

MAY 2021

CHANNELS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SAILING CLUB OF WASHINGTON



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE PIXLER

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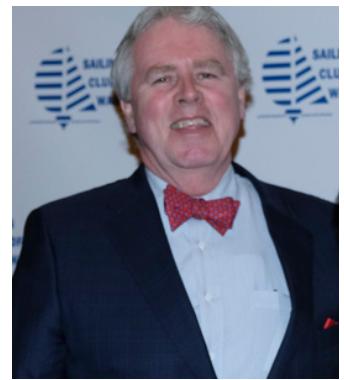
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COMMODORE'S LOG

BY BRIAN MCPHERSON

With April showers behind us, lifting COVID restrictions, and beautiful sailing weather, SCOW is well on its way to a fine spring and summer season. And what better way to kick it off than with the *Burning of the Socks*? Tomorrow, **Thursday, April 29th** is the day! As this is our first social event of the season, we're asking attendees to wear masks and [sign up at this link](#). If you're curious where the tradition started, see the article below.



Our maintenance directors, **Dana Howe** and **Wayne Williams**, along with a great volunteer crew, spent many hours over several days prepping our fleet with a thorough maintenance of our boats and I'm pleased to say all are available for use. Take advantage and get out on the water!

Cruiser skippers, please continue to reach out to our members as crew. Many are interested in becoming cruiser skippers and would love the opportunity to crew for you.

Bonnie Sylwester continues to grow *Wednesday Night Racing* (WNR). Many clubs would be envious to have 13+ boats on the starting line for a one-design race. In fact, most would be happy with anything over five boats. We continue to strive and match crew with skippers.

With the recent COVID guideline changes, **Marie Brennan** is contacting volunteers to restart *Social Sail* later in May. In the past, *Social Sail* has been a very popular event, but it involves the need of several volunteers and skippers in order for it to be successful. Please contact Marie at social@scow.org if you can help out.

The guideline changes by the CDC and local authorities, along with more people receiving a vaccine are all welcome news! Spring is here. Weather is warming. Let's go sailing!

WHY WE BURN SOCKS

If you ask the original sock-burner himself, Capt. Bob Turner, he'll tell you the tradition began in the mid-1980's in Annapolis, where he managed a boatyard.

"I wore socks all winter long while I was working on other people's boats," Turner said. "By the end of the winter, my socks could pretty much stand up by themselves, and one day I just decided to burn them."

On the first day of spring one year, Turner said he removed his caulk-filled, sawdust-laden socks and placed them in a paint tray. He sprinkled them with lighter fluid and set them on fire. Then he drank a beer to celebrate.

And that, as they say, is how the time-honored spring sock-burning tradition began.



FLYING SCOT MAINTENANCE: NEW CENTERBOARD CAP AND JIB SHEET BLOCKS

BY PETE FARRELL

Returning member to SCOW and decided if I was going to be in such good company, I should dress up my Scot with a new centerboard cap and jib sheet blocks. If you just glance at the jib sheet blocks you might say, "Hey, three screws each, all sitting right there, should be the easiest task so do that last." And you would be WRONG!

The centerboard cap was pretty straight forward. The screws came out and all were able to be reused. I bought both the c/b cap and blocks from Flying Scot, 150 bucks, because I was not at all sure of the condition of mine, well-ages as they were. I did take pictures of everything and that saved me a question reinstalling the mainsheet block.



In my case the screws to the jib sheet blocks, having been solidly in place for 25 years, were not going anywhere. I got one started (yes, just one) but after a few turns of the Philips, it was clear the screw heads were going to be completely rung out. I ended up drilling all the heads off. Even then it took a vice grips to inch out each of the six screws. I think some earlier boats had bolts rather than screws. And I did cut away some of the floatation material to check but mine were all 3" screws.

I kept track of port and starboard blocks to use as templates for new screw holes. I also got new screws from Flying Scot, and then waxed each screw before putting them in. They went in pretty easily, especially compared to the extraction saga.



