

DOCKSIDE SCUTTLEBUTT

Issue 05-01

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The Newsletter of The Fanshawe Yacht Club of London, Ontario. Issued six times per year to Members and friends of the Club. Edited by Ralph Smith; contributions and comments welcomed and should be sent to:

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Art Seager

Once again, our valued member, Art Seager illustrates that he has not lost his skill as a graphic artist nor his dedication to our club. Each year Art recognises some member who in his opinion has contributed to the ongoing successful operation of our facilities. This year, he has recognized three members in this rendering. In his own words - - -

“This Scuttlebutt cover recognizes three of our members who probably spent most of last summer improving our Club facilities. Hans Schaffner and Brian Perry brought to fruition the Sailing School building conceived by Les Pomeroy and Len Macdougall. Sailor Mike keeps our docks looking neat and is shown taking “Rose” on the last cruise before leaving F.Y.C. for bigger waters.”

Thanks Art, for the “Art - work”!

Though he has been a member since last year, I didn't know Steve Hayhurst until our Annual General Meeting last month. When we adjourned, he approached me, identified himself and asked if I would like to see his article that was published in “Gam”. Always looking for stories of interest, I readily agreed. Lucky for all of us! Included in this issue is a great article, edited just a bit for room, an amusing story of the trials and tribulations of a mature sailor, in a boat new to him, competing with the likes of the Biskaborn boys! An entertaining tale that identifies problems to which most of us can relate and a description and promo of our Club in a national magazine that we could only hope for. Thanks Steve for submitting it to Gam and sharing it with us.

Watch out for the U.S. Coast Guard!!

- the old order is changing, yielding way to new, and the world is a less friendly place than it was a few years ago.

One sign of that unfriendliness is found in information from the American National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. This information has been added to the CPS boating course, and there is more about the regulations in this issue.

In a few words, Canadian boaters visiting American waterways need to be entirely knowledgeable about new rules, and completely vigilant that they don't break any of them. The consequence for being in designated restricted areas is "a quick, determined, severe response. Violators will be seen as a threat." The security zones in question include such seemingly innocuous spaces as cruise line facilities. All commercial port operations are now out of bounds. Stopping or anchoring under a bridge or in a channel will result in boarding by law enforcement officers. Approaching within 100 yards of a U.S. naval vessel or failing to slow to minimum speed within 500 yards of any U.S. naval vessel will result in six years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, "not to mention a quick and severe response."

CPS does a good job of promoting safe boating. We must be aware that teaching safe boating practices in the United States has taken on a whole new meaning. We must get this information out to CPS members and the general boating public.

We who live, or who have lived, along border waters are accustomed to sliding back and forth across a line which has not been permanently engraved into the waves. We will need to be much more aware of our location, and that means more attention to charts and navigating, even in such popular vacation spots as the 1000 Islands. Which shouldn't stop us from enjoying our boats, promoting CPS, teaching, serving in various volunteer capacities, and dreaming about the big cruise. The new world order just calls us to be a little more vigilant in our planning for next season's boating, and a little more aware of the need to provide our students and our members at large with accurate, up-to-date information.

Editor - From the Power Squadron publication, "Port Hole". Permission to reprint graciously given by the Editor in Chief and author of the article, P/R/C Joan Eyolfson Cadham, (and you thought I never asked!!)

THE "A.G.M." 2005

Another Annual General Meeting. How much closer together they seem to get!! A good turnout of the regular "movers and shakers" that form the nucleus of the club though it would be nice to see, say, 75% of the members in one place some time. But then, we would have to find larger quarters were that to happen.

Commodore Steve assumed the Chair for one last time calling the meeting to order. The Notice of Meeting was read, agenda recognized and we were underway. Commodore Steve had an impressive video display, a pictorial history of the events of this unique year.

First, we celebrated the hard work of Marc Lacoursiere in landing us a grant from the Trillium Fund. Politicians were on hand at the Commodore's Reception to present a "ceremonial" cheque to our Executive. The weather could have been better but the spirits of the group of members attending reflected the satisfaction that our club would get some needed amenities.

