

JANUARY 2021

CHANNELS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SAILING CLUB OF WASHINGTON



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE PIXLER

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- COMMODORE'S LOG | 2
- NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK | 3
- MAINTENANCE | 3
- THANKS FOR THE WAKE | 4
- MEMBERSHIP | 7
- CALENDAR | 7
- WHO'S WHO IN SCOW | 8

COMMODORE'S LOG

BY BRIAN MCPHERSON

Happy New Year! We have finally brought to a close the decade formerly known as 2020. While we won't be able to kick off the year with our annual *Afterglow* party in person, the Board is hard at work planning an alternative online event scheduled for January 22nd.



Speaking of the Board, we've had several changes. After years of service, we must say farewell to four board members with many years of service to the club: **Richard Kaiser**, who served as Commodore for the past two years; **Dave Beckett**, Racing Director and Flying Scot Fleet Captain has relocated down the Bay; Secretary **Jock Whittlesey** and Membership Director **Toni Cole**. Both Jock & Toni devoted many hours organizing and streamlining the electronic storage of documents and membership files. While we will most certainly miss their dedication and guidance, we are excited to welcome our new Board Members: **Jenn Joint**, Secretary; **Bonnie Sylwester**, Racing Director; **Becky Cole**, Skipper Director; and, **Esther Massey**, Membership Director. I'm looking forward to sharing new ideas and perspectives to keep our club thriving and successful.

While only the hardiest of us are actively sailing now, the Board will be meeting to address the challenges for the upcoming year. In a normal year, the Board customarily approves a budget, schedules seminars/meetings, sets a training schedule, reviews committee assignments, etc. during the winter months. Like last year, we need to be flexible and adapt as changes occur.

You may have noticed the new look for ChaNNels in 2021. See the article *New Year, New Look* on page 3 to find out how your photo can be featured on a future cover! Also, this is YOUR newsletter, so SCOW members are highly encouraged to submit articles and general sailing info each month to editor@scow.org.

I am optimistic about 2021! The future looks brighter today than just a few short months ago. We continue to receive impressive interest in SCOW membership and our training programs. We had great turnouts for our virtual meetings with interesting topics and guests. It will take time and we will face some challenges, but I would like to think we have turned the corner and will be able to bring back some events.

Again, best wishes for the New Year!

-Brian

With the 36th America's Cup just around the corner in March, ever wonder what goes on in the head of a champion? **[Chasing the Cup: My America's Cup Journey](#)** is the autobiography of the youngest and double winner Jimmy Spithill.



NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK

BY JAN RIVAS

As we put 2020 in our collective rearview, many of us will agree: it's time for a change! We're giving ChaNNels a new look. Have no fear, the SCOW newsletter will still include all the club news, musings, jokes, photos, social and sailing info it always has, but with a new look for the new year.

Each month will feature a cover photo taken and submitted by a SCOW member. To kick us off, **Julie Pixler** has provided the beautiful sunset scene for this month's issue. Send your submissions for consideration to editor@scow.org by the last day of the month for the upcoming month's issue.

It's just another way to stay connected to our little sailing club, both on and off the water. Keep the submissions coming!

A few ideas:

- Photos
- Sailing stories and cautionary tales
- Book, app, podcast, and movie reviews
- Places to go: favorite anchorages/ports; travel near and far; fun places to visit along the way
- Jokes, cartoons
- Helpful hints, tips and hacks
- Racing recaps



MAINTENANCE MUSINGS

BY DANA HOWE

Happy New Year and I hope you and yours are safe and well!

