

*January 2022*

# CHANNELS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAILING CLUB OF WASHINGTON



Cover art by Laurie Lubsen

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAILING CLUB OF WASHINGTON

# Commodore's Log by Brian Mcpherson



First of all, thank you to Scott McConnell for offering to be the editor of ChaNNels!

I appreciate time has passed since our last issue – we have some catching up to do with sharing events from the summer and fall. We hope to have a regular schedule going forward. Yet, we depend on articles, input, photos, etc. from our members. If you have something you'd like to share the rest of SCOW, please email Scott at: [editor@scow.org](mailto:editor@scow.org).

December 21 was the Winter Solstice. I look forward to this date each year. Although it will be colder and we may have some snow the next few months – not great sailing weather except for the hardy - we have turned the corner – begin to experience longer days of sunlight. We are now heading towards spring.

January and February are busy months for the SCOW Board. We begin the budget process and scheduling events for the coming year. Many moving parts need to be coordinated – seminars, social events, training, new committee member approval, updating agreements and others.

We hope to improve in 2022.

Brian

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By former Commodore **Jan Earle**

Sonnet VI

Fleet ship, that soars upon such waters blue  
The very skies do scowl with envy, ply  
Your swiftest. Make your homeward bearing true  
From far-flung landfall. Ken ye not the cry  
Of water-loving fowl in harbor calm?  
Oh, see ye not the swaying of the craft  
That safely ride their anchors 'neath the palm?  
Seek not the breezes that do naught but waft  
So lightly o'er the mirrored sea but thread  
Thy ruby bow through roaring gale and heel  
Thy snowy billow's bulge o'er breaker's head,  
For duty thine it is mine ache to heal.  
O lay once more thy breast upon the sea  
And bring, I pray, my Lover's heart to me.



JE 08.30.1980 for AFHG

Sonnet to the Sloop Red Shift

## Our Aid to Navigation: Hains Point By Bernie Cook

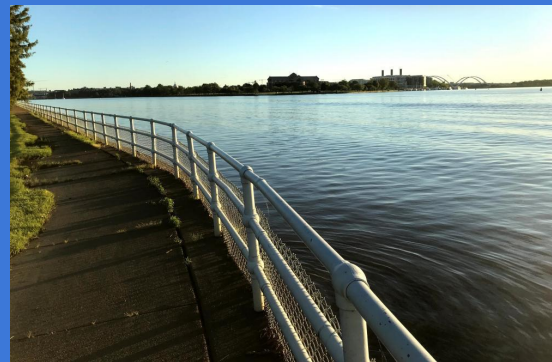
All during the 1800s, the swamps of downtown Washington would frequently rise up into full floods. The Potomac would edge around the base of the Washington Monument and flow up the canal that is now Constitution Avenue. The problem was compounded by heavy river silting that formed into mud banks. These shoals were topped off with sewage and garbage that turned noxious at every low tide. After a major flood in 1881, Congress finally authorized action on some long-dusty engineering plans to create a built-up waterfront. The job was handed off to Chief Engineer Major Peter Hains, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



The project started with building retaining walls which were then filled with dredged river bottom. At first hopper cars on temporary railroad trestles were used but this proved to be too expensive. The engineers switched to hydraulic dredges that pumped sludge directly to where it needed to go. Moving 12,000,000 cubic yards resulted in 620 acres of park land that we know today as East Potomac Park. The project included creating the Tidal Basin which to this day works as designed by flushing out the Washington Channel with each tidal flow.

Although dredges moved the river mud, the project required years of hard, dangerous labor by hand.

Hains retired in 1918, the only known officer to serve in World War I and in the Civil War with his first action at Bull Run.



# SCOW in Pictures – check out Smugmug

By George Clark

SCOW has one of the largest online photo galleries of any marina; and so, this article reminds everybody of its existence and invites everybody to contribute photos.

SCOW began in the late Sixties. Therefore, dozens of the photos provide nostalgia for how SCOW got its start; how SCOW evolved; and who were the most active volunteers, over the years, who contributed to what SCOW has evolved into today. But truthfully, SCOW is not the first-and-only. We know because we researched newspaper archives and discovered that the tradition of sailboat racing, in our segment of the river, is a tradition with a recorded history of a hundred years. That means sailboat racers are in good company. Abe Lincoln would approve.

Aside from nostalgia, there are more current photos in the gallery that might be of greater interest to newer SCOW members - i.e., photos with captions that pertain to sailboat racing, contributed by former racing director Dave Beckett, which are instructive enough to be worthy of publication.

Aside from providing online viewing for the public-at-large, the SCOW photo gallery also serves as a repository for photo slideshows used at SCOW events; and the best photos get used in SCOW promotional literature.

And one can contend that any social club's online photo gallery is its most important recruiting asset. Think about why. It is because when you are new to a community and trying to decide what social club to join, the first thing that you are going to want to see at any club's website is its photos.

