

DOCK LINES

2014



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From the Bridge

After a long and arduous winter, the harbor is finally starting to look normal again with Sail Georgina boats. While the ice raved havoc with the docks this year, the town was quick to respond getting things back up to snuff without delay. We wish to acknowledge and thank all of those who worked so diligently to make this happen.

I would also like to thank Jeff and all of those who have set the race course up. It looks like another interesting season with new faces and boats all up for the challenge.

Whether you are a cruiser or racer, I hope to see you out there.

David Goldstein
Commodore, SGA

From the Engine Room

It was a very busy spring for us which included a two week holiday in Cuba where we attended the wedding of one of our club members in April, and an amazing Adventure Canada Cruise to Sable Island, our newest addition to Parks Canada, our spring issue of Dock Lines rapidly became a summer edition. As usual, it is very difficult to fill our annual newsletter without the ongoing support of member contributions. I

look forward to any submissions to include in our future issues.

I would like to thank Nancy Clover of Tabasco for getting permission and passing on Carolyn's Tips on Selling a Boat, reproduced here unaltered; also Reg Blanchard for the article on our Community Sail program, and Neil on the naming of his yacht.

The delayed publication brings with it one advantage in that we were able to include mention of the two christenings in July and welcome the new yachts.

You will find another instalment of the New England cruise under Cruising Notes, and I hope you will enjoy some of the other ramblings.

Just a final note: I had a couple of queries directed through Dock Lines concerning membership, docking, and the Community Sail Program. Please go to our website www.sailgeorgina.ca where you will find all the information, application forms, and contact info. There is also a listing of all the executive members, together with their email addresses.

Hessel Pape, Editor



By Carolyn Shearlock

Last week I got an email asking for tips on preparing a boat for sale -- specifically for taking photos and showing it.

Having just been through the joy of wading through hundreds of listings when we were looking for a boat, as well as having bought and sold one in the past, I'm happy to share a few thoughts. These apply whether you're selling the boat yourself or working with a broker.

Let's start with the fact that almost every search is initially conducted online. The photos and description are what's going to make someone call or come visit. And for people like Dave and I, who live 500 to 1,000 miles or more from a boat, we really want to have a feel for a particular boat before we commit to the time and money involved in a visit.

My belief is that 100% honesty and transparency is best in listing a boat. Yes, you want to present it in the best light but you don't want to "trick" someone into thinking it's something it's not. What's important isn't getting hundreds of people to look at the boat; it's getting the one right person to look at it. Great, accurate, inviting photos and a detailed description of the boat will do it.

If you are planning to use a broker, start by

looking at the broker(s) listings. Are they well presented? Do the photos make the boat look inviting? Is the information complete? If you don't like how the broker is showing other boats, don't use him/her for your boat -- there is no reason to believe he/she will do a better job for you. No matter how personable they are, if the online listings aren't appealing no one will visit in person.

On the other hand, if you're planning to sell the boat yourself, spend some serious time -- maybe 4 or 5 hours -- looking at listings online. Make note of what's included in listings that you like (doesn't matter if you actually like the boat, just whether you like how it's presented). Pay attention to how the photos are staged and how descriptions are worded. What makes some listings stand out? How can you apply those lessons to your boat?

Next, begin by de-cluttering and de-personalizing the boat. Prospective purchasers want to imagine themselves on the boat and so removing family photos, the kids' drawings and so on will go a long ways. I know. It's hard.

Clean, clean and clean the boat some more. Make it sparkle! Pay particular attention to the galley and heads. Clean the oven, defrost the refrigerator, clean inside every locker and straighten the contents.

To take the pictures, use a camera with a ultra-wide-angle lens. Not a fisheye, but one specifically designed for small spaces without distortion. This is what separates great boat photos from the merely good -- the ability to get much more of each "room" in the photo. This will make the boat look much more roomy. Using a typical point and shoot or cell phone camera just won't do justice to your boat. A good broker should have a good camera and know how to use it; if you're doing your own, ask friends who are into photography if they have the necessary equipment and might be willing to do the photos for you -- or think of hiring someone.

Pick a nice sunny day for the photos -- the sunlight coming through ports and hatches will make the boat look much better.

If you're living on the boat, or if it's being stored, there's probably a certain amount of clutter on the boat. But the photos don't have to reflect that. Clear each area of the boat as photos are being taken (never let the broker take the photos without you being there to do this!). Yes, it's a lot of work but the boat will show much better. A prospective buyer wants to see the v-berth, not five bags of sails, 3 PFDs and whatever else is laying on the v-berth.

Some people and broker like to "stage" the photos with linen and dishes on the table, pots on the stove and so on. I'm not a fan of this as I want to see exactly what's there, but I know it's a personal issue.

Take lots of photos -- 50 or more is not unreasonable as some won't turn out well. Thirty or more in the actual listing is not unusual (if you're using something like SailboatListings.com or Craigslist where the number of photos is limited, remember that you can email more to interested parties). But those should not be of the same items, just from a different angle. Use close ups of all electronics. Avoid the temptation to use professional photos from the manufacturer --

people want to see the actual boat being sold (I get furious over "sistership" photos when I'm looking).

Look at the photos as you take them to make sure they're sharp, totally in focus and that you don't have "stuff" in them -- a power cord hanging down through the center of a picture, books and eyeglasses on the nav station, a dirty glass in the galley sink, makeup on the counter in the head, whatever. Also make sure that there is nothing in the pictures that's not included in the sale. Retake as necessary. NOTE though -- don't try to hide any problem areas. In fact, take a photo specifically of the problem. As a buyer, I get very suspicious when I visit a boat and discover that a book "just happened" to hide a stain on the upholstery. I wonder what else the seller is trying to hide and tend to walk away.

Once you have all the photos, edit them as necessary. Delete the ones that are blurry or otherwise bad. For the good ones, I'm not saying to "Photoshop" them and alter what's there, but crop if helpful and also add arrows or circles to point something out if it's not immediately obvious. Give the photos names that clearly explain what something is (if the online listing lets you caption photos, do that too). Seeing "Photo 1" doesn't tell me a thing about what you're trying to show.

