

ChanNels

The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington
August 2007

Commodore's Log

As I write this I am at a conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. I have met one sailor here (he commented on my SCOW hat). He was from Alaska where the water is a lot colder than in DC. There is sailing on Great Salt Lake (where the water is a lot warmer than in DC).

Great Salt Lake is saltier than the ocean, not as salty as the Dead Sea, relatively shallow, and has occasional problems with red-purple bacteria or red algae blooms. The salt is corrosive to metal, so there are few metal boats. Winds are reported to be erratic. The depth and salinity of the lake depend on rainfall. Lately it has been dry here so the lake is smaller and more salty than in recent years. I think I prefer the Potomac. We are lucky to have a nice place to sail.

As you read this months Channels, you will find information on upcoming social events, including sails on the bay, river events, and about the new-to-us Catalina 25.

Once again, we have purchased a boat that does not have a name. Sooo...., it is time for another contest; this time to name the Catalina. Send me your suggestions for consideration.

Adam Pressman has agreed to stay on and coordinate the racing program despite his busy schedule. So I expect to see another racing seminar before the year is over, along with the usual Wednesday night races. Lisa Eller and Wayne Williams have taken over the production of Channels. This is their first issue!

Please note that Wayne, Adam, other Board members have contributed a lot of time to the club to organize activities, classes, maintain the boats, buy or sell boats, and keep the club functioning. Members of the Boat Asset Committee have also helped with the purchase and sale of the boats, in particular, John Roland. Please thank them when you see them. Good Sailing!



Danschweida – Returning under Spinnaker with Zaafar at the Helm

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The newest addition to the SCOW fleet, a 1983 Catalina 25

We departed from Annapolis Back Creek at about 11:00 AM Saturday, July 28th, and tied up at Buzzard Point Marina on the Anacostia River at 3:30 PM, Monday, July 30th. Skippered by Ron Sheldon and crewed by Brigitte Conway, Steve Linke, and Tom Kelly, she proved to be a sound and mostly comfortable boat. In spite of numerous obstacles laid in front of Skipper Ron and his crew, the new Catalina made her destination within hours of the estimated hour.

The trip provided a number of lessons that the crew will not soon forget, so much so that one crewmember called the voyage “a boating bootcamp.” With two days notice, Skipper Ron agreed to take charge of the trip, and drove to Annapolis to inventory the new craft and test its electrical systems. Scouting out the marina for a misplaced gas tank and line, fabricating an extension cable to interconnect two batteries between the engine and the boat’s electrical system, gathering miscellaneous sails, tools, lines, safety equipment and ice chest from SCOW resources, borrowing a five gallon gas can from Jeff Teitel and another five gallon can, battery and more necessary items from Dorothy Stocks, and purchasing a second battery, battery box and other items was only the first phase of making the new boat seaworthy.

With transportation provided by Dorothy Stocks and Mike Trueheart, the skipper, crew, their gear and the scavenged and purchased equipment were delivered to Annapolis the evening before departure. After stowing equipment, shopping for fuel and provisions, and sleeping aboard the first night, the crew made ready for an early departure Saturday morning, only to discover that the extension cable was fabricated with all connectors sized for the smaller negative battery terminals and, therefore, didn't fit the larger positive terminals. While part of the crew departed to rectify that problem, the remaining crew prepared the engine. Following the marine requirement that the more important the part and the more difficult to replace, the more likely it is to fall overboard, the oil dipstick was lost. Steve, who claimed to be an Army reservist, revealed his true background of Navy SEAL by stripping to his shorts, and diving into the dark and chilly waters of Bert Jabin’s marina, much to the skepticism of his shipmates. To their astonishment, he returned within seconds with the wayward dipstick held aloft like an Olympic torch, thus assuring his place on any SCOW crew in perpetuity.



