

Starting Line



October 2012

Inside this issue ...

- From the Commodore
- How Not to Rename Your Boat, Part II: Poseidon's Revenge
- SYSCO October 2012 Meeting Minutes
- SYSCO Awards Party

SYSCO

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

www.syscosailing.org

From the Commodore

By Michael Nance, Commodore



Low water level alert!!!

The river is low and we personally had some adventures yesterday hitting a new sand bar trying to get back to our slip in Tomahawk Bay from Hayden Bay. One of the most eventful 15 minute ventures ever! Hard over and full speed ahead, we got off the sand bar and made it to the marina. Liz jumped off and tied the bow line. After that, Liz and I found ourselves standing on the dock watching the stern of the boat float away while the East wind took over. Calm, cool and collected, Liz suggested that I climb up on the the dock box, board the boat and find a stern line. Two lines later (the first one went into the water when tossed, just a foot short of the dock) we were safely tied up. Just a reminder that things can go ary in a heartbeat. So be careful out there! Luckily with some cool thinking from Liz, we made it home safely and I'm thinking it is time to winterize the boat. Except of course it is almost time for SOS on Sundays! What's a sailor to do?

The SYSCO Awards Party is almost here! Be sure and register early online at [syscosailing.org https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_registration_form.php?regatta_id=5792](https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_registration_form.php?regatta_id=5792).



Early registration is due by Oct. 10 to save \$10 and make it easier for the club to plan on the number of attendees we need to feed. Bring your crew!

Thanks.

Michael



How Not to Rename Your Boat, Part II: Poseidon's Revenge

By Tod Bassham

Our story so far: in Part I we violated one of the major no-nos in renaming our boat from *Moonbeam* to *Nausicaä*, when we plastered the new name on the hull before we performed the proper de-naming ceremony. We compounded this error by taking *Moonbeam/Nausicaä* out upon Poseidon's watery domain, hoping that we could finish the race before the sea-god noticed the unknown intruder. No such luck. The consequence was a broken tiller and a spinnaker that looked more like a pretzel than a racing foil. The only thing that saved us from utter calamity and a last place finish was a hasty prayer/bribe to the sea-god, a promise that we would perform the de-naming and re-naming ceremonies, complete with a sacrificial bottle of bubbly, as soon as we reached the dock. Poseidon, who apparently has a taste for champagne, sent a providential wind that lifted us to the head of the pack, giving us a bullet and the lead in the fleet standings.

Now we stood on the docks, with the entire Merit 25 fleet gathered around, ready to perform the critical de-naming ceremony, which we had purloined from John Vigor's *How to Rename your Boat and 19 Other Useful Ceremonies, Superstitions, Prayers, Rituals, and Curses* (Paradise Cay Publications, 2004). And here is where we made our second major boo-boo.

Vigor cautions not to skimp on the quality of the hooch: the gods are used to drinking ambrosia, after all, and a \$3.99 magnum of Chateau No-Name doesn't cut the divine mustard. Vigor also emphasizes pouring the *entire* bottle over the bow: no sips for the gods and chugs for the crew.

On hand we had a bottle of Safeway's finest \$3.99 bubbly, and a thirsty horde of Merit 25 sailors, who are notorious for preferring quantity over quality. I said the ritual words, asking the sea-god to scratch *Moonbeam* out of his little black book and prepare a blank slate for the new name. The cork was popped, but as I began pouring the cheap froth over the forestem a deep sigh went up from the crowd. A voice asked quietly, "You gonna pour that stuff all out, mate?" Well, I thought, a few sips couldn't hurt, and passed the nearly full bottle to the crowd. It came back a few seconds later, completely empty, its contents emptied down the bottomless gullets of the Merit fleet. The mob growled ominously for more. Hastily, I pulled out a pint of Jim Beam I'd been saving for an after-ceremony snort with the crew, twisted the cap off and splashed a drop on the bow, just before the howling mob ripped the pint from my hands and dispatched it with unseemly gusto. In the confusion the crew and I cut the lines and drifted out into the fairway, with the crew lobbing beers into the maddened horde to keep it occupied.





Artist's rendering of a Merit 25 fleet social gathering.
Johannes Lingelbach

From the safety of the fairway we completed the naming ritual, and at long last the boat possessed her true name: *Nausicaä*. All's well that ends well, I thought, as we bolted on an old tiller to replace the shattered stick. But I was uneasily aware that the gods might be peeved at the miserly quantity of very cheap bubbly foisted on them, and unmollified by the drop of good Jim Beam I'd managed to splash on the bow. Come to think of it, that drop might never have made it to the water. I seem to recall a certain Merit 25 skipper licking the bow as we tried to shove off, but I may have just imagined that.

