

---

## CHANNELS -- SPECIAL E-MAIL EDITION

September 1998

---

### Commodore's Log

#### Stuart Ullman

There's a lot of good racing at the Washington Sailing Marina this month. The Also Ran Regatta, SCOWs biggest racing event of the year, takes place on the 26th; Ruth Conolly has written a column about it which shares the front page with this Log. On the Saturday the 12th is the Leukemia Cup Regatta, one of WSMs best races and best parties of the year. It's such a good race, in fact, that PRSA continues it on Sunday; the two day series is the PRSA President's Cup Regatta. And all of this is in addition to the usual races at the marina, including SCOWs Flying Scot races on Tuesday nights.

The Tuesday night Flying Scot racing is going well, I am told. On Tuesdays I am usually on Rebecca, racing with DICF out on the river, but when we are leaving the lagoon I see bustling preparation, and clusters of people rigging Scots.

Sometimes I meet members, even some who joined years ago, who don't know about the Tuesday races, or know about them only by rumor. If you are one of these, and if you are free on Tuesday evenings, you should come down. It's good sailing.

If you are not just a new member but also a new sailor, you may feel that racing is too far above your skill level for you to participate. Don't let that stop you. Go to the marina on Tuesday evenings and participate in the races, either on the Scots in the lagoon, or on one of the cruising boats on the river. Good crew is welcome anywhere, and you may be good crew even if you are a complete sailing novice. In the DICF races 'good' usually means eager, reliable, trainable, and not much more than that. And in the SCOW Flying Scot races, 'good' just means at the dock and ready to go. Skippers race hard, and want to win, but most are happy to take new racers out to show them the sport, and if you are not yet an expert sailor, there is no better or faster way to become one than to race.

I'm not sure why this is true, but it is. Maybe it's because racing gives you the chance to watch some good sailors sailing hard, or because you are captured by the spirit of the race, so that even the smallest sailing skills suddenly seem to matter. Maybe it's because racing gets you out on the water in conditions you might otherwise avoid, conditions in which you might decide not to sail if the series outcome didn't depend on it. Don't misunderstand; no prudent skipper will take his boat out in conditions he can't handle. Boat owners are not all crazy. Most of them value their safety as much as you value yours, and they might value their boat even more than their safety. They won't risk either one very much. But if they are racers, they probably value the excitement

of the race more than ease or comfort, so they go out in the heat or in the cold, in big winds or no winds, in dry or wet weather, and as good crew---eager and reliable---you go with them. While you are out you learn to sail well in all those conditions.

Some of you, I know, didn't take up sailing so you could race. Your daydreams don't involve dinking around the race buoys in the WSM lagoon, or on the river, or even on the Bay. Your sailing daydreams have nothing to do with racing. You dream about tranquil moonlit anchorages in far away places, or about lonely passages across oceans, braving giant whales and wild weather lashing across the decks, or about cruising peacefully in the waters near Greece, or about sailing your own boat into San Francisco Bay or Hong Kong or Sydney. And you may look out at the Scots poking around our little lagoon, and wonder: where is the romance in that? But the sailing lessons you learn while racing help you prepare to cruise too; all kinds of weather happens in the world, all kinds of conditions arise that you have to deal with quickly and well---or patiently, and with a bit of humor. You learn a little of that daysailing in conditions that look like fun sailing when you set out: but you learn a lot of it when you set out to race, in whatever conditions are out there when the race is scheduled to start.

I'll give you one racing day as an example: Tuesday, July 21. On that day the DICF boats went out to the river as usual. There were forecasts of possible storms, but the weather guys always say that, don't they? But on that Tuesday, on the Potomac, the possible became fact. A storm came through just at the start of the race that blew Rebecca, with Declan Conroy skippering, almost to the bridge before she could get her sails down; there were gusts strong enough to sail Rebecca back and forth across the channel near Alexandria with no sails up at all, propelled by the wind against her hull. And that same day I was crewing for Mike Geissinger aboard Euphoria at the Screwpile lighthouse regatta in Solomon's, and we saw nothing of that storm or of any storm; we had almost no wind at all. It was interesting to come back after the Screwpile, in fact; the marina was buzzing with stories about the events on the river, about hectic rides and groundings and water over the rail. Wild, exciting stuff. Things were not quite like that in Solomon's. We spent much of the day in dreadful stillness, from 10 AM when we assembled at the race rendezvous in the Patuxent until mid afternoon. In the meantime we simply waited there for the wind to come.

