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# ChaNNels

The Newsletter of the Sailing Club of Washington

September, 2001

## September Membership Meeting

Here's your chance to find out what plans the National Park Service has for the Washington Sailing Marina and other marinas along the Potomac when Jacque Lavelle, concessions specialist, joins us for our monthly membership meeting Monday, September 10th. The program begins at 7:30 PM but come early for 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. And thank you to our own Mike Geissinger who graciously spoke to us in August about his action-packed adventure to the small island of Flores in the Azores. Stay tuned here for information about more great monthly SCOW programs, and email me at [vice@scow.org](mailto:vice@scow.org) with your programming ideas.

## Commodore's Log

I often say that SCOW activities involve three things -- sailing, eating and socializing -- in varying order depending on the season. But, I really should add learning to that list. Specifically, learning about sailing. Training our members to sail and helping them improve their sailing skills has been a central element of SCOW's program since the club was founded. SCOW's goals, described in our by-laws, reflect this. The club is to "provide its membership with opportunities to sail, to exchange information about sailing, to learn safe boating practices, and to meet others in the Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay area with similar interests." Training is so important that the by-laws require that a member of the Board of Directors be appointed the Director of Training to run the annual training program. In addition, the by-laws establish a "Training and Skipper Certification Committee," which historically has provided continuity in the training program by writing and reviewing the materials used in our courses and skipper exams, proposing members qualified to serve as trainers and check-out skippers, and generally ensuring that the standards of our training program remain consistently high despite annual changes in Board membership.

Our training program has been a success because many of our skilled sailors annually volunteer many hours of their time as instructors in the basic sailing class, the cruising boat class and the capsized course -- the courses that the club offers every year to its members. For example, in our basic class, instructors teach four three-hour evening classroom sessions plus four weekends of water sessions. This is a large commitment of time. The club has traditionally awarded a club jacket to each trainer in the first year that he or she volunteers twenty or more hours to the training program and we have passed out a surprising number of those jackets over the years. Equally surprising is the commitment that those trainers continue to show after they have earned a jacket. These folks are not in it for a jacket -- they are in it because they love sailing and want

to share their love of sailing with their fellow members. In addition, some members also volunteer time to individually tutor other members; and these names are available from Training Director Judi Campbell.

If you think of "training" only in terms of our formal classes or tutoring, though, you are missing a lot of what this club has to offer to broaden your sailing knowledge. Our membership meetings feature a sailing related topic every month. In addition, we have a large number of members with a lot of sailing knowledge and they are happy to share it with you in any number of ways. Within the last year, for example, three of our monthly programs have featured our own members: Stu Robinson shared tips he has learned from years of sailing Gamgee; Jack and Nikki Goodman told us how they planned and accomplished an 8-month cruise to the Bahamas; and Mike Geissinger told us about his recent open-ocean sail to the Azores. We'd like to feature more of our members at monthly meetings, so if you have a sailing adventure or skill you would like to present, please tell Vice Commodore Kathryn Scott.

An excellent method of seeking or sharing sailing information is through the "all-SCOW" email list. For example, a member recently asked for advice regarding use of an outboard motor; and Don Deese replied with an answer so thorough that I printed it out and put it inside my own outboard motor owner's manual. The email list has become a popular way for members to advise others of hazards on the river, to solicit crew or sailing opportunities, and to exchange other sailing knowledge. Remember that the "all-SCOW" email list is not moderated, so please restrict your emails to topics of interest to the entire club and related to sailing or club activities.

Members freely share advice in other ways, too. As some of you know, I sold my American 14-6 and bought a Precision 23 this year; and I spent a lot of time talking to members who own large boats before I made that purchase. I benefited greatly from their advice when I bought the boat, and I've continued to benefit from their advice on things like sail trim and tuning. It is great to have access through SCOW to such a wealth of sailing experience and knowledge.

