
CHANNELS -- The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington

May 2000

May Program

DC Harbor Police

Join us for socializing at 1830. Meeting at 1930. See the trailer for location.

Commodore's Log

"The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the sinking of the recreational sailing vessel Morning Dew was the operator's failure to adequately assess, prepare for, and respond to the known risks of the journey"

That was the NTSB's assessment of a tragic incident in which a sailing vessel was lost with all hands. In that case, the skipper apparently set out into the ocean, in marginal weather, with inadequate clothing, three teenage boys (ages 13, 14 and 16) for crew, no GPS, no life raft, and little else that would have been prudent for sailing offshore.

Since many of us rarely venture beyond the Wilson Bridge in the club's boats, you may be wondering what this story has to do with you. The answer is that every time we set sail, each of us has to "adequately assess, prepare for, and respond to the known risks of the journey," even if that journey is just to Old Town for lunch. With the peak sailing season finally upon us, it is a good time to remind ourselves of some things that we should do to each time we set sail.

First, do you remember the rules of the road? Let's see, starboard over port, or was that port over starboard? Oh well, it doesn't matter, sailboats always have the right of way, don't they? They don't? Do you mean that the Spirit of Washington was trying to tell me something last summer when she sounded five short blasts on her horn? I thought she had to get out of my way. It is useful each spring to look over the rules to refresh your memory.

Then check the weather forecast. Better yet, check a couple of forecasts -- forecasters don't always agree. If you have computer access, you can get the current conditions at National Airport on the web at

<http://weather.noaa.gov/weather/current/KDCA.html>.

Accuweather (<http://www.accuweather.com>) will give you their own forecast as well as the National Weather Service forecast; or try The Weather Channel at <http://www.weather.com>.

Invest in an inexpensive weather radio. Or listen to the radio -- just make certain that the station you use updates the forecasts constantly.

If a chance of thunderstorms is predicted, tune in your AM radio on the way to the marina. Do you hear intermittent static? That is the sound of interference from a thunderstorm somewhere -- it may not be headed for you, but you should stay alert. And while on the water, believe your eyes and not the radio weather forecast. I once saw ominous clouds while sailing and decided to head for shore, even though the local "all news" station playing on my boat radio assured me every ten minutes that there was only a "slight chance of a shower after midnight." I barely got my boat out of the water before a ferocious storm hit, whipping the water of the lagoon into whitecaps and blowing the rain nearly horizontally. The forecast on the "all news" station never changed and never even mentioned the storm. As it turns out, they did not subscribe to a continually updated forecast service.

When you arrive at the marina, check the boat thoroughly, even if the log says that the last skipper left it in good condition. Is the rigging secure? Are all lines in order? Are the center-board and rudder moving freely? Is all required safety equipment aboard and functional, including one PFD for each person plus a throwable cushion? Are the sails in good condition? Never, ever, leave shore with a tear in a sail. If you are in a Flying Scot, is there a paddle and bailer? If you are in a cruiser, are the gas tanks full enough? And, before you put that Scot on the crane, um, did you remember to put in the stern plug? (No, I thought you did!)

Now check the skills of your crew. Can they swim or might they be apprehensive on the water? Is this their first time sailing? If so, they should be wearing a PFD. Brief them on the use of emergency equipment and their duties while aboard. Also brief them on emergency situations, like capsizing and crew overboard. Yes, you know crew overboard procedures, but do they? And what should they do if you fall overboard?

Next, check your provisions. No, not just the pretzels; I am talking about other important things. If it is sunny, do you and your crew have hats and sunscreen? Do you have adequate water -- dehydration can affect your thinking and motor skills. If it is cool, do you and your crew have jackets or other appropriate clothing? If there is a chance of rain, do you have foul weather gear?

Have you told someone where you are going and when you will be back? Skippers of the cruising boats are required to file float plans, but those are only useful if someone happens to notice that a boat is missing. And, if you have one, a very useful piece of safety equipment is a cell phone.

Equipment failure, a storm or even a sunburn can turn a fun day of sailing into one that is not only miserable, but possibly even dangerous. As we gear up our sailing season in earnest, we should heed the words from that television police show: "Let's be careful out there!"

Fair winds to all.

Bay Activities for May

Mike Geissinger

(This article did not appear in the print edition of ChaNNels. Please pass the word to other members who may not receive the electronic edition.-ed.)

The Memorial Day weekend will usher in the summer season for SCOW on the Bay. For the past several years Barb and I have hosted a picnic at The Cottage on the lower Potomac, Virginia side. Together with the Social Director, we will do the same this year!

In addition to the picnic there will be a raft up on Saturday, May 27th at St. Mary's, then a short cruise across the Potomac to Cralle Cove for a Sunday raft up and party. The SCOW picnic on Monday will offer day sails for club member by the cruisers who can stay over for a couple of hours.

Stay tuned for more information at the May General Membership meeting on May 8th.

