

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

STARTING LINE



Free Bowl of Soup rocks the final Sailing on Sunday race for this winter with T-Rex crew. How can they effectively trim with such short arms?!? Photo courtesy of Jenn Thompson.

From the Front

Michael Morrissey, Commodore

We decided to shake off the winter's cobwebs by racing in the last Sailing on Sunday (SOS) race on March 4. Beautiful winter weather with temperatures in the mid-40s, wind shifting from the SE to SW at 5-12 mph and the promise of a chili-cook-off at Portland Yacht Club (PYC) after the race. Either because of the weather or perhaps the chili, I counted 33 boats milling around the starting line for the 1 pm start. The SOS has been run by the Corinthian



SOS Race Committee start. Photo by Pati Morrissey.

Yacht Club (CYC) over the years and it is a staple for many of the SYSCO sailors. During my first years in SYSCO, we sailed every SOS race we could in a Merit 25 getting to know the boat well and getting the crew familiar with different duties on the boat. But, the most fun was getting to mix it up with some of the big guys on the starting line and the windward – leeward legs. The wind was often squirrely enough that you could catch a lucky puff, every now and then, and slide up beside a J-105 who was trying to head downwind after the windward mark against a 3 knot current in light air. Good for the ego and part of the fun of sailing on the Columbia. I suspect that most of the SOS sailors join

in just for the fun of sailing, rain or shine, having the feel of the tiller (or wheel) in your hand and enjoy getting that anxious feeling running through your bones 2 minutes before the start

CYC has done a great service over the years to run the SOS series. They convince members to be race committees no matter the weather and this year they have seen everything from near freezing sleet to sunny days pushing 60 degrees. So thanks to the CYC and the RCs for their efforts again this year. Although the races technically do not count for a trophy, we all remember those races we did well, got the chute up quickly and sailed like champs. The other races we can chalk up to experience and make a mental note that will get us around the course during series racing. It's all fun in the true spirit of Corinthian sailing.

Another thanks goes out to PYC who opens their doors and bar each Sunday afternoon to SOS sailors. This past Sunday was the annual chili cook-off. There were more crock-pots than a Wellness Center cooking class and helped add to the festivities of winter series that is becoming a tradition.

There will be several events coming up in March to get us ready for the April season opening. The SYSCO Race Clinic will be held on April 12 and SYSCO sailing begins with the Crew Overboard (COB) race on April 21. The serious racing starts with the Spring Series on April 24, which is just around the corner.



East meets west. Photo courtesy of Pati Morrissey.

From the Rear: On the Mekong River

Bruce Newton, Rear Commodore

I had planned to write an article focusing on the sailboats I thought we would see on our two-week journey up the Mekong River. But not a single sailing vessel was seen among thousands of boats. My wife, Wendy, and I took a Road Scholar trip on a small passenger boat up the Mekong River from Ho Chi Min City to the Angkor Wat area of Cambodia. It was a fascinating learning experience. We had excellent lecturers, great guides, and experiences that we could not have done traveling on our own. The histories of Vietnam and Cambodia are tragic yet the people are very positive about the future.

We started in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). We were struck by the size of the city. No one knows the population but estimates put it around 14 million people (and 8 million motorbikes). At one point we went to a restaurant on the 54th floor of a skyscraper and were shocked to see (barely through the smog) clusters of high rise buildings in every direction as far as the eye could see. After boarding our boat we headed down the Song Soai Rep River past mile after mile of container ship ports. We transited the Song Tra Canal to get to the Mekong. The portion of the Mekong River in Vietnam is an interesting mix of ancient fishing villages and factories. Most of the boat traffic consisted of hundreds of sand barges and dredges. A huge volume of sand apparently is needed to build the roads, bridges, and high rise buildings of Ho Chi Minh City.

The factories, dredging, and barge traffic abruptly ended when we crossed the border into Cambodia. It was like stepping back in time a few hundred years. All of the structures are built on stilts to accommodate the 30 foot rise in water level during and after the rainy season. Electric service was nonexistent as was indoor plumbing in the rural areas. There were families living on tiny fishing boats. At one point we visited a floating town of 9,000 people. The town consisted of small houses on logs and, when the rainy season came and the water level rose, the "town" dispersed into the flooded areas to pursue fishing. Another aspect that was striking is the garbage everywhere (much of it plastic). I mentioned it to a local who said it was not a problem because when the rainy season comes it all gets washed away!

