
CHANNELS -- SPECIAL E-MAIL EDITION

March 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, MARCH 10

Olympian Rower Michelle Knox Zaloom will speak at SCOW's March 10th membership meeting. Come hear the inside skinny on what it's really like to be one of an elite group of athletes competing to be the best in the world in front of the world. Michelle, a two-time Olympian rower, will share her experiences, joys and triumphs at the Barcelona and Atlanta games. Michelle also rowed in the most recent Pan American games in Cuba. An avid sailor, she will discuss how she prepares both physically and mentally for the rigors of competition in her on- the-water-sport. Don't miss her March 10th!

(SCOW monthly meetings are held at the American Legion Post, 400 Cameron Street, Old Town Alexandria, VA. Use the downstairs door. Socializing: 6:30. Program: 7:30)

RE-UP BRUNCH MARCH 16th

(Jim Metcalf, Social Director) SCOW's awesome annual re-up brunch will be Sunday, March 16th, from 11 am to 3 p.m. at the Colonies Clubhouse, 7700 Provincial Drive, McLean, Virginia. (The same venue as the holiday party.) Potables, edibles and enjoyables for all. Kick off the 1997 Sailing Season. Bring your checkbook and calendar to re-up your membership, pay up your skipper fees, and sign up to help SCOW.

Make reservations for yourself and your guests by sending \$10 per person to SCOW, c/o Social Director Jim Metcalf, 5209 Pimlico Court, Fairfax, VA 22032. Bring friends you're trying to recruit. Introduce them to other SCOW sailors, old and new.

Directions to the Colonies: Take the Beltway to Tyson's Corner, Exit 11A. Take Route 123/Chain Bridge Road to McLean. Turn right at the first light on to Old Meadow Road. Go 1/4 mile, turn left onto Provincial Drive: the gate house entrance to The Colonies. Tell the guard you're headed for the SCOW party at the Clubhouse. Park where you can.

COMMODORE'S LOG

(Anne La Lena) Spring is on the way, and that means sailing! Kick off the season at March 16th's Reup Brunch, at the beloved Colonies Clubhouse. Your dues, boat fees and volunteer efforts are wanted. Renew your membership early and get a nice savings on dues. Madame

Secretary Victoria Hampton will be ready and willing to take your signed membership forms and checks.

Social Director Jim Metcalf is depending on you to make this a success. Please call him to volunteer as cook, bartender, or set-up/clean-up engineer. All in all we have been blessed with a mild winter that allowed for nautical interludes every so often. SCOW sailors took advantage of each and every one of 'em. So did other folks, with almost tragic results.

In early February, on one of Mother Nature's "let's lure them out of the house days," a family of five took off from the Naval District of the Washington Marina for what was to be a pleasant day's sail on their 27-foot trimaran. One Mom, one Dad and three kids--one five-year-old, one three-year-old and a 19-month old.

All the kids were tethered, it was a balmy 60-degree day and the parents had a ready plan of action if a kid fell overboard. What could go wrong? Plenty. The three-year-old went to the head, came back up on deck and the parents forgot to re-tether her. She fell in. As Dad was the better sailor, the parents had planned that if a child fell in, Mom would go in while Dad would handle the boat. Instead, Dad dove in and swam to the child. He immediately began to weaken in the 37-degree Potomac. He had taken off his life jacket to fix the sails before this mishap. He was floundering in the icy water.

Then Mom jumped in and swam with a lifejacket for him, urging him to go to the boat. She would stay with the little one. Meanwhile, the other two little ones are being fast carried away as the sails filled and the trimaran moved ever so efficiently and deadly away.

Enough suspense. They were all rescued. It was touch and go for the 3-year-old, but she fully recovered. It's frightening how close that entire family came to being wiped out. The pit of fear in my stomach as I read the Washington Post article, however, was nothing compared to the horror and fear those parents felt. Luckily they were on the part of the river where people could see them. Luckily people saw this pending catastrophe and sprang into action, calling the authorities and getting expert assistance.

