

Nov/Dec 2017

From the Front

40 Years Old
and Looking to Party!

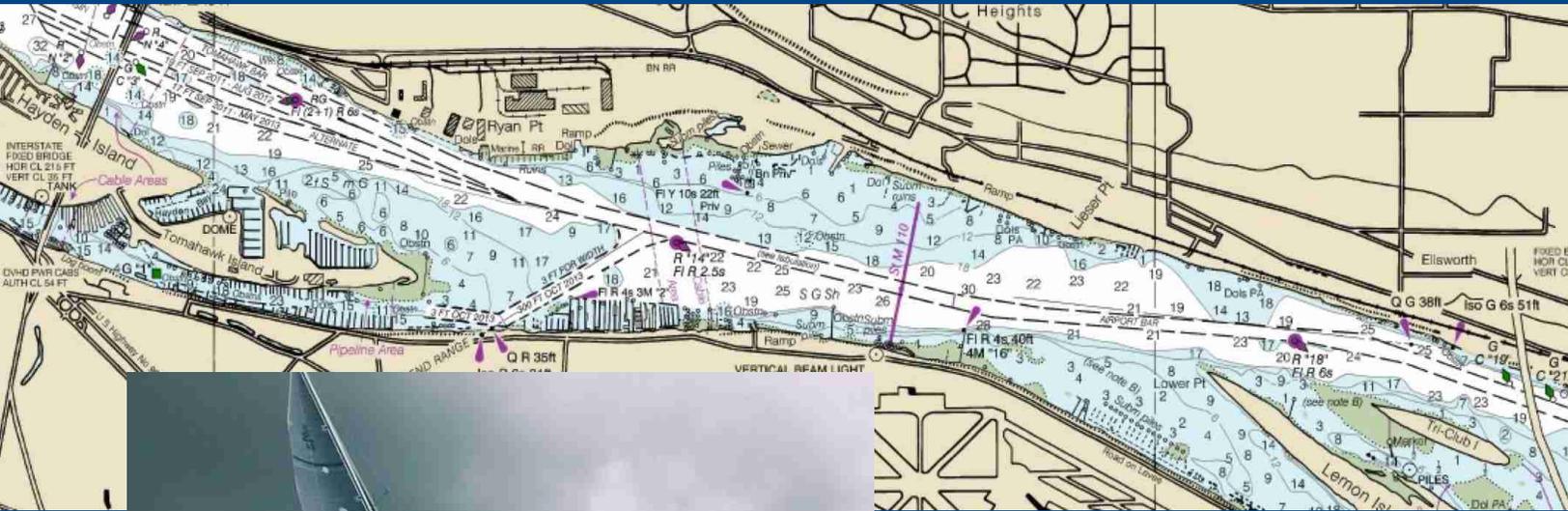
To Boldly Go, Part 1

Racing Report

2017 SYSCO General
Membership Meeting

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

STARTING LINE



October Sailing on Sunday racing captured beautifully by Adam Demorest.

From the Front

Bruce Newton, Commodore

The annual awards party was early November and, as always, it was fun getting a significant portion of the sailing community together. Over 200 people squeezed into the Portland Yacht Club. PYC did a great job with the dinner and keeping everyone's glass filled via two full bars. A very impressive set of raffle prizes were on display with many people fervently stuffing raffle tickets into the bowls of the prizes they hoped to win. SYSCO's own Trophy Czar, Jim Shaw, did an amazing job handing out a large number of awards in an efficient manner. And, as usual, Jim managed to find fun, unique, and useful awards for the SYSCO racing events.

Michael Morrissey discusses the racing awards later in this newsletter. I want to highlight the special awards that SYSCO confers.

The ***US Sailing Association Sportsmanship Award*** recognizes an individual who best exemplifies the spirit of sportsmanship in sailing. SYSCO presented the Sportsmanship Award to **Tod Bassham**, who co-skippers the Merit 25, *Naussica*. Tod has long been involved in SYSCO and served as Commodore in 2014. Tod is also well known for coming up with some innovative (others would say crazy) ideas for racing on the Columbia and was the originator of the Daylight Savings Dash (complete with required crew overboard drills) and the Short-handed Soaker, which was a big success (unless you were a smaller boat being water cannoned by a cruiser). Tod has served in just about every officer position in SYSCO and his energy and enthusiasm has been a huge boost for racing on the Columbia.