The good news from the story, other than Lively is all cleaned up and waxed, is that I refinished the old blocks and c/b cap, sealed them with several coats of polyurethane. They look great. I am happy to give them to the club at no cost to use on a Scot, but I can tell you that I will NOT be available to get the jib sheet screws out.

MAY IS SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH PRACTICE SAFE SUN!

#PracticeSafeSun

Everyone is at risk for skin cancer – regardless of age, gender, or race. Your skin needs **protection** from the sun in order to **reduce** your risk of skin cancer. Follow these simple steps:

Dress to protect yourself from the sun by wearing a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses with UV protection. For more effective sun protection, select clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label.

Seek shade, especially from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest.

Apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing. Remember to reapply every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

RECOMMENDED: ONE HAND FOR YOURSELF, ONE FOR THE SHIP

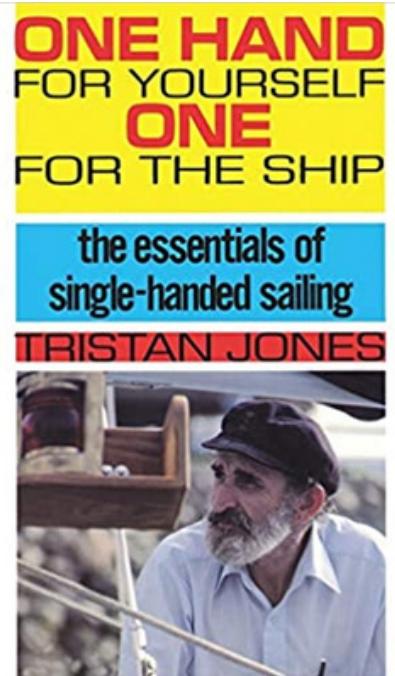
BY LARRY GUTHRIE

Tristan Jones, in his epic book [One Hand for Yourself, One for the Ship](#) notes that he does not know how to swim (p. 55)! Amazing and somewhat encouraging that he can advise on single-handed circumnavigation, noting this. This is a lesson in optimism as well.

About the Author

Tristan Jones has logged more miles--and more adventure--sailing single-handed than any other person alive in our time. He has crossed the Atlantic many times, often alone, and has circumnavigated the globe in small boats.

Jones was born aboard his father's sailing ship as it rounded Cape Horn. He grew up in Wales and later joined the Royal Navy. After he left the service, he began a career of yacht deliveries and, aboard his own yachts, undertook some of the most ambitious small craft journeys ever made. He has written many books about his incredible adventures and is one of the best-loved nautical writers today.



M A Y E V E N T S

3 | SCOW BOARD MEETING | VIA ZOOM | 7PM

5 | WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA | 4:30PM

6 | MARYLAND IN THE AGE OF SAIL LECTURE SERIES SPONSORED BY THE CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM | "WATERY HIGHWAYS-THE CHESAPEAKE BAY" | 5PM | VIA ZOOM | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

7 | SPINSHEET FACEBOOK LIVE HAPPY HOUR | 5PM | HOW TO RUN A GREAT TEAM RACING REGATTA W/SEVERN SAILING ASSOCIATION MEMBERS| [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

8 | SCOW MEMBERSHIP DRIVE | VIA ZOOM | 7PM

12 | WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA | 4:30PM

15 | SCOW ST. BRENDAN'S REGATTA | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA

19 | WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA | 4:30PM

20 | MARYLAND IN THE AGE OF SAIL LECTURE SERIES SPONSORED BY THE CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM | "BATTLE OF HAMPTON ROADS AND THE CIVIL WAR" | 5PM | VIA ZOOM | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

26 | WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA | 4:30PM

29-30 | PRSA SPRING REGATTA | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA

28 | WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING | WASHINGTON SAILING MARINA

NOW WHAT? (A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO JURY RIGGING)

BY ALLEN FLANIGAN

One of the great things about learning to sail is that you not only learn skills specific to sailing (like how to hang a rudder or step a mast); if you're doing it right, you also learn life skills. Learning to deal with the unexpected effectively and confidently is an important step on the path to being an experienced skipper, and might even help you develop an attitude that gives you confidence to deal with life's ups and downs in general.

