

IN THE COMMUNITY

BY TRACY GIBB

# FROM STEM TO STERN

Nearly every Sunday from May through October, sailboats dot the water just off a peninsula in the southwestern corner of Charles Mill Lake. After an afternoon of racing and sailing, those on board gather for a potluck dinner to socialize at the clubhouse above the docks. These families belong to the Mohican Sailing Club — a long-standing tradition dating back to the end of World War II.

Constructed in the mid-1930s, Charles Mill Lake is a 1,350-acre flood control reservoir located on the Ashland-Richland county line near Lucas. Managed by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, the lake's layout and 10-horsepower limit make it ideal for sailing.

Local families formed the Mohican Sailing Club in 1945. According to Tom Wills, current commodore and self-proclaimed cheerleader of the group, the original objective of the club was simply to race sailboats. "But it quickly transitioned toward a social group, where families and friends could sail and spend time together," Wills says.

The clubhouse serves as the hub for the organization's weekly cookouts, meetings, and special events. In spite of several upgrades over the years, the facility has preserved its traditional charm with its three fireplaces, ballroom, and second-story wraparound porch. It also contains trophies

from races won, photos from days gone by, and a wall of past and present commodores — some of whom are third-generation members.

The 45 member-families that belong to the Mohican Sailing Club have a variety of small boats, ranging in length from the 13-foot, 9-inch Sunfish to the 18-foot Interlake. Boats compete against others of the same type during the club's Sunday races. Each vessel also has its own national race series, and the club has played host to a few of these events, including the Jet 14 Nationals and Interlake Haphazard.

Ultimately, Mohican Sailing members race for the sheer enjoyment of the sport. The club owns half-a-dozen Sunfish sailboats, so having your own vessel isn't necessary. And for the novice, they offer sailing lessons, instruction, and advice. "It's all about sharing our passion for the sport with others," Wills says.

For some members, sailing has been a lifelong hobby. Now in his 80s, Cecil Bazley joined the Mohican Sailing Club in 1968. While Bazley no longer sails, he still attends the club's weekly races and dinners. Sitting in one of the chairs he gifted to the club in memory of his late wife, Thelma, Bazley watches out over the lake, spending Sunday afternoons with his fellow sailors and friends.

The Mohican Sailing Club is located at 2187 Mifflin Township Road 1265 in Lucas. For information about club membership or events, visit [www.mohicansailingclub.org](http://www.mohicansailingclub.org).



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