The ***SYSCO Sailor of the Year Award*** is given to the individual who has clearly gone beyond the call of duty in support of the club. This year the Sailor of the Year Award was presented to **Jacqueline Pitter**, our newsletter editor and social media guru. Jackie skippers and co-owns the Ranger-20, Thunder Pig. Jackie has done an outstanding job with the SYSCO newsletter over the last few years. She has also revitalized the club's presence on Facebook. These efforts have gone a long way toward building the sailing community.

The ***SYSCO Commodore's Trophy*** goes to the racer with the best performance and participation in a competitive fleet. It is awarded based on a points system described later in this newsletter. The Trophy this year was won by our own Vice Commodore, **Michael Morrissey**.

On November 6 we held the annual General Membership Meeting. The members present and those voting by proxy unanimously approved the proposed increase in the yearly membership dues to \$120 and the proposed housekeeping updates to the bylaws. They also elected the new officers for 2018.

Please welcome your officers for next year:

Commodore Michael Morrissey

Vice Commodore/Race Captain Jeff Eastes

Rear Commodore Bruce Newton

Treasurer Scott Stevenson

Secretary Don Woodhouse

This is a good time of the year to have a Fleet Party. SYSCO is encouraging Fleets to have more social events and is offering to chip in \$50 toward the costs of Fleet social events. Contact Scott or me for details.

Sailing on Sundays is underway and the weather has been decent so far. So grab your foulies and get out on the water.

40 Years Old and Looking to Party!

Tod Bassham

Next year, 2018, is SYSCO's Fortieth Anniversary. Yes, 40 years ago, in the depths of the Carter malaise, the skippers of several small one-design boats (Ranger 20s, Catalina 22s etc.) got together and decided to form a club to provide affordable racing and cruising for the working stiff. The idea was simple, and revolutionary. Forget fancy yachts and PROs and complicated handicap formulas. Just go out and race with your friends in one-design or level fleets of similar boats, in competitive races run by the fleets. Forty years later, SYSCO is still going strong. And although much has changed, much remains the same. We still go out and race with our friends in one-design or level fleets, although we now allow our PHRF friends to join the fun.

Plans are afoot for a 40th anniversary party, and word is that the sheriff is already clearing jail space for the inevitable riot of drunken sailors. While I look forward to the party, I cannot help but daydream a little about a special, one-off, 40th anniversary race. A race that showcases the fleet spirit that characterizes SYSCO, but offers something a little bit different.

Hm, how about *team racing*, using fleets of mixed boats drawn from SYSCO's one-design fleets? Not crazy enough? OK, how about team *relay* racing?

Stay with me here. We form five teams, each comprising four boats, total 20 boats. Each team has one boat from the most active one-design fleets (say, J-24s, Merits, Cal-20s, and Ranger 20s). The four J-24s from each team start the first race, each carrying a football (yes, a literal football). Five minutes later four Merits start the second race. Somewhere on the course, before they finish, each J-24 has to pass or hand the football to the Merit on their team. More likely than not, the passing would occur while one boat is on a downwind leg while the other is on an upwind leg, which will require some precise maneuvering or speed and course matching. If the ball is fumbled in passing, the passing boat has to recover it from the water (footballs float, don't they?) and both boats have to circle around to complete the pass. Meanwhile, the third race starts, with the Cal-20s. Somewhere on the course, each Merit passes their football to the Cal-20 that is on their team. Then the Rangers start, and the Cal-20s have to pass the football to the last team member, the Ranger 20s. Finally, the J-24s start the next round of five races, which gives us a total of 40 laps around the course (20 boats, each racing the course twice, equals 40 trips around the course, which coincidentally is one for each year SYSCO has been in existence).

Each race is scored, so the first J-24 to finish their race gets one point, the second two points, etc. But in addition, each of the five teams has a *team score*, based on how well the other boats in their team finished in their races. The team with the lowest *team score* wins the big prize...40 bottles of 40-ounce malt liquor.

