

April 2017

From the Front

Saving Civilization, One
Holding Tank at a Time

Racing Report

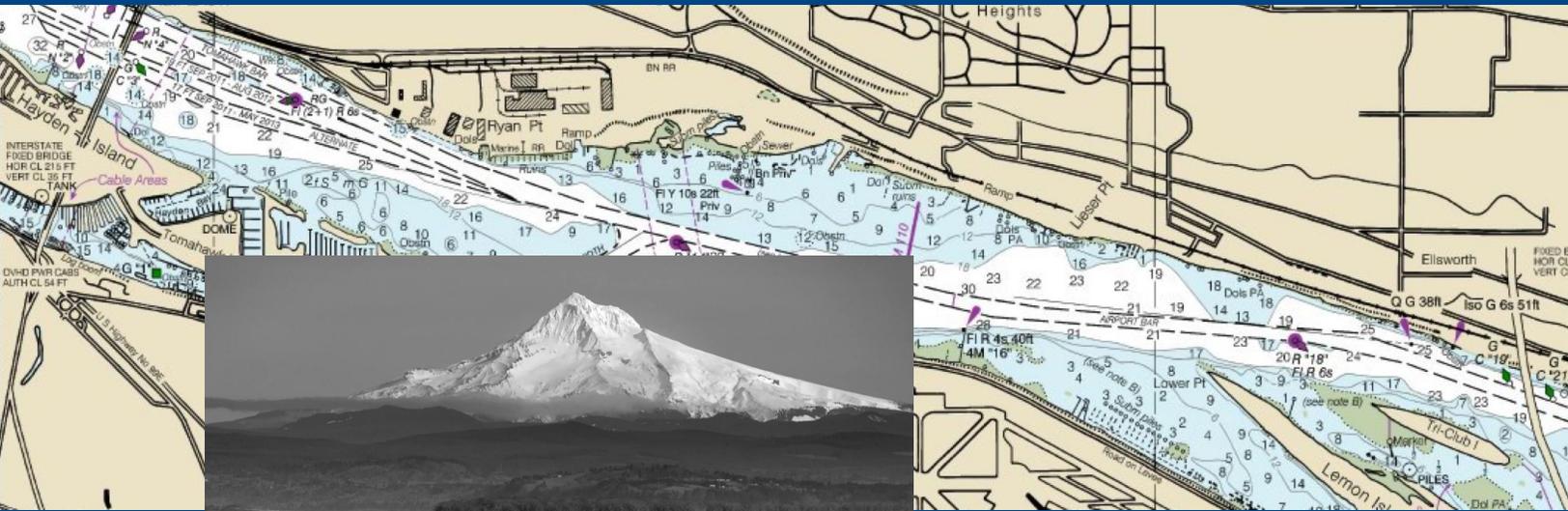
Flood Stage Racing

April 2017

SYSCO Board Minutes



Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon STARTING LINE



Spar Trek preparing for her 2017 sailing season on March 18. She will be representing SYSCO in the Race to Alaska this year. Follow them at <https://www.facebook.com/spartrek>. Photo courtesy of Kris Amundson.

From the Front

Bruce Newton, Commodore

The racing season is here! Be sure to register for the Spring Series before the deadlines. The registration deadline is 48 hours prior to the first race. Late registrations may be accepted with a \$30 late fee up to 24 hours before the first race. But please don't wait that long because doing so makes it difficult for the Race Captain to figure out Classes – particularly now that some boats may be requesting handicapped racing.

One of the perennial things that we talk about is how to grow our sport. Last weekend I attended the talk at Willamette Sailing Club by Nicholas Hayes, author of the book *Saving Sailing*. In researching the book, he conducted extensive research on the demographics of sailing and how the demographics have changed through time. It is fascinating work but rather than attempt to explain it, I will recommend reading the book. What his research led to is an interesting potential solution. He found that the demographic groups currently most likely to catch the sailing bug are adults between the mid-twenties and mid-thirties and also single mothers of young children. He also found that the traditional yacht club model is not effective in reaching these people and a more promising model is the community sailing center. Community sailing centers typically feature shared boats, lots of volunteer labor, and low monthly membership fees. He also



Dana Sibilla atop Escape Artist's mast preparing for the 2017 race season.

found that the most effective teaching model is not classroom followed by structured instruction but sticking the newbie on the helm right away, getting them hooked, and then working on what's going on.