If there was any doubt about continued divine displeasure, however, the next race of the series proved it beyond the proverbial shadow. As we rounded the first mark and prepared to launch the chute, the boat

suddenly crash-gybed. I stared dumbfounded at the replacement tiller, wondering why the helm had gone so soft. For some time I continued to move the tiller back and forth, to no apparent effect, until I realized that the old piece of wood had delaminated, split into two long halves, and broken free of the rudder head. I threw down the tiller pieces and grabbed the rudder head, steering by brute force as we careered wildly through the fleet, screaming "No helm!" By the time we reached the leeward mark, our experienced Charlie Foxtrot Romeo team had duct-taped the old tiller together and lashed it onto the rudder head with twine, so we could hold the boat's nose to the wind. We finished the race and managed to avoid a DNF, but we were now tied for the series lead.

The gods, however, were not through yet. The next, and final, race of the series brought gusty winds and a dark squall line on the horizon. As we approached the windward mark on starboard, a port-tack Merit 25 tried to duck us, just as the slick duct-taped tiller slipped briefly out of my hands, and we rounded up, causing contact and a bent toe-rail on our aft-quarter. In the ensuing muddle we rounded the weather mark far behind the fleet.

By this point I had had enough. It is one thing to break two tillers and ruin our standings, but to dent my boat's beautiful curved toe-rail was beyond the pale. "Yo, Earthshaker," I called, "yeah, we stiffed you on the hooch, and neglected the proper rituals, and named our boat after the girl that thwarted your evil



designs against Odysseus, but all this ends here and now.” Thunder crackled in the distance. I grabbed the beer-chest, and to the crew’s horror and dismay dumped the chest and an ice-cold case of Ninkasi IPA overboard.¹ “That’s right, Tamer-of-Horses,” I yelled to the heavens. “We are making the most dreadful sacrifice a sailor can make. NO COLD BEER. We’ve got one warm bottle of non-alcoholic beer left, and when we get back to the dock we are going to split it five ways. You can have the dregs if you want. But that’s it. We got nothing more to give.”

A lightning bolt split the sky as a black cloud moved swiftly toward us. “Bring it!” I screamed.

And it was brung. A gust laid us down on our beam-ends. We popped up like a breaching whale, the wind filled the spinnaker, and with a massive jerk that sent us all tumbling we went flying up the river. A wave caught up to us, white foam rearing and breaking like maddened horses, and it seemed to carry us along at immense speed until we reached the tail of the Merit fleet. Only then did the wave subside and the squall pass with a last rumble of thunder. The gods, it seemed, were impressed with our awful sacrifice, and had decided to give us a chance at the series title. We followed the parade of Merits around the leeward

mark, hoisted the blade jib and hardened up, grimly determined on the impossible task of reeling in the leaders.

Then, *mirabile dictu*, the lead boats suddenly rounded up, sails all ahoop, their crews apparently driven mad by something we could not see or hear. Then we heard it, too, a faint eerie clink-clink.

“Nausicaäns!” I ordered, “Ear-buds in, eyes to the masthead!” As the crew obeyed, I lashed down the tiller, duct-taped myself to the backstay, and tried to look only at the finish line in the distance. But that lovely sound of clinking glass was more than I could bear. There it was, off the bow, a floating ice-chest full of Ninkasi IPA, bottles clinking together in the swell, still cold and so refreshing, so tempting, the perfect blend of hops, malt and barley. I raved and howled, begging to be released, but the crew could not hear. In my madness I seemed to see half-naked maidens holding up frosty bottles of hoppy ambrosia, calling out to me to join them as we slowly drifted by. At long last we drifted blindly across the finish line, to the sound of the horn and my inconsolable weeping. We had won the CYC summer series, but in our grief it meant nothing.

¹ *The official beer of Team Nausicaä. Appropriately, Ninkasi is the Sumerian goddess of beer, the chief brewmistress for the gods and, come to think of it, a fine name for a boat.*





*A scene from Final Race of the 2012 CYC Summer Series, by Herbert James Draper, sometimes mistaken for a similar painting *Odysseus and the Sirens*, by the same artist.*

And that, my friends, is how NOT to rename a boat. I can only hope others learn from my failure to follow the proper de-naming and re-naming rituals. Unless the most extreme care is taken, you may wind up wrapped in duct-tape, weeping, with only warm non-alcoholic beer to drink. May the gods preserve you from that fate.



SYSCO October 2012 Meeting Minutes

From the Board

The October board meeting was held at Elmer's Delta Park on Monday, Oct. 1, 2012. Commodore Michael Nance began the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Also present were Warren Dalby, Tod Bassham, George Brown and Gary Bruner.

Reports

Financial: Treasurer Tod Bassham reports that our bank balance is currently \$8,102.77, reflecting four new membership's income and expenses that include a down payment for the Awards Dinner caterer. Tod will prepare a year end financial statement, but it looks like our carry over will be significantly less than in previous years due to increased costs for fuel, moorage, a paid PRO and above averages costs for Pancho repairs last season. We are also over budget for burgees and pennants. There was some discussion about the possibility of having to reluctantly raise membership fees, but no action was taken. Michael will contact Regatta Network to see if they can fix our registration system online to require each member to pick two areas of volunteer possibilities for next season.

