

# Starting Line



February 2013

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**SYSCO**  
Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

[www.syscosailing.org](http://www.syscosailing.org)

## From the Commodore

By Frank Colistro, Commodore

Greetings, fellow cruisers and racers!

Here we go again, ramping up for another season of SYSCO racing and cruising. Dave Perry's Racing Rules and Tactic seminar, sponsored in part by OSCA is coming up on February 23, with a mock protest committee on the evening of February 22.

In other news, the final Sailing on Sunday race is coming up on March 3. Captain Billy Sanborn and Gil MacGregor are putting on an SOS potluck at PYC that Sunday evening.

Overall, the SYSCO Board is very happy with the steady flow of membership renewals and race registrations. On we go to 2013!



# Strange Fraternity

By Tod Bassham

Bitter cold was the day I reached rock bottom. Grey clouds smothered the horizon; a dismal sleet crystallized from every sodden molecule of air. Nothing moved in the marina, not a breath of wind. It was January, the middle of a Pacific Northwest winter, and I was shivering in the cockpit of my sailboat, holding an empty bottle in my hand.

How did it begin? As such things do: with a small white lie.

The racing season ended gloriously, with wins and grins all around. But the crew soon scattered in all directions, back to their families, the start of school<sup>1</sup>, and preparations for the coming ski season. The weight of autumn descended like the proverbial ton of bricks. Oh, there is the blessed Sail on Sundays series, but crew is always hard to find, and the family isn't into cold weather sailing; even my dog refuses to sail with me when the temperature sinks below 35 degrees. As the fall advanced, some vital essence seemed drained from the world. I decided to fill the void by throwing myself into boat projects, and soon spent every fall weekend down at the docks, covered in epoxy and fiberglass dust.

And then the rain came, the start of one of the wettest winters on record. I rejoiced at first, because now I could spot the leaks. Happy weeks followed, but finally it became too cold for any sealant to cure, or for my fingers to hold a screwdriver. Only I still wouldn't let go. Every weekend in December and January I told my long-suffering wife that I still had

“boat projects” to complete. It was a lie. All I did—all I seemed able to do—was to sit alone in the boat, drinking and listening to the rain patter on the tarp. Sometimes I would putter about, whipping rope ends. But mostly I thought of preparing the boat to race in the spring, and the caress of the summer wind.

It took me a long time to realize I was not alone. The marina always seemed deserted when I walked down the icy ramps, and past the long rows of sailboats. But gradually I became aware of others like me, others who couldn't let go. We would exchange brief glances across the fairway, or pass each other on the dock, eyes averted, ashamed of our weakness. We formed a strange fraternity. Like me, they probably had families, lives, something else to do. Like me, they choose to spend every available moment down at the docks, pretending to work on a sailboat. Why? Why couldn't we sit in a warm den watching football, or enjoy a weekend on the ski slopes, like everyone else?

The answer came at the end of one cold January afternoon, a bad day at the bottom of winter, when fading memories of warm days under sail could provide no comfort. I was wearily gathering up the empties when I heard a soft tread on the finger pier. “Evening, brother,” a voice called. I poked my head out from

*How did it begin? As such things do: With a small white lie.*





under the tarp, and recognized one of my fellow sufferers, a grizzled salt I had seen haunting the docks, but had never spoken to. His eyes flicked quickly to the empty bottles in my arms, looked up at the mast of my boat with unmistakable distaste, and then away to a horizon I couldn't see. "Some of us are gathering up at the Power Patrol meeting room, if you'd care to join us," he explained.

Some lingering remnant of self-respect made me say yes. The old salt helped me carry the empties up to recycling, and we trudged heads bowed through the drizzling sleet toward a brightly lit window. Inside, chairs were circled, occupied by a dozen men and women dressed in foul-weather gear.

I turned to my guide. "This is an AA meeting, isn't it?" I asked.

He shook his head, and handed me a beer. "Not quite. We call it SA: Sailors Anonymous."

We sat down and sipped our beers. After a few minutes, a man stood and spoke. "My name is Alex, and I am a sailing addict. It has been six years, ten months and four days since my last sailing trip." "Hi, Alex!" the group chorused. Alex recounted how he had become obsessed with sailing and sailboat racing, how it had ruined his career, his finances, and finally his marriage. Others then recounted similar sad tales.

Finally, a young man stood, head lowered, for a long minute. "I had a relapse last week," he said quietly. The group murmured sympathetically. "A friend from my former life called, said they needed foredeck for



Sail on Sunday and I...I..." Tears stained his cheeks. "It was a tough week at work, and I knew the wind was just kicking out of the gorge. I wanted to jump a halyard one more time, and feel the boat heel under me as we approach the starting line. I wanted to sail."