SCOW Says Thanks

SCOW says thanks to Sharon Schoumacher for organizing the Hexagon outing; to Charlie Day, a volunteer from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, for speaking about the state of the Bay at the March membership meeting; to Andrew Bass of the United States Naval Academy, for speaking in April about local weather; and to the members of the Training and Skipper Certification Committee, led by Barbara Ullman, for developing the new exam for racing skippers.

Sailor's Bookshelf

This month's Sailor's Bookshelf recommendation comes from Mary Bayshore, who writes: I recently read *Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea* (nonfiction) by Gary Kinder, and enjoyed it immensely. The book jacket declares it "one of the most exciting adventure stories of our time...combines maritime disaster with visionary underwater technology. In September 1857, the SS Central America... went down during a hurricane off the Carolina coast. It would be the worst peacetime disaster at sea in American history, claiming more than 400 lives and 21 tons of gold. In the 1980s a maverick engineer...set out to find the wreck and salvage its treasure... The result is a magnificent tale."

I don't want to give away too much, you really must read it for yourself. But I will say that a town in our area was named for the captain of this ship in recognition of his many accomplishments as a seaman and explorer.

Wanted: The VOICE of SCOW! RJ Bruening

Do you have a pleasant telephone voice? Would you like to help the club without leaving your home? SCOW needs a "voice" to record new messages on the hot line , check for new messages, and refer message contents to the proper persons in the club. To audition for this job (that's a

fancy word for volunteer), please call 202-628-SAIL, and press 4 for the audition line. (There will be no prompt for this line, just press 4 before you hear the "tone to leave a message"). Call from the telephone you would use. There is a big difference in quality of the sound from telephones. Leave your name and phone number, and read a bit of ChaNNels into the telephone, or anything else you have on hand, so we can get a feel for how your telephone sounds. I'm sure we'll have lots of candidates, so be patient with us while we weed through the applicants! Robert J. Bruening e-mail address <mailto:bruening@jhu.edu>

Membership Report

Currently we have 232 members; 59 new members and 173 re-upped members! New directories will be available at the May meeting and for those of you who cannot attend, we will be mailing to your home address. If you weren't able to get your dues paid in time for the first printing of the directory, we will print an addendum sometime mid-summer.

SCOW Welcomes Our Newest Members:

Daniel Bender, Andy Blenke, Jonathan Bramley, Shayna Collins, Elliot Bray, Mick and Judi Campbell, Craig Carlson, Heddy Carr, Lisa Carr, Lynn Chia, Claire Cohen, Max Colice, Kristin Craine, Susan Donahue, Edward Fluhr, Maryann Ford, Suzanne Griffin, Noel & Nathaniel Berman, Elaine Kessler, Suzanne Kim, Jackie Landells, Kwang Hyun Lee, Tammy Lucas, Kendrick McCabe, Lauren McCabe, Erin Olofson, Michael Orlandi, Frank and Bonnie Ostrander, Karen Plett, Richard Pollock, Dave Rabinowitz, Beth Ann Reymer, Brad Smith, Jeremy and Gloria Spilker, Lee Talbott, Susan Troccoli, Jan Metten Van der Meer, and Marieke Beltman.

More Social Sail Volunteers! Kelly Bowers

Thank you SO much to all the people who have volunteered to make social sail happen. Here's our list for May - July. This list is accurate as of 4/13/00.

May 4 Tina Daberkow (Chef I) Heather Casavant (Chef II) Liz Bruening (DM)

May 11 Beverly Ashcraft (Chef I) Donna Thurber (Chef II) Ruth Connolly (DM)

May 18 Nelson Padeco (Chef I) Susan Ragland (Chef II) Joe Deporter (DM)

May 25 Pete Hirshman (Chef I) open (Chef II) Cathy Hess (DM)

June 1 open (Chef I) Jason Mundy (Chef II) Bill Davenport (DM)

June 8 Kathryn Scott (Chef I) Heather Spurlock (Chef II) Heather Casavant (DM)

June 15 Denise Malueg (Chef I) open (Chef II) Kathryn Scott (DM)

June 22 Larry Gemoets (Chef I) open (Chef II) Sandy Clover (DM)

June 29 Bill Davenport (Chef I) Beth Bacheldor (Chef II) Pete Hirshman (DM)

July 6 Kelly Bowers (Chef I) Kathi Trepper (Chef II) Jeff Teitel (DM)

July 13 Sandy Clover (Chef I) MaryAnn Ford (Chef II) Larry Gemoets (DM)

July 20 all open

July 27 all open

If you are curious about what each position entails or if you want to snag a particular date, please give me a call (202-332-4160) or send me an e-mail at:

documama@yahoo.com

Skipper Coordinotes Liz Bruening

As of April 11, 75 people have renewed their skipperships. Of these, 45 renewed for the Flying Scots, 8 renewed for the Cruisers, and another 22 renewed for both the Scots and the Cruisers.