Obviously, things could have and should have been handled differently. Their plan was prudent, but it needed to be executed. Logic, not fear, needed to rule events. How many of us would have kept our own heads in the same situation? How many of us would keep our heads if we capsized a Scot or lost a crew member overboard on the Potomac or the Bay?

The lesson here for all of us is that safety must be of paramount concern to us at all--even to the point of being a nerd or not cool or not a daredevil showoff. No, deliberate carelessness was not a factor in that family's ordeal. I am extending the realm of factors that can jeopardize people's lives and health. But too often I have seen or heard of people horsing around on our boats and if we're lucky, only the boats get damaged. This is not acceptable. We must all think before we play around. And believe me, I am including myself in that admonition as well.

You may have noticed that Psycho does not have a pulpit. That will not continue into our boating season. You may have also noticed that one Scot has a ladder. Familiarize yourself with it. Know how to extend it. The other Scots will get ladders as well.

What are your safety concerns and issues? Bring them to me, bring them to the Board. Bring problems or ideas for safer boat upkeep to Maintenance Director Dick Dyer. A note in the log is not enough.

Expend the energy to make the telephone call or have the face-to-face conversation. The most effective way--jot down your comments and concerns and hand them to me or to a Board member. Put your name and phone number down so we can contact you for follow-up as necessary.

We have a Safety Committee that will be active. Give your time and ideas when asked. You may end up helping yourself as well as others. Be careful out there. We want you around for a long, long time.

1997 DUES DUE

(Victoria Hampton, Secretary) It's time to renew your SCOW Passports to Sailing Fun. The best deal is the DISCOUNT you'll get if you renew your membership ON OR BEFORE THE APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Monday, April 14. Discounted dues are \$35 for a single membership and \$50 for a family membership.

Renewal applications were mailed in February. 1) Mail them back to me. The address is on the application. B) Hand them back, with a check, at the Re-up Brunch on March 16. iii) Return them at the March or April membership meetings. Of course, you can renew after April 14. But you won't get a discount. So don't be left on the dock, missing great sails and terrific parties. Renew your membership now!

SKIPPER FEES DUE, TOO

(Denise Malueg Derry, Skipper Coordinator) Ahhh, March... a time of renewal... the birds return, the tulips start to grow, the trees bud... and SCOW sailors send checks to their beloved skipper coordinator to reinstate their skipper privileges! If you were a qualified skipper last season, you are allowed to renew the privilege for this season without having to endure the grueling water and written exams.

This is a great deal. Fees remain the same as last year: \$80 for the Scots, \$110 for the cruisers, and \$140 for access to both.

Current skippers were sent renewal packets in February. If you should have received a packet and didn't, please let me know, I'll forward one to you. To make this process as easy on the skipper as possible, I'll have a table set up at the Re-Up Brunch, March 16, to accept applications, agreements, and checks (made payable to the Sailing Club of Washington). Stop by and see me!

If, for some crazy reason, you're going to miss the Brunch, mail me the forms and fees. Why renew early? Lock combinations change mid-April--renewing early affords you uninterrupted boat access! (And the earlier this paperwork gets out of my hair, the earlier I'll be able to join everyone on the water. Give another sailor a break!)

There are lots of neat activities planned this year, and I encourage new skippers, as well as seasoned salts, to check out the boats to join in the celebrations. SCOW is as much fun as we make it--and I'm planning on having a great season!

RIVER ACTIVITIES

(Lee Spain, River Director) Sign up sheets at the monthly member meetings are springing up like spring flowers. Overnight river excursions on the cruising boats are scheduled for May 3rd/4th and June 28th /29th. Skippers and willing sailors are needed for both events. SCOW members with their own cruising boats are also invited to attend these river raftups. There should be no shortage of crew for these fun-filled events. We are also doing preliminary planning for a SCOW cruising boat to join the Bay Fleet for a 4th of July raftup at the Solomons. Potential crew and skippers should keep an eye out for sign up sheets.

With Spring, we will finally be able to return to our traditional weeknight rituals. SCOW needs cruising boat skippers to introduce old, new, and prospective members to the fun of big boat cruising during Thursday night social sails. Of course, for a truly successful social sail season, we'll also need dockmasters, hosts, and small boat skippers to join in the fun. The first social sail is scheduled for Thursday, April 17th.

