



RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER YACHT CLUB  
IRVINGION, VA 22480

March 2009

# THE HEADWAY

## A Flare for Tradition

By Jerry Latell



*Photo supplied by Jerry Latell*

*Photos clockwise from top left: 1. Jerry and Lance practicing with a serving mallet, 2. tools of the trade – palm, needles, thread, fids, mallets, etc, 3. Lance working on final layout of fore-topsail, 4. clew of the mizzen sail showing a served corner, bonnet cringle, and several grommets.*

The thing about sail lofts is that they tend to be unusual places. Walk into one and you'll see people working shoeless on sewing machines mounted in the floor. So it is a challenge for a sail loft to come up with an

exceptional project that stands apart from its ordinary business. I recently was awarded a project that definitely stands out from the "normal" work of a sail loft.

The day-to-day business of the loft in Deltaville is building

new sails and repairing sails for southern Chesapeake Bay sailors. But we recently added a few more historic customers to our books. Last fall, my team of

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# Commodore's Message

*By Coleman Brydon, Commodore*

- Incredibly, February is almost over and the spring sailing season is right around the corner. Lew Thatcher hogged all of the snow up in Vail (142 inches) leaving us with another year with little or no snow. (Just writing this will probably guarantee a March snow.) And now we can turn our thoughts to spring. There will be a racing rules seminar on March 14<sup>th</sup>, which will bring us up to date on rule changes. Then there is the Club clean-up day on April 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by the Blessing of the Fleet (15<sup>th</sup>) and the Shakedown Cruise (25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>). Looking further forward, the date for the First Annual Whiskey Run regatta has been set for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. More details will be forthcoming, but please put this date on your calendar. Our goal is to get a record number of member boats participating in what should be a fun event.
- On February 21st, approximately 70 members turned out for a truly memorable evening. Larry and Jill Worth, feeling challenged, I suppose, to give extra value for our three dollar increase in dinner price, outdid themselves, offering of a three-course gourmet meal starting with French onion soup served in individual bread bowls made by Kate Raffetto, followed by Cornish game hens stuffed with spinach and oysters. Those tasty little critters must have been training with Alex Rodriquez because they were so meaty that many diners took home doggie bags that the Worths had thoughtfully provided. As always, the ambiance of friends getting together made the evening magical.
- During the social we announced a new program for members with grandchildren: Esther Platsis and Andrea Latell have volunteered to be Grandparent Coordinators. Their function will be to provide grandparents of visiting grandchildren with information on area events for children, or perhaps even arrange play dates. Be sure to take advantage of this service whenever the opportunity arises.
- In other news, RRYC was awarded first place by the town of Irvington for our Christmas Decorations. The award came with a \$75.00 prize. Kudos to Jack Chamberlain and his decorating crew.
- On a less positive note, Bruce Sanders of Rappahannock Yachts has decided that RRYC members can no longer use his boatyard for overflow parking during socials and other events. He has become increasingly concerned about potential damage to boats and/or people. He has offered, however, to let members park in the vacant lot at the corner. Your Board will be working on ways to improve the parking situation, but, in the meantime, please be a good neighbor and honor his request. Note: If your boat is docked at Rappahannock Yachts then you are encouraged to exercise your

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## A Flare for Tradition

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skilled sailmakers and I started building a new suit of square sails for the *Susan Constant*, a re-creation of the largest of the three merchant ships that brought the first settlers to Jamestown in 1607. This reproduction vessel was built in 1991 and is a fully operational ship and exhibit at Jamestown Settlement History Museum. The *Susan Constant* is about 116 feet overall and carries six sails on three masts.

Not surprisingly, the business of sailmaking has changed quite a bit over the past four centuries. Flax and hemp have given way to Dacron and Kevlar; sewing by hand has almost completely been replaced by machine sewing; and as the materials and techniques changed over time, so did the basic form of sails. So building true period reproductions presents a unique and fascinating challenge. Not only do the sails have to look the part; but since they will be flown from an actively sailed ship, they must be up to

the task of making her go. The *Susan Constant* project required employing traditional techniques to build the sails, meaning this was going to be a time-consuming project. In fact, the Ullman Sails team estimated it would take about 700 hours of labor to complete all of the sails. Watching the shape being created inch by inch with the deliberate use of needle and thread is time-consuming, and sometimes tedious, yet a truly gratifying job.

