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## CHANNELS -- SPECIAL E-MAIL EDITION

March 1998

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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, and is normally available 15 days before the printed version.

Articles for Channels should be submitted via email to to the editor at [sanlar@erols.com](mailto:sanlar@erols.com). Please paste the text of your article directly into the body of the message, and be sure that word wrap is off.

### Commodore's Log

By Stuart Ullman

Thunder is breaking all around my house. A dark, constant rain rattles against my windows. It is finally night after a long day, and I am inside and warm: but just an hour ago I was walking in the street, cold and soaking wet, and I watched the rising wind drive clumps of ripples across water streaming in the gutters, and up the slope of the street outside my house. And that was when this storm was just approaching. Now the rain is fatter, faster, and the wind is heavier.

I generally enjoy this sort of thing, and I am enjoying this now. But I'm also thinking: "I wonder how the boats are?"

This is the second storm in two weeks, and this is the small one. The first, on February 4, was much bigger. Phil Geishert called me before that storm hit to see if we wanted to move the Flying Scots. We decided not to, but Thom Unger and Monica Maynard did go down at lunch on the 3rd to make sure all the boats were well secured. Afterward Phil told me that it was the worst storm he had seen since he came to manage the Washington Sailing Marina. Not the strongest gusts, we have had storms with bigger gusts a few times. And not the highest flooding either, although the water did rise up well over the sea wall, and covered the wooden parts of the cruising boat docks and the cement bases of the small boat cranes. But other storms came and left in a few hours. This one came and stayed. Hour after hour the wind remained, sending waves smacking into the small boat docks, and jerking the boats in the wet slips against their lines.

The lines failed. Some did, on A dock. Phil and his staff walked the docks all through the storm, checking lines and replacing them when they snapped. And then the brand new 1/2 inch lines they installed as replacements snapped too, not at chafe points, just from the stress of the sucking waves and the constant wind. For 13 hours, all day and long after the

day was gone, they worked in the wet and saved boats. Toward evening they called for extra help from GSI, and got it. Finally, at 10 o'clock that night, the winds had died enough so that they felt it was safe to go home.

I sometimes hear people vent their frustrations with GSI, and I have my own frustrations too. Why can't they keep the restaurant open over the winter? Why do they sometimes seem surprised to see us on Thursday evenings, or the DICF racers on Tuesdays? Can't they figure out that we are there every week? Why can't they show Whitbread or America's Cup coverage when it's on, instead of always showing the soap operas on the televisions? Or just turn them off? And I know that some of you will think of more substantive frustrations to vent than TV programming in the restaurant. But when you think of them, remember that there are also long, cold, soaking days like February 4, which the marina staff spends working hard in severe conditions for our benefit.

### **March Speaker**

**Underwater archaeology! Ancient artifacts raised from the depths! Well, ok, not ancient exactly, and not from all that deep. Old artifacts raised from the mud. But it's from mud close to here, and artifacts from our own history. Dr. Susan Langley, State Underwater Archaeologist for Maryland, will talk to us about the search in the Patuxent River for the War of 1812 Chesapeake Flotilla. But there is no need for me to tell you about the topic--- Dr. Langley has provided us with an excellent abstract for her talk.**

### **Abstract of the March Member Meeting Presentation Dr. Susan B.M. Langley**

**The US Chesapeake Flotilla, under the command of Commodore Joshua Barney, provided the only substantive naval action between British and American naval forces during the War of 1812. It survived the Battle of Cedar Point and the First and Second Battles of St. Leonard's Creek in June 1814, with the loss of only two vessels. These were gunboats deliberately scuttled by Barney as their slowness made them liabilities in battle. The Flotilla then pressed further up the Patuxent River where it remained blockaded by the British who were increasing in strength due to reinforcements arriving from Europe. On August 22, Barney received orders to destroy the fleet and mobilize his men to the aid of Washington. Approximately 33 vessels, both naval and merchant, were armed with charges and set ablaze.**

**Between 1977 and 1980 the remains of a vessel believed to be Barney's flagship Scorpion were relocated and investigated archaeologically. Buried under approximately 2m of silt, the vessel was found to be 90% intact with equally impressive preservation of artifacts. The excellent condition of the site bodes well for the survival of the rest of the flotilla vessels and their contents.**

**The current project is a cooperative endeavor involving both state and federal agencies and includes research, testing, excavation, conservation, interpretive and educational components. The plan is to relocate other Flotilla vessels in both the upper Patuxent and St.**

