

# THE HORNPIPE

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## Commodore's Comments

On August 7 your commodore motored across the Choptank and deposited *Heather II* in her very own slip. The diesel ran GREAT, and we appear to be back in business. We also didn't need to take out another loan, though it wasn't cheap. I apologize to y'all for the weather while we were on the hard. Maybe it'll get better now that we can participate! We had a great trip to Cape Cod. Even though we never set foot on a boat, we nearly ate out New England's supply of seafood.

Saw a wonderful T-shirt while in Massachusetts that said, "I'd rather be on the dock with a drink on the rocks than in the drink with the boat on the rocks."

Hope to see you on a cruise shortly!

*Duncan MacDonald*

## Murder-Mystery Picnic

Please join the investigation of the mysterious demise of Captain Ron Namuk on August 19 at 2:00 p.m. on Hammock Island and bring a salad, appetizer, or dessert to share. The

usual fare of hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks will be provided by our club social chair. Let your vice-commodore, Jan Zerhusen ([hzerhusen2@verizon.net](mailto:hzerhusen2@verizon.net)) **AND** membership chair, Jenny Poniske ([jennyp7@hotmail.com](mailto:jennyp7@hotmail.com)) know ASAP as to your intentions, for planning purposes.

*Jenny Poniske*

## Best Beer Cruise – July 22-23

The prizes were bought, beer iced, bags packed, four boats lined up to meet us, and then we checked the weather one more time. Saturday began to look very iffy, and so we got cold feet and canceled the cruise.

We heard later that several storm cells of hard rain and wind crossed Hammock Island Saturday afternoon. Our little NOAA radio at home issued a severe weather advisory for the bay from Pooles Island to Sandy Point for late afternoon.

We sat home and thought that years ago we would have chanced it — have we grown too cautious, or are we just smarter now?

*Cruise Captains: Hank and Jan Zerhusen*

## ***The ICW***

The ICW will be missing navigation aids and support from the USCG due to lack of dredging in the state of Georgia. This will force all travelers to take to offshore route and bypass Georgia completely. For the present time the USCG has agreed to maintain the markers on Hell's Gate, but it's only for a short time. Yes, there is a solution and it involves all of us to email Georgia's Delegation in particular Jack Kingston to let them know our concerns. So please take the time to read the notice below and email Jack Kingston at [Jack.Kingston@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jack.Kingston@mail.house.gov).

*ICW Closure! After a five-year battle, it looks like it could actually happen in the Georgia portion of the ICW. According to an article in The Great Loop Link, which is put out by America's Great Loop Cruisers' Association, due to a total lack of dredging on the Georgia Waterway in the past five years, the USCG announced they were going to be removing all channel markings in the Hell's Gate area. They did not want to be responsible for marking a channel that wasn't there and was not going to be dredged. This would, in effect, close Georgia to ICW cruisers and force them to take an offshore route. Fortunately, enough "noise" was generated that the USCG has agreed, at least temporarily, to move and add markers on Hell's Gate, but the issue is still critical. Cruisers are urged to contact Georgia's delegation, in particular Congressman Jack Kingston, and let them know how important it is for the ICW to be properly dredged and remain open. Man your battle stations!*

***Art and Sue Grotz***

## **News Flash – Government Does Something Right!**

Imagine this: a positive report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on Hurricane Katrina operations! If you have any experience at all with the GAO, you will have seen that this agency, whose bread and butter is reporting problems and recommending fixes, has a hard time being positive. They are terrific investigators,

rigorous in their validation of the facts; exhaustive in their description of circumstances, history and context; and relentless in their search for meaningful recommendations for future improvements. Before reading this report, the most positive message I ever saw from the GAO was along the lines of "Progress has been made, but much remains to be done". Yet on August 1, the GAO issued a report on Coast Guard operations during and after Hurricane Katrina passed through the Gulf last year, which practically glows. Here are some excerpts from their report:

"Of the estimated 60,000 people left stranded by Hurricane Katrina, over 33,500 were saved by the Coast Guard. Precisely identifying why the Coast Guard was able to respond as it did may be difficult, but underpinning these efforts were factors such as the agency's operational principles. These principles promote leadership and accountability and enable personnel to take responsibility and action."

