

Starting Line

May 2013



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Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

From the Commodore

Taking Care of Business

It's May 6th, as I sit listening to Portland's own Olympic sailor, Kerry Poe; hold a seminar on racing tactics and strategy, I delight in the thought that our SYSCO Board set a record tonight for a brief board meeting: twenty minutes!

Ryan Rodgers was taking notes while Jan Burkhart reported on how well we are doing membership-wise. Todd Bassham reported on the current condition of the treasury. Vice-Commodore Warren Dalby was praised by all as to how well our weekday races and regattas have been going. We congratulated Gary Bruner for saving SYSCO hundreds of dollars by doing tons of free maintenance on our mark boat, and we all shared our appreciation of what Michael Nance and his son, Steve, have been doing for our website.



All this took about half of our time. We devoted the rest to commiserating with a new racer who was a little shaken up after a close encounter of the almost-got-run-over-by-a-much-bigger-boat kind on the racecourse recently. We congratulated him for doing the right thing; tacking away and staying in one piece, counseled him on the pluses and minuses of filing protests, especially when they involve boats that are not in your own class, and, overall, thanked him for bringing his concerns to the Board, rather than moaning and grumbling about them and letting them mar his enjoyment of our sport.

Well, it's time to get ready to head to Astoria for Wy'East's Oregon Offshore number twenty. We will do our best to find ourselves one of those elusive Japanese Tsunami docks floating off the Washington Coast, maybe bring back a souvenir!

- Frank Colistro, Commodore

From Sweden With Love

By Tod Bassham

Family sailing vacations—I have learned through painful experience—are best conducted in a foreign country. In this way, humiliating nautical errors or social gaffes can be chalked up to cultural misunderstandings. And, if things *really* go bad, deportation may save you the price of return tickets.

Our story begins two summers ago, when my daughter Joie turned 15. Little did I imagine, when I held our mewling infant daughter for the first time, what horrors would follow. I remember the naïve hopes I had that Joie would be a boon companion, a staff to lean on in my old age. I had imagined myself on my deathbed many years hence, Joie weeping beside me. “Go!” I would say, “Go and at last marry some fine man, elderly and respectable, an accountant, who can support you in your few remaining years!” And only then would she regretfully leave my side. But human hopes are playthings in the hands of the gods.



“Dear aged parental units,” Joie announced on her birthday, “I’ve decided to cast aside 15 years of parental love and duty, and henceforth shall heed only my hormones. I am now a teenager, and must assume the prerogatives and emoluments appurtenant thereunto. Accordingly, I have commenced dating.”

Over the sound of my wife’s wailing and the rending of parental garments, I managed to gasp, “At least tell us you’re not dating a musician!”

“In point of fact,” Joie admitted, “the boy I am seeing *is* a musician. He plays a loud screechy instrument in a large band of pimply adolescents.”

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The large “band” turned out to be the Portland Youth Philharmonic, not, as we initially feared, some kind of a punk death-metal reggae/ska hip-hop crossover band. But that almost made it worse, because now we had to take Joie to the boyfriend’s classical music concerts at the Schnitz, and sit there trying not to snore too loudly through music that sounded like several hundred tomcats undergoing involuntary vasectomies, without anesthetic.

Joie’s younger brother Kinley, for one, was delighted with this romantic development, as it gave new scope for his life’s mission: to cast into the uttermost pits of hell the thing that dared call him brother. Scarce a family meal would pass without his solicitous inquiries as to which lip balm Joie used to prevent chafing from her boyfriend’s passionate kisses, etc. Joie retaliated as best she could, but she could do little damage, given Kinley’s confirmed cooty-inspired bachelor status.



Thus, as summer approached I was in a state of despair, trapped between endless classical music caterwauling and equally interminable sibling warfare.

The summer was rescued, however, by the unlikelyst of saviors: my wife’s 80-year old mother, Anne. Feeling time’s winged chariot drawing near, Anne conceived the notion of the entire family visiting the ancestral home in Sweden. She wanted to see the old relatives again, gather around the hearth of the little cottage by the Baltic shore, and tell stories about great-uncle Lars and his flatulent cows.