The heat was intense. People were wilting on every boat. After an hour or so, the crew of Euphoria realized that we had the right equipment on board to help these overheated sailors, and that since that was so it was our mission, our duty really, to provide relief to those in need. To begin our philanthropy we hauled out our supersoakers, sailed by Carpe Diem, and drenched Dr. Donald Deese and his crew, refilling more than once to be sure our good works were completely effective. We thought of it as altruism, as a kind, humanitarian gesture, and I'm sure that Don saw it that way too, because even though he had no supersoakers on board he did his best to return our kindness by sailing past Euphoria close enough for his crew to dump water all over us from buckets. And after that there was a great deal of kindness felt on both boats, as we motored around exchanging torrents of water, each boat trying to achieve the best position to unleash a broadside of kindness on the other. Later we decided to extend our circle of benevolence, so Euphoria and Carpe Diem sailed by Nelson Pacheco on Second Wind, one on each side, and rained so much kindness on him that for a moment I was afraid Second Wind would sink under

the weight of it. Finally we were exhausted from our virtuous labors. For a while things settled down. We went back to lolling on the motionless decks under whatever shade we could rig.

We didn't see Carpe Diem for most of an hour after that. But I know this about Don: it's hard to surpass him in matters of this type, matters of kindness and public duty. And I had once known, but had forgotten, that Don has a high-volume pump on board for emergencies, capable of pumping water at a rate of a gallon per second. It took an hour of engineering, but the crew of Carpe Diem turned this pump into a high volume Pressure Hose of Mercy: they came by us smiling the smiles of those who know they are doing good deeds, and power washed Euphoria's decks, her skipper, and her crew, proving that at least on that day there were no greater humanitarians in the Screwpile fleet than Don Deese and the Carpe Diem crew. All of these stories, the wild and the tame, the serious and the comic, are part of racing.

Ah, you say, those of you who dream of racing, but these Tuesday races in Flying Scots are not great races that I've seen on television, not the America's Cup, not the Whitbread. No, they aren't--- few of us, no matter how hard we daydream, will be able to participate in those. But remember that those who race in the big ones, the television races, also sail in local races and dink around in lagoons somewhere just having fun. And remember that the Whitbread racers sailed around the whole planet to get to the Chesapeake, and said that this stop, in our bay, was among the best and most enjoyable in the race. So if your dreams about sailing include racing, then get started, even if you're still just learning what a tiller is. Start with the SCOW races, and DICF, and the Bay: some of the best racers, best races, and best times in the world are here. And if you dream instead about cruising in exotic places far away, don't stop. There are plenty of SCOW members who can verify that all of those exotic places are really there, that the oceans really are full of whales and wild weather, and that with patience and persistence you can achieve all of those dreams. But start in the lagoon first. Spend some time in the river and the bay learning and practicing before you set sail for Australia.

And remember this too--I shouldn't have to say this, it is so clearly true--Alexandria is pretty romantic too, and Annapolis, and Solomon's. The Bay is full of tranquil moonlit anchorages, and there are people all over the world who dream about sailing someday in the far away, exotic Chesapeake.

You're lucky. You have these things, great racing, great cruising, the whole Chesapeake and our little lagoon, you have all these things in your hand, or almost. You only have to reach out and take them.

### **September Speaker**

The speaker at the September meeting will be Alli Alligood from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, to tell us that we should revel in the bay, to explain what CBF is doing to maintain that possibility, and what we can do to help them.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Also Ran Regatta**

**Saturday, Sept. 26**

Are you ready for racing? We're gearing up for SCOW's Volunteers are needed to race the club's three Flying Scots, so we have a good showing. The only requirements are: You may not have won any other races this year, and at least one person (designated skipper) on each boat must be checked out on the Scots--though you may all share time at the helm if desired.

I have reserved the boats on the scheduling book that day, so now we just need to form skippers and crews for a fun day of racing.

