

THE HORNPIPE

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Commodore's Comments

As many of you know, the two-week cruise south was not as advertised! Read the report elsewhere. This was small consolation to us, as our boat is still on the hard (but being worked on finally!). We did manage to meet with the cruisers (Barb and Dick Callis, Jan and Hank Zerhusen, and Sue and Art Grotz) in St. Michaels. We enjoyed crabs, etc., at the Crab Claw and a visit to the Maritime Museum. Then we went out to the raft-up and had drinks and stuff, just as if we were part of the cruise. We bragged a bit about our upcoming night in the air-conditioned B&B in Cambridge, but we would really have preferred to have had *Heather II* as part of the raft. Watching the Germany-Italy World Cup semifinal with the Italian B&B owners was fun, and the barbeque and fireworks at the Cambridge Yacht Club eased the pain of no boat. Sorry about the weather. I know I promised, but I guess I need to be there to make it work! Here's for better sailing weather from now on.

Duncan MacDonald

The Fourth of July Cruise That Almost Wasn't

The Fourth of July cruise, which we have participated in for about 17 years, just about fizzled like some fireworks. June 24, the original departure date, was delayed one week due to rain. One couple (the Millers at Mears Oxford) gave up after waiting at the marina a week and drove home to PA. The MacDonalds' engine mechanic (who does not work when it rains) repairs things on his own time table, so they were boatless.

Thus June 30 found *Windsong* and *Octavia* at anchor in Dun Cove. *Octavia* had an interesting trip through Knapp Narrows. Approaching red 4, we could see a large sailboat aground in the channel. We gave a call to the BoatUS tow boat nearby to get some local knowledge on passing through the narrows. He said he'd offered them a tow, and they had declined. On his advice we squeezed through between the boat (which was all closed up with the air-conditioner running) and red 4. The towboat people told us if we grounded they'd bump us off. After hearing we were headed to Dun Cove, they told us to be careful and wished us a nice trip!

Saturday morning we had breakfast cooked on *Windsong* — sausage and blueberry pancakes — delicious. On to Oxford — a little sail. *Octavia* was the first boat to anchor off the strand, giving us our pick of spots. *Windsong* anchored in front of us, close enough to shout back and forth. Late in the afternoon, we dinghied in for supper at The Mast Head. The crabs had to have been the best we have ever eaten. They were from the Wye River, heavy, sweet, and full — jumbos! A highlight of the trip.

Sunday the Grotzes arrived in the early afternoon. *Lauren A* had quite a time with an Island Packet that had anchored too close to them and continued to bump them off and on all night.

The Tred Avon was roly with all the holiday, traffic so no raft either night. We all watched the fireworks together from our own boats — they were great as usual.

Monday, we went on to San Domingo Creek, the back door to St. Michaels. It was a short motor ride, with no wind or traffic, and the MacDonalds waiting for us with their car at the “dinghy dock”. The town of St. Michaels needs to set up a decent dinghy dock — there are a lot of boaters using the back door. On to the Crab Claw for more crabs — only medium this time, but still good. We took a short walk around the museum and a long time inside the air-conditioned exhibit building. Returning to our boats, we took the MacDonalds out by dinghy for a short visit and some drinkies, all on *Lauren A*.

Tuesday, we all headed home — the Grotzes to Middle River, the Callises to the Magothy after deciding it was too hot (heat index of 105), and the Zerhusens to the Bodkin for the same reason.

Octavia ventured out on Friday, July 7, had a great sail across the bay and back, but found a lot of debris in the bay with more on the way as more gates were being opened at the Conowingo Dam. We spent a cool night at anchor in Jubb Cove, forgetting it was a weeknight and no speed limit.

Saturday we dinghied up the creek to visit with the Sabins at their lovely home on the water, look for the eagles, and just enjoy the creek before heading back to our slip and driving home.

Jan and Hank Zerhusen

Book Review: *One Fell Sloop*, Susan Kenney

I picked up this murder mystery from the early 1990s in a used bookstore. It was the title that attracted my attention, of course; it turns out to be a pun on at least three levels. One of the sloops is a 28’ wooden Herreshoff, one a larger fiberglass Hinckley, and the third is a modern pushbutton extravaganza. (The critic peering over my shoulder suggests that plot and characters may be of more interest than the boats. But I’m not so sure about that given the forum I’m publishing in.)

The heroine is a professor of English with an infuriatingly competent, independently wealthy, Scottish amateur botanist for a lover. The set up reminded me of Harriet Vane and Lord Peter even before the characters themselves reference Dorothy Sayers. For a plot summary, suffice it to say that the course of true love never runs smooth, even with a locked-room-style puzzle of a murder holding them together. The setting is the coast of Maine, and the boats truly are integral to the plot.

Since this book is more than ten years old, check your local library or upstairs at Hammock Island for a copy.