Video or not? If you are going to use video, my feeling is that it should be in addition to still photos, not in place of them. Frankly, Dave and I never saw a video that was particularly helpful -- we preferred still photos where we could look at one for a while and discuss what we saw. If you opt for video, it's better to narrate what is being shown than have music in the background. I tend to prefer an edited video with narration added in post-production than someone trying to talk and film at the same time.

Now it's on to the description of the boat. Depending on where you list it, you'll have different limitations and formats. I recommend having a separate document that

can be sent to interested parties that lists absolutely everything about the boat. If you can, save your basic document as a PDF so that no one can alter the document on you.

Now, from the complete list, create your description or give it to the broker for them to do the same. If you're selling it yourself and have only limited space to describe the boat, try to hit the big ticket items that make your boat attractive (electronics, dinghy included, rebuilt engine, new sails . . .). If it's a production boat with many built, there's no need to rehash features common to all if you're short on space. If you're not confident of your writing skills -- or if you're not a good speller -- ask a friend who is for help. Spelling in particular is important as people enter search terms and if a word isn't spelled right in your description, it won't show as a match.

The listing itself. If you're working with a broker, ask them to tell you the minute it's online and immediately check it for accuracy as well as for how well it shows your boat. Insist that any inaccuracies be corrected immediately. Yachtworld, which most brokers use, lets people set up alerts for new listings -- and these tend to be people (or their brokers) who are serious buyers. Don't let them see an inaccurate listing for your boat!

If you are listing it yourself, enlist a friend to look at the listing when it's at the "proof" or "confirm" stage. It's just too easy to miss mistakes when it's something you've been working on. A fresh set of eyes will pick up things you miss. If your friend is a boater or in marketing, so much the better.

Finally, pay attention to how similar boats are listed. For example, we just purchased a Gemini catamaran made by Performance Cruising, Inc. On Yachtworld, over 90% are listed as "Gemini" in the manufacturer/model field. On Sailboat Listings, they're listed as Performance Cruising. You want yours listed as the others are so that people using the search function will find your boat.

Showing the boat. Even if it's a broker who is actually showing the boat, it's up to you to ready it. It should be 100% clean, fresh smelling and clutter-free. Prospective buyers will be opening pretty much every locker, so make sure that they are neat and organized (if there is just too much stuff crammed in there, it pays to remove some of it, even if you have to rent a storage unit). If you want people to think that there is plenty of storage space, make sure that there is a bit of empty space in every locker (very important in clothing storage areas).

If you have any funky head smells, do everything in your power to rid the boat of them. I highly recommend Marine Digest-It. Baking soda and simply airing the boat out will help too.

And finally, make the boat look appealing. This is where I'd stage the boat -- lay out the table as though dinner is about to be served, put fresh flowers on the table, plump up the throw pillows, open the hatches (assuming it's not raining), put fresh towels in the head, fresh sheets on the bed, and so on. Absolutely no tools or paint in sight!

The above first appeared on **The Boat Galley**, <http://theboatgalley.com/>

Also check out:

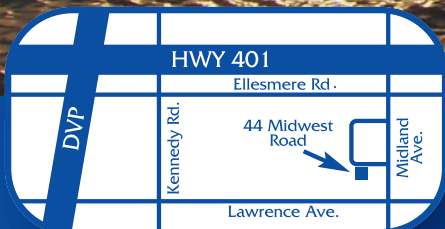
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Sail Georgina's Best Kept Secret

(At an Unbelievable Low Cost)

The Community Sail Program - access to a fleet of sail boats, and much, much more.

How it all started:

Sail Georgina is a pretty cool secret, located just 48.5 nautical miles north of "Toronto", and where a group of scurvy sailors started a Dinghy Sailing Club at De La Salle Park in 1984. When that location was no longer available, not to have the wind taken out of their sails, they moved to their present location at Jackson's Point Harbour in 1999. The little Club started over with a clean slate and with a few slips but she was destined to grow. Today the club leases some twenty slips from the Town of Georgina and now docks yachts up to over thirty feet in length. In 2002 the dinghy docks were added and in 2004 Sail Georgina established its own sailing school. With Trillium Grant Money a fleet of CL-16's was purchased. Because the Sailing School ran only for several weeks during the summer, and when later the sailing dinghies were no longer used for their original purpose, they sat idle for much of the time. The club soon realized that they provided a great opportunity for use among the members of Sail Georgina. Especially the sailors who did not have their own boats and crewed for others, now had a chance to go out and be master of their own little ship for a while. This, in turn, led to an invitation to the community at large to use the sailing dinghies as well, and for an extremely reasonable yearly fee anyone could go out for a sail. Participants were to receive instruction by a qualified club member if required, be checked out, and become part of the program. Thus the present day Community Sail Program was born, becoming a service offered by Sail Georgina to the community.

I enrolled in the adult sailing class in 1998 and received my White Sail One. During that course, the class was asked if anyone would be interested in running the Community Sail Program and while everyone else stepped back I just stood there "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea". Ever since then I have been known as Fleet Captain Dinghy. The Club officially "Pressed into Service" the position Fleet Captain (Dinghy) in 1999.

The Program includes:

- Access to the club's CL16 dinghies for personal use (Two presently rigged for trapeze)
- Dinghy Racing Program
- Crewing opportunities by invitation on board members' yachts for club races
- Voting rights at the SGA general meetings
- The right to hold a space on the SGA slip waiting list
- Social Activities
- Pot Luck suppers at the harbour
- And many more activities

All the above rights and privileges are offered at the unbelievable reasonable cost of \$130 for the entire season, a fee which basically covers the cost of the upkeep and maintenance of the dinghy fleet. To reiterate, this program gives people of our community at large access to a fleet of sail boats all summer.