So what does this suggest for SYSCO? First, we should continue our informal support of the Oregon Women's Sailing Association. Skippers who want to help by offering to take their boat out sailing to support OWSA activities can contact MC Rydzewski at commodore@owsa.net. Second, Fleets can setup events or mini-courses to introduce folks to sailing. For example, the Merit 25 Fleet has started a training program for new sailors who want to be regular crew or alternates in the Fleet. I'm sure there are other ideas out there. (Although it may not be a good way to attract newbies, don't forget the sailpdx.org crew list where skippers can advertise openings for crew and more experienced sailors list their availability.)

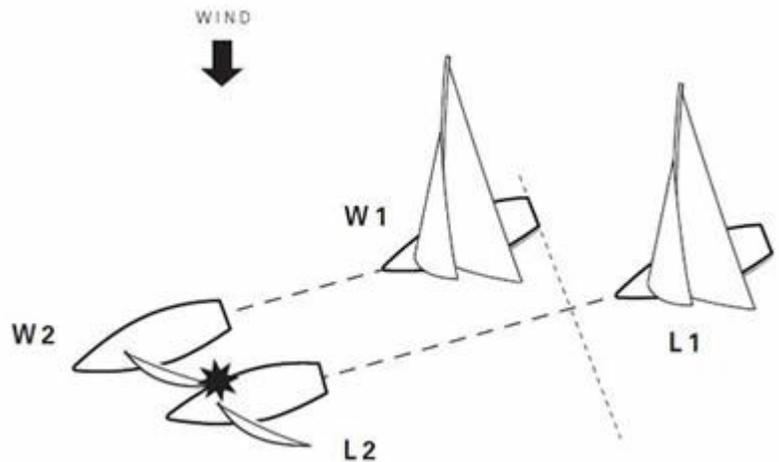
Surprise: A Rules Quiz!!

Randy Poff

Boats W (a windward boat) and L (a leeward boat) are reaching towards the gybe mark. L becomes overlapped with W from clear astern. They are both sailing proper courses and are on a collision course.

As they near each other, W hails, "You came from clear astern and I'm on my proper course." L replies, "I'm on my proper course." W's boom then touches L with no damage or injury and both protest.

You are on the protest committee; how would you decide this?
(answer on page 6)



Upcoming Dates to Remember

SYSCO Spring Evening Series (Tues & Thurs)

April 18 – May 25

CRYA Opening Day OWSA Linda Bean

May 6

Cruise

May 6

CYC Oregon

Offshore

May 11 – 14

**RCYC Medium
Distance Race**

May 20

Saving Civilization, One Holding Tank at a Time

Tod Bassham

Sailboats are among the most aesthetically pleasing objects in creation, but behind the shell of shiny gelcoat and oiled teak lurks a malodorous time-bomb that many of us ignore at our peril. Yes, I'm talking about the holding tank sometimes full of poo and pee that is probably hiding in a lazarette near you. If, like me, you inherited one of these legacy systems when you acquired your new-to-you bateau, what should be done?

The first step is to download a copy of the e-book *The New Get Rid of Boat Odors*, by the doyenne of marine septic systems, Peggie Hall. This handy and authoritative treatise will tell more than you would ever want to know about maintaining or replacing the stinkpot system, so it don't stink no more. Also tells you how to sanitize other sources of boat odor, such as bilges, mildew, etc., ad nauseum.

With this treatise in hand, you can make informed choices about whether to upgrade or replace your poo system. My only criticism of the book is that Peggie casts a jaundiced eye on composting systems, which I tend to believe are promising and appropriate choices for some boatowners. Alas, not for this boat owner. My better half recoiled at the thought of installing a composting system on our boat, a common and misguided reaction. So for better or worse, we are stuck with some variation of the disgusting holding tank scenario. But how to make it less disgusting?