Our ship passage ended in the Angor Wat area and we spent several days exploring the many temples built 500 to 600 years ago. They are marvels of engineering and art. We then headed to Hanoi on our own and got there in time for the midnight fireworks display marking the start of the Tet (New Year) holiday. It was a great adventure and we came away with a renewed appreciation for our first world comforts, our environmental laws, and our (hopefully still intact) democratic form of government.



Clockwise from Above: A typical farmer's house on the bank of the Mekong in rural Cambodia.

A typical Cham family boat. The Cham are Muslims originally from central Vietnam. In Cambodia many Cham families do not own land and live exclusively on their fishing boat. Note the TV antenna.

The Toum Tiou, a converted rice barge and our home for two weeks. There were ten cabins. Note the boarding ladder on the port bow.

Live fish being delivered to a market in Vietnam.

Upcoming Notifications and Dates to Remember

SYSCO Race Clinic (Thursday, April 12... New Location!)

New to racing on the river? Want a refresher on what courses to expect, how starts are run, what special rules and conditions govern racing on the mighty Columbia? SYSCO invites all skippers and crew to attend a free pre-season race clinic, offering critical information to new racers and seasoned skippers alike. Race Clinic will be held this year at the **OSU Food Innovation Center classroom (2nd floor) at 1207 NW Naito Parkway at 6:30 pm**. There is free parking at the building parking lot.

SYSCO Race Registration is Open!

Sign up for SYSCO COB Challenge and Spring Series at Sailpdx.org.

North Sails Trim Seminar

March 21

RCYC Frostbite Regatta

March 24

PYC Sailor's Dinner

April 6

PYC Opening Day Regatta

April 7 & 8

SYSCO Race Clinic

(New location! See above announcement)

April 12

Oregon Offshore Kickoff Party

April 16

SYSCO COB Challenge

April 21

SYSCO Spring Evening Series

(Tuesdays and Thursdays)

April 24 – May 31



Michael Morrissey successfully draws everyone's attention away from the pizza at SYSCO's Fleet night. Photo courtesy of Jenn Thompson.



Racer's Corner

A 3-knot current at Buoy 14 on the Columbia. Photo by Michael Morrissey.

Racer's Corner – Introduction

Michael Morrissey, Commodore

This month's article concerns the effect of current while racing on the Columbia and is written by Craig Daniels. Craig has been a top-notch sailor in the Cal-20 fleet for several years and knows the Columbia River well. In addition, he is a U.S. Sailing Association National Judge and a member of the OCSA Protest Committee. Craig was awarded OCSA Sailor of the Year for 2017 in recognition of his contributions to area sailboat racing.

Sailing in Current – Basics

Craig Daniels, Cal-20 Sailor

This essay should help you understand the basics of sailing in current on the Columbia River.

Some Basics

The dam upriver from us releases water and that moving water is current. It's important to note that the dam changes its flow during most days so the speed of the current varies over the day. The speed is less likely to vary during the shorter evening races and more likely to vary during the longer weekend race day. Friction with the river bed slows the current. This means that the current is less in shallower water and greater in deeper water.

Around the Race Course – The Start

It is important to check the speed of the current before the race. There are many ways to do this but here is the one that I use, which takes no instruments other than a stopwatch. Let your sails out and drift past the starting or

finishing mark. Start your watch when your bow is even with the mark. Stop it when your stern passes the mark. This gives you a general idea of the strength of the current (Please be courteous and take this measurement while no boats are in their starting sequence, else you will interfere with their start).

This also tells you how fast you are approaching the starting line due to the current. Suppose that it takes 10 seconds to travel one boat length. Then 30 seconds before the start, you had better be at least three boat lengths from the starting line else you will be over early

In light air, west wind, stay between the boat and the starting mark. This keeps you from being swept past the starting line on the outside and having to very slowly make your way back to the line. There is nothing worse on the Columbia than having to set your chute to slowly inch back to the starting line as your competitors drift quickly to the windward mark on a 2-knot current.

