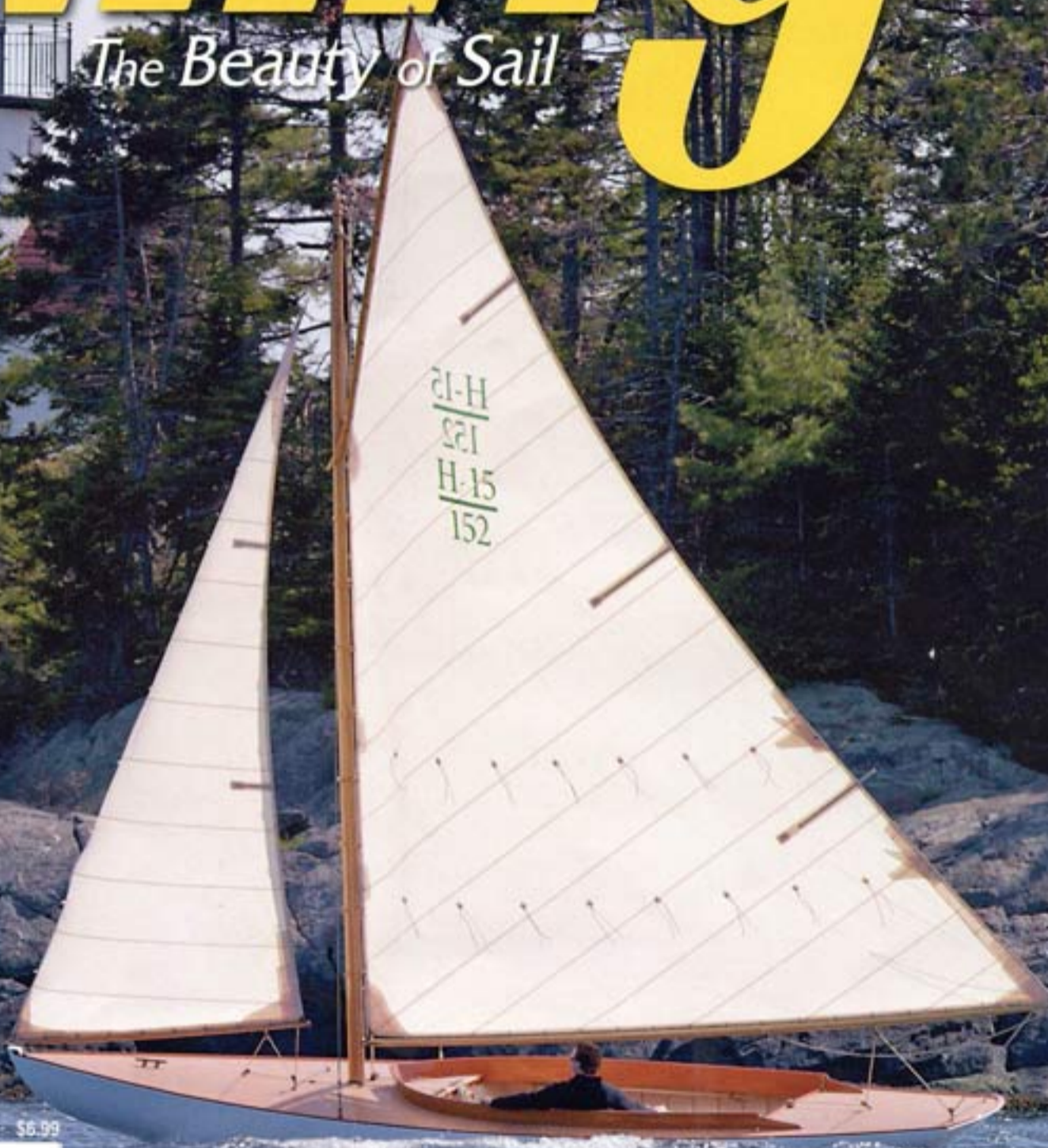


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# Sailing

*The Beauty of Sail*



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## Sailing with altitude

**D**an Dacey was destined to be a teacher, be it art, sailing or skiing. When he was first placed on a sailboat in a wicker basket before he could walk, he didn't think he would spend the next 65 years making a living doing something he loved so much. Even now there's no sign he'll hang out his retirement shingle anytime soon.

"If I retired, I'm just going to be sailing and skiing," Dacey said. "So why retire?"

Aboard his rugged 22-foot Seaward *Shenanigan*, Dacey sails Lake Dillon, Colorado, from mid-May, when the ice melts, to October 1. Whether there's an easy 8-knot breeze or gale-force winds, Dacey sails the lake every day in the shadow of North Peak at Keystone, where he teaches skiing in the winter. ASA Basic Keelboat is his specialty, but he likes the variety of requests he receives, from following races and explaining strategy, to helping students set up and sail their own boats. As Dacey puts it, "It's exciting to me to turn someone on to sailing because it's a world I love so much."

Dacey started sailing on the East Coast, from Cape Cod to Boothbay Harbor, Maine. Among his first memories were cutting down evergreens with his father and grandfather to make a mast and boom for his boat. His great grandmother hand-sewed his first set of sails.

"We put it all together, went sailing and had a ball," he said. At one point in his life, four generations of Dacey men sailed together. The sailing legacy started with his grandfather's beautiful catboat, which he and his brother got into trouble with, and continues with his large family, including six siblings, still involved in sailing. His mother lives near Cape Ann, Massachusetts, where she heads down to the docks every day to watch the fishermen come and go.

He started teaching skiing in 1968 at Sugarloaf and Saddleback, Maine, making his way to Colorado for the first time in 1975 when he taught at Telluride. In 1985 he moved to Keystone to teach skiing, but he said, he stayed for the lake. Calling himself a regular ski instructor, he spends most of the time in the moguls with groups of advanced students.

He's never taken a season off since he started in 1968, and while some instructors burn out, for him the drive to teach, "just gets worse every year." An honor he's proud of is twice being recognized as one of the top 100 ski instructors in North America by *Ski Magazine*.

When his wife Veronica "Ronni" recently retired from running the Keystone Spa and Fitness Center, she bought her own 18-foot sailboat and they're now a four-boat family, including a 16-foot easy-to-trailer boat they take on camping trips around Colorado.

Dacey may be a transplanted Coloradan, but you'll be welcomed aboard his boat with a hearty "let's go sailing" in numerous other exotic locales. Between teaching sailing and skiing in Colorado, he sails out of La Paz, Mexico, on his 40-foot liveaboard Beneteau *Wind Gypsy* that he and Ronni co-own with two fellow Colorado ski instructors. Dacey is a teaching skipper who gets calls from students to take them places. He takes groups to the Caribbean as a hired captain or a teacher. For entry level, it's the British Virgin Islands, but he goes to the Leeward and Windward Islands in the Caribbean for more advanced sailing.

One of the high points in his sailing career has been teaching team building with the *Mighty Mary* women's America's Cup team through a Denver University executive masters program. He heads to San Diego most every spring and fall to enjoy the contagious energy level of the world class sailors. And, of course, to teach.

Dacey taught art at a community college in Michigan for three years, but after moving to Colorado he says, "skiing and sailing became just another art form." He has always sketched, calling himself a realist, and now his art takes the form of digital photography. If things ever slow down for Dacey, he plans to return to painting.

Back on Lake Dillon, you'll find Dacey rafted up with his buddies every Tuesday night, enjoying food and drinks on one of the most scenic high altitude lakes in the country, surrounded by snow-capped mountains. On the slopes or on the water, Dacey is a sailor among us everyone should know. --Michelle Hurni