Brigetta, Ron and Steve – Picture by Tom



Ready for Departure

Next, the motor refused to start, or even turn over, an apparent victim of ‘hydrolock’ (caused when a fluid [oil in this case] immobilizes the cylinders) from being improperly stored with the wrong side down. Skipper Ron manifested his characteristic ‘can-do’ spirit, consulted John Roland by phone as to cause and cure, and after John had departed from Manassas for Annapolis to lend first hand assistance, was able to convince a lone Saturday morning Bert Jabin yardman to take a look. For the price of a six-pack of beer, and fifteen minutes of on and off cranking with the starter motor, the yardman persuaded the 8 HP Yamaha to finally start, in a plume of blue haze accompanied by the cheers of the crew.

With provisions and personal gear safely stowed, and final running rigging installed with the help of John Roland, the trip was finally underway, only four hours late. A hard day of motoring into the wind ensued, finally making the turn into the Potomac around 9:30 PM. Further challenges followed as darkness fell, since the vessel lacks a compass and depth gauge (for now!). Brigitte may have saved a grounding when she noted that the planned course could turn us inside the Point Lookout marker, which was on shoals. Thanks to her observation, we turned well outside, with plenty of water under our raised keel. (Continued on Page 4)



Rainy Day Sailing – Picture by Mary Silverson



Sunny Day Sailing with Skipper Mike Rothenberg

No aspect of the sailor's world is more mysterious to the landsman than the practice of navigation. To find a precise point in a trackless waste seems neither art nor science, but magic. Yet in no other sphere of progress has the continuity of development been so clearly based on the heritage of the past, nor has the accumulated knowledge been so universally shared by men of all races, creeds and nations.

- Carleton Mitchell
Author
Passage East

Bay Crab Feast and Raft-Up St. Michaels, MD Saturday, August 25

Would it truly be summer without a crab feast? We don't think so! So, on August 25, SCOW members and friends will meet at the Crab Claw in St Michaels at 5 p.m. for our annual Crab Feast and Raft-Up. Please RSVP to Dot Almassy if you plan to attend. Everyone must be there by 5 p.m. in order to be seated together, and note that the Crab Claw does not take credit cards -- cash and checks are accepted. For detailed information on car pools, dockage information, OR TO RSVP, social@scow.org

Board Brief By Maggie Nelson

- ✓ The Board welcomed Melissa Ennis as the new Skipper director effective in July.
- ✓ Member Brigette Conway's suggestion to buy a rescue heaving line for the Flying Scots was approved.
- ✓ The new Catalina will be available to club members in August. Thanks to the BAC and all who have worked to obtain the boat.
- ✓ Psycho will not be sold – if usage continues as monitored thru the spring.
- ✓ The Leukemia Cup regatta is looking for a corporate sponsor. Please contact Dorothy Stocks if you know of a company who would like to donate money as the sponsor.
- ✓ The new Flying SCOT was christened as Selkie at the Summer Picnic.
- ✓ SCOW's Racing Committee is working on Strategy and Tactics program to be delivered the last four Wednesdays of August, as well as a Seminar for the Leukemia Cup night (08 Sept 07). Watch email for details.

The newest addition to the SCOW fleet, a 1983 Catalina 25 (Continued)

Tom's handy GPS provided a virtual marker at the entrance to Calvert Bay and our first anchorage, dockside at Point Lookout Marina, on Smith Creek at 11:30 PM Saturday. A brief 'sticky' grounding was salvaged by quick hands on the motor shifter, throttle, and tiller. It had been a fairly rough day on the Bay, with up to 4-5 ft. seas and many long rollers and swells causing steep plunges of the bow and pronounced rolling of the boat. Everyone onboard, however, was seahardy and never even gave a hint of seasickness. Deserved showers and a good night sleep ensued.

