

Sailing for Gold on the Yellow Sea

Lake Country athletes prepare for Summer Olympics in China



Team 7, (from left) Debbie Capozzi, Carrie Howe and Sally Barkow, celebrates its second-place finish at the Yngling class 2008 European Championships in Blanes, Spain. SUBMITTED PHOTO

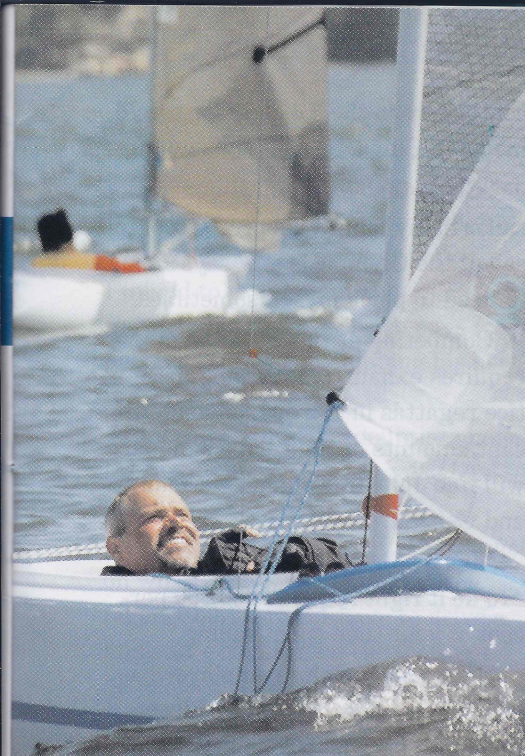
Once again, Lake Country has proven you don't have to live on the coast to be a world-class sailor. Nashotah resident Sally Barkow and Pewaukee's John Ruf will represent the United States in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in China. Sally will sail in the women's three-handed Yngling class, while John will sail a 2.4-meter boat in the Paralympics for disabled athletes.

Sailing has been a part of Sally's and John's families for over 100 years. It's only natural that the two families would foster avid sailors.

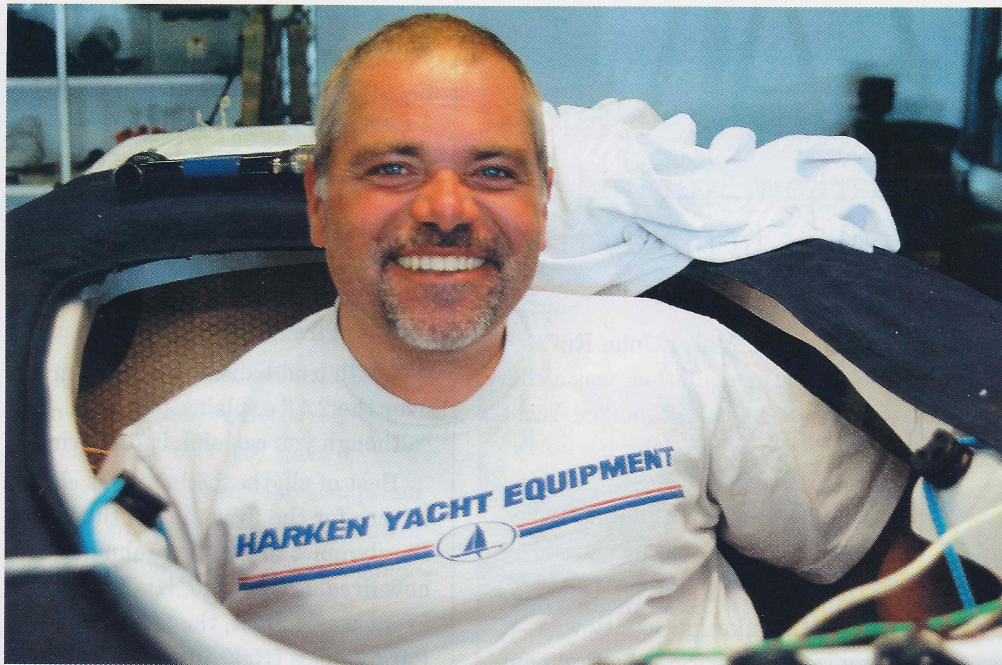
Sally Barkow: China via Pine Lake

Sailing since childhood, Sally, 28, quickly made her mark on the sailing world during her college years. Twice named All-American by the Inter-

Collegiate Sailing Association, Sally took her Old Dominion University team to the top, winning the ICSA North American Women's Championship in 2002. She's also earned the title of Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year in 2005 and 2007. Sally is thrilled to be competing in the Olympics, though Pine Lake might be considered an unlikely starting place.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



John Ruf of Pewaukee will represent the United States at the Paralympics.

“There was an adjustment at first in transitioning to a keelboat,” says Sally, who grew up sailing flat-bottomed scows in Lake Country. “A keelboat is heavier and you can’t ‘feel’ it as well with your body.”

The Yngling, which Team 7 will sail in China, is a 21-foot keeled boat that debuted in the 2004 Olympics. Although Sally had raced on the college circuit, the shift to world-class competition brought some other challenges.

“Working with a team was new,” she says, “though I had raced some double-handed boats with Debbie,” referring to college mate Debbie Capozzi of Long Island, who joined Sally in making the decision to try for the Olympics. Additionally, they had to purchase their own boat – it wasn’t provided as in her college days.