At the April meeting, I heard again and again the same question from new members. "How do I become a skipper?" So, for all you new members, and for all you renewed members who would like to become SCOW skippers, just follow these easy steps:

A. If you are new to sailing:

1. take the Basic Sailing Class
2. fill out the OPEN BOOK written exam and return to me
3. complete an on-the-water checkout then upon successful completion of 2) and 3)
4. pay the extremely reasonable skipper fee and Voila! You will be declared a SCOW QS (Qualified Skipper) and as such, entrusted with the sacred combination to the holy of holies, the SAIL LOCKER and able to spend fun-filled, sun-filled hours IN CHARGE on our precious boats.

B. If you already know how to sail and you want to become a skipper of either the Flying Scots or the Cruisers, (known affectionately and hereafter as the BIG BOATS):

1. familiarize yourself with the rigging, launching and sailing of the boat you wish to check out on. How, you say? I'm glad you asked: a) come to Social Sail on Thursday evenings at 6:00 p.m. and help launch and rig the Scots. Go for a 20 minute sail with a SCOW skipper. If you ask real nice, you may even get to help unrig and unlaunch the boats. b) crew on the Tuesday evening Flying Scot races c) go for a new member sail on one of the BIG BOATS on selected Friday evenings d) register for the Cruising Boat class, 3 sessions in early May e) ask a tutor, a QS (see above) to spend a few hours sailing with you. Ask me for a list.
2. complete numbers 2, 3, and 4 in part A

and Voila! etc.....

See you on the River

John Rogers

River Activities begin on April 21 at 6 PM with the first Social Sail of the season. Tuesday night races begin the next week.

On Friday evening June 9th (7 to 11 PM) we will be taking the scow big boats down the river to show off the big boats and the river at night. Although it has been dubbed the New Member Sail, it is for everyone, with a preference for new members and those who have not been out on the big boats. Several members who have their own boats have also volunteered to come along and take out new members. Several members signed up at the last membership meeting, but don't feel left out. If you are interested in joining the excursion, send an Email to River@scow.org or sign-up at the May general membership meeting. If space is limited, never fear, we will have another new member sail on Friday July 7.

For a longer sail on the river and the big boats, consider the two day River Raft up #1, 10 AM June 3 to 4 PM June 4. Think of it, a scenic excursion down the river, an evening raft up, and sailing back the next day. Interested? If so, send an Email to River@scow.org or sign-up at the May membership meeting.

See you at social sail.

Successful Skippership for Women!

A panel discussion led by Liz Bruening, Monica Maynard, Hope Andruss, and Carrie Blankfield will address the following questions. Have you taken the training and passed the check-out sail and been reluctant to take the Flying Scots out on your own? Do you think you don't have enough sailing skills to be responsible for a sailboat as skipper? Have you been sailing for years but never gotten around to taking the Scot check-out? Do you want to race but don't know how to get started? Do you want to develop the skills to be skipper of Psycho or Rebecca?

The panel of experienced SCOW women skippers will answer your questions and provide suggestions for achieving your sailing goals. This stimulating panel, socializing and light supper will be on Sunday, May 7th at 5:00 PM at Carrie Blankfield's home. Cost: \$10.00 per person. Mail your checks to Hope Andruss (see the directory). Reservations a must. No walk-ins.

Carrie's address is: 5008 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. Lots of parking available in front of her home or just around the corner on Fessenden Street. Directions: From Maryland: Go South on Connecticut Ave to Nebraska Ave. and turn right. House is one block down. From Virginia or DC: Go north on Connecticut Ave and turn left at Nebraska Ave. House is one block down.

Open House

The West River Sailing Club, Galesville, Md. is hosting an Open House May 20, 10-4 PM. This is an opportunity to try a variety of sailboats. For information: call Meredith Horan at 301-926-1054 (evenings) You'll find directions to WRSC at: <http://www.paw.com/sail/WRSC>

Books Bill Davenport

(These reviews do not appear in the print version -ed.)

SEA QUEST By Charles Borden, Pub. Ballantine Books Inc.

The most complete collection of small boat stories I've come across.

This collection of stories covers the early transatlantic solo voyages in the late 1800's and early 1900's as well as many of the pacific solo voyages. Includes accounts of such sailors as Howard Blackburn who, when separated from the mother ship in a north Atlantic gale. Rowed his dory from the grand banks to Nova Scotia, loosing all of his fingers to frostbite in the process. After recovering sailed solo across the Atlantic in a 20' sloop. Also includes Vito Dumas's 1930's solo circumnavigation aboard his 32' double ender "Gaucho" and many more short stories.

THE BEST OF SAIL TRIM Pub. Norton &Co.

Filled with articulus from Sail magazine on everything from sail trim to Barber haulers . Of particular note is the article by Avrel Gentry on telltail placement. I used Mr. Gentry's system of telltail placement (which is unique) when racing Hobie cats and found it was easier to keep the boat in the groove. And had more advanced warning when in was vacillating out Than with the conventional system of telltail placement.

Rain long foretold long last; Short notice soon past.

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)

Write us: info@scow.org

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- Please don't make extra work for you and me by including tabs, indents, attachments, or extraneous notes. And hey- NO ALL CAPS! Your titles should have Leading Caps Only.

We will format 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

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