



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

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VOL 20 ISSUE 03



### Submissions to the Dockside Scuttlebutt

Interested in writing? Here is a chance to be published. Please submit any articles or photos to Suzanne Goldt at [oldgoldt@gmail.com](mailto:oldgoldt@gmail.com).



Just some reminders of our last regatta , the 2019 Pumpkin Regatta. Hopefully we can see this again!!!

Meanwhile, there were 16 boats out last Wednesday evening for the weekly 'check' of the visual and sound system on the Race Hut.

A hint, best winds have been for the 3 PM race so try that as well as the 6:30 'check'

(Photos by B. Magill)





### Message from the Commodore's Desk

July 30, 2020

Hello FYC Members,

Based on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, indoor and outdoor gathering limits will be increased. Physical distancing remains a requirement for all people who are not from the same household or social circle. That being said we will still keep Doug MacKenzie Hall closed for the time being. Portable washrooms are available for your convenience and these are cleaned daily by our Club Steward and weekly by the provider.

Stage 3 does not mean that the fight against this deadly virus is over — far from it. Everyone must continue to be vigilant and follow public health advice and our Covid Code of Conduct. This will help limit outbreaks and reduce the risk of undoing the significant progress we have made together over the past several months.

Our government's priority is, and will continue to be, protecting people's health and well-being while planning for recovery and growth. That is why it is essential that everyone continues to act responsibly and respectfully towards their fellow citizens by following the advice of public health officials.

Remember to social distance, disinfect and/or wash your hands often and wear your masks when you are not able to social distance by 6 feet from each other. Wear your mask inside any service building, this is the law.

This reduction in activity at Fanshawe Yacht Club has provided an opportunity to create new policies to address the Covid-19 Pandemic and update old ones adopted in 2007 and 2009 to reflect what we need in 2020.

I will continue to keep you posted on what is happening at FYC.

Thank you for your help keeping Fanshawe Yacht Club Covid-19 free. You are all doing a fantastic job. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at [madam.commodore.fyc@gmail.com](mailto:madam.commodore.fyc@gmail.com)

Regards,

Your Commodore, Bonita



**ED NOTE: Please note in the following notice that a sign in book will be at the main gate for everyone to sign in. Most important for Covid tracing if needed!!!**

August 11, 2020

### Safety Officer Announcement

I would like to thank all members for following the COVID 19 procedures.

I do see that while I am at the club, everyone is social distancing, wearing face masks when necessary and using the hand sanitizers.

There have been no reported cases of COVID 19 at the club. This is partly because of our procedures and partly because of the procedures you use while you're away from the club. Please keep up the good work.

The Board of Directors has now decided to add an extra level of precaution regarding COVID 19. As you all may already know, it is now common place that **all** guests must sign in when you go to a restaurant. We must also use this same policy. There will now be a clip board near the main gate for **ALL to sign-in DAILY**. This will assist us when and if Contact Tracing becomes necessary.

Still remember to do:

- 1 Do not come if you feel sick or have a fever.
- 2 Social Distance 2 meters.
- 3 Bring and Wear a face mask if you are unable to keep 2 meters away from others
- 4 Bring your own sanitizer.
- 5 Bring your own gloves.
- 6 Bring your own water, food, snacks. **DO NOT SHARE** these items
- 7 Wash your hands often

And now add:

- 8 Sign-in at front gate.

If you have any concerns regarding the club or safety around the club, do not hesitate to contact the Commodore at [madam.commodore.fyc@gmail.com](mailto:madam.commodore.fyc@gmail.com)

Thank you

Mike Van Wiechen, your FYC Safety Officer



## 2020 FYC Racing and Events – Checking of the signals!!

It does appear that we will continue with our current use of the club recreationally with no scheduled formal activities. If this changes in any way, you will hear from the Board of Directors by email. Tentatively, the Pumpkin Regatta (October) and FYC Annual Dinner (November) are scheduled IN CASE we are able to have them.

Meanwhile, there is no current racing program but many of the sailors have been taking advantage of the 'checking' of the lights, sounds and other visual signals on the Race Hut that have been used for racing in the past. It is of ultimate importance that we know that the signals are in good working order and that the marks noted can be reached by sail. All sailors who are interested are more than welcome to attend this weekly event!!!