The sails for the *Susan Constant* have rope sewn by hand along all four edges of all nine sails. The technique, called "roping," is how sailmakers traditionally added shape and structural support to the sail. Roping wasn't the only technique that required an intense amount of handwork. The team also had to master hand sewing cringles and grommets. The cringles are spliced into the edge ropes and are used to attach control lines. Grommets are sewn along the edges to allow the sails to be laced to their supporting yards. In total for the set of sails, there is just over a half mile of seams that had to be sewn, about 400 grommets stitched, and nearly 800 feet of edge roped!

The loft team has found the traditional sailmaking to be an intriguing escape from glue guns and high-tech fibers. The deliberate nature of the traditional work has provided the team an opportunity to deconstruct our modern sailmaking techniques and re-evaluate a lot of the methods we use. We have found many ways to improve our sails by exploring these more traditional techniques and applying them to modern materials. The sailmakers of Ullman Sails Virginia will next put our traditional skills to the test repairing five very large square sails off the USCGC Eagle.

The sails were finished the last week of February. They will be delivered sometime in the next few weeks, and we plan to help the crew bend them on this spring so we can check them. Unfortunately at this point there are no sails planned for the ship this year, so we will only get to see them hanging at the dock.

See <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jacksonlatell/sets/72157608647965188/> for more photos of the *Susan Constant's* new sails under construction.

## From the Rear Commodore

By Pete Knight

Here is an update on projects underway at the Club. The Beavers have been creating a new look in the corner where the coffee pots are set up. New cabinets and formica countertops have been installed. This will provide more storage for linens and other house-keeping supplies. Also the old bar has been removed allowing easier movement between the kitchen and porch doors. There are, of course, many unseen but necessary ongoing repairs needed for an old building such as ours.

Elsewhere in this addition is a notice of items we hope to complete on clean up day. Please come and help. This is a great way to renew old friendships as well as meet new members.

## Membership News

By Sally Clark, Membership Chair

The Board of Directors voted to accept with regret the resignation of the following members:

Active: Chris Christensen, Alan Christensen, Warren Hammett, George Bryant

Inactive: David Bresett.

Membership Status Changes were also approved, moving both Bob Strange and Suzie Rockwell from Active to Inactive membership.

# Adventures of a Skiing Sailor (or a Sailing Skier)

By Tom Asch (excerpted with permission from an e-mail explaining why Tom couldn't attend the February Board meeting.)

Many of you have heard by now that I had a ski accident around 2:00 PM on (February) 14<sup>th</sup> at Snowshoe, WVA, resulting in breaking my hip in several places. Although the x-ray of the break looked pretty spectacular, as was the pain it caused, the fall was not. What happened was this; I had pretty much come to a full stop on top of a large snow mound, leaned back on my poles and somehow lost my balance, causing me to fall forwards doing a basic spread eagle face plant down the back side of the snow mound. Long and the short of it, when you pull a wishbone apart and it breaks... that best describes what happened.

After a quick, painful toboggan ride down the mountain behind a snowboarder ski patrol "dude," I was literally thrown into the back of a Chevy Suburban like a sack of potatoes to be "dropped off" at the mountain clinic for assessment. It was determined that I needed an orthopedic surgeon, not available at nearby Pocahontas County General, so my choices were few. We could not get to Richmond because it was out of the ambulance service range from Pocahontas County General...go figure.

By 7:30 PM, Brenda had found a surgeon with Tuckahoe Orthopedics in Richmond and contracted with Richmond Ambulance Authority to come to Pocahontas County General to deliver me to the Joint Replacement Center at St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond. By the way, real pain meds did not happen until 5:00 PM....Tylenol they gave me when I got to the ER was not cutting the cake. After a 5 ½ hour ambulance ride, we arrived at St. Mary's in Richmond at 6:30 AM. By 4:30 PM, I was in surgery, where I was fitted and implanted in my hip area with a 6" titanium rod and screws to put the pieces back together.