Wednesday night racing is scheduled to start on April 16th. I'd like to make sure that we get a good start this year with a strong cadre of regular participants. Last year our boats often sat idle on race night. Please remember that any Flying Scot skipper can participate and that SCOW boats will take all available crew. You don't have to be experienced. Weekday races are very low-pressure.

We'll have a racing rules seminar before the start of the season. Informal one-design racing is the best way to learn sail trim. This year, the Scots have new sails and they'll be plenty fast.

Finally, I'd like to hear from SCOW members with their own personal trailerable sailboats. Anyone interested in an easy trailer sailing expedition to Leesylvania State Park near Potomac Mills in Virginia? Please contact me to volunteer or share ideas via the SCOW telephone system, e-mail at Lspain@calibresys.com, or through the numbers listed in this fine publication.

1997 BAY CRUISING SCHEDULE

(Larry Gemoets, Bay Director, 703-823-2452/703-855-7352. E-mail: sanlar@mnsinc.com)

DATE PLACE OCCASION

April 19-20 Harness Creek Early Bird cruise

May 3-4 Upper Potomac River Rendezvous

May 24-26 Rhode River/Duns Cove. Memorial Day

June 28-29 Upper Potomac Join the river fleet!

July 4-6 Solomons Independence Day

August 1-3 open New Moon Cruise

Aug/Sep 30-1 open Labor Day Cruise

October 3-13 open Fall Cruise

Events of interest: Safety at Sea seminars April 5 and 6 at the Naval Academy. Call Marine Trades Association of Md. 301-261-1021 for details. Washington Boat Show February 26-March 2 at the Washington Convention Center. Call 703-569-7141 for details. Check out all the gear at the spring boat shows, polish your skills, and have a great sailing season! In addition to regular schedule of Bay activities, Carrie Blankfield plans to host one or two all women's cruises this season. Please let either of us know if you are interested in signing on as part of the flotilla, or as crew.

I have scheduled the first raftup for the year in Harness Creek again, since it seems to have worked out so well last year. A little less fog, and it will be perfect. Please sign on for this gathering as early as you know something. Of course, you don't have to have a reservation, but it helps us to know how many to expect or plan for. Will we all fit in the hurricane hole? Maybe not.

About crews: Crew is able bodied, sheet hauling, helm watching, anchor lowering, working crew! If you have a need for crews, please let me know. I have a standing list, and can also solicit. If you are able bodied crew, ask to be on our standing list.

About Guests: Please consider hosting some of our members as guests for a day sail one day or more this season. Every person you host is a potential crew/skipper in the future.

Me, join a raft-up? Yes, you. If you never have, give it a try. It is easier than approaching a dock or a slip (to me, anyway), and there are lots of friendly SCOW folks to lend a hand. Old hand or first time, do use your own judgment about staying overnight in a raft-up. Listen to NOAA weather radio before you turn in, just to be sure. If there is any doubt, it is far easier to break off early than to try it at 0200 in the rain and howling wind.....See you out there

TRAINING

(Mike Geissinger, Training Director) Time to commit. The schedule is set and the instructors are ready. The boats will be scrubbed and the wind will be stiff. Sign up for the course of your choice. You have to be ready for the impending racing season. Naturally, the first course is a

racing seminar at the Washington Sailing Marina on Monday, April 28th at 7:00 p.m. Course is \$10 and will be worth each penny. Sign up at the March or April Membership meeting or call the SCOW Hotline (202) 628-7245, mailbox 7; leave a message and I'll call you back.

On April 30th the first Basic Sailing course launches at 7:30 p.m. in the Chart Room of the Washington Sailing Marina. Everyone who sails should have this course on their vita. The concentrated course meets in the Chart Room four consecutive weeks for the mind part. Three Saturdays or Sundays for on-the-water training. That gives you 24 hours on the boats, on the water. You will learn the Flying Scots from bow to stern and mast to centerboard. A check out session on May 31 will qualify you as a skipper on the Scots--which means you can use the boats at your pleasure.