And again, besides the annual fee, all that is required is to complete the Community Sail Checkout form (found on our web site) and have it signed by a Sail Georgina executive member before taking out a boat. This check out only needs to be completed once and becomes also valid for ensuing years. To reserve/sign out a boat it is best to contact the Fleet Captain. For further

information interested people can check the club website at www.sailgeorgina.ca and go to Activities > Community Sail.

I see the Community Sail Program as a self sufficient entity of Sail Georgina Association, for the benefit of the community and the senior members of the sailing club alike. I also believe that with a membership of around 30, and with the current annual fee of \$130, this little program will thrive, bringing sailing to a lakeside community at a very reasonable cost.

Sail Georgina, the Sailing School and the Community Sail Program are operated on non-profit basis. The club's sailing are repaired and maintained by club volunteers. Only lines, fittings that need replacing, and materials purchased for repair are paid for by way of fees collected. Similarly the spring launch and fall haul-out are done by volunteer labour on the part of club members.

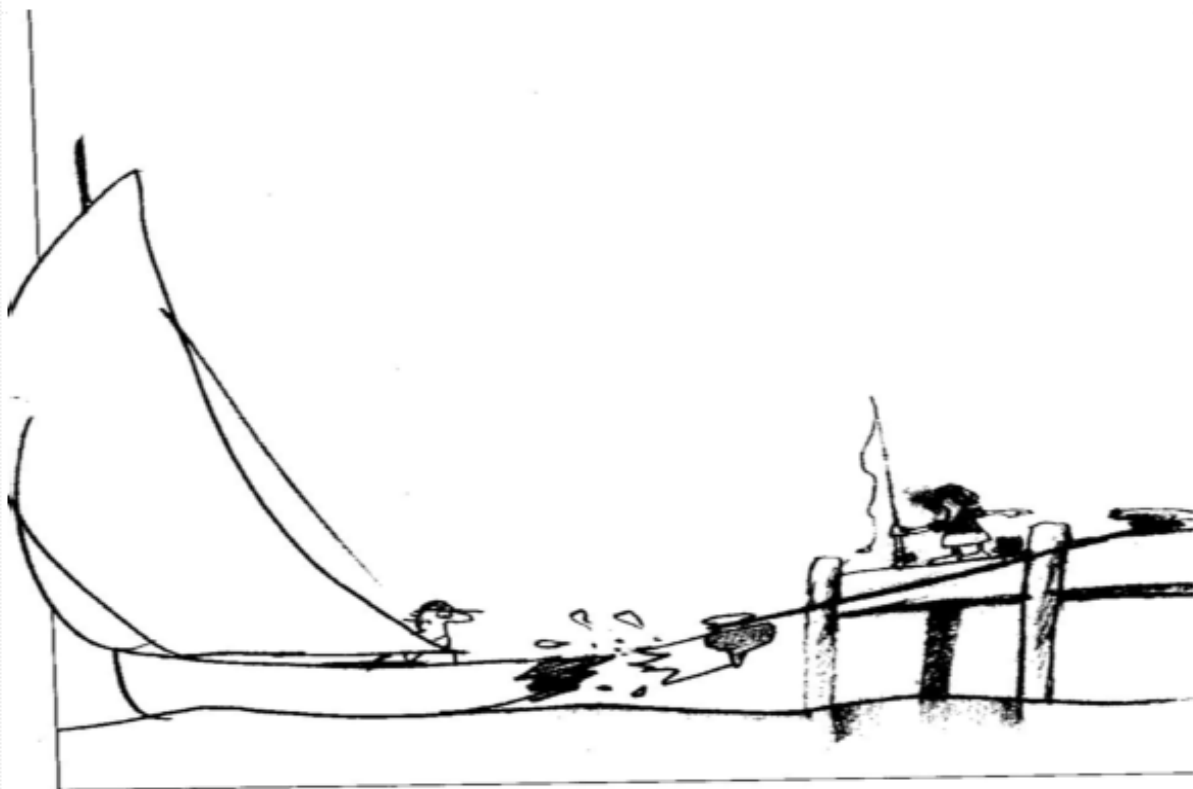
I would personally like to congratulate and thank the Executive of SGA for their support over the years to make this program (Sail Georgina's best kept secret) possible.

This is where I need your help - Please tell everyone you know about this wonderful program for if we don't grow I believe we will slowly take on water and founder.

Reg Blanchard (SGA Fleet Captain
Dinghy)

PS this position is for "sail"

May the sun always be over your Yardarm





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IT IS TRADITION

I remember many years ago when we signed up to learn the mystique of operating a ship, we all became initiated in the ethics and unique practices of life on the waters.

“We all speak a special language,” we were told, and, “There are many traditional and different ways in which we behave on the water. As seafarers, once we leave the shore, the wind and the elements are an undeniable leveler for of each and every one of us. We all become the same, no matter what our station in life on shore. We all become treated the same by what awaits us out there. We therefore must all follow the same rules and follow the age old traditions and customs of the sea.”

We had two instructors to teach us back then, and upon looking back, it now occurs to me that the year we took our basic course it was but twenty years after the end of the Second War. Both Earl and Fred had served in the Canadian Navy and were both well versed in the subject. You followed the rules, Navy traditions, tried and tested for centuries and coming down to us from the British experience of such famous people as Drake and Nelson. Of course, the Canadian Navy was very much based on British tradition, including all the pomp and ceremony that went along with it.

Earl was very much the one set on seamanship, ethics, rules of the road, and the correct conduct aboard ship and taught the first part of the course during the ten weeks before Christmas, while Fred dealt with the practical aspects of the compass, chart reading and laying out courses and taking bearings, etc. Of course, this was before GPS, though electronic navigation did exist, including R.D.F., radio direction finders, low frequency transmitters (below the A.M. radio band). On

Georgian Bay we had six of them, each transmitting a distinctive letter in code, each on the same frequency for one minute in succession. Hope Island transmitted the letter F (..-.). The R.D.F. radio with a rotating aerial on top could usually find the direction of a beacon if within range.

