

THE HORNPIPE

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Commodore's Comments

I don't know what happened to my control of the weather this summer. Somehow the weather gods were not kind. At least no hurricanes, YET! Sailing season is coming to a close.

Since cold weather is expected this weekend, the Flynns have canceled the Swan Creek cruise on October 14-15.

It's time to consider officers for next year. We are particularly looking for a commodore, vice commodore and social chair. I'll be calling people, but would LOVE to have volunteers. Call me at 410-799-9517. Experience is NOT necessary!

We don't yet have a program for the November meeting, which will be held at the Hawthorn Neighborhood Center, as usual, at 7:00 p.m. on November 20. If you have any ideas or can make a presentation, we would appreciate it if you would let us know. We'll send another notice in the November Hornpipe. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Looks like another wet sailboat show. Good news that the Volvo Ocean Race is likely to return to Baltimore-Annapolis.

For those who have been following the travails of *Heather II*, our engine, though not perfect yet, is functional, and we're sailing again!

Duncan MacDonald

First Mate's Report – Womanship Course

Many individuals possess tremendous knowledge and skills. However, it takes a good teacher to convey that knowledge to his or her students. The same holds true for sailors, and I'm pleased to report that my two-day course with Womanship (a Christmas present from Matt) proved both interesting and incredibly informative.

The group gathered on August 24 and 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., onboard a 30-foot Catalina based in Galesville. Our instructor, Mary Anne DeGraw, has held a captain's license for more than 20 years, and was quite at ease with the "motley" crew that assembled. The five participants were of various ages, backgrounds, and experience levels. Their rationale for being there included fear, curiosity, and desire to know exactly how and why a first mate did things on the boat.

The first morning, we discussed our sailing experience and what we hoped to learn. We used study sheets to discuss the parts of a boat and learn about the points of sail. During a bow-to-stern tour of the boat, Capt. MAD (her initials, not her temperament) provided detailed information (as well as the correct names) for all the features on the boat. We practiced tying knots, cleating (many times — I can actually cleat one-handed now), calling “ropes” by their correct name, “lines,” and handling and stowing them correctly.

Along the way, we asked questions, shared individual experiences, and practiced laying out a short course for the afternoon sail. After lunch, we learned to start the engine, talked about raising the sails, and headed out. Interestingly, once Mary Anne backed the boat out of the slip, she turned it over to the students and never touched the wheel again until we returned. The sails were raised, and we each took the helm for two tacks as we headed out the West River. We manned the lines (learning how to keep the heels of the hand toward the winch), adjusted the sails, and read the chart. The winds, forecast to be five knots, were considerably higher in the afternoon. Even though some of us clenched the wheel as the wind picked up, we successfully returned to the dock.

The second day, we discussed engine maintenance and plotted a course to the South River buoy by the Thomas Point Light. We also practiced, each getting a turn, the correct way to pick up a mooring and to drop anchor. The group was very congenial, helping each other as needed. The afternoon sail turned out to be a brisk one, and we made the light on a broad reach, and we were all feeling confident.

Mary Anne recommended different sailing clubs, the power squadrons, and a variety of other educational and service opportunities to meet different students’ interests. She’s been teaching Womanship courses (two-day, three-day, overnight) for a number of years, in locations around the country and in the Caribbean. Womanship will also arrange trips for couples, groups, and corporations. Mary Anne, who also has a business doing charters and private instruction, had just returned from ferrying a boat from the Chesapeake up to Maine, and spoke of many trips down the Intracoastal

Waterway to Florida and in Europe. An experienced and easygoing captain (USCG Master, 50T, Near Coastal, Sail, Tow), she lives in Arnold and can be reached at MADgicSail@comcast.net if you need her services.

Did two days make a difference? Matt and I just returned from an overnight to Swan Creek, and I definitely feel I have a better knowledge of how the boat works and what I’m contributing to its operation. Matt was impressed with how much more relaxed and assured I seemed to be as we sailed.

Learning is a life-long task, and I feel that even two days of the Womanship Course made a difference, *and nobody yelled!*

Barb Coyle

Funny and/or Strange

(Vice Commodore Jan Zerhusen came up with the idea of CCSC members sending to the Hornpipe editors “funny or strange” things that have happened to them on the water. This is the first such tidbit.)

