



## The Drifter

Browns Creek Sailing Association Newsletter  
(October 2025 Edition)

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### From the Helm — Bringing the Cup Home!

Browns Creek Sailing Association has plenty to celebrate this month. Our sailors traveled to Wilson Lake for the 2025 Tennessee Valley Challenge Cup (TVCC), hosted by the Muscle Shoals Sailing Club. The regatta was as competitive as ever, and thanks to the skill, teamwork, and determination of our skippers and crews, BCSA brought the Cup home!



The weekend wasn't just about racing — our hosts at MSSC put on a wonderful social, complete with good food and live entertainment from Ms. Bones. It was a perfect blend of spirited competition and camaraderie, the kind of weekend that reminds us why we love this sailing community.

A special shout-out to our racers who represented BCSA with pride on the water:

- Zack Lawson – Melges 14 — 2nd Place Overall (Dinghies)
- Andy Myrick – Flying Scot — 6th place
- Monty Williams – Flying Scot — 7th place
- Ed Hurst – S2 6.9 — 1st Place Overall (Cruiser Spinnaker)
- Mark Proctor – Hunter 34 — 4th place (Cruiser Non-Spinnaker)
- Susan Wilson – S2 6.9 — 1st Place Overall (Cruiser Non-Spinnaker)

Every skipper and crew gave it their all, and their combined results secured the overall victory for BCSA, edging out MSSC in the final tally. The Cup is back at Browns Creek — and we couldn't be prouder!

### Annual Dinner & Officer Elections – November 8th

Mark your calendars for our much-anticipated Annual Dinner on Saturday, November 8th! This evening promises wonderful food, great company, and plenty of fun as we gather to celebrate another fantastic year at Browns Creek.

We'll meet under the tent at Browns Creek with cocktails starting around 5:00 pm (BYOB), followed by dinner served at 6:00 pm.

This year's menu is catered by Rock House Eatery and will feature:

- Pork tenderloin with apricot rosemary glaze

- Mashed potato bar
- Creamy mac and cheese
- Grilled Blue Lake green beans with mushrooms, shallots, and bacon
- Fresh garden salad
- Warm rolls
- Cheesecake topped with assorted berries
- Tea and water

💰 Cost is \$25 per person. Please RSVP by November 3rd to reserve your spot.

👉 Click here to pay online

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In addition to a great dinner, the evening is also our annual officer elections. Members will nominate and vote for next year's officers (Commodore, Vice Commodore, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member at Large).

We'll also be appointing committee chairs for Membership, Social, Cruise, Race, Webmaster, and Communications. If you've been thinking about getting more involved, now's the time to raise your hand! Race is especially looking for fresh energy, and we'd also love to see someone step up in Communications to help expand our presence beyond Facebook and email.

Not ready to chair? Join a committee! It's a great way to dip your toe in before diving all the way in. No election needed—just contact a chair or board member to get involved.

✦ How to raise your hand:

- Email: [board@brownscreeksailingassociation.org](mailto:board@brownscreeksailingassociation.org)
- Or simply corner a current officer or chair at the dock. (Bribes in the form of snacks, beer, or boat rides are known to work wonders.)

This is one of the most important—and most fun—nights of the year. Don't miss it!

## **The Great River Race — October 10–12**

Get ready for one of the most exciting traditions on Lake Guntersville — the 54th Annual Great River Race! This is one of the longest-running inland sailing events in the country, and Browns Creek Sailing Association is proud to host another year of big competition and even bigger camaraderie.

### **Courses & Classes**

- Long Course: 70 miles (4 laps), keelboats only. 24-hour time limit.
- Short Course: 17 miles (1 lap), open to keelboats and dinghies. 9-hour time limit.

Awards will be presented for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each class.

