



# Windsurfing Enthusiasts of Tidewater

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[www.sailwet.com](http://www.sailwet.com)

Summer, 2005

## Event: Introduction to Windsurfing

Chances are you received a copy of this newsletter at the **WET/Beach Sports Introduction to Windsurfing event at Fort Monroe**, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2005.

Speaking for WET I hope you thoroughly enjoy this event, and find out more about the sport of Windsurfing. Maybe even get “hooked”, as windsurfers say.

This event is being held on an annual basis. We used to call it “Learn to Windsurf”. A mild misnomer – when are we done learning to windsurf, anyhow? What are the roles of accommodating conditions, instruction and equipment? Below you will find an approaches to answer these questions.

WET is working on other activities year round: Organizing races, dealing with access issues, representing WET's umbrella organization US Windsurfing ([www.uswindsurfing.org](http://www.uswindsurfing.org)) in Tidewater, and socializing. We do this at our monthly meetings, at the annual party, and most importantly while free sailing our many spots around the area – including the Sunday Sail at Fort Monroe every Sunday during the warm months. There are also tangible benefits from becoming WET member: get discounts towards event registrations, US windsurfing membership and shop purchases.

[JP]



Christopher Zeitvogel

Photo: Kouji Watanabe



Hardrian Corning at WET race

Photo: Kevin Ellis

# When Can I Say: I Have Learned to Windsurf?

## by Marcy Kennedy

They say that learning to windsurf has a flat learning curve. I think there were times, my learning curve was a straight line, or maybe even dipping into negative values. When I bought my first sails from Kenny Todd, within five minutes of meeting me, he made a comment about my being a stubborn woman. My surprise, at his saying this to me, must have shown on my face because he quickly explained that any woman learning to windsurf had to be stubborn. I still have no idea what he was talking about. Surely that didn't apply to me, but then again it must have, because ten years later, I am still learning to windsurf.

I am not sure at what point I can say I have learned this sport. Is it when I can tack and jibe? Tack and jibe what? A long board? A sinker? Is it when I can get in the harness? Is it when I can get in the footstraps? Have I learned to windsurf when I know what conditions I can sail in and what conditions I should stay on the shore and watch? Is it when I can longboard? Shortboard? Return to where I started from? Rig my own equipment? Understand the lingo? Understand the effects of fin size? I don't know. When I was first learning and only sailing one board with one fin and a few sails, I was a lot more willing to say I knew how to windsurf. Now, I am no longer eager to give advice and I am aware of a lot more variables that I didn't know about before.

I do know that learning each new skill was exciting, and that I have learned to put enough of the skills together to enjoy the

sport. Sometimes it all works, and I think I must have reached Nirvana. There are still times when, although I am sailing, it doesn't all work. (I usually have an audience when it doesn't. That's a law of windsurfing.) Sometimes having the audience makes the mistakes more fun, because the other windsurfers are not likely to let me get away with doing something incredibly or spectacularly stupid and not commenting on it. Heck, you can even get quoted for years for just explaining one's difficulties with the sport's equipment/clothing.

When I take my novice sailing friends out, I think I have learned to sail. They remind me that sailing in chop is different than sailing on flat water, and that sailing straight downwind or pointing high is not as easy as it looks. When I sail in light winds and fish jump in front of me, or I chase birds off the surface of the water, I think I must be in the perfect spot and don't want to ever have to come off the water. When I sail in high wind, I am reminded of how much I love the sound of my board hitting the water and how when everything comes together, I am at ease flying across the surface of the water. I smile and say to myself, "I can do this. This is wonderful." That must mean that I have learned to windsurf. But then again, when I sail with the "big dogs", I am reminded that I am still learning to windsurf.

I suspect I will be learning to windsurf for as long as I can sail. Perhaps when I have Alzheimer's it will be completely new to me and I can learn it all over again.

# Old Salt Remembers The Early Days

## by Christopher Zeitvogel and John Atkinson

If you ever watched windsurfers jumping, jibing, playing in the waves, enjoying the sport on a perfect day, you might wonder if it always worked out this nicely for them. Rest assured it has not. Every windsurfer stood in front of a windsurf board and rig for the first time, wondering how a universal joint could bend this much without breaking apart.

