
CHANNELS -- SPECIAL E-MAIL EDITION

January 1997

Channels is the newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington. The E-mail edition is an edited text-only version of our hard copy monthly publication.

MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER, JANUARY 13

Geoff Kerr of the Alexandria Seaport Foundation will offer an illustrated, illuminating talk on the doings and undoings on the mighty Potomac.

COMMODORE'S LOG

(Anne La Lena) Happy New Year SCOW! May 1997 bring fair winds, good fortune and fine adventures to you. Your new board has been busy at work drawing up plans for a productive, enriching and enjoyable year for all SCOW members with the participation of all SCOW members.

As your board begins its term of office it is guided by the suggestions and concerns voiced at the November meeting and our own ideas and plans.

One suggestion was to formalize a tutoring program. A sailing tutoring program will be structured and publicized for you to use. Liz Breuning, in the best SCOW spirit, spoke up after the November meeting and volunteered to be the Tutor Coordinator, an offer which was immediately accepted. Information will be published in future Channels and announced at meetings.

Another suggestion was to forge better links between new and established members. That's where a buddy system can be developed. I plan it to be an easy, enjoyable linkage for both new and established members. There will be a sign-up sheet at monthly meetings where members can volunteer to be buddies to newcomers. The goal is to introduce new SCOW people to others to break the ice and make them feel welcome.

Volunteer buddies will be asked to introduce the new members to 10 other SCOW people, spend some time -- five minutes and the rattling off of names will not suffice -- talking to the new members and answering questions. If you don't know the answer, point the new member in the right direction.

Established members will meet new people more easily and quickly, and new people will feel more welcome and be more likely to volunteer and continue as SCOW members. This program is meant to be enjoyable and relatively easy. It's not meant to be mentoring, as that is usually a

more time-consuming and involved relationship. Friendships may develop, but that will be based on chemistry and personalities, not mandates or goals. SCOW is for people who want to be involved and who are willing to put out the effort to be involved.

Happily, George Umberger will continue as New Member Coordinator. He did an excellent job last year and SCOW is lucky to have him continue. Cathy Cook, coming off a two-year stint as Secretary, will also be a New Member coordinator.

Other suggestions included reactivating big boat use for social sail nights, day sails for Scots beyond the Wilson Bridge, more timely publication of Channels, and firm speaker commitments with appropriate write-ups beforehand, among other comments.

Your board will undertake to do a lot -- that's why you elected us. Some of these things are strictly within our means and we will accomplish them. But we 10 people are not in a vacuum. Your efforts, time, ideas and commitment are also sought and required to enhance a very fine club.

One area your participation will enhance is material for Channels. The editorial staff of Melissa Ennis and Tom Durmick has gone to great lengths to bring you exciting and interesting newsletters. They have done a terrifically creative job and will continue to do so, but with your submissions (and don't forget to spellcheck, proofread and verify dates and numbers -- yes, I include myself in this too).

Many thanks to the 1996 board for their myriad efforts, visible and invisible to us. Led by Commodore Declan Conroy, the 1996 Board brought SCOW into the 21st century with its own Web page and furthered the club with a stimulating training program and buoyant social schedule. A hard act to follow.

However, your 1997 Board has the dedication, dreams and determination to set a new standard in stewardship. Join us as we make this a banner year for SCOW.

SCHOONER SINKS: CREW SAFE

(Melissa Ennis) We note with sorrow the sinking of the ALEXANDRIA, a 125 foot schooner that was Old Town's nautical landmark since 1984. The Alexandria Seaport Foundation, her former owners, sold her because they could not raise the \$1.5 million to recondition the 67-year-old wooden hull. Her new owner, Yale Iverson of Des Moines, ignored warnings that ALEXANDRIA was not ready for "strenuous situations." She sank in 45-knot winds about 50 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras on December 9.

The coast Guard rescued Iverson and six crew members, including two who were stranded in 12-foot seas for more than five hours.

Many sailors, including the editor of channels, tend to see boats as living beings. Anthropomorphism is the word, and it's an error in logic. We know there are worse sins than mistreating a vessel. Something that's not logically alive cannot be murdered. and it's unfair to

condemn a skipper merely on the basis of an Iowa address. Still, we mourn the ALEXANDRIA. Perhaps the poor old lady got the death she preferred. Instead of rotting away at a mooring, she died battling heavy weather and rough seas. It's not a bad way to go.

RIVER ACTIVITIES

(Lee Spain, Director of River Activities) Last year, the marina was a truly exciting place to hang out. There was something interesting happening almost every day. A few personal highlights from last season included a SCOW overnight in Gunston Cove, taking the SCOW big boat course, racing on a big boat, racing on my own boat, helping Special Olympians, serving on a couple of race committees, puttering around in a puny Penguin, docking in Old town, racing in the Leukemia Cup, and wolfing down social sail burgers.

When you throw in an overnight race on the bay, a family raft-up on the South River, a cruise up to Baltimore, and a few unmentioned misadventures, you get the general impression that I was a busy boy. The key to all that fun was simply active participation. The clubs at Washington Sailing Marina have all kinds of cool people and feature all kinds of cool stuff. All you have to do is participate, volunteer, sign up for events, and hang out at the right dock at the right time. As the director of river activities, I'm already looking forward to next season's fun.