If you want to know when the "checking" takes place, contact Jens Biskaborn to be added to the list of sailors who receive an email on Tuesday. Jens will ensure that the weather conditions are the ultimate ones available for the week....either a Wednesday or Thursday. Wouldn't want to be caught "checking" with no wind or in a storm!!

"Checks" occur at 3 PM and 6:30 PM. Come to one or both! Always important to recheck. Apparently, winds are generally better at the 3PM check and tend to die more in the evening but this isn't a given



**"Checkers" at the ready**

There have been 12 to 16 sailors out each time. Bring a box dinner, a lawn chair and a hockey stick to mark social distancing if you come to both.

Keep in mind that water makes masks useless so bring a pocket spare mask in a ziplocked bag just in case. Hand sanitizer is available at the portaloos and on the dock picnic table.

Half the season left to sail!!!

## 2020 Events are being scheduled for trial!

There will be emails coming out with more details for these events that will be tried with all the club Covid precautions in place!

### Please note on your Calendars:



Aug 22/23 Summer Regatta - For club members only  
Watch for a details email.

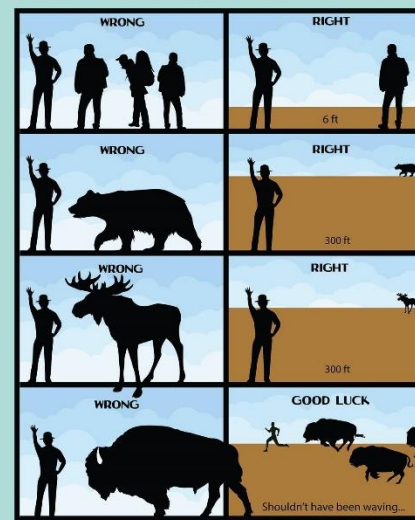


Sat. Sept 12 Meet on the dock in the afternoon to view the Air Show. BYO lawn chair. Look for a details email



Mon Sept 14 General Meeting by ZOOM  
Details coming.

### KEEP YOUR SOCIAL DISTANCE





## RC Yacht Sailing at FYC



Rick Goldt's largest and smallest yachts (in between are 2 lasers and a fireball). If you have a radio-controlled boat in your possession, you can socially distance along the dock to race them....just saying. Call Rick if you are interested. He has two if you want to try one.



Lilydale Lake RC racing in Melbourne Australia



## Boater in Fanshawe Conservation Area faces impaired charges – June 2019

**ED NOTE:** Fanshawe Lake is patrolled by a UTRCA security boat and they are able to issue fines. As well, the lake falls in the Municipality of London and the OPP can also be on the lake looking for breeches of boating regulations. Please keep this in mind. Have the proper safety equipment aboard and be aware of the recreational boating rules for UTRCA and the MOT

Author of the article :**Dan Brown** Publishing date: Jun 25, 2019

### Article content

A Cambridge man is facing impaired boating charges after police say they found him unconscious on a boat in Fanshawe Conservation Area.

Emergency crews descended on the recreation area Saturday at 7:25 p.m. after calls to check on the welfare of the man.



Fire department water rescue team.  
(File photo)

### Boater in Fanshawe Conservation Area faces impaired charges

Members of the London fire department's water rescue unit located the man inside the boat on the lake, and assisted him to shore.

He was taken to hospital by Middlesex-London Paramedic Services.

As a result of the incident, he is charged with impaired and impaired exceeding the blood-alcohol concentration

## Notes from UTRCA



### Camping:

- Seasonal camping is open
- Overnight camping is open. [Book your site online](#) or call 1-866-668-2267. Reservations are required; no walk-ins accepted.
- Campground washrooms are open
- Campground splash pad is open
- Campground pool, showers and laundry facilities are closed for 2020 season
- No group camping for 2020 season

**CAMPERS please note: Face coverings are now required at the campground registration office and in campground washrooms**

### Day Use & Reservoir (fees apply):

- Trails are open for hiking, biking, and enjoying nature
- Day use washrooms are open
- Boat launch and reservoir are open
- Playgrounds are open
- No equipment rentals (canoes, kayaks) for 2020 season
- No pavilion or shelter rentals for 2020 season
- All special events and activities are cancelled for the season.

### Road construction at Fanshawe front entrance - impacts on our visitors

As of **Tuesday, July 21**, there are temporary traffic control measures in place at the park entrance. Please be patient and plan on extra time coming and going from the park. Exercise caution while driving through the construction for the safety of workers.