Also, 5 people are needed as skipper and crew of the committee boat, Rebecca, and two or three people for each of the two 14/15 ft. motorboats we're using as rescue craft. At least one qualified, checked-out big boat skipper is needed and preferably a couple of people who have driven motorboats before, though we can probably get a brief lesson from a PRSA person. The crew members aboard Rebecca will be doing the race timing, flags, scoring—and we can have a familiarization session for that as well. So if you're interested in race committee or rescue boat duties, please send me an e-mail.

The Regatta will take place on the Potomac, in front of the Alexandria, Virginia power plant beginning at 11:30 a.m. on September 26, 1998. Sailboats of all types and humans of all descriptions are accepted. SCOW membership is not necessary. Registration will be from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. on the afterdeck of the Washington Sailing Marina, with a skippers' meeting to be held at 10:00 a.m. at the WSM small boat cranes. The regatta entry fee is \$10.00 per boat.

There will be one long race for cruising boats and three shorter races for daysailers. Four or more boats of the same type will have a separate start and will be scored according to class rules. Other small boats will be scored by handicap groups. Groups will be determined by size.

Please reply to Alice Starcke (StarckeA@worldnet.att.net), or phone Alice at (703) 971-7755, or call Ruth Marie Connolly (202) 458-3809 for more information about participation and volunteering.

**Get involved. RUN TO THE ALSO-RAN REGATTA.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **How to Join the SCOW E-mail List**

The SCOW E-Mailing List is an easy way for SCOW members to communicate with each other. Anyone who is signed up (about 100 people right now) can send an e-mail to a single address and everyone on the list will get a copy. To get on the list, send a message to majordomo@shirenet.com with "subscribe scow" in the body of the message. After you've signed up, any message to scow@shirenet.com will be sent to all the subscribers. The list averages about one message a week, usually about upcoming club activities. --Jeffrey Teitel

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Fowl Weather Raft-Up**

SCOW will be having its annual Fowl Weather Raft-Up on the weekend of October 31 and November 1. This year we will be rafting up in the Choptank River area to accommodate boats from both the northern and southern fleets. The actual site has not yet been determined, and I am asking skippers familiar with the Choptank to suggest locations that would provide both a good vantage point to watch the migrating waterfowl, and have sufficient depth and shelter to accommodate a raft-up on a breezy night (often associated with breezy days, which, of course, we all want!). Interested skippers and prospective crew members should call me at (202)-244-5516(H) or (202)-358-5155(O), or sign up at the September meeting. **Allan Lewis, Raftmaster**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **New Members**

**SCOW welcomes the following new members:**

**Rich Alberth,  
Tracy Bridgham,  
Donald Cameron,  
Anna Fragomeni,  
Charissa Goins,  
Les Horn,  
Kathryn Kelsey,  
Tom Leithauser,  
Sheila Murphy,  
Carol Ann Stern,  
Lawrence Stern,  
Kathleen Trepper**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **River Activities**

#### **Tina Daberkow**

So far we have had a great season on the river. The Tuesday night races are going strong. Racing is a great way to learn and get in some good tiller time. Social Sail on Thursdays has also been a big draw with lots of new faces. I would like to thank all of those that have volunteered to help make the social sails such a success and also encourage those that haven't volunteered yet to step up and help. We still have all of September and a few weeks of October that volunteers are needed.

In addition to the usual activities, we have a couple River events coming up. SCOW will host the **Also Ran Regatta on Sept 26**, for all skippers who have not yet won a race this season (does not include SCOW's Tuesday lagoon races). This is one last chance for a trophy! Every boat & skill level is welcome. If you're interested in volunteering for this event, please refer to the Also Ran Regatta article elsewhere in this Channels, for info.