The history of the online photo gallery itself began, years ago when Luis Rivas was Commodore; and Luis asked for a volunteer to scan a mountain of printed vintage photos into image files.

So, I dismantled those beautiful hardbound photo albums, that Alice Starke had created back in the Nineties, to enable me to scan each printed photo, individually, using my flatbed photo scanner.

Scanning took me a hundred hours, I suppose, because each photo had to be corrected, in an image editor, in addition to being scanned.

And since I was teleworking at home for the IRS, which paid me a government paycheck for doing nothing; I leveraged my tour-of-duty as free time to build an online gallery for SCOW.

Originally, the gallery was hosted at Google Picasso. But then, Google abandoned Google Picasso when Google replaced Picasso with Google Photos.

That was a tough transition because we lost most photo captions, during the export, and the burden of administrating a Google Photo gallery became more work than administrating a Google Picasso gallery, at least for a huge photo gallery of our size.

So back when Richard Kaiser was commodore, we researched what is the best website for hosting an online photo gallery. I told Richard that I could not reach a conclusion because online consumer reviews were not in consensus. So, we finally ended up choosing SmugMug as our new host website because Richard had firsthand experience with SmugMug and liked it. And, SmugMug has proven to be a winner because it is easier to administrate, keeping in mind that we have to maintain order among thousands of photos that otherwise would make no sense if they ever got scrambled. That means the modest annual subscription fee is justified because SmugMug is easier to administrate than competitor sites for photo galleries that are free. The SCOW photo gallery can be accessed by clicking-on this green SmugMug icon, displayed at the bottom of the webpage at SCOW.org:



The photo gallery also can be accessed via the URL link in my signature block, below.

My only qualification for being administrator is that years ago, I volunteered when Commodore Luis Rivas needed a volunteer. So, if anybody looking at SmugMug has a suggestion for a better user interface than what I contrived, then we are receptive to that feedback.

George Clark

SCOW Photography Website Administrator

<https://scowpictures.smugmug.com/>



## Sea Scout Ship 25 visits SCOW

On August 14, 5 SCOW Skippers took out members of the newly formed Sea Scout Ship 25. About 15 Scouts and leaders participated. For many Scouts – this was their first time on a sailboat. Unfortunately several Scouts along with Jim & Eric are missing from our photo. Many thanks to our volunteers: Josh Morin, Jim Klein, Connie Li, Bob Ochs & Eric Schmidt.



## ***BVI Trip!***

If you've been on the water less as the weather cools and are feeling the landlubber blues this winter, DC Sailing Community has just the fix. Led by SCOW member, Matt Smith, DC Sailing Community is composed of sailors from all the different sailing clubs in the DC region and charters cruising boats in a different tropical location each winter. This past August, DC Sailing Community chartered five catamarans in the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. Thorough planning and careful organization meant that all thirty five sailors followed the appropriate COVID precautions, which resulted in an extremely safe international traveling experience. Nobody got sick as a result. In March of 2022 the group is planning to charter eight boats in the Caribbean paradise of the British Virgin Islands. The strong presence of SCOW members among skippers and crew on these trips has really enhanced the feeling of community, and with several open spots still available there is room for a few more. No sailing experience is needed to enjoy the balanced itinerary of breathtaking beaches, snorkeling, beach bars and of course the best sailing conditions you can imagine. If you've ever considered expanding upon the sailing foundation you've found as a SCOW member, this is your chance to jump aboard. All the details, including the itinerary, travel guidance and Covid safety protocols can be found here under the Crew Information button: <https://www.dcsailingcommunity.com/bvi-2022>



### **Carlie Smith**





## A Laser Evening “Distance” Cruise (Jim Klein)

I don't know why I've lived here for so long and never tried a distance sail with my small one person Laser dinghy. But last night I finally did, and it was tons of fun. It took me 4+ hrs roundtrip, and was 16 total miles (as a crow flies, not all my zig zagging to get there, which would be considerably more mileage), and I made it around green can #81 (Near Ft Washington, MD). Not a record by any means, (I know a Flying Scot that made it to Tim's Rivershore, three times the distance, last summer), and I do plan to try for a further distance next time, but I was happy with this small personal record, and I don't think it's too bad for a Laser.

I got the idea one night sitting on the dock in Annapolis, watching the sun go down and the lights on the boats come on, thinking, boy, I'd like to skipper a small boat all the way down the Chesapeake and out into the ocean. Something like a West Wight Potter 15 or 19. Wouldn't that be terrific? But where could I charter such a boat? Micro-cruisers (cruising sailboats under say 19') are typically not found in the market to charter. Then the saner side of me kicked in and said that is probably not going to happen anytime soon. So that got me thinking, what can I do with a Laser in the Potomac River? What can I do now this summer? Life is short. So, inspired by the story of the Flying Scot making it to Tim's Rivershore, as well as a nephew of mine doing long distance sailing and camping in a small boat in Lake Michigan, I followed suit (somewhat).