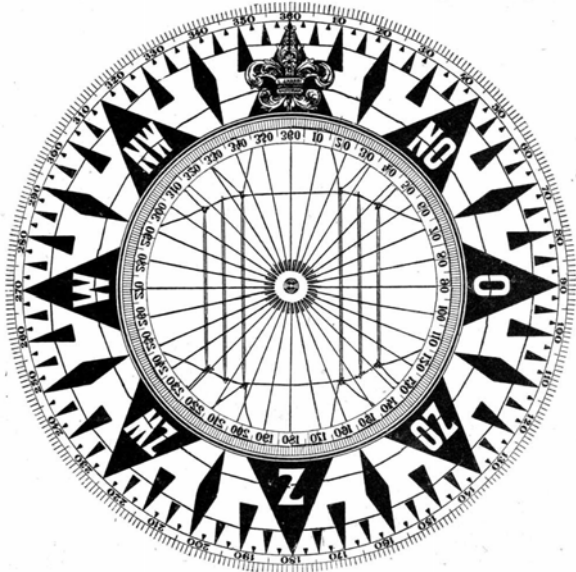


A model of a Cinque Port trader - mid twelve hundreds.

Of course “port and starboard” were the first terms learned as well as the other directions such as “off the bow” and “off the quarter” of the ship. At one time the left side was called the “larboard”, but it sounded too much like starboard, especially in stormy conditions out on sea. Hence the term was changed to “port” or “port side” since in very early days it was the side of the ship tied up to the quay, also the result of tradition, since originally the small traders that plied the coasts of Europe, such as the Cinque Port ships, had no rudder at the stern as we know it, but one lashed to the right side, the “steerboard” side of the ship.

For some reason the names of many items on board differ from those at home. We have “berths”, not beds, and the kitchen is a “galley”. The one I like best is when I sit on my “head” when doing my business on board. This rather old term for the toilet came from the days when there were two wooden boards

with round holes installed at the bow, or the “head” of the ship for the purpose. Someone asked me recently, why not at the stern. Upon thinking about it, it occurred to me that it would not be to pleasant for the man at the helm, nor would the captain appreciate the result dropping by his windows at the stern, or worse, hitting them when the wind is abaft.



An old Dutch version of a compass card showing points.

And then there is the compass. While today we use degrees, in olden days compass cards were subdivided into “points” - 32 points to a complete circle, one point equals $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$. These were named, not numbered and a seaman learned early to “box the compass” by naming all the points, forward, and backwards too! There were also half and quarter points when a smaller subdivision was needed. The cardinal points, North, East, South, and West - and the intercardinal points, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest - are still in common use as rough directions and as descriptions of wind direction. Points such as NNE, ENE, and so on are sometimes used, but directions such as NNE by N, or NNE by E, and their like seem now to be relegated (often erroneously) to

movie or television drama.

On a totally different subject, much of today’s ceremony is rooted in old ethics and traditions. The Sailpast or the actual “review of the fleet” is steeped in more than 600 years of Royal Navy tradition and history, and was introduced in Yacht Clubs as a continuation of the naval habit of having admirals (and/or royalty) review the fleet on special occasions. Protocol demanded that a flagship be anchored with the Admiral and staff on the quarterdeck to receive and return the salute. Vessels sailed past, dipping their colours in salute, and with their captain also saluting, with their ship’s company standing at attention. The Vice Admiral would lead the fleet passing in review, and the final vessel would carry the Rear Admiral.

For Yacht Clubs the Sailpast tradition began nearly 200 years ago with the first club formed at Cowes in England. The membership at Cowes was mainly aristocratic and many were familiar with naval practice and tradition. Cowes Yacht Club eventually changed its name to the Royal Yacht Squadron and certain social graces were added to the traditional naval practices.

Most yacht clubs follow the naval practices, except that the salute is received by the Commodore instead of the Admiral. The salute is delivered by the passing boat, if under sail by luffing its jib, or if under power, by dipping its ensign. All the crew on the saluting boat, preferably in dress whites and with blazers as an option, stands in attention, on the forward deck if possible, and facing the Commodore, who is the only one to salute by hand.

Protocol dictates that until the Sailpast is completed, only the flagship may be dressed (while at anchor). However after the sailpast, all participating yachts are encouraged to dress on returning to their dock. (Ships are never

dressed while on their way.)

By precedent, the Sailpast is a formal event that officially opens the boating season. Tradition dictates that all club members participate in the Sailpast, on their own yacht or on another member's yacht. Good manners require that a member unable to participate will send his/her regrets to the Commodore.

It is said that the Sailpast ceremony goes back to the earliest origins of the traditions of the sea. One of the earliest references can be found in the Iliad which states,

"After two years of preparation the Greek fleet of more than 1000 ships and an army of 100 000 men assembled at Aulis, a port in Eastern Greece, for a Sailpast of Troy." From this event came the famous line that "Helen of Troy had the face that launched 1000 ships."

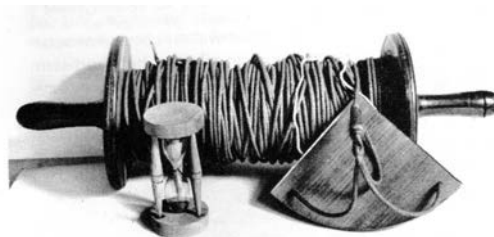
You cannot teach an old sea dog new tricks. I do not think that the metric system has any place on the water. I much prefer feet and fathoms for measuring depth and find it disconcerting to learn from the Coast Guard on VHF that the "weekly water level for Lake Huron taken at Godrich is 0.2 meters above datum. Our yacht draws 4.6ft. According to the specs, so . . .

Worse is the measurement of distance and speed. How often was it that it was drilled into us that "one minute of latitude equals one nautical mile." It is so convenient to go to the East or West margin of the chart with a pair of dividers to get the distance. As well, a quick glance will quickly remind you of the scale without unrolling or unfolding the chart to find the title block.

A nautical Mile, abbreviated to a upper case M (as opposed to a statute mile symbolized by a lower case m), is in some countries referred to as a "sea mile", and is

somewhat longer than the land mile, measuring 6080ft. (Nearly 2km). The statute mile is equal to 5280ft.