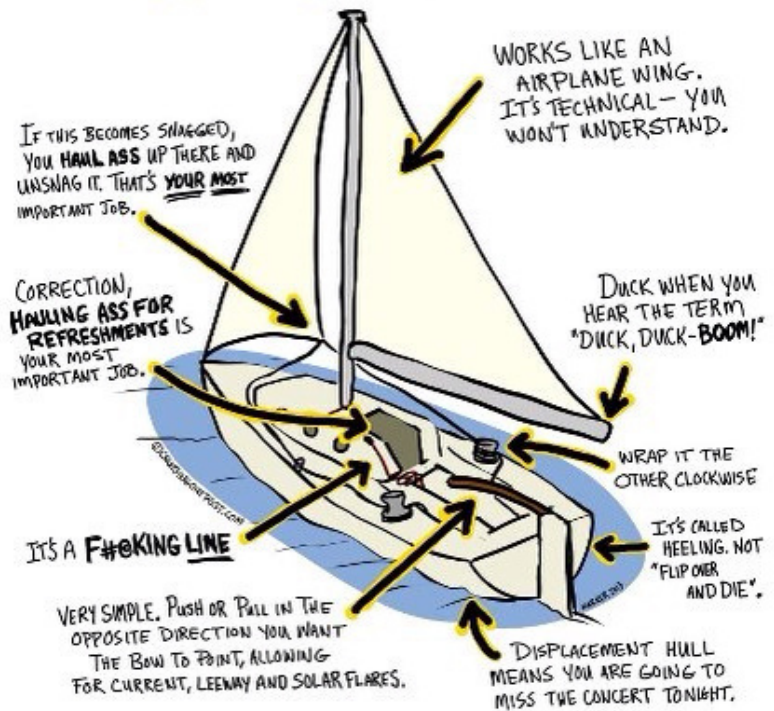
Not much to report from the realm of Flying Scot maintenance other than a pesky issue with *Sunset Song's* centerboard. She's been offline awaiting repairs (note to self).

I thought I'd close out 2020 with some stats about boat usage along with the most active skippers:

BOAT	TOTAL	SKIPPER	CHECKOUTS
Caroline	53	Greg Prather	8
Elisse	52	Eric Schmidt	39
Ms Elli	33	Tim Bliss	21
Selkie	31	Rhonda Glasmann	5
Sunset Song	11	Bonnie Sylwester	6
Andiamo	11	Mike Hooban	2

I suspect Eric has actually had *Elisse* out more than 39 times but I had to go down to the sail locker and collect the checkout logs to make the tally. Knowing Eric he's had *Elisse* out again since then!

HOW I EXPLAIN SAILING TO MY GUESTS



INFOGRAPHIC CREATED BY CRUISING OUTPOST.COM



THANKS FOR THE WAKE

BY CHIP LUBSEN AND JAY WEITZEL

We sailors are now sharing the “Sailing” Marina with powerboats and members have reported incidents in which they feel powerboats are not operating safely. The most frequent complaint is that some powerboats are speeding and creating large wakes while passing near sailboats in the narrow channel to the River, especially in the long straight run from the R6 daymark to the River. West Marine used to sell a flag that said “Thanks for the Wake, You Jerk!” While you may feel better waving one at a rude powerboater, it is more important to understand the Inland Rules and be prepared to deal with potentially dangerous power/sail interactions. (A power-driven vessel is any boat being propelled by an engine, including a sailboat with the sails up if the engine is engaged.)

Unfortunately, the channel to the river isn't a “No Wake” zone and nothing in the Inland Rules expressly prohibits boats from speeding and making wakes in that channel. In fact, an official Coast Guard publication states that “vessels under 1600 GT are not specifically required to manage their speed in regards to wake...” This doesn't mean that powerboats can ignore the consequences of their wakes. The Coast Guard may seek a fine of up to \$5000 under a federal law prohibiting negligent operation of a recreational vessel that endangers person or property. Some states have wake laws. And, in many cases in which wakes have caused injury or even swamped other boats, courts have found the offenders liable for damages because they violated Rule 6 regarding operating at a safe speed and Rule 2 which requires precautions for special circumstances. To recover damages, though, the injured parties had to sue the offenders in court as you would with a traffic accident.

The Club has approached the Marina about extending the No Wake zone. In the meantime, if you are “waked” in a manner that jeopardizes the safety of your crew or vessel you should log the offending boat name, time and other details and report the incident to the Commodore and Vice Commodore. If the incident is particularly egregious, contact the DC Harbor Patrol on VHF Channels 16 or 17 or at 202-727-4582.

IF A POWERBOAT AND A SAILBOAT ARE NEAR EACH OTHER, THE SAILBOAT HAS DUTIES JUST LIKE THE POWERBOAT AND, IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT, BOTH SKIPPERS WILL NORMALLY BE AT FAULT.

-U.S. Coast Guard

What does this mean if you're sailing in the channel and a powerboat approaches creating a wake? Rule 5 requires you to keep a lookout. You will see the powerboat approaching long before it gets to you. Being a sailboat skipper is like playing chess...you plan several tacks ahead. Think about what the Rules require you to do to avoid the powerboat, and where you want to be when the wake hits. You do not want to take a wake squarely on the beam, transom or bow. While every boat is different, the general rule is to take the wake at a 45-degree angle on the bow.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

THANKS FOR THE WAKE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

You may need to hold a tack, or execute a few short tacks, for example, to be in the right position. Plan your tacks to avoid having to luff up, which leaves your boat stalled and not maneuverable. Stay aware of the traffic around you so you can maneuver to take the wake safely and make certain to tell your crew to prepare for the wake and what you plan to do.