This fund provided funds first, for the replacement of our dilapidated boats the School has been using for a long time. Secondly, we were able to hire an "on-site manager", for the Sailing School, Fred Eidt. This provides more "hands on" supervision of the Instructors and is expected to maintain and even improve the quality that has been established. The repair of the walkway to the Sailing School dock was an absolute necessity as it was listing to the East and a "Person Lift" for the benefit of Community Living London clients was also a must. The Trillium funds are being put to good use.

Though we had one boat on display for the ceremony, the balance of the shipment of CL14's were delivered in time for the school start-up. To house the boats and to improve the Corporate Headquarters of the Sailing School, the "Boat House", in the planning stage for a couple of years, came to be. With good planning, good "connections" in some areas and with the hard work of several of our members, the construction of the Boat House came in on time and under budget! Not many projects under the direction of a committee can say that. And, with no tears, the old trailers were dismantled and taken away for good!! The funds from the Trillium Fund were not and could not be used in the replacement of the School buildings.

The rainy weather in May caused the Commodore's Sail Past to be rescheduled to a fine day later in the year though wine was provided only

once!! In fact, the “background” of my desktop is a picture my wife and I on our boat, rounding and saluting Commodore Currie on his. We are closely followed by the Dickinsons and Brian Perry. It’s a nice reminder that this cold weather won’t last forever! Thanks to whoever took the picture!

The Ontario Summer Games was an event that was run successfully at our Club. It was a success as far as completing the races and the contribution of many of our Club Members making the event possible was noted in earlier issues. However, we never know what constitutes success of these events in the minds of the OSA. Maybe we should have them tell us a bit more of the benefits to sailing these races contribute. Is this the farm team for our Olympic hopefuls?

One happening that was extremely disturbing was the collapse of the South ramp. Great portions of concrete, apparently undermined by erosion from underground springs, broke away, making the recovery of the larger boats a bit difficult. Thankfully, both docks were repaired when the UTRCA was able to lower the water level. All should be well but this is a reminder that if our big North dock ever collapsed, we would really be up the creek!

Included in the slide presentation of the Commodore were pictures and thanks to the many members who contributed greatly to the success of this year. We try to mention everyone who helps and indeed there are many and we are always fearful of leaving someone out and hurting their feelings. It is fortunate that we have some engineers, electricians and others with skills that were we required to pay for their services, we would be in dire straits. (Once, years ago, we had a lawyer as a member)

Commodore Currie concluded his year in office by turning over to the new Commodore, John Bryant, the gavel and the tattered old tie that has been seen by many but I doubt worn by any! It is a symbol of office sort of like the Mayor’s “Chain of Office”. Commodore Bryant’s words are shown as delivered.

The meeting concluded with a fine “social hour” where many carb’s were consumed and enjoyed!!

Quote from “Mainsail to the Wind”

Only two sailors, in my experience, never ran aground. One never left port and the other was an atrocious liar! - - Don Bamford, 1990

COMMODORE CURRIE'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE A.G.M.

JANUARY 24, 2005

Thank you for your support during 2004. This past year has been a truly exciting time to be the commodore of this club, as several major projects that we have been working on for several years were advanced from the planning stages to completion.

The "Sailing School Rejuvenation Project" that began with our application for a Trillium Grant and our plan to build a proper Boat House for the Sailing School was continued, and as a result we believe we experienced an increased number of students taking our courses throughout the summer.

Thanks to the work of our past commodore Marc Lacoursiere, we were awarded a Trillium Grant last year, mainly to provide new boats for the Sailing School. With the Trillium grant money, we ordered 8 new CL-14 sailboats for the School, and they arrived at Fanshawe before beginning of the 2004 School year. As the new boats arrived and went into service with the school, we were able to sell off seven of the old CL14's, mostly to the other members of Fanshawe Yacht Club.