Speed is another issue that argues with the use of the metric system. While our sumlog can be set to metric units, I much



The old chip log, consisting of the log-chip, log-line, and log-glass. The log-chip is a thin piece of wood weighted so that it will float vertically. The chip is thrown from the stern and the log-line is allowed to flow freely over the rail. The line is marked at intervals of 47 feet 3 inches, called "knots" and the number of knots that pass over the rail in the time that it takes the glass to empty is a direct measure of the speed.

prefer the traditional units of measurement: Miles and knots (nautical miles per hour) The term "knots" is not to be confused with "nautical" but refers to the old practice of the knotted log-line as explained above.

Also worth mentioning are the age old calculations we used to determine the relationships between speed, time and distance, namely 60 D street, or rather:

$$60D=ST$$

when time is measured in minutes. What with modern instrumentation, including GPS course plotters, we don't seem to need much of these "ancient" tools any longer. Even on extended cruises we seldom plot our courses on our charts, or find our position through dead reckoning.

Perhaps those of us who had our indoctrination into the old traditions of the sea are lucky in that we have some knowledge of the way things used to be done should the modern gizmos break down.

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THE HARDWARE STORE UNDER THE WATER TOWER

Sail Georgina Welcomes New Yachts to Its Fleet

This season of 2014 saw several members leave on a sabbatical or depart permanently for other waters. We will miss them and wish them fair winds.

This year's additions at the docks include *Esprit de la Mer*, a Tanser 26, owned by Brad Jones, who has returned to the club



after a lengthy absence. In July he took his ship for a two week cruise to explore Georgian Bay, hence the lowered mast in order to pass through the Trent Severn Canal.

We welcome Sue & Bob Fortier and their J27, *Wild Hare*, and wish them many great days on the waters of Lake Simcoe and beyond.



We also welcome to our midst this year our new member Neil McLaughlin and his yacht *Sonars*, a beautiful Hunter 33, of which a little more later.



Our Past Commodore, Tim, former owner of the 25ft. *Summer School*, fulfilled his dream and passion for a larger boat with his acquisition of a Catalina 30, a new and larger summer abode, since Tim can be found living onboard at the club for much of the season. Being mostly retired from the field of education his new Yacht has been aptly named *Finishing School*.



Summer School, a 25ft. Northern, and Tim's former boat, remains at the club, now berthed at a different location with her new owner and new member Jason Moreau.

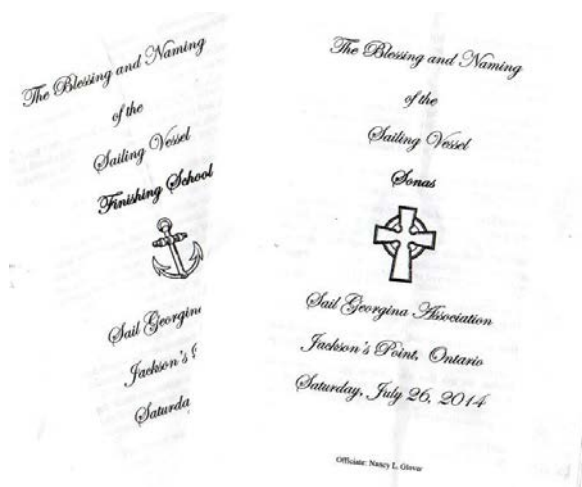
Jason, who spent time on the water sailing dinghies told us he is currently on a steep learning curve and ready to captain a

larger ship. We all welcome Jason as a full member of Sail Georgina and wish him great sailing.



The Blessing and the Naming of Two Yachts

Perhaps a first for our club - I can't be sure - were the two separate ceremonies held on the dock on Saturday, July 26, to formally christen two ships. Past Commodore, Nancy, officiated at the proceedings to name (rename) the two new boats that joined our fleet. Both ships, mentioned above, had previous names and according to proper tradition the first part of each ceremony, addressed to the Lord of Sea and Sky, began with a prayer to de-name the vessel, all thoughtfully written up in well



prepared program folders for those of us who attended. The two ships involved were Neil's Hunter 33, christened *Sonas*, and Tim's

Catalina 30, renamed *Finishing School*. To quote just a small part of the ceremony for each ship,

"Lord of Sea and Sky, we rededicate this vessel to your domain in full knowledge that she shall be subject to your laws of the wind and sea."



Tim and *Finishing School*.

The captains were each asked to say a few words and tell us about their choice of names for their vessels. For Tim *Finishing School* seemed quite obvious, having more or less retired from his profession, and as a logical progression from his previous boat.



Neil christening *Sonas*

Neil took a few moments to explain his choice for a name, and below, under a separate heading, Neil speaks for himself. The ceremonies were aptly concluded with the traditional Champagne over the bow and the toast by all present.

The Naming of Sonas

by Neil McLaughlin

Sailing for me has always been an escape from the pressures of work and just life in general. Being on the water has been a passion for me all of my life, no matter what sort of vessel, though sailing and racing were always out front.

I was accepted into the Canadian Coast Guard Officers' Training Program when I was 19. My desire was to one day be a captain and command a ship. However, my eyes let me down when the Coast guard discovered to both our surprise that I was colour blind. After a trip to Toronto to their HQ, and a failed "lantern" test, it was official, I was indeed colour blind. The Coast Guard offered to move me into the Engineering Program, but I would have none of that considering the likelihood of spending my career in the engine room. So, I dropped out and went back to school, eventually to graduate with a degree from Western in Business and Psychology.

Years ago, when I was racing Lasers, I had started thinking about the next boat name, and while Sonas had not yet come to mind, I knew that either in Mohawk or Gaelic I would find a fitting name, a name that would reflect my perspective on sailing.

About ten years ago my older brother did some family history research. He discovered and validated that my great grandmother was a Mohawk woman from the Deseronto area. That fact, if it was known by my parents (they had both passed away by the time we found out) was either hidden intentionally or people just did not seem to care about it. We may never know.

