

# THE HORNPIPE

VOLUME 31, NO. 3

March 2007

## CCSC 2007 Board Members

Lee Benedict, Commodore	(baltiben@comcast.net)	410-465-0043
George Alberts, Vice Commodore	(gealberts@att.net)	410-730-2245
Matt Coyle, Secretary	(Matthew247@aol.com)	301-570-8719
Ed Sabin, Treasurer	(esabin1@comcast.net)	410-255-7362
Jenny Poniske, Membership Chair	(jennyp7@hotmail.com)	717-372-6622
Cynthia & Duncan MacDonald, Social	(DunMcDnld@aol.com)	410-799-9517
Judy & Steve Foland, Hornpipe Editors	(Foland@aol.com)	301-261-6613

## Commodore's Comments

At last we are coming to the end of the “dog days of winter;” or at least we would be if there were such. In four weeks time, some of us will have our boats commissioned and back in the water. The rest will be not far behind. THANK GOODNESS! For those of us not so fortunate as Cynthia and Duncan MacDonald, so that we could go on a winter cruise in the Caribbean, and not so fortunate as Jan and Hank Zerhusen, so that we could do our own cruising in Florida, it has been a cold, boat-less winter.

Apropos of little or nothing, my research reveals that there cannot be “dog days of winter.” Contrary to what I thought before consulting Google, the phrase “dog days” does not mean lazy and inactive days generally, although judging by our family pet it should. In fact, it has nothing to do with the images I had conjured up in my mind of Grandmother Benedict’s sleepy old hound stretched out in the shade of her porch in the summer or on her hearth in front of the fire in the winter.

Instead, it has to do with a star and ancient mythology. As explained by one Jerry Wilson of wilstar.com, the brightest star of the constellation

Canis Major (the big dog), and possibly of the entire sky, is Sirius, a star so bright (“How bright?” you ask) that the ancient Romans thought the earth received heat from it. This was before the Howard Stern of satellite radio fame — not to mention the Howard Stern of Anna Nicole Smith fame.

These days, between July 3 and August 11, Sirius (called the “dog star”) rises and sets at nearly the same time as the sun and thus is blocked from view by the brightness of the sun. The ancients believed that Sirius’ heat added to the heat of the sun to create the particularly hot and sultry weather characteristic of this time period each year. I’m thinking those ancients must not have been strangers to the Chesapeake Bay during the summer. In any event, they named the period the “dog days” after the “dog star,” Sirius, and the name stuck.

I like my now-shattered, uninformed mental images of a hound dog better than this explanation, but I must defer to Jerry Wilson. And while I’m at it, hats off to the ancients for their sophisticated, if scientifically incorrect, observations and ratiocinations. (Although it may be hard to believe, I’ve never had the opportunity to use the word “ratiocinations” before.)

With the ramp-up of the sailing season upon us, other officers will be announcing the club’s

cruise and social events calendars before long. All I can do now is steal a step on time by penciling in on the Benedict family calendar a club shake-down cruise to Eagles Nest in May. I hope that this club tradition in recent years continues, and that I can finally take part. For a brief moment, this simple scribbling made the coming sailing season seem closer!

But after this, for just a few more days, it's back to lounging on the hearth before the fire for me.

PS: If you have not already "re-upped" your club membership for 2007, please do so with Ed Sabin soon. We don't want to lose any members!

**Lee Benedict**

[*Lee is the recipient of the newly coined Editors' Ratiocination Award for actually finding a way to include the word ratiocination (rash-ee-OSS-uh-NAY-shun: the process of logical reasoning) in a Hornpipe article. Congratulations, Lee. Eds.]*

**CCSC Spring Meeting--Hammock Island,  
28 April, 1:00-5:00 p.m.**

*Make plans now to kick off our cruising season by taking part in our annual spring meeting (and cook-out), scheduled for Saturday, 28 April, 1:00-5:00 p.m., at Hammock Island. The club will provide drinks, hotdogs, hamburgers, rolls, etc. Please bring hors d'oeuvres, side dishes, or desserts to share. We will review the season's cruise schedule, and it will be an opportunity for interested parties to sign on as cruise captains. If you wish do so, bring your old and/or unused and/or unneeded gear for an informal gear swap, as well. We look forward to seeing you there!*

**George Alberts**

**CCSC Website Development**

So far I have had no contributions from anyone. Ed Sabin is sending me some photos in the mail that I'll scan. Several members (Lee Benedict, George Alberts, Matt and Barb Coyle, and Ed Sabin) have had useful suggestions. Without

content, though, it's hard to come up with anything but a template of a site. That's what I've started doing and hope to have something that is a test design. I don't know if I'll have it available for people by the time The Hornpipe goes out. Searching past emails, I find that I have saved almost all the Hornpipes I've gotten over the years, and I have moved them from MS.doc format to .pdf format. I thought that I'd create a page of Hornpipe archives, available for download from the website. I'm missing several, though. Here's a list of those I'm missing:

All pre 2001

2001: Jan, Feb, June, July, Sept, Oct, Nov

2002; ALL

2003: Jan, April, May, June, July

If anyone has digital copies of those in this list, please email them to me at [rfl@yerkes.uchicago.edu](mailto:rfl@yerkes.uchicago.edu).