I was released from the Hospital yesterday (2/19/09) afternoon and have been ordered to "house arrest" by my docs, and physical therapist. Hopefully that will end sometime next week after I'm off all prescription pain, blood thinner and antibiotic meds.

*We all wish Tom a speedy recovery in time for sailing season!*

## Former RRYC Member on a Coast-to-Coast Odyssey

Long-time club member, Ted Brush, is off on a cross-country bicycle trip with several friends. Follow his progress on his blog at <http://jambl.net/biketrip/>.

## Commodore's Message

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right to park there, freeing up space for the rest of us.

- As many know, the Club slip fees are supposed to be based on a percentage of local market rates. The last time our slip fees were adjusted, however, was in 2003. Bob Bierly, our Treasurer has just completed a survey of the marinas in our area and has concluded that our rates are substantially behind the commercial marinas and should be adjusted upward approximately 60 percent to comply with past guidelines that call for rates that are 85% of the average market rate. Recognizing this is a bad year to make such an adjustment, the Board is considering raising slip fees incrementally over two or three years, beginning 2nd quarter, 2009. This will enable us to catch up with the market and establish a reserve fund for dock and building repairs, while continuing to provide a bargain for Club slipholders. The board will be voting on this at our March meeting. Your comments are encouraged. Our thanks to Bob Bierly for putting many hours into the study. If you are interested in viewing the study, go to this site: <http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=pIjwdnyg24sDrOyHreLjZFA>

# Racing News

*Contributed by Ron Mihills and Lew Thatcher*

Two big events are coming up, one in March, and one in May, both centered around Annapolis, MD.

**60<sup>th</sup> DOWN the BAY RACE for the VIRGINIA CRUISING CUP  
ANNAPOLIS TO HAMPTON  
Friday, May 22, 2009 (start)**



HAMPTON: The Down the Bay Race is back after a 10-year hiatus. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Friday of Memorial Day Weekend, the starting gun will send boats off on a 120 nautical mile, non-stop race down the Chesapeake Bay from Annapolis, Maryland, to Hampton, Virginia. This race will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> running of the event, and the first since 1999.

Chesapeake Bay racers and others had been competing in the Down the Bay Race for the Virginia Cruising Cup every year since 1934. There was a break during the World War II years (1942-45), but, aside from that, interest was keen until the late 1990s. In its heyday the Down the Bay Race attracted more than 130 boats and created just as many legends. In 1974, Running Tide, a 60-foot Sparkman and Stevens design owned by Al van Metre, set the record for actual time start to finish. The written record of the exact time has been lost, but racing “historians” say the time was somewhere “around 13 hours”.

Now, with sailors looking for a change of pace from the prevalent ‘round the buoys races and expressing an interest in distance races that run into and through the night, the Down the Bay Race is back by popular demand. Hampton Yacht Club and the Storm Triesail Club-Chesapeake Station have teamed up to revive the old Bay favorite.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Down the Bay Race for the Virginia Cruising Cup will be run on Memorial Day Weekend. Classes will be IRC, PHRF A, B, C, Non-Spinnaker (double headsail allowed) and any one-design class with 5 or more boats. Check-in will be at Annapolis Yacht Club from 15:00 until 18:00 with a pre-race party to follow on Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The first warning will be at 10:30, Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, and the post-race party and awards presentation will be at Hampton Yacht Club on Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, starting at 18:00.

For information and entry form go to the website at [www.hamptonyc.com/downthebay](http://www.hamptonyc.com/downthebay). Event Chairmen are Vince Behm, (757)876-7778 and Wayne Bretsch (301) 332-6773.