Last winter, when I was looking for a boat, I initially was going to buy more of a pure racer. However, after thinking about it, and talking to my wife and friends, I decided to go with a cruiser that could be raced if so desired. Bottom line, the boat needed to be a place where I, my family and friends could gather and enjoy such a time away from the

normal course of life.

After shipping the Hunter 33 to Crates from South West Illinois (Lake Carlyle) where I bought it, I finally had some time to get to know her and figure out a name. Even while sitting in the cradle at Crates she started to be a place of enjoyment.

I searched for potential names both in the Mohawk and Gaelic languages and determined the "Sonas" seemed best to fit to the various feelings that I had about the boat. From the Irish-Scottish Gaelic translation, Sonas is quite an old term and may be spelled and pronounced in several different ways depending on the dialects I chose to pronounce it like SOH-NUSS. It seemed to sound right for the boat and fit the nautical usage. The translation can mean the following: place of contentment, bliss, enjoyment, felicity, happiness, luck, passion, success.

So, there you have it. Sorry for the long note, but the naming did have a bit of history. Similar to Tim's naming of *Finishing School*, it also reflects a bit of the story of our lives.

I thank Nancy for the delivery of the blessing. Being there with so many new friends made it a very special day.

Neil McLaughlin

When my uncle met Auntie Fowling . . .

- * My Auntie Fowling insisted on a clean bottom.
- * When my uncle met Auntie Fowling, he went off the weed.
- * When my uncle met Auntie Fowling, he lost much of his strength. She got rid of all his mussels.

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CRUISING NOTES - PART 7

The coast of New England 1971

By Hessel Pape

In July of 1971 I spent a month cruising New England on board of a 26ft. Grampian with her "master" Bill S. How we prepared for this venture, set out from Newport, Rhode Island, with the intent to cross the 740 Miles distance to Bermuda, and how we decided to switch to an alternate plan, during the middle of the first week while battling hurricane conditions can be found in the previous six instalments of Dock Lines. At this point we have departed from Point Judith, a small commercial fishing port, East of Newport, Rhode Island, and plan to sail to Cuttyhunk, a beautiful sandy island that is part of the Elizabeth Island group on the North side of Vineyard Sound.

Cuttyhunk and Further.

As mentioned in the previous instalment, just sailing there would have been somewhat boring of course. Therefore Bill, my skipper, decided, what with a fresh breeze mainly abaft, that the spinnaker should be raised and make a show of ourselves. But don't ask what kind of a show.

Now, I don't think Bill had all that much practical experience with a spinnaker - he knew how it was supposed to go, probably from reading about it - but in my brief sailing experience I had never put one up. I told him so.

"No problem, Ole' Chap, just go up there and I'll tell you what to do."

A properly packed spinnaker, Bill explained, has its three corners right at the top in the sail bag, each identified by a coloured patch, red for port, green for starboard, and both for the head of the sail. Sounds great if it works. All lines, sheets and halyards, lead around the outside. Just hook'm up, tie down the bag, and haul away. When I did, and the huge sail slipped out of the bag, we sported a magnificent figure eight, blazing in the sun, ahead of the fore stay. While Bill, at the helm in the cockpit, was in charge of the sheets, or so I thought, the wind played and toyed with the sail, preferring to tangle it back into a figure eight, or streaming it straight out when the sheet line came undone. Eventually, though, we were able to fly it for longer periods of time, in the way other sail boats did, twisting only occasionally. Come to think of it, I do not recall a spinnaker pole - there just wasn't enough room to bring one along with all the other stuff we had on board.

On approaching the harbour of Cuttyhunk Island the spinnaker had to be taken down again of course, and tucked away into its sail bag, a bit of a chore in the still fresh wind. I did eventually wrestle it back on deck and into the bag, rather hoping that Bill had gathered in the sheet lines. It seemed, though that he had decided that the latter was part of my function as sail gatherer. Instead he decided to start the engine and make for harbour. It started very well and stopped just as sudden when he put it into forward gear. The end of one of the spinnaker sheets, still tied off at a cleat and disappearing overboard, had become rather tight. Reacting quickly, he threw the transmission into neutral, restarted the engine, and threw the gearshift into reverse. The engine stopped abruptly again for a second time.

Some colourful language was followed by an order to lower the mainsail. This done, and now drifting about powerless - fortunately the sea was comparatively benign - from somewhere in the bottom of one of the cockpit lockers Bill collected a diving outfit, which he donned. Equipped with a suitable knife he went overboard and successfully cleared the line from the prop shaft.

Now, the gearshift between the engine and the propeller shaft works on a conical principle, one for forward and one for reverse. The thrust of the propeller forwards or backwards kept the shaft engaged. Having thrown the lever smartly into reverse at the first sign of trouble, the transmission had engaged itself firmly into the reverse cone. In other words, it was stuck.

That was how we motored, backwards, into Cuttyhunk Harbour, and tied up to an old rusty barge at the end of the dock. John Cotton was there, shaking his head, to help us and hold our lines till we were ashore to secure them. Explaining what our problem was, John replied,

“Thank God! I thought you were some damn fool making fun of Canadians,” he said, pointing to our Maple Leaf flying off the back stay. “So, where you from?”

John Cotton turned out to be private investigator from New York. He was the real thing, not just someone from the movies or TV programs that we watched in those days. Asking whether we had supper yet, he came aboard with an offering of steak and salad which we devoured. Then John suggested that he would give Bill a hand with the transmission in the morning. Bill felt sure it would have to be taken apart at once.

“Relax,” was John’s easy advice. “You’re on a holiday. Come spend the evening with us.”

Aboard his traditional wooden 32 foot motor yacht, a gorgeous old boat, he plied us with Crème de Cacao and vodka, and entertained us endlessly with his numerous stories. He made Perry Mason seem like an amateur.

