

April 2018

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40 Years of Success

Racer's Corner

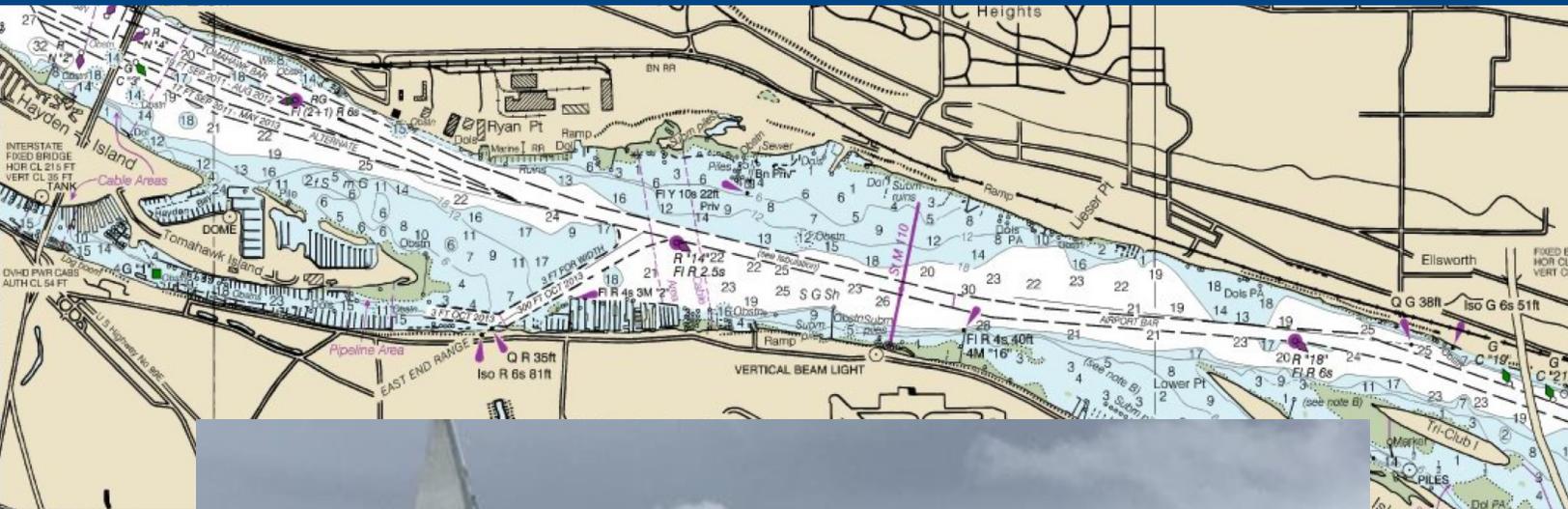
Racing Report

April 2018 SYSCO Meeting Minutes

Editor's Note: To Boldly Go, Part 3 expected in May

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon

STARTING LINE



J-105s Troublemaker and Free Bowl of Soup fighting for position on day 2 of the PYC Opening Day Regatta, April 8. Photo courtesy of Cameron Hunt.

From the Front

Michael Morrissey, Commodore

By the time you are reading this, your boat should be in the water, the bottom cleaned, a few practice sails are under your belt and you are ready to go for the Spring series. It's like opening day of baseball where every team is on equal standing and has a good chance of winning the series if the myriad of things involved in sailboat racing fall into place. The crew is lined up, the sails are in good shape, the mind-set is good, and you're ready for anything that comes your way, which is necessary because the Spring series is notorious for shifty winds, strong currents, and comments like, "I've never seen that before on the Columbia!". While we all have fun racing on the Spring series, the Columbia river does present some danger. The "From the Rear" piece focuses on safety on the course, which should be paramount for all races. Our Race Captain talks about upcoming events and gives guidelines for being knowledgeable about race courses and starting procedures. This month's Racers Corner talks about getting a good start at SYSCO events.

There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes in getting ready for the Spring Series opening. A tip of the hat goes to Thomas MacMenemy who worked with Jeff Eastes in getting Pancho ready for launch. There were several patches that needed fiber-glassing as well as having an overall cleaning. Pancho is now sitting at McCuddy's at B-29 dock and ready to go. We will have an at-the-boat session with Pancho for all those who interested in helping out with Race Committees during the SYSCO racing series and being on the mark boat. Contact your Fleet Captain if you'd like to attend. Fleet Captains are lining up their race committees and with Race Coordinators Randy Poff and Denny Damore will be helping out RCs get everything prepared well in advance. It should be a good year on the water. Also, don't wait until the last minute to sign up for the Spring Series so that the SYSCO team can start assigning fleets and pennants.

