

*Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon*

**STARTING LINE**

**January 2016**

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*Upcoming Dates to Remember:*

*\* Portland Boat Show January 13 to  
17<sup>th</sup>.*

*\*SYSCO Fleet Night Tuesday,  
January 26, at 6:30 p.m.*

*\*Seattle Boat Show, January 29  
through February 6*

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**From the Front**

## **Nat Powning, Commodore**

Happy New Year, I hope 2016 winds up treating everyone well. This year will come with a few changes for SYSCO but rest assured we have a solid core of volunteers working to maintain and grow Portland's keelboat racing scene. First, a special thanks goes to Tod for fulfilling the complete series of director positions from Secretary through Commodore and has now seated himself at the stern of the bus as Rear Commodore. He thought it'd be a cake walk to simply kick back with the cool kids and answer easy questions but instead has already found himself responsible for our newsletter. In the seat that's arguably more critical than all others Bruce Newton is transitioning from Treasurer to Vice Commodore. This position is also our Race Captain and OCSA Liaison so he'll be right in the middle of these changes we're facing. Scott Stevenson, who has been supporting Jan to keep our membership data organized, will be watching our liquid assets as Treasurer. I personally witnessed the passing of our coffee can full of cash and am hopeful that Scott has it stashed in a good hiding place. Gary Bruner with Don Woodhouse will continue covering the very important role as Secretary. A big thank you goes to these directors and all of our volunteers. We are still looking to fill the Newsletter Editor seat along with a few open Fleet Captain positions, please contact myself or any of the caretakers if you are interested.

Some might think December would be a slow time for the volunteers of a sailing club that suspends racing during winter but you'd be wrong. As the year comes to a close we've been busy hammering out a schedule and nailing down all the intricacies to go into next season's race book. Speakers have been getting lined up for our upcoming chalkboard sessions and the boat show committee is doing a great job getting our booth setup and volunteers wrangled. In addition to the usual updates, SYSCO has added a third week-night series and is making some adjustments around our Race Committee structure based on lessons learned in 2015. As has been shared previously, with the loss of CYC's Summer Series there's concern that the OCSA Tropical Awards Party may suffer so we're also re-considering where our awards are presented to help keep this important cross-club social gathering strong. By the way, if you're a SYSCO member and have not received a survey regarding our Awards Banquet please let us know by sending a note to [sailing@syscosailing.org](mailto:sailing@syscosailing.org) as we may have your email address wrong.

Keep one eye on your inbox for more details as these things get settled and come join us for Fleet Night the last week of January. This year we'll be gathering on Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> 6:30 at Rose City Yacht Club. It'll be a fun opportunity to connect with your fellow fleet-mates, hear the latest scoop on our new Twilight Summer Series and even get some insight on building and maintaining a successful racing crew. I hope to see you there!

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### **From the Rear**

#### **Tod Bassham, Rear-Commodore**

One of the great pleasures of relinquishing the reins of power to our new Commodore is that I get to join the ranks of former Rear Commodores on the back benches, where we can sit and kibitz to our hearts' delight, second-guessing the decisions of a new generation of SYSCO leaders who, we are confident, will be wiser than we were.

An unexpected bonus is the freedom to speak my mind without fretting about whether the voters will toss me into the electoral trashcan. So here goes.

As you may know, SYSCO is circulating a survey to elicit member preferences regarding the Great Awards Party Conundrum. There are three important questions. First, should SYSCO award its trophies at the OCSA Tropical Party, or continue to hold a separate awards party? Second, if SYSCO continues to hold a separate awards party, where should that party be held? Third, if SYSCO continues to hold a separate awards party, should the Summer Twilight (former CYC Summer) trophies be awarded at the SYSCO party or the Tropical Party? Please take the survey as soon as you can, decisions must be made soon.

There are strong views on all sides, but here are my answers, and reasons.

