

# Chanels

The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington  
January 2010

## Commodore's Log

Ahoy Fellow SCOW Members,

Greetings and Happy New Year! I am excited to welcome the new board members (see listing on back page), and I am looking forward to a great year. This year's board is already working hard to plan activities.

My ambition for the year 2010 is to update the website to make it a more valuable resource to our members and to update many of the forms, tests, and procedures to make sure the club operates more efficiently. Many changes have already been made to help all of you monitor the weather and tides observed and predicted, log onto the boat reservation system (FACES), and get other useful information that is now posted on our website.

In the near term our agenda is to start planning the activities and budget for the year so the club can continue to operate smoothly. Please contact the appropriate board member if you are interested in helping out in any way this year.

As always, we start the year off right with the Afterglow Party on Saturday, January 9th. This is the time to mingle with other members and reminisce about the good times we had last year and start to think about the fun we will have this year. Be sure not to miss this fun event!

Our new Vice Commodore, Faith Rodell, has already booked several fantastic speakers for our general meetings, so check out the details in next month's Channels. Be sure to come to our January General Meeting on Monday, January 11th, to hear all about the Alexandria Seaport Foundation.

We look forward to our continued association and thank you in advance or in arrears for your kind efforts in helping further the objectives of SCOW, namely:

"...provide its membership with opportunities to sail, to exchange information about sailing, to learn safe boating procedures, and to meet others in the Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay area with similar interests. The Club shall plan activities for both the novice and experienced sailor."

Chris von Guggenberg  
2010 Commodore

**Don't forget! SCOW Afterglow Party on Saturday, January 9, 7-11 pm**

**See details on next page**

## **SCOW AFTERGLOW PARTY**

**Saturday, January 9, 7-11pm**

**Potluck Dinner** – Scrumptious ham and roast beef will be provided. Bring your tastiest sides, luscious appetizers, savory dips/chips, decadent desserts – or \$10 for the pot. Beer & wine – 2 free drinks! Unlimited hot cider, hot chocolate, etc.

**Start the new decade by sharing dreams of adventures past and future!!**  
**Bring your pictures, tall tales, and vivid memories of a great season past!**  
**Bring your anticipation and excitement for another great year ahead!**

**Where:** The Colonies at McLean, 7681 Provincial Drive, McLean, VA 22102  
It's just inside the Beltway. From Rte. 495, take Rte.123 east, go right on Old Meadow, then left on Provincial Drive. The Colonies is on the left. It's a gated community, just tell the guard you're going to the SCOW party at the Clubhouse, which is on the left just after you enter.

**Volunteers:** If you can come an hour early or stay an hour late, or serve as bartender/food tender for one hour during the event, please contact Vana Nespor, SCOW's 2010 Social Director: [vana.nespor@gmail.com](mailto:vana.nespor@gmail.com). You make the difference!



**SV Liberty Belle's "Gingerbread Man," winner of the 2009 Holiday Boat Parade of Lights, was designed and created by SCOW members Dorothy Stocks, Steve Linke, and Peg O'Laughlin**

## Keeping the SCOW Fleet Sailing

**Fall Maintenance Day a success.** SCOW volunteers have made great progress during the latter part of 2009 in completing repairs and upgrading the SCOW fleet. The Fall Maintenance Day was well attended and productive, thanks to the volunteer members and the coordination and oversight by Tom Kelly, SCOW Maintenance Director for 2009. Building on the progress achieved that day, we have continued to finish repairs and upgrade fleet equipment. The four Flying Scots and two cruisers are all equipped and ready to serve the membership for the 2010 sailing season.

**Volunteers needed.** Keeping the fleet in good shape is the responsibility of all SCOW members and can only be achieved through your continued support of the maintenance program. Maintenance teams for each boat have been established to ensure that routine maintenance continues and repairs are initiated expeditiously. All members are encouraged to join the Club's Skippers in volunteering for one of these teams. Working with experienced skippers is a great learning experience and is critical to keeping the fleet in good condition. If you would like to volunteer for a specific boat or would like to be assigned to a boat, please email [maintdir@scow.org](mailto:maintdir@scow.org). No one should be concerned that your talents can't be used. You don't need to be experienced to make a valuable contribution because there are plenty of varied tasks and lots of expertise to assist the uninitiated. The key ingredient is your willingness to do your share to support the Club.

