

"I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving - we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it - but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor." - Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



ChaNNels Monthly Newsletter - February 2018

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Commodore's Log



By Joe Leoncio

Ahoy! **RE-UP BRUNCH** is this Sunday, March 4th at 10 am at the Colonies of Mclean, located at 7681 Provincial Drive, Mclean, VA. This is an opportunity to share in fellowship and to meet new friends. If you're interested in any of our training classes, you'll be able to meet trainers and to sign up for classes. Most of the leadership team will be floating around to garner your ideas and solicit feedback on SCOW.

Electronic forms. We are in the midst of rolling out technology that will modernize our administrative processes around membership forms, skipper agreements, and registration for training. As I'm sure many of you know, it's notoriously challenging to get any large organization to adopt change - especially when it comes to technology. Please be open-minded as these changes will ultimately save time and be more efficient in the long run.

SCOW cruiser towing insurance. If you're a cruiser skipper, SCOW is saving you time and money by purchasing a group towing insurance plan that is effective March 1 for use of SCOW cruisers. While SCOW hasn't done this before, we thought it prudent to do so within the context of past incidents over the last couple of years that resulted in significant costs to individual skippers and the club's maintenance budget. Not only that, damages to our boats have resulted in significant time out of service. This new policy will reduce costs

for everyone and improve our access to the boats by reducing damage and time out of service.

We're going to pass the cost of group towing insurance to skippers by increasing your skipper fees by only \$10. This costs significantly less than the \$68 you would've spent if you had to buy an individual policy. What a deal!

If you are a Scot skipper and wish to have towing insurance, then you'll still have to purchase that on your own. We decided not to get Scot towing insurance because Scot groundings are less severe and do not require a tow most of the time. Most of us have run aground in the shallow lagoon, and ungrounding is simply a matter of either tacking, raising your centerboard, or dropping sails and paddling out.

Social Sail. We are adapting the social sail schedule to avoid historically bad weather in April and to avoid holidays when we have had historically low volunteer turnouts and poor guest attendance. This is a work in progress so stay tuned to the calendar on scow.org, and we'll send out official club communications through the proper channels to keep you informed.

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter! I encourage anyone to submit any sailing or club-related material for next month.

Joe Leoncio
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TOP STORIES

It's A Digital World And SCOW is Right in the Thick of It

By Richard Kaiser

It's 2018 and the world has become a digital machine - your smartphone can be used to pay for McDonald's and your news comes to you in a flash, or a tweet. Everything is moving faster and faster, except the process of Re-Up at SCOW.

Yes, sailboats are one of the oldest modes of transportation known to man, that doesn't mean that your sailing club has to be part of the Stone Age! Yes, the Greatest Generation didn't have smartphones or electronic forms, but now you do.

SCOW has streamlined the Re-Up process with digital forms. That's right, you no longer have to print forms, then fill them out by hand, sign them with pen in hand, scan them and send them to the appropriate SCOW Director. The process of renewing your membership or joining for the first time is now all digital - no need to print and scan or print and send your forms to SCOW by the Pony Express.

Here's a quick look at the process.

First, get your computer ready for digital forms by downloading the latest version of Acrobat Reader DC - it's free and you can download a free copy for your PC, Mac or Chromebook here: <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/install-reader-dc-mac-os.html>

Once you have Acrobat Reader DC running on your machine, go to the SCOW Website (www.scow.org/Renew) and you'll see directions for renewing your membership (if you're reading this SCOW newsletter, I'll assume that you're already a member or a Russian hacker). There are three simple steps to renew your membership:

1. Click on [Release and Indemnity Agreement Form](#) which will display the SCOW Membership Agreement. Fill out the form and digitally sign the form. Directions to sign the form are on the SCOW Web page if you need help. If you're completing the form as a Family Membership, remember to have all of your family members older than 18 digitally sign with you. When you have completed the form, save it to your computer for your records, then send it to membership@scow.org. No postage, no printing, no scanning - a miracle of the 21st century!