We started with replacing the old permeated hose with shiny new hose. We quickly found that we had to use a heat gun to get the old hose off the fittings. I won't dwell on the olfactory sensations that occur when you use a heat gun in a confined space to warm up ancient pieces of permeated septic hose. We then replaced the 25 feet of old hose with new hose, with immediate olfactory improvement. But I then realized that I was going about this in the wrong way.

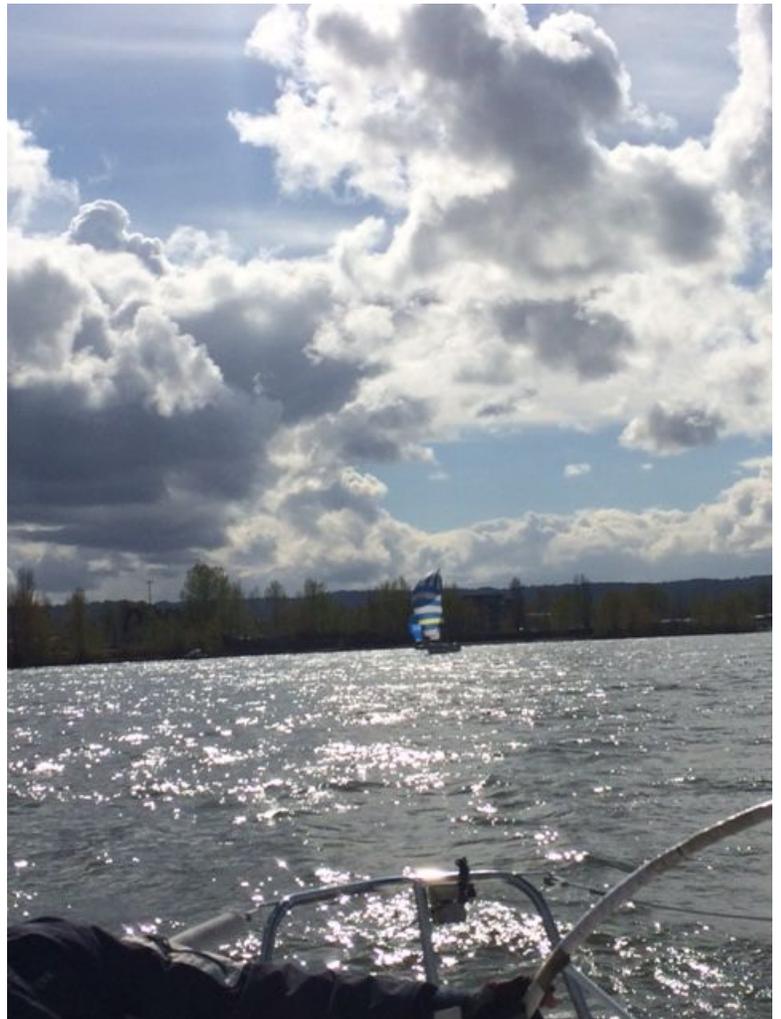
As Peggie will tell you, a properly designed marine septic system should have short, non-horizontal hose runs. The new hose was a great temporary solution, but it would soon be permeated as well by effluent sitting in the long horizontal runs. The real problem was the badly designed septic system. The long hose runs resulted from the fact that the cheap bastard who installed the holding tank used a cheapo tank with fittings on the side, which side faces aft, or away from the head compartment. This meant hoses from the head had to run through two bulkheads and then loop around in the lazarette to enter the tank from the aft side. Similar loops were necessary to reach the pumpout access and the macerator. Half the lazarette was occupied by great loops of soon to be smelly hose. Not Good.

The solution I wished I had thought of before ordering and installing 25 feet of new hose was to replace the

old cheapo holding tank with new spiffy one that has fittings on top. If I had actually read Peggie's book all the way to the end instead of stopping to rant about her antediluvian prejudices against composting heads, I might have realized that the proper first step is to order a new tank with all fittings located on top. By connecting all hoses to the top, I cut out the loops, get rid of 15 feet of hose, and eliminate all horizontal runs. It also frees up lots of lazarette space. And bonus! If a hose ever fails, a top-fitting tank doesn't dump 10 gallons of sewage in your bilge. So, belatedly, I ordered a new top-fitting tank from Ronco plastics.