Class size is limited to 12 so sign up early. Register at the March or April Membership Meeting or call the SCOW Hotline (202) 628-7245, mailbox 7. If you have been a member of SCOW for over six months the cost is \$110. For newer members, \$150.

Advanced sailors will want the Cruising Boat Course that starts on June 5th. I know June seems far away. But class size is limited. To get on deck, sign up early. Cost (\$150) includes the classroom session and four water sessions, two days and two evenings. Sign up sheets will be at the March, April and May Membership Meetings. Or call the SCOW Hotline.

BASIC SAILING COURSE

Four classroom sessions: April 30, May 7-14-20. 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. in the Washington Sailing Marina (WSM) Chart Room

Water sessions: May 3 & 4, 10 & 11, 17 & 18

8:00 am to noon OR noon to 4:00 p.m.

Check out session: May 31

Class size--no more than 12.

Pick morning or afternoon for maximum of 24 hours on the water.

Members for 6 + months: \$110. Newer: \$150.

CRUISING BOAT COURSE

Classroom session: WSM Chart Room, June 5, 7:00 p.m.

Water sessions: June 8 and 15 (Sundays) 9:00 am to 3:00 p.m.; June 13 and 20

(Fridays) from 6:00 to 11:00 p.m.

Class size limited to 4

Cost: \$150.

A PSYCHO EXPERIENCE

(Bill Gold) Friday, January 24. I settled in to work with my first cup of coffee. On the way in, the weather forecaster had predicted tomorrow's weather...rain clearing by noon, breezy in the afternoon with a high near 60. TGIF. As my thoughts turned to sailing, the phone rang. It was Melinda.

"Did you see the forecast for tomorrow? I can be at the marina at noon." We caught up with each other's news, I started the second cup of coffee and reserved Psycho for Saturday.

At the marina on Saturday noon, the wind was milder than predicted. While waiting for Melinda, I warmed the motor, readied the boat, filed the float plan and completed the log. I chose the Genoa over the smaller jib and hanked it on. When Melinda arrived, we exchanged pleasantries with the crew readying Rebecca, then cast off, blazing a trail through the skim of ice between the dock and the lagoon.

In the lagoon, we headed into the still mild northwest wind, raised the sails and headed downwind out the channel into the river.

Attempting Smoot's Cove, we drug bottom, so we headed up and came about parallel to the Wilson Bridge to clear the shallows. Back in deeper water, we headed downstream with the tide. Rebecca was the only other visible sailboat.

Around 2:30, the sky began clearing in the west and the wind picked up a little. We began to heel a bit and were enjoying the ride. As the wind rose, we realized we were overpowered with the ginny up. The bow was digging in and steering was difficult. Small whitecaps began to fill the broad expanse of the river.

We tried to start the motor to head up and drop the ginny. When the outboard wouldn't start right away, we hauled in the ginny on a starboard tack, came about, and Psycho settled into a groove on the port beat back. With the boat under control, the motor started readily.

Melinda pointed to the starboard side. The lower outboard spreader stay had come loose and was flying in the wind! We lowered the main, temporarily secured the stay from flying and motored back, the wind still on the rise. Tied safely at F dock, we found the connector sleeve, refastened the stay, and reported the incident on the maintenance Hotline.

The incident added to our sailing experience. We realize we may have prevented the equipment failure if we reduced sail earlier.

SAILING: The fine art of getting wet and becoming ill while slowly going nowhere at great expense. from A Dictionary for Landlubbers, Old Salts, & Armchair Drifters by Henry Beard & Roy McKie, brought to your attention by Mike Geissinger

TRISTAN JONES'S INCREDIBLE VOYAGE

(Reviewed by Lee Spain) In all my armchair adventures, I have never encountered an author who seems as completely insane as the late great Tristan Jones. Intrepid, or nutty, the Welshman sailed in the lowest navigable waters, the Middle East's Dead Sea, and in the highest navigable waters, South America's Lake Titicaca. The Incredible Voyage (Sheridan House, \$17.95), recounts six years of small boat quests.