Going back in time for us are John Atkinson of Virginia Beach, and Christopher Zeitvogel, WET's Japan expat. [JP]

John Atkinson's experience:

I was about 44, and bought a "We'll teach you to windsurf package" from a now defunct company teaching at the hotel on Shore Drive. The equipment included a ground trainer and a 12' board with a sail. Two hours later I pulled the board 200 yards along the beach back to the instructor, and walked away from the remaining paid-for lessons. I was frustrated, bruised, tired, beaten, and never wanted to see another board.

Five years later I gave it another shot, in Nags Head, and tried again in 2' water. It eliminated most of the problems I have experienced in the Chesapeake Bay. After three multi hour sessions, I was just about as thrilled, and happy to be zooming along at three to five knots as I am today to launch into a 30 mph Noreaster from the same beach that beat me the first time. The rest is history.

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Christopher Zeitvogel remembers:

The first time that I ever saw a photo Windsurfing was in the late 1970's when Boy's Life magazine ran an article on the then-emerging sport out of California. I now know that at that time, windsurfing, AKA boardsailing, was reaching mega-fad proportions in Europe. But the Boy's Life

magazine article only mentioned California, and treated the sport as very extreme, probably like they would kiteboarding today. I was a rather unsociable, unathletic, and unhappy junior high school student at the time, in Colorado, and the only reason that I remember the article is that it encouraged me to try and do more pullups, since the guys windsurfing all had biceps and then some.

Then in 1981 I found myself a junior in high school on the tropical island of Okinawa.

The Windsurfer-Class World

Championships had been held on the island just before I arrived. I still had only a vague idea of what windsurfing was. But one night I had this dream... I saw windsurfers, a whole bunch of them, like you might see at the Canadian Hole on Hatteras Island, NC or Doug's Beach at the Gorge, OR. And they sailed out... and flew, flew up in the air and hung there. You'd call it "hang-time" today. Bear in mind that I had still never seen windsurfing actually being done, though the next summer one almost sailed into me while I was snorkeling.

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Que Foreigner, *the* mega band of the day - "Feels Like the First Time":

"I would climb any mountain, sail across the stormy sea  
If that's what it takes me baby, to show how much you mean to me"

The First Time for me was at the US Air Force's Kadena Marina on Okinawa. It was 1983, and the board and rig was the standard plastic 45lb Windsurfer Stocker, complete with "Blue Noodle" fiberglass mast, triangle sail and a tie-on boom. (That windsurfing is hard to learn is a modern modern myth, carried over from these ancient days - it is almost unbelievable today that anyone ever learned at all back then!) They had a fleet of

20 rental boards, and as I recall, I was there with my Dad and sisters. An associate of my father's had rented a board and presumably knew what he was doing. Somehow I ended up giving it a go.

"It feels like the first time, feels like the very first time

It feels like the first time, it feels like the very first time"

I remember the advice that he gave me:

1. Pull yourself up out of the water onto the board and kneel on the deck.
2. Use your arms, not your back to pull the sail out of the water.
3. Take little baby steps around the board and mast.

But mostly, mostly I remember the rash on my stomach from climbing up and over the non-skid all that afternoon. I do not remember actually sailing, but I would like to believe that I actually *did* sail a few yards. If only had we known these nice soft deck boards in the old days.

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"I have waited a lifetime, spent my time so foolishly

But now that I found you, together we'll make history"

My family left Okinawa in May of 1985. In May of 2005 I was back on the island, and one day after work there was a promising southwest wind and I rigged up at Kadena Marina for the first time in 20 years. Now, Kadena Marina is simply a hole blasted in the reef during WWII. To complicate things, there is an island smack in the middle of it. To further complicate things there are various headlands, seawalls, docks, reefs, bouys, and anchored vessels. All in all it is a henious place to learn to windsurf. The day I went back was also an extremely high tide, so there was no shelter from the reef; it was choppy. The wind swirled, gusted and died, all right at the beach. No sooner was I on the water then Foreigner rang in my ears loud and clear:

"And it feels like the first time, like it never did before

Feels like the first time, like we've opened up the door

Feels like the first time, like it never will again, never again"

Short reach, tack, short reach, go to tack, wind friggin' dies then backs - splash.