## Gypsy Moth and Euonymus Webworm Populations Explode (media release, June 12, 2020)

*June 12, 2020* – During the past week, forestry staff at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) have received many inquiries about population explosions of European Gypsy Moth and Euonymus Webworm. Both species of caterpillars can quickly defoliate trees and shrubs. Defoliation by these invasive species in successive years can be very stressful on trees, making them susceptible to other stressors.

"We want to alert people to these non-native threats to trees and shrubs," says John Enright, UTRCA Forester. "We hope that landowners will take measures to protect the trees and shrubs on their property."

### European Gypsy Moth

A mature Gypsy Moth caterpillar is approximately 6 cm long, and can be identified by the pairs of dots along its back – five pairs of blue dots, followed by six pairs of red dots. The caterpillars feed mainly on deciduous trees and shrubs. Their favourite foods include oak, maple, birch and serviceberry. The young caterpillars will hang from trees on silk threads and be blown long distances by the wind.

Young caterpillars feed throughout the day, but as they mature, they come down from the crown of the tree during the heat of the day to seek shade. At this stage, homeowners can trap the caterpillars on the tree trunk. To make a trap, wrap a strip of burlap, approximately 45 cm (17") wide, around the tree trunk at chest height. Tie a string around the centre of the burlap and fold the upper portion down to form a skirt, with the string acting as a belt. The caterpillars will crawl under the burlap to escape the sun and become trapped. Later in the day, lift the burlap, pick off the caterpillars, and dispose of them.



### Euonymus Webworm

This year there appears to be a localized high population of Euonymus Webworm in the Ingersoll and Thamesford areas. This pest is not considered as serious, as it feeds mainly on small shrubs, in particular non-native euonymus species. While not as serious, the webworm creates mass webbing that completely envelops shrubs, making them look like something out of a horror movie. The larvae that feed within the webbing are yellow, with a black head and a series of black dots down their back. The larvae mature at about 2.5 cm in length. Hundreds of larvae within the webbing will strip the foliage completely.




**[Photos of Gypsy Moth caterpillar and Euonymus Webworm](#)**

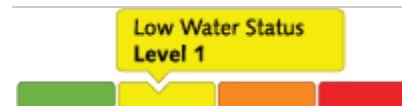
Contact: [John Enright](#), Forester

## Ontario Low Water Response Levels

On the UTRCA website, <http://thamesriver.on.ca/>, you will find the following graphs on the home page to alert people to either flood status or low water levels.

If you click on  **Water Levels** you will arrive at the current levels on the 3 reservoirs. For Fanshawe reservoir, a level above 0.7 meters means the water is over the main dock.

### Level 1 Bulletins



Issued when stream flows are approximately 70% of their normal flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 80% of average. Level 1 bulletins also report general conditions of the watershed, and ask the public to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 10%.

Level 2 Bulletins

Low Water Status  
Level 2

Issued when stream flows are approximately 50% of their normal summer flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 60% of average. Level 2 bulletins also report specific drought related concerns and ask all holders of Permits to Take Water and the general public to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 20%. Municipalities may implement or increase restrictions on non-essential water use.

Level 3 Bulletins

Low Water Status  
Level 3

Issued when stream flows are approximately 30% of their normal summer flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 40% of average. Level 3 bulletins also report the potential for significant harm to the ecosystem and economic harm to water takers. Municipalities may implement or increase restrictions on non-essential water use.

\*The [Ontario Low Water Response](#) report was developed by the Province, municipalities and Conservation Authorities. The report defines drought and low water and describes the means of measuring and quantifying drought and the conditions leading up to it. Three drought condition levels are described: Level I (warning), Level II (conservation) and Level III (restrictions). The report also identifies precipitation and streamflow indicators used to determine the level for watersheds.

Flood Status  
Normal

Low Water Status  
Level 1

Water Levels



Turtled in Fanshawe Lake (from K. Biskaborn; Sail Montage)

The 6 Best Kayak Sails of 2020

ED NOTE: Why just kayak when you can SAIL Kayak...or SUP or Canoe



by Christina Diaz



Kayaking is a great way to get outside, exercise, and explore new locations. One way to improve your kayak experience is with a kayak sail. Especially if you're looking to take a long trip in your little boat. Also, if you're already a kayaker but are looking for a way to take your kayaking experience to the next level, a kayak sail will help.