On October 3 & 4 we will have a Fall River Raft-up. If you are interested in crewing for the raft-up, please contact me, Tina Daberkow, at 703-534-0742 or [tdaberkow@aasa.org](mailto:tdaberkow@aasa.org). As you know, there is a limited amount of space on Psycho & Rebecca, so the sooner you contact me the better your chances of making the cruise.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **1999 Nominating Committee**

### **Liz Bruening**

The Nominating Committee for SCOW's 1999 Board of Directors (Elizabeth Bruening - Chair, Carrie Blankfield, Ruth Connally, Declan Conroy, Dan McClafferty, Thom Unger) has begun the work of preparing a slate of candidates to lead our organization. As specified in the By-Laws, we elect four Officers: Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Secretary, and Treasurer; and six Directors assigned by the Commodore to fulfill the duties of Training, Social Activities, Maintenance, River Activities and any other of several functions.

If you know someone who would be a good candidate - this includes YOURSELF - please get that name to me (my e-mail address is [Fiskerbeck@mix.cpcug.org](mailto:Fiskerbeck@mix.cpcug.org)) or to any member of the committee. We need your good suggestions to sail on into the new year.

If you are contacted by the Nominating Committee to run for a position on the Board of Directors, it is because we think you would be a wonderful candidate to lead our club through 1999. We know you. We value your expertise, your sense of dedication and your creativity. We hope that you will consider the honor seriously and then will say "yes".

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Congratulations, New Skippers!**

### **Denise Derry**

The skipper business has been booming this year. To date, I've got 90 skippers on the books. Although my roster did not increase in numbers so much during the past month, it increased in level of skipperships. I had four Flying Scot skippers pass the Cruising Boat exams! Bill Bernhards, with nudging from last year's cruising boat classmate, Monica Maynard (having passed her cruiser exam last fall), successfully completed his exams in early August. If he sails the cruisers as much as he's sailed the Scots - the regular cruising skippers had better get their reservations in early! John Dickinson, who has been working on this for at least the past two

years (his paperwork was a carryover when I took this job!), fought time and job obstacles to complete his exam, and pledges to be more available for club sailing activities in the next two (plus) years. Nancy Little, a new Scot water instructor this year and organizer of the Thursday evening cruiser sails (great job for a prospective new cruiser skipper!), passed a thorough exam by Joe DePoorter, in mid-August. Scott Wainner had just enough wind to complete his exam by Commodore Ullman, with crew assistance from Nancy Little and yours truly. With Nancy's persistence, expect to see these four volunteering to skipper the cruisers on Thursday nights soon!

SCOW's newest Flying Scot skipper is Jeff Laufle. While working a temporary job assignment in DC for a few months, he learned about SCOW, and jumped right into volunteering for anything that needed to be done; including setting up for Social Sails, flipping burgers, scrubbing & fixing boats, assisting with Tuesday races, and sailing. If you've been to any Thursday Social Sail, or any recent social activity, I'm sure you met Jeff. His enthusiasm, selflessness and willingness remind me that the benefits gained from doing something is directly related to the effort you put into it. Jeff has already returned to Seattle, but with luck, his job will pull him back to DC a few times before the skipper season is over in March.

\*\*\*\*

### **Interested in Skippering?**

The sailing season never really ends in this area. Last winter was mild, and allowed sailing every month. We get fluky 70 degree days in February, worthy of ditching work to sail. Skipperships are renewed at the time of club membership renewal, in March. So, if you thought you'd wait until "next year" to take the exams, you've got a long wait. Do it now! Phone Denise Derry at 703-683-2088 to request a Flying Scot or Cruiser skipper exam package today!

\*\*\*\*

### **Skippership**

#### **Denise Derry**

SCOW's skippers are an elite group. Although just 27% of the club, they are the Club's skippers. Any sailing you do on our five boats is because they've taken the time to develop their skills, pass the written and water exams, pay the fees, and volunteer their services at Tuesday's racing, Thursday's Social Sails, or just when they see you loitering around the cranes at some other time. All, so we can get on the water. That's pretty nice of them, isn't it?

There is a difference between being a SCOW skipper, and renting a boat from a marina. Marinas are in the business of boat rentals TO MAKE MONEY. To steal a line from a seafaring cap'n, "if you can hear thunder, see lightening, and eat mush," you can probably rent a boat. Some marinas have the renter complete a quiz - the one I saw was easier than one in "Cosmo." The rental places get a lot of money from their rentals, which you don't see them putting back into their boats, do you? Rental boats lead rough lives because of the variety of skippers who sail them. SCOW's

boats are in fine shape because our skippers have a basic level of ability ensured by exams from experienced checkout skippers, and our boats are constantly under maintenance scrutiny. We're lucky to have these volunteers looking out for the club's assets and you! Adhering to a handful of policies & procedures is reasonable to ask of the skippers who have the best sailing deal in town. A measly \$80 gets skippers access to three daysailers, and for another \$60 they've got access to two cruisers, for a year. That's the price of a couple rentals.