“We had to learn the technical side of the boat and be responsible for everything – you really have to know your boat,” explains Sally.

Carrie Howe from Grosse Pointe, Mich., rounds out Team 7, named after Sally’s family boat number. The group has worked well together, with

Debbie watching the food they eat, Carrie checking their accommodations when they’re competing, and Sally taking care of transportation and paperwork.

In April, Team 7 ranked No. 2 in the world in the ISAF World Sailing Rankings, and they took silver medals in European championships in Spain and France. With expert coaching from Gary Bodie, the head coach of the U.S. Olympic Sailing Team, their potential to medal in the China Olympics is well established.

John Ruf: Hope Floats

John Ruf has overcome his own challenges to become an Olympic-class sailor – he’s paralyzed from the waist down. An attorney for Robert W. Baird & Co., John, 39, had never given a thought to sailing in the Olympics – that is, until he was laid up from the accident that resulted in his paralysis.

Although John was born with a spinal tumor, he was able to get around with a cane and enjoyed racing the X, M-16 and especially E-scows with his family on Pewaukee



MIKE SCHIRMER

Sally Barkow of Nashotah grew up sailing on Pine Lake. She will lead Team 7 during the summer games.

Lake Water in Their Veins

Barkow, Ruf find sailors in family trees

William M. Meyer, John Ruf's great-great-grandfather, was a charter member of the Pewaukee Yacht Club in 1896, while Sally Barkow's great-great-grandfather Jacob E. Friend helped start the Pine Lake Yacht Club in 1890.

In 1897 the Inter-Lake Regatta Union of Waukesha County was organized, sponsoring the first competitions among Pine Lake Yacht Club, Pewaukee Yacht Club, Oconomowoc Yacht Club at Lac La Belle, Oconomowoc Lake Yacht Club and Okauchee Lake Yacht Club.

Additionally, the popular E-scow was partially designed by John's great-grandfather Arnold Meyer Sr.

Lake. His 1998 accident made E-scow sailing too difficult and risky – his only post-accident attempt resulted in a fractured femur. Flipping through old sailing magazines during recovery, John read about the 2.4-meter sailboat. With a single keel that adds stability, the 2.4 sits low in the water like a kayak, and its two sails can be operated from a sitting position.

“With lead ballast, you can't tip over the 2.4,” explains John, “although you can sink it,” he grins.

Best of all, the 2.4 boat was chosen to race for the first time in the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney. John had a new dream to pursue. His first racing event was, in fact, the 2000 Paralympics trials, in which he placed third. With his third attempt a charm, John took first place at the 2008 U.S. trials and will be one of 15

contenders in the 2.4 class for a gold medal in China.

“Given that I am a fifth-generation sailor in my family, it's pretty cool to sail at the Olympic level,” says John. “I need to pinch myself sometimes.”

Competing at the world level requires exhaustive training, practice regattas in Europe, and significant amounts of time. This summer will find John in Finland, Germany and Canada.

“It's a full-time deal,” says John. “To do it right requires 100,000 percent of your time spent sailing.”

Fortunately, John's employer has been supportive, giving him all the time off he needs to compete. As an amateur athlete, John, like Sally, has to take care of many details himself. He's purchased multiple boats for



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

John Ruf will sail a 2.4-meter boat in the Paralympics.

training (all of them named White Buffalo) and manages his own competitions and travel arrangements. The U.S. Sailing Team has provided him with coach Marko Dahlberg of Finland to prepare for the Paralympics. The U.S. also pays for his plane ticket and shipping his boat to China.

John's attitude has doubtless been the key to his success as a disabled person.

"I just focus on what I can do – not on what I can't," he advises. "The biggest bummer is I have to drive a minivan – it's hard on the male ego," he jokes.

Join the Team

While most of the events of the summer Olympics will take place in Beijing, Aug. 8-24, the venue for the

sailing competition will be in Qingdao on the Yellow Sea, about 430 miles east of Beijing. The Paralympics will open on Sept. 6 at the same location. Sally's parents, Dick and Leslie Barkow, her three brothers and her sister will travel to China, as will John's parents, Fritz and Sally Ruf, along with his sister.

"I'm proud of the fact that I've been able to sail competitively and represent the U.S. and Lake Country," says Sally. "I'm also proud to know so many great people and of the friendships I have made around the world."

Fans of Sally can learn more about Team 7 at www.team7sailing.com; and visit John's Web site at web.mac.com/whitebuffalo. 🐾

Find Your Lake Country Dream Home



Tichigan Lake, Waterford!

Inviting log home designed for lake living! 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2 kitchens, fireplace, bunk house, 3-car garage. Sandy lakefront for lake fun! \$699,000 LL1011455



Waterville Lake!

155 feet peaceful lakefront and 1.5-acre wooded, landscaped yard. Gourmet kitchen, fireplace, wine cellar, patio, 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 4-car garage. Exceptional home and full recreational lake with swimming and great fishing in a convenient location for commuting and everyday needs. \$699,000 LL1007183



Prudential

ABSOLUTE REALTORS®



Cathy Zeiler
Office: 414-906-4559
Cell: 414-254-7171
www.pruar.com

From The Ordinary To The Extraordinary

S & K REMODELING

262-782-7185

Full Service Interior Remodeling • Kitchen & Bath Specialists