While visiting *Octavia* one day a couple of weeks ago, one of the local kayakers came by. We see them all the time, but this gal was talking, and I couldn’t see any one nearby. Then I noticed her cell phone tucked between her shoulder and ear. I asked and she confirmed that’s exactly what she was doing: getting in a social call while paddling up (or is it down) the creek.

Jan Zerhusen

Mexican Dinner Cruise, September 16-17

The weather didn't look too good on Saturday a.m. when we left Cambridge. It rained lightly as we approached Knapp Narrows, but we never had a downpour. After an uneventful journey through the narrows, we found ourselves being buffeted by a northeast wind and sizeable waves when going up behind Poplar Island. You realize how far it is to Eastern Bay in that kind of weather. However, once we got to Prospect Bay, it started to clear.

We made phone contact with the Callises and the Flynns, who were both coming out of the Magothy River, and suggested that we shorten the trip a bit by going into Queenstown instead of Langford Creek. Just as we arrived at the anchorage the heavens opened up for a few minutes and that is all the rain we had. The Callises arrived soon after, and finally the Flynns, who had left late and had a bit of a problem getting in the Queenstown channel arrived. By this time the party had begun with margaritas. There were great homemade dips, and later chicken enchiladas, taco salad, *Dos Equis* beer, raspberry pastries, and coffee. That night the weather cleared, and the stars and crescent moon were fabulous.

Morning found us visiting aboard the Flynns' new 32-foot Beneteau (very spacious) and hosting a local waterman for coffee. When last seen, the Callises and Flynns were tacking out of the Chester River. We, the MacDonalds, just made the noon opening of the Kent Narrows bridge and motor sailed down to Knapp Narrows. After following probably the slowest boat on the bay through the somewhat tricky western entrance, we went to Dun Cove for the night. There were only seven boats there and no watermen to wake us at 5:00 a.m. Monday was nice and sunny too, and we were able to sail some after lulls in the breeze. Oh, those beautiful days on an uncrowded river.

Cynthia & Duncan MacDonald

Adventure Down the Intracoastal Waterway

I am planning to be away from late September through October and maybe part of November on a recon mission down part of the Intracoastal Waterway on our sailboat *Aldebaran*. It's something I've wanted to do for a long time (as long as I've had the boat — 30 years). Unfortunately Robbie is busy teaching, so I'll be alone on this trip.

Not sure how far I'll get. More likely than not, I'll turn back early when I get too lonely, bored, tired, cold, hungry, or bitten by mosquitoes or deer flies. I have a folding bike, a radio, and books for entertainment, though a friend who has done the trip says that I won't do much reading

because I'll be too busy with household tasks plus planning the next day's segment of the trip.

Episode #1 of Ed's Excellent Adventure

We got all packed to start on September 28, but by 11:30 a.m. Robbie and I were still carting boxes, bags, and buckets of stuff on board *Aldebaran* and the wind was getting up. Small craft warnings that afternoon and rain and thunderstorms that night were coming from the south — the direction I wanted to go. Discretion being the better part of valor, I decided to hang out until the next morning, when I could get an early start. The wind was to be from the northwest, which, if it happened, would help boom me down the bay.

Maybe I'd use the time to unpack and store things away on the boat — enough stuff to support an expedition to Antarctica. I could also mow the grass in the front yard one more time so Robbie could delay a little longer how to deal with it. So far she is being a good sport about the trip. Thanks, Robbie.

Will be in touch.

Ed Sabin

The *Westerly*

I never gave her a name, but, since every boat has to be called something, I just called her the *Westerly*. In a former life she had been named *Balthus*, after an obscure, ribald, French poet. I couldn't have my first boat named after a poet, so *Balthus* was dropped and the more utilitarian *Westerly* took its place. It seemed more nautical, more English, more like a sailboat.

The *Westerly* snuck into my life, and I dragged my good friend Larry along for the adventure. If that sounds like a story forming, it is. It started with a call from a co-worker, a brilliant engineer and theoretical physicist who has trouble turning a door knob at the same time he is expected to pull the door open. He lives in Maryland, and his sister-in law, who owned *Balthus*, and who can be blamed for bestowing that name on the poor boat, had lived in California for the preceding six years. *Balthus* had been kept at the dock of a house on

Spriggs Cove, off the Magothy, owned by my friend's brother and sister-in-law.