When SCOW burps out a new skipper, we've said, "OK, this one is safe to take my 80-year-old grandma for a sail." I like to believe that all SCOW skippers think of safety first, and have common sense to not go out in conditions beyond their skill level. All of SCOW's skippers have agreed to follow SCOW's boat handling policies and procedures.

The club has developed these policies over more than 25 years. Although forgotten incidents may have spawned some, the resultant policies are still quite valid. None of the policies and procedures is onerous. Sure, they limit some activity (Scot sailing areas are between the bridges, and not between the docks) and specify certain activities (motors are engaged when traveling under the Wilson Bridge; Scots are always towed under the bridge to the capsized course; single-handing AT ANY TIME is not permitted without permission from the Board ). SCOW does not imply that these activities cannot be done, but that SCOW does not want them done in SCOW's boats. Although I've sailed under bridges in my own boats, I've also been stuck between the spans of a bridge, tacking, tacking, tacking -- for 45 minutes -- because the wind can be squirrely around the large cement pilings. I also know some salts who sail alone, under spinnaker, all over the Bay. There are times though, for instance, when approaching a dock that it is nice to have an extra hand aboard. SCOW recognizes this, and has a very limited singlehanding policy. No one yet has singlehanding permission for the cruisers. Scot singlehanders are Declan Conroy, Joe DePoorter, Dave Glick, Stuart Ullman, and Thom Unger.

The marina teaches students to sail between the docks and turn sharply into the wind, to bring the boat to a stop. It works; I've seen it. I've also seen some experienced SCOW skippers try this same maneuver and to everyone's surprise, bash the bow not only into the dock, but over it! (And with those mainsheets dangling off the stern, need I explain the term "carrier landing?") SCOW does not want that type of docking done with its boats. Dock at the ends only, or the outside of the T-dock in an onshore breeze.

There is no question on my exams or on the skipper applications, that can weed out the skippers who feel their skills are above policy, and who cannot control their own urge to show off. That the infraction does not result in damage to body or boat, is irrelevant. That another SCOW skipper may have witnessed it and comes away with the attitude that this is a sloppy, lax, rental-boat-mentality club IS relevant. These boats are not rentals, they are ours, yours and mine.

This year's skippers are great. They admirably step up to volunteer at Social Sails, for coaching new skipper candidates and conducting training sessions. The new and experienced skippers easily share their skills with others. By far, the majority of our skippers keep the policies and procedures in mind when sailing. Every once in a while, though, I hear about damage done to the boats resulting from boneheaded actions of the skippers, who knew it was against SCOW's Policies & Procedures. So, if you do see a SCOW boat operated in a rogue manner, discuss it

with the skipper at the time, and notify the skipper director, later. I'm sure you don't want to read more thinly veiled tongue-lashings in future Channels articles.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Training Teaser**

**by Scott Getzow**

We had a near perfect day for our first capsized course of the year, 18 July; plenty of wind and sunshine. Students Sandy Clover, Larry Gemoets, Cathy Hess, Peter Hirschman, Randy Scott, Bob McMichael, and Gaile Swider are thoroughly qualified to tip over... and right themselves. They were ably instructed by Thom Unger and Jeff Teitel, with assistance from Nancy Little and Dave Scheuermann. Word got out that this course was so much fun, that the second capsized course, August 15, actually had a waiting list.

The third basic sailing course, which started on August 17, was added due to the strong interest in lessons this year. The enthusiasm of our new members is reflected in the Fall Basic Sailing roster, made up of mostly new members: Jason Fenwick, Alyce McKelvy, Chris Farthing, William Herald, Kristie Smith, and Diane Munro.