Two other excellent opportunities for teaching and learning are Tuesday night races and Thursday night social sails. If you are thinking about getting checked out as a skipper on the Flying Scots, a critical part of the test is knowing the SCOW procedures to rig and launch the boat and to unrig and stow it. Every week at both the Tuesday night Flying Scot races and at Social Sail, we launch two or three Scots. What better place to learn? If you see a group launching or stowing a boat, walk over, offer to help, and tell the skipper in charge that you are trying to learn how to rig or unrig so that you can get checked out. In my experience, no skipper will turn down an offer of help rigging or stowing a boat; and almost any skipper will be happy to tell you what he or she is doing and why.

There are also opportunities for learning on the water at these events. If you are on a boat and are curious about what some part of the boat is called, or how some equipment is used, or why the skipper says "hard a-lee" during some maneuvers and "jibe-ho" during others, ask the skipper! Don't be embarrassed or afraid that your question is too basic. If you'd like to take the tiller during Social Sail, ask the skipper if you can take a turn at the helm. In fact, for some of us, the first thing we do after getting safely away from the dock, winds permitting, is to find the person on board with no sailing experience and put them at the helm. It is fun to see the look of

apprehension fade and the joy of sailing appear on a new sailor's face.

I hope that you will take advantage of all our club has to offer you in terms of sailing, eating, socializing, and especially learning!

Fair winds and following seas!

**From the Skipper Coordinator**  
**Joan O'Kane**

Congratulations to Cathy Bleakly and Erica Vey, our newest Flying Scot skippers and to Aaron Laufer, our newest cruising boat skipper!

Summer is winding down, but there's still time to become a skipper. If you're a paid-up member of SCOW and would like to receive the test packet, please email me at skipper@scow.org. Be sure to include your mailing address and whether you are interested in becoming a Flying Scot skipper, a cruising boat skipper, or both. You can also email me if you have any questions about how to become a skipper.

**Training**  
**Judi Campbell**

August was a busy month for the SCOW trainers. The second Capsize Class was completed on August 18. Thanks to Thom Unger for taking the lead for both offerings of this important class and Stuart Ullman and Larry Gemoets for assisting him.

The second Cruising Boat Class was completed and thanks go out to Declan Conroy, Stuart Ullman, and Joe DePoorter for training during this offering. The Cruising Boat Class was completely revised by the Training Committee this year. As part of that revision, the Cruising Boat Class now has a land class as well as water classes; and the Training Committee has selected the book, Basic Cruising, as the text for the course. Thanks to Barby Ullman and the Training Committee and especially Stuart Ullman for working so diligently to make this class far more comprehensive.

With the core of our curriculum done for the season, the season will finish out with a number of special training events. In response to several suggestions, I am scheduling sessions in navigation, life sling, docking, and crew overboard.

See you on the water!

**SCOW Holiday Raft-Up**  
**Susan Batchelder**

Attention SCOW members: get your calendars out! I know it's still hotter than blazes, but December will be here before you know it and I'd hate for you to miss a good SCOW party. The Holiday Raft-up is scheduled for Sunday, December 16th at the Colonies in Mclean from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. Now, put that on your calendars! Sunday, December 16th, 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

For you newer members, the Holiday Raft-up is a potluck with great food, good cheer and

holiday libations.....a chance to dress up and wear something festive. Families and guests are welcome. More details will follow in later issues of Channels, but I wanted to get the date on your calendars now!

### **SCOW Says Thanks!**

SCOW says "Thanks!" to: Mike Geissinger for his presentation at the August meeting; to Gordon Cameron, Thom Unger, Stu Robinson, Monica Maynard, Stuart Ullman, Delcan Conroy, George Umberger, Steve Linke, and Barry Dunsmoor for assisting with a variety of maintenance activities on the Flying Scots and the cruising boats; and to Tom Unger for providing the projection screen so Mike Geissinger could show his great images from the Azores at the August membership meeting.