Yes, SYSCO should award its trophies at the OCSA Tropical Party. There are several practical arguments pro and con (e.g. PRO: save money for the club and members who attend both parties; CON: it would make for a longer awards banquet, etc.). I think the pros outweigh the cons, but I could argue those both ways. However, it seems to me that the real issue that

motivates passions on this subject is not the practical pros and cons. I believe the practical arguments obscure the emotional heart of the real issue, which is different visions of SYSCO and how we, as a club and as members, fit into the larger sailing community.

SYSCO started out as a rebellion against the somewhat staid sailing scene in the late 1970s. We were small-boat skippers, often one-design, who wanted competitive racing and low-cost cruising and camaraderie, not yachtsmen on big boats out for a jaunt on the river and a sundowner at the club. The “yacht” in “Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon” was surely an ironic statement. We introduced the concept of level racing to the river, and have been extremely successful over the years in providing a fun, low-cost alternative to the more traditional sailing clubs and organizations. We have consistently promoted fleet and one-design organizations, and made fleets an integral part of how the club is organized and how races are run. Fleet captains make up the bulk of our Board, and fleet captains and fleets typically provide our PROs and race committees. It has proven to be a successful formula. So successful, in fact, that in 2016 SYSCO will award the majority, maybe 75 percent, of all the trophies for all races, from all clubs.

So why mess with success? Why change from two awards parties to one awards party? My answer is because we, in a sense, won the rebellion. We run the most races (and most innovative and fun races) on the river. We are no longer the rebellious teenagers at the margins of the sailing community that we once were (or imagined ourselves to be). We’re now grown-ups, full-fledged members of the sailing community, with concomitant perspectives and responsibilities. Many of our boats are no longer “small,” and the “yacht” moniker in our name is no longer entirely tongue-in-cheek. When CYC decided to move on from their summer series, SYSCO stepped forward and took responsibility. We did so because we recognized that we are a big part of the sailing community, and that supporting the sailing community is both the right thing to do and, ultimately, good for SYSCO as well.

To me, the same perspective answers the first question posed by the survey. Yes, we should unite the two awards parties, because one big party supports the sailing community better than two smaller, separate parties, and a strong sailing community is better for SYSCO. Like

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Everyone is invited to kick-off a new year of racing at SYSCO Fleet Night! Meet with other members of your Fleet, elect a Fleet Captain, and slam dunk the winter blues with camaraderie, pizza, and BYOB beverages.

Fleet Night opens the racing season, and it is a superb chance for Fleets to get together to plan the coming year, learn the latest news, and decide who will lead the Fleet. Among the topics of discussions will be how SYSCO will run the third race series -- the Summer Twilight Series, which will allow skippers in mixed-boat spinnaker fleets to race

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Fleet Night  
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learn about  
changes to the registration  
process and updates to the  
OCSA Racing Instructions,  
and, in general, get a jump  
on the racing season.

Pizza will be available for purchase. Soft drinks will be complimentary and everyone is welcome to bring your own beer or other drinks.

Fleet Night is Tuesday, January 26, at 6:30 pm for the pizza social, 7:00 - 8:00 pm meeting at the Rose City Yacht Club, 3737 NE Marine Drive, Portland.

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anything else having to do with boats, there are trade-offs, but it's the right thing to do. SYSCO runs a great party, and we should bring that enthusiasm and skill-set to help the sailing community put on the best party ever.

As for the third question: if we *do* decide to continue with two separate parties, SYSCO should award the third summer series trophies at the Tropical Party. That is the party at which the third summer series trophies have always been awarded. More importantly, if the sailing community awards 75 percent of all trophies at SYSCO's party, and only 25 percent of trophies at the Tropical Party, then the Tropical Party will probably longer be viable. The Tropical Party may go away, and that would be bad

Enjoy this picture of the SYSCO Booth being constructed at the Portland Boat Show. From right to left, SYSCO volunteers Jim Sever, Mike Daly, Gary Bruner and Tod Bassham.

Can't see the picture?