In power/sail interactions, the Inland Rules do not give any boat the “right of way.” As the United States Coast Guard explains, “The Rules do not grant privileges or rights, they impose responsibilities....” If a powerboat and a sailboat are near each other, the sailboat has duties just like the powerboat and, if there is an accident, both skippers will normally be at fault.

The Rules prioritize duties in terms of maneuverability. Because a sailboat is less maneuverable than a powerboat, Rule 18 says that the powerboat “shall keep out of the way” of a sailboat. So, if a sailboat and powerboat are approaching each other, Rule 17 designates the powerboat as the Give-Way Vessel, which must “take early and substantial action to keep well clear.” Rule 8 requires the powerboat to do that by altering course, and possibly speed, so that it can pass “at a safe distance” from the sailboat.

YOU DO NOT WANT TO TAKE A WAKE SQUARELY ON THE BEAM, TRANSOM OR BOW. WHILE EVERY BOAT IS DIFFERENT, THE GENERAL RULE IS TO TAKE THE WAKE AT A 45-DEGREE ANGLE ON THE BOW.

At the same time, Rule 17 designates the sailboat as the Stand-On Vessel and requires the sailboat to “keep her course and speed” until the powerboat is clear; and Rule 8 says that the sailboat “remains fully obliged to comply with Rules 4-19 when the two vessels are approaching one another so as to involve risk of collision.” Finally, Rule 17 says that if it becomes apparent that the powerboat is failing to take appropriate action, then the sailboat may alter its course or speed to avoid collision.

With the constant silting in the lagoon and channel, we should also mention Rule 9. It says that vessels in a narrow channel shall stay as far to their starboard side as safe and practical, and that sailboats “shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.” Is the channel to the River a “narrow channel”? The Coast Guard says that “a waterway is deemed a narrow channel or fairway by circumstances and conditions; and, more times than not, by a Court judgment when Rule 9 was not heeded.” In other words, if you collide with a powerboat, the court will probably say the channel was narrow. A Flying Scot with a 4’ centerboard may seem like the boat most in danger of grounding. However, a powerboat with the outdrive down will also draw between 3’ and 4’. So, powerboats and sailboats both should be thinking of Rule 9 in the channel. For the sailboat, the narrowness problem is compounded by the need to tack (one reason a speeding powerboat is likely violating Rules 2 and 6). A powerboater should recognize and respect this need to tack, but if you need to alter course, you must do it early enough to allow the powerboat to adjust course and speed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

THANKS FOR THE WAKE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

These same issues come up at the Marina. Suppose you are on a port tack in the channel across from the small boat cranes where you want to dock. Your plan is to then shift to a starboard tack to dock. However, a powerboat leaving the Marina is passing to your port between you and the dock. Or, perhaps a powerboat is passing you from astern between you and the docks. You are the Stand-On Vessel. You must maintain your course and speed until the powerboat has completely cleared. This assumes that you can do so safely, avoiding any obstacles such as docks or shoals. But, wait, you say. That means I'll go by the dock I want to use and have to sail back. Yes, you will, because that is what the Rules require. You need to keep a lookout, be aware of traffic and plan your tacks ahead.

Sailors sometimes fail to keep a lookout when taking off from the dock. When the sailboat is finally rigged, too many crew members walk the boat to the end of the dock, shove off and jump on without looking for traffic in the channel. Sailboats have taken off directly into the path of powerboats proceeding at a safe speed by the docks. As the skipper, you are responsible for making certain that the channel is clear before you allow your crew to shove the boat off.

Cruising boat skippers also need to be cautious in the wet slips. When approaching the docks, it is important to make certain no boats are leaving the fairway. In the past, you could do that by looking for a mast moving down the fairway. That isn't possible with a powerboat. Within the past few weeks, there has been at least one incident in which a powerboat leaving a fairway nearly collided with a boat in the wet slip channel.

(The vessel leaving the fairway should have sounded one long blast under Rule 34.)