2. Next, update your SCOW profile and pay your dues by clicking on [Update Profile and Submit Payment](#). Use your PayPal account or pay by credit card, this is 2018 after all - sorry, no BitCoin!!

3. And if you're a SCOW skipper and wish to renew your Skipper Agreement (that you just paid for in step 2), click on the third button on the screen [Skipper Agreement Form](#). Now you have another chance to use that brand new software that you downloaded earlier - Adobe Reader DC. When you click on the Skipper Agreement Form button, you will

The screenshot displays three numbered steps for renewing membership on the SCOW website. Each step includes a title, a description, and a button.

One
 Submit a signed Release and Indemnity Agreement. Your membership cannot be activated until SCOW receives your signed Release and Indemnity Agreement.
 SCOW bylaws require that each application for membership --- including all household members --- agree to the SCOW Terms and Conditions of Membership.
 Click here for instructions on how to digitally sign the Membership Form. Questions, please contact SCOW's Membership Director at membership@scow.org.
 Release and Indemnity Agreement Form

Two
 Renew your membership by updating your profile information and submitting your payment via PayPal.
 Update Profile and Submit Payment

Three
 not a Skipper - disregard step
 if you qualify according to the skipper director then please complete and remit the Skipper Agreement form.
 PLEASE NOTE that your skipper privileges will not be activated until Steps 1 and 2 are completed.
 Skipper Agreement Form

download the new Skipper Agreement Form - fill it out completely, digitally sign the document and save a copy to your computer for your records and mail a copy to Skipper@SCOW.ORG.

That's it - no cut down trees, no wasted postage and an easy way for your SCOW Directors to manage thousands of documents. You're all done and ready for another year of SCOW events, including Social Sails, Wednesday night racing, series racing, Burning of the Socks, Racing seminars, Oktoberfest, raft-ups, monthly meetings at Hard Times and many more events... The point is that you're ready to hang with your fellow sailors. Enjoy!

Note: Some members mentioned that downloading the Membership & Skipper Agreements to your computer first and then opening them with Adobe Reader DC may speed up the process.

Let me know how we can improve the process. Send your constructive suggestions to vice@scow.org.

See you on the water!

Why Race? (or at least, why I race)

by Mike Hooban

Aside from acting as SCOW Treasurer, I also volunteer as a trainer on occasion, and enjoy the various racing opportunities the club offers. I've noticed that there is sometimes a perception that the training and racing aspects of the club are quite distinct, and even sometimes in conflict with one another. Although I recognize that arranging schedules between the two activities so as to make sure boats are available can be a challenge, I tend to see the more important point as being that racing serves for at least some of us as a follow-on to training, and a good way to continue to improve skills once basic sailing training has been completed. I felt it might be useful to share some background and thoughts on this.

I came to sailing fairly late, in 2006 or so, while on business travel to London. An associate, Chris Greenwood, had gotten interested in sailing. He had begun racing with the Strand on the Green Sailing Club in West London on Sundays, and regularly needed crew. I tended to feel that it would be ungracious to refuse the opportunity, so I would go when asked, and we'd sail on the Thames just east of Kew Bridge. The boat was something called an Enterprise, and was more along the lines of an Albacore than a starship.



Enterprise

Chris was not great at explaining what he was doing, and I mostly just did what I was told. In retrospect, I think I should have been suspicious when Chris told me we needed wet suits, and I have to say that the only two times I've been in an unintentional capsize were while racing in the Enterprise with Chris. Ultimately, I decided that it would be interesting, and even prudent, to take lessons, so I signed up with Belle Haven Marina in June 2011 to take their basic course on the Flying Scot. While not, I'd say, as extensive as the SCOW course, it covered the basics and could be completed in a week.