The construction of the Boat House building for the Sailing School that we have been planning for three years was finally completed. This splendid new building has already provided much needed improvement to the sailing school operations, and was immediately used as the activity headquarters for the Ontario Summer Games, a prestige event for FYC.

The installation of a temporary hydro supply for the new sailing school building was completed. This system was built in such a way as to allow for a new, more powerful hydro service to be installed when funds become available.

The old sailing school buildings were removed completely during the Fall Work Party, greatly improving the appearance of our property.

In late November, repairs to the concrete walkway to the sailing school docks were completed, which addressed a major safety hazard.

At the same time both South and North ramps were repaired, allowing for the continued use of these valuable assets at our club.

A plan finalizing the a person hoist to enable the London Community Living members to utilize their boat more effectively was put in place.

The addition of the Sailing School Manager's position to oversee the daily activities of our sailing school, made possible by the Trillium grant, was implemented and made a significant contribution to the operation of the school in 2004.

In August, our club hosted the sailing events of the Ontario Summer Games at Fanshawe Lake, and we received many favorable comments about the organization and running of this prestige event.

Membership fees were not increased this year, except for passing on the increased costs from UTRCA and OSA.

We implemented a more transparent approach in reporting the discussions held at the executive level of our club enabling our members to be better informed as to how the decisions concerning the club are being made. These minutes were provided to the editor of the Scuttlebutt for inclusion in the newsletter.

Many volunteers helped with such major projects as the construction of the Boat House and the operation of the Ontario Summer Games. Their support and skills in all our activities are greatly appreciated – without their volunteer support, our club would cease to exist!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to personally thank all of you that have made 2004 a great year and look forward to a successful 2005 sailing season.

**Steve Currie
Commodore 2004/05**

Quote from "Mainsail to the Wind"

Protesting the New York Yacht Club is like complaining about your wife to your mother – in – law.

-Sir Frank Packer who funded and lead two unsuccessful challenges for the America's Cup

MEET COMMODORE JOHN BRYANT!!

FROM THE AGM JANUARY 24, 2005

Thank you all for your vote of confidence in my leadership for the coming year!

I've had some anxious thoughts in the last few weeks about becoming Commodore of this Club.

I've been on the executive for more than ten years as Secretary and I've greatly enjoyed the sense of community that comes from being aware of a great deal that's going on at the Club, without having to take direct responsibility for leading the debate or making those critical decisions that the exec has had to make to manage the Club and the School.

I've been able to dodge the Commodore bullet a few times in the past years, but this time was different. The system of recruitment to the executive in this club that relied on a member to progress from Fleet Captain through Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore and so to Commodore has very clearly broken down, and we are faced with having to recruit members without much past experience into the various offices. So last November, when Carl approached me to become Commodore this year, it was clearly time for me to step forward – and very hard to step back with Carl and Steve bearing down on me!

At this point I'd like to pay tribute to three members of the outgoing Executive that will be retiring this year.

Carl Holland – for his tireless efforts to persuade wary members to take offices in the Club, and for his invaluable advice on dealing with some difficult interpersonal matters.

Josie Scarlett – for managing much of our Sailing School activity for the past several years, much of it without the support of a functional Sailing School committee.

Brian Perry – for his service on the Exec for three terms as our Rear Commodore representing the Race Committee, and for his tireless work to build and maintain the physical assets of the Club.

The new executive for 2005 will be a major Changing of the Guard for the management of the Club as we have five new members to welcome to the executive:

Rose Eidt as Vice Commodore
Bob Kennedy as Rear Commodore
Mike Wareing as Fleet Captain
Peter Wilkins as Sailing School Director
Mike Calhoun as Secretary

I look forward to working with them and with Michelle Patten, who is continuing as our Treasurer, to keep the affairs of the Club and our Sailing School in good order.

The year 2004 was definitely a banner year for FYC, as we received the new boats paid for by the Trillium Grant, we completed the new Boat House building that will serve as the headquarters for the School, and we removed the old sailing school buildings to improve the appearance of the Club property. Each of these initiatives is an example of what can be achieved by our group of dedicated volunteers!

