managed AYC's Birthday Regatta and Leukemia Cup fundraiser, and this year, I managed the Leukemia Cup fundraising campaign, helping AYC raise \$50K over the past two years for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Eighteen months ago, I started AYC's Sunfish Fleet - a fun bunch of sailors with wet pants who enjoy racing our spirited "Funfish" sailboats at Tempe Town Lake and beyond. I serve as Sunfish Fleet Captain. I'm a US Sailing certified Level 1 sailing instructor and powerboat operator. The thing that I most love about AYC is the people - we have a great community of sailors, and I'm grateful for the many wonderful friends I've made within AYC and for their support.

My wife, Robin, and I live in Glendale. Robin occasionally sails her own Minifish and, over the years, our C-22 provided our family and friends with many memorable outings on Lake Pleasant. We have two daughters - one of which frequently has blue hair, which contributes to my gray hair. Our oldest daughter is a junior at Northern Arizona University, and our youngest is a sophomore at the University of Arizona. I retired 2 years ago as a senior director of information technology after a challenging 20-year career with a global Fortune 100 corporation. When I'm not sailing, I enjoy golfing (which, at times, I also turn into a "water sport") and hiking the desert and mountain trails of our beautiful state. I am looking forward to serving as Vice Commodore in the coming year.

Rear Commodore – Marshall Williamson



I Grew up in a suburb of Syracuse, New York, playing most sports, and got into sailing when I joined a new sailing club in Philadelphia that acquired eight J27's. Thus, I learned to race one-design in Wednesday night beer can races. Then I got married, moved to Tucson in the early 90s, and raised two daughters who are now out on their own and prospering. I also enjoy hiking, skiing, golf, classic car restoration, and recently started cycling. I frequent San Carlos Mexico a few times a year.

I've competed in most AYC Regattas and Race Series since 2013 and joined the Club in 2016. I also served on the Board as Secretary in 2016-17. I secured a \$5000 corporate sponsor for the 2017 Leukemia Cup and am the AYC Spin Fleet Capt. 2020- 2021, 2019-2020. It's probably known that I was also the Spring 2021 Blunder bucket Recipient.

I am also a member of the Tucson Sailing Club (TSC) and served as:

- Past Commodore (same as staff Commodore, a voting position) 2019 and 2020
- Commodore 2017 and 2018
- Vice Commodore 2016 and Race Chair
- Rear Commodore 2014 and Regatta Race Co-Chair

Some of my other sailing experiences are Hawaii to LA Transpac return trip as crew on an Andrews 70 in 2019, the Flathead Lake Montana Cup 2018, and the J24 Regional Championship 2018 Lake Ontario.

In the working world, I do part-time business development for a start-up software company.

Fleet Captain – Jeff Coulter



I moved from Seattle seven years ago for an amazing project opportunity that would utilize my skill sets and passion as an interior architect. On my way to investigate this new opportunity, I flew over Lake Pleasant and saw a Regatta in progress. I then came to realize that sailing in the desert was a possibility...who knew?

My first sailing experience was on a Catalina 27 at the age of 16. And that's when I got the bug. I didn't get started with hard-core racing until 1996. I've learned to race with amazing boats and crews, beginning on a J29 then went to J105, J109, J122, J24. I crew in San Diego, on a J70 that competes throughout the California coast. I've raced a Santana 70, as well as a Santana 20, that many of you have seen me on at Lake Pleasant. I've also raced a Capri 14.2 on TTL.

When it comes to the bigger Regatta's I've raced in the PSSR, PSSC, Grand Prix, J-fest, Seattle NOOD, San Diego NOOD, Swiftsure, WIRW, Rolex Big Boat, European J24 Championship, J24 Midwinters Championship and Long Island Race Week, just to name a few.

I've done a lot of cruising as well - through the San Juan Islands in Washington, into Canada and off the coast of California. I am very efficient in all positions with the bow and driving being my favorite. I also enjoy the role of tactician.

This last year, I served as Racing Fleet Captain and am willing to serve in this role again. I've served AYC as a volunteer instructor teaching sailing on TTL for the past six years and will continue with this role. I am looking forward to working with the new Board and doing my best for the AYC racing program.

