

THE HORNPIPE

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Commodore's Comments

The McDonalds put on a great spring picnic at the end of April. Attendance was excellent and Duncan served up delicious fare from the barbeque. George Alberts finalized the cruise schedule with the assignment of cruise captains, and Dick Callis shared details of the upcoming two-week cruise to Yorktown, the centerpiece of the schedule. Those who cannot budget the full two weeks for this event should consider joining in for its beginning or end.

On a sad note, Carol and Bill Durr, our Hammock Island hosts, were absent from the picnic due to the death of Carol's mother in Virginia the night before. We all extend our condolences and best wishes to the Durrs.

Now the answers to the questions I left hanging in last month's comments. Jan and Hank Zerhusen did indeed show up at the picnic with tan and beard respectively, not to mention a host of tales and pointers from their seven-month cruise to Florida and the Bahamas. Adrian and Tom Flynn were able to attend, but unfortunately Adrian was injured on *In Like Flynn* earlier in the week and made a late appearance at the picnic as a result. Steve (aka "Ansel Adams") Foland and I both took pictures of the event for Bob Loewenstein's

website, and hors d'oeuvres and desserts were both greatly outnumbered by salads and side dishes.



2007 CCSC Picnic

As an unplanned bonus, aboard *Agape* at its slip a few yards from Duncan's barbeque, Ilyse and Jesse Delanoy give the rest of us an impromptu lesson in bending on the mainsail.

Crass commercial message: hold the date for the "commodore's cruise" on June 9-10 just off the Sabin's pier at the upper reaches of the Bodkin.

The goal is to maximize participation, so those who cannot sail there are urged to come to the Sabin's by land and dinghy out to the raft. A tasty naval grog known as "Bilge Cleaner" will be served aboard *Nik of Time* – Chardonnay for the ladies. I hope the event clears club members' boats out of Hammock Island and other marinas for the night.

See you there.

Lee Benedict

5-6 May, Worton Creek

Throughout the week the weather forecasts looked good for the first cruise of the 2007 CCSC season, to our traditional destination, Eagles Nest on the Magothy. As the weekend approached, however, the forecasts grew a bit ominous. A high north of us and a low east of us were expected to produce strong northerly winds on Sunday, making for a potentially "bad" beat home for those of us north of the Magothy.

I had begun to reconsider the destination when Hank Zerhusen suggested we switch to Worton Creek, which would be an easy trip up and across the bay Saturday and a potentially "fun" ride downwind Sunday. So that became the plan. *Octavia*, with the Zerhusens (and the Folands, along for the ride), *Nik of Time*, with Commodore Lee Benedict on board, and I aboard *Breezing Up* made plans to meet there Saturday afternoon. Andy and Usha Monjan indicated early interest in going, but canceled based on quite reasonable concerns about the weather (potentially cold and windy).

The Zerhusens and I departed Hammock Island around 11:00 a.m. I was leading the way out of Bodkin Creek when my engine temperature alarm got my attention (see below).

After a two-hour delay, we headed out again. After a nice sail most of the way on stronger-than-expected southerlies, *Octavia* and *Breezing Up* approached the mouth of Worton Creek under power. I raised Commodore Lee aboard *Nik of Time* and learned he had just arrived and was on his lunch hook inside the creek. The Zerhusens agreed to drop anchor just north of Red #2 at the entrance, I rafted up with them, and *Nik of Time* joined us a short while later. As we were setting up for the traditional cocktail party, down in

Octavia's comfy and commodious saloon, the Delanoys rafted up, aboard *Agape*.

The delightful social "hour" ran on until shortly after 8:00 p.m., with enough food that some of us didn't have to cook dinner on board. Then, as agreed, the raft broke up, and we anchored separately. I enjoyed a cool night aboard *Breezing Up*, going up top around 1:30 a.m. to confirm that NOAA had gotten the forecast right, with the wind having shifted from the south to the north, and strengthening. The anchor seemed to be holding, so I went below and back to sleep.