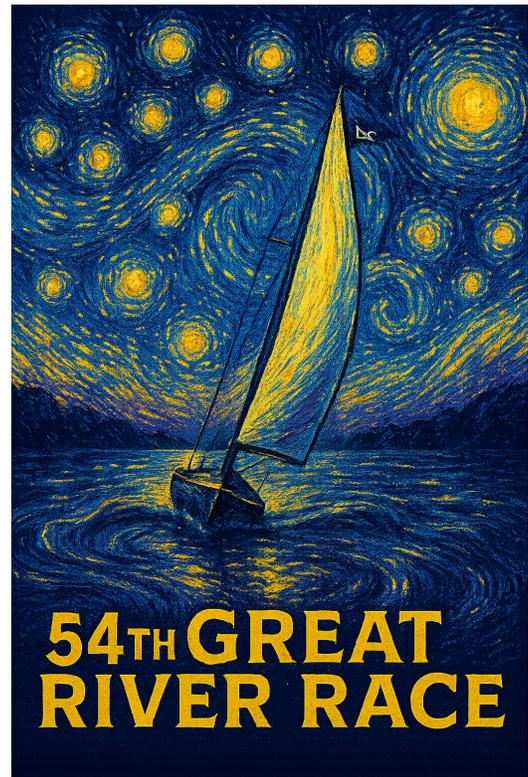
### **Registration & Fees**

- Online registration open until Friday, Oct 10 at 8 PM.
- In-person registration available at the BCSA Clubhouse Friday, Oct 10 from 5–8 PM.
- Entry fee: \$50 per boat (includes one meal).
- Extra crew meals: \$13 each. Non-crew meals: \$18.

(Note: Shirt orders are now closed — skippers will still receive the included event shirt.)

### Schedule of Events

- Friday, Oct 10 – Clubhouse
  - 12:00 PM – Registration opens
  - 6:00 PM – Social & Dinner
  - 7:00 PM – Skippers Meeting
  - 8:00 PM – Registration closes
- Saturday, Oct 11 – Lake Guntersville
  - 8:55 AM – First Warning Signal (all classes)
  - 6:00 PM – Short Course time limit
- Sunday, Oct 12
  - 9:00 AM – Long Course time limit
  - 11:00 AM – Awards at the BCSA Clubhouse



This is always one of the highlights of our year — part endurance test, part sailing celebration. Whether you're racing, crewing, or cheering from the docks, come be part of this storied tradition on the Tennessee River.

### Goose Pond Golf Cruise — October 17–19

BCSA is combining two great pastimes this fall: sailing and... trying to hit a tiny ball with a stick. That's right, the first-ever BCSA Open Golf Tournament is happening at Goose Pond Colony Resort!

The plan is simple: sail (or drive, if you must) from NASM Marina to Goose Pond, then trade your foul-weather gear for golf clubs. We'll play Best Ball — because no one wants to watch a foursome of sailors hack away until dark.



Why come by boat? Because we're offering an automatic "handicap advantage" for those who make the trip under sail. Consider it less of a rule and more of a shameless bribe.

## Schedule

- Friday, Oct 17 – Departure

Boats head out from NASM Marina around 5:00 PM for a 3–4 hour sail. Expect some after-dark docking (or anchoring if we're feeling cautious).

- Saturday, Oct 18 – Golf Day

A proper sailor's breakfast of coffee and pastries will prepare us for the greens. Expect swings of all kinds — some might even connect with the ball.

Evening: Dinner at The Docks, Goose Pond's waterfront restaurant, where we'll swap golf war stories and pretend we're athletes.

- Sunday, Oct 19 – Return Sail

Head home whenever the crew is functional again. Flexibility encouraged.

⚠ Important:

- Boat arrival = handicap bonus
- Car arrival = guaranteed heckling

So, bring your boat, bring your clubs, and bring your sense of humor. Whether you're here for the sailing, the golfing, or just the laughs, this is a cruise you won't want to miss.

## Halloween Party & Costume Contest — October 24

👻 Ghosts, ghouls, and... gulls? It's time for BCSA's Halloween Party! Join us on Friday, October 24th at 6:00 PM at the BCSA Clubhouse for a night where the docks get a little darker and the sailors get a little spookier.