For the year 2003 while he was commodore, Carl Holland set three major objectives for his term of office:

The Trillium Grant – (that covered new Boats, repairs to the School walkway, and a personal hoist for disabled sailors)

The Boat House

Increase our Membership

Steve Currie as Commodore continued these three major initiatives through the last year and we have now achieved two of them, the boats and the boathouse, and in spite of the effort involved in building them, I might say these two were the easier ones to achieve!

The major objective that still remains for us this year is to maintain and increase our Membership. The Owner Members form the backbone of this club and their continuing support is what allows all our sailing activities on Fanshawe Lake to continue.

All our Public Relations, our advertising for Club and School, our Open house, and our Website are directed at informing the public about the fun and excitement of sailing and the comradeship of our club, and inviting

them to become members with us. During the coming year I'd like to emphasize the importance of all these activities to the continuation of our Club and support them wherever possible.

Over the years, it seems that the most reliable source of new members has been our advertising in the press, our open house, and by word of mouth among the boating community, and that plus the convenience of having a lake in town has brought a substantial number of cruising members to Fanshawe.

A close second in bringing in new blood to the Club is our Sailing School. The School provides

- A pool of young people that have experienced sailing and may come back to the sport later in life
- A group of highly motivated young people that serve as instructors and will likely continue in sailing
- A stream of adult students trained in the essentials of sailing that will continue in the sport, can become boat owners, and are the most likely source of new members for the Club

Our School has new boats, a splendid new headquarters, and new management with fresh ideas. Under the leadership of Peter Wilkins and Fred Eidt, I look forward to another successful year for the School in 2005.

Over the years, fewer and fewer members are taking part in our formal racing programme and it is becoming very difficult for our Race Committee to find enough members willing to volunteer to actually operate our traditional three regattas a year. The Race committee has decided to reduce the number of regattas to two, combining the Commodore's Cup and the June Bug regattas into one "closed regatta" to be held in June, and the open Pumpkin regatta in October. I'd like to invite other members to join me in training to become qualified to help with these regattas and support the racing at FYC.

In contrast to the formal racing regattas, the informal Wednesday Racing continues to be very popular with members – we have as many as 25 boats out for these afternoon and evening events. Many thanks to John Burgess and the others that organize and take part in this popular club activity!

Our Club can only be maintained in operation if members are ready to volunteer to help with all the tasks that have to be done. I'd like to recognize the efforts that Steve Currie and Carl Holland have made to encourage members to join in the work and fellowship of the club through the Work Parties and in the often unsung, but very necessary, tasks of the

Harbour Master, Dock Marshal, Parking Marshal, Safety Officer, and organizing the Annual Banquet.

Taking part in these offices around the Club, participating in the annual cruise to Northern waters, joining in the annual Open House – all these activities provide the fellowship that has been the hallmark of Fanshawe Yacht Club. So when members of the executive ask you to volunteer for one of these tasks, please let your name go forward – we can't do the job without you!

I look forward to another successful season of sailing and comradeship in Fanshawe yacht Club. Thank You!

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

From Otto

Our Membership Chairperson, Otto Biskaborn advises that we are getting mail returned from people who have moved a while ago. To send our newsletters, applications for the upcoming season and any other notices, we need to know where you live! Thank you for helping us keep our records up to date. It is especially important to have this information soon in order to have our upcoming Hand Book as up to date as possible.

Also, former Commodore Gord Stewart, his knee repaired and rested over the past summer, is ready to return to our Club this year. In fact, he and our inspiration to everyone, Ross Green, were the first ones to submit applications for this sailing season. Ross helps Sailor Mike with the carpeting of the tires and can be seen at work parties, safety boats and anywhere else where a helping hand is needed.

We credit "Otto" with providing this information. We need not use his surname as everyone must know him as he seems to be at the Club every time I am. Another major contributor to our sailing fun and we couldn't do without either he or Ross!!