**Bob Lowenstein**

**News from Octavia**

**3/6/07**

**Warderick Wells Cay, Exuma Islands,  
Bahamas**

We're homeward bound. Very slowly. We were at Staniel Cay last week, the southernmost point of our trip (24° 10'N 76° 26'W). This is about one third of the way down the Exuma Island chain. We now have put 1805 nautical miles (2078 statute miles) under the keel for this trip. Unfortunately, we have had too many engine motoring hours — 296 and too few sailing hours — only about 80.

We crossed the Gulf Stream February 7-8, doing a night passage with very calm conditions — ideal for motoring, but no wind for sailing. Crossing the Gulf Stream is a big deal; sometimes the wait for acceptable wind and wave conditions can be weeks; so we crossed with no wind. Our departure was from Ft. Lauderdale; landfall was Memory Rock, a well known spot for entering the Bahama Banks with good water under the keel. Most of the Bahamas islands are surrounded by

shallow sand (the “banks”). Careful navigation is required to avoid running aground in sand or bashing into rocks or coral heads that litter the bottom here and there. Fortunately, most of the banks and coral heads are shown on the navigation charts for the heavily traveled areas. There is also a considerable tidal range of two to four feet.

We spent most of the month of February in the Abacos, visiting five cays — the most memorable being Green Turtle Cay, with its village (population of 450) dating back to the Tories who escaped the American Revolution. We weathered a 40-knot gale there, fortunately moored in a safe harbor. (I dove down to put my own heavy line on the chain, not trusting the worn line already attached).

The weather in the Abacos was too chilly and windy for swimming, but still warm enough for tee shirts and shorts most days.

We departed the Abacos on February 22, making an overnight passage to Royal Island, at the northwest tip of Eleuthera Island. We sailed the whole 100 miles on a broad reach with just the genny.

We refueled and re-provisioned at the nearby town of Spanish Wells on St. Georges Cay. As with Green Turtle Cay, the village on St. Geroges Cay was very quaint and friendly.

Leaving Spanish Wells, we joined three other boats to travel in company down into the Exuma Island chain of cays. We knew one of the boats from an earlier meeting in Ft. Lauderdale; they are from Laytonsville, Maryland.

For the last few days we have been on a mooring in the harbor at Warderick Wells Cay, the headquarters of the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park. This is THE PLACE we have been looking for as an ideal destination. It is an unspoiled island that has reefs and sandy beaches in the harbor within swimming distance or short dinghy rides of the boat. (The harbor is open at both ends, so there is a tidal flow of several knots at max ebb and flood. Therefore, the harbor is self cleaning with respect to sanitation; one pumps out at night at max ebb.) Because of the fast currents, snorkeling is safe only at slack water, between the tides. A failed dinghy outboard can result in being swept out to sea; so we

carry a handheld radio, and an 8-pound danforth anchor.

Warderick Wells Cay is about two miles long and less than one mile wide. The top of “Boo Boo” hill affords a spectacular view of the protected harbor on one side and raging surf bashing into the rocky cliffs on the ocean side with the twenty five-knot nor’easter that is now blowing. The weather is balmy, mostly in the 80’s. The water is transparent to a depth of about 20 feet. It is disconcerting to watch the shadow of the boat moving across the bottom. When viewing the boat from the dock, it appears to be floating on air. At night, in moonlight, the water is invisible, and the floating-on-air phenomenon is even more pronounced. There is a bird (one of many kinds) here, the Bananaquit, which literally eats sugar out of the hand. It is small, with black, white, and yellow markings. I think they have been spoiled; they frequently fly into the cabin looking for a handout.

Later this week, we plan to head north back into the Abacos and retrace our path back through the cays to Florida by the end of March. Then we will head north to the Chesapeake during the month of April.

Recently we have not had access to a telephone or wi-fi. Here at Warderick Wells however, we have wi-fi access at the park headquarters building.

We are doing very well, as is our boat and its mechanical and electrical systems. We are very brown, Hank has a beard, and we both need haircuts. We have met lots of new friends, mostly from the US, but many from Canada and Britain. We are looking forward to being in closer contact with our family and friends when we get back to Florida and have normal telephone service.

*Hank and Jan Zerhusen*

## **Getting Ready for Next Season**

When I finished my solo cruise down the ICW to Florida and back, in May 2004, I vowed I would never do that again! Since then, I have quietly and, to some degree unwittingly, been preparing for another run. I’ve made a number of repairs, and a few minor enhancements, to *Breezing*

*Up*, and I've thought a good bit about it all. In the process, I finally admitted to myself that I've got to do this trip one more time. With Jutta's permission in hand, I'm beginning to make serious plans. I'm considering "diverting" to the Bahamas (the Abacos) this time, although I might just continue to the Keys for the winter.