Bring your favorite Halloween dish to share — sweet, savory, or scary, we're not picky as long as it's tasty. There will be plenty of fun on deck with games, music, prizes, and a full-on costume contest. Think spooky sailors, haunted pirates, or even a ghost ship's crew — creativity counts, and bragging rights are on the line.

Expect a night filled with laughter, eerie tunes, and maybe a sea monster or two. Whether you come as a witch, a wizard, or just yourself in foul-weather gear (the scariest costume of all), we want you there!



⚓ Details

- Date: Friday, October 24
- Time: 6:00 PM

- Where: BCSA Clubhouse
- Bring: A Halloween dish to share

Don't miss it — the sailing season may be winding down, but the spooky season is just getting started.

## From the Cruise Chair — Painted Bluffs Cruise

They said it couldn't be done. Well, not really — but if you saw the weather radar that morning, you might've believed it. Our Painted Bluffs Cruise kicked off with a few hours of quality rain delay bonding, also known as “standing around pretending we didn't secretly wish we'd stayed in bed.”



Eventually, the skies decided to play nice, and five boats shoved off for adventure. First up: locking through Guntersville Dam. Always a crowd-pleaser. Nothing says “sailing club” like 20 people squinting at concrete walls while shouting, “Do we tie up here?!”

Downriver, Painted Bluff did not disappoint. A 350-foot wall of rock and history rising over the river — majestic, humbling, and the perfect backdrop for a floating lunch raft-up. Boats tied together, food passed around, and everyone pretending the current wasn't nudging us into an impromptu bumper-boat competition.

The day wrapped with a night at Pirate's Cove, where the BYO rum policy was embraced with enthusiasm. Stories were swapped, snacks vanished, and someone may have discovered that tequila and sailing stories are a dangerous mix.

Rain or no rain, this one goes in the books as one of the best cruises yet. Proof that with a little patience, a lot of rock, and the right company, BCSA always finds a way to turn chaos into magic.

Cruise Chair, Matt Birckbichler

## From the Social Chair — September Recap & Upcoming Events

September was another wonderful month of socials! Our Movie Night was a great success. While we didn't have quite as many kids as we hoped, it was still a fun evening with a strong turnout. True Spirit was an inspiring movie choice, and everyone enjoyed it.



A special thank you to Matt and Mark for helping set up. We even treated ourselves to “VIP seating,”

which turned out to be extra comfortable! The pizza and popcorn bar were crowd favorites and added to the fun atmosphere.

As the year of socials begins winding down, we still have two exciting events coming up:

#### Halloween Party – October 24

- Come dressed in your best costume – prizes will be awarded!
- We'll have games, food, and plenty of fun.
- Please bring a dish of your choice to share.

#### Annual Dinner – November 8

- A special evening you won't want to miss.
- Includes a slideshow of memories from this wonderful year of socials.

It has truly been a fantastic year of fellowship and fun. Thank you to everyone who has participated and helped make our socials such a success!

— Jennifer Birckbichler, Social Chair

### **From the Member at Large**

I don't have any specific concerns from our membership at this time. I would like to remind folks that if there is anything you would like to see done, changed, or added to our club, please find me and let's talk.

I am usually around the marina — more specifically at the far end of the 600 dock aboard Escape. Stop by and let's chat over a cold drink!

Member At Large, Mark Proctor

### **From the Treasurer & Membership Chair**

We currently have 92 members on the roll this year! Several are brand new to sailing and are eager to learn by crewing.

If you're planning to sail and would like extra hands aboard, please post your outing on the website or Facebook page. It's a great way to share knowledge, welcome new members, and help them gain experience on the water.

Treasurer & Membership Chair, Elizabeth Starnes

### **Story Time — “Escape” to the TVCC Regatta**

by Matt Birckbichler

SV Escape's journey to the Tennessee Valley Challenge Cup (TVCC) began the way all great sailing adventures do — loaded down with too much gear, just enough snacks, and a crew that swore they'd packed everything. This year's regatta was hosted by Muscle Shoals Sailing Club, famous for tricky winds, legendary socials, and the occasional sailor who insists they “almost won” last year.