## **CBYRA Race Management Seminar**

**Sunday, March 8, 2009**

**Annapolis Yacht Club 612 Third Street Suite 4A • Annapolis, MD 21403**

The Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association will again be hosting its Race Management Seminar at the Annapolis Yacht Club on Sunday, March 8. The purpose of this seminar is to present contemporary procedures for race committees, with ample time for discussion between the presenters and the audience. Speakers that have experience not only on the Bay but also at other venues will discuss the best practices they have encountered.

The seminar is designed for the many Race Committees of the clubs on the Chesapeake that conduct sailboat races. In addition to the presentations, opportunities will be provided for informal discussion for the participants to describe their successes and offer advice. The format will provide an excellent opportunity for networking.

Registration Fee of \$15.00 (materials, coffee, tea, water and sodas) is payable at registration starting at 08:30. “Dutch Treat” Lunch will be available at AYC.

Please email [cbyraoffice@cbyra.org](mailto:cbyraoffice@cbyra.org) or call Beth at 410-269-1194.

# Your Help Is URGENTLY Needed: Please Reserve April 4th for the Annual Club Clean-Up Day

*By Pete Knight, Rear Commodore*

The annual Club clean-up day is scheduled for Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, from 08:30 to 12:00 hours. As you can see from the list below, there is a lot to accomplish. There will be tasks for everyone! Don't be shy about volunteering. As usual, the work will be supervised by the Beavers. The planned projects, along with supervising Beavers, and number of helpers requested/required is below. Look over the list, pick out the project you want to help with, and bring the appropriate tools with you. Check in with Pete Knight when you arrive at the Club, and sign up for lunch, which will be provided. With a good turnout of workers, we can make quick work of all the chores and have the clubhouse, docks, grounds, and club boats spruced up and ready for the new sailing season.



*Clean-up day, 2007, included a crew of club members who gave the kitchen a thorough cleaning. That's just one of the many jobs to be done this year, too, so sign up to help!*

<b>Boats</b> <i>Carl Gerster – Stu Kramer – Doug Power</i>		- Wash windows on outside of clubhouse	2
- Wash & wax outside of launch	3	- Wash windows inside & outside of annex	1
- Wash & wax inside of launch	1	- Wash windows & screens of dock house.	1
- Wash & wax fiberglass Optis		- Clean outside of ice chest & soda machine.	1
- Wash & wax Sunfish	3	<b>Inside Cleanup</b> <i>Mike Romey</i>	
Wash & wax hull of Club Whaler	2	- Wash windows inside clubhouse	2
Wash @ wax hull of Club FS	2	- Clean kitchen shelves	3
- Organize Opti @ Sun fish sail bags, rudders, & centerboards	2	- Clean both microwaves	1
<b>Painting</b> <i>Blaine Liner</i>		- Clean refrigerators	2
- Front door inside & outside	1	- Clean stove & ovens	1
- White trim on North & South side of waterside porch.	2	- Wash serving trays	1
- Porch doors & trim both sides.	2	- Clean blades & globes of ceiling fans (set to down).	2
- Porch screen doors both sides.	2	<b>Landscaping</b> <i>Dave Raffetto</i>	
Kitchen door & trim outside.	1	- Weed & mulch garden at entrance	2
<b>Carpentry</b> <i>Jim Bearden</i>		- Weed & mulch area on street side of pool	2
- Repair fence between Club and RY.	2	- Weed & mulch area on north side of pool	2
- Check for loose nails & bad boards on pool deck.	2	- Trim bushes around pool & clubhouse	2
- Check for loose nails & bad boards on dock	2	- Mulch around septic tank tops & flagpole	1
Check for loose nails & bad boards on porch.	2	- Spray weed killer as needed	1
<b>Outside Cleanup</b> <i>J. D. Willett</i>		- Spruce up inside of circle	1
- Clean inside & outside of propane grill.	1	<b>Food</b> <i>Jill Worth</i>	
- Wash windows & screens on porch	2	- Order food	1
		- Pick up food	1
		- Set up for lunch	2
		- Clean up & empty trash after lunch	2