A good time was had by all at the 40th SYSCO anniversary event at the PYC last month. Frank Bocarde and Bill Sanborn were gracious hosts and did a great job of getting the word out. Bill has written a nice piece about the event for this month's newsletter. More than 80 folks and 21 Commodores attended and enjoyed the slide show and stories of deeds and misdeeds that occurred in SYSCO over the past 40 years. What was spoken most often were tales about the camaraderie and support that SYSCO sailors have for encouraging beginning racers to get on the race course and try things out. This speaks volumes to the spirit of volunteerism that makes SYSCO the organization that it is. It was good fun hearing the stories and meeting some of the past Commodores of the Club. Thanks to PYC for hosting the event.



Frank Bocarde MC'ing the 40th Anniversary of SYSCO. Photo courtesy of Michael Morrissey.

From the Rear

Bruce Newton, Rear Commodore

The sailing season is here and skippers are or will soon be going through the annual ritual of cleaning, maintaining equipment, and crew practices. One thing that is very important not to neglect is the safety of your crew and boat. Although it looks benign, the Columbia is a fairly treacherous stretch of water with swift currents, very cold water temperatures for much of the year, and hidden underwater hazards. Last year we had a potentially disastrous multiple crew overboard event that showed how difficult it can be to get back to a crew member in the water and how difficult it is to get a hypothermic person out of the water and into a boat. Read about the event and a discussion of personal floatation devices in the [July 2017 newsletter](#).

As part of your spring refit, please make sure you have all the required safety gear, conduct the required Crew Overboard drills, and discuss safety with your crew. There are two sets of requirements that apply. The Coast Guard safety requirements are summarized on this handy chart:

https://www.usps.org/national/vsc/conductvsc_files/USCGMinReq_2012.pdf

In addition to the Coast Guard safety requirements, we have a set of safety requirements that are incorporated into the local racing rules for the Columbia River. All boats that participate in racing events must comply with these requirements. The OCSA Safety Equipment Requirements can be found here: <http://sailpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/OCSA-SER-2016.022516.pdf>. All skippers are strongly encouraged to review the requirements. Here are a few of the required items that you might not already have: a heaving line of 50' or greater, a VHF radio, soft plugs for through-hulls, a bailing bucket of at least two gallons. There is also a requirement that annually, two-thirds of the crew practice crew-overboard procedures including demonstrating how to re-board someone from the water.

Speaking of required crew-overboard practice, why not shake out the cobwebs and get a portion of your requirements done by entering the SYSCO Crew Overboard Challenge on April 21?



Two J-105s argue about how to bring down a sky'ed halyard on April 7. Photo courtesy of Cameron Hunt.

40 Years of Success

Bill Sanborn, SYSCO Historian

Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon had its beginning in 1978 to fill a need that several sailboat owners who wanted to race, but felt that the existing format for racing was not very friendly. During a trip to the Bay Area Frank Bocarde met with some folks who had begun a group that supported One-Design, and Level fleets by pooling their resources and organizing a racing program in which they shared Committee Duty, Marks, and a Mark Boat.

Frank presented the idea to several Portland-area sailors, who were also looking for what they thought would be a better place to learn to race against similar boats, and they found there was a real need for such an organization. From that Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon was formed, and supported by the Ranger 20 and 22, and 24, San Juan 24, Santana 20 and 22, and Tansar 22 owners, and an unassigned Level Fleets of White, Blue, and Red owners. In a couple of years, the newly introduced J/24 were beginning to show up and became an active fleet, as did the Catalina 22.

The concept was well received and supported by the active racers and while the Club has been pushed and tugged in several directions over the years the cooler heads have prevailed and the Board, while trying new ideas some that worked and some that did not, had stayed to the original concept. The basic premise is that the Club is made up of a group of individual fleets working together to promote and help improve learning to race sailboats, and offers a venue for the sport. Over time the individual One-Design Fleets have expanded, changed or fallen away depending on the effort the members put into to promoting their model of boat.