Several SA group members stood and gently hugged him. One of them whispered: "Next time you feel that way, give me a call, and I'll take you out in the power boat."





I looked at the old salt. “Power boat?”

He grimaced. “Sailing is like high-grade heroin. Power boats are like methadone, a milder habit that helps you break the addiction.” He pointed to a placard on the wall. I started reading down a list of 12 steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless over sailing—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power Boat could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the Power Patrol.

There were more steps, but the words blurred. I stood up, and all eyes turned toward me. I stammered: “My name is Tod, and I—I’m addicted to sailing.”

Their faces looked expectantly up at mine. “It’s been...” I paused for a long moment.

“It’s been far too long since I went sailing.”

I gathered my jacket, and turned to the young man. “I could use help on the foredeck tomorrow,” I told him. He looked desperately unhappy, then met my eyes, and nodded.

I’m grateful to Sailors Anonymous, because it taught me that I am addicted to sailing. When I eventually sought help, I was able, with the support of family and friends, to transition into a healthier relationship with sailing, with moderation the guiding principle. My family is happier now that I limit sailing to once a week, and my wife is especially glad that I’ve given up “boat projects” every weekend. I’ve even taken up some non-sailing interests, although I still can’t stand to watch football on TV.

Life is good. My crew includes that young man from the SA meeting. I can race with the crew, dock the boat, and walk away without glancing back more than once or twice. I admit the sound of halyards clanking on a winter day still haunts me, but I now recognize there is more to life than sailing. One day at a time, they say.

My name is Tod, and I am a sailing addict.



# Traditional and Not So Traditional

By David Paligo

Sailing and racing have many traditions... Some of these traditions have carried down from the old mariner days with formal titles like “Commodore,” “Captain,” “Lieutenant” or “Boatswain’s mate.” Another tradition is to call a crewmember by their position or duties on the boat like Skipper, Yanker, Cranker, Sewer or Foredeck. Yet another fun way is to earn your nickname by something you say or do.

Here is a short story I want to share about the first team I raced with called the “Core Four” and how we earned our nicknames.

Doug Marshall has been one of my sailing and racing mentors for many years. He has raced on many offshores, TranPac’s and countless Columbia River buoy races on OPBs (Other Peoples Boats). Doug had been away from the racing scene for a few years and decided it was time to get back into racing. So he bought a J/30 from the Great Lakes area and had it transported here to Portland. After fixing her up the way he wanted her rigged, it was time to form a crew and practice. Doug has always said we need to “practice to race not race to practice.” And practice we did.

In no time, it was race time. Our first race was against an established J/30 one design fleet that had been competing against each other for a few years, and the competition was tough. In our first race, as we were going around the windward mark, rounding room was tight, and Doug touched the mark in order not to



make contact with another J/30. Doug yells out that we must do our penalty turns and said he could not remember if we should do a 360 or a 720. Doug being a fair and honest sailor said we would do a 720 “just in case” and promised he’d look up the rule before the next race. Race #2 found us in a similar situation and, you guessed it, we touched the mark. Of course, Doug had not looked up the rule and we did another 720. This time, as we were doing our tacks and gibes,



we actually gained position on the race course. Well, later on Doug finally looked up the rule; but the new nickname of “720” has stuck with him for all these years.

Milo (first name is Marc) goes by the first part of his last name (Milobinski). But that just did not seem representative of a strong young man that was capable of handling all the demands of the foredeck - or as some call it: Adventure Land - to just be called Milo. We needed something more fitting for him and as we batted around new nicknames our minds turned to “FORE \_ \_ \_ \_”. Well, what started as endings like “deck” soon turned to more risqué ideas such as “play” and sk\_ \_ . Okay, I think you see the direction that anyone can go with this one. Better judgment prevailed so we still call him Milo.

Brian Barnett was my neighbor. One day, while enjoying a few barley pops while talking over the fence between our yards, I asked him if he'd like to try out for a position on our sailboat team. He was so excited he could hardly get a word out and his wife had to blurt out... HECK YES for him. We were always working on projects on the J/30 - keeping it ready for buoy races and prepping it for our first offshore race as Core Four. During one of the many work parties, we decided to BBQ something on the docks and Brian volunteered to do the cooking. Like always, one guy wanted a veggie burger, one guy wanted chicken, one guy wanted a fish burger and one wanted a cheese burger... you get the picture.

Well Brian never missed a beat. He prepped all the food exactly as ordered and surprised us all with some salad, cold beers and warm chocolate chip cookies for desert. We all sat back to an outstanding BBQ and the work party continued with full tummies and satisfied sailors. We all got to talking about Brian's culinary skills and gave him the name of Cookie Monster but most of the time we just call him Cookie.