The report goes on to describe the specific principles and factors that helped the Coast Guard to be more effective — principles you would expect to see, like standardization, training, and exercises, and less traditional factors, like initiative, flexibility, and restraint — which means treating citizens and visitors with dignity at all times. In this too-brief report, there are tantalizing anecdotes, such as the story of the first Coast Guard C-130 to arrive on the scene after the storm. Originally dispatched to perform an environmental survey, the pilot realized there was no communications interoperability among the military and civilian rescue organizations on the ground, and so, on her own authority, changed her mission to that of an airborne communications platform. Another snippet describes a helicopter pilot from Florida, a co-pilot from Alabama, and a rescue swimmer from Alaska who formed a cohesive instant crew and "performed numerous rescues". There must be 33,500 or more stories to be told.

No personnel or assets (aircraft or ships) were hurt during the Coast Guard operation, and they even maintained their standard maintenance routines throughout the operations. The Coast Guard has used their after-action reports to build better preparedness for this year's storm season.

True to their roots as the government's accountants, in the GAO's dry, dispassionate wrap-up they note that due to the large number of hoist rescues, it may be necessary to replace Coast Guard hoists sooner than the normal maintenance intervals, which may require a budget increase.

As Jenny Poniske noted, it's good to think a branch of government I may need to depend on some day seems to have its act together. You can find the whole report available for free access or

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06903.pdf>.

*Nan Shellabarger*

## Above and Beyond

Have you ever been to the top of the mast in a bosun's chair and wished you could get a few feet higher to be able to comfortably work on the mast top? I figured a way to do this and thought some of you might be interested.

**Background:** Recently I had to rework my spinnaker bale. Our boat had come with what appeared to be a home-engineered, stainless plate bolted to the mast truck. The forward part of the plate had two downward bends jutting forward of the mast. The spinnaker halyard block was attached to the forward tip of the plate and was very close to the jib furling mechanism, causing interference during furling, so I decided to remove the plate and rework it. While removing the plate, one of the bolts fastening it to the truck sheared and remained in the truck. No amount of coercing with vise-grips, pipe wrenches, and penetrating oil managed to budge the headless bolt. I took defeat gracefully and decided to simply drill another hole in the plate for a new bolt and let the old, sheared bolt remain. I began to wonder how I could ever drill and tap a vertical hole in the mast truck while sitting in a bosun's chair. My eye level would be a bit below the top of the mast, although by straining a bit I could raise myself to just see an inch or so above the mast top. However, that was still not adequate. There must be some expedient way for one to stand and be at a comfortable height above the mast. But how?

**Solution:** Thinking back to my climbing days, I wondered if two stirrups made out of webbing would allow me to stand up at the top of the mast (or at any point along the mast, for that matter). What could these stirrups attach to? The bosun's chair? Or strap above the shroud tangs? While pondering this problem, I realized none of these ideas were relevant. Instead, just wrapping the sling around the mast should work. My weight would provide enough friction to prevent the slings from slipping down the mast.

**Implementation:** Taking two four-foot pieces of one-inch tubular, nylon webbing (which were old sail ties), I tied a small loop in one end and a large loop (a stirrup to fit my foot) at the other end of each sling. Once up the mast, I wrapped the sling around the mast, passed the stirrup through the small loop, and then let it hang down. I repeated this procedure with the other sling. Placing my feet in the stirrups and transferring my weight to the slings locked the slings in place by sheer friction. No safety belt or other line was needed, because I was still being slightly supported by the bosun's chair.

**Mission Accomplished:** It took about 20 minutes at the top to drill and then tap a new hole, attach the modified plate to the truck, and feed the halyard through the block. No problems, nothing dropped, and all the while, very comfortable.

**Additional Benefits:** Another nice thing about this arrangement was more comfort while sitting in the bosun's chair. Having a footrest also stabilized the swinging that usually happens if feet are just dangling. Try it the next time you're up the mast.

*Bob Loewenstein*

## Barnacles: Heads-up

*Octavia* had been idle for about a month. Last weekend we took her out and discovered a bad case of barnacles.

Small barnacles were spread evenly on the hull, BUT only to about two feet below the waterline. They were easy to clean with a long-handled windshield ice scraper. I use a suction cup to have a handhold while working in the water.

Dense barnacles and moss about one-half inch thick on the prop caused heavy vibration above 1500 rpm. We could only make four knots.

We also found dense barnacles and moss on the rudder all the way down to the bottom.

If your boat has been idle for a few weeks, expect slow speeds and prop vibration.

***Hank Zerhusen***