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## CHANNELS -- SPECIAL E-MAIL EDITION

May 1998

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### Commodores Log Stuart Ullman

Every now and then it's good to pause, to step away from our preoccupations, to stand back and ask ourselves: "Why the heck are we doing all this stuff? I mean, what's the point?" As it happens, the authors of the SCOW bylaws have done this thinking for us, and have provided us with an answer. SCOW has a point, and a purpose, and here it is:

"The Club...shall provide its membership with opportunities to sail, to exchange information about sailing, to learn safe boating procedures, and to meet others in the Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay area with similar interests. The Club shall plan activities for both the novice and experienced sailor."

Really. It's in the Bylaws, you can look it up.

I know what you're thinking. Pretty generic sailing club stuff, right? You are thinking: this doesn't differentiate us from any other sailing club anywhere in the world.

But it does, somehow. Well, some of it does. Or maybe what we do to achieve it does. Based on this statement of our purpose, SCOW has created a unique role, a valuable one, at least for that part of the local population that lives a sailing life, or has dreamt of a sailing life. My own opinion is that it is the recognition of the second of these groups, explicitly, overtly, in the bylaws, which sets SCOW apart.

Of course all sailing organizations--- clubs, schools, marinas, chartering services---intend to provide opportunities to sail. WSM has boats to rent, and gives good courses in basic sailing and sailboarding. And there are other clubs at our marina which provide special sailing opportunities. PRSA is an excellent club for small boat owners interested in racing. DICF is the organizational center for Washington Sailing Marina cruising boat owners.

But there are sailors who don't race, and there are sailors who don't own boats, or don't own them here. And there are people who aren't sailors yet, but daydream about sailing anyway. Boat owners don't just materialize fully formed and ready. Yes, there are a few who buy the boat first and then learn to sail it, but I don't think this is the usual order. Boats are expensive toys. Most sailors go through a period of experimentation and discovery, a year or two of sailing apprenticeship, before they decide to invest in one of their own. This is SCOW's niche. In SCOW new sailors, novices, have a group which explicitly intends to support them, to provide sailing activities for them, to provide them with sailing companions. Not just a class: we do have

classes, lots of them, to teach our members how to sail our boats, how to race them, how to navigate in the local waters, how avoid dangers and recover from problems. That's a fundamental part of the club. But in addition to formal training, SCOW gives novice sailors a place to do their experimentation over a long time and in good company, a place to serve their apprenticeship, to develop their sailing skills slowly after the classes are over, a place to find other sailors new and old to talk to, to sail with, and to learn from.

Sailors already skilled and schooled in sailing don't come to SCOW for that, of course. Boat owners with long experience don't. In part they come because of it, because this pool of new sailing talent is here. They scan the field of newcomers, searching for good company on their boats, and for good crew prospects. That sounds almost predatory, but it shouldn't. Just the opposite. The boatless sailors like nothing better than to be asked to crew. For young sailors--- young in sailing years, regardless of their age---this is exactly what they need. And in my experience, boat owners love to share their sailing obsession with newcomers. With anyone. But they can't be completely satisfied taking out the out of town visitors, the neighbors who have never sailed and get nervous when the boat tips, the grandparents or the grandchildren. Sometimes they want to shake the boat out and flat out sail, to get to the edge of their own skills, to the level of sailing where they can still learn. They want to sail with people who know how to do it. People who like it.. And because we nurture the novices, SCOW provides that, too.

None of this is new. The oldest SCOW historical artifact I have come across, a scrap I found in the vault, under the filing cabinet and stuck to the floor, is a reference to training. It talks about the success of our training program in 1963. Let me spell that out for you, in italics: nineteen sixty-three! Thirty-two years ago, before SCOW was called SCOW, even before it was called the Three Mile Limit Club. I'm not sure what the club was called then. But whatever it was called, it was already meeting the SCOW purpose, providing a place learn about sailing, and to find opportunities to sail, companions to sail with and sailors to socialize with, to provide all of this not just for sailors who have boats of their own, sailors with polished skills and years of experience, but for everyone who wants them.