Jury rigging (or jerry rigging) is an old nautical term that refers to repairs made with whatever lies at hand. Ships that traveled the oceans made certain to carry spares of critical components, but you can't carry an entire spare boat aboard. Situations inevitably arise where a repair while at sea cannot be made by simply trading out a spare component (e.g. a shackle) for a failed component. Jury rigging is improvisational—the art of making do with what you have on hand to make an effective repair that allows a boat to safely proceed.

On April 5th, **Eric Schmidt** and I decided that taking *Andiamo* out for a sail would be a great way to celebrate Dyngus Day (although we forgot to bring any pussy willow branches with us). *Andiamo* had just been thoroughly checked out during the second SCOW maintenance day, looking spiffy and eager to give us a thoroughly enjoyable sail in the gentle to moderate breeze that was on offer out on the Potomac River. We launched just prior to low tide and made our way towards the Naval Research Lab (just across the river from Daingerfield Island). Sailing in about 10-15 knots of wind, we were enjoying some practice mark roundings when a muted pop was heard below the foredeck.

Eric, at the helm, saw the boom drop several inches towards the cockpit and also noticed a gap between the front of the mast base and the mast step. I saw noticeable slack in the forestay and jib luff up front. The lower ends of the jib tack and forestay relative to the foredeck were several inches above where they should have been. We knew something was wrong and while Eric eased the mainsheet to reduce pressure on the sail, I got his permission to go below and inspect the standing rigging forward. Eric gave me a flashlight which allowed me to see a rather ominous sight: the toggle plate which the forestay turnbuckle and jib tack wire attach to was detached from its anchoring bracket. Since the forestay was no longer firmly attached to the hull, I realized that a large enough load on the mast could very well pull the turnbuckle on the end of the forestay through the fiberglass deck and leave us dismasted. Even if the forestay did not give way completely, the slack in the standing rigging was causing serious imbalance in the boat, making her difficult to handle.

"JURY RIGGING (OR JERRY RIGGING) IS AN OLD NAUTICAL TERM THAT REFERS TO REPAIRS MADE WITH WHATEVER LIES AT HAND...THE ART OF MAKING DO WITH WHAT YOU HAVE"

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SAILMAKER, JAMES FORTEN, AND AMERICA'S FIRST CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

BY MICHAEL MESSINGER

In her new book Until Justice Be Done, historian **Kate Masur** shines a light on the important role sailmaker, **James Forten** (1766-1842), played in helping advance civil rights in the nineteenth century. Though a grandson of slaves, James was born free in 1766 in Philadelphia. Like his father, Mr. Forten was a prominent sailmaker and became one of the richest African Americans in America.

Tragically, his father died in a boating accident when James was only 9 years old. As a teenager during the American Revolution he worked as a powder boy on a Royal Louis sailing ship. Captured by the British army, he spent 7 months on a British prison ship.

After the war, he worked in a sail loft in Philly.

He purportedly experimented with different types of sails and arrived at one that made it easier for ships to maneuver and increased boat speed. Unusual for the time, he eventually took charge of the white-owned enterprise and his sail loft of over 30 employees and integrated became one of the most prosperous maritime businesses in Philadelphia.

Mr. Forten was a reform leader and avid champion of equal rights and woman's suffrage. In the early 1800s, anti-black laws were being passed to restrict black migration and rights. As Ms. Masur explains just after Ohio gained statehood in 1803, measures were passed under state police power that restricted black peoples' ability to migrate, travel or enforce rights, such as, contracts or property, in state courts. Similar anti-black measures often rooted in discrimination based on race or class were adopted in the Indiana and Illinois territories.

Mr. Forten with others is credited with helping prevent the anti-black measures from spreading to Pennsylvania.