* * * * *

Quote from "Mainsail to the Wind"

At some point during the race, you may be wet, cold, scared, uncomfortable, or even bleeding. This is normal! This is part of the fun!
Janice Mohlhenrich, 1997

Proposed Life Jacket Requirement Sinks!

Editor's Note: This item is from The Washington Post, Page 20 Community Section, September 9, 2004 .

Proposals to require recreational boaters to wear life jackets garnered little support during a recent public forum conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board in Ashburn, VA.

The federal agency has been considering such a requirement. Most states require recreational boaters to carry a personal flotation device for each passenger on board. However, no state mandates that they must be worn at all times, except by children. Recent Coast Guard research found that fewer than 5 percent of adults in open boats wear life jackets.

Nearly every sector of the recreational boating community at the forum last month - boating consumers, boat builders and dealers, life jacket manufacturers-either expressed strong opposition to a government mandate or failed to embrace the idea, according to representatives of BoatUS, an organization of 575,000 boat owners.

FYC Editor = The Editor referred to above is the editor of the Power Squadron publication, PROMOTO. Though we consider it prudent to wear PFD's when conditions warrant, we do not believe in wearing them in light winds on boats not likely to capsize. However, we do have any children on board so adorned. - RLS

ARCHIES

Please mark your calendars to reflect the changes in dates for our monthly get-togethers at Archies on Commissioners Road East. In February and March, we will convene on the Ninth of both months.

Hope to see you there in numbers so we can have a draw for a free meal! O.K., so we are late with the notice for February. Hope you make it to the March meet.

* * * * *

"If you wait to do everything until you're sure it's right, you'll probably never do much of anything." - --Win Borden

NOTICE

The General Meeting normally held in February has been postponed

The new executive has decided to hold the next General Meeting on Monday, March 21 at 7PM in the UTRCA building.

The Agenda for the March meeting is as follows:

- 1. Minutes of the AGM**
- 2. Presentation of the 2004 Audited Accounts**
- 3. Accounting policy**
- 4. Preparations for Spring Work Parties**
- 5. Reports from Committees**
 - Sailing School**
 - Open House**
 - Membership**
- 6. Officers' Report**

With the new faces on our Executive, it is understandable that they need some time to get established and to present an agenda that they deem important. It is hoped that there will be some help offered as it seems the workload contributes to the hesitation some show in volunteering.

Please plan to attend the General Meeting to help plan the operations of our club for the coming season, bringing your thoughts and ideas with you. However, I'll be in Florida at that time and will need someone to take notes for me. Any volunteers?

RACING AT FYC

by Jens Biskaborn

Last fall, after the sailing season and club closing activities were over, there was a racing meeting held at the UTRCA building. Only four people showed up: Rick Goldt, Jeff Eames, Brad Biskaborn (a non-voting family member) and myself. It's not hard to see that FYC club racing has fallen on some hard times.

At the meeting, we discussed the past sailing season and decided that FYC could no longer run the four major regattas, as there were not enough people willing to run these events. We decided to combine the Commodore's Cup and the June Bug into one regatta, open only to club members.

I personally enjoy racing, and the gradual decline in FYC members that race is very disappointing to me. Not only do we need to increase club membership, we need to increase the number of people who want to race.

To that end, I am proposing that interested club racers (and there are still some of us around) get together with the adult sailing school graduates on a Saturday afternoon(s) filled with short races. We would use school boats for these races as the graduates would be familiar with them. The FYC racing member would crew while the grads would skipper the boat. After each race, we would come ashore, and the FYC member would go to another boat, and then we would head out for another race. We could use a 3 minute starting sequence and the club starting line or the rabbit starting system. We would set out a couple of inflatable marks if required. The key is to keep things simple and maximize the time racing. It would be good if this was part of the sailing school agenda, so interested grads could plan for it, and the number of participants would be known.