Uphaul. Wind swirls. Splash. Wind gusts, try to waterstart - wind dies. Uphaul. Wind swirls, splash. How the hell did I ever learn to windsurf in this place?

Not impressing anyone on the beach, that's for sure. Despite my updated gear, technologically far removed from the Windsurfer Stocker. Eventually I made it to more open water and could enjoy longer reaches, even pumping onto a plane once or twice. The wind angle was just such that I could sail out of the harbor into the open sea. And when I did, it felt *exactly* like it did the first time that I went out in the open swells - I was terrified.

I had hoped that there would be wind enough to plane out there, but there was not, and as rough as the water was, there was the real possibility of missing the harbor mouth and coming ashore on seawall instead. I made it though, and stayed inside the harbor for the next hour; sailing through memories thicker than the haze brought by the south wind.



Kadena Marina

Photos of the Marina at high tide on a less hazy day from the internet at <http://community.webshots.com/album/82283215bfEqat>

## WET Calendar of Events 2005

June 2

### **WET Meeting**

Location Mona Lisa's at Buckroe Beach

June 11

### **WET/Beach Sports Introduction to Windsurfing**

Mill Creek

June 11-12

### **BABA MAS / IV race**

June 26

### **BABA V Race**

Contact: Tom Sargent – [tomus919@worldnet.att.net](mailto:tomus919@worldnet.att.net)

July 7

### **WET Meeting**

Location TBA

July TBA

### **Lotta Regatta**

Location TBA

July 16

### **BABA VI race**

Contact: Tom Sargent – [tomus919@worldnet.att.net](mailto:tomus919@worldnet.att.net)

July 25-30

### **US Nationals Hood River**

[www.uswindsurfing.org](http://www.uswindsurfing.org)

August 4

### **WET Meeting**

Location TBA

August TBA

### **Cookout/Fun Race/Swap Meet**

Location TBA

September 1

### **WET Meeting**

Location TBA

September TBA

### **Intro to Windsurfing**

Location TBA

September 10

### **BABA fun race – Race around Hart Miller Island**

Contact: Tom Sargent – [tomus919@worldnet.att.net](mailto:tomus919@worldnet.att.net)

September TBA

### **BABA MAS / VII&VIII races**

Contact: Alan Bernau – [abus111@crosslink.net](mailto:abus111@crosslink.net)

October 2

### **BABA race IX**

Contact: Tom Sargent – [tomus919@worldnet.att.net](mailto:tomus919@worldnet.att.net)

October 6

### **WET Meeting**

Location TBA

October 15-16 or 8-9 – stayed tuned for NOR

### **Fall Regatta Hampton Roads Sailboard Classics MAS**

November 3

### **WET Meeting**

Elections, location TBA

December TBA

### **WET Holiday Party**

Location TBA



Editor trying to dry-jibe his sinker. Photo: Bob Catzen

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**OUR NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY:**

<http://www.uswindsurfing.org/>



*Wanna know where we sail? Check out the launch map at <http://www.windvisions.com/launches.html> for all the information you need about the local sailing sites.*

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## Next WET Meeting

The July WET meeting will be on the South Side

July 7<sup>th</sup>, 7p

at Duck-In  
on Shore Drive  
Virginia Beach Lynnhaven Inlet

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**WET MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
**203 Buckroe Ave., Hampton, VA. 23664**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Individual Membership...\$20.00         | U. S. Windsurfing Membership...\$25.00 |
| Each additional family member....\$5.00 | through WET (Normally \$35)            |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**WAIVER, RELEASE, AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT**

In consideration of acceptance as a member of the Windsurfing Enthusiasts of Tidewater (WET), I (the undersigned), intending to be legally bound, do hereby for my administrators, my executors and myself, waive, release and forever discharge any and all rights and claims for damages which may occur to me against WET, its officials, employees and agents of any and all liabilities or responsibilities arising from any injury received or incurred by participation in any event sponsored by WET. My release is also given for the reproduction of any photographs taken of me or including me for use in media coverage. I understand that I am waiving rights which otherwise should have been mine by law and I do so of my own free will and consent.



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