Cruising Captain – Jeff Bryant



I grew up in Indiana where I raced cars and motorcycles, as a youth. While in Indiana, I became a machinist and an engineer acquiring skills I use daily in my work, life, and sailing.

I joined AYC in July of 2018, and my sailing began a month earlier when I completed the ASA 101 course and bought a Capri 14.2 the following week. I was off like a rocket – one year later, I completed ASA 103 and 104, done some ocean cruising, and switched from the 14.2 to a Sunfish. Since joining Tumbleweed's Catalina 25 program, I've sailed 100+ outings on Lake Pleasant. More recently I purchased my first keep boat, a Cape Dory 25.

The last few years have also included multiple trips to San Diego for Sunfish sailing or chartering a variety of other keelboats. In 2019 I competed in the Buccaneer NAC race as well. My daughter Sabrina is starting to get involved in sailing and AYC too. She takes photos at events and recently completed ASA 101.

Last year I was on the AYC Board as Secretary. I also serve on the United States Sunfish Class Association (USSCA) Board of Directors as the West Region Representative. I look forward to being the AYC Cruising Captain and creating some great events for our Club.

Senior Staff Commodore – Rob Gibbs



I grew up in the deep south and someone in our family always had a boat. At some point in my youth, I thought sailing might be cool to learn. Fast forward to about 2003 after college and a 6-year Air Force career and I find myself and my bride on a sailboat in San Diego for the first time ever with my boss and another coworker from my first post-military job. Sails went up, diesel went off, the boat settled in and I was hooked! I came home from that weekend and searched all I could find about sailing in Arizona. And out of the 3 websites that came back in my search, ArizonaYachtClub.org was at the top of the list.

I learned to sail that fall on an adopted Sunfish at Tempe Town Lake and then bought my first Buccaneer 18 out of San Antonio, Texas. I owned 3 Buccaneers over the years and have had a ton of fun sailing them. My family has also been fortunate enough to own a couple of bigger boats at Lake Pleasant as well. A Santana 2023R and 1/3 ownership in a Catalina 270. But as it turns out, I'm a Laser sailor through and through. That boat has taught me so much about sailing, and I'm convinced I've only scratched the surface.

One of my favorite things about sailing is getting to pass on my experience to others. To see others grow in their ability and love of the sport is more rewarding than any trophy, especially when it is kids in our youth program. To facilitate this, I've taken several instructor courses during my short sailing career including US Sailing Small Boat Instructor, US Power-boating's Safe Power-boating Instructor, American Sailing Association's Instructor courses for Beginning Sailing (101), Coastal Cruising (103), Bareboat Chartering (104), and Coastal Navigation (105). Next step...USCG Captain's License.

I appreciate the opportunity to have served the AYC in several capacities, culminating with a 2-year stint as Commodore from 2018-2020. We have seen continued growth in the past 2-3 years despite the pandemic and I look forward to continuing to grow the sport of sailing in the most contradictory of all venues - the desert!

Junior Staff Commodore – Cindy Pillote



I started sailing in Arizona by taking the Start Sailing Right and single-handed classes from the Arizona Sailing Foundation. Shortly thereafter, I joined the Club and bought a Buccaneer 18. I've been sailing my Buccaneer at Tempe Town Lake, Lake Pleasant, and other venues ever since. I also serve as a regular crew on Bob Worrall's *Spirit*.

I previously served on the AYC board as Membership Director, Secretary, Commodore, Junior Staff Commodore, and Senior Staff Commodore. Then, I went on to serve on the ASF board for a few years. I'm looking forward to serving, once again, on the AYC board as Junior Staff Commodore and to continue helping ASF in its endeavors.