Peggie will also tell you that ventilation is the key to a happy holding tank experience. At a basic level, vents are necessary to keep your holding tank from pressurizing and literally exploding, with catastrophic consequences to your wallet and sense of dignity. But vents also have an important anti-stink function. Ideally, a holding tank should be cross-ventilated with two or more large diameter vent hoses, with short runs to opposite sides of the boat to maximize ventilation from differential pressure. Good ventilation=no odor. This is because—as my high school biochemistry teacher no doubt explained on one of those days I skipped class—ventilation encourages good aerobic bacteria, who thrive on oxygen and clean living, and who produce only odorless CO₂. Contrarywise, ventilation kills the bad anaerobic bacteria, who hate oxygen, America and Judeo-Christian civilization, and who like nothing better than to create and emit sulfuric fumes reminiscent of hellfire and brimstone.

Accordingly, the new tank I ordered featured not one but two oversized vent fittings. Now I just have to screw up my courage and cut large holes in my topsides and transom to install new thru-hull vent fittings. If it works, the aerobic bacteria will win, and our civilization will be saved, or at least smell a little sweeter as we plunge into entropy and chaos. In the meantime, anybody want to buy 15 feet of slightly used sanitary hose?



Sun break during the CYC & PYC Opening Day Regatta on April 8. Photo courtesy of Jacqueline Pitter.

Rules Quiz Answer (from Question on page 3)

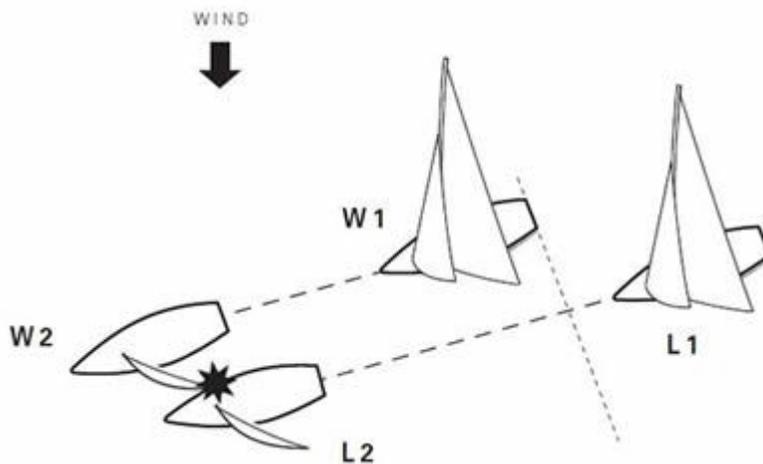
Randy Poff

Boat W is penalized under rule 11, On the Same Tack, Overlapped, for failing to keep clear of a leeward boat, and rule 14, Avoiding Contact, for failing to avoid contact when it was possible to do so.

When L first became overlapped with W, she was required to give W room to keep clear under rule 15, Acquiring Right of Way, which she did.

Because L overlaps W from clear astern, rule 17 requires L not to sail above her (L's) proper course. L is sailing on her proper course (not above it) and W fails to keep clear. L could have avoided making contact with W, but didn't;

therefore she breaks rule 14. But a right-of-way boat is exonerated (not penalized) for breaking rule 14 when the contact does not cause damage or injury (see rule 14(b)).



How you can access *The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2017-2020*:

Visit World Sailing here: <http://www.sailing.org/racingrules/documents>

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Racing Report

Michael Morrissey, Vice Commodore/Race Captain

Season begins

All sailors recognize the value of a well-run race. Being on the Race Committee (RC) can seem daunting at first but OCSA has done a great job in laying out common sense instructions and developing a framework that works remarkably well. SYSCO has taken up the mantle and has organized volunteers to run the RCs and give all boats the opportunity of having a fair and competitive race. SYSCO is divided into different fleets and each fleet has its own Captain. The Fleet Captains are responsible for organizing the RCs for specific days in the racing calendar (either a Tuesday or a Thursday) and get the platform boat for the RC. Each Fleet designates a volunteer PRO and SYSCO has folks available to help the PRO (if needed) set the course, run the race, and keep the scoring accurate. It's an integral part of racing and it works amazingly well for a volunteer organization. So whether you're an old-deckhand or a sailing newbie, be sure to sign up when the call for volunteers goes out from the Fleet Captain. It helps SYSCO be the unique organization that it is and brings sailboat racing to the Columbia River.



