
ChaNNels -- The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington

January 2000

Commodore's Log

"Yet a sailor's life is at best but a mixture of little good with much evil, and is a little pleasure with much pain. The beautiful is linked with the revolting, the sublime with the commonplace, and the solemn with the ludicrous." - Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840)

Dana's views on sailing were formed by having spent the years between 1834 and 1836 sailing around Cape Horn and up the California coast on a merchant vessel. You probably have a more romantic view, perhaps never having put down your hamburger long enough to actually get on a boat at Social Sail. On the other hand, anyone who has spent much time sailing can appreciate Dana's comments to some extent.

So, here it finally is, the season we sailors hate - winter. While there may be the odd chance to get out on the water, for most of us winter is a time to enjoy other pursuits and to look forward to the sailing season ahead.

However, if we can't actually sail, we certainly can read about sailing, so in this issue of Channels I am inaugurating what I hope will be a continuing column, "The Sailor's Bookshelf." I am making the first contribution but if you have a fiction or non-fiction sailing book that you think would interest your fellow members, send a brief review to me. We will try to publish one per month.

And for those odd moments when you are not reading about sailing or thinking about sailing, you can join your fellow members at SCOW events and talk about sailing. In addition to the monthly membership meetings and weekly "Social No-Sails," we will be having other social events that will be announced in Channels.

Speaking of events, "Board 2K" will be meeting on January 8 to plan this year's entire calendar of events. If you have suggestions for events that you think will promote the "good," the "pleasurable," the "beautiful" and the "sublime" aspects of SCOW, please contact me or any Board member by email, phone, "snail mail" or just hail us on Channel 16. We always want to hear suggestions on how our club can be made better. The entire schedule will be published in the February issue of Channels and also will be posted on the SCOW web page.

January Speaker: SCOW member Stu Robinson will give us a taste of the cruising life as he recounts his experiences cruising for four years in the West Indies. He will show a half hour

video either at the social hour or during his presentation. He will have various equipment on hand and give us a few demos.

The Sailor's Bookshelf Many books tell about sailing from the perspective of captains - naturally, since they were able to write. But, have you ever wondered what it was like to be a seaman aboard a sailing vessel a few hundred years ago? If so, *Two Years Before The Mast*, by Richard Henry Dana, Jr., first published in 1840, is a must-read. Dana was a student at Harvard who left his studies due to illness and signed on as a common seaman aboard a brig bound for California. (He later became a lawyer but please do not hold that against him.)

It is all here: the food and living conditions; the boredom of life at sea when the ship is becalmed; men swept overboard to their deaths; rounding Cape Horn in a gale; standing on the yardarms reefing sails with the lines caked in ice; floggings; the list goes on. And, better yet, it is all true. Equally interesting is the description Dana offers of places like San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Francisco as they looked, and as people lived, circa 1835. In fact, today in Santa Barbara, there is a plaque on a building noting that it is described in Dana's book.

If you are at all interested in history, in sailing, or both, this book is worth a read.

Racing Committee News Last fall, Commodore Thom Unger appointed a committee to propose ways to improve the club's racing program. The committee held two public meetings and prepared a lengthy report based on the comments received at those meetings. That report was discussed at the general membership meeting in November. Among other things, the report proposed (1) that informal Tuesday night Flying Scot races be resumed, (2) that the club identify the Tuesday night DICF races and certain other races as sanctioned events for use of the club's cruising boats, (3) that a method be developed to allocate club boats fairly for those events, and (4) that qualifications be established for skippers who want to use the Club's cruising boats in club-sanctioned races.

By popular demand, another public meeting will be held at the Washington Sailing Marina on Wednesday, January 19, 1999 from 7:30 to 9:30.

Copies of the committee report will be available at the January general membership meeting, at the January 19 meeting, or from a link to the SCOW web page. If you are interested in this aspect of the club's programs, please plan on attending. We anticipate that the committee will revise its report if necessary based on the input received at this meeting and that the Board will then implement some or all of those recommendations for the upcoming racing season.

Re-Up Brunch: Hold This Date!

The annual re-up brunch will be held on March 12, 1999 at The Colonies in McLean. Mark your calendars now for this popular annual event! Details will be in the February Channels.

All Skate Get Ready for SCOW's First Year 2000 Event!!

Brrrr!!! It's too cold to be in the water in January, so how about gliding on top of it?

Join SCOW for an ice skating party at the new National Gallery of Art's outdoor sculpture garden from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday, January 22, 2000. Help break in the New Year at Washington's newest ice rink, and enjoy some of the world's premier sculptures at the same time. Rink fees are: \$5.50 for adults and \$4.50 for kids age 12 & under and seniors age 50 & up. Skates rental is \$2.50.

The garden/rink is located outdoors between 7th and 9th Streets NW on the Mall between the Natural History Museum and the Gallery's West Wing Building. For more information, please call Kathryn Scott at 703.683.3036. See you there!

Feeling Sociable? Ready to meet some new people and have fun? We're planning an action-packed Social Season with SCOW, but really could use your help. Please share your ideas for events or offer to join our social committee. I promise I won't overwork or overlook you. Give Kathryn Scott a call at 703-683-3036 or drop her an e-mail at social@scow.org. Help make the Year 2000 SCOW's most sociable season ever!

Great News! On December 17, 1999 at 3:00pm Ron Heilig & Deborah Jonas Were Married at the Black Horse Inn, In Warrenton, Va. Merry Christmas to All Love, Ron & Debby

We've Signed On for Another Big Year with BoatU.S.!

We have renewed our BoatU.S. Cooperating Group Program for another year! Because of this special arrangement, you get 50% off when you join the nation's largest Association of recreational boat owners. You pay half of the regular BoatU.S. dues of \$17 dollars. that's only \$8.50 a year!

If you are already a BoatU.S. Member, you can now renew your membership at the low \$8.50 rate.

BoatU.S. Membership benefits include: An effective lobby that fights unfair taxes, fees, and government regulations that single out boat owners.

A 684 page Discount Equipment catalog, plus special discounts and member reward with purchases.

Discounts on fuel, overnight slips or repairs at more than 425 marinas.

Low cost, high protection boat insurance, including special programs for trailerable boats and PWC's.

On the water towing, with your choice of service levels- from \$50 per incident(free to members) up to unlimited service.

BOAT/U.S. Magazine

Contact Larry Gemoets for information or an application. When renewing membership this year, be sure to mention Co-op group #GA80156S

Membership Meetings On the second Monday of each month (except December) at the American Legion Hall, 400 Cameron Street (around the corner from Gadsby's Tavern), Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. Socializing starts at 6:30 p.m. downstairs, and our meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. upstairs

For information about club activities Call: 202.628.7245 (That's 628.SAIL) Visit us at: www.scow.org Write us: info@scow.org

Submissions to Channels: Please! Just type or paste your articles into the body of an email message. We will format it for you. No tabs, no indents, no attachments, NO ALL CAPS! NO Kidding. Email us for details. Your editor doesn't take dictation or transcribe stone tablets. Pony express, snail mail, etc are acceptable, but get it here (not just in the box) by deadline -ed.

ChaNNels can also be read at: www.scow.org. Submit articles to channels@scow.org by one week after the monthly meeting. Use any means, but email is preferred.

Larry Gemoets, Editor. Declan Conroy, Web Publisher. Sam Schaen, Mailing lists.

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