Is this ridiculous idea even remotely plausible? Not at all. But wouldn't it be kinda...fun?



October Sailing on Sunday action. Photo courtesy of Rich Ackerman.



To Boldly Go, Part 1

Kris Amundson

It is 2010 and I am standing in front of David King's cutter *Saraband* in Astoria. It was moored there after his return from a near overall win of the Singlehanded Transpac. I was there crewing on Gary Bruner's *Shamrock* for my first ocean race, the Bridge to Bridge. It was at this moment I began a vague plan – within tens years find a small ocean worthy boat and get to work on my own SHTP campaign. A simple enough plan until some folks up north hatched the Race to Alaska in 2015.

This looked just as hard as an SHTP, but no classes and attracted a different kind of crazy. The event seemed to thumb its nose at the standard regatta: very few rules, no engines, sea trail from Port Townsend to Victoria, pass two waypoints, get to Ketchikan. The writing, website and videos were full of wit and snark and Sperry wasn't in the lexicon. Personally the race had this kind of gravity well that was as big as the Notice of Race was short. Another excuse to keep looking for that small boat, this time narrowed down to the ULDB classes that fit my budget and safety margins, and sailing this kind of race with friends seemed more appealing than going it alone on open ocean with little experience.

Late Summer of 2016 intensified the boat search. Olson 29/30, Moore 24, Santa Cruz 27, Hobie 33, Express 27 were all boats I began filtering for on Craigslist, Yachtworld, and their respective class forums. I inspected some tired SC27s, a possible O29, and a beautifully restored but expensive O30 in the mid-west. In October I came across a post on the express27.org forum of Hull #4 for sale out of Anacortes, Washington. The Express 27 was on the top of my list but never *really* on my list because they are so rare. The photos showed a boat in excellent condition and didn't disappoint when I flew up to take a look.

Working in London for most of November, I was in regular email contact with the owner of "E Ticket" and managed a remote survey of the boat. After some thought a decision was made and early December we would trailer her down to Portland. I had a boat, now I needed a boat name, a team name, and a crew.

Naming the boat was going to be something sci-fi or nerd themed – having watched all of Star Trek The Next Generation many, many times, I decided on “Spar Trek” which fit the terrible pun requirement. The beautifully restored but expensive Olson 30 “Spar Wars” also influenced the naming process. The R2AK team name came naturally: Away Team (later we would learn of the R2AK team Make It So).



Away Team R2AK photo shoot. Photography by Mike Hall atop the I-5 bridge.

Potential crew lists were built, narrowed down, and a short list finalized; emails went out to the first four. Video conferencing happened in January as I was working in Toronto for 6 weeks and by the end of the month we had a team. Drew, a gentleman adventurer from Vancouver BC and San Francisco whom I met over the Internet while at South Pole, was always a yes it turns out – he just didn’t believe me until I emailed him that I had a boat. While our only in-person experience had been a tasty Vietnamese lunch in SFO while I was in town for a conference, he had ocean sailing experience with boats in Mexico and learned how to sail in some of the waters we would be traversing in BC. Drew was our spirit and brought a smile, positive attitude, social engineering, chaos, storytelling and a carbon fiber guitar who knew how to swing a cordless drill.

Larissa also agreed to the journey. Hailing from Tasmania and having sailed nearly around the world on a nicely sized fully-keeled cruiser, confidence in her abilities is an understatement. We had also sailed together on Jack Colter’s *Makai* in both the 2016 Oregon Offshore and Swiftsure. When given the choice between a porta-potty or a bucket for our marine head she made the call and we quickly found ourselves in a Home Depot trying to decide between the orange “LETS DO THIS” or standard white. Larissa was our strength and brought strategy, insight, motivation, caution, and our rowing secret weapon.