After leaving cash for facility use in the dockmaster's door, the ship of fools was underway again at full throttle the following morning about 7:40 AM. Anticipating a restaurant breakfast, based on a promising cruising guide description, while getting fuel, ice and replenishing provisions at Coles Point Plantation marina, the crew found a closed restaurant and had to settle for microwaved frozen breakfast sandwiches from the sparsely stocked marina store. With GPS waypoints and courses, cross checked by charts and eyeballs, the motor cruise continued up the Potomac, dodging one thunderstorm by sheltering behind Cobb Island, and riding through an hour of solid downpour, with lookout nearly frozen to the mast just east of Aquia Creek.

Fortunately, the crew was well prepared with waterproof charts, waterproof GPS and waterproof binoculars, enabling them to continue motoring in very limited visibility, in an area so full of crab pots it merits a special mention on the chart. Since things tend to come in bunches, and as if rain, thunder, lightening, crab pots, poor visibility, and no safe haven were not enough, a barge appeared from around the bend, going downriver. An interesting phenomenon observed was the outgoing tide cascading over shoals at spider marker "5" near Mathias Point. With Steve at the helm and Brigitte navigating while sitting in the buckets of water coming down, we made it safely through the storm.



Tom with Mt. Vernon in the Background

Anchorage that night was provided by the Marine's marina at Quantico (thanks to Steve and his retired military ID.)

Hoping for a sit down restaurant dinner in Quantico, the crew settled for pizza and beer at a marina picnic table, since the only Quantico establishments open Sunday night were Dominos and barbershops, catering to squared away Marines. After dinner the skipper gave the crew a lesson in how to play 'Hearts', which he won hands down, in a brutal approximation of Captain Bligh.

Monday included real coffee and muffins from now open Quantico establishments, an 8:15 AM launch from Quantico, late morning leftover pizza, a first attempt at sailing off Mount Vernon with little to no wind, and arrival at Buzzard Point Marina around 3:30 PM. Tying up at the Buzzard Point slip was reminiscent of a buzzard or even a gooney bird landing, but it gave Tom practice which was clearly needed.

The trip reinforced lessons that mariners have learned countless times: plan, prepare, and prevail. Several innovations developed during the voyage included the adoption of a technique of our aviation brethren (another clear link between flying an airplane and sailing) - clearing "S" turns performed by the fresh helmsman during the hourly handoff; also, how to use a \$30 pump to move gas from reserve 5 gallon cans to fuel tank while under way until the pump's designed failure life of 3-4 uses so you can then learn how to thoroughly rinse your mouth after each siphoning thereafter; and also, the circular Nav log (can also be used to hold food in an emergency).

Each member of the crew made significant contributions to the ultimate outcome of a successful trip, and Skipper Ron provided steadfast leadership (between naps). In addition to a new cruiser in the SCOW fleet, new friendships were also part of the delivery. Approximately 170 miles at an average speed of approx. 6 mph, 28.5 motoring hours.

Danschweida and Selkie Below the Wilson Bridge

By Zaafar Hasnain

I wish I had a picture of Rebecca towing Danschweida and Selkie downriver recently. The only simile that springs to my mind is a mother hen waddling – there was a bit of a waddle because we wanted to steer slightly to the side of Rebecca – purposefully towards the Wilson Bridge, with her two chicks toddling and tripping behind her. There was a touch of toddling or tripping whenever a pesky motorboat went by. Alas, I'm sure our readers would have appreciated a picture of that little procession, rather than my lame attempt to describe a fundamentally indescribable experience.

Rebecca was operated by our legendary Bill Davenport, with the bikini-clad and tanned Rhonda Glassman; Danschweida had two fun ladies in the persons of Mary Siverson and Teri Nachazel, in addition to yours truly; and Selkie had that young, intrepid Lisa Eller and her husband John Eller who seemed a nice chap. I hope to know him, Lisa, and Rhonda better in the future.

I'm told we did three things that haven't been done by Flying Scot skippers before. We sailed on a Flying Scot south of the Wilson Bridge, we beached the boat at Fort Foote, and we flew a spinnaker. This piece was threatening to turn into a little tutorial on beaching, sailing with fluky and light winds, and flying spinnakers, but I deleted what I'd written on the last two topics.