I believe that this would be a great way to get grads more excited about our club and possibly start them on the road to racing. I am willing to give a couple of Saturday afternoons for this event, and I am sure that there are a few other FYC members that would also be willing to give this a try. I recommend that the Sailing School directors meet to consider these ideas. I would also like to hear from interested FYC racers willing to help. Thanks.

Editor – Sounds like a good idea, Jens, but what is a “Rabbit Start? Maybe my problem is I've been using the “Turtle Start”?

NEWS FROM THE PACIFIC NOR'WEST

By Derek Innes

In our 40 years of sailing, (1964-2004), this 20-30 minute experience I had on April 2, 2004 stands out as one of the most bizarre in memory. The day was sunny, crystal clear and fairly warm with light winds. I decided to sail our Dart catamaran out to the Haro Strait which is the border between the U.S. (San Juan Islands of Washington State) and Canada (B.C'. Gulf Islands.) This area was approximately 10 km from the launching ramp in Sidney.

When I got there, there was a keel boat which had stopped 30 metres ahead of me and the two sailors on board were taking photos. I slowly sailed over to see what was happening when suddenly 6 or 7 Dall's Porpoises began swimming at high speeds (25 to 30 MPH) a mere four feet below my hulls. Initially, I thought they were Orcas (or Killer Whales) as they had similar black and white markings. Remembering the film "JAWS" and the scene where the shark tips over the catamaran, I was quite alarmed!

For what seemed an eternity, I watched these sleek 7 foot marine mammals jump right beside me, then swim quickly under my hulls – sometimes two at a time, each going in a different direction. A favourite postcard out here in Victoria shows an Orca breaching. I thought to myself - "I'm in deep trouble if one of these guys comes up underneath me"! Unlike the keel boat, the Dart could capsize!! Seeing that I was quite anxious, the keel boat sailors kept calling out reassuring me that they were Dall's Porpoises and they were just putting a show on for our two boats. They told me that these porpoises would never hit the catamaran or their yacht as "they have better sonar than the U.S. naval ships".

In our two years out here on the Pacific Northwest, we have yet to see a Killer Whale. It is common knowledge out here that, in the waters off Southern Vancouver Island, there are 3 resident pods of about 30 Killer Whales in each.

When I got home, I told Marj., my wife, about my experience and she was so excited we both went to the same place the next day but didn't see a thing!

Dall's Porpoises: length 7 feet, Weight, 300 lb.s.

Orcas or Killer Whales: length 30 feet, weight 8 tons.

- - and from the Times Colonist of “The Capitol and Vancouver Island - - by staff writer Judith Lavoie

A gold River resident whose sailboat has repeatedly been attacked by Luna, the Killer whale asked his RCMP detachment this week to lay attempted murder charges against the Orca and the DFO.

The request was not taken seriously, said Keith Bell. “But, I told them that he’s going to kill someone out there and then they are going to get orders to shoot him.” And interim agreement between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation to monitor the five year old orca which has been accused of damaging several boats ended October 31. Although both sides say the agreement could be renewed, talks have yet to take place.

Bell has had three run-ins with Luna in his eight-metre sailboat. The whale broke the rudder and tiller and knocked the engine off its mounting. In desperation, Bell left the sailboat at Critter Cove last winter, but Luna found the boat. This summer, Bell brought the boat back to a logging camp near Gold River, but Luna again decided to dismantle parts of it. The final straw came last month when Bell and a friend were in his small aluminium Dinghy heading for his sailboat to install the repaired tiller. Although they were moving across the inlet as fast as they could, Luna caught them, Bell said!!

He lifted the boat right out of the water. Then he veered to the side and lifted us up again. He was just playing around but if he’d tipped us over, we’d have been in the water, he said. “I’ve lived in Gold River for 30 years and I just enjoy getting out in my sailboat but I haven’t been able to sail much for two years because of that whale”.