Usually, I love nothing better than passing around the lingonberry jar and talking with aged Swedish relatives about bovine emissions, but for some reason I was not in the mood this time. I started to say no—hell no—and then the words “Baltic shore” struck me, and I realized there could be a *sailing* angle here.



“By any chance,” I inquired of my mother-in-law, “do the Swedes go a-sailing on the Baltic?” Oh, yes, Anne replied, and started a long anecdote about the time great-uncle Lars ferried some of his cows to the islands, the wind died, and he was saved only by a providential gust of bovine emissions—something like that, but I had already stopped listening and was firing up the internet.

Who’d a-thunk, but it turns out that for the two months of the year that Sweden is not buried under an ice sheet, it is one of the world’s greatest cruising grounds. Off the coast of the capitol city, Stockholm, lies the *Skärgården* (“rock garden”), an archipelago of 20,000 islands and countless uncharted rocks. Few of these islands are inhabited year-round, but from

the internet pictures they all looked stunning: wild granite outcrops and sandy white beaches, washed by shallow Baltic waters warmed by the midnight sun. So beautiful are these islands that when the spring thaw hits around the middle of July, nearly the entire population of Stockholm emerges pale and blinking from their bunkers, prepares the family boat, and decamps for the outer islands for some serious decompression. Abandoning Scandinavian moral rectitude, the Swedes party like winter is only two months away (which in fact it is). The prevailing attitude is: what happens on the islands, stays on the islands, and that sounded fine to me.

Well, this research cast a different light on Anne’s proposal for a family trip. As an added bonus, a long summer trip would remove Joie and the parental ear-canals from contact with her screechy musician boyfriend. If we were lucky, she might fall in love with some hunky Swedish sailor named Sven, and begin a long and ultimately unrequited long-distance romance that would keep her out of the dating pool for decades.

Thus, I quickly booked an Elan 36 for a week of sailing in the islands. A Rob Humphrey-designed cruiser, the Elan 36 is built in the former Yugoslav republics for the Mediterranean charter trade. It has a 3-cabin layout, a linear galley, in-mast furling main, furling genoa, and a deep 2-meter lead keel ideally suited—it turned out—for hitting uncharted rocks.

With three cabins, there was room even for mother-in-law Anne. I magnanimously offered her a berth, confident that she would rather sit around the hearth with the aged relatives rather than rough it Bassham-style for a week on sandy godforsaken islands. To my astonishment, she accepted, which left me pondering how to get an 80-year old woman safely on and off the boat or, for that matter, up and down the companionway.

We spent a delightful week visiting with the Swedish relatives, including many young cousins, all of whom spoke better and more grammatical English than my own children. Then it was time for our charter, which began in the beautiful seaside town of Dalarö. Here, we stumbled on the first major difference between European and American-style sailing: bow-tied boats, but no finger docks. Everything loaded on the boat—groceries, bags, 80-year-old mothers-in-law—must be heaved over the bow pulpit. Our charming hosts showed us the essentials—Swedish language guidebooks, Swedish-language charts, two rusty pitons and a rock hammer—and we were off.

A second major cultural difference now presented itself, as we wound through the harbor navigational aids: Red Right Reverse. Sweden, joined by most of the civilized world, enjoys not only the metric system but also the IALA-A buoyage system, unlike the few backward nations (*USA! USA!*) that get by on IALA-B. We carefully kept the red buoys to starboard as we exited the harbor, and beheld, for the first time, the islands of the *Skärgården*.

What sublime scenery! Charming red-painted cottages, wild forested shorelines, and beaches covered with skinny-dipping Swedes. Fortunately, Anne was too near-sighted to observe, and my wife and the children were below reading aloud the bestselling Stieg Larssen thriller, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, so it was left to me to endure the awful image, forever burned in my retinas, of pink naked Swedes cavorting in the waves.

