

# Starting Line



May 2012

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# SYSCO

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

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

# From the Commodore

By Michael Nance, Commodore



As I write this, spring has definitely arrived here in the Northwest! Temperatures were predicted to be in the 80s for Mother's Day! The Oregon Offshore race has been completed,

and from the reports I have received, it was quite the slog for most boats outside of the A Fleet. A couple of broken boats as well, but everyone is safe and there were no "whale incidents." Congratulations to all who took on the challenge!

Racing in the ditch resumes this week and we will be racing non-stop weekly until the second week of July. The first Annual SYSCO Solstice Regatta will be held Friday June 22 and Saturday June 23. Be sure and get your entries in early. Online registration is available now at [sycosailing.org](http://sycosailing.org).

An important update from our Program Chair Randy Poff:

I have had very positive response to the idea of "joint-programming" from representatives of all of the sailing clubs on the river (RCYC, PYC, CYC, OSWA and of course SYSCO).

- Perhaps mid-January: a "Big-Event," possibly coordinated with the Portland and/or Seattle Boat shows?



- Perhaps mid-March: a "Big-Event," possibly coordinated with OCSA race management and/or Sysco Race Clinic?
- Perhaps late April: a "Big-Event," possibly like "Going North," "Focus on Oregon Offshore," "Racing Rules," or the like?
- Perhaps late September: a "Big-Event," to close the summer season, possibly real river scenarios: reviewing racing rules, "What went right?" and/or "What went wrong?" or the like?

I'm thinkin' SYSCO takes "dibs" on a Big Annual Event in March (since we already get good participation at the race clinic and it's a good "kick-off" to the core club activity: evening racing!). Perhaps the usual race clinic could be enhanced and expanded, based on feedback and the club's solid record, eh?



Further thoughts? Please send comments to randall.poff@gmail.com.

Since we are in the thick of racing season, membership meetings are “suspended.” I have not arranged a speaker for May 21.

Note: The board has voted on this and SYSCO membership meetings are suspended for the time being.

Fair Winds!

Michael Nance, Commodore

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# New from SYSCO: The Maritime Marital Counseling Program

By Tod Bassham

Racing sailboats has always been, traditionally, a man's game. As a broad generalization, persons of the male persuasion seem well fitted by evolutionary biology to enjoy chasing other men in circles around randomly located marks, hooting and slapping backsides at each other, while persons of the female persuasion have historically found this to be a rather jejune way to pass the time. Another explanation for the male/female disconnect in the world of sailboat racing is the fact that—let's be honest here—men stink. For most men, "foulies" is a aptly descriptive word for the waterproof garment worn during inclement weather, which is seldom if ever taken home for washing. And while the advent of the pee bottle has done much in recent years to improve both safety and hygiene aboard racing boats with all-male crews, it is still common on long-distance races to see a row of rail meat hanging over the lower lifelines with a focused look in their eyes, dangling their legs over the side and, um, letting gravity assist the flow of nature. And we have not even touched upon the whole gaseous emissions problem.

In short, there are many good reasons why women have run screaming from any suggestion that they join their male friends, lovers, and husbands on the race course. But, thank goodness, times change, due in large part to outstanding organizations such as the Oregon Women's Sailing Association. New



generations of women are now sailing, racing, and learning how to use a pee bottle in a seaway. For a long while, separate but equal was the rule, with women-only crews racing against men-only crews. This satisfied everyone, until the women started winning the races, and it became clear to even the densest masculine understanding that mixed gender crews made the best of the talent pool, as well as enjoyed the tastiest after-race snacks. Racing now entered a new golden age, with fleets of happy mixed-gender crews, aboard boats that no longer stank like



garbage scows. Oh, no fundamental change in human nature occurred. There are still emissions of “bad air,” and much hooting and slapping of backsides, but the insults that fly back and forth across the water now involve actual witticisms instead of crude comparisons of bowsprit length.