To say the boat had been neglected is to invoke kindness for the sake of dignity. *Balthus* hadn't been out of the water for at least four years and hadn't been sailed in as many. The house was a rental property, and part of the lease required the tenants to keep an eye on the boat. Mostly they kept an eye on their jet skis and thought *Balthus* was a convenient place to tie up visiting jet skis, throw empty beer cans and, inexplicably, store several large cement blocks in the cockpit.

My physicist-engineer friend wandered into my office one day in July of 2001 and said he had a problem that he wanted to talk about. I get worried when an engineer wants to talk. I get more worried when a physicist wants to talk. I'm a lawyer. I don't speak science or physics and know only elementary engineering. In other words, I can fake interest only so long. I'm afraid I won't even be able to pretend that I understand. I said, "Sure, come in." My fears were misplaced. It wasn't a patent infringement problem.

He had gotten a call from his brother the night before. The brother was worried because he had received a call from a neighbor in Spriggs Cove who reported that *Balthus* was leaking diesel oil and the neighbor was afraid that "someone" was going to call the Department of Natural Resources and that there would be a significant fine if there was a diesel leak. The brother wanted my friend to go down to the boat and look for signs of diesel fuel. My friend wanted to know what he should look for and where he should look for it. I asked him what he knew about boats, and his sheepish grin was all the answer I needed. I volunteered to go to the boat and look for any signs of a fuel leak.

That Saturday I went to Spriggs Cove, located the house, and got the consent of the tenants to let me go out back to the dock to see the boat. From fifty feet away it was obvious that *Balthus* hadn't had much attention in a long time. However, there was no sign of a fuel leak anywhere around the boat. I boarded her and moved enough beer cans out of the way to allow me to open the companionway hatch. Inside there was at least ten inches of water above the sole but no sign of a fuel leak. I found two spots of diesel fuel about the size

of silver dollars floating on the water. I soaked them up with some paper towels that I had brought with me.

The headliner had come unglued and fallen onto the sole at some time in the past. The adhesive had combined with the water to form free-floating, near-lifelike, dark masses; but they had probably somehow prevented slime from forming on the cabin sole. The serious deterioration of the interior woodwork was evident, and it became clear to me that if *Balthus* wasn't rescued soon, it was headed to the salvor's yard. Someone who knew more about boats than me might have concluded that time had already passed.

About that time, I heard someone call from the dock and ask if anyone was on board. I called back, expecting to perhaps be confronted by the "concerned" neighbor. It was a neighbor, but one who was concerned that a stranger was on the boat. After assuring him that I had permission, and using the owner's name plus a few anecdotes to show I really had some connection with the owner, he decided I was a legitimate investigator. "Let's get this water pumped out," he said. He located the pump handle and began operating the big diaphragm pump concealed in the stern lazarette. I was sent below. My job was to keep as much of the headliner-adhesive goo from entering the pump as possible.

It was a high volume pump, and it didn't take long to empty the boat. The Volvo Penta diesel had a rust line approximately two-thirds of the way across the flywheel, where the water level had been. The neighbor looked at the diesel engine, pulled out the dipstick, and examined the oil. There were no signs of water. "Let's start it", he said. I asked how we could do that and the look of disdain convinced me to be quiet and just follow instructions. He reached into a side compartment and pulled out a big, heavy, steel handle. He fitted it to a socket on the flywheel, opened the compression levers on the top of the engine, and told me to go into the cockpit and stand by the throttle.

He began to turn the engine over slowly, to circulate the oil-sludge mixture, and told me to get ready. He turned the crank faster, disengaged the crank handle and closed the compression levers.

The engine sputtered once, sputtered again, belched black smoke, sent out more black smoke, and began to sputter. I worked the throttle up and down as the engine struggled to run. It gradually smoothed out. The black smoke slowed, then stopped, and we watched the Volvo return to life after many years of dormancy. We ran it for a few minutes, watching for blue or gray smoke. When we didn't see any after a few minutes, we shut it down. There would be some good news to report to my engineer-physicist friend, and he would be able to relieve his brother's concerns.

About a week later, I had another visit from my physicist friend. "I need to talk to you", he said. Before I could answer, he said, "My brother wants to know if you want the boat?" I didn't answer. "For free," he added. "Just take it away, and it's yours. He'll pay to have it hauled out of the water for you." I knew this was the beginning of a problem.