In an east wind, it can be difficult to get to the start line. Stay close to it as it is very easy to be late. Southerly winds are interesting. The current makes it easy to get swept into the mark so be careful of that congestion. There is also a nice opportunity in southerly winds. It is possible to sit on the line “motionless.” Let your sails partly out so that your boat speed matches the current speed.

The Windward Mark

Be careful if you approach the windward mark on port. The current is sweeping you down river and it is easy to overstand. In light air, you may even get swept past the mark on the wrong side. Also in light air, it’s good to have your anchor ready. Sometimes the “fastest” course will be to anchor after you round the mark.

Downwind

With westerly winds, we spend a lot of time sailing downwind against the current. The current slows our progress, so less current is better. This is a good time to think about whether you want to be near either shore where the current is less. Of course, the wind might be less too and you likely are sailing a longer distance so this is one of those difficult decisions in sailboat racing. But, it is worthwhile to at least discuss whether you want to seek current relief.

At the end of the leg, be aware that as you round the leeward mark, the current is pushing you towards the mark so it takes extra room to not hit it. It’s been my experience that practicing this rounding can pay great dividends during a race.

If the wind is from the east, then we are going downwind with current. This means that you are approaching the leeward mark very quickly. If you have a spinnaker up, take it down “early” – it won’t be. If you don’t, you will be late and get swept farther to leeward while you finish dropping it.

Suppose there is southerly wind and you are heading towards the Washington shore from the Oregon shore. There is a trick to sail the shortest course. Look at the land behind the mark that you are heading towards and try to find a tree or building behind it and that you can easily spot. Then adjust your helm until the tree or building doesn’t move up or downriver. This gives you your shortest course. You can also use this when you are on the last jibe to the leeward mark in a westerly wind.

No “Lee-Bow” Effect

Finally, I want to help dispel a myth. Some sailors think there is a “lee-bow” effect. They erroneously think that if they are sailing upwind against the current – an example for us would be heading to the weather mark in an easterly wind -- then they can point so that the current “hits” the leeward side of the keel, they will get lifted to weather. This isn’t true. Here is a thought experiment that is my attempt to explain this.

The situation: easterly wind and typical Columbia river current. Imagine you are anchored. The anchor holds you to the bottom, and while that may seem obvious, this is the critical fact. Your sails are let out all the way so they aren’t pulling at all. Turn your helm. You will feel the current push the boat to one side as it works against the anchor line. This is that push sailors are thinking about. The problem is this push is only there when you are anchored. Now, pull

the anchor up. The sails are still out. You are now floating free and moving down river. This is the key moment. Turn the boat. It won't turn unless you scull. So, scull. After you turn a bit, you will notice that all you are doing is going backwards with the current. If you closed your eyes, and didn't see the land, you are motionless when you use the water of the river as a frame of reference. This is the frame of reference your keel feels. Without the anchor, it doesn't "know" there is land. Pull your sails in and sail. You are just moving over the water as though it is a lake. The difference is that this lake is moving towards the ocean -- but your keel doesn't know that. I hope that helps understand why there is not a "lee-bow" effect. Dave Perry has also tried to dispel it and you may like his explanation: <http://j105.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/noleebow.pdf>



February Sailing on Sunday race. Photo courtesy of Pati Morrissey.

Racing Report

Jeff Eastes, Race Captain

Snowpack finally reached 100%, the daffodils are blooming, the grass got its first cut of 2018, all of these are pointing to one thing, Spring Evening Series is just around the corner. Fleet night was well attended as fleets selected their captains and they were given the Race Committee Schedule. Matt Berger, WSC Program Director and Mitchell Burke, Oregon Youth Sailing Development Director gave a talk and a Q&A about youth sailing in the Portland area. There is a lot going on and an active high school and college racing program. Everyone thought it is a good idea to involve more young sailors in SYSCO events and efforts will be made to increase these opportunities in the future.

Pancho - The tarp has been pulled off Pancho, repairs and tuneup are in progress. Pancho is being well loved and needs 4-5 hull repairs to keep her river worthy for the coming racing season. A special thanks to Thomas MacMenemy who's leading the repair efforts. Race schedules are being entered into Regatta Network and Spring Evening Series will be here before you know it.



Thomas MacMenemy fixing the cracks in Pancho. Thanks, Thomas!!