I knew I had to have the benefit of the tide first bringing me south, and then north again when I reached my final destination. I first looked at a chart of the Potomac River, at an area I thought I could reach in one evening (I loathe sailing in the midday sun) even if it means I'll be coming home in the dark. I don't mind the dark, as I have a home-made red/green nav light I can easily attach to my mast, and a very bright flashlight to shine on my sail if any boat comes in my vicinity. I thought that Mt Vernon might be a good place to shoot for. So I looked at the tidal charts, and found a day where the low tide would be about fully low at that location at about 7 PM, which would then give me 2 hrs to get home in the light, and many more hours to get home in the dark if I had to. That day happened to fall on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Of course the evening had to have little chance of storms, as well as decent wind. NOAA said clear skies, south winds 5-10. Perfect. I'm going. So I packed my little SCOW drybag that I got last year during Covid, with my cell phone, my nav light and my wallet and headed out of Washington Sailing Marina at 5 PM. That gives me 2 hrs of tacking downwind, and I told myself that wherever I end up at 7 PM, I need to turn around at that time and come home. I packed what I thought to be plenty of water, but no food (I was in a rush to get out of the house), a paddle, nav light and flashlight.

The wind on the river was stronger than was predicted. It was probably a steady 10kts or so, which kicked up some nice big waves. So it would be tacking all the way down the river into this wind, which I did not mind, but at first it did seem like I was not making much headway, and I questioned if I had done my tide calculations correctly. But in fact I did, and I noticed if I stayed

close to the channel going down, that indeed the current helped boost me south. I made it to and under the bridge by 5:45PM and once south of the bridge, things quiet down so much and suddenly I'm looking at a shoreline of sand, cliffs and riverside homes, much more inviting if there is an emergency than our airport or heavily guarded military bases, government labs and of course all those boulders! As I don't know the river very well down there, I just followed the shipping channel markers the whole way down. I was surprised at how few boats were out this warm summer evening. There were some large power yachts, but they went slowly and gave me plenty of room. One cruising sailboat, a couple of wave runners, and that was it. As it neared 7 PM, my designated turn around time, I found myself wanting to continue on. If only I could just round one more mark that I see in the distance. But no, that was not too wise, so I stuck to my schedule and turned around green can #81, near Ft. Washington, and headed home. After beating into the wind for 2 straight hours, it was fun letting the sail out, and running with the wind. And now if I could only find a comfortable way to situate myself. Indeed where there is a will there's a way, and I found the best position is to face sideways, sit my butt down in the 'cockpit' of the boat, and place my feet up on the side of the boat sort of like sitting in a Lazy-Boy. The PFD provided me with just enough cushion against my back so that I did not end up with major body cramps. I'm not saying it's super comfortable, but it was ok so long as every once in a while I got up and moved a little to get the blood flowing again to my feet. So now the tide is coming back in, and I'm running with both wind and tide in my favor. The following waves were just slightly faster than my boat, so every once in a while my boat would 'surf' down a wave. Keep in mind the Laser is a wet boat, so I'm sitting in about 1" of water the whole time. A large cruising boat passed me slowly, and in doing so kicked up a big wave, which almost capsized me (only because I was being lazy and did not sit up right to counterbalance the boat). Oh well there are worse ways to spend 4 hrs.

I was near Old Town with the sun finally setting, and up near our humble WSM about 9PM where I needed to attach my nav light for the last 20 minutes or so. An open motor boat swung by and offered me a tow in, which I declined but thanked them. It is always nice to have some motor boats around who will no doubt offer assistance if things were bad. My final 20 minutes was very slow, hardly any wind, but again I knew the tide would get me to the dock. There was a man and his little daughter sitting at the end of the dock, and I wondered what they both were thinking when this small sailboat came drifting in so late. So in conclusion, it was a great trip. I am glad I had some frozen water bottles with me to cool me down in the beginning, which was hot as heck. I am sorry I did not pack some food, but that was ok. Next time. Next time food and I'll leave a little earlier and maybe make it down to or past Mt Vernon!

(Note: To make the nav light, I started with a locking clamp I bought at Home Depot. I screwed on a small wooden platform, to which I attached some inexpensive waterproof battery operated red/green nav light I bought off of Amazon. The locking clamp is big enough to clamp onto my mast down about 3 feet off the boat deck.)



Circa 1922

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We need your ideas and submissions. Sail reports and stories. Poetry and photos. Nacho recipes that involve guacamole. Tips on sailing events. Ideas for a drink you had. Tell stories that should never be told. Send any and all submissions to [editor@scow.org](mailto:editor@scow.org) . Please for the love of Peter Paul and Mary put your name on the submissions so I may give credit where credit is due.