It has been said that an extended cruise, like mine, is something like seven years of wear and tear on a boat, compared to our normal leisurely cruising schedules. After getting Tidewater (Havre de Grace) to make a number of repairs in the year after I returned, I realized how true that was. They had to replace a water pump, rebuild the wind meter, and repair and reprogram the chart plotter, among other maintenance issues. Last year I replaced the two original Group 4D (180 amp-hour) batteries with 200 amp-hour AGM (absorbed glass mat) batteries. Late in the season I installed a Sirius satellite radio antenna (first time ever that I drilled a hole in my cabin deck!).

Also, late last season, I finished installing external-tank monitors for the holding tank and the two fresh water tanks. I'd be glad to share details of that installation with any interested party. It was a challenge getting access to the tanks to install the sensor strips on the sides of the tanks, and running (hiding) wires from each tank to the control panel at the navigation station. I really took my time on this job. I installed the first sensors in June, and I finished the job in October!

Finally, to increase my self-sufficiency underway, I decided to get a Mast-Mate nylon ladder for climbing the mast. It fits into the mainsail slot, and works like a charm, now that I have dealt with the fear of falling backwards by buying a tool-belt/harness for the Mast-Mate system. In my first test of the ladder, I replaced my anchor light, and learned that the ladder allowed me to comfortably work from a level where my waist is just below the masthead. I hook in with my sailing harness and tether and use the tool-belt as a back-up.

Based on my experience the first time down the "ditch", these enhancements promise to be greatly appreciated this time around. I considered doing more. A short list would include installing a generator and reverse cycle air conditioning. A flat

panel HDTV with surround sound was briefly considered, as well. Fortunately for my bank account, these would have consumed too much precious space on board.

When I had *Breezing Up* hauled and blocked at Tidewater this fall, I had a short list of maintenance items — which grew after my discussions with the service manager. The autopilot clutch had started slipping, and there was a small amount of play in the propeller shaft, which suggested some wear in the cutless bearing. Based on the service manager's recommendations, I also asked them to remove and clean the heat exchanger and check the exhaust system. All of this work has been finished. I have a new autopilot drive and a new cutless bearing. I have a clean heat exchanger (they say it was full of "stuff", including pieces of the zinc anodes that sit in the exchanger). They also found that I had a hairline fracture in the exhaust elbow(!), and I have had it replaced. This was potentially serious. If left alone, the crack could have expanded and led to some threat of carbon monoxide in the rear cabin. They said they had some trouble locating the replacement part (apparently Catalina, which uses the Universal M35B engine in the Catalina 34, does not use a standard exhaust elbow. They had it redesigned for this boat, and Tidewater had to deal directly with Catalina for the part). The mechanic theorizes that at one time the engine was run "hot" (with the cooling water intake seacock shut), which was true for at least a short time, in my first season. The (very) hot "cooling" water, when it first hit the exhaust elbow, could have caused the crack. I don't mean to alarm any of you, but I think you should consider checking the exhaust elbow for such cracks. We've all run our engines "hot" for at least a few moments before we realized we hadn't opened the cooling-water seacocks.

I was also persuaded to make one enhancement to my autopilot. I agreed, but I'm withholding judgment on this one until I do some sailing. I added a rudder-sensor attachment to the system, and I'm told it will help the autopilot hold a course. I may have prematurely agreed to do this without fully understanding how it will help. But I have a lot of confidence (and good experiences) with the Tidewater service folks, so I'll give it a

chance. After all, it cost less than a "boat buck" (installed).

So now I'm just about good to go. I'll be washing and waxing the hull, and painting the bottom, later this month. Launch is scheduled for mid-April. If all goes well, my next haul-out will be some time in 2008.

*George Alberts*

## **Ahoy, Mates**

We don't have a real SAILING thing to share, but our recent trip to Florida was nice. You all had some nice weather while we were in Florida in late February — nice if you like snow and ice! We drove south with still cool weather until we got to Sanibel Island, where it turned into the upper 70s and lower 80s and stayed there the whole eight days we were there. We had one day of foggy weather which was fine for visiting the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Otherwise, we had sun,

sun, sun. The owner of the place we stayed at gave shelling trips on his boat for those staying at his place, and we spent a delightful five hours in his Wellcraft getting up close looks at dolphins; eagles on nests; and white, sandy, and nearly empty beaches (empty of people that is). Hurricane Charlie had broken through Captiva Island in two places, and, thus, where we were was reachable only by boat. Tarpon Bay and the waters between Sanibel and the mainland are pretty shallow, and although we saw a few sailboats, it was obvious that this was powerboat country. Sanibel, if you haven't been there, is delightful, principally due to the large percentage of the island that is in preservation (wildlife refuge, conservation area, or whatnot; and the building code, or covenants), or whatever, eliminates high-rises and keeps signage minimal at the shopping centers. It reminds us a little of Columbia! Now that you are all jealous, I'll sign off. See you at the April picnic.

*Duncan and Cynthia MacDonald*