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Editor's Note: The following two articles contain material not included in the print edition of chaNNels because they were still being edited by the authors at press time. I am providing the final editions/articles here so that at least some of us can enjoy the benefits of their work. -lg

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**Thanks to Our Instructors.**

With you guys on board, this should be a great year.

By Barbara Ullman, Training and Skipper Certification Committee Chair  
With help from Denise Derry and Stuart Ullman

SCOW is off to a good start on another very busy training season.

The training program, and the strong support given to that program by SCOW members, has always been part of the heart of SCOW. For many members, it is a major part of their

contribution to SCOW. Our courses---Basic Sailing, Introduction to Cruising Boats, Intermediate Sailing, Capsize Recovery, Bay and River Navigation---are all taught by SCOW members. These volunteers donate their time to help new members turn a curiosity about sailing into real sailing skills. They help people become sailors.

Why do they do it? There must be some reason for so many people to give up weekends and evenings. Maybe they enjoy it. Maybe by teaching, they learn more about sailing themselves. Maybe it's just a way to meet the new members. Maybe they do it to support a club which has become important to them. Maybe they are repaying an old debt to the sailors who taught them when they were starting out, who helped them master the skill, the art, the life of sailing.

Whatever their reason, they help the club immeasurably, and they deserve our praise and our thanks. So this column, from the Training and Skipper Certification Committee, praises them and thanks them.

All of our trainers are drawn from our membership. Our instructors not only have good sailing skills, but good insights into how to share that knowledge with people new to sailing, who may not yet speak the language. They must have patience, and the ability to communicate the obscure in simple, direct words.

The program was developed with help from an ad hoc Training Committee or two. Folks like Elli Abramson, Ginny Ivans, Ric Harvey, among many others, set some fine standards to guide us. In 1996 the most recent ad hoc committee reviewed the entire program. Dave Glick, Len Zuza, Patrick Derry, Jeff Teitle, Marilyn Wilson, Stuart Ullman and I took on looking at all aspects of Scow training. Patrick Derry applied his interest in teaching and gifted ability for storytelling and volunteered to teach all of the land classes of a Basic Sailing class. As it turned out, that year, he taught the land classes of all three Basic Sailing sessions! He also recruited and passed the torch to George Umberger. We were also fortunate when Len Zuza continued to refine the Intermediate Sailing class. Every year he quietly produces the Intermediate class, and gives students a greater appreciation for the subtle points of sailing.

These contributions bloomed, and a revision of the By-Laws established the Training and Skipper Certification Committee as a standing committee the next year. This committee ensures continuity within SCOW's Training Program, even while the Training Directors rotate yearly.

The committee felt that consistency would only be achieved by a core group of instructors, preferably one principle instructor or a pair of instructors, who would to teach the land sessions of an entire Basic Sailing series. This, coupled with a cadre of water trainers familiar with the land curriculum, would result in a comprehensive training class of great value for students, thereby supplying SCOW with qualified, knowledgeable, and safe sailors.

SCOW recognizes the amount of time given by its instructors. As a small token of appreciation, at the Hail and Farewell, SCOW has awarded trainers who have donated 20 hours of their time in a single training season with a nifty blue windbreaker, with the word "Instructor" embroidered on it. Those who have donated again the next year have received signal flag patches or other

tokens. The next time you see someone wearing one of those spiffy jackets, remember what that person has done to earn it, and say thanks!

Let us not forget our great students, either! Many of our trainees have been sailors elsewhere and come to brush up before checking out as skippers, while many have never done any sailing before they came to SCOW. They are absolute novices. The classes may be among the first SCOW activities they are involved in and our corps of trainers are among the first SCOW members these newcomers meet and get to know.

So you could say that our instructors serve as SCOW ambassadors---they are often the newcomers' first image of the club, and through them the club fulfills one of its most basic functions. Training and encouraging new sailors is an inseparable part of the purpose and operation of SCOW. The club teaches new sailors, supports them---and welcomes them. They give new life to the club. They refresh us. They learn, and gradually they become the club. Many of our instructors, and past/present/future board members, were initially students in our Basic Sailing course.