### **Nominations Will Soon Be Open!**

As required by the by-laws, at the September Board meeting a Nominating Committee will be appointed. The committee will report its proposed slate of candidates at the October 8th general membership meeting. Under Article III of the by-laws, additional nominations from the floor may be made at the October meeting, following which nominations are closed. Elections will be conducted at the club's Annual Meeting on November 12th. As in the past, ballots will be mailed and full instructions on returning them will be included with that mailing.

Elections will held for all four club offices (Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Secretary and Treasurer) plus six Directors. This club is only as strong as its volunteers, and its leadership only as strong as those who volunteer to lead it. If you want to make a contribution to the club, please volunteer to run for office when the Nominating Committee is announced.

### **SCOW Summer Social Fun!**

At the time of this writing, we're heading into the home stretch of the Summer SCOW social schedule and what an August it's been!

### **Crab Feast**

On Saturday, August 4, scads of SCOW members enjoyed the bounty of the sea in the form of a fantastic crab feast! More than 60 SCOW members spent their sunny Saturday crushing (and eating) crustaceans and chowing on large quantities of corn on the cob, hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, cole slaw, fabulous desserts and, of course, beer. Next time you see anyone of the following people, be sure to thank them for helping make one of SCOW's biggest social events a success:

Joan O'Kane, baked beans, shopping and all-around organization

Donna Cohen, delectable desserts

Kristine Bieg, drinks

Patti Larkin, cole slaw

Tom and Melissa Ennis, burgers and such

Samia Abdel-Wahed, all-important paper products

Patti Epler, corn on the cob, keeper of the social chair's sanity  
Jay Weitzel, crab truck guy

### **Smith Island**

On Sunday, August 19, 20 intrepid SCOW explorers braved the elements of a damp day to visit Smith Island, MD, the only inhabited part of Maryland that can be reached solely by boat. After a 90-minute cruise across the Chesapeake from Point Lookout, MD, we enjoyed a fine seafaring feast at the Bayside Inn. Following that, we rented golf carts and bicycles, or just walked around Ewell, one of Smith Island's three villages and enjoyed the peace and quiet of the isolated island and the hospitality of its friendly residents. It was definitely different, and if you're looking for something that harkens back to simpler times, then a visit to Smith Island is for you.

We'll also have had our Labor Day day trip to St. Michaels by the time you read this. Here's hoping it was fun!

So, with all that, we've got just two social events left -- and they're both doozeys:

**Hail and Farewell**  
**Saturday, November 17, 2001**  
**Fort Meyer Officers Club**

**Holiday Raftup**  
**Sunday, December 16**  
**The Colonies**

Keep an eye on Channels and your e-mail for more details on these exciting events!

Your Swingin' SCOW Social Chair  
Matt Gaston

**Racing News**  
**Bill Bernhards**

As usual, I have more people to thank for acting as race committee on our Tuesday night Scot racing; Stu Robinson. Matt Gaston, Jeff Teitel, and Sergey Tagashov have all been a great help ensuring many of our members get to learn about racing and sailing through our club.

As I write this article for the September Channels issue, I realize that there are only four more races left this season. During this summer I have met several new members who told me they joined our club just to get some racing experience. Others said they have raced in the past and really enjoyed the opportunity to do it again. Still others were just grateful to go sailing. Whatever the reason, a large number of club members have been racing/sailing on Tuesday nights and I would like to thank all of you for helping make this successful.

I would like more feedback from everyone who took advantage of this racing series. E-mail me at [race@scow.org](mailto:race@scow.org) and let me know what you liked, or what you think could improve this program.

Several club members attended two racing events, recently held on the Chesapeake. The first was the Annapolis to Solomons race sponsored by the Eastport Yacht Club. Approximately 140 boats sailed in this race. On "Kateri Ann" owned by Don Ross from Galesville, Maryland were Mike Geisinger and Bill Bernhards.