**Leonard's Creek. This lecture discusses and updates the progress of the Chesapeake Flotilla Project.**

### **Maintenance**

**Monica Maynard, Maintenance Director**

**We're about to begin our new sailing season. Those occasional warm days make me anxious to get back out on the water regularly. And with sailing comes fixing the sailing vessels. We need your help to keep our boats in good shape. Please come out and participate in this year's maintenance activities. The more you know about the boats, the better sailor you'll be. Here's a great opportunity to learn!**

**When it comes time to renew your membership for the coming season, don't forget to check off that box saying that you want to volunteer for maintenance activities this year. There are tasks for all abilities and energy levels. Come out and lend a hand to the maintenance efforts. As a SCOW member, these are your boats. We need your help to keep all our boats ready for sailing.**

**Remember to mark your calendars for our spring maintenance day on Saturday, April 25!**

### **Training**

**Scott Getzow**

**Another busy schedule of classes is set for the coming months. As a reminder, the Basic Sailing course is scheduled to begin on April 29, with classes meeting every Wednesday thereafter for a total of four 'land' classes. All will be held at the WSM chart room at 7:30. The water classes will be on Saturdays, May 2,3,9,10,16,17. There will be two sessions per day; the first will be from 8:30-12:30 and the second will be from 1-5. When signing up for the class, let me know your preference as to what session you would like. As mentioned in the previous article in Channels, the fee is \$110 for members who have been in the club at least six months, and \$150 for those that have been in less.**

**Also, we have scheduled a Racing seminar, at the WSM chart room, starting approx. 7:30 on Wednesday, April 22. This should be a great class, and the cost is only \$10, which you pay at the door the night of the class.**

**For those with some sailing experience who would like to take the Cruising boat course, the fee is \$150. The class starts with a land session on June 3, at 7:30, at the Chart Room, and there will be three water classes: Saturdays, June 6, 13, from 8-5, and Friday, June 12, from 6-11.**

**Classes are starting to fill up, so you don't want to wait too long or you might miss out. Remember, to register for a course, you can contact me at my E-mail address [scott.getzow@uspto.gov](mailto:scott.getzow@uspto.gov), or leave me a message at 703-370-0446.**

**Skipper Information Available Now!**  
**Denise Malueg Derry**

**How are those New Year's resolutions coming along? I have not made much progress with mine, either... the calories of Christmas blended with those of Valentine's day... and I've still not made sense of my sock drawer. But, we have nine more months to improve ourselves. Start now. Ask me for the skipper exams. You and I both know you want to take it. Remember back to January 1, 1998? "I resolve to get checked out on the SCOW boats. "Summer seems far off now", "there's plenty of time," I hear you say. Not really.**

**Get the written exam out of the way now. You can take it at your leisure; unhurried, relaxed. If you run across a tough question, you've got time to poll a few of your favorite SCOW skippers for the answer at this month's Re-Up Brunch, Maintenance Day on April 25, or Thursday night Social No-sails at King Street Blues.**

**The skipper checkout process is less painful than you think. Pass a written exam, pass an on-the-water exam, and if you're a cruiser skipper candidate you need to submit a skipper bio, summarizing at least 20 hours of skipper-time. It's a snap, but it does take some time on your part, my part, the tutor's and the checkout skipper's parts. It requires some coordination of all those schedules, but really, it's not daunting.**

**To make it easier on you, I'll be at the Re-Up Brunch, March 15, at the Colonies in McLean. I'll be hawking my exams and Policies & Procedures, as well as the Scot and Cruiser Skipper Information Files.**

**What more could a skipper candidate want? Well, I suppose you could want me to drive the packet right to your house...**

**Show me you're interested, and I'll show you I'm interested in seeing you on the water as a skipper by June!**

**Not easy enough yet? Well, how's this: we have scheduled two group checkout days, May 30 and July 11. This is for Scot candidates who have passed their written exams and scheduled a time slot through me. The dates coincide nicely with the end of the Basic Sailing classes, but it is also intended to checkout those folks who did not take the classes but have been dragging their feet. With one or two others in the boat, the checkout is efficient, and you've got a buddy along to work the lines.**

**Yep, Denise, that is easy.**

**OK, good, I'll see you at the Re-Up Brunch, picking up skipper information materials from my table. Don't hesitate to phone me for more information, or to request the exams even sooner (703-978-1666). Good luck with those resolutions!**

## **Sailing into Retirement**

**Dave Glick**

**Not to wish your life away - I'd trade places with any of you "children" and do it all over again, but there is sailing after Social Security.**