The Bay Navigation course, Sept. 16 & 19, which also filled up quickly this year, will be taught by Stuart Ullman and Declan Conroy. Carrie Blankfield has again offered the use of her 40' C&C for the water portion of the class. The lucky students are: Jason Fenwick, Lynn Jones, Randy Scott, Cathy Hess, Kathleen O'Keefe, Scott Getzow and Carrie Blankfield. Carrie's only condition for letting SCOW use her boat was that she be allowed to take the class! Sounds like a pretty good deal to me.

If you've got any questions regarding SCOW's training program, don't hesitate to phone me, Scott Getzow, at home or catch me at a Thursday Social Sail.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Tuesday night Flying Scot racing.**

**Bob Bruening**

Even August was kind to Tuesday night races in the lagoon this year. There were winds and sailors every Tuesday, not the normal dog days of August!

On August 18, all three boats were in the water and the "skippers meeting" had been held. The winds were reported as being 9 mph gusting to 22. As we prepared to cast off, the gusts rose even higher. We delayed the start, dropping the sails and tying them down. There were thunder storms in the metropolitan area, and none seen nearby, but we had the tail winds from some storm. Some thought winds hit 30 mph. But after a delay of 15 minutes, we raised sails, and prepared to race with mandatory life jackets.

Two of the boats acted strangely. They did not handle as expected, and did not respond to changes in tactics. Raising the center board on Danschweida cured the problem, but we could not believe we were aground 15 feet inside the shallow water marks a half hour after high tide. The secret is that the water grasses have really proliferated this year. At high tide you can't see the grasses, but the center board gets tangled in them. Watch out for the hydrilla!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Editor's Note: The following story was cut quite a bit to fit the print edition of ChaNNels. The unedited version appears here- lg.**

### **Sunset in Solomons Island, Sunrise in Lewisetta....**

**Mike Geissinger**

Euphoria's crew spent four days on the water. We felt fried, baked, and basted with sweat. After the last of four races on the Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge Regatta, we weigh staying for the awards and party that night or casting off for home. The sail back will take at least eight hours. Do it at night when it will be cool or under the hot, blistering sun of day? The decision to go at night was easy. Let's go. Stuart Ullman, Monica Maynard and I were parched from the sun aboard Euphoria, a Columbia 8.3, for four days in light winds on the Chesapeake Bay.

We shove off from the marina about 8:00 PM. As we motor out of the Patuxent River, the sun sets over Solomons Island. I think about getting some fuel but decide not to stop. That's all right, this diesel engine is stingy on fuel and we have enough. Famous last words. We pass Drum Point, set the sails in light air, cut the motor, and head to Cedar Point, the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. Home is a cottage off the Coan River just inside the mouth of the Potomac River in Virginia.

The wind begins to stiffen. Dusk yields to the darkness of night and the phosphorescent water washes away with the bow wake. The sound of the wind dins as we scan the crystal dark skies to see a canopy of stars from horizon to horizon.

Under main and genny we heel to gather the wind and propel the 10,000 lb. craft through the ink of sky and water. The bay widens to about 20 miles and the lights on shore are sporadic and in places merge with the canopy. Time and space compress and expand to yield a dimension without either. Lights move slowly while water rushes past the hull. Reality becomes the seemingly dark void ahead with nothing behind.

Sailing at night tests and distorts your perceptions, all your perceptions. The dark is analyzed for those guideposts commonly used during daylight but many of them are not there. You must take the clues you're given and squeeze them for all the information they contain. The sense of speed increases at night. The sense of wind direction is more acute. Familiar terrain becomes confused and distorted. You rely on the objective data you generate by chart, compass, speed, calculation, etc. The night and the miles pass.

The GPS indicates we are approaching Point No Point. The wind begins to fall a bit. The #2 battery is fading. We turn on the motor at idle to charge the battery. The slip at the marina did not have a connection to shore power. We borrowed a general purpose extension cord but found it too light weight for the boat's trickle charger. Another new-boat-to-me lesson. Short periods of motoring will not keep the #2 battery topped off like a good charge will.