My sailing had been very limited prior to meeting this crew. I was totally surprised when Doug asked me if I would like to try out for a team he was putting together. I told him of my very limited sailing experience and he told me not to worry, and that he would mentor me through all the sailing duties and lingo. Well, I was like a kid in a candy shop and I asked every question known to man about sailing and racing in which Doug would explain everything in detail to me. Doug would always say to ask the question and he'd explain or pencil it out on paper for me. This was so awesome and I felt free to ask questions any time. Looking back, I think that Doug enjoyed my enthusiasm and looked forward to my questions. Some of my obvious Q's were along the lines of “do we have enough fuel?” or “do you know we are three minutes to our start?” or “do you know the course?” Sometimes I thought I may have over done the whole question thing when Doug





found this old Sail Magazine with an article call “Every boat needs a MOTO.” I asked Doug what is a MOTO and he responded with Master Of The Obvious, and that person is allowed to ask those obvious questions.

One evening I had to miss a race and 720’s reputation was to be two days late to the start line. Low and behold, the night that I missed, the team was running later than usual and did not have time to get the course. So 720 jumps into the start sequence, nailed the start line and was leading the entire J/30 fleet for the first time ever. Because we were always late to the start line we usually followed the pack and it really wasn’t that important to get the course. I’m sure you racers can see this one coming. 720 had no idea what the course was so he guessed with the direction of the wind he would just run last week’s course. He continued until he looked back and the entire fleet was going a different direction. Of course, on this race they came in DFL. The next day we were talking about the race and Doug commented that no one on the boat had asked if he knew the course and it became evident that every boat needs someone to ask those questions that cannot be argued with or put down because of that question. That day I became known as MOTO and it was declared that from that day forward, anyone was allowed to ask a MOTO question and would never be put down for asking. From that moment, no one, and he meant no one, was to ever question a MOTO question.



If you haven’t adopted this “tradition” and earned a sailing nickname yet, just keep your eyes and ears open. All the signals will be there for just the perfect sailing nickname and if you haven’t earned yours yet, don’t worry; one WILL be assigned to you :)





# SYSCO February 2013 Meeting Minutes

## From the Board

The SYSCO board meeting was held on February 4 at the Delta Park Elmer's. The meeting started at 7:03 p.m. following a short discussion concerning the fall awards banquet cost reduction options.

Members present were as follows, Mike and Liz Nance, Frank Colistro, Warren Dalby, Gary Bruner, George Brown, Tod Bassham, Jan Burkhart, and Ryan Rodgers.

## Membership

Jan Burkhart reported 56 registered and paid memberships as of the morning of the 4th, with five new applicants.

Rhys Balmer, Merit 25 Paradox

John Gries, Newport 27 Lady Amber

Barb Hutchinson, Martin 241 Nelly

Stevan Jananovic, Ranger 20 Newton's Orange

David Boyajian, associate member

After a quick vote, all were unanimously approved as members!

Next, Jan presented the board with the layout of the new online membership roster proposed by Scott Stevenson. The new arrangement will allow members to list SYSCO members by fleet, first name alphabetically or last name alphabetically. There were no objections from the board.



The board voted to comp the P.R.O. an associate membership to maintain insurance coverage on Pancho.

Gary Bruner made a suggestion that each new member be personally contacted by a board member to welcome them to the club. After much discussion, the board settled on maintaining the welcome letter and SYSCO race burgee for now.

## Racing

Fleet night saw fewer attendees than the years past, yet most members saw it as a success. The major concerns amongst the discontent were the dwindling



number of attendees and the quality of provisions were thought to be too high.

The election of fleet captains is recorded with the exception of A and B fleet but those officers are expected soon. Fleet night also aided in the sale of the OCSA race book. We currently only have five left so get yours soon!

### **Treasury**

As of the first of February, the bank balance was \$7,749.37.

Tod Bassham reported that Fleet Night cost \$380, approximately \$100 less than last year's Fleet Night. Donations brought in \$240. There was some discussion of combining SYSCO and CYC's fleet night to cut additional costs.

### **Pancho**

Gary Bruner states that Pancho is dry and ready for the upcoming race season.

### **Old Business**

Petra Gilbert has generously agreed to put out February's newsletter before passing the torch. Tod Bassham has agreed to help until a new replacement is found.

Mike Nance compiled a list of SYSCO members who've expressed interest of volunteering for newsletter duties.