**Jane and I are spending our first winter South of the Wilson Bridge on the East coast of Florida near Cocoa Beach. (Which also happens to be the Olympic training site for wind surfing). We have a nice little town house on a canal connected to the mile wide Banana River which provides some wonderful sailing and sights. Unlike the good old Potomac, we seem to have 10 - 15 knots every day and the groundhog sees his shadow on most of them. Our Catalina 22 (Babalu) is berthed about 100 yards from our door, a 1st for us, and I must say very enjoyable. (Len Zusa's quote about "messing around on boats" now has more meaning).**

**Sailing on the Potomac (or anywhere) is always fun. In Florida, every sail seems to be an adventure. A portion of our canal is lined with Australian pines. These are a favorite nesting place for pelicans. Drifting by and seeing these beautiful creatures eyeball to eyeball is a treat. Someplace on the canal we will pass a Manatee, or maybe a family of the huge friendly sea cows. They lollygag just below the surface, munching away or rolling and cuddling their calves. As we approach the river, not a trip goes by that we don't see the beautiful porpoise arching out as they blow and grab a fresh breath of air. If they are chasing fish and break the surface with a leap, we feel especially fortunate. But the real treat comes when a pod of two or three or more comes up on our bow wake and "sail" with us for maybe a half hour or so. You want to reach out and rub their backs. We spent a night on the river during a recent full moon and all night the only sound to be heard was the "blow" of the porpoise. Seeing their shadows against the moonlight is something.**

**We have more species of birds than you can imagine and they always seem to be waiting for us. Egrets, cranes, storks, ibis, roseate spoonbills and brown pelicans by the hundreds. The night we anchored out we had a special treat. We were anchored near a bird sanctuary and saw a flock of white pelicans. They were huge birds - twice the size of the browns - and, in flight, pure white with black tipped wings - breathtaking. The next day we sailed through the largest flock of ducks we'd ever seen. The water was covered as far as the eye could see. Apparently we are on a fly way - but we have seen them so often, we think this may be their winter home.**

**We are also only a half mile from the ocean and a spot where the loggerhead turtle comes to lay its eggs. In the same area, we have the right whale giving birth to its calf. The right whale is endangered and is huge - 50 feet long - and weighing up to 70 tons! To see one blow it's huge "V" just a couple hundred yards off shore is breathtaking.**

**Needless to say, we are enjoying our "cold weather" home but do miss our SCOW friends and, if you'd like a sailing treat, come on down and let us fill your winter dreams.**

## **Social Activities**

**Merri Ash**

**HELP!!!! HELP!!!! HELP!!!! HELP!!!!**

**As your new and nervous Social Director, the Board and I have tried to plan a fun filled year of social activities. To make them successful will require some additional help, after all I am only one person. Therefore, I am soliciting volunteer help to serve on the Social Activities Committee. Please email me at Mash088@aol.com or call me at 703-549-9094 to volunteer. I would like very much to have a committee meeting the weekend of March 7-8. I need about 10-12 volunteers to carry out all the good things we have planned for 1998 so please call.**

## **Upcoming Events**

**COME OUT AND SEE ALL YOUR OLD SCOW FRIENDS!!!!!!**

**March is coming real fast and we have the RE-UP BRUNCH planned for Sunday, March 15, 1998. It will be held at the Colonies in McLean, VA, from 10-2. The cost for this event IS \$10.00. I am in serious need of HELP for this event. We need cooks, bartenders, and people to prepare brunch type foods. You will be reimbursed for the costs of whatever you make. PLEASE R.S.V.P. to me at 703 549-9094 by MARCH 9,1998 and tell me what you are bringing. The purpose of this event is to have everyone renew their membership for the up coming year so come armed with your checkbook.**

**One final note!! In planning the Mardi Gras party, I wish to thank everyone who helped me through this frantic time especially Monica Maynard and Denise Derry. They both helped me survive the planning to insure that we all have a great time on the 21st. I do have a plea to the members of this organization, please try to R.S.V.P. on time so that we on the Social Committee can plan accurately for all those who attend to insure we all have a BLAST!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**P.S. Speaking of blasts, be sure to read next month's Channels to find out which SCOW members were named King and Queen of Mardi Gras.**

## **Whitbread on the Web**

**The main URL for the Whitbread Race is: <http://www.whitbread.org/>**

**To go directly to the leaderboard - particularly interesting when a leg is in progress:  
<http://www.whitbread.org/status/index.html>**

**Chessie Racing news can be obtained directly at:  
<http://www.livingclassrooms.org/whitbread/boat/index.html>**

**And the Whitbread Chesapeake home page with links to TV schedules, local events, and Bay info is at: <http://www.us.net/whitbread/index.html>**