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# FIVE THINGS: About a sailing teacher

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BY EMILIANA SANDOVAL  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Jerry McNamara's favorite place to be is on Lake St. Clair, sailing or teaching others to sail.

## BRIEF BIO

McNamara is from Tuckahoe, N.Y. He moved to the Detroit area to attend the University of Detroit after a stint in the Navy. He is a retired appraiser and lives in Grosse Pointe with his wife, Sheila.

## SEA LEGS

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He learned to sail in the early 1950s when he was stationed in Japan.

"I was on a base with a couple of sailboats that nobody seemed to want to use, so I took one out, fooled around, made mistakes, figured it out."

When he moved to Michigan, he built a 16-foot boat. His current boat is a Cal20 -- that means 20 feet long -- called Rascal. It's sitting in his yard as he preps it to be painted.

"It's driving my wife nuts. She's ready to get it out of there."

He has been a member of the Crescent Sail Yacht Club in Grosse Pointe Farms for 30 years.

## TEACHING

The Crescent Sailing Association began its Adults Learn to Sail program four summers ago. McNamara volunteered to teach. Two years later, he was asked to run the program.

"I love teaching. What's really great is the people who come -- they're terrific, interesting people who want to get the most out of life. We get people from all walks of life. I really enjoy being with them."

Students sail once a week for 12 weeks. You don't have to be a member of the club to take the class.

"It's a basic sailing program, but we also simulate racing, which helps focus your attention. And we finish with an actual race the day after the Crescent Regatta."

Students learn to sail on 19-foot Flying Scots, four to a boat with an instructor.

"They're very stable boats, very hard to tip, which is reassuring for people learning to sail."

The 2007 session begins Wednesday with a welcome dinner at the yacht club. Go to [www.crescentsail.com](http://www.crescentsail.com) for prices and applications.

## AWARD WINNER

McNamara won the U.S. Sailing 2006 award for Outstanding Director of a Seasonal Program. It was a big surprise.

"I had no idea. We were away and came home to all these messages on the

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answering machine, some guy talking about an award. I had no idea I was even SITE up for it. One of the guys here nominated me. It's nice to know your peers appreciate you."

The award plaque hangs in the yacht club's main building.


**WATERBOUND**

In the winter, McNamara works on his boat and does stuff for the program, such as updating the training manuals. During sailing season, when he's not teaching or focused on the program, he likes to race on Lake St. Clair.

"It's a wonderful, wonderful lake. There's no better place to be."

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