At last we reached a secluded cove on Fjärdland Island, a nature preserve. Here we observed a third major difference in boating Swedish-style. Along the steep rocky shores boats were anchored off



the stern and tied bow-on nearly touching the rocks. It turns out that the Baltic has zero tides, or so little as makes no difference, making it possible to tie up to any steep-to shoreline without worry about grounding at low tide. What puzzled us was how to tie the bow to the treeless rocky shore. Fortunately, a friendly naked Swede showed us how to use the rock hammer to drive the pitons into cracks in the rock, at a V-angle to the bow, and tie lines to the pitons. The sight of a buck-naked Swede swinging a rock hammer caused me more retinal scarring, but soon the boat was secure. We heaved Anne over the bow pulpit, and set off to explore the island.

And thus began a blissful week of cruising in the *Skärgården*. Joie perfected her bow babe routine, lounging on the deck in skimpy attire, popping *köttbuller* (Swedish meatballs) in her mouth, and trying to ignore the hordes of naked Swedish boys waving on the shore and swimming alongside. Anne curled up in the cockpit, reading the little-known sequel to the Stieg Larssen trilogy—a commercial failure called *The Girl with Köttbuller Stuck in her Braces*. Meanwhile, Kinley learned that singing the classic B-movie hit song “Puberty Love” in an atrocious Swedish accent, with umlauts över every pössible vöwel, worked very well to discöüräge the local böys from testing Jöie’s virtue. She remained true to her musician back home.

And then we hit the rock. On the last night of our charter we anchored fore and aft in a narrow inlet on the island of Utö. I had plotted a safe bearing to the exit passage in case need arose for a hasty midnight departure. None did, and we spent a peaceful night. The next morning we had trouble raising one of anchors, and had to motor around in circles. Finally, the recalcitrant anchor came up. While I was busy stowing it on the bow I told the helmsboy, Kinley, to motor slowly toward the exit along the previously determined safe bearing. I didn’t take time to check the chartplotter, which would have shown that we had drifted position in our circling, and a reef now lay between us and the exit. As I finished stowing the anchor I looked over the starboard bow and saw rocks visible below the surface. Since visibility was about two meters and we had a two meter keel, this was a matter of keen interest. I started running back to the cockpit yelling for Kinley to turn to port—no, the other port—but his 12-year-old face registered only confusion.

CRUNCH. The boat tilted 15 degrees, and shuddered as the keel glanced off a rock. I put the engine in neutral and we all stared at each other. I checked the bilge, found it dry. Later the owner and I dove on the keel and found no discernible damage, but at the time I was (and still am) deeply

mortified by this proof of my incompetence. I glanced around for an audience, but it was too early in the morning for any skinny-dipping Swedes. With a sigh of relief, we powered back into deep water and through the buoyed passage. Red Right Reverse.

Outside the entrance the wind had kicked up to 25 knots, the first stiff winds of the charter. Everyone disappeared below but my wife and I, the only wind-junkies aboard. We set a reefed main and jib, and bore off on a beam reach to Dalarö. The boat heeled sharply, and below we heard breaking crockery and what sounded like one of the kids spewing *köttbuller* from at least one orifice.

Anne crawled up the companionway, grimly determined that if she was going to die she would do it above-decks, as far as she could get from recycled *köttbuller*. My wife lashed her onto the high side, like Ahab onto the white whale, and then took the helm while I played the traveler and sheet.

The speedo hit seven knots, seven and half, eight. Anne, realizing that death was not imminent, started enjoying the rush and motion. We all exchanged grins of mad pleasure. Finally Anne exhorted me to “put the rail under, son-in-law!” And so we did, all the way back to Dalarö.



SYSCO Board Meeting Minutes

The May board meeting started at 6:05 at the North Sails sail loft. Frank Colistro, Ryan Rodgers, Warren Dalby, Gary Bruner, Mike Nance, Jan Burkhart, Tod Bassham, Dennis Olmstead, and Dave Palaigo were all in attendance.

Treasury

Regatta Network has paid a sum of 1000 dollars to SYSCO for racing registration. A deposit for 500 dollars was paid to Kell's for the SYSCO awards banquet.

