

---

# ChaNNels

The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington

June, 2001

---

## "Nobody Yells" Rescheduled for June Membership Meeting

Learn how to be more confident on the water and how to make sailing safe and fun at our monthly membership meeting, Monday, June 11th when Womanship Founder Suzanne Pogell shares practical skills about sailing safely without any yelling. Suzanne created Womanship, a premier sailing organization for women by women, to empower women on the water. Since 1984 more than 22,000 women from age 18-82 have learned how to take the helm and sail in fair or foul weather. Regardless of your gender or experience level, you're sure to enjoy her talk about safe sailing under any conditions on Monday night. The program begins at 7:30 PM but come early for some food and fun starting at 6:30 PM at the American Legion Hall, 400 Cameron Street, (around the corner from Gadsby's Tavern), in Old Town Alexandria. As always, please email me at [vice@scow.org](mailto:vice@scow.org) with your programming ideas.

---

## Commodore's Log

Did you know that when you are at the helm of one of our club's boats, you have something in common with the captain of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier? Anyone who is operating a vessel of any type in the inland waters of the United States is required to obey the U.S. Inland Navigation Rules. (A different set of rules, the COLREGS, apply on the high seas.) Knowing and obeying these rules can save you from a collision and could save your life. I have seen too many instances in which these rules are ignored and I'd like our members not to be the ones breaking them, so, as the river begins to fill with pleasure craft, I thought I'd review a few of the rules you're most likely to encounter as you sail the club's boats.

We share the Potomac with many other vessels, not just other sailboats but also personal watercraft, powerboats, large tour boats, barges under tow and the occasional ocean liner. Unfortunately, many sailors have a single -- and incorrect -- rule etched into their brains about power driven vessels: Sailboats have the right of way over power-driven vessels. From this, they conclude that every power vessel on the water is obligated to yield to them. That is wrong. While sailboats GENERALLY have the right of way over power vessels, there are important exceptions.

Let's start with one of the most basic rules, Rule 5, which states that every vessel must have someone keeping lookout for other vessels to avoid collision. So, even though you are sailing, you have to keep a lookout yourself, or have your crew do so, at all times. Especially remember

to look frequently under or around the jib, which blocks your view of a fair amount of water. If you fail to keep a lookout, and a collision occurs, you can be responsible for negligence, even if you collide with a powerboat.

Now, say you are keeping lookout and see a large vessel, perhaps the Spirit of Washington, coming down the Potomac River towards you. Well, prudence alone would suggest staying out of the way, because in a collision between a Flying Scot and the Spirit, those aboard the Spirit have a significantly higher chance of not being injured. But, here is one case in which the "sailboats always have the right of way over powerboats" notion is wrong. Rule 9 states that sailboats must not impede the passage of a vessel that is restricted by its draft to a narrow channel and also cannot cross that channel if doing so would impede a draft-restricted vessel. I spend a lot of time on that river and -- trust me on this -- the captains of the Spirit vessels and most other sight-seeing vessels believe they are draft restricted and that the river channel is narrow. They will not hesitate to greet you with five short blasts (the "I don't have any idea what you are doing but you are in danger!" signal) if you even look like you're about to get in their way. By the way, Rule 9 also applies to traffic in the narrow channel from the Washington Sailing Marina to the river since many cruising boats with fixed keels cannot leave that channel without running aground. Bear this in mind if you are sailing in or out of that channel.

Suppose instead you see a barge under tow approaching. Here, Rule 18 states that sailboats must give way to a vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver such as one engaged in towing. So, even though you are in a sailboat, the Inland Rules identify you as the "give-way" vessel and the vessel under tow as the "stand-on" vessel.

What if you are about to pass a powerboat from astern. Hmmm, enough wind on the Potomac to pass a powerboat? Well, I suppose it could happen with a strong wind in a no-wake zone. And, if it does, guess what? The powerboat is the stand-on vessel under Rule 13 because any vessel overtaking another has to stay clear of the boat being overtaken. If you are not sure if you're overtaking that boat, Rule 13 requires you to act as if you are.

If you are the give-way vessel in any situation, Rule 16 requires you to take "early and substantial action to keep well clear." Rule 8 requires that any action to avoid collision be "positive," "made in ample time" and "large enough to be readily apparent to another vessel." There is a very important reason for these requirements -- your movement sends a signal to the stand-on skipper on what he should do. Rule 17 requires the skipper of the stand-on vessel to maintain course and speed. If you are not doing anything because, for example, you didn't keep a lookout or don't know the rules, Rule 17 is causing the vessels to come closer to collision. Rule 17 addresses this by stating that, as soon as it becomes apparent to the stand-on vessel that the give-way vessel is not obeying the rules, the stand-on vessel may maneuver to stay clear; and, if collision cannot be avoided by action of the give-way vessel alone, the stand-on vessel must take action to avoid collision.