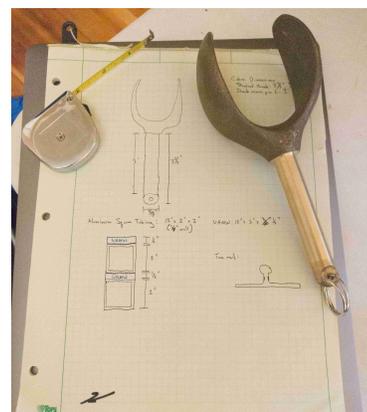
Stewart Carter was invited to join our merry band of crazy and while he had to decline he became a key member of the pre-race shore team as our team rigger and shipwright who spent a significant amount of time up to start helping tune the rig and sea trials. He wanted a compass everywhere – I wanted an iPad everywhere (we set off with 1 fixed compass, 1 handheld compass and two iPads with iNavX/Navionics). If there was a project manager for our Utopia Planitia that was Tomahawk Bay Slip E-25, it was definitely Stewart.

One thing R2AK is famous for is their amazing writing and media staff. The team bios are epic to say the least and better describe Away Team than I can. Here is an excerpt from our team page (<https://r2ak.com/2017-teams-full-race/team-away-team/>):

“If you read anything about ancient Sparta, a few pages in and one thing is pretty clear: not only were they every bit the impressive fighting force Hollywood makes them out to be, but the reason we’re still reading and making movies about them 2,500 years later isn’t just because they had better swords or more people or smarter tactics but because their entire society was designed to foster toughness and **cull out those** who didn’t hit the mark; an entire culture existed in the \$10,000/steak knives game starting at birth. Newborns were assessed by soldiers for signs of strength then **bathed in wine to see if they twitched**, and when they turned seven they were taken from their homes to train in fighting, marched without shoes, denied food, beaten routinely. Miss the mark at any point, you’re a slave. Keep making the cut and you get to fight for Sparta...

... From their wine bathed beginnings, Team Away Team has been racking up tough guy points across the globe. Two years sciencing in Antarctica’s least hospitable posts, summiting the premier peaks of the West Coast, crossing oceans, canal transits—they even made the South Pacific harder by criss-crossing it a bunch of times rather than just **finding the first beach with an ice machine** and drinking high-octane fruit juice until the numbers wore off the Master Card.

Even the small indulgences that sneak in (**12 combined total trips to Burning Man**) are well offset by the optional hardships: squatting on the anchor in the middle of a large city while they rebuilt the boat they lived on, hard charge racing up and down the west coast, Northern Ireland, and as far as India, two years off the grid living in the Sea of Cortez.”



Motoring to Schooner Creek for repairs and biking back to the car (left). Most all our gear being inventoried in Larissa’s basement (center). The secret plans for the oarlock mounts (right).

By early March the boat and team were finalized and I was finishing up my work in Toronto – let the preparation begin! The next few months was a whirlwind of repair, gear acquisition, row-system building, chart studying, research, panic, budgeting and testing. It was all coming together and on June 3rd we motored out of Tomahawk Bay up to the James Gleason boat ramp, trailered the boat, and headed for Port Townsend.



Stewart Carter sealing the port-side chainplate (left). All new standing rigging ready to install (center). Drew drilling large holes through the bulkhead for a compass (right).



John Carter helping out with bedding the chainplates (left). Drew working the bow tie-downs during the un-splashing from the Columbia River (center). Spar Trek hits saltwater as Larissa and Kris transit over to Point Hudson in Port Townsend (right).

We had 4 days in Port Townsend before the start and the punch list was still extensive. Looking back the hardest part of the whole endeavor was getting to the start – tuning the rig, fitting the headsail furler (twice!), replacing the manual bilge pump, mounting and wiring the solar panels, filling our nine 5gal water cubes, climbing the mast to fix the windex ... the list went on and I covered in lanolin and butyl tape. On top of this was the amount of public attention the fleet was getting. Port Townsend was an amazing welcoming town for this event. It was a mixture of excitement and panic as we attacked the work list while politely managing the amount of chit-chat; folks wanted to know everything about our little starship. As one of the first boats to moor in Port Hudson it was also intimidating to



Kris and Larissa battle the Facnor headsail furler (upper-left). Spar Trek is ready to rock with it's Impulse Drive (oars) at the ready with fresh retro-reflective and day-glow tape (upper-right). Drew ascends the mast to fix a loose windex (lower-left). Stewart leads us out into the Admiralty Inlet for a sea trial, all systems go! (lower-right)

watch the fleet pour in – boats that seemed more prepared than we were, boats that had done it before, boats with fancy pedal drive systems – the calm panic rolled in like a tide. Are we going to be ready for this? The skippers meeting was the first skippers meeting I had ever attended as a vessel owner.