Sunday morning was sunny and crisp. The winds were strong out of the north, but we were well protected near the northeast shore. Commodore Lee was the first to head out, shortly after 7:00 a.m. The Zerhusens and Folands, aboard *Octavia*, got underway around 8:00 a.m., and I followed shortly behind them. I rolled the Genoa out after motoring about two miles to the southwest. I followed *Octavia* down the bay under sustained 20-plus knots out of the north and northeast, and enjoyed a surprisingly comfortable ride back to Bodkin Creek, arriving just behind the Zerhusens at around 11:00 a.m. I checked my wind meter and found it had clocked a maximum of 36.8 knots along the way. Hank and Steve helped me tie *Breezing Up* into our slip. I cleaned up below, washed *Breezing Up* down, and enjoyed a warm bowl of soup for lunch, aboard *Octavia* (thanks, Jan!).

After doing a few odd jobs and relaxing aboard *Breezing Up*, and saying hello to the Delanoys, who arrived around 3:00 p.m., I headed home. I felt like like a "brilliant fool" for agreeing to the change of destination (brilliant) and forgetting to open the seacock on my engine cooling water line (fool). All in all, a pleasant beginning to the cruising season.

George Alberts

Boats Don't Get to Choose Their Owners

My owner and I have a genuine love-hate relationship. On the one hand, he pampers me and treats me to the finest of equipment and the best of professional mechanical care (he's a real Elmer with

tools in his hands). On the other hand, he abuses me no end--for example, running me hard aground in Florida (rather than asking for directions in an area being dredged), and crashing me into a channel marker piling under autopilot. It's gotten so bad that I now take our eight-year relationship on a year-to-year basis.

This weekend he did it again. Unaccustomed to the luxury of additional crew, he was understandably distracted when he welcomed Steve Foland on board for the trip from Hammock Island to Worton Creek. In his confusion, my owner remembered to check my oil level but forgot to open the seacock for the engine cooling water intake. He compounded that rookie mistake by not checking for cooling water discharging out the exhaust once he fired up my engine. This was an especially disturbing blunder on his part — he had treated my engine to some professional preventive maintenance this winter, anticipating a trip down south this coming fall.

So I made my usual effort to cover for him, in this case by sounding the engine temperature alarm as we neared the mouth of Bodkin Creek on our way out. Unfortunately, it took some time for me to get their attention. But once he caught on, my owner did the right thing by shutting off the engine and assessing the situation, before deciding (correctly) to sail back to the marina. The crew did a credible job on the first pass (with my assistance, of course), getting my bow pointed into the slip. However, they forgot to get a heaving line ready, and before they could recover from that mistake they were being blown across the fairway. They managed to work me out into open water, pushing off from pilings, with only a slight bump to my bow pulpit. They then bumbled their way across the water to the slips at Ventnor Marine, again pushing off from the pilings and managing, at long last, to get free and finally gain some momentum (after tearing the cover of the Life Sling against two of the pilings). They made a clumsy attempt to sail onto the end of our pier, coming in too hot and circling out to try again. At that point, Hank Zerhusen shouted a most helpful piece of advice, "suggesting" that they sail parallel to the end of the pier, at some distance off, then turn toward the pier, nose into the wind. Somehow they pulled that off, got a line to

the folks trying to help us tie up, and we were secure.

How many experienced sailors does it take to change an impeller? In this case, three. To my owner "Elmer's" credit, he remembered to check the coolant level — fine, and a good sign — and then pulled the impeller cover off, found that it had indeed been damaged, and produced a new impeller from his on-board stores. It seemed to take them forever to put the new one in, but they finally got it right. The key suggestion came again from Hank, who succeeded in getting the impeller blades depressed in the correct direction and held in place temporarily by cable ties, as they slipped it onto the shaft, fitted the cover part-way, cut the cable ties free and bolted the cover in place.

