

THE HORNPIPE

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Commodore's Comments

I was thrilled to hear of the terrific turnout for the Wine Cruise this year, which I gathered was the first club cruise for some of our new members. What makes our club so great is how we get out there and sail! One of the best parts, of course, is sharing the harbors, stories, food, and bottles at the end of the day, and usually, the more the merrier. I'm looking forward to hearing the story of the long cruise this July.

With *Mutima* finally afloat again, I invited members of my family along, and they turned it into a Whine Cruise. I think we've all had the experience of inviting guests for a sail, only to end up bobbing around in the lightest of breezes. For some novices, the heat, the sun and the irregular motion combine to make it a less than thrilling experience. With most guests, their discomfort is expressed politely, if at all, and your only clue may be when they are always too busy to come sailing again. With the under-10-year-old crowd, however, they find a way to share the discontent with everyone on board.

I've found that being anywhere near boats makes me happy, and Jenny is about as hardcore a

salt as there is. There's always something to do on board—something needs fixing, there are multitudes of strings to pull, fixtures need to be polished, some new gadget or toy is there to play with. This time we amused ourselves by deploying the spinnaker (using the patented Gary Hoyt gun-mount spinnaker arrangement used on *Freedoms*). This required studying diagrams in the manual and considerable improvisation and experimentation with an extraordinary number of unique lines that could be rigged any of several different ways. It's probably just as well that there wasn't much wind to deal with.

We finally got some wind, and everyone ended up in a fairly good mood. Good enough, anyway, to try it again.

See you on the water!

Nan Shellabarger



Who could this be?

The Red Planet

The Red Planet is about to be spectacular! This month and next, Earth is catching up with Mars in an encounter that will culminate in the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history. The next time Mars may come this close is in 2287. Due to the way Jupiter's gravity tugs on Mars and perturbs its orbit, astronomers can only be certain that Mars has not come this close to Earth in the last 5,000 years, but it may be as long as 60,000 years before it happens again.

The encounter will culminate on August 27 when Mars comes within 34,649,589 miles of Earth and will be (next to the moon) the brightest object in the night sky. It will attain a magnitude of -2.9 and will appear 25.11 arc seconds wide.

Mars will look as large as the full moon to the naked eye. Mars will be easy to spot. At the beginning of August it will rise in the east at 10:00 p.m. and reach its azimuth at about 3:00 a.m. By the end of August when the two planets are closest, Mars will rise at nightfall and reach its highest point in the sky at 12:30 a.m. That's pretty convenient to see something that no human being has seen in recorded history. So, mark your calendar at the beginning of August to see Mars grow progressively brighter and brighter throughout the month.

Dick Callis

VHF Broadcast of NOAA Weather

Art and Sue Grotz are warning us that there are plans afoot for NOAA to stop its VHF weather broadcasts. Now is the time for us to contact our senators and congressmen to persuade them to ensure that the broadcasts will continue by defeating Senate Bill 786. The broadcasts are not just a convenience for boaters, they are a vital link in the chain of maritime safety. Doing away with the broadcasts will undoubtedly cost the government more in Coast Guard rescue efforts than the broadcasts themselves now cost. Ending the broadcasts would endanger each of us.

Steve Foland

THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS AND PAST ISSUES OF THE HORNPIPE. WE HAVE FOUND THESE STORIES MOST ENTERTAINING. WITHOUT YOUR STORIES AND INFORMATIVE ARTICLES, HOWEVER, WE WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE TO REPORT IN OUR UPCOMING NEWSLETTERS; SO PLEASE KEEP SENDING IN YOUR ARTICLES.