Now, suppose you are the give-way vessel and you decide to hold your course until the very last second so you can "duck" behind the stern of the stand-on vessel. The skipper of the stand-on vessel does not know your intentions. All that the skipper of the stand-on vessel sees is another vessel on a collision course that is failing to take appropriate action to stay clear. At the last

minute, as required by Rule 17, the stand-on vessel turns to avoid the certain collision. At that very same instant, the give-way vessel executes the "ducking" maneuver. It is possible that the new courses of both vessels could put them on a collision course with absolutely no time or space left to maneuver. That accident would have occurred because of the stand-on vessel's failure to follow Rules 8 and 16.

A few years ago, SCOW had as a speaker the captain of a large sea-going vessel. He had two comments about small boats: (1) He can't see you. (2) If he can, he can't do anything about it. Keep that in mind when you encounter a large vessel on the river. And, don't assume that the skipper of any other vessel of any size -- be it power or sail -- is keeping a lookout, knows the rules of the road, or will take the necessary action. As Rule 7 cautions, if there is any doubt as to the risk of collision, that risk is deemed to exist. Obey the rules, and treat other boaters with courtesy and respect. Remember, we are flying the SCOW burgee and our club's name is on our sails. Your actions will help promote SCOW's reputation as a club of safe and courteous sailors.

Fair winds and following seas!

---

### **The Sailor's Bookshelf**

Imagine this. A ship (with both sails and engine) sets sail to explore the Antarctic just as World War I starts. The ship arrives in the Antarctic but is trapped in the ice, and drifts with the ice pack for 10 months, with the men living aboard her. Finally, the ship is crushed by the ice and sinks. The crew escapes with supplies and three small lifeboats. They live on the ice floe for several months until it begins to melt. They then set off in the three lifeboats and sail for Elephant Island, becoming the first humans to set foot there. But, they know that nobody will search for them there. A few days later, therefore, the leader of the expedition sets off with five men in the largest lifeboat -- which was 20 feet long, or one foot longer than a Flying Scot -- to sail across 800 miles of stormy, sub-Antarctic ocean to South Georgia, where they know a whaling station will offer assistance. They sail for sixteen days, encountering sixty foot waves. With incredible navigation skills, they arrive at South Georgia, but on the opposite side of the island, so they cross uncharted glaciers and mountains on foot to get to the whaling station. The expedition leader then returns with a rescue party to save the 22 men remaining on Elephant Island. Remarkably, the entire crew survives this ordeal.

This story is so outrageous, it sounds like the plot of a summer blockbuster movie that could be called Die Hard 4. Believe it or not, though, it actually is the true story of Ernest Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic aboard a boat called, appropriately, Endurance. There are many books about this expedition, but I selected Shackleton's own book, which is called simply, "South." His description of the adventure is modest and marked by British understatement. For example, contemplating the thought of an 800 mile sail through frigid ocean waters in a 20 foot boat, Shackleton remarks, "Clearly, our voyage would be a big adventure." Indeed. If you would like to read a story of man against the elements, with plenty of sailing, that seems too incredible to be true, this book is highly recommended.

---

# **Skipper Coordinator News**

**Joan O'Kane**

## **New Skippers**

### **Congratulations to**

**Barry Dunsmoor**

for being the  
first new Flying Scot skipper of 2001  
and to

**Sergey Tagashov**

for being the first new cruising boat skipper!

The new season was barely a month old when Barry and Sergey completed their checkouts.

## **More New Skippers**

It was a little rainy, but we had a successful Checkout Day and Picnic on Sunday, May 20th. Seven people passed the water checkout and five of them are now paid-up skippers.

### **Congratulations to**

**Steven Aune,**

**Lisa Carr,**

**Josie Fritsch**

**Jan Metten Van der Meer,**

**Jill Vogel**

Special thanks go to Checkout Skippers Dick Dyer, Larry Gemoets and Jim Metcalf! Thanks also to Cathy Chapman for buying and delivering lunch, to new member Alex Broman for setting up the food, and to all the people who kept me company down at the docks!

## **Another Checkout Day and Picnic - June 24th**

For those of you who missed the May Checkout Day, have no fear. We have another Checkout Day and Picnic scheduled for Sunday, June 24th. Checkout Day is scheduled close to the end of the Basic Sailing class for the convenience of those in the class, but anyone who has passed the Flying Scot written exam may schedule a checkout for that day. Please call or email me for more information. Checkout times on Checkout Day are scheduled on a space available basis and drop-ins are not allowed. If you can't make it to Checkout Day, please call or email me about scheduling a private checkout.