Following training, I shopped around for a boat and, not finding a suitable Scot, got an American 14.6, in which my family and I enjoyed a fair amount of daysailing. This was OK, but I got tired of being passed routinely by SCOW's Scots, and finally purchased my current boat, Green Hornet, in September 2014. I had previously joined SCOW, but hadn't really done much in the club.



Green Hornet

Having a Scot was really nice. However, I tended to have the feeling I wasn't getting as much out of it as I could. This was confirmed on one Sunday outing when we sailed up to Hains Point and then struggled to get back. Yet we saw boats racing up there and moving a lot more easily and effectively than we were. I had to wonder what they knew that I didn't.

Back at the marina, three SCOW members (Julian Mallett, Dick Vida and Dave Beckett) approached the boat as we were putting it up on the stand. They had known the previous owner and encouraged me to rejoin SCOW and consider racing the boat. I thought about this and felt that it might be useful to see how things went in a competitive context, and especially what I could learn from the experience. I sent in my \$50 and started showing up on Wednesdays for pickup racing on SCOW boats. In general, I kind of sucked at it, but felt that I was gradually getting a bit better than I'd been.

In 2015, I got more into racing with SCOW, crewing on Richard Kaiser's Jeannette, and then on my own boat with Dave Beckett at the helm. By the end of the sailing season, I was skippering my own boat and placing respectably. Since then, I've tried to participate as much as possible in SCOW racing and in other opportunities (e.g., PRSA, Leukemia Cup, etc.). I confess to getting a lot of enjoyment out of this, regardless of outcome (though I prefer to place higher rather than lower).

I also go out for daysails with family and friends, and feel that my skills have increased noticeably since 2014. I attribute much of this to the discipline imposed by racing. Basically,

being in a race means that you need to pay attention to pretty much all the key aspects of sailing, and you get to measure your progress by comparing your performance with that of other boats in the race. Almost inevitably you become a better sailor, not just on the race course but overall.

Some examples may help illustrate, looking at the SCOW training syllabus for Flying Scots. Basic things like checking the weather, launching, rigging, etc., occur before, during and after each racing session. Depending on the nature of the race, you end up sailing on most if not all points of sail, both before and during the race, and need to become adept at handling the sheets, especially the main (which seems challenging for a lot of new sailors). You tack and jibe, and your success often depends on how well you do these things under pressure. You need to be cognizant of boat balance, stability and heeling, and how to control these things to optimize your performance. You need to be conscious of other boats on the water, both in and out of the race, and the rules that govern your relation to them. We've even encountered groundings and crew overboard, and of course deal with the special local hazard of a lot of hydrilla. It's also important to learn to be aware of the various ways the wind can shift while you're out there, and the impact of things like tidal flow and even water depth on your ability to sail between points. All of these things are very fundamental to our training program. On top of that, you're also likely to get the chance to learn to use the spinnaker.

When I'm training, I don't especially try to recruit people to racing. However, I do sometimes point out specific situations that work on skills important to racing, and which racing allows you to practice. This is often fairly basic, such as getting people to switch hands effectively between tiller and mainsheet during a tack or jibe, as well as being generally efficient in these actions. I also notice that a lot of newer sailors shy away from using the tiller extender, which limits their effectiveness when tacking, and also makes it hard to hike and/or move their weight forward to enhance the boat's trim. However, when you're out there with a bunch of other boats in competition, you tend to get the point on this fairly quickly, and will have the opportunity to see experienced people perform these functions. When training or just daysailing, I also rather miss the presence of other boats on the same course from which I can make an assessment of how to fine tune things like sail trim, but also feel that I have a pretty good idea of how the boat should feel if we're doing things right.

So I generally try to mention to our newer sailors that they are welcome to come out to our Wednesday evening sessions, and also to seek opportunities to be part of SCOW series racing as well as other regattas offered in the area and open to SCOW boats. I think our training program is really excellent, and provides a very good basis for learning sailing basics. I also think, however, that the SCOW racing program provides a way forward for those who have gone through our program, and an opportunity to hone existing skills and develop new ones.