Everyone should have the 2018 OCSA Racebook by now and reviewed the calendar. A couple important dates to highlight or add to the calendar are;

April 12th: SYSCO Race Clinic, a change of venue TBA.

April 14th: Fleet Captains and Pancho Training, 10-12 AM at McMuddy's Marina,
Pancho's slip

April 21: COB Challenge: a race between the I-5 and I-205 bridges with simulated crew overboard drills on each leg.

April 24th and 26th: Spring Evening Racing Series starts.

Be sure to register and pay for SYSCO and OCSA membership and sign up for the COB Challenge, and Spring Evening series.

Thanks again to the Fleet and Race Captains.

March 2018 SYSCO Board Minutes

Gary Bruner

The SYSCO board had its regular monthly board meeting at Elmer's, Delta Park, on Monday, March 5. In attendance were: Commodore Michael Morrissey, Vice Commodore Jeff Eastes, Treasurer Scott Stevenson, Thomas MacMenemy, Mike Daly, Warren Dalby, Nat Powning, Bill Sanborn, Denny Damore, and Gary Bruner.

Commodore Michael opened the meeting at 7PM sharp with introductions.

Membership

Chair Jan Burkhart is still in Florida, but she sent in a report. The board voted to approve Julie Demaree as a new associate member. Current membership consists of 74 regular members and 10 associates, which is a bit behind last year at this time, but SYSCO events are starting later than usual, so that is likely a major factor. The first SYSCO event of the season will be the Crew Overboard Challenge (COB Challenge) that will be held on April 21st.

Financial

Scott Stevenson reported that SYSCO currently has \$7,067.20 in its checking account and \$3,690.59 in Pancho Reserve Savings, for a total of \$10,757.79. Major upcoming expenses are for insurance and moorage for Pancho which may amount to nearly \$3000 total, but we are awaiting the exact moorage figure from Mark McCuddy.

Racing

Jeff Eastes reported that Pancho is going to be moved from storage this week to Thomas MacMenemy's home for yearly clean up and repairs. A work party will take place this weekend. After that, the plan is to take Pancho to Pacific Boatland for yearly maintenance on the Yamaha engine. Pancho is slated to splash soon after April 1st, with Pancho training for fleet captains and RC participants at McCuddy's on April 14 from 9-11 AM.

Fleet Night

The consensus was that fleet night went well, drawing between 65 and 75 participants. Mike and Bruce thanked volunteers, OCSA membership was 'pitched', Race books sold, and Bill Sanborn gave a preview and welcome for the 40th Anniversary of SYSCO, to be celebrated this Sunday

afternoon at PYC. Discussion surrounded the increased interest in getting youth sailors out on big boats, much like the Merits did for the Portlandia Cup recently. It is hoped that new Saturday "Beer Cans" might even include some youth oriented "Root BEER Can" races at times. Jeff reported that most fleets have selected their fleet captains, but he will follow up with each, confirming their obligations regarding RC responsibilities. A schedule was handed out at fleet night. The SYSCO Race Clinic (for new racers, and a review for the experienced) is scheduled for April 12 at the new WSC clubhouse. However, due to permitting delays, a second venue is being sought in case WSC is not ready in time.

Other Business

Bill Sanborn again plugged the 40th Anniversary celebration coming up this weekend at PYC.

Gary Bruner reported that the Army Corps is responding regularly to email comments they are receiving about the Wm Gleason wing dam danger. That email address, again, for anyone who'd care to comment is cenwp_pa@usace.army.mil Many thanks to those who have emailed! We have gotten their attention, but more is better!

Denny Damore relayed that the Cal 20 fleet is working with the Columbia Gorge Racing Association to secure a date for one design regatta for smaller, trailerable boats at Cascade Locks in Sept. They've yet to secure a specific date for that event.

Finally, Bill Sanborn mentioned that the Columbia River Sailing Association (formerly the Hunter Owners group), is becoming quite active on the cruising scene on the river, with monthly events. Membership is only \$35 per year. They are no longer limited to Hunters, but accept cruisers of many different brands. You can find out more at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/columbiariversailingassoc/>

The meeting adjourned just before 8 PM.

For Secretary Don Woodhouse

Submitted by 'utility infielder' Gary Bruner