Membership: Jan Burkhart was not in attendance, but Tod confirmed four new members. It is not clear whether Jan will be willing to serve as Membership chair next year.

Racing: Race Committee Chair Warren Dalby reported that last spring, SYSCO's racing clinic in



March was well attended, but that only three boats came out for the practice race the following evening. It was decided to save money by leaving Pancho on the hard for another month and not splashing until the day before the Opening Day Regatta. We could then do a couple of 'practice starts' for new racers in the hour or so before the regatta for interested parties, thus saving moorage dollars until April 13, 2013. The Summer Solstice regatta was not well attended last year, and discussion ensued about the



possibility of cancelling it if attendance was not up next year. Michael will contact Columbia Crossing and Doug Shenk of “Free Bowl of Soup” to see if we might collaborate somehow with that very popular Beer Can event on Friday, and end our regatta the following Saturday. Discussion surrounded the lack of wind on some weekend regattas, so it was decided that our regattas not begin before 1400 hours. Warren will discuss that possibility with OCSA to see if that might become universal. The Solstice Regatta will conclude with at least a ‘partial’ potluck social on Saturday, with SYSCO providing a main course, perhaps. Warren Dalby will also be discussing with OCSA a change to SSIs regarding wording over marks that are sometimes placed out of position due to high water, etc., as well as the wording of the “Time Limit Exceeded” limit for PHRF boats, and especially the cruising class that sometimes has quite disparate boats.

Pancho: Maintenance Chair Gary Bruner reported that Pancho is parked on his trailer and all tarped for winter.

Program: Chair Randall Poff was not present, but SYSCO assumes that OCSA is going ahead with the idea of quarterly informational meetings. SYSCO will be hosting the Race Clinic as its contribution. It is up to three other clubs to come up with speakers for three other dates.

Old Business

Awards party: Stephanie Rice was not present, but the caterer has been hired. There was discussion about saving money by not having a band or DJ play music after the Awards ceremony, but, in Stephanie’s absence it was not clear if a band has already been hired. Mike will contact Stephanie about that situation, and Gary will ask her about payments to the caterer, and ask about the confirmation of the final head count for dinner. Gary Bruner volunteered to call all the “winners” of trophies this season to give them a personal invite and reminder about the Awards Dinner at PYC on October 20, and to let them know that CREW are invited. Gary will also contact Petra Gilbert and ask if she can make up a ‘kewl’ PDF that can be sent to Michael for a weekly ‘blast’ to the membership, encouraging them to participate in the Awards Banquet. Warren has contacted each Fleet Captain to remind them to each provide a gift or two for the raffle at the Awards Party. Michael will talk to Stephanie about ticket availability and having someone at the banquet to sell them.

New Business

Officers: Dave Long has resigned as Secretary due to too many conflicts with his job. Gary Bruner volunteered to take over for the last few months, provided he has voting privileges. That was moved, seconded, and passed by vote of the Board. Warren



Dalby said he will double check the bylaws about the dates for elections for officers. There was much discussion about possibilities and nominees, but it is hoped numerous members will step up for consideration. Obviously, we need to elect Board positions of Commodore, Secretary and Treasurer, and fill a number of committee chair positions. We are not yet clear who might stay on, but we'll need chairs for at least: Membership, Social, Pancho, newsletter, website, and, no doubt Fleet Captains for each level fleet.

OCSA News:

Tod Bassham volunteered to put together the SYSCO basket for the OCSA Awards Party in November. OCSA has requested two volunteers from SYSCO to help set up and two to help take down things after their party. Tod agreed to be one of the volunteers for set-up, so we are looking for three additional volunteers.

On March 1 and 2, 2013, OCSA has invited the 'rules meister' Dave Perry to speak at a weekend race clinic to teach local sailors about all the new rules for 2013-16. He will conduct a mock 'protest' on Friday night. In addition to each participant's fee of \$25, each local club has been asked to contribute from \$200-500 to help defray the significant costs of having Mr. Perry come to Portland.

Next year, OCSA is thinking about requiring that ALL river racers actually JOIN OCSA in order to have their boat participate in an OCSA-sponsored race, and not just 'buy the race book'. Since it will be a requirement, and OCSA will have a database of members, they can then put race information on the website to be accessed by racers who may have misplaced the book.

OCSA had requested to collaborate with SYSCO by combining our 'Race Clinic' evening for racers with their 'Race Management Clinic' that is designed for those who actually run races on the river. That offer was declined by vote of the board since the intent of the meetings seemed to us to be quite different and there was concern about the length of such a proposed gathering.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Bruner
Acting SYSCO Secretary





SYSCO Awards Party

Portland Yacht Club

Oct. 20, 6 p.m.

(dinner at 7 p.m.)

Italian food, trophies and prizes!

All welcome

\$25 advance tickets; \$35 at the door

Reservations at syscosailing.org

or SYSCO, PO Box 5502, Portland, OR 97228 (by Oct. 10)