**New SCOW lockers.** Support for skippers and maintenance teams has also been the focus of recent upgrades to the SCOW lockers. We have expanded our storage space and upgraded the lockers to ensure that equipment is readily available to skippers, and that tools and supplies are accessible when needed for maintenance. SCOW now has three lockers on the east side of the storage building at the Washington Sailing Marina. The Sail Locker is the center door. To the left of it is a new Storage Locker and to the right is the re-located Maintenance Locker. These lockers have been cleaned, painted and new shelving installed with labels to assist in finding equipment and returning equipment to its assigned place. When using the lockers, please let us know if there is additional equipment that the Club needs to acquire or if you have other suggestions to help support the SCOW fleet.

**Senior Bosuns.** The Club has traditionally relied on its most experienced and knowledgeable members to assist in overseeing special maintenance tasks. We have sometimes referred to this group of advisors and specialists as Senior Bosuns. To make it easier to seek their advice and to communicate with them, a new SCOW email list has been established to direct email correspondence to all Senior Bosuns, [seniorbosuns@scow.org](mailto:seniorbosuns@scow.org).

Let us know how the maintenance teams can better serve the Club, and please consider joining one of the maintenance teams for 2010. Thank you!

Mark Hogan  
SCOW Maintenance Director for 2010  
[maintdir@scow.org](mailto:maintdir@scow.org)

## New "Reefing-Ready" Rigging for the Flying Scots

By George Umberger and Jim Klein

Some of us have been busy of recent, and all four Flying Scots are now similarly rigged for a new reefing procedure and also for spinnaker use.

We have noted for some time that reefing lines often go missing, some skippers are confused by the jiffy reefing procedure, and lines sometimes get tangled or misused. Consequently, we have experimented a bit, tested out a new reefing procedure, and commend it to your use. All Scots are now rigged similarly for reefing from either the port or starboard side of the boom.

The two reserve mainsails (middle shelf of the sail locker) have been rigged with permanent reefing lines (purple lines) and a long outhaul line that need not be untied at any time from the aft clew grommet. All the other mainsails will be rigged in this fashion in the near future. Please study the following reefing procedure, and then test it out for yourself on the water. Updated laminated launch procedure cards in the cockpit of each boat will also explain this reefing procedure.

## Flying Scot Reefing Procedures (Revised)

**Step 1.** In a reefing situation, head into the wind; loosen the mainsail halyard, lower the main so that the reefing luff grommet is close to the boom, then lock off the halyard; release tension on the outhaul and remove the outhaul line bitter end from the mid-boom cleat and block. Do not remove it from the aft-boom block.



**Sail up (note purple reefing lines in reef grommets)**



**Sail dropped to reefing grommet (purple line tied)**

**Step 2.** Securely tie off the mainsail around the boom, both fore and aft, with the two purple reefing lines (attached permanently through the luff grommet and the leech grommet), using a reef knot (square knot) to do so. You may use the reefing hook at the boom gooseneck if you wish. This is not required if you prefer to use the purple reefing line to tie off around the boom gooseneck forward of the reefing hook. Ensure that the reef point is secured with forward as well as downward pressure. Take care not to impede the travel of the mainsheet with the reefing lines.



**Forward reefing line tied**



**Aft reefing line tied**

**Step 3.** Rethread the bitter end of the outhaul line through the leech reefing grommet. The line should run from the bowline at the sail clew back through the aft-boom block and then forward through the leech grommet and then aft again to the aft-boom cleat (boom port side) or block (starboard side). Unlike previous reefing procedures, you NEVER need to detach the outhaul line from the mainsail clew grommet. Reefing may be done on either side of the boom. You may tie off here with a cleat hitch on the port side (after tensioning the outhaul) or you may merely run the line around the aft horn of the aft-boom cleat (or through the block on the starboard side) and

continue forward to thread the bitter end through the mid-boom block and then aft again to tie off at the mid-boom jam cleat.