In the morning Bill had me go up the mast again to do some work on the lines. I had him send my camera aloft for a couple of pictures. John Cotton eventually woke and came over. He and Bill had a look at the transmission. After some time and discussion, John seemed to have a typical American solution - give it a good wack! He went back to his boat and much to Bill’s distress, he returned with a heavy sledge hammer. Without much ado the problem was eventually fixed with a piece of bronze and a good “tap” with John’s sledge. It never gave us trouble again during our trip, but I heard much later that the shift became stuck on several more occasions and that Bill had a piece of bronze on board for the purpose.

Bill had found our new acquaintance an interesting sort of chap to chat with. I suppose it was because both dealt with the law, each in their own way. It seemed to take his mind off his persistence to keep moving. We went to the village to have a look around and found it very quaint. Small cottages behind white picket fences sat here and there along sandy roads on the island, while all over climbing roses in profuse bloom sent out their unmistakable fragrance. It seemed that the ocean sea air strengthened their perfume, and carried it much further afield than back in Ontario.

We spent another evening with John Cotton on board his boat, and left early in the morning, Friday, the 16th, sailing up Vineyard Sound, making brief stops at the harbours of Martha’s Vineyard, including Vineyard Haven, Oak Bluffs, and ending up at Edgartown for the night. Unfortunately the stops were all too brief, usually a hurried trip into town for one thing or another, though long enough to be impressed with Oak Bluffs and its huge ornate wooden hotel buildings and the delightful colourful little houses profusely bedecked in gingerbread of all sorts of designs.

On Saturday morning, while tied securely to the old Edgartown municipal dock, complete with shore power, Bill decided to move the boat batteries to a new location, replace the cables, and install an isolation switch of the type which would allow him to switch over from one battery to the other, to both or neither. It was a job he could only himself complete, resulting in some welcome free time for me. Because Bill sent me on several errands in the morning, I had the opportunity to wander about and see a little more of the summer haven. Edgartown mainly consisted of larger, stately homes, all built of wood, very impressive, and all neatly painted. I was told that the sea air is very kind to wooden buildings and tends to preserve them for a long time.

By late morning I settled down with a beer by the open front hatch of our boat to write a letter home. Beside us on the dock there stood a large old fashioned shelter, square posted, and a roof line decorated with gingerbread, while around the shore line there were several wooden shingled shacks all with old docks dating back to the fishing days. Actually, there still was a great deal of fishing activity about, both commercially and for sport. Besides numerous large expensive pleasure craft at the docks and at moorings there were a good many cruisers equipped with high towers constructed above their flying bridges with yet another set of controls together with large fishing poles at their transoms, since the expected catch might weigh ten to twenty five pounds or more. They would bring in anything from herring to cod, flounder, swordfish, bluefish, or even good sized sharks - quite a selection of fish for good eating. Just around the corner from us, for instance, you could get swordfish burgers.

I had already tried lobster rolls, fried scallops, deep fried shrimp, larger than I had ever seen before, deep fried oysters, cohogs¹, a delicacy of a clam paste served hot on a round shell to which I was introduced in Newport, while later and not to forget, the steamers at Noank, and the Boston clam chowder, which I had never had before. The latter was definitely a favourite of mine.

It was shortly after the noon hour when Bill popped up from the main hatch, suggesting he would like a sandwich. Among the temporary disorder of tools and electrical paraphernalia I made us some lunch and planned to continue my letter home on the front deck a little later.



At the dock, Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard. Notice the Jerry cans with diesel for the engine, strapped on the side and the cannister on the cabin roof containing our primary life raft.

We had been sailing together for two weeks by this time, but the situation with Bill remained much the same; he was still perfect while I did everything wrong. We got along because I did not react to his critiques and said very little in response. Again, though, he could not resist to utter yet another censure. He had suggested I should plug in the kettle since we should use shore power as much as possible and especially since we had paid as much as \$5.20 to dock for the night, a considerable sum for those

days. Discovering that the kettle had remained cold, Bill could not resist remarking how stupid and sleepy I was at having forgotten to plug in the shore line that he had unplugged some time earlier to use his electric drill, while I was in town.

The previous day something had come up about the time for high water at Oak Bluffs when I had calculated a different time. Bill had forgotten to account for Daylight Savings Time, but he maintained that I was wrong and he was right. He eventually reworked his figures for Edgartown, which differs by only a few minutes, and came up with the right results. When I suggested he compare his work with the Oak Bluffs figures he told me that it did not matter any longer and that I should work more carefully.

Then, that very morning, there was an earlier issue about the tea kettle. Bill had risen early and while I was tidying up my sleeping bag, he remarked, "You haven't put your kettle on! That is the first thing that has to be done when we get up." He seemed to be of the opinion that I was hired crew he had brought along for his convenience.

I had become rather immune to such outbursts from him - they happened regularly but I kept quiet since I wanted to finish our trip together peacefully. After all, it was rather good experience and I did see a great deal of the New England coast.

Lunch finished, Bill went back to his project at hand, while I returned to the fore deck to finish the letter home. Not long after settling down, a motor launch pulled up along side with the harbour master looking critically at our little ship and wondering when we planned to pull out, since we appeared to have overextended our stay.

¹ Cohog - also written as quahaug, quahag, from the indigenous name quahog for a round, thick shelled clam, native of the Atlantic coast of North America.

“You must speak to the skipper,” I told him, wondering how Bill would deal with the annoyed official and adding, “He’s down below.”

Bill explained that we would not be too long and that he has pulled the battery cables, preventing us from leaving till the job was done. He promised, though, to leave in time to vacate the spot for the new rush of weekenders arriving later in the day.

I noticed that the wind was picking up a fair bit and that if we were to leave later in the afternoon, we would be in for quite a ride. Bill, much preoccupied with the job at hand, turned to me before disappearing down below again, and remarked, “Why don’t you go for a walk around town. This is a job I have to do myself.”

I took the hint and disappeared for a while, this time off for a walk without a specific purpose, but to soak up the ambiance of the place and be amazed at the large wooden homes which were but the summer residences of the rich. The people about reflected this as well, both by their looks of confidence in their postures, and their attire, elegant yet simple. The vegetation, also, seemed to reflect an air of richness. Large ancient trees, some tending towards the exotic, and the numerous bushes of climbing roses in full bloom abounded throughout. In particular I noticed many holly bushes not seen back home, and a reminder of a much milder sea climate reminiscent of Holland.