## Social Notes: From Stars to Shamrocks

Amid a theme of red carpets and star-studded tables, RRYC celebrated the glamour of the Oscars at our February social, with each dinner course suggested by a past award-winning film. Unless you are one of those people who read the Headway from back to front, you have already read the Commodore's comments about the delicious dinner prepared by Jill & Larry Worth. They were assisted by their guests, Kathleen & John Pollard, with table decorations by Kate Raffetto. Servers were Jan Moser, Fran Westbrook, and Marybeth Sisson. Greeting arrivals were Board hosts Marybeth & Dick Sisson. An impressive spread of appetizers was provided with contributions by Terry & Coleman Brydon, Jan & Norm Mosher, Polli & Mike Romey, Pat & J.D. Willett, and Kay & Tony Weiler (who deserve special credit because they had to cancel their reservations, but still brought an appetizer).

At our March social, on Saturday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day just a wee bit late. You'll have to get your fill of corned beef and cabbage elsewhere and join us for a different salute to the Irish at RRYC, featuring another fine dinner prepared by the Worths.

We will also enjoy another after-dinner program in March, with speaker Bob Gonsoulin. He and his wife Joan, along with another couple, purchased the Middle Ground Light House (adjacent to the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel) in December, 2005, from the United States Coast Guard. They have spent a tidy sum turning the still-active lighthouse into a family retreat. His presentation will include pictures.

Remember that reservations are due by March 14<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday prior to the social. Also, PLEASE remember that the only safe way to make reservations for socials is to e-mail [dinner@rryc.org](mailto:dinner@rryc.org). If you do not receive a confirmation, you do not have a reservation; please follow up. If you do not have e-mail, you can call Jill Worth at (804) 438-9371, but that should be a *last resort*, and the same deadline applies! No one has used the "snail mail" option in the last three months, so the mail-in form is being discontinued.

There has been some confusion over paying for guests who are prospective members. The deal is that all dinner attendees, including prospective member guests, must pay for dinner. IF they do become members, whoever paid can then ask to be reimbursed for that dinner.

## March Menu



**Irish Beef Stew w/ Guinness Stout  
Colcannon (Creamy Mashed Potatoes  
w/ Cabbage and Kale)**

**Irish Flag Salad**

**Irish Soda Bread**

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**Bailey's Irish Cream Sundae w/ Chocolate  
Ganache**



## Another Seasonal Poem from the Club Bard

We're all starting to get anxious for the sailing season to start anew. Every day that's a little warmer than usual, people are heard longing to be on their boats! Certainly, now that we're heading into the fabled March winds, that urge will only get stronger!

### Sailing in Cycles

*By Bob Bierly*

Spring is springing and the grass is rising  
That we have Boat fever is not surprising.

Our Fleet Blessing Meeting will launch a new Campaign  
And some of the faithful will no doubt launch champagne.

The roster of members must be increased with new numbers  
Jim's cruise schedule tells us where at anchor we'll slumber.

Ron Mihills is busily planning the test  
Where our racers will vie for who really is best  
But first there's the business of preparing the Boat  
And sanding and painting and PRAYING she'll float.

Once again in her element (what more can I say?)  
No, not at the pier, but far out on the Bay.  
So on with the waxing and the cleaning off grit,  
And finish installing all that new s(tuff).

One Bob's doing wood work, another's re-plumbing the head.  
And Akula is coming northward as per usual it's said.  
And all of the rest of us can't wait to hear  
What else will distinguish this new sailing year.

So here's a health to the season! May we all get it together!  
And enjoy following breezes and endless good weather.  
May the raft-ups that follow be numerous and well attended.  
So when Christmas arrives and the boat parade has ended  
We will all conclude that this year was the best!  
(and we'll all haul our boats and you know the rest!)

# Club Calendar

## March - April 2009

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**March**

- 6<sup>th</sup> - First Friday
- 14<sup>th</sup> - Racing Seminar 0900-1200
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Board Mtg. & Club Dinner

- 4<sup>th</sup> - Clean Up Day (see article inside for details)
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Make Up For Clean Up Day
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Board Mtg. , Blessing of the Fleet, & Club Dinner

**April**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Private Party

- 25<sup>th</sup> - Shakedown Cruise



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