My owner then fired up my engine, they checked for and found no leaks, and I treated them to a rush of cooling water (and no smoke) out the exhaust. With a collective sigh of relief, *Octavia* and I headed out once again, only two hours late.

George Alberts, Breezing Up

The Sun Between My Topsiders

In 1982, Mary and I chartered a bareboat from Caribbean Sailing Yachts (CSY) in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Sailing in the BVI is heaven on earth for me — tolerated by Mary out of kindness to me. Bill and Amy Denison rounded out the crew.

First morning, at the CSY marina. There she was. *The Hornblower*. A cutter rigged, stern cockpit, 37 footer designed and built by CSY, tied stern-to at the pier. Fueled and provisioned for a week of island hopping through paradise.

Important footnote. The CSY 37 has a cushioned, semi-circular, 'U' shaped (as seen from the fore-aft axis) helmsperson's seat. The idea is that the boat can heel at any angle and the helmsperson can sit on a level seat by shifting the part of the seat sat on (I hope this phrasing is sufficiently delicate for all audiences). As I discovered from use, on long tacks, sitting on a horizontal perch in the manner that this seat permits is a comfort feature and energy saver for the helmsperson.

After a skipper's briefing on shore and the lengthy onboard check-out of the boat with a CSY staffer, I was in a hurry to get underway. Picture postcard-type places to go to; white, palm tree lined beaches to see; warm, clear, amber colored water to swim in; rum and Cokes to drink; brilliant, hot sun to sunbathe in; picturesque anchorages to anchor in; Mary in her bikini. But I get carried away.

OK. Everything and everyone was ready. The long awaited, eagerly anticipated moment had arrived. Time to drop lines and head out. The wind was dead astern, perfect for an easy departure from the slip.

My exit plan was simple. Mary, Bill and Amy would be stationed on the bow to remove dock lines from pilings forward as we motored past them. I would untie the stern lines on the pier, hop on board, put the engine in gear and slowly motor forward to clear the pilings, then turn left — er, to port — and out into the Sir Francis Drake Channel.

I couldn't help noticing that the CSY staffer who had given us our onboard checkout was idling about on the pier. I knew what this was about. CSY reserved the right to require me to take a professional skipper onboard for the week at my expense or cancel the charter if my boat-handling (or, more to the point, lack thereof) warranted in their judgment. The staffer was there to assess my seamanship in departing the marina. Confident of my ability and of the adequacy of the sailing resume I had submitted to CSY when applying for the charter, I did not worry about this detail.

Time to put the exit plan into action. Engine started. Crew ready. I stepped onto the pier and untied the stern lines, threw them aboard, and

stepped onto the stern as the boat started to drift forward thanks to the favorable wind. Looking forward to make sure that we were not drifting onto one of the pilings, I kicked over the taffrail and stepped onto the above-described helmsperson's seat. More specifically, I stepped onto the cushion at the upper edge of the semicircle or, if you will, the top of the inside of the 'U.'

Well, with remarkable speed, my foot and the cushion slid around the semicircular contour of the seat. I lost my balance and my body continued the rotation begun by my foot. In seconds I was inverted, hanging in air, heels over head, looking at the midday sun between my Docksidiers. It seemed like I was weightless, upside down in midair for ten minutes. In fact, however, the laws of physics were not temporarily suspended, and after what can only have been an instant, I landed on the cockpit deck with a crash, thinking, "Lotta' good my sailing resume is going to do me now."

The silence of the crew members on the foredeck and the observer on the pier was deafening.

No time to survey damage to pride or body.

I jumped to my feet, put the engine in gear and slowly motored forward clear of the pilings, then turned left — er, to port — and out into the Sir Francis Drake Channel. The crew came back to the cockpit slowly, quietly and without eye contact with me. Never heard a word from the CSY staffer on the pier. Why not, I do not know.

Lee Benedict