For this new year, I've resolved to get racing cranked up again, chill by the grill at social sail, and come up with a few adventures just to keep things interesting. If you have ideas, feel free to run them by me at a social no-sail, member meeting, or even via e-mail at lspain@calibresys.com. I'm really looking forward to working with everyone to ensure that next sailing season is outstanding.

BAY SAILING

(Larry Gemoets, Bay Director) As a new guy to SCOW. I am surprised to have this "honor" bestowed upon me! With your help and suggestions, and a little luck thrown in, I hope we can have another fine season of Bay cruising in 1997. Carrie Blankfield will still be behind the scenes, giving me free advice and hopefully an occasional ride. Thanks Carrie for your past efforts too.

Like Carrie, I would like us to do some mentoring so that we can introduce new people to the bay and give them a taste of the cruising life. Please consider hosting some new crew this year, even if you have regular crew that you are happy with. If you have any doubts about new crew (who wouldn't?), try a day sail first. By the way, if you would like to host the Bay Coordinator and his wife, that would be good too.

SEEKING SEA STORIES!

(Anne La Lena) Channels is broadening its beat, calling for articles as far and as wide as the Seven Seas. Don't know what to write? Here are some suggestion...

Original fiction is always of interest. Why not review a book -- "My Old Man & The Sea," "Sea Change," the latest Patrick O'Brien novel, or a nautical mystery...Review a movie or video: "White Squall," "Wind," "Dead Calm," "African Queen," "Horatio Hornblower," "Caine Mutiny," and others.

Share your experiences: racing, cruising, at-sea boat repairs, chartering, domestic and international and more. How did you get started sailing? Woody Woodside shared a dandy tale in the December issue. Thank you Woody.

Tell us about how you winterize, cook on board, anchor, or just how exciting docking can be with the wind against you. Do you have unique rigging you'd like to crow about. or sailing software or Web sites you'd like to share?

You have a ready and willing readership -- and you keep the copyrights and movie rights. Get your name and your work in print! Photos are also much appreciated. Pencil your name on the back of your prints -- they will be returned.

"THE ONLY HEROINES ARE THE SHIPS"

(Lee Spain) Since the most bitter cold of winter is still ahead, it's time to stock up on reading materials. While I'm still awaiting Patrick O'Brien's new Aubrey/Maturin novel, *The Yellow Admiral*, I can heartily recommend *The Cruel Sea* by Nicholas Monsaratt.

The 1951 classic is an emotional monument to the men and ships that fought Nazi U-boats and kept freedom alive by escorting convoys across the Atlantic. We get a real appreciation for the tiny destroyer escorts and their crews. The parts of the book are appropriately named after eras in the war: 1939 -- Learning, 1940 -- Skirmishing, 1941 -- Grappling, 1942 -- Fighting, 1943 -- The Moment of Balance, 1944 -- Winning, and 1945 -- the Prize.

A sense of foreboding builds from the very beginning. In the prologue, the author tells us that he is writing the story of two ships: one doomed and one victorious. Thus, from the start, we know that the H.M.S. compass rose is going to sink. He then tells us about the corvette, her captain, her officers, and her crew. As we read and bond with the Monsaratt's cast of all-too-human characters, we can only wonder when the protagonists are going to reckon with their deadly torpedo and the icy waters of the North Atlantic. We get to know loss as U-boats and the sea claim victim after victim despite the best efforts of the escorts. In the personal lives of the crew, we see disappointment after disappointment as German bombers, infidelity, and the sea itself obliterates people and relationship. As the jacket cover says, "...the men are the stars of this story. the only heroines are the ships and the only villain the cruel sea itself."

When the survivors regroup on the H.M.S. *Saltash*, re-train on more sophisticated equipment, and continue their efforts in the new ship until the triumph over Germany, we read on with satisfaction. However, as we finally close the covers, we are also left with a lasting memory that victory came with a horrible price. You may have to hunt for this book, but nothing from Richard Henry Dana, Patrick O'Brien, or C.S. Forester comes close as an intense reading experience.

MARINE INFO WEB SITES

Thomas Point Light Station hourly observation -- Nice picture, wind, baro, air and sea temps:

<http://www.nws.fsu.edu/cgi-bin/buoy.cgi?tplm2>

Marine Forecast Washington, DC:

<http://asp1.sbs.ohio-state.edu/text/wxascii/marine/FZUS06.KWBC>

Metro Washington 1-4 days forecast:

<http://iwin.nws.noaa.gov/iwin/md/local.html>

SEND THOSE TAPES

(Melissa Ennis) Send your Giant and Safeway receipts to me, if you're not collecting for your favorite school kid. I'll pass them on the Gunston Middle School in Arlington.

Gunston's using sailing skills and stories as part of the science, English, and social studies curriculum. (Not my idea. I'm thrilled to see how well it's working.) They can use the help. Just stuff your receipts in an envelope and send them to Melissa Ennis, 4627 South 36th Street, Arlington, Virginia 22206. the program runs through March.

REMEMBER SOCIAL NO-SAILS

We meet every Thursday evening for Social No-Sail at The Potomack Landing Restaurant, Washington Sailing Marina.