The adventure began in 1969, when Tristan set forth in his financial backer's boat Barbara on a delivery voyage from the United States to Israel. There he had the boat trucked overland to the Dead Sea. Bureaucrats stopped him from launching the boat. However, friends provided another sailboat for him to actually sail upon the Dead Sea. Barbara was trucked to the Red Sea, where he dodged pirates and hostile Arab forces. He sailed down the Red Sea, down the east coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope, and across the Atlantic to the Amazon.

He sailed about 40% up the Amazon in miserable conditions before turning back. At some point in the Caribbean, he replaced Barbara with a smaller boat, Sea Dart, which he sailed down the west coast of South America. He had Sea Dart smuggled across Peru and up to Lake Titicaca. After sailing upon Lake Titicaca, he entered Bolivia, had all kinds of adventures with the absurd Bolivian Navy, hacked his way through miles of jungle, re-launched the boat, and sailed down through a 6000-mile maze of tropical rivers through Paraguay, Argentina, and back to the Atlantic. Finally, he sailed back across the Atlantic to England where his journey ended in 1975.

The Incredible Voyage is filled with adventure, misadventure, exotic locations, and delightful humor. Tristan Jones showed an incredible amount of spirit and fortitude as he faces delays, dangers, and deprivations. I highly recommend this very entertaining book and I am looking forward to reading more of his 16 other works. He handles his pen as well as he did his boats.

SOCKS INFORMATION

(Courtesy of Mike Jenner) "I got a pair of English socks as a gift, with the attached instructions. I was so delighted with this latest navigational advance from the old country that I thought I should share it with SCOW members.

If this latest technology is not available in the US, one might buy one pair of red socks and one pair of green, and mix them up. You would then have one pair of navigational socks to wear while one is in the wash. This strikes me as the ideal acquisition for fair weather sailors like me who grow rusty over the winter months."

Editor's note: If you're REALLY rusty, put red nail polish on at least one port toe, to remind yourself which sock goes where. (Green nail polish is for lubbers.) Then remember to keep your toes towards the pointy part of the boat...

MIRACLE OF BERTH

(Melissa Ennis) See an 18th Century wood ship being recreated in Wilmington, Delaware. The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation is building a replica of the Swedish ship that brought very white settlers to Delaware. (Smote by the Lenape, then the Dutch, then the English.) They're using authentic tools and techniques, and they're delighted to talk to visitors. The vessel is at 1124 East Seventh Street, Wilmington, DE, 19801. Bow sketch is circa 1996 by W. S. Dawson. My thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Gerard J. Ennis for this information, and so much else.

You're sure to learn a lot. When was the last time you got to see an orlop deck? It's a two and a half hour drive. Make it a weekend. See Wyeth paintings at the Brandywine River Museum in nearby Chadds Ford, PA. Enjoy the incomparable Pre-Raphaelite collection at the Delaware Art Museum. Shop a lot: there's no sales tax in Delaware. Enjoy the splendid local cuisine: genuine subs and superb cheese steaks. (Bring me an Italian sub, no oil, pickles and peppers.)

MR. LINCOLN'S SAILORS

The story Ken Burns didn't cover! Learn more about life at sea for typical sailors in the US Navy during the Civil War. Fort Ward is hosting a slide-illustrated lecture on Saturday, April 12, at 1 p.m. in the Museum library. Dr. Joseph P. Reidy, Professor of History at Howard, is a specialist on the Civil War Navy. Call 703-838-4848 for reservations. \$5 admission fee. While you're there, see the exhibit "Jack Tars of the Union Navy."

Fort Ward is a genuine Civil War outpost, west of Old Town, on 4301 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA. Call 703-838-4848.

SAILING TO NEW ADVENTURES

This issue is the last one for the team of Melissa Ennis, editor, and Tom Durmick, art director. We retire with regret! As a teacher in training, Melissa's professors are unsympathetic to "the sailboat sank my homework." And Tom's up to the gunnels in work.

We turn Channels over to the capable hands of Larry Gemoets, whose talents are as formidable as his computer system.

Melissa promises to send in occasional articles. Some may even involve sunscreen.

REMEMBER SOCIAL NO-SAILS

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