The sails remain full and powerful. The motor coughs and sputters, then goes quiet. Out of fuel. We can now heave plan #1 overboard and develop the backup plan. The wind is directly out of the west. We have about 15 miles to my home dock. Three and one half hours until sunrise. Plenty of food and water. We can just keep going. We will keep the running lights on as long as possible. Time has ceased to be important and distance becomes the highest priority. How far are we from here to there, then how far to through the next leg? What's the heading based on the wind? We have been on a starboard tack since leaving Cedar Point, 17  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles to Point Lookout at the mouth of the Potomac River.

At Point Lookout the wind is on our nose, coming straight out of the Coan River and home. We will sail a starboard tack farther, into the middle of the mouth of the Potomac. We can see the flashing MO "A" buoy, the first channel buoy in the Potomac River. Now tack to port on a heading of 310 and make our way up the river.

The flashing red #6 at the mouth of the Coan River is 6.3 miles from Point Lookout. We will be making about 12 miles to go the six. On the port tack we must make our way to the flashing green #5 marker in the middle of the Potomac before we tack again, about 6 miles. There is a feeling of safety once we leave the churn of the waters at the confluence of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. The tide is running out and current is strong against us. The wind on the river has less fetch to build a three to four foot chop as on the bay. The sail becomes more civilized. The three of us have been awake for about 21 hours. No need to analyze the physiological implications for over 40's. They are bad enough for 20+ year olds. We still need some more adrenaline. I've made the entrance to the Coan River a bunch of times, only once at night. The red #6 is just visible in the distance as is the green #5. Those marks and compass are used to decide when to tack. Now the running lights are getting very dim as the #2 battery loses its charge. The lights go out. With no other traffic in sight I'm reluctant to switch to the #1 battery, saving it for emergency lights and radio transmissions. Euphoria is now far enough up the Potomac that we can tack to starboard and head for the red #6. All my local knowledge was amassed during the daytime. Trying to reconstruct the visual entrance to the Coan River is difficult at night. Where are those fish traps? I know there are several around the entrance but am not sure where they are located. An encounter with one of them would end this voyage immediately. Only local avians are safe around the traps. Monica is at the forestay with a flashlight scanning the black waters for fish traps and crab pot buoys. Remember we are still sailing close hauled at about 4 knots. With any sighting the decision will be immediate to tack. We are not able to point high enough to make the mark. The risk of snagging a crab pot buoy increases with the amount of tacking.

The distance to red #6 is closing but we stand well below the mark. Monica's light falls on a white rectangular reflector dead ahead about 50 feet. We immediately tack to port without trying to analyze what we are seeing. Feeling that we have passed the danger we tack back to starboard,

closing on the mark. In an effort to slow the boat the foresail comes down and we sail the main. Ready? Head up, drop the genny, fall off. Euphoria is hardly making way. What's wrong? Are we dragging crab pot buoys? Look over the transom. No. When we try to tack again, the boat won't pass through the wind. Fall off. Fall off farther but no increase in boat speed. Try to tack again. No dice. Raise the genny, we have no choice.

We now have to tack through the channel at the mark. The width of the channel is less than a ° mile. We had to muster enough adrenaline to do some quick tacks to get past the mark, clear some crab pot buoys on starboard, and clear enough room to head to the fueling dock at Lewisetta Marina. Stuart and Monica pull four port and three starboard tacks that put us through the channel and far enough into the Coan River to sail close to the fuel dock. We all have been up for over 24 hours. Having made it into the relative safety of the Coan River, the plan is to set the anchor then sail to the dock after daybreak.

Set the anchor and douse the foresail. Now the main and secure both sails. The wind is still stiff but we are all running on empty. It's been about 23 hours. I begin doing a check of the boat to see if everything is secure and battened down. We're unwinding now. Anchor is set and I survey the surrounding area. The high intensity vapor light at the marina provides good visibility in the darkness. I look over the transom and we seem to be within 10 yards of the fueling dock. "Stuart, is all the anchor rode payed out?" I ask. Stuart, still at the bow, answers, "No." I ask him to pay out the rest of the rode and the boat slides closer to the dock. Stuart yells, "That's it." I reach into the cockpit lazarette and get a dock line. Throw it around the fuel dock piling and tie off the boat. We have stopped within two feet of the fueling dock.