A half hour before the race there was very little wind, but as the start neared the wind picked-up to about 15 knots out of the northeast. Starting time for our class of non-spin one was at 19:45. After tacking several times to reach Thomas Point lighthouse we fell off and held a broad reach all the way to the mouth of the Patuxent River. Then the wind slowed as we approached and crossed the finish at 3:45. On corrected time we placed second out of the 18 boats in our class.

The following day allowed the racers to rest, or party, before the start of the "Screwpile Regatta". Joining us on "Kateri Ann" were Heather Spurlock and George Umbruger. The first day of racing saw deep blue skies as 136 boats completed two races in light winds and a strong ebb current. Racing was delayed for about an hour before winds were strong enough to overcome the current. We placed sixth and fourth for the day.

On the second day of racing we were met with cloudy skies and only a hint of breeze. Two gunshots signaled a postponement of the race. After waiting some time the skies cleared and the western shore heated to a point where a southerly sea breeze began to build. The committee boat signaled the starting sequence and the first race began in 6-10 knots. The second race of the day saw winds of 11-15 knots. Again we finished sixth and fourth.

For the third day of racing the weatherman was predicting more wind. Unfortunately our skipper got a call saying that his son was ill so he got a ride home and asked his crew to take Kateri Ann back to Galesville for him. Therefore we missed the third day of racing but enjoyed the sail home, even though it was very hot.

Bay racing is very different from racing on the river. There were no tourist boats to dodge in a narrow channel and no hydrilla to slow you down. There were large freighters that we had to keep an eye out for, and there were parties, after each race, that went late into the night.

If you can find a skipper who likes to race on the bay, take him/her up on it. I'm sure you will find an exciting time. One way to find a skipper is to register your name with [www.spinsheet.com](http://www.spinsheet.com). Spinsheet tries to match skippers with crew in the Annapolis area. If you are a bay skipper who is looking for crew contact me at [race@scow.org](mailto:race@scow.org) and I will try to find some SCOW crew for you.

**Money Matters**  
**Mary Bashore**

Did you know most of the income that supports our club comes from membership dues? Your dues and fees support fleet operations (boats and their maintenance), and communications like this newsletter. We can keep the dues so low (despite the increase in postage and other expenses) because of the many volunteers who organize training, cruising, racing, and social activities. There is always room for one more volunteer to help with any activity.

If, in the process of volunteering you have expended personal funds, you may be interested in knowing how to quickly and easily get reimbursed. Whenever possible, coordinate in advance with the event organizer or responsible board member as to the appropriate cost and/or quantity. Whether you pay by cash, check, or credit card, please get a receipt, write your name and the event on it, and mail it to Treasurer Mary Bashore. For routine expenditures, you will immediately be mailed a check. It's as simple as that. If you're not sure, ask a board member or send an e-mail to [treasurer@scow.org](mailto:treasurer@scow.org).

## **River** **Jon Allen**

I would like to thank all of the skippers who have participated in the River Cruises:

Dale Eager  
George Umberger  
Graham Leadbetter  
Jay Weitzel  
Stu Robinson  
Bill Bernhards  
Henry Yung  
Dave Scheuermann

It has been a great season of sailing. We still have one more left on Sept. 14th. We moved the Friday night cruise from Sept. 7th because of conflicts with the Leukemia Cup. We are starting to get a lot participation from members with their own boats - come join in.

## **Bay** **Jon Allen**

We had 3 boats at Dun Cove and about 14 people, 2 or so that had never been to a raft-up. We didn't have much wind on Saturday, but after the storms came through it was really a great sail back.

We have 3 more raft-ups planned for the year:

Labor Day Weekend: St. Michaels

Columbus Day Weekend:

1st night at Irish Creek - Choptank

2nd night at Hudson Creek - Little Choptank

Fowl Weather: Oct 20-21

This should be upper Bay. I will have more information as we get closer.  
Happy sailing

## 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)

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### 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.

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**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.....