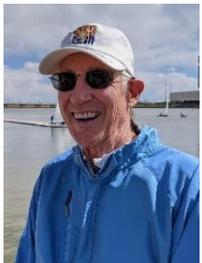
Membership Director – Skip Kempff



I joined AYC in 1996 when I moved to Arizona from San Diego. I started sailing Echo on Lake Pleasant in late 1960 and had sailed with the Thistle Fleet members on Lake Pleasant and in San Diego for many years before the move. While living in San Diego, I served as the Commodore of Coronado Yacht Club in 1989 and have been a Flag Member since 1966.

My service to our Club includes two years as Club Fleet Captain and a two-year term as Membership Director - I'm currently in another term for this position. Other volunteer work includes leading the team that re-decked the two pontoon boats used at TTL, supporting new crew through lecture and handouts in the *ASF Intro to Sailboat Racing* class, and being PRO on several race committees and one Birthday Regatta. I am a seven-time winner of the AYC Club Championship race and I've been awarded one of only eight AYC Honorary Life Memberships - recently renamed to Distinguished Life Membership.

Membership Director - Gordon Briner



I grew up sailing out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mostly International 14's and crewing on a Flying Dutchman around the US. I was able to crew in several national championships in Lightnings and Solings with some outstanding sailors. Sailing the Chicago/Mackinac race was something one aspired to while growing up around Lake Michigan and I was able to be part of the race 6 times, with two respectable results. I spent a short time working at North Sails in Pewaukee, Wisconsin, when they shared a facility with Peter and Olaf Harken who were starting up Harken blocks.

My professional and recreational interests lead me to a career in the ski industry. Most recently, leading a great group of people at Taos, New Mexico for 20 years and Breckenridge, Colorado before that. I also worked Keystone, A-Basin and Purgatory Ski Resorts.

My wife and I moved to Arizona two years ago to connect with our son and grandsons and play as much as we can. The Arizona Yacht Club accepted my membership application 18 months ago so I'm still a new guy and getting to meet a lot of great people. It's a tremendous group. My sailing time is mainly in a Laser at Tempe Town Lake and I've spent some time at Lake Pleasant which reminds me of some of the inland lakes in the mid-west, less the cactus. I was able to compete in the Birthday Regatta this year which was a memorable experience.

I'm excited about serving the Club as a Board member and Co-Director of the membership Committee with Skip Kempff. A number of enthusiastic sailors have joined the AYC over the past few years and I believe there are more in the area who want to be part of the Club.

Secretary – Lori Reger



My first sail was in 2008 on a Catalina 22 over in San Diego. After that fun experience, I wanted to learn to sail, which led me to finding AYC and joining the Club in 2010. I took my first class in 2010 and then the next class on Lasers & Sunfish in 2011. From there, I adopted a Sunfish every season and came out on my own to sail with the Club. I'd practice and teach myself to sail as the rest of the fleets raced at TTL.

In 2013, I bought a Sunfish club boat and also joined the AYC Board as Secretary; a position I held for 3 years. I enjoy lending a hand with many of our regattas and social events throughout the year. For many years, I coordinated the Adopt-a-Boat program at TTL and soon after joining the Club, I began volunteering by helping the Membership Directors with administrative details and greeting people at our monthly meetings. I've enjoyed greeting people at our meetings for the past 10 years – a task I hope to get back to someday when meetings resume.

I continue to sail my boat at TTL and in the last few seasons I've participated in racing. Occasionally I crew at Lake Pleasant. Other sailing I've done in the last year includes a 28' Telstar Trimaran and a 16' Compac over near Galveston Bay, and a Hobie Mirage Tandem Island, a blast up a down a bayou under a full moon!

Treasurer – Tony Chapman



I'm a Certified Public Accountant and have volunteered my time as AYC's Treasurer for the past 16 years. I own a Viper 640 and a Buccaneer 18 and am also the Class Treasurer for those fleets. You'll see me primarily racing at Lake Pleasant with the Sport Boat Fleet.

Since joining AYC I've sailed two TransPac races to Hawaii and many Buccaneer and Viper North Americans. I'm one of only three Viper owners to have competed in all three Viper 640 World Championships held in Bermuda, Perth, Australia, and Long Beach, CA – using my own boat each time. The boat I shipped and raced in Bermuda and Perth is now part of the South Africa Viper 640 fleet.