Under the steady hand of Captain Mark Proctor — who assured the crew that the river only goes one way, so we couldn't possibly get lost — Escape pointed her bow downriver. The races might not start until the weekend, but for her crew, the adventure began the moment the dock lines hit the water.

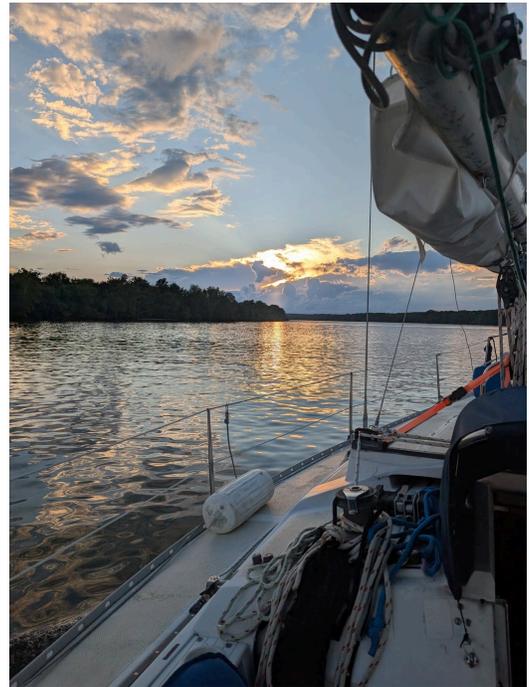
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### **Leg One: Browns Creek to Ditto Landing**

Escape shoved off from Browns Creek Wednesday around noon, freshly stocked by Captain Mark Proctor. Dallas had no shortage of extras for what was, in reality, just a day trip.

The plan was simple: Dallas would crew the first leg down to Ditto Landing, then hand things over to me (Matt) to continue the journey downriver.

The course carried Escape across Guntersville Lake, through the Guntersville Lock, and past the towering cliffs of Painted Bluff, reaching Ditto by nightfall. About four and a half hours underway, the skies added some suspense — storms circling, a tornado warning nearby, and just enough lightning to make the mast feel a little taller than usual. Somehow, Escape threaded the needle, dodging the worst of it and finishing the leg with nothing more than a late rinse of rain to close out the day.



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### **Leg Two: Ditto Landing to Riverwalk Marina**

Wednesday evening, I (Matt) joined Escape at Ditto Landing, chauffeured by my wife Jenn and our daughter Emma. They lingered long enough to wish us good luck, deliver a round of hugs, and then wisely make their exit before things got interesting. Dallas, having finished his brief but colorful role as Leg One crew, hitched a ride home with them, leaving Captain Mark and me to face the river.

After a few too many “just one more” nightcaps, we called it an early-enough night and rolled out the next morning to coffee, breakfast, and the noble sailor's ritual of topping off the fuel and water. By 8 a.m., Escape proudly nosed her way into the Tennessee River... only to immediately protest with a horrific metal-on-metal screech.

She sounded like she was trying to eat herself alive — chattering, clanking, and shuddering until she gave up completely. Dead in the water, we were dragged by the current, powerless, rudderless, and at the river's mercy. Anchor down, situation assessed: the prop shaft had slipped free of the transmission coupler. Translation — we weren't fixing this one mid-river with a pocketknife and duct tape.

Salvation seemed at hand when a beautiful tugboat appeared, chugging out of the Ditto pass. Mark hailed the skipper, explained our plight, and politely requested a tow. The English captain leaned over and, in his finest accent, basically said:

“Ohhh no, mate, can’t help you there. Best of luck though, cheers!”

And off he went, breaking the cardinal law of mariners: thou shalt help a boat in distress. Apparently, the exception is when you’ve got tea time.

So Mark rang up a tow service, and after an hour of bobbing around, our rescuer arrived. Unfortunately, this captain’s docking finesse left something to be desired. While wrangling us back, he managed to bump us into another boat, muttering, “Oh no, this isn’t good,” as though he’d just dropped a sandwich instead of a sailboat.