“Start”, I told myself. The preparation was sound, the rig was new, chain plates re-bedded, keel bolts torqued to spec, reasonably water tight, tuned with help from the experienced, boat design tried and true, reasonable safety gear, a reliable rowing system, capable crew. Shut up. Go. So says R2AK. Alright then.

Up at 0330 for our 0500 start of which we needed to row out to. No time for a coffee run might have started Drew and I on our first incident of conflict had we been worse people as I began preparations to cast off. Nav lights and red headlamps activated we pushed off and Drew began our first strokes to Alaska from our rowing seat that was a stationary 75 quart cooler. It was outside the breakwater that three white cannon balls politely hit us all in the chest. Paddle boarders affiliated with the race had swarmed the outgoing fleet and were attacking us with containers of oatmeal paddling off to the next boat as fast as they had arrived, pelting the fleet with their steamy wares.

A Force 1 was taking breaths around the start line. I got into race mode and called for as much sail as we had. My goal was a middle start – not last, but would let the multihull fleet battle it out in their light-air cluster of yelling. The horn fired, an oompah band could be heard giving us a boost of encouragement from the beam, and Away Team was underway! At 0.1 kns we began our beam reach towards Point Wilson and began prep for a spinnaker which became limp once hoisted. An hour later this spinnaker was asleep in its bag along with two crew in theirs. I began my first shift of rowing with the auto-tiller on. This lasted for two hours as we made our way north. Glassy seas, riptide through Point Wilson, and out into the Strait of Juan de Fuca with views of the Olympic Mountains. I kept myself busy with some beat boxing and trying to row faster than Team Willpower on their Seascope 27 with pedal-drive.



The fleet floats around the start, trying to position in light winds (left). Kris and Larissa in race-mode (right).

By late morning the crew had arrived on deck rested and with rations. We punched up some Tycho on the sound system and the wind gently began to fill in from the N-NNW. We checked our forecasts and smiled nervously. Pressure was on its way – a lot of pressure. Spar Trek was going to get its first real test of stability and rig. The crew was going to get a test of their own – physical and psychological.

To Be Continued...

Upcoming Notices and Dates to Remember

Come to the Portland Boat Show!

The Portland Boat Show will be at the Expo Center from Wednesday, January 10 through Sunday, January 14. This is always a fun event and we have a great way for you to get in for free -- just volunteer to cover the SYSCO booth. Pick a time slot and volunteer with a friend. We always have two volunteers covering the booth so you can take turns touring the show. The duties are to greet visitors, explain racing and SYSCO to prospective new sailors, and sell copies of the 2018 Racebook. Remember that commitment to volunteer for at least eight hours that is part of your membership renewal? This a great way to meet that commitment. Please also share this opportunity with your crew. To volunteer go to <http://signup.com/go/ymByags> and pick a volunteering time slot. If you have any questions, contact Bruce Newton.

CYC Sailing on Sunday Series

Sundays, Oct 15 – Mar 4

Portland Boat Show

Jan 10 – 14



December 3rd Sailing on Sunday race. Riva was a great race committee who resisted the urge to shorten the course. Photo courtesy of Jenn Thompson.

Racing Report

Michael Morrissey, Vice Commodore/Race Captain

The SYSCO Racing awards were given out at the Awards party hosted by OCSA on November 4th. The Spring, Summer and Twilight series winners were announced in the October SYSCO newsletter and kudos to the boat owners, skippers, and crews for their prowess on the water in a variety of conditions.

There are three other annual awards that are presented that I would like to describe in more detail for the members as they represent efforts made throughout the year or in one case several years in support of SYSCO. These are the SYSCO Commodore's Trophy, the Sailor of the Year, and the Sportsmanship award. The Sailor of the Year and Sportsmanship awards are open for nominations each year and agreed upon by the SYSCO officers as well as the previous year's winner.