He authored a series of letters published as an eleven-page pamphlet, *Letters from a Man of Colour, on a Late Bill Before the Senate of Pennsylvania*, in 1813. In them James holds up the equality of all people in the Declaration of Independence. According to Ms. Masur, he described an equality that "transcended perceptions of skin color, national origin, religion or supposed level of civilization."

Perhaps this sailing season, as SCOW members trim their sails going to weather and increase boat speed, we will do well to be thankful for the example of sailmaker, James Forten, and his lifetime commitment to justice, equal rights and community service.

JAMES FORTEN (1766-1842)
IMAGE COURTESY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
PENNSYLVANIA, LEON
GARDINER COLLECTION OF
AMERICAN NEGRO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
RECORDS



Sources

Kate Masur, "Until Justice be Done: America's First Civil Rights Movement, From the Revolution to Reconstruction," Norton & Co. Publ. 2021.

John Witt, "A forgotten movement that fought to end slavery and advance civil rights," Book World, Washington Post, April 25, 2021.

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/forten-james-1766-1842/>

<https://hiddencityphila.org/2011/10/society-hills-abolitionist/>

<https://blackinventor.com/james-forten/>

NOW WHAT?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Looking at the situation at the front of the boat, I did a quick mental inventory of what parts of the rigging were still in working order, and decided that a jury rig could easily be arranged using the jib halyard. I told Eric what I had planned, and he turned us into the wind to give me a minute or two to secure the mast using a length of line with one end attached to the bow eye using a bowline knot and the other end likewise attached via bowline knot to the shackle at the end of the jib halyard. Once the rig was done, I returned to the cockpit and carefully tightened the jib halyard using the winch crank. The boom slowly rose to its normal level as the mast raked forward, and the stays became taught. Eric and I now had a functional and seaworthy rig, ready to bear the forces of wind and water involved in sailing a Flying Scot. We proceeded under main alone and were able to make it back to the docks without further incident.



THIS IS A CLEAR PICTURE OF HOW THE TOGGLE PLATE SHOULD LOOK. IT PIVOTS AROUND A RIVET ATTACHED TO THE LOWER BRACKET. THIS RIVET IS WHAT FAILED. PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC SCHMIDT

The unexpected failures that can occur on a sailboat range from minor annoyances (like a busted buckle on a PFD, or a reefing grommet that has popped out) to serious problems that affect the safety and seaworthiness of the boat. Our rigging failure was one of the more serious calamities that can occur, making the boat unsailable and potentially unsafe should the mast come down. The basic mindset that an experienced skipper develops is to understand that sooner or later, a failure will happen. Bringing spare shackles, spare line, basic tools like a rigging knife, pliers, etc. aboard with you is essential if you want to have the best chance of quickly and effectively dealing with whatever failures happen. Moreover, jury rigging requires a prepared mind. A good skipper contemplates hypothetically, what (s)he might do if any of the more vital components of the sailboat (centerboard, standing rigging, running rigging, tiller, rudder, boom, mast) fail. In order to accomplish a successful improvised repair, it is also important to understand the physics of what makes boats work. When we learn to sail, we learn to understand and appreciate that sailboats are built to withstand and harness potentially strong forces. When a vital component fails, any successful attempt to jury rig a repair requires an appreciation of the forces that will be exerted on the jury rig. Had Eric and I not had confidence in the ability of our jury rig to bear the normal loads exerted on a forestay in the wind conditions we had, we would have had to contemplate reducing sail by reefing to ensure that the jury rig would not be overpowered and itself fail, or even douse all sail. A broken pintle is another device which presents a challenge to jury rig, as the force it endures in keeping the boat on course can be substantial.

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NOW WHAT?

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The process of coming up with a jury rig involves skills that most experienced skippers have. The first order of business after a component failure is to secure the boat and check on the crew. It's generally a good idea to luff up/heave to so that you can concentrate on dealing with the failure. Heaving out the anchor might also be a good way to secure the boat from danger (such as a lee shore) while you deal with the situation. Investigate the failure to learn as much relevant info as you can. Once you know what is broken you can determine if the boat can safely continue sailing without any repairs. If something vital is broken or has fallen overboard, you will need to consider the options available to you. Do I have a spare? Can I jury rig? Will the boat be sufficiently seaworthy and maneuverable for me to safely proceed?