Race committee having too much fun during CYC & PYC Opening Day Regatta on April 9. Be sure to volunteer for race committee! Photo courtesy of Naomi Reichman.

Some thoughts on Starting the race

Most of us are getting ready for the beginning of the SYSCO Tuesday-Thursday Spring series starting April 18th. A number of boats have been fine tuning or just having fun during the informal Sail-on-Sundays winter series, the RCYC frostbite regatta, and the PYC Opening Day regatta. It's been pretty wild with winds blowing from 2-20 mph (and that's just on the first windward leg!) and a 3-knot current which makes starting and buoy rounding very interesting and at times downright terrifying.

To me one of the most important segments in Columbia River racing is the start. The races are usually short and one must get off the starting line in good shape to finish in the top half of the fleet on a consistent basis. To get a good start, you or someone on the boat needs to be fully versed in the committee flags, the starting sequence of horns, reading the course board, etc. This will be a good time to go over these factors so that the skipper can concentrate on getting a good start on be off to the races. Be sure to review the

OCSA General Sailing Instructions on pgs. 60-70. Once you feel you have a good understanding of the rules you should be ready to race. A brief review of the sailing instructions is:

1. The OCSA race courses are by letter or by course description listing OCSA marks individually. These are shown on pg. 60-61 of the 2017 OCSA Race Book. A rule change this year states that all marks will be taken to port – which makes it safer on the course.
2. The wind usually blows upriver from the West and the first weather mark is a yellow/orange inflatable or navigation buoy #2. If the Race Committee (RC) is using #2 or a navigational buoy, they will signal this with a red square above the course board on the RC.
3. The starting line is between the committee boat and a temporary green inflatable mark, and while the RC can be at either end of the line, the buoy is usually to the north of the RC boat.
4. The RC will try to set the starting line perpendicular to the wind but because of drift, wind changes, or anchoring difficulties this may not happen.
5. Sail by the RC before the starting sequence so that they can record your boat being on the water for the race and you can get a look at the course board.
6. The RC will have a race board that marks the order of the fleets and their courses. It's good to say the course out loud and have your crew point to the actual buoys on the course. There's nothing worse than to round the top mark in first place and then have no idea of where the next one is.
7. Another important rule is an automatic DSQ if you hit the RC boat (not its anchor line). This keeps our volunteer RC equipment and boats out of harms way and keeps the RC on task for sending the fleet off to a good start.

Be sure to know your fleet flag as the races will start in 5 minute sequences beginning at a set time (around 6:30 pm for Spring Series). For example, the Merit fleet last year sailed under the Swiss-looking flag which was the 4th starting sequence. So when the first gun went off we know that our 5 min. sequence would begin around 6:45 and we would be on the lookout for the flag and the horn. An excellent visual review of Starting Procedures and rules are given on the syscosailing.org website by Dale Mack under the Resources section (2017 SYSCO Race Clinic Presentation).

The Columbia River is a special place and the combination of light wind and strong current (especially in the spring) can wreak havoc with the best of starting plans. This year you have to be especially vigilant as it has been a heavy moisture year with lots of rain in the valleys and snow in the mountains and high water in the Columbia. The current has been 2.5-3.0 knots for some of the spring regattas and in light air it can be challenging not to get swept over the line. You are allowed to use your motor up to 4 minutes to your

start and this will also allow you to get out of the way of other boats and keep on the downwind side of the starting line in light air.

It should be an interesting and fun year. After this long winter, many of us are looking forward to hearing the starting sequence again, having a nice 8-12 knot westerly blowing upriver and a fleet of 60+ boats challenging each other, trying to adjust to wind and current, and sharing something that all sailors do in figuring out the shortest route around a set of buoys on the Columbia River.