The Commodore's Trophy is awarded to the racer with the best finishes overall for all the SYSCO races that happen on the Columbia River. The SYSCO sponsored races include the Spring, Summer, and Twilight series races, and the Daylight Savings Dash and the Dual Bridge Duel. There must be at least three boats from a fleet for participation and the more boats in the class, the greater number of points for your finish. For example, first place in three to five boat fleets gets 3.25 points while fleets with six boats or more get 3.75 points for a first place. Points are also earned for second, third, and fourth place. This follows the OCSA Participation and Performance Trophy scoring system described in the Racebook.

This year's **Commodore's Trophy** winner was Michael Morrissey and crew in *OB1*. They won the Summer and Twilight series in the Merit 25 class while finishing 3rd in the Spring series. Several other boats were in contention having done well in their respective fleets so it came down to the specialty races. The Daylight Savings Dash was canceled due to lack of wind while the Dual Bridge Duel was a race that tried one's patience with light air and a 3-knot current. The OB1 skipper reports that the key to the race was the rounding I-205 mark in a dying breeze. After making a final gybe for a do or die rounding of the buoy, he realized he forgot to loosen the pole downhaul and exhorted his wife, Pati, to "be the pole" as they squeezed by the mark and rode the current to the finish line, capturing the trophy.

As described earlier, the **Sportsmanship Award** this year went to Tod Bassham, who co-skippers the Merit 25, *Naussica*. And the **Sailor of the Year** award went to **Jacqueline Pitter**, who skippers and co-owns the Ranger-20, *Thunder Pig*.



Portland Christmas Ships decorated and ready to parade. Tis the season, check 'em out!
<http://www.christmasships.org/> Photo courtesy of Maria Swearingen.

2017 SYSCO General Membership Meeting

Don Woodhouse, Secretary

November 6, 2017

In attendance were Scott Stevenson, Mike Daly, Don Woodhouse, Jim Severs, Gary Bruner, Mike Stainsby, Mary Stainsby, Kelly Dews, Jacqueline Pitter, Jeff Eastes, Kris Amundson, Robert McCorkle, Michael Morrissey, Warren Dalby, Bruce Newton, Bill Sanborn, and Nat Powning.

The meeting was called to order promptly at 7:00 pm by Commodore Bruce Newton.

Bruce opened with a statement on the state of the club and an overview of the last year from his point of view. Bruce noted that the club has survived and thrived for forty years and current membership at 135 attests to that. The membership is comprised of 121 regular members and 14 associate members. Our annual budget was summed up by Bruce, reporting a typical \$10k budget with \$6k of that going towards trophies. The rest typically goes to racing equipment and Pancho (our mark boat) operations and maintenance. On the racing side, we held 38 days of SYSCO races. The quality of racing continues to improve because of the Fleet Captains, their designated PROs, the training provided, and the help of the Tuesday and Thursday Coordinators. Pancho is operating well and only a few repairs are slated for this winter. Our offer to financially support fleet social activities was used by some Fleets, and the barbeques at the end of summer series and at St Helens were deemed successful.

Bruce provided an update on discussions about the future of CYC and OCSA. CYC had approached SYSCO and proposed a merger. CYC was close to dissolving but, at their most recent general membership meeting, enough

volunteer came forward that the club will continue with a focus on running the Oregon Offshore Race. Talks are expected to continue in January with an emphasis on OCSA concerns and challenges.

The 2018 calendar has been completed and there are only minor changes for the SYSCO events, with the major change being no July break for Whidbey Island Race Week.

Candidates were voted in for 2018 unanimously by the 17 members present and two votes by proxy.

Commodore Michael Morrissey
Vice Commodore/Race Captain Jeff Eastes
Treasurer Scott Stevenson
Secretary Don Woodhouse

In other voting, there was a vote on changing the bylaws to increase the dues to \$120 and increase the late charge to \$10. The vote was unanimous by the 17 members present plus two votes by proxy. A collection of minor edits to the by-laws that were characterized as housekeeping updates was similarly passed by unanimous vote.

With the approaching 40th anniversary, some thought has been put into having a celebration in the early spring at PYC to bring past and present members together.

We decided not to have a Dec. Board meeting and to move the Jan meeting to 1-8-2018.