Back at the dock, we shifted into repair mode. Mark’s daughter drove us for parts, while reinforcements arrived in the form of Zack Lawson — part diver, part superhero, all business. With his dive gear, he slipped beneath *Escape* and realigned the prop shaft like it was child’s play, emerging victorious as though he’d just wrestled Neptune himself.

By dinner time, *Escape* was alive again, and we aimed her down river. She carried us under the Highway 231 Whitesburg Bridge, past the I-65 overpass into Decatur, and beneath the Steamboat Bill Memorial Bridge.

Of course, radar had promised a storm, and for once, radar wasn’t exaggerating. Darkness fell, winds roared to 27 knots, rain hammered the deck, and visibility shrank to the length of a tiller. Navigating by electronics alone, *Escape* plowed on stubbornly, proving sheer grit is as useful as GPS. Finally, around 10 p.m., soaked but triumphant, she slid into Riverwalk Marina, closing out a day that felt more like a season.

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### **Leg Three: Riverwalk to Muscle Shoals Sailing Club**

Friday morning, *Escape* shoved off from Riverwalk Marina, her bow pointed toward Wheeler Lake and on to the fabled docks of Muscle Shoals Sailing Club. Six hours and a handful of obstacles stood between us and our destination.

The first obstacle: the Decatur railroad bridge. With only ten feet of clearance when down, and *Escape* standing tall at over fifty feet, you might say we were invested in making sure it opened. Mark hailed the bridge operator on the VHF, then again. Crickets. Tried the phone number listed. Instead of a human, we got a robotic maze of “press one for this, two for that” until we gave up. Just as we’re about to question life choices, the bridge begins to creak open — still radio silence.

Up she goes, groaning to a halt. Mark hails again to confirm clearance, because “fifty feet” versus “decapitated mast” isn’t something you want to eyeball. The bridge operator’s casual reply crackles back:

“Maybe. That’s full lift.”

Comforting.

So there I am at the helm, inching Escape closer, heart pounding, eyeballing the masthead like it’s the sword of Damocles. Inches away, a fishing boat nearby pipes up with some encouragement:

“Y’all got it! Send ’er on through! She’ll clear, don’t be skeered!”

Nothing like unsolicited redneck engineering to boost the confidence. Sure enough, by some miracle (and maybe mast compression), Escape slid under with room to spare — if you count “barely” as room.

Once past Decatur, the river transformed into a dystopian backdrop. Factories lined the banks, barges churned in and out, and smokestacks gave off that cheerful “end of civilization” vibe. It felt like sailing through a deleted scene from Mad Max: Beyond Thunderboat.

Soon after, we motored past Browns Ferry nuclear plant. The water near the banks swirled and boiled like something alive. Naturally, this sparked an important scientific discussion:

“Think the fish around here glow in the dark?”

“Glow? They probably got four eyes and a taste for fiberglass.”

We agreed unanimously to avoid swimming.

From there, Escape pressed on — past Lucy Branch, past Wheeler State Park, and into Wheeler Lock. After a short wait, we locked through, dropping more than fifty feet like an elevator designed by Poseidon. With that, Wilson Lake stretched out before us.

Funny thing: after hours of tension and toil, we nearly motored right past Muscle Shoals Sailing Club at a blistering five miles per hour. Luckily, the Browns Creek crew was onshore waving, hollering, and pointing us toward the dock like runway marshals guiding in a lost plane. Lines were tossed, decks kissed solid ground, and Escape had finally reached her destination.

Leg Three may not have had quite the chaos of previous days, but it had its moments. The racing, however, is another story entirely... as is the trip home.

To be continued.

## **Closing Notes**

Thanks to everyone who raced, cruised, cooked, volunteered, and cheered. Don’t forget to RSVP for the Annual Dinner, consider joining a committee, and say hello to new members when you see them on the dock.

See you on the water!

 Browns Creek Sailing Association  
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