**Outhaul thru aft grommet**



**Outhaul around cleat/tension**



**Outhaul tied at cleat**



**Outhaul run to forward block & cleat**

Tension this outhaul line securely before cleating. It is important for sail control and performance that the foot of the sail be tensioned properly. If you wish, you may also use the mid-sail white reefing lines to clean up the mainsail along the foot, but do not create tension on these mid-mainsail reefing lines; the tension should exist only at three points: the gooseneck reefing connection (forward and downward pressure), the aft-boom reefing connection (downward pressure), and the outhaul (aft pressure).

**Step 4.** Tighten up the luff with the main halyard and then fall off to proceed under reefed main.



**Safe sailing of our Scots requires skippers to be able to reef the mainsail!**

Practice reefing often when you do not need to reef, so you will be experienced when you really do need to reef!

**IF YOU ARE EVEN THINKING ABOUT REEFING, REEF BEFORE YOU GO OUT!**

It is MUCH easier to shake out a reef when you find the wind has died rather than attempt to put in a reef (while underway) when wind is increasing!!

## **The Truth About Cold Water by Mario Vittone**

I'm going to come right out and tell you something that almost no one in the maritime industry understands. That includes mariners, executives, managers, insurers, dock workers, for certain – fisherman, and even many (most) rescue professionals:

**It is impossible to die from hypothermia in cold water unless you are wearing flotation, because without flotation – you won't live long enough to become hypothermic.**

Despite the research, the experience, and all the data, I still hear “experts” – touting as wisdom – completely false information about cold water and what happens to people who get in it. With another season of really cold water approaching, I feel compelled to get these points across in a way that will change the way mariners behave out there on (or near) the water.

What follows is the truth about cold water and cold water immersion. I know that you think you know all there is to know about hypothermia already (and maybe you do), but read ahead and see if you aren't surprised by something.

When the water is cold (say under 50 degrees F), there are significant physiological reactions that occur, in order, almost always.

### **You Can't Breathe**

The first phase of cold water immersion is called the cold shock response: It is a stage of increased heart rate and blood pressure, uncontrolled gasping, and sometimes uncontrolled movement. Lasting anywhere from 30 seconds to a couple of minutes depending on a number of factors, the cold shock response can be deadly all by itself. In fact, of all the people who die in cold water, it is estimated that **20% die in the first two minutes**. They drown, they panic, they take on water in that first uncontrolled gasp, if they have heart problems – the cold shock may trigger a heart attack. Surviving this stage is about getting your breathing under control, realizing that the stage will pass, and staying calm.

### **You Can't Swim**

One of the primary reasons given by recreational boaters when asked why they don't wear a life jacket, is that they can swim. Listen up, Tarzan; I swam for a living for the better part of my adult life, and when the water is cold – none of us can swim for very long. The second stage of cold water immersion is swimming failure. Lacking adequate insulation your body will make its own. Long before your core temperature drops a degree, the veins in your extremities (those things you swim with) will constrict, you will lose your ability to control your hands, and the muscles in your arms and legs will just flat out quit working well enough to keep you above water. Without some form of flotation, and in not more than 30 minutes, the best swimmer among us will drown – definitely – no way around it. Without ever experiencing a drop in core temperature (at all), over 50% of the people who die in cold water die from drowning perpetuated by swimming failure.

### **You Last Longer Than You Think**

If you have ever heard the phrase, “That water is so cold, you will die from hypothermia within ten minutes.” then you have been lied to. For that matter you can replace ten minutes with twenty, or thirty, or even an hour, and you've still been lied to. In most cases, in water of say 40 degrees (all variables to one side), it typically takes a full hour to approach unconsciousness from hypothermia, the third stage of cold water immersion – though you must be wearing flotation to get this far.

We are all different in this regard, but I once spent an hour in 44-degree water wearing street clothes and my core temperature was down by less than two degrees (I was not clinically hypothermic). It was uncomfortable, to be sure, and I wouldn't recommend finding your own limit, but it probably would have taken another hour to lose consciousness, and an hour after that to cool my core to the point of no return. The body's efforts to keep the core warm – vasoconstriction and shivering – are surprisingly effective. The shivering and blood shunting to the core are so effective, that twenty minutes after jumping in (twice the “you'll be dead in ten minutes” time), I had a fever of 100.2.