This year's training committee members are Liz Bruening, Mike Geissinger, Dan McClafferty, Jeff Teitel, and Board representatives, Scott Getzow, Training Director, Denise Derry, Skipper Coordinator, and Thom Unger, Vice Commodore. I chair this committee and stand upon my authority (!) to say for all the members, if you have a question about training, ask, but be warned: we have been known to rattle on for hours about training issues..

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### **Train the Trainer Day Barbara Ullman And Denise Derry**

For the past few years, the Training Committee has brought the old and new instructors together for a "Train the Trainer's Day" just before the year's training program begins. The name may not be quite accurate. The attendees usually teach the organizers as much as the organizers teach the attendees. When this group is all together, they are quite an impressive assembly! There are over 30 currently active trainers and many more who have taken a tour of duty in years past.

The Training Committee held the 1998 TTD on April 18. Mike Geissinger organized a terrific day! Focus was on the Basic Sailing course, and included an energetic discussion of what Thom Unger called 'religious issues': Do we let the students cleat the main? Do we let them cleat the jib? Do we raise the main first, or does that matter? Lower the centerboard before you raise the sails, or when you are about to sail away? The question is not what we do ourselves. If that were it, the answer to all these questions would be "it depends on the situation". No, the question for instructors is what should we teach, to beginning sailors? Opinions vary, and are strongly held. But all agreed that for beginners we should pick one answer, and every instructor should teach that.

Eighteen instructors--club members with all the right skills and knowledge--joined in the discussion. Afterward, they went out on the water for a 'dry run' of all six lessons, with our Commodore and Vice Commodore acting as students, and asking questions like "Why do we call

this a right tack---what? Oh, I mean starboard tack, when all the sails are on the left side of the--- what? Oh yes, I mean the port side of the boat? What is a tack, anyway? Why do you keep telling me to fall off? I want to stay on. I am not pinching, I didn't pinch anyone, what are you talking about?"

In spite of our Commodore's behavior they all stayed until the end of the day, and Training Director, Scott Getzow now has eight new instructors to teach our classes: Monica Maynard, Stuart Robinson, Larry Gemotz, Ruth Connoly, Nancy Little, Ed Venere, Randy Glantz. To these new instructors, the Training Committee says: welcome, we need you , and we're glad you're here. And to all instructors we say: thank you.

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### **Training Scott Getzow**

First, I would like to thank all of the new trainers for attending the Train-the-Trainers day on April 18. We had a very constructive class, which was well organized by Mike Geissinger, and attended by a lot of enthusiastic new trainers. Anyone who has trained in the past and would like another opportunity this season, please let me know. I'll be glad to sign you up.

There has been a lot of interest in the Basic sailing courses this year. So much so that by mid-March the first course was full, and the second course has eight students already. So far, the students for the second Basic sailing course are Rebecca Roper, Michael O'Hara, Cherie Doran, Greg Roemer, Matthew Roberts, Leslie Hart, Michael and Susan Norman. Remember, if you want to reserve a spot in this course let me know as soon as possible. The course consists of four classroom sessions, scheduled for June 17,22, July 1, and July 6. The class starts at 7:30 and meets at the Washington Sailing Marina's chart room. The six water sessions for the course are on June 20,21,27,28,July 11,12, from 8:30-12:30 or 1-5 each day. The cost is only \$150 for new members, and \$110 for those who have been a member of SCOW for more than six months.

The cruising boat course, which starts June 3 at 7:30 at the WSM chart room, has students John Kaufmann, Elizabeth Bruening, and Roy Cooper. The water classes for the course are on June 6, and 13 from 8:30-5, and June 12 from 6-11 PM.

This year we're offering two Capsize courses. The first is on July 18, and the second is on August 15, from 10-4. I want to encourage new sailors in particular to take this course since you'll learn a skill that could prove quite useful if the 'unthinkable' should happen. The cost is just \$20 payable the day of the course. If you want to sign up for an upcoming course, you can reach me at my E-mail address [scott.getzow@uspto.gov](mailto:scott.getzow@uspto.gov), or by phone at the number on the back of Channels.