Kayak sails have a number of great benefits. They're convenient, help get you to places faster, and add speed without needing to exert more of your energy. Whether you're an expert or a beginner, the perfect kayak sail for you is out there. Today we're going to help you find it. But first, what should you consider when buying your first, or next, kayak sail?

Here's a quick list of our top picks for the best kayak sail:

Preview	Product
	<a href="#">VGEBY1 Wind Sail, PVC Foldable Board Wind Sail Wind Paddle with Transparent...</a>
	<a href="#">Hobie Mirage Kayak Sail Kit-Aqua/Chartreuse</a>



## Preview

## Product



[LoneRobe 42 inches Downwind Wind Sail Kit Kayak Wind Sail Kayak Paddle...](#)



[Advanced Elements Rapidup Kayak Sail](#)



[Dyna-Living 42" Durable Downwind Wind Sail SUP Paddle Board Instant Popup...](#)



[Sea Eagle QuikSail Kayak Sail](#)

## Things to Consider

### Design

When shopping for your kayak sail, you'll want to think about what design of the sail. Kayak sails come in three main designs: V-Shaped Sails, Circular Sails, and L-Shaped Sails.

**V-Shaped sails**, also known as the Downwind Spinnaker, are great if you're looking to catch speed when facing downwind. While this is a great way to boost speed, it doesn't give you a lot of mobility when traveling into the wind. Also, some V-Shaped sails can be difficult to maneuver.

**Circular sails** are the most common type of kayak sail. This is because they are the easiest to use. They usually attach to the center of the kayak, allowing you to pick up speed with the wind. Unfortunately, this sail also only lets you go in one direction and can't be moved. But this is a great place to start if you're a beginner looking to buy your first kayak sail.

**L-Shaped sails** are used for the sporty kayak users. These are great because they are able to be moved in order to catch the wind coming from any direction. Because they are mostly used by people with more experience and are the best sail, they are also typically also the most expensive.

### Material

The material of your sail also determines its durability. The three main material types are plastic, laminated cloth, carbon fiber, and aluminum. The most common material used in kayak sails is plastic. This is because it is both flexible and lightweight. But plastic has the potential to crack easily, especially when being used in saltwater. Laminated cloth is another material commonly used to create kayak sails. This material is used because it is stronger than plastic. But, with this strength comes added weight making it more difficult to take the sail up and down.

Now that you know what you're looking for, take a look at these two great kayak sail options.

### Best Bang for Your Buck Sail

#### VGEBY1 Wind Sail



[VGEBY1 Wind Sail, PVC Foldable Board Wind Sail Wind Paddle with Transparent...](#)

This lightweight sail is great to be used on any kayak (both inflatable and hard-shell). It comes with an adjustable strap allowing it to be fit to many different boat sizes. The sail is made out of PVC material, or plastic, that's both durable and water resistant. The VGEBY1 Wind Sail is great for beginners because it is easy to use with just two different movements. This allows you to pick up wind when you need it but glide to a stop easily when you need to. This versatile sail is great for kayaks, canoes and different inflatable boats.

Another thing we love about this product is that it comes with customer service representatives that can help assist you if you have any questions or concerns. Since this is a sail for beginners, it works bests in lakes and intracoastal waterways.

## Pros

- Low price
- Lightweight and easy to maneuver
- Clear window so you can see your surroundings

## Cons

- Hard to fold back into its box for safe keeping

### Best High-End Sail

#### Hobie Mirage Sail Kit

#### [Hobie Mirage Kayak Sail Kit-Aqua/Chartreuse](#)

If you're interested in getting one of the best sails on the market then this sail may be great for you. It's priced pretty steeply but is great for the more experienced sailor or a newbie looking to make an investment. Additionally, it is extremely easy to use so if you're serious about learning to sail a kayak this is great for you too. While this is great for more experienced kayakers, it shouldn't be off limits if you're seriously looking to learn about and use your new sail. It can be great for beginners because it's design makes it easy to take down so you won't be stuck on the water struggling to control your new sail. But remember, practice makes perfect!