Even if you're not checking out, please drop by the picnic area on June 24th! The food will be served between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. as we transition from the morning checkouts to the afternoon checkouts. It's a great way to congratulate the people checking out in the morning and to encourage those checking out in the afternoon.

## **Reserving Boats**

As of May 20th, SCOW has 88 skippers (53 for the Flying Scots only, 12 for the cruising boats only, and 23 for both the Scots and the cruisers). Since the number of skippers will continue to

grow as the season goes on, here are a few suggestions to keep the reservations process running smoothly:

1. Don't try to reserve a boat unless you already know the lock combination and don't argue with the marina staff if they say you're not on the skipper list. The only people who have the combination and are on the skipper list are those whose skipper fees and membership dues are current. If you think you're a skipper but you don't know the combination, then there's a problem with either your skippership or your membership. Please call me at 703-379-9869 or email me at skipper@scow.org as soon as possible so we can straighten it out.
2. When you call the marina to reserve a boat, ask the person who answers the phone if it's a good time to take a reservation for the SCOW boats. Most of the time there is only one person in the store to tend the cash register, wait on customers and answer the telephone, so it can get hectic. If they say it's not a good time, call back later.
3. When making your reservation, ask about the availability of a specific boat instead of asking which boats are available. The marina keeps a separate calendar for each boat, so asking for a boat by name should help speed the reservations process. Every skipper seems to have a preferred boat, so it shouldn't be too hard to ask for it by name. If your favorite boat seems to be the most popular, think about which one is your second favorite.
4. If you can't keep your reservation, call the marina and cancel it. It's unusual for all of the boats to be reserved at the same time, but it's also frustrating to find out that a boat you thought was reserved by another skipper sat on its trailer all afternoon. Be considerate of your fellow skippers.

If you encounter any problems with the reservations process, please let me know.

---

## **Social Activities**

### **Matt Gaston**

We've got a fun summer of social and sailing stuff just waiting for you to participate, so mark your calendars now! If you're interested in volunteering to help at these events, we need people on several of them, both as leaders/organizers and as folks who just want to help. But regardless of whether you volunteer or just show up, we think you're in for a good time! Questions? call SCOW's Swingin' Social Director Matt Gaston at (703) 838-0645 or e-mail him at : social@scow.org

June 9  
**Waterfront Dining Night**  
Matt Gaston  
Stoney's Crab House  
sign up today!

July 1  
**Picnic at Len and Karen Zusa's** Volunteer - it could be YOU!

We need a committee to organize this event

July 21

**Canoe Trip**

Joe DePoorter

(but he'd like a volunteers)

call (703) 533-3795)

Shenandoah River 12 miles up from Front Royal

August 4

**Crab Feast**

Volunteer - it could be YOU!

We need a committee to organize this event

August 19

**Day Trip to Smith Island**

Matt Gaston

New event!

More details to come.

September 1

**Day Trip to St. Michael's**

Volunteer - it could be YOU!

In conjunction with the

Labor Day raftup

Enjoy shopping and

the Maritime Museum!

November 17

**Hail & Farewell**

Betsy Troeder

Ft. Meyer Officer's Club

December 2

**Holiday Raftup**

Susan Batchelder

The Colonies

## **Social Sails are happening too!**

Remember every Thursday night you can find your SCOW friends down at the dock for Social Sail. You'll experience every kind of cuisine, from Giant deli trays, to baked potato bars to carnivorous cookouts. Thanks to Ben Lesser and Erica Vey for recruiting the social sail culinary crew. And, if you're interested in inflicting YOUR particular taste in food on an unsuspecting (and really very forgiving) SCOW membership, please contact them about signing up to help run your own social sail today! We still have plenty of slots open. And remember, it ain't brain surgery, it's just a picnic!

Cheers! And I'll see you down at the docks.

---

## **Racing News**

**Bill Bernhards**

As of this writing our first two Tuesday night Small Boats Races have been well attended. All of our Scots have been in the water for these races and each boat was full. I participated in the first race and had 5 new members with me. Jay Weitzel took out at least four with him. Everyone was eager to learn how to sail. I wish there had been more wind for that evening. The second Tuesday had wind. Dave Carstons (thanks Dave) acted as race committee for the evening and again all of our boats were out and full.

I'm looking for other interested skippers who want to sail on these evenings and/or act as race committee. The rules are simple: 1) make up whatever course you wish (this is usually determined by the amount and direction of the wind, 2) try to get an even number of people in each boat, 3) follow as many racing rules as you can remember, 4) have fun!

The race committee person can stand on the dock and direct the race or participate in the race, acting as skipper or crew. If you remain on the dock you can get out the flags and wave them. If you go out on one of the boats, just call out the time and yell, "GO" at the start. If there is traffic in the channel area before or during the race, remind everyone to let others by. The larger boats, even under power, are restricted by the channel, and so you must give way.