Bill Davenport towed us south through the Bridge and then set Danschweida and Selkie loose. Thanks Bill, for being the mother hen, and Wayne, for organizing this event in the first place. You're both awesome.

We identified the rafted up flotilla of boats near what I took to be Fort Foote and sailed towards it. We circled the flotilla, within hailing distance, a couple of times and asked whether we could raft up. Upon not receiving an answer, and because it was a hot, muggy afternoon with light winds, the prospect of rafting became quite unattractive quite quickly.

My crew and I decided it would be more fun to sail farther south (because the winds were southerly) and fly

the spinnaker on the way back. Alas, the wind continued to be anemic, and we just sailed around, possibly halfway between the Wilson Bridge and Fort Washington. During this period, we got a phone call on my cell phone from David Thompson of PRSA, who appeared to be organizing the event and who had obtained my cell phone number before we cast off at the marina. David was concerned about what happened to us, because we had sailed out of sight of his boat as well as the flotilla.

I assured him we were fine and that we were on the way back. He told me that he was on a small powerboat and that he and a Lightning were beached at Ft. Foote and gave me some pointers on how to follow them. My crew, bless you girls, enthusiastically concurred with this plan and we proceeded to head towards that spot. David was on the beach and helped us secure Danschweida.

We walked the anchor out towards deeper water, set it, and then tied the boat to a medium-sized fallen tree on the beach. The boat was floating throughout the time we were there. I had brought along a long rope I found in the sail locker for this purpose, and if we ever do this again, hopefully with all four Flying Scots, I'd suggest they bring 50-ft. ropes so they can do the same thing.

There's a nice trail at the beach, leading to a bluff overlooking the river, with a nice view of the river and the Virginia shore. There's also a barbecue grill like you often see at state parks. It's an approximately 10-minute hike but well worth the schlep. I've since checked with the Fort Foote rangers and was told that there are no bathrooms or even out-houses and that we're not allowed to camp there overnight. Despite this, I hope we can organize another similar event this year, and I hope there will be more interest. You do need a bit of local knowledge, such as David Thompson telling me there are underwater hazards just north of where we beached, but we can build on this experience... Thanks to all who participated in organizing this great event.



Next Membership Meeting: Monday, August 13th, 2007

Location: American Legion, 400 Cameron Street, in Old Town Alexandria

Time: Socializing downstairs begins at 6:30 pm and the meeting begins upstairs at 7:30 pm.



Fort Foote, River Raft-Up

Several cruisers rafted up in the afternoon including Timeless, Liberty Belle, Rebecca, Crows Nest, Valhalla, Little Tomato and Gypsy Wind. It was hot. So hot that many were seen swimming in the Potomac to cool off.

Pictures
by Steve Riker



Capsize Recovery - Not "Rocket Science," But a Lot of Work

by Alice Starcke

SCOW's Capsize course on Aug. 4 was a refresher for me, but many were going through it for the first time. A group of about 16 members, including instructors Thom Unger and Jeff Teitel, went to Smoots Cove--just south of Wilson Bridge-- for the class. We took the cruisers Rebecca and Psycho, traveling under power with two Flying Scots in tow. Winds were very light that day - under 5 knots at first, then later in the 5-10 knot range. One of the first questions asked was, how do we make the boats capsize in such light air?

After the cruisers were anchored, Thom gave a talk about the procedure for righting a capsized dinghy, main reasons why people capsize the Scots, and how to force a capsize. We then broke into small groups of 4 or 5, got into the Scots and practiced capsizing and righting the boats--multiple times.



1. Sailing along close-hauled; Instructor Jeff is at the helm. Someone's checking to be sure the centerboard is cleated down. Not doing so can mean **big trouble**.