Since this sail is extremely heavy duty it is meant for your hard-shell (non-inflatable) Hobie kayak. Enjoy added power without difficult sail maneuvers. This sail is 123 inches tall and has a sail area of 20.25 square feet. It's not the largest sail but works great in 10-12 mile per hour winds. Also, you can choose from a variety of colors that allow you to be seen by fellow boaters out on the water.

## Pros

- Window for visibility while sailing
- Extremely sturdy
- Allows for tricky maneuvers in water

## Cons

- Can't be used on an inflatable kayak

## Conclusion

Kayak sails come in a number of shapes, sizes and prices. But, depending on your overall skill level and where your next adventure is taking you, there is a sail out there that will work great for you. Overall, circular shapes are the most common for beginners and moderates. Start there and you'll have your new sail in no time. But, if you're already a great sailor, find a sail that is extremely durable and allows you to maneuver the waters easily.

This information from



**Survival**  
TECH SHOP



## Things to look for in a good sail: Distinguishing A Great Cruising Sail from Average

There are four key areas for the cruising sailor to consider when identifying a good sail versus a bad sail:

### 1. Fit (2D geometry)

The starting place for the sail design project is to fill up the space available on the spars as much as possible. In the cruising world, it can be common to see ill-fitting sails – not reaching the top of the mast, headsail shy of filling the available space, and so on. North Sails use a three-dimensional rig model, so rather than just drawing the sail on a piece of paper (2D), we build a model of the rig in 3D to model the flying shape and size of the sail. You get the 2D geometry right and then put the three-dimensional shape onto the rig, and the 3D geometry changes the way the sail fills the space.

### 2. Form (3D Flying Shape)

The biggest driver of good performance versus bad performance is the aerodynamic (flying) shape of a sail that is built into the material with shaped seams or molded into the composite structure.

Mainsail twist is an interesting part of the engineering challenge that requires the designer to drill down into the interaction between the material properties and sail design. For most mainsails, when you ease the sheet the middle of the leech sags to leeward and the upper battens stay tight. If the material is too stretchy, or poorly oriented, the sail will get deeper in the middle and the draft will move aft in the top half of the sail as wind pressure increases. Those pressure-induced changes in the shape and depth will force the sailor to ease the mainsheet.

Easing the sheet closes off the slot between the main and jib, which will dictate that the jib sheet is also eased. This sequence of events explains why so many cruising boats 'can't point' and why some sailors spend a lot of time with their sails fluttering and flapping, or they end up switching on the engine even in fresh breeze.

A well-designed sail aims for a progressive twist in the leech from the top to the bottom when the sheets are eased or when the sail sees an increase in pressure. We want the highest batten to be angled more to leeward than the one below it, and the next batten down more to leeward than the one below it, and so on, much like the wing of a bird deflects and twists on the down stroke. The twist profile is the BIG difference between a good and a bad mainsail.

After the design process, the sailmaker's ability to replicate the theoretical shape and structure has everything to do with the construction techniques available. If you are simply cutting cloth off a roll and sewing it together, you are much more limited. The molded sail process and advanced composite construction makes it possible to place the materials exactly where they're needed.



### 3. Structure (material properties)

The structure allows the sailmaker to introduce the properties into the sail that have been developed through the software design process. The latest composite materials offer the ultimate weight-to-stiffness ratio. A stiffer sail will allow you to sheet harder, apply more pressure and deliver more driving force to the hull so your boat goes faster. A stiffer sail doesn't get deeper with increases in wind pressure, so the boat heels over less. A more upright boat equates to a more comfortable ride, and also delivers greater forward motion (less leeway).

### 4. Finishing

One important yet often overlooked element is how quiet a sail is when it's being used. A low-stretch sail that fits the rig and has been designed to take advantage of the range of controls available can be set up flat and trimmed tightly so that the whole surface of the sail is pressurized and stable. There should not be any parts of the sail fluttering, flapping or panting as the boat moves through wind and waves. A good sail is a quiet sail.