Mowachaht/Muchalaht Chief Mike Maquinna said band members have been taking an 8.5 M boat into Nootka Sound every day to keep the whale away from sailing and fishing vessels. The program has been successful because the First Nations boat is one of Luna’s favourites, says the Chief. Boating traffic is now dwindling but the Band plans to ask for an extension of the agreement. However, the Band has not yet received the \$10,000 it promised by DFO to monitor the whale so the Band has been relying on it’s own money and donations to keep the program running.

Editor – Thanks Derek, for sending us news of your neighbours!!

What a coincidence!! Just as I was ready to send a note to Derek Innes to see what is happening in Canada's version of "La La Land", he has come to life! Above are two articles illustrating the type of marine life that we in protected waters never encounter!! Our water may be green at times but nothing in it tries to eat us!! For the information of new-comers, Derek and Marjorie Innes were members of FYC for forty years and have represented Canada in Catamaran Races in several parts of the world. Derek advises that they sail 12 months of the year but they do have to dress a little warmer in December to and including February. Well, I enjoy blowing snow!! Always great to hear from them and we look forward to having them drop in at the Club any time they are in London!

WATER LEVELS FOR THE THAMES RIVER

are now available on the Web at www.thamesriver.on.ca - follow the link to "Thames River Levels".

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) monitors stream flow and meteorological data throughout the watershed as part of its Flood Control Program. At most stream gauge locations real-time data are recorded at least hourly for water level, rainfall, and air temperature. Information is posted daily on the web site during low flow periods, and more frequently during floods.

We presently monitor water levels and stream flow at 18 locations, rainfall at 16 locations and reservoir levels at 5 locations in the Upper Thames basin. Other meteorological data such as air temperature, wind speed, direction, and solar radiation, is also gathered at some locations.

The information provided by the monitoring system supports UTRCA flood management and low flow response. Of interest to our park's recreation users are water levels and discharges at our flood control and flow augmentation structures at Fanshawe, Pittock, and Wildwood Dams. The UTRCA and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) are working towards providing information for the whole Thames River watershed.

Editor – Thanks to Rick Gold for this information. It will be a great improvement to be able to monitor water levels without having to drive out to see for yourself!

“OLD GUY” RACING

BY STEVE HAYHURST

Reflecting on my lifelong sailing history last year, I realized the part that had been the most fun was one-design dinghy racing in and around the junior program at the Oakville Yacht Squadron as a kid in the early 70's. I was not alone in remembering. Dinghy racing in general was experiencing a renaissance and the Laser, in particular, had a comprehensive program of Masters (read - old guy) fleets and regattas. Perfect, I thought: small, light-weight, easy to handle and damned near the most popular boat ever built. An Olympic class, with a rigid one-design rule to boot; should be challenging enough for a former child prodigy like me.

After a half-hearted effort to find a competitive, late model used boat, I determined I should probably take all the competitive advantage that money could buy and get a new vessel.

The young guy from Fogh Marine was extremely helpful and answered all my questions throughout several visits over the winter. On more than one occasion, he looked at me somewhat dubiously and ventured that the Laser is a very athletic boat to sail. He allowed, however, that I was about the right weight to campaign it successfully. Naively, I thought, the boat has a 75 square foot sail, how athletic can it be? Very, is the correct answer, I learned to my chagrin.

Currently a resident of London, Ontario, I joined the Fanshawe Yacht Club where an active core of sailors race Lasers, Wayfarers, Dart catamarans and other dinghies.

Fanshawe is a small, man-made lake with heartbreaking, shifty wind patterns caused by the relatively high banks. Local wisdom has it that if you can race there, you can race anywhere. Local wisdom appears to be correct! Though not as large as it once was, the club remains a wonderful, friendly, do-it-yourself operation, the way I remember most sailing clubs before the boats got too big and the members too complacent. The Laser fleet includes a couple of members my age who have raced, and raced well, since the 70's. In addition, there are a number of young guys, all about seven feet tall, lean and hungry with shaved heads, who sail as if they were born on the damned boats. Needless to say, while helpful with rigging, tuning and trimming tips, and in spite of all my purchased speed, all summer they consistently handed me my head.