ANDIAMO BACK SAFELY. THE RED LINE CONNECTS THE JIB HALYARD TO THE BOW EYE TO SERVE AS AN IMPROVISED FORESTAY. PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC SCHMIDT

It's very easy to imagine a wide range of scenarios: Failed jib halyard? Use the spinnaker halyard to hoist the jib. Or douse the jib and sail under main alone. Or repair the jib halyard if possible.

Broken gooseneck? Rig the main to be used without boom by fastening the tack to the mast with a gasket around the mast, attach another line to serve as a Cunningham to tension the luff (similar to the SCOW standard procedure for reefing the main), and attaching the main sheet to the clew to allow the sail to be trimmed.



ALLEN RIGS A SECOND JURY RIG LINE BETWEEN THE BOW EYE AND THE LOWER END OF THE FORESTAY TO FURTHER SECURE THE FRONT OF THE MAST. PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC SCHMIDT

The knot tying and rigging skills that you develop as a SCOW member and skipper will come in handy when you find yourself dealing with an equipment failure. Have spare lengths of line and basic tools with you whenever you are sailing. In the same way that a good skipper prepares the crew for the eventuality of crew overboard by performing drills, it's a good idea, particularly for a training skipper, to conduct failure drills by discussing with your crew/trainee(s) what sorts of failures might be experienced aboard a sailboat, and lead them through the process of what would be needed to deal with a specific scenario or scenarios.

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NOW WHAT?

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Invite them to improvise solutions. Discuss and critique the different solutions you come up with. You can even deploy an actual jury rig to demonstrate. Our jib halyard jury rig could definitely be deployed with the forestay still intact as a practice exercise.

An experienced skipper knows the value of staying calm and focused anytime they are in command of a boat. It is particularly valuable when you are beset by an unexpected equipment failure while on the water. The old saying is "if you haven't gone aground, you haven't been around." Likewise, if you haven't had something fail on a boat, you're either new to being a skipper or you're very, very lucky.

NEW MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

BY ESTHER MASSEY, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Since January, we have 45 new members with 17 household members for a total of 62 new members and 197 renewals with 70 household members for a total of 267 renewals and 329 overall. A few members have yet to complete their profile for this year. Our main referrals for new members come from other members and web searches. In sum, we're doing fairly well.

We've started holding membership drives through Zoom MeetUps and it seems to be working. With **Joe Leoncio** leading the sessions, a lot of interest has been generated. People are able to get questions about the club answered and hear the enthusiasm of different members. Our next Zoom meeting will be on **Thursday, May 8 at 7 PM**. All members are invited to listen in and offer advice. Please see the SCOW site for details.



ON THE TRAILER AWAITING REPAIR OF THE TOGGLE PLATE.
PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC SCHMIDT

MORE MAINTENANCE DAY MEMORIES



PHOTO CREDIT: RICHARD KAISER

DICK VIDA AND TIM BLISS
"FIXING SOMETHING."

PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC SCHMIDT



WHO'S WHO IN SCOW

2021 OFFICERS

Brian McPherson, Commodore | commodore@scow.org

Chip Lubsen, Vice Commodore | vice@scow.org

Jenn Joint, Secretary | secretary@scow.org

Mike Hooban, Treasurer | treasurer@scow.org

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Marie Brennan, Social Activities Director | social@scow.org

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Carlie Smith, River/Bay Director | river@scow.org

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Wayne Williams, Maintenance Director (Cruisers) | cruisermaint@scow.org

Bonnie Sylwester, Racing Director | racing@scow.org

Esther Petrilli-Massey, Membership Director | membership@scow.org

Becky Cole, Skipper Director | skipper@scow.org

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Vacant | Chair, Investments Committee | investment@scow.org

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