**Here are some interesting photos....Who knew? Sailing a Laser and paddling a kayak are part of the formation of a Canadian Prime minister. So....maybe this has FYC marketing potential?**

**It is delightful to see that I am not the only one who awkwardly exits my kayak at times!!**

## The First Defense of the America's Cup

SCUTTLEBUTT  
SAILING NEWS

**ED NOTE: As we have no race results of our own so far this year, I thought you might enjoy the first defense of the America's Cup on it's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

**Published on** August 6th, 2020 *by Steven Tsuchiya*

August 8th marks **the 150th anniversary** of the first defense of the America's Cup (a.k.a. "1st America's Cup" or "America's Cup I"). It was a single-race contest won by the yacht Magic, which defeated 16 of her fellow defenders and the lone challenger from England, to complete the New York Yacht Club's first successful defense of the America's Cup

### THE MATCH

August 8, 1870, dawned dark and gloomy over New York Harbor, but by 9 am, the clouds dispersed. At 11 am, 17 schooners of the New York Yacht Club and Ashbury's Cambria began anchoring about 50 yards apart, along an east-west line in the Narrows.

With the wind from the southwest, Cambria, having been granted the choice of berth, anchored near the weather-most end (west) of the line, with only one boat to her west. The Club's schooners included the small centerboarder Magic, Bennett's Dauntless, and America, then owned by the U.S. Navy. America took her place near Cambria. Magic and Dauntless were the fifth and sixth yachts in on the leeward (east) end.<sup>7</sup>

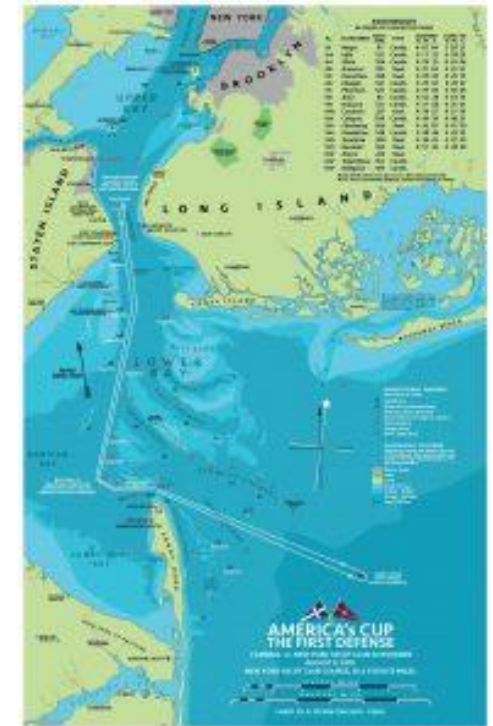
Anchored in the ebbing tide, the schooners pointed toward the city. Their sterns faced the start line, which lay about 500 yards to the south on a parallel line marked by a stake boat on one end and the Club's Staten Island clubhouse on the other.

Why did the yachts anchor far behind the start line? Because the Deed of Gift authorized that a match—made without mutual consent—must be "subject to [the defending club's] Rules and Sailing Regulations..."<sup>8</sup> During that time, the NYYC rules directed second-class sloops to anchor on the start line; first-class sloops to anchor about 250 yards behind the line; and schooners to anchor in the back row, about 500 yards from the line.

Many spectators lined the banks and hills along the Narrows to watch the start, but there were many more of them on the water. Yachting writer Roland F. Coffin, who witnessed the race from the pilot boat, observed that other than the possible exception of the ceremonies related to the delivery of the Statue of Liberty; the 1870 race was "the grandest marine pageant ever seen in the harbor of New York. Every schooner-yacht in the Club was entered and started. Nearly every steamer in the harbor was brought into requisition for spectators, and all were crowded to their utmost capacity. Besides these, almost everything that could float, from the large coasting schooner to the tiny skiff, was brought in to use, and it seemed as if the whole population of the city was upon the water. Wall and Broad streets were deserted for the day, and the courts and public office had but few attendants."<sup>9</sup>

Just prior to the preparatory signal at 11:21 am, the wind shifted to south by east, now placing the boats on the west end of the line—including Cambria and America—at a disadvantage. The start gun roared at 11:26 am, and the schooners raised their sails and weighed anchor as the tide went slack.

The centerboard schooner Magic, with the sailing master Andrew J. Comstock at the helm, "wheeled around as if by machinery"<sup>10</sup> onto starboard tack and was the first yacht to cross the start line; the rest of the fleet turned around over the next several minutes, Cambria two minutes after Magic, and America, just as she did in 1851,



starting dead last. The first leg was 9.5 statute miles to windward to Buoy No. 10, off Sandy Hook.

At 89 feet long and 97 tons, Magic was the second smallest schooner in the fleet. However, she took advantage of the handicap system at that time, the Waterline-Area Rule, which did not tax sail area or draft, by carrying an estimated 6,480 square feet of canvas and had draft of 17 feet with her board fully lowered.