Yes, on Sunday, April 9, several sailors observed Buoy 14 "missing." Turns out, a ginormous mess o' logs had snagged the buoy and completely submerged it! YIKES! Photo courtesy of Randy Poff.

Flood Stage Racing

Bruce Newton, Commodore

The Columbia River as of this writing is still at flood stage. This creates several challenges for racing.

First, there is wicked current which in some spots can exceed 4 knots. Bucking that current especially with an east wind will test the patience and endurance of any team. The current also creates a particularly dangerous situation when sailing upstream to round a mark. Our temporary marks have eight feet of chain and several sash weights at the end of the chain to keep the rode below keels and rudders. But if a boat rounding the mark gets swept to the mark, that anchoring tackle will get raised and likely hook the rudder. The result is a boat pinned by the current with the mark anchoring chain or line caught in the rudder. Be sure to leave plenty of space when rounding marks.

The second challenge is trees and other debris floating down the race course. The rules do not allow using your engine to dodge trees while racing. So keep a good look out and plan evasive actions early.

Finally, during flood conditions, all those wing dams and dolphins that are so visible in the summer suddenly disappear. It would be good idea to review the chart to refresh your memory on where they are located.

Safe sailing, everyone!

April 2017 SYSCO Board Minutes

Gary Bruner, Temporary Secretary

The meeting at Elmer's Delta Park was called to order at 5:30 PM in order to get basketball fans out in time to watch some of the NCAA finals. Present were: Bruce Newton, Scott Stevenson, Michael Morrissey, Tod Bassham, Warren Dalby, Jan Burkhart, Thomas MacMenemy, Phil Campagna and Gary Bruner.

Treasurer's Report

Scott Stevenson reported that SYSCO has \$5510 in checking and an additional \$3686 in Pancho reserve for a total of \$9196.

Membership Report

Jan Burkhart announced that Ryan Kelley (Catalina 22, Wind Dancer) and Carla Danley (associate) have applied for membership. The board voted to approve these new people, bringing the club total to 104, of which 12 are associates. Welcome, Ryan and Carla! Jan and Michael will be contacting fleet captains to remind racers that the Spring Series will begin on April 18. It's expected that membership will see a bump up in the next couple of weeks. SYSCO publishes a list of members on the website, and OCSA publishes a list of boats that are eligible to race, having both OCSA membership and PHRF if required. In response to Jan's request, the board voted to approve the expenditure of nearly \$600 to Prestige Flags for 25 SYSCO burgees, which are sent to new members.

Pancho Report

Phil Campagna and Thomas MacMenemy confirmed

that Pancho is splashed and living at McCuddy's Marina. Phil will check to see if there are available fenders to attach to the logs on the dock. He suggested that backing the boat into the slip is the best choice when water is high. Thomas has built a new seat for Pancho that fits over the fuel tank, allowing more room in the boat for marks. Thomas is not charging the club for this work. Thank you, Thomas. Additionally, he created an aluminum Red Square to attach to the course board in order to comply with the OCSA regulation that we need a visual signal when using navigation bouy 2 and the windward mark on W/L courses. Michael will check with other operating authorities to see what sort of red signal they need to attach to their course boards. Warren Dalby agreed to take the lead in looking after Pancho while Phil is rafting the Grand Canyon for the remainder of April.

Racing Report

Michael Morrissey will be contacting Mark McCuddy about moorage owed between now and the end of August. Michael says that only about 15 boats are currently registered to race in the Tuesday series, and just over 20 are signed up for the Thursday series. We are in good shape with fleets assigned which races they will serve as RC. Michael reminded us that April 15 is the date for a Pancho training session at McCuddy's for fleet captains, Volunteer PROs, Pancho drivers, and other interested members.

Newsletter

Jacqueline Pitter was commended for doing a great job on the newsletter and working to improve our Facebook presence. Everyone was reminded to get articles in to Jacqueline by the weekend following each board meeting.

The last order of business was to approve OWSA's request to rent Pancho for their races series.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Bruner, temporary secretary



Spinnaker run on April 8 during the PYC & CYC Opening Day Regatta. Photo courtesy of Jacqueline Pitter.