# James Gleason Boat Ramp Closure

By Ryan Rodgers

The James Gleason boat ramp is closed this winter for repaving. The project started mid-January and hopes to improve parking, create storm water treatment and add permeate restrooms. The project's proposed finish date is around June.

If you're planning on ramp launching your boat prior to the upcoming sailing season, you might want to consider alternate plans.





# SYSCO Members - Save \$5

By Jan Burkhart

Time is running short to save \$5 on your 2013 SYSCO membership.

Please renew by Friday Feb. 15, 2013, *or the computer will automatically add the \$5.*

\$85 – Regular - sailor owning a boat

\$25 – Associate – not a sailboat owner, OR you do own a powerboat.

Just think – renew today and use the extra \$5 to get yourself a Starbuck's treat...

SYSCO: To renew or join as new go to: [https://www.regattanetwork.com/membersgmt/SYSCO/membership\\_registration\\_start.php](https://www.regattanetwork.com/membersgmt/SYSCO/membership_registration_start.php)

Should you need technical assistance, please contact Steven Nance at [stevenmnance@gmail.com](mailto:stevenmnance@gmail.com) (who is son of the Rear Commodore - thank you!)

As this news goes out, SYSCO has 66 members for 2013 including 12 new members. Good Job Cruising Fleet. You have the most participants to date.

SYSCO Welcomes New Members:

- Rhys Balmer, Merit 25, Paradox
- David Boyajian, Assoc., ready to crew.
- John Gries, Newport 27, Lady Amber
- Barb Hutchinson, Martin 241, Nelly
- Stevan Jananovic, Ranger 20, Newton's Orange
- Jackie Pitter – SYSCO Social Chair !

- John Gries, Newport 27, Lady Amber
- Mark Kloepfer, Assoc., ready to crew
- Jim King, Hunter 34, Tanguera
- Jeff Olin, Assoc., ready to crew
- Jim Severs, Pearson 26 OD
- William Street, Cal 20, Union Maid

New members, please attend the SYSCO social to claim your Welcome Packet including a SYSCO Burgee.

## SYSCO Social & Membership Drive BYOB AND POT-LUCK

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16  
7 - 9 PM

ROSE CITY YACHT CLUB  
3737 MARINE DRIVE

*Bring a bottle & an appetizer,  
socialize, share stories,  
and invite new members.*



## Need Boat Repair Supplies?

By Jan Burkhart

Are you working to repair your beloved boat? Bill Brennan may have the exact tool you need. Give Bill Brennan a call at 360-597-3209.

Bill has moved, emptied his repair barn(!), and selling extra gear. All of the precious boat repair needs have been boxed and moved to Vancouver. Call Bill or watch Craig's List.

Thanks. And as always, Bill wishes you a "great sailing season."



## S.O.S. - Sail on Sunday

By Ryan Rodgers

In the time of year when many sailors choose to winterize their boats and switch to snow sports, a number of SYSCO members have been participating in the Sailing on Sundays series, a casual “pick-up game” of sailboat racing CYC hosts from October into March.

The racing starts at 1300 every Sunday, with a start line between buoy 14 and the east end of the RCYC break wall.

The course is left to the discretion of the volunteer race committee, and typically includes a combination of the 14, 18 and 2 nun buoys between the I-5 and 205 bridges.

If you'd like to shake the cobwebs and mildew out of your canvas and join us, it's easy to register.

There are three races remaining and entry is free. Go to [www.sailpdx.org/cyc-sailing-on-sundays-series/](http://www.sailpdx.org/cyc-sailing-on-sundays-series/) for details on registering, and join our group at [groups.google.com/group/sos-pdx](https://www.google.com/group/sos-pdx).





# SYSCO 2013 Cruise Schedule

By Bill Sanborn

March 16 – 17

Spring Shakedown Cruise, Govt. Isl. West

May 25 -27

Memorial Day Weekend, Martin Isl Pond

June 8 – 9

June Cruise, Hadley Landing

July 4 – 7

Independence Day, Martin Isl Pond

July 27 – Aug 4

SYSCO Delta Cruise, Down River

Aug 24 -25

SYSCO St. Helens, Race down

Aug 31 – Sept 2

Labor Day Cruise, Coon Isl.

Oct 26 – 27

Fall Colors, Coon Isl.

Nov 2 – 3

ABC (Men's Cruise), Hadley Landing

These are dates and locations that SYSCO has cruised to in the past and are dates that don't conflict with other Yacht Clubs advertised cruises.

These dates are not the only options for organized cruises and a phone call or email to fleet members or the entire club will usually find a buddy boat to share time on a dock or in a raft up. Often times we'll decide at the last minute to spend the night on the boat at a dock or at anchor, and will find other with the same idea and share time on the dock with them.