Nan Shellabarger

Messing About in Boats

Hank and Jan Zerhusen put-putted up Bodkin Creek in their dinghy a couple of days ago to say hi and see our place (about the 7th or 8th house on the right after the Bodkin Yacht Club at the top of Main Creek — blue sailboat *Aldebaran* is docked in front). Me, being retired, I’m here most of the time, and Robbie works at home mostly during the summertime. We took a coffee break to visit with the Zerhusens on our front deck and showed them our home. We welcome others to put-put up the creek and see us.

I showed Hank the P-Cat 19 catamaran sitting in our driveway that I rescued from the weeds last month. It had been sitting for years on a rusty trailer overgrown with vines next to a vacant house in the neighborhood. 1980 was the year of the last Maryland boat sticker on the boat. For

many months I had been meaning to catch the owner of the house when he was there doing yard work. I finally caught up with him and asked if he wanted someone to take the catamaran off his hands. He said yes.

Next I had to clear it with the boss. Robbie seemed pretty doubtful. She could think of several household projects, like cleaning up the garage or the basement, that seemed more important to her. But in the spirit of give and take that has characterized our marriage of 26 years, she agreed to one more watercraft in the yard/dock. We're up to six now. The real question in my mind now is, "Will it float?"

Tune in next issue for the *denouement* of this exciting tale.

Ed Sabin

Book Review: *Seaworthy*, T. R. Pearson, Crown, 2006

There was the age of the flagpole sitters, and then there was the age of the long-distance rafters. Generally inspired by Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon Tiki*, assorted crackpots attempted reaching various South Seas locales by sailing aboard ill-conceived and poorly constructed vessels during this ill-conceived and poorly constructed age. The vessels, constructed of materials varying from papyrus through balsa to steel, were cumbersome, difficult to maneuver, and seaworthy only in the sense that they floated, however briefly.

The central focus of this book, William Willis, was a German sailor who jumped ship to become an American. The author, T. R. Pearson, does not bother to hide his sneer as he recounts Willis' assorted adventures and misadventures aboard rafts outward bound from South America to points as distant as Australia during the 1950's, the heyday of the rafters.

Pearson as much as tells the reader that if he did not deem Willis to be utterly insane before he began his adventures, that he believes the manner of Willis' execution of the cruises would have driven the man mad in the end anyway. For instance, not a single one of the radios Willis reluctantly took on his cruises ever worked for a single moment. And

on his first cruise, all of Willis' fresh water (150 gallons) disappeared through holes in the cheap containers that Willis had stored it in. That left Willis the only option of drinking salt water, his beverage of choice anyway, during his months at sea.

Saying that he doesn't know whether to admire or ridicule Willis, Pearson proceeds to heap the latter on his subject with abandon. He calls Willis a "hard head" who "wouldn't learn from his mistakes" and who "was either suicidal or out of his mind." A recitation of the bare facts makes all of these observations seem to be at least reasonable. Willis' survival is nothing short of miraculous, and the statement of the facts is entertaining, hair-raising, and even humorous reading.

Pearson indulges in some cheap tricks in the book. For instance, at one point he leaves Willis facing certain death at the end of a chapter, then follows with a chapter that deals with a totally unrelated matter before returning, in a subsequent chapter, to the danger facing his central character. I was reminded of the weeks that intervened between episodes of Buck Rogers at my local theater when I was a kid. It didn't make me feel warm and fuzzy toward the author.

About halfway through the book, Pearson diverges from Willis and recounts the tales of rafters who were even more blithering in their idiocy than was Willis. These tales too are entertaining, and by the time Pearson returns to Willis, the reader is aware that the suicidal, out-of-his-mind hard head was definitely the best of a bad lot. Pearson's sneer at Willis takes on an almost sympathetic tone, and at one point Pearson actually says of Willis that he was "a connoisseur of solitude and a student of isolation." That is rare praise indeed, coming from Pearson.

I recommend this book for any sailor, especially one who may feel that he or she is perhaps lacking in some respects when it comes to planning and preparing for cruises. Anyone, but anyone, would feel themselves to be the personification of efficiency, organization, and intelligence (especially intelligence) after reading about the great rafters.

Steve Foland

July 22 Best Beer Cruise

Bring several bottles or cans of your current favorite brew to Worton Creek. The CCSC beer tasters will sip or slurp and judge what they like best. Prizes will be awarded.

Please bring an appetizer to share along with the beer.

Look for the burgee — raft with us.

As a heads-up, Worton is not an acceptable anchorage in westerly winds; go to plan B, Swan Creek. We will monitor channel 16 all day.

Please email or telephone us by 9:00 p.m., Thursday, July 20, if you plan to come. (410 730 9129; hzerhusen2@verizon.net)

Cruise Captains: Hank and Jan Zerhusen