However, one unforeseen consequence of mixed gender crews has been a distressing increase in the number of husband-and-wife racing teams, a development deplored by all right-thinking sailors. Once confined to a once per year “couples race” – a day everyone else knew to remain off the water – marital racing has spread like a virus to beer cans, weeknight club racing and beyond. All of us have witnessed the unappetizing spectacle of a husband and wife attempting to dock a big cruiser in a cross-wind. For reasons that have long puzzled top scientists, there is a direct emotional connection in the sailing wife between the fact that her husband just muffed the dock approach and the fact that last night he forgot, again, to take the garbage out. Similarly, in the mind of the sailing husband there is no synaptic distance between the latest proofs of his wife’s poor line-handling skills and her constant

nagging about leaving underwear on the floor. No one truly interested in preserving the harmony of the seas could ever believe it appropriate to transfer this warped interpersonal dynamic to the pressure-cooker of a racing cockpit. Yet, more and more often that is what is happening, with predictable results.

Where before the insults would fly between boats, with good-natured observations about the likely parentage of the other skipper and the size of the army boots his/her mother wears, increasingly the insults are flying between the coamings, with biting commentary along the lines of “You sound like your mother!” and “Leave my mother out of this!” It goes without saying that when crew communication sinks to this level, racing performance suffers.

But help is on the way. Your SYSCO Board, ever vigilant in its efforts to improve your racing experience, has authorized an expenditure of up to \$150,000 this year on a pilot program they call: Maritime Marital Counseling. It works like this. During every SYSCO-sponsored race the Board members will monitor channel 72 for calls of marital distress. When a call is received, a quick reaction team mounted on jet-skis will speed to the boat’s location, with air cover provided by a pair of F-14s scrambled out of Portland International. Each team consists of two highly trained marriage counselors and a pair of former collegiate sailing champions. To avoid causing loss of time and distance in the race, the teams will board the stricken vessel by ranging alongside at full speed and then vaulting onto the deck, using catapultive assault techniques developed by the U.S.

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Navy Seals. The collegiate sailing champions will take over the helm and motivate the remainder of the demoralized crew, while the two counselors will separate the bickering couple, and begin emergency counseling, using all the tools at their disposal: scream therapy, psychotropic drugs, and choke-holds, as deemed necessary for crew safety and to preserve the boat's position in the race.

Once the situation is stabilized and the boat again reaches optimum VMG, the team will leap back onto their watercraft, and roar off, ready again to intervene whenever the outcome of a sailing race is threatened by marital discord.

Medical science has discovered no cure yet for marital racing, much less for its underlying cause, marriage. For good or ill, mostly for ill, the scourge of couples racing together will be with us for the foreseeable future. There is something in the nautical married mind that insists, against all evidence, that the festering resentments at the heart of almost all marriages will not detonate under the stress of a failed spinnaker launch. Yet the situation is not hopeless. With your generous contributions to SYSCO, we can develop new techniques, such as the Maritime Marital Counseling Program, that can reduce the evil effects of marital racing, until that blessed day when a cure is found. Until then, fair winds to all.

The author and his wife own a Merit 25.  
They do not race together.



# SYSCO May 2012 Meeting Minutes

## From the Board

The SYSCO board meeting was held at Delta Park Elmers on May 7, 2012.

Present were: Michael Nance, Bill Sandstrom, Gary Bruner, Jan Burkhart, Tod Bassham, Warren Dalby and David Long

Commodore Michael Nance rapped the gravel at 7:06 p.m. and began with a welcome. The reading of the old minutes was dispensed with.

## Committee Reports

**Financial Report:** Treasurer Tod Bassham reported that we have 2012 income of \$6,572.50 in membership dues, in addition to approximately \$1,300 received in 2011 for 2012 renewals. Total expenses as of this date are \$4,819.43. SYSCO balance as of May 7, 2012 is \$12,663.50. There will be an additional income of \$500 from the insurance claim from Pancho III. This money will go into the Misc Income.