So far, most of the crew have been new members. There have also been some people who were interested in joining the club. These people may join our race night by signing the permission form found in each boat's file binder. If you are skipper remember that most of the people going out are new and really want to learn how to sail as well as learn to race. Please give them as much of your time as possible in helping them learn. Don't be afraid to ask them to do some of the work. I let my crew put the boat in, put on and raise the sails and do everything to put the boat away. Come to think about it, I got to go sailing and others did all the work! I think I'll do this more often.

---

# Spring Tune Up Regatta

Bill Bernhards

Our Spring Tune Up Regatta was a great success. We had a wonderful spring day with fair winds and a good turnout. Two races were conducted on the river. We had several new members come out and everyone who showed up got to race. DICF was invited to join in for this race and afterward I heard many good comments from them, especially the desire to see this race again next year. They suggested combining the race with their annual boating equipment spring yard sale/picnic at the Marina.

And the winners are:

Non-Spinnaker Class- First Place: Bill Davenport on "We Few". Second Place: Dale Eager on "Rebecca". Third Place: Henry Yung on "Psycho". Spinnaker Class- First Place: Pat Williams on "Aydod". Second Place: Craig Ekman on "Opfor".

I would like to thank two special people for their help; Stu Robinson, for organizing the small boats and getting the PRSA boats working for us and Heather Spurlock, for joining me on the committee boat, keeping score and figuring out the scores to determine the winners.

Winners received a special edition Spring Tune Up Regatta T-shirt. Many people have expressed a desire to purchase one. If you wish to order a shirt, contact me at [race@scow.org](mailto:race@scow.org). I need at least 12 shirts to place an order.

Cost: \$10.00

---

## Bay Activities

The June raft-up is on the weekend of the 16th.

**North Fleet:** Rhode River

**South Fleet:** Smith Creek on St. Mary's River

We are having the July Picnic at the Zuza's on the 1st. The raft-up will occur the Saturday night before. Please contact social if you want to help with the picnic.

The August raft-up is the weekend of the 11th.

**North Fleet:** Shaw Bay, Wye River, Eastern Bay

**South Fleet:** Honga River

---



## **Training**

### **Judi Campbell**

Congratulations to those who completed the Basic Sail and Cruising Boat classes and a hearty thanks to the following intrepid instructors who make this program possible:

#### **Instructors**

##### **Basic Sail**

Larry Gemoets  
Stuart Ullman  
Ed Venere  
Neil Shepherd  
Jim Metcalf  
Declan Conroy  
Randy Glantz  
Liz Bruening  
Marty Crowson  
Thom Unger

##### **Cruising Boats**

Stuart Ullman  
Joe DePoorter  
Thom Unger  
Declan Conroy

I want to also thank Barbara Ullman and the Training Committee for their work in revising the Cruising Boat curriculum.

Also, special thanks to Jay Weitzel. With all he does as Commodore, he found time to help me out with instructor scheduling so I could spend time with my son on Mother's Day.

Spaces are still available in the Capsize Classes--the first is on July 14, and the second one-day class is on August 18.

Still under consideration is the scheduling of a third Basic Sailing class in August. I will be talking with our instructors before making the decision after the completion of the second Basic Sail offering which begins May 30.

Here's hoping all our newly trained members as well as us old salts have a great summer on the water! Happy Sails to You!!! (I can't believe I said that!)

---

## River Activities

The river cruise on June 8th should be a fun time to view the fireworks from the Alexandria waterfront festival.

The annual Smoot's Cove Raft Up is June 30th. This is an all day event on a Saturday. Last year we had at least 7 boats make a show. We will leave around 10:30 in the morning and stay till 4 or 5.

The next 2 events are July 6th and August 3rd. We still need skippers for the SCOW boats on all these events.

---

## 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

Visit us at: [www.scow.org](http://www.scow.org)

Write us: [info@scow.org](mailto:info@scow.org)

Call: 202.628.7245 (That's 628.SAIL)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Submissions to Channels:

Just type or paste your article into the body of an email message.

**Don't send your articles as (or with) attachments.**

Put a **title** on the first line,  
**your name** only (not "by") on the second line,  
and launch right into the article.

I know this is hard for you to resist doing, but-

**IF you include words in all caps, multiple tabs, indents, attachments, or extraneous notes,  
your article will look kinda silly, or even totally unreadable.**

We will format (but not remove formatting, see above) your article, adding emphasis, aligning tabs, and doing all manner of things to present your article in it's assigned place.

Submit articles to

**channels@scow.org**

within one week after the monthly meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Kelly E. Griffin, Layout Editor (the hard part)**

**Declan Conroy, Web Publisher**

**Kim Webb, Mailing lists**

**Larry Gemoets, Chief Go'fer**

**(I dress up the electronic edition too)**

That's all, folks.....