For my part, I have managed to be amusing as hell with all my new guy pratfalls.

On my first foray, a Wednesday-night club race in late May, to break myself in slowly, I rigged the boat, removed the trailer straps and proceeded to back down the ramp. A gust promptly blew the boat off the trailer. Fortunately, it landed on the gunnel and not the hull. Lessons learned? Lasers are launched from dollies, not trailers and the mainsheet is never rigged until the boat is in the water.

At the first club regatta, I got caught out on starboard on the weather leg. I tacked, got my head caught in the mainsheet and capsized directly on top of a Wayfarer. Later, going downwind (in last place) I noticed everyone else was sailing by the lee. Reasoning this was not likely a mere coincidence, I shifted my weight rather too abruptly and capsized to windward. The open regatta in June was the kind of screamer sailors dream about. By the end of the day, I had capsized twice and fallen out of the boat once. On one of the capsizes, my bottle of sunscreen floated away (there being nowhere on the boat to stow anything) and the top of my head got sunburned. When I arrived home, I realized I had a bruise on my arm the size of an orange and the little toe on my left foot was broken. I also had a second, a third and a fourth and pretty much the most fun I've ever had on a boat in over 35 years of sailing! The following day, I could hardly move.

In recent weeks, my performance has improved so that I am not always last. I think it's skill, but it could just be a lucky shift. Either way, this is one of the best things I've done in years. I would not have believed that such a small boat could be so exciting to sail.

In its heyday, Fanshawe used to have 60 Lasers in the fleet. There are fewer today. Pity. But, if everyone who reads this, lives within an hour of London, and raced dinghies in the past, would beg, borrow or steal a boat... who knows? Maybe we could have a B fleet and I might actually win once in a while!

(GAM) Editors Note: Steve Hayhurst, 48, is a management recruiter living in London, Ontario. You can email him at <mailto:steve@hayhurstconsulting.com>". Rick Goldt (age irrelevant) is the racing contact at the Fanshawe Yacht Club. His email is "<mailto:goldtr@thamesriver.on.ca>".

Say you saw it in Gam

SAILOR MIKE

Sailor Mike is a rather unique individual and is a true sailor. If he's not sailing, he's thinking about it! Forever scanning the "net" for ideas, he has come across a site with scads of names for boats for every type of owner. You can access this site at - <http://www.yachtsee.com/>. In addition, this site has links to lots of more information and is well worth a look.

Though not standing for election to the executive, Sailor Mike is always working around the club as Dock Master, procuring and installing the carpets to cover the tires on the North dock, cutting the grass along the dock side. In addition, he has always been available to help with the sailing school boats, rigging the boats from Kingston for the Ontario Summer Games, appearing on CFPL's "New Day" to promote our Club. Also, to be sure, we are always thankful for the articles for this publication.

And don't forget his organizing the dinners at Archies to keep in touch with each other during the winter months. Thanks Mike for everything!

HELPFUL HINTS

Maybe it's just me but I think all Sailor's lay awake at night trying to think of a solution to a problem of theirs only to find later that someone has already solved it!

One day, walking along the dock, I observe Joe Hochstenbach in a tender scrubbing away at the bottom of his boat. When he came ashore, I see that he has taken a boat fender and positioned it under what I would call a "barn broom" to have the buoyancy of the fender apply upward pressure to the broom to get rid of the green stuff I have been dragging around all summer. What a great idea – maybe that's why I can't keep up to him! However, it seems to work well on a Mariner but I may have to look for a broom with a curved handle to reach the centre of my hull. Worth looking into, for sure!!

Please send any of your inventions to us to be shared with all. You may think they are trivial but someone else may think they are marvellous! A good idea is to keep an eye on our many veteran sailors as they are the real innovators and have already experienced and solved most problems that we are liable to encounter.!!



DOCKSIDE SCUTTLEBUTT