I returned to our boat just in time to hear some colourful language from down below. Bill had banged up his finger and needed a band-aid. It was but a minor injury, but our first excuse to bring out our first aid kit we had put together with so much care in the weeks before we left. As it turned out he had ended up “bringing along some odd and ends” as well, and had in fact two of those white plastic containers full of ointments and bandages. It seemed that all our careful preparations and all the time we had spent in June in anticipation for our sea voyage had been somewhat of a waste of time, although Bill had called it “good practice and a training exercise, a learning experience”.

“You see, Ol’ Boy, we trained our young fellows in the navy all the time to prepare them for the real thing.”

Food wise it was much the same. Not once did we follow the menu that had taken so much time to set up. My poor wife had sat for hours putting together a menu such that we would have varied and interesting meals, checking the supermarkets for what was available, and selecting foodstuffs keeping the amount of room on our little ship in mind. I suppose Bill considered it good training for her as well, but then I don’t think he had considered that she would never enter the navy. Our food supplies bought at the onset remained largely unused - Bill refused to touch any canned stuff because we could get fresh. Practically at each harbour where we stopped he has bought more food, or I received orders to do so. The grocery bill mounted. Well, he argued, it does not matter really, because had we stayed home we still would have to eat and such money would have been spent just the same.

“Any that is left over at the end of our trip,” Bill added, “we can divide up, or better yet, keep on the boat for future use.”

Since the arrangement was that we would share the consumable expenses, I was becoming rather concerned about the final bill.

I was terribly disappointed at the price of everything in the New England area. Bread and milk were both 40¢ and vegetables were also more expensive than at home. Clothing was much the same. The only thing I found to be much cheaper was beer and alcohol, generally sold all over. Since in those days Ontario was still rather conservative when it came to alcoholic refreshments, it was hard to become used to walking into a large grocery store and find its shelves stocked in profusion with wines, liquors, gin, whiskey, and what have you. It seemed that here in Edgartown there was more to drink than to eat. Canned beer was displayed on endless shelves, and in stacked cases on the floor like pop was in Ontario, leaving little room for food stuffs, or so it appeared.

While thinking of these things, relaxing on my bunk in the fore cabin of our boat, my reverie was punctuated by a series of curse words which floated in from aft because as Bill tested the switch he had just installed, the regulator protested loudly. It was a faulty switch he concluded, since it was simply impossible for

him to do wrong. The thing was that all the wires leading to and from it were supposed to be of the same polarity, namely positive. He probably selected and hooked up some wrong wires, but then, to emphasize again, Bill never did anything wrong.

It was his suggestion that we should go out for a lovely fish dinner. Afterwards, he had decided, we would do a night sail to Nantucket. No rest for the weary. In fact, back on Cuttyhunk John Cotton had remarked to me that he thought of Bill as quite a nervous fellow, one who could not sit still and one who was much to preoccupied with possible problems which did not exist. It had struck him, John had said, that Bill seemed to be afraid or nervous about his boat.

“He does not show it too much on the surface,” John added, “but it is there and the reason he must constantly occupy himself.” It was not a settling thought and I wondered whether I would have chosen to come on the trip had I known such things before hand.

As it turned out, the electricity went out all over the island late in the afternoon, and I ended up making our supper on board. We vacated our space at the dock in early evening, sometime after a late supper on board and, well beyond the time we should have done so according to the dock master, and set out on the open ocean once again for a course to Nantucket Island. Nantucket, a favourite subject of Limerick enthusiasts, lies Easterly of Martha’s Vineyard, well south of Cape Cod, and our trip to the harbour was about 30 Miles. The wind had dropped some and as usual blew from the South West, common in the area, and the sea was reasonable. Since it was a night crossing - we did our four hour watch routine again - we had several navigational lights to guide us. Our Grampian had a hybrid keel and with the keel-center board down we drew about six feet, necessitating some watchfulness with regard to our track since there were a couple of shoals to avoid in Nantucket Sound, especially around Cross Rip Shoal.

The actual harbour of Nantucket is well protected by a break wall, and quite a large basin mainly given to pleasure craft. Any wharfs that were on shore were taken up by fishing boat and a host of boat for charter if you wanted to go out and catch your marlin. Instead there were numerous moorings, many taken by expensive large yachts, and a number free for guests. We found one and hooked the float with the mooring pennant and tied up. We took out time making ourselves shipshape and had a leisurely breakfast to await a respectable hour to go ashore.

Now, we did not tow a tender to go ashore, but it turned out that the local yacht club provided a shuttle service to and from shore via a small launch which would come out to pick you up if you blew a horn. Of course, Bill had such an item on board. Our visit to shore was but a brief one, another stop at a hardware store and his usual search for radio crystals at a marine store. Unfortunately there wasn’t much time to look around because Bill seemed to feel that “shore leave” was a waste of time and of no interest to him. It was not long before he had us taken back to the boat.

The next leg of the trip took us in a generally Northern direction to Cape Cod. To Cape Race, and around to Provincetown was a trip of about 60Miles, including the avoiding of the shoals around Pollock Rip. On a whole, our journey, including a brief stop at Chatham, was largely uneventful. The sea was kind, the breeze steady, and our wind vane running the rudder blade of our wind steering gear did most of the work for us. A slight adjustment of the vane once in a while to keep us on course, while helm was tied off to account for weather helm, was all we needed to to.

“A good opportunity for you to wash out the cockpit, Ol’ Boy,” was Bill’s strong suggestion, while he went below to pretend to do some navigation.

We eventually put in at Provincetown harbour, around the North tip of Cape Cod. Our near disaster there, I will leave for the next instalment. For now, I will leave you while Bill and I go off to have a look around and admire from afar the reproduction of the Mayflower and visit the Pilgrim Museum and take in some quick history.