Dang it, we forgot to take any pictures. You'll have to use your imagination. Or perhaps go to the Boat Show and see the SYSCO booth for yourself!

Kells,

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## **SYSCO Board Meeting Minutes**

**January 4, 2016**

The meeting at Elmer's Delta Park was called to order by incoming Commodore Nat Powning at 7 PM sharp. Besides Nat, other members present were: Thomas MacMenemy, Mike Daly, Warren Dalby, Bruce Newton, Scott Stevenson, Frank Colistro, Tod Bassham, Bill Sanborn, Tomas Morrissey, and Gary Bruner.

Nat began by reviewing the names of each board member and chairperson within SYSCO leadership. Except for a couple of missing Fleet Captains, the entire lineup is set, with the exception of a newspaper editor. That position is a serious need for SYSCO right now and one for which writing skills are not required. Nat reminded everyone that Fleet Captains are welcome at board meetings and he reassured us all that Fleet Captains are notified and reminded of board meetings.

Treasurer Scott Stevenson distributed the 2016 proposed budget and a budget status report. Scott reported that, so far, for 2016, SYSCO only has limited numbers of paid memberships(14 Gold, 7 Silver, and 5 Associate). There was discussion around the fact that SYSCO's account with Wells Fargo is free, but only so long as we maintain a \$3,000 balance, so we cannot move the Pancho reserve funds to an interest bearing account without incurring fees. There was some discussion about perhaps moving to an account with a local credit union, but no action was taken. The budget was unanimously approved on a motion from Tod Bassham and a second from Bruce Newton.

Vice Commodore Bruce Newton gave a racing report. This year we are reinstating a Racing Committee to support the expanded racing program. So far the Racing Committee consists of Bruce, Randall Poff, Lynda Davis, and the Fleet Captains. Bruce, Randy, Nat, and Todd met on December 15 to begin planning the 2016 racing year. Fleet Night is scheduled for Tuesday night, January 26. Frank Colistro will be the featured presenter, and he will speak on crew morale and team building. Tara Powning and Heather Zeiser, social chairs, will see to providing the proper number of pizzas for 'pizza by the slice', based on previous year's attendance. Bruce mentioned that fleet captains and other interested parties will be encouraged to attend the OCSA Race Management Clinic scheduled for the morning of Feb 13, to be led by Rich Jones, former SYSCO PRO. Additionally, there will be a second training session for Fleet Captains in early April on Pancho operations and SYSCO-specific procedures related to running races.

Gary Bruner will contact one new associate member to see if he is planning on racing his potentially "F fleet" boat, in which case, he will need a different membership designation.

No Pancho report, and no Social chair report.

Boat Show: Tod says lots of spots open for volunteers at the booth. SYSCO will offer \$20 off for any first time memberships. Tod will gather the requisite SYSCO flyers and paperwork for the booth that will be set up on January 12<sup>th</sup> by Gary, Mike and Tod.

Awards Party: The meeting ended with spirited discussion about the pros and cons of the OCSA proposal that SYSCO join with the other clubs to present awards at the OCSA party rather than at a separate SYSCO party as has become the norm. Nat and Tod will send a Survey Monkey to members soon to gather input about member's wishes about whether it's better to have 1 big party or two. Discussion revolved around expenses for clubs and members, venues, and the obvious imbalance of awards to be presented, given SYSCO's third weekly series this season. Hopefully, a decision can be reached soon so that venue(s) can be secured promptly.

Submitted by Gary Bruner, standing in for Don Woodhouse, Secretary, currently on the ski slopes of Utah where he is employed.

**Rules Discussion:** Jonesin' for a discussion of the racing rules? Eric Rimkus and Craig Daniels, US Sailing Judges, are leading a monthly rules discussion. Join them at the Willamette Sailing Club on the 2nd Wednesday of each month starting January 13 at 6:30pm. The group will pick a focus for each evening, present a situation, and then discuss it. The focus for the first evening will be starts. Free!