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### **Membership Sam Schaen**

Please look at the label on your newsletter this month. If it says, "Last newsletter unless you renew", it means we have not received your renewal (as of April 21). The May newsletter is the last one you will receive until you renew. If you think there has been a mistake, contact Cathy Hess.

Also, I haven't sent you new members in a while. Below is a list since Jan 1. If it's too late for this month, I'll resend next month.

**New Members (since beginning of year)**

Timothy Babilon,  
Robert Beckman,  
James Buckley, Jr.,  
Laurie Burras,  
Heather Callahan,  
Roy Cooper,  
Cherie Doban,  
Ginny Drecup,  
Ken Drecup,  
Courtenay Dusenbury,  
Ilana Fogelman,  
Diane Hart,  
Thomas Hart,  
David Hatcher,  
Tracy Hightower,  
Peter Hirshman,  
David Hollies,  
Charles Hollister,  
Mike Keller,  
George H. Laurence,  
Amy Love,  
George Love,  
Tamba McCraw,  
Kelly McKenna,  
Leila Murphy,  
Ernest Nussbaum,  
Michael O'Hara,  
Kathleen O'Keefe,  
Carl Redenbo,  
Mary Lou Redenbo,  
Greg Roemer,  
Marc Roemer,  
Leona Roszkowski,  
Ann Servatius,  
Joan Staas,  
Jason Stevens,  
Tim Halliman Stevens,  
Ted Tate,  
JoAnn Thacker,  
Carol Thomas,  
Karen Zuza

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**Maintenance**  
**Monica Maynard**

For you, the reader, our April 25 maintenance day is past, but as I write this, it's still in the future. I want to thank all of you who came out to work on our boats on maintenance day. Our willing and able volunteers are SCOW's most valuable asset. Thanks for your energy and efforts!

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**Wanted:**

Social Sail Volunteers are needed each Thursday throughout the sailing season. The three primary tasks are Dockmaster, who carries around the notebook and signs people up for Flying Scot rides; two Picnic Coordinators, who bring the food and set it up; and two to three Qualified Skippers. Please contact Alice Starke at 703.354.5790 if you would like to volunteer. There will be a sign up sheet at the monthly meetings.

Let's Get the Big Boats Out, Too\_\_\_\_\_

Nancy Little has offered to coordinate Thursday evening rides on SCOW's cruising boats- either Psycho or Rebecca. Call Nancy at 301.972.7069 if you can participate either as qualified skippers or as crew.

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**Scot Skipper Checkout Day**  
**May 30, Saturday noon - 4:00**

I have done you a favor - I've made it easy on you. Oh sure, some say I'm soft.... hearted, that is. Well, I am. I'd like to see more skippers using our boats! So, for students and other clubmembers who have passed their written Scot exams but have not had time to arrange a water exam with a Checkout Skipper (COS), I've arranged one for you on Saturday, May 30, noon until 4:00. This is a catch-all day for my stragglers out there - you know who you are - those folks who say they don't have time to do the water exam, or their schedules conflict with every COS they've phoned, or they can't find a buddy to act as crew.

This is your chance. I've arranged a COS, a boat, and crew (the other skipper candidates) to be there for you. Then, after your sail, I'll be in the grove (on my lawnchair, sipping a pink beverage with an umbrella in it....ahhhhhh) to welcome you ashore from your exam and receive your checks, at which time, I'll show you the secret handshake and give you the sail locker combination. I urge current Basic Sailing students to take advantage of this opportunity. There won't be an easier time than May 30 for you to complete your exam. You'll be done with classes and your skills will be fresh. Please consider taking this step to skipperhood, otherwise, why did you take the course? And think about it..... I didn't schedule Checkout Day so close to the end of your class for nothin'! Anyone interested in finishing their certification, please phone me for scheduling, so I know how many checkout skippers to reserve, as well as boats! I should have

already graded your written exam before you attend the water checkout, so please send it to me soon. Once again, for questions or scheduling, call Denise Derry, 703-978-1666.