

Sailing brings excitement, relaxation to father and son

This is another in the series of articles that will accompany the "Make Your Move" program and feature Hanford workers who are physically active.

In his book, *The Wind in The Willows*, Kenneth Grahame wrote "Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." And messing about — or sailing, in the case of John and Ryan Bickford — is an activity for the mind, body and soul.

John Bickford, the Fluor Hanford Lessons Learned coordinator, has been sailing for 36 years, since his sailing class during his first year at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Once the midshipmen learn sailing basics, they have the option to begin to participate in intramural sailing races. The U.S. Navy believes that the sailing and racing experience not only teaches its future naval officers how to "drive ships" but also to make decisions instantly in a changing environment and execute a complex set of activities to carry out those decisions.

Sailing under these circumstances is not leisurely, and Bickford really enjoyed the "pumped-up adrenalin" that racing the 44-foot boats afforded the participants. His enjoyment and talent for the sport was evident, and his first assignment upon graduating from Annapolis was serving as sailing instructor for the incoming freshmen. Thereafter, he attended Nuclear Power School and served aboard five submarines until he retired from the Navy in 1991. During his career in the Navy, he sailed whenever he could, and when his family settled in San Diego, sons Ryan and Mike learned to sail.

While their father was at sea, Ryan and Mike and their mother, Lela, pleasure-sailed a 9-foot dinghy on San Diego Bay.

The Bickfords moved to the Tri-Cities in 1991. They quickly found and joined the Columbia Basin Sailing Club, competing in the weekend races held from March through November at Charbonneau Park on the Snake River. Father and son have been active sailing-club members and racers since they moved here.

Depending on the size of boat you sail, the physical activity ranges from driving the boat safely under sail to maintaining the boat, sails and rigging. The mental challenge is to maximize the performance (speed) of the vessel by tweaking sail shape; considering the vessel's position to the wind; and dealing with water current, rocks, sand bars and other sailors and boaters.



Ryan (left) and John Bickford relax after completing a race during the Desert Regatta held at Charbonneau Park May 3-4.

Continued on page 14.

Sailing brings excitement, relaxation to father and son, cont.

Ryan Bickford, who now works at the Computer Help Desk at Battelle, spent a few summers with his father teaching sailing at a local sailing school. His sailing experiences on the Columbia and Snake Rivers got him a summer job at a sailing camp on Orcas Island, one of the San Juan Islands in Puget Sound. For Ryan, the best part of sailing is "...being outside in the sun and having fun without the noise."

When he attended Washington State University in Pullman from 1996 to 2000, the younger Bickford organized a sailing club and WSU sailors competed in regattas throughout the Pacific Northwest against other university teams.

According to John, "It's a great sport. Sailing offers mental and physical challenges, but it's relaxing, too. Just listening to the sounds of the wind in the sails and the lapping of the water on the bow instantly drains the tension from your body." ■