Magic's owner and manager was Franklin Osgood (1828-1888), a mining and zinc manufacturing magnate who had earned fame as one of the organizers of the Great Ocean Race of 1866. During an era when most yacht owners knew little about sailing, let alone racing, Osgood was a bona fide racing sailor.

The New York Herald observed, "Mr. Franklin Osgood, owner of the Magic, is a brave, courageous and bold seaman. He goes for every stitch of canvas aloft in a stiff breeze, and would himself get in the weather rigging if it would accelerate the Magic's speed."<sup>11</sup>

Magic sailed towards Fort Lafayette and, after exiting the Narrows, tacked over to port and was able to lay a course all the way to Dix Island (Lower Quarantine) on the West Bank. The fleet followed. Amid the pack in the Narrows, a large keel schooner, Tarolinta, fouled Cambria, causing some damage to both. But Cambria did not protest.

Off Dix Island, America accelerated with astonishing speed, overtaking one boat after another. America was a crowd-favorite, and spectators cheered on the famous yacht. At 12:48 pm, Magic rounded Buoy No. 10, followed five minutes later by America. At 1:07 pm, Cambria was the 13th boat around the mark.

From Buoy No. 10, the schooners raced on a 9.6-mile reach to the Sandy Hook Light Vessel. With the tide flooding, it was a slog. Dauntless and another yacht passed America while Magic clung<sup>[1]</sup> to her lead. Coffin writes, "the scene around the lightship when the yachts turned was one never to be forgotten. It would be difficult to estimate the number of people who witnessed the turning, but I know I shall be within bounds if I put it at 20,000."

While these marks come with a steep cost, that investment may be offset by the expense of powerboats needed to manage a course using inflatable marks. But another cost to race committee is manpower, and Dick Neville – long-time on-water director for Block Island Race Week – likes the opportunity this technology provides:

Race Committees are facing several threats this year. Members are aging out, budgets are tight, and the coronavirus makes us want smaller numbers of volunteers on signal and mark boats.

Last weekend I was part of a small committee running the Bay Harbor Cup (Little Traverse Bay, MI) for the 5-boat Great Lakes 52 class in where I discovered the benefits of robot marks (Bots).

We had four aboard the signal boat, including our Bot controller and three aboard our one-mark boat. All went better than I could have hoped. We used no flags, just an automatic horn and we broadcast the countdown, as well as OCS's, postponements, course changes, abandonments, etc.

The Bots are impressive. Move the pin at 5 minutes to the warning, no problem (as long as you broadcast you have moved it!). Move or square the gate any time, no problem. Change the weather mark and offset for the second beat or between races, no problem. Blowing 20-25 knots with good sized waves – no problem.

We can simplify and automate the race committee functions. The future is here.

I don't disagree with Dick, I'm smarter than that, and I know I would be drooling over the Bot's functionality. How cool would it be to move a mark on an iPad to its desired location, and then watch the mark move itself? But beyond being hypersensitive to adding cost to the sport, I do worry about de-emphasizing volunteerism.

When my kids were early in their education, parents were required to contribute time to support the school. While this was a win for the teachers, it was also a massive win for the parents, as many of my closest friends today were met during those volunteer hours. It also created a community of caring people that jumped in when needed, far beyond what was required.

This also should be the norm for yacht clubs, as volunteerism creates that layer of familiarity among members that forms necessary bonds to strengthen the club. New members need to become active members, and required volunteerism fulfills that mission.

But even before becoming a member, an applicant at my club needs a number of personal references to vouch for their integrity but also their boating experience. This can be a challenge for someone new to the area or the sport, but the club allows non-members to participate in race management, and soon enough aspiring applicants have the references they need for club membership

Maybe these Bots are the future, but I hope not at the expense of building a community of caring people to support the future of the club and sport.

**Tags: Craig Leweck, Dick Neville, MarkSetBot, race management**

## Pondering the future of race committee

Published on August 11th, 2020  
by Craig Leweck, Scuttlebutt  
Sailing News

Rather than using drop marks to set race courses, MarkSetBot is a self-propelled robotic mark that uses GPS technology to zero in on a specific location and stay there until you tell it to move.

SCUTTLEBUTT  
SAILING NEWS