Membership

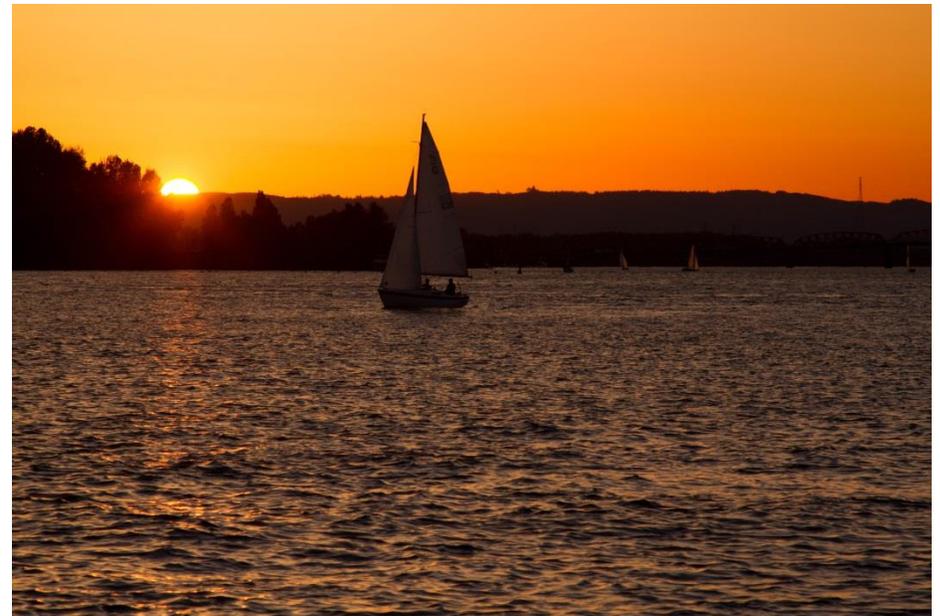
Associate membership is up; however, full membership is down slightly this year.

Racing

Racing continues this spring and we look forward to seeing you on the river.

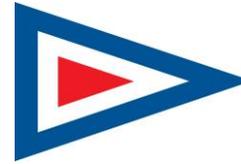
Social

After racing the final day of racing of the Summer Solstice, SYSCO will host a BBQ at the Columbia Crossings lawn. A five dollar suggested donation is asked for skippers and crew. We also ask that you RSVP the number of crew planning on attending by emailing [Jackie](#).





**LEUKEMIA
CUP REGATTA®**



**Rose City
Yacht Club**

2013 Leukemia Cup Regatta

What: The Leukemia Cup Regatta (LCR) is an exciting sailing event that combines the joy of sailing with the important goal of raising money to fight leukemia, lymphoma and other blood cancers.

Who: With 61 chapters in the United States and Canada, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research and providing education and patient services. LLS mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families.

How: Sailors from around the area raise more than just sails to honor blood cancer patients and survivors "honorary skippers." Skippers register their boats and recruit their friends and colleagues to help crew and to solicit funds. Skippers and crew members seek donations from friends, family, co-workers and employers to sponsor their boat. Fundraising incentives are offered at \$100 up to \$10,000.

Schedule of Events:

Friday, July 26th, 2013

1800 - Leukemia Cup VIP Dinner and Auction hosted by RiverPlace Hotel on the Willamette River

Everyone is welcome. Tickets: \$100 pp. To purchase go to www.leukemicup.org/oswim or meet a fundraising minimum of \$100.

Saturday, July 27th, 2013

1400 - Power Boat Poker Run and Regatta take place on the Columbia River

Register your boat at www.regattanetwork/event/6338 and submit your entry fee.

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

1800 – Gosling Rum After Party and Award Ceremony

After an unforgettable day on the water there will be a BBQ celebration and awards ceremony for the top race finishers, cruisers and fundraisers on the Columbia Crossing lawn. This is open to all Regatta participants as well as non-participants who hit their fundraising minimum. Tickets are also available for purchase at www.leukemicup.org/oswim for \$50.00 pp.

Sponsors: Race Sponsor ~ Rose City Yacht Club

National Sponsors: Ken Gardiner, Gosling's Rum, Jobson Sailing, The Moorings, North Sails, Offshore Sailing School, Sailing World and West Marine.

National Chairman: World Class Sailor, ESPN commentator and author Gary Jobson who is a survivor of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

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