

Things slow down a bit when the snowbirds depart for cooler climates. However, it's a good time for the frogs to hone their racing skills and try out new sails, rigs and boats. This summer there were several swaps made as skippers opted to try a different boat or sail. I personally used the time to work on my sail tuning skills.

The good news about summer sailing at Ashland Pond is that we rarely keep score. Therefore, there is little at stake for each race. We can move mast position, work on getting the rig vertical or try different draft settings. Also, we're testing new gear. I burned out a couple of winches before settling on the RMG. It may be more expensive, but it's reliability can't be beaten.

During most of the summer we had light, variable wind. This made winning consistently even tougher. Alan was the only one that seemed to have the magic formula. The rest of us sort of trailed along behind and tried to tack when he did. We also worked on our knowledge of rules. Tom Germer and Ken Morrison were often present and available to interpret "close encounters" so that we could learn from our mistakes. In both the EC12 and Soling 1M fleets we probably averaged about 5-6 boats each racing day.

Then, along came Irma. Besides the heavy winds, she dropped between 12-14 inches of rain on The Villages. However, the civil engineers who laid out the property did a magnificent job. The ponds overflowed, the golf course flooded, etc., but not a single home was damaged by flood waters. Our racing area was completely flooded and you probably saw the photo of Alan and me sailing around "the" tree. Once Irma's flood receded we were left with an awful mess. Snowbirds, you can thank the Frogs for a thorough cleanup effort headed by Tom Germer, Alan and Liz Perkins.

Now that fall has officially arrived, we're getting 10-12 boats on the starting line. We need the practice of racing in a larger fleet with more interactions, but it takes some getting used to. It makes for great practice as we prepare for the coming regatta season. See you all this winter.