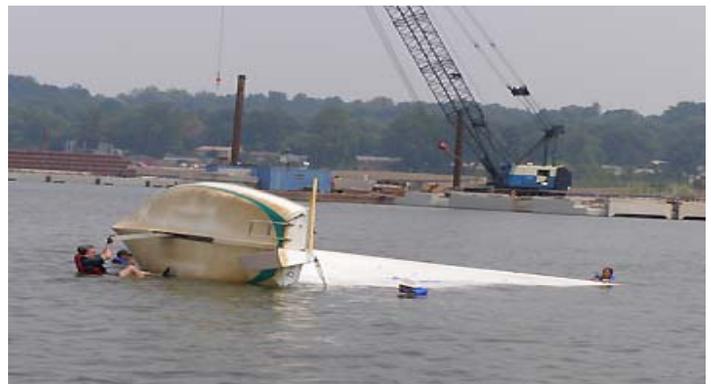
2. Beginning to heel the boat-- everyone moves to the leeward side. A crew member climbs out near the leeward shroud to hang on and lean over the water.



3. Almost over. You can see someone standing, hanging on the shroud.



4. We're capsized! Then we check to make sure all are OK, have their life jackets on, and the mainsheet is uncleated. A cleated mainsheet can cause **trouble**.



5. Crew gets in the proper positions to raise the boat. Being quick to get to the head of the mast is essential. Letting the mast go way under water can be **big trouble**. One person is at the bow hanging onto the painter and another at the centerboard. The boat is then **turned head-to-wind**.

Photos by Alice Starcke

Capsize Recovery (Continued)



6. Pulling down on the centerboard makes the boat pop up. It may take two people, depending on their weight.



7. The boat is up, head-to-wind, one person holds the helm as others begin to climb on.



8. Some people climb in over the side, others use the swim ladder on the boat's stern.



9. All get back in the cockpit, get settled, then bail the water out.

Photos by Alice Starcke

Capsize Recovery (Continued)



10. Sailing away again.

Photo by Alice Starcke

Lest you think I'm "giving away the store," making it unnecessary to take the course by telling these basics, please keep in mind that it took us multiple times practicing the procedures to really get them right. And, reading about it is not at all the same as doing the drills. So if you want to feel more confident about your sailing, take the course next year. It's well worth the effort and lots of fun. This is an all-day course with time for socializing, having lunch, and splashing around in the water. And here's the bonus--you'll learn the "mysteries" of capsize recovery--the reasons behind the bolded words in this story!

2007 Board of Directors

Position	Name	Home	Work	E-mail
Commodore	John Rogers	202.244.5537	301.294.2804	commodore@scow.org
Vice Commodore	Tom Paquin	202.281.8999	202.659.6500	vice@scow.org
Secretary	Maggie Nelson			secretary@scow.org
Treasurer	Dorothy Stocks			treasurer@scow.org
Training Director	Karen Szymczak	703.971.1388		training@scow.org
Maintenance	Bill Davenport	301.598.7524	301.367.3301	maintenance@scow.org
Social Director	Dot Almassy	703.560.0367	703.681.7466	social@scow.org
Skipper Director	Melissa Ennis	703.845.5764	301.279.4201 x2108	skipper@scow.org
River Director	Wayne Williams	703.981.9320		river@scow.org
Racing Director	Adam Pressman		703.850.2073	race@scow.org

Other Key People

Crew Liaison	Melissa Ennis	703.845.5764	301.279.4201 x2180	crew@scow.org
Bay Director	TBD			bay@scow.org
Channels Editor	Lisa Eller	423.360.6899	202.353.2755	channels06@scow.org
Channels Layout	Wayne Williams	703.981.9320		channels06@scow.org
Email Administrator	Jeff Teitel	202.271.1238		postmaster@scow.org
Membership Coordinator	Monika O'Connor	703.921.9262	703.593.4380 (cell)	members@scow.org
Web Editor	Peg O'Laughlin			webmaster@scow.org
Photos on Web	Mike Rothenberg	703.998.0692	703.820.1270	pictures@scow.org

For Information about Club Activities

Visit <http://www.scow.org> or email info@scow.org