**Membership:** Chair Jan Burkhart reports that we now have 116 members who have paid. There is one new member, Mac Stilson. The new membership roster will be coming out. The cover was revealed at the meeting. The board approved \$359 for the printing of the new membership roster. Membership cards will also be printed for the 2012 year.



**Racing:** Race Chair Warren Dalby asked the board to remember to discuss the Race Clinic schedule and the start time of the 2013 Summer Solstice Race in the October meeting. There will be a SYSCO working group this month to come up with wording to add SSI for summer series mark placement.





Cruising: Cruise Chair Bill Sanborn reports that there will be a cruise to Martin Island for Memorial day weekend. Whoooooohoooo... Bill guarantees a big party! All members are invited!

Pancho II: Gary Bruner reports that The hub on the prop blew out. A new prop was bought at a cost of \$105. The idle/linkage problem was fixed with a big help from Bob Brown. Thank you, Bob! It was reported that the Pancho crew put a scratch on the side of Pancho. Please leave the fenders down until you are clear of all docks. Gary is going to try to get the hub fixed in the old prop to use as spare. The estimated cost is \$40. A big thanks to Gary for making Pancho III the safest, hottest, coolest mark placing boat around!

Old Business: Commodore Michael Nance reported.

The board voted to put \$10,000 insurance coverage on Pancho III. This will allow Pancho III to be replaced.

SYSCO did receive a \$500 insurance payment for the damage from last year.

New business: The board voted to support Randoll Poff's recommendation to replace most or all of the general membership speaker program with a program coordinated with all the yacht clubs to have four or more substantial programs per year at a venue such as PYC, open to all sailors. SYSCO will take March 2013 and host a speaker program in conjunction with the Race Clinic. Combining all the clubs together will allow for a greater turn out at the programmed events.

There is a charge of \$35 to use Pancho III. Based on evidence that the actual amortized cost to operate Pancho for a single event costs more like \$70, the board voted that for 2013 the price will increase to \$50.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary David Long.



# Cruise Report

By Bill Sanborn

Time to pull out the coolers, dust off the barbecue, splash the dingy and sail down river to Martin Island for the Memorial Weekend Raft Up in the Pond on May 26, 27 and 28. Folks are telling me with the high water it takes too long... BALDERDASH! It takes the same amount of time for the round trip at all water levels; sometimes you spend less time going and more time returning. We'll have some sailing dingy and kayaks, and its a wonderful place to play.

Delta Cruise # 28 will have the meeting on July 28 at Martin Pond, and we'll spend the week exploring to lower River, and visiting Cathlamet, Warren Slough, Astoria, and any other spots on your list. For those with questions, each boat has its own Float Plan, and is welcome to join or depart the fleet for any part of the Cruise.

Bill Sanborn

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Life begins at 6 knots.



## Ch- ch- ch- changes!

As noted by Commodore Nance (this newsletter, page 2), your SYSCO Board has voted to suspend general membership meetings (education and information) during the Spring and Summer racing season. In addition, SYSCO will be moving forward on idea of “joint-programming” with representatives of other sailing clubs on the river (RCYC, PYC, CYC, OSWA, etc., etc.). SYSCO anticipates combining efforts with other racing clubs to hold four “Big Event” programming meetings throughout the calendar year (and avoid meetings during the usual busy sailing season). Such events would be open to all interested persons and serve as replacements for most SYSCO general membership meetings.

If you have ideas or concerns, please contact any board member. We are just beginning. We are at the idea-formation stage and need your input. Four big “quarterly” programs, held every three months, sounds ideal, but the best sailing ’round these parts eliminates the months of May, June, July and August (“prime time” in the ditch, both racin’ and cruisin’, Offshore, Swiftsure, Whidbey Island Race Week, trips to the Salish Sea, etc., etc.) and nobody wants to do much during the year-end holidays, November and December.

That leaves combined programs for all river sailors. The Commodore’s article outlines some ideas. Do you have further thoughts or concerns? Contact me at [Randall.Poff@gmail.com](mailto:Randall.Poff@gmail.com), or any board member.

Randy Poff, SYSCO Program Chair