A long time ago I brought home a dog, explaining that it had followed me (don't all dogs know whom to follow?) and it turned into a 13-year commitment. I left my parent's home long before the dog did, but it had been a valuable life lesson. I knew I had to approach this right the first time if I was to convince Barbara of the undeniable and obviously self-evident overpowering merits of this proposal. Barbara and I had been married 28 years at the time. She had long ago sorted out what she needed to know to keep me under control, arranged it alphabetically, prioritized it, and stored it away for quick access. "OK," she said, after I had told her about the offer and before I had begun to explain why it was such a great deal. I resisted the urge to get confirmation that she really meant it. Never ask twice once you have the answer you want. I said, "I'm going to ask Larry if he wants to go in as a partner." "That's a great idea. He'll like that." I headed across the backyard to Larry's house. Larry's wife, Linda, hadn't agreed, but then she hadn't said "No" either. We took that as consent, and an hour later we were partners in a bold adventure.

One month later, *Balthus* was on the hard at Ferry Point Marina. Amazingly, when it was hauled from the water, there were only two blisters approximately one square foot each, and the balance

of the hull was sound. The surveyor pronounced *Balthus* in need of a lot of cleaning, new seacocks and hoses, but found that the vessel was basically sound and, with the recommended repairs, seaworthy. She made no effort to hide her amazement, but attributed the vessel's structural condition to the engineering philosophy of the *Westerly's* marine architect, Giles Laurent. "Overbuild" seemed to be his guiding mantra.

Out of the water, a *Westerly* is a distinctive boat. It has twin bilge keels and was designed to be moored in conditions where it is expected to be in the mud at each low tide. The vessel rests level on the keels and refloats level as the tide rises. Intended for use on the North Sea, the hull is extremely solid, and that may account for the relatively large number of these vessels still in service more than 25 years after they went out of production. The construction also accounts for its ponderously slow cruising speed. The twin keels take any worry out of the possibility that you may be able to point high.

Larry and I spent a lot of time on the *Westerly* over that winter, and by early April of 2002 it was ready to go back in the water. We had spent too much money and too many weekends at the boatyard when we should have been doing something productive and intrinsically worthwhile. Is there any better way to spend time than messing around in boats? We knew the answer.

On a brisk day in late March of 2002, we hired a captain to go with us for the move from Ferry Point Marina to Hammock Island. It took six hours, and we encountered 20 knots out of the northeast, seas running three to four feet. The boat heeled so far on port tack that the engine cooling water intake would come out of the water, the engine would begin to overheat, and we would have to either shut it down or switch to a starboard tack. Not a good option when the lee shore is close and shallow.

It may have been one of the best sailing days we ever had. We sailed the *Westerly* for the next three summers, up to 2005, when Larry and I decided it was time to let the *Westerly* go to its next owner. We had never given it a name. It was always the *Westerly*. I bought a Pearson 31, *Nancy Ann*, and Larry took up golf. We sold the *Westerly*

to a man from California, over the Internet, sight unseen. He named the boat *Dakini*, which I learned is a strong, female presence from Hindu mythology. He planned to come to the East Coast in March 2006. He had some very unusual plans for the Westerly, but that is another story.

Matt Coyle

September Cruise

Jenny and I took time off at the end of September for a five-day cruise south. It was a typical Chesapeake week — too much wind, then little or no wind, followed, finally, by a wind just right. First we were two days down to Solomons (beating with two reefs the whole long first day, flying the spinnaker the second as the wind shifted and then died), where we rendezvoused with some friends who sailed up from the Northern Neck. On the way back, we had two very slow days motor sailing and just bobbing around, which gave us a chance to really look at our surroundings.

As we motored into the Little Choptank, bound for the night's anchorage in Hudson Creek, Jenny spotted dolphins! There was a pod of perhaps a dozen playing over by the shore. They came over to check us out, and passed under *Mutima* on their way back towards the open bay. I had a little camera, but it doesn't capture the thrill we felt seeing them right around us.

The final day we had five hours on a broad reach heading due north for home. Each hour we set a new speed record for *Mutima*, and it was about as thrilling sailing as I've ever had. We averaged more than 6 knots for the whole five hours, which for us is flying! We got home to Hammock Island just a couple of hours before the next front came through like gangbusters, bringing tornados and thunderstorms with it.

All in all, a terrific time. Hard to say whether the dolphins or the sleigh ride were the highlight — but it's clear we'll be back to do more!

Nan Shellabarger