## Rescue Professionals Think You Live Longer

There is a good side to the misconceptions about hypothermia. Should you ever be in the water in need of rescue, you can be certain that the Coast Guard is going to give you the benefit of every doubt. When developing search criteria, search and rescue coordinators use something called the Cold Exposure Survival Model (CESM): It is a program wherein they enter all the available data about the victim (age, weight, estimated body fat, clothing, etc.) and the environment (water temp, sea state, air temp, wind) and the software spits out a number that represents the longest possible time you can survive under those conditions. I plugged my own information into it once and it said I could survive for over 4 hours in 38 degree water wearing nothing but a t-shirt and jeans and no flotation. I can tell you from experience that the CESM is full of it – I'd give myself 35 minutes tops – but the error is comforting. If the program that determines how long I might live is going to be wrong – I want it to be wrong in that direction.

## Out of the Water Is Not Out of Trouble

I lost count of the number of survivors I annoyed in the back of the helicopter because I wouldn't let them move. I had a rule – if they came from a cold water environment, they laid down and stayed down until the doctors in the E.R. said they could stand. It didn't matter to me how good they felt or how warm they thought they were ... because the final killer from cold water immersion is post-rescue collapse. Hypothermia does things besides making everything colder. Victims are physiologically different for awhile. One of the things that changes is called heart-rate variability. The heart's ability to speed up and slow down has been affected. Getting up and moving around requires your heart to pump more blood, being upright and out of the water is also taxing, then any number of other factors collide and the heart starts to flutter instead of pump – and down you go. Victims of immersion hypothermia are two things; lucky to be alive and fragile. Until everything is warmed back up – out of the water and dry is good enough – mobility comes later.

## Did You Learn Anything?

If you did, then hopefully you'll use it to make good decisions when it comes to being safe on and around cold water -- good decisions like these:

1. When working on deck, wear flotation. This includes, especially, all fisherman in Alaska. I couldn't find more recent research, but the 31 Alaskan "fell overboard" casualties in 2005 died from drowning, not cold water. Not one of them was wearing flotation. Many couldn't stay above water long enough for their own boats to make a turn and pick them up.
2. If you witness a man overboard – getting the life ring directly to them is critical (vital – step one – you must do it). Make certain that this all-important piece of safety gear is not just on your vessel, but readily available and not tied to the cradle.
3. When working on deck – wear flotation. I said that already? Well, when I quit reading search reports that end with "experienced" mariners dying because they thought they understood cold water – I'll come up with better advice.

For more advice about how to handle an accidental immersion into cold water, please watch [Cold Water Boot Camp](#) – it is one of the best 10 minutes on immersion hypothermia ever produced. For even more advice, ask me a question on the discussion boards.

Published: November 10, 2009 by Mario Vittone

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### About The Author

Mario Vittone has eighteen years of military service in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. His writing on maritime safety has appeared in *Yachting*, *SaltWater Sportsman*, *On-Scene*, *Lifelines*, and *Reader's Digest* magazine. He has lectured extensively on topics ranging from leadership to sea survival and immersion hypothermia. He is a marine safety specialist with the U.S. Coast Guard.

## Next Membership Meeting: Monday, January 11, 2010

Kathy Seifert will tell us all about the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, a local group that helps at-risk youth turn their lives around by teaching them to build and use wooden boats and by preparing them through apprenticeships for a career in the building trades.

**Location:** American Legion Post, 400 Cameron Street, in Old Town Alexandria  
**Time:** Socializing downstairs begins at 6:30 pm and the meeting begins upstairs at 7:30 pm

<b>Social Sail</b>	Every Thursday, Washington Sailing Marina, April - October, 6:00 pm
<b>Social No-Sail</b>	Events and locations vary, December - April, 6:00 pm
<b>Board Meetings</b>	1st Monday of every month, 7:00 pm (open to members)
<b>Channels Deadline</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> of every month. Submit articles to: <a href="mailto:channels09@scow.org">channels09@scow.org</a>
<b>2009 Calendar</b>	<a href="http://www.scow.org/calendar.html">http://www.scow.org/calendar.html</a>
<b>SCOW Pictures</b>	<a href="http://picasaweb.google.com/Sailing.Club.of.Washington">http://picasaweb.google.com/Sailing.Club.of.Washington</a>
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### For information about club activities

Visit <http://www.scow.org> or email [info@scow.org](mailto:info@scow.org)