Finally, there is another type of boat seen more frequently at the Marina...kayaks. The Inland Rules treat kayaks as "vessels under oars." They must obey the Rules, although their status is murky because they're neither power nor sail vessels and are not expressly addressed in the hierarchy of maneuverability. It is clear that a powerboat is more maneuverable than a kayak. However, a sailboat may not be. The Coast Guard says that whether a kayak is the Give-Way or Stand-On Vessel would be determined by the situation under Rule 2. The best rule is to keep a lookout and avoid a collision.

AS THE SKIPPER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING CERTAIN THAT THE CHANNEL IS CLEAR BEFORE YOU ALLOW YOUR CREW TO SHOVE THE BOAT OFF.

One other tip: Look directly at the other skipper. Make sure they're looking at you and they know you're looking at them. The #1 cause of boating accidents is a distracted skipper. Don't make the other skipper wonder, "Does he even see me?"

The bottom line, then, is to keep a lookout, obey the Rules, plan your tacks, act early to make your intentions clear to an approaching powerboat, and avoid a collision. Have a safe time on the water!

You can find the Inland Rules [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP

BY ESTHER MASSEY, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

All hail the New Year. Let's hope it's better than 2020. I look forward to being SCOW's new Membership Director for 2021.

To start out the year, we've developed new marketing material for the club. A new poster will be hung at the marina in the box near the former restaurant. Business cards and brochures will be available at the marina store, West Marine, and will be available to members upon request. Your support in promoting the club would be most appreciated.

This month we welcome **Jeff Lascurain** to the club. Jeff, you and all SCOW members can keep up with the club this winter by making sure you are signed up to our unofficial Google Group.

To subscribe, click on this [link](#) or paste the following URL in your browser:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/scow-all>

Choose to "Join Group." You may unsubscribe at any time.

great time to learn about sailing

January is National Hobby Month

JANUARY EVENTS

**7 | ANNAPOLIS MARITIME MUSEUM WINTER LECTURE SERIES | 7PM
THOMAS POINT SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE PRESENTED BY DAVE GENDELL, AUTHOR,
SAILOR, CO-FOUNDER OF SPINSHEET | \$10/FREE FOR AMM MEMBERS |
REGISTER [HERE](#)**

**8 | SPINSHEET VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR | 5PM
WHEN THINGS GO WRONG ONBOARD | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)**

**8-10 | CAMP WHARF AT THE FIREPIT | THE WHARF, DC
A VINTAGE AIRSTREAM TRAILER W/ EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR THE PERFECT
S'MORES | [MORE INFO HERE](#)**

**15 | SPINSHEET VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR | 5PM
SPINSHEET CENTURY CLUB STORIES | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)**

**21 | ANNAPOLIS MARITIME MUSEUM WINTER LECTURE SERIES | 7PM
TRADITIONAL WOODEN SHIPBUILDING PRESENTED BY PETE LESHER, CHIEF
CURATOR AT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY MARITIME MUSEUM \$10/FREE FOR AMM
MEMBERS | [REGISTER HERE](#)**

**22 | SPINSHEET VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR | 5PM
MARINE WEATHER FORECASTS | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)**

22 | AFTERGLOW | 7PM | ONLINE VIA ZOOM

**29 | SPINSHEET VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR | 5PM
GETTING INTO SAILING IN 2021 | [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)**

WHO'S WHO IN SCOW

2021 OFFICERS

Brian McPherson, Commodore | commodore@scow.org

Chip Lubsen, Vice Commodore | vice@scow.org

Jenn Joint, Secretary | secretary@scow.org

Mike Hooban, Treasurer | treasurer@scow.org

2021 BOARD MEMBERS

Marie Brennan, Social Activities Director | social@scow.org

Trueman Sharp, Training Director | training@scow.org

Carlie Smith, River/Bay Director | river@scow.org

Dana Howe, Maintenance Director (Flying Scots) |
scotmaint@scow.org

Wayne Williams, Maintenance Director (Cruisers) |
cruisermaint@scow.org

Bonnie Sylwester, Racing Director | racing@scow.org

Esther Petrilli-Massey, Membership Director | membership@scow.org

Becky Cole, Skipper Director | skipper@scow.org

2021 BOARD APPOINTEES

John Rogers | Chair, Training & Skipper Certification Committee |
TSCC@scow.org

John Kauffman | Chair, Boat Assets Committee | BAC@scow.org

Vacant | Chair, Investments Committee | investment@scow.org

Luis Rivas | Chair, Audit Committee | audit@scow.org

Jeff Teitel | Email Administrator | postmaster@scow.org

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