Catamaran Sailing in the Bahamas

By Joe Leoncio

“She can take it,” I tell myself. *Island Times*, our Sunsail 444 catamaran, skipped across the bright, blue Bahamian waters like a rock on a pond over the previous two days in heavy, 20+ knot winds under reefed sails. If she was capable of what the SCOW crew had put her through up to now, then she was capable of much, much more.

“Kevin, let’s go full sail. We’ll be ok.” Kevin Longenbach and I are co-skippers. In planning this trip, we shared all of the administrative and logistical tasks. Unlike me, he’s actually sailed on a catamaran this big before.

I raise my voice over the howling wind. “Hey, everyone! We’re going to raise sails all the way!” With my hands on the wheel, I use my foot to push the electric halyard button on the floor to raise the sail. The sail gets stuck in lines, called lazy jacks, that guide the sail into the sail cover. Untangling the sail while driving the boat is not going to be easy. This is *Island Times*’ way of telling me that hubris has no place on her deck, and I am unable to sail this boat on my own.

Kevin, Luis Rivas, and Randy Moore are on deck and ready to assist. Kevin takes control of the halyard, while Randy and Luis guide him. Meanwhile, Tim Moore works with Clare Robbins to unfurl the genoa sail. The crew hoists sails in record time, and *Island Times* zooms off to her next destination. We achieve a state of synergy, and I am proud of the crew. Team pride is the only kind of pride that *Island Times* allows.

As we cross a stretch of water that is exposed to the open ocean, the wind starts gusting to 30 knots. The crew cheers as we reach a top speed of 10 knots! She cuts so smoothly through the wind swell that it feels like flying.

I continually push and evaluate the operating limitations of *Island Times* through the lens of a monohull cruiser sailor.

“Is our catamaran heeling?” “Yes, but we’re ok.”

“Is there weather helm?” “Yes, but we’re ok.”

“Is our catamaran able to take additional gusts?” “Yes. Luis also brought that up, I prepped Randy on the helm just in case. We’re ok.”

“How’s the crew?” “Smiles all around, music blaring, and beers open. They’re ok. Zipping across the water like this, they’re getting as much fun and excitement out of this as I am!”

I reach a new level in seamanship, and I replace my sailing lens with one that has a wider view.

At the end of the week, my entire crew and I are salty catamaran sailors. As we depart sunny Marsh Harbour airport bound for the frigid climate that awaits at Ronald Reagan National Airport, I am already committed to next year's sailing trip in the Caribbean.

The whole trip was organized by Matt Smith of the DC Sailing Community (DCSC), and we were participating in a 4-boat flotilla. Sailing is fun on its own, but it is so much more fun when you do it with other people. It helps tremendously when you have a broad network that you can rely on to exchange information, troubleshoot, and explore ideas. You’re able to do more, learn more, go further, and grow faster than you would on your own.



Kevin Longenbach holds up a fish that Randy Moore caught while we were anchored at Hope Town. The crew enjoyed fresh fish that night for dinner!



Clare Robbins and Randy Moore. Randy caught a starfish while we were anchored in extremely shallow water near Sandy Cay.

Upcoming Events

Big thanks to Dave Beckett and our friends at West Marine for hosting our winter seminar series. They have been well-attended so far, and I feel that they really set the expectation for sportsmanship and fun for the SCOW racing program. We've got a few more planned, but also pay attention to the other important events like Re-up brunch (THIS SUNDAY!), Maintenance Day, and Rub off the Rust

Here's the list of events:

- Feb. 28 - Racing Tactics and Strategy
- March 4 - Re-up Brunch
- March 7 - Racing Tactics
- March 17 - Flying Scot Maintenance Day
- March 24 - Rub off the Rust

Check out the calendar on scow.org for details!

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