Forty racing seasons later we find there is still that need, and a void that SYSCO continues to fill. For a long time we had monthly meeting with speakers, but in the last few years we found that interest in the meetings had dropped off, and the best way for the Club to get member involvement is to have a "Starting Line", and each week during the season we see 80 plus boats with over 200 sailors show for the Tuesday or Thursday during the 16 weeks of the racing season.

We say, "40 Years of Success," because in 1978 SYSCO had the support of the Sailboat Racers, and has matured with a 40 year record of well run events to support, educate and develop sailing skills of those those new to sailing, or those with lots of experience who want to continue to hone their skills both in boat handling, and also in volunteer Race Management.

Those who have helped guide SYSCO thru 40 years take pride in what has been accomplished and are still on the job of promoting the SYSCO way. We can assure anyone who is considering helping the Club move forward that the Membership have a vested interest in the future success of SYSCO, and will have your back.

On March 11th we invited all the Sailors who were SYSCO, past, present, and future to attend a 40th Anniversary Reception at Portland Yacht Club, had a wonderful turn out, and lots stories were shared.



Past (and current and rear) Commodores left to right: Jim Sinclair, Rich Jones, Frank Bocarde, Bob Waldron, Warren Dalby, Lynne Bocarde, Alan Boguslawski, Loren Beach, Mike Oxborrow, Lanny Perkins, Bruce Newton, Frank Magdlen, Tom English, Karen Anderson, Tim Carman, Michael Morrissey, Bob Brown, Bill Sanborn, Gary Whitney, Tod Bassham, Michael Nance.

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.

SYSCO Race Clinic

(New location! See above announcement)

April 12

SYSCO Fleet/Race Captain & Pancho Training

April 14

Oregon Offshore Kickoff Party

April 16

SYSCO COB Challenge

April 21

SYSCO Spring Evening Series

(Tuesdays and Thursdays)

April 24 – May 31

CRYA Opening Day

May 5

CYC Oregon Offshore

May 10 – 13

ISC Beer Can Race

May 12

RCYC Medium Distance Race

May 19

RVYC Swiftsure

May 26 – 28



Buoy two dragging some sticks it caught in the high current over the winter. Photo courtesy of Kelly Dews.

Racer's Corner – Starts

Michael Morrissey, Commodore

Getting a decent start on the Columbia during the racing season is important to having a good race overall. The current, if the wind is from the west, makes the first weather leg go by very quickly and if you're in the top three to the weather mark you should be in good shape for the rest of the race. Everyone has a different theory on what constitutes a good start and what they are comfortable with. Thinking about this I would say keep these simple guidelines in mind for your start.



Cal 20 Start Line. Photo courtesy of Michael Morrissey.

Guidelines

1. Do some pre-race scouting and planning, and talk it over with your crew about what side of the line you want to be on when the horn goes off.
2. Be aware of the current and how strong it is, as this can drag you over the line in a west wind, especially in light air, and make it painfully slow to get to the line in an east wind.
3. Keep good tabs on the clock, have a crew member read off the time every 15 seconds when you get below 2 minutes to the start.
4. Fight for clean air. If a pack of boats are crowding the pin end, then you might be better off in the middle and having good options after the start.
5. Boat speed at the horn. Ideally you want to be at top speed, sheeted in when the horn goes off and everyone in position.

Let's take each of these rules and explore them a little further.

No. 1. During the summer series, probably 80-90% of the races have a W-NW wind which makes a nice windward leg towards the #2 buoy. The Race Committee (RC) will often set the line straight across the river with starboard slightly favored. This creates a slightly shorter course to the windward mark and an advantage to boats at the pin end. To determine the favored end you can simply sail up to the line before the race sequences begin and go head to wind – if your boat is perpendicular to the line no side favored. If it points toward one end, then that end is favored. If you sailed part of the course before the race you might have noticed that the bigger puffs always seem to be more from the NW and this might be another reason why you want to be towards the northern end of the starting line (usually the pin end). This allows you to sail toward the mark in the puffs and keep your boat speed up. Also, some racers feel there is stronger current toward the deeper channel and want to get that positive current effect as soon as possible. Oftentimes this works, but not always, and if the line is relatively square, you can start pretty much anywhere on the line and be in good shape. On those rare days when there is an East wind you should also square up to the wind, determine the favored end and be sure you are moving fast when the gun goes off. If your start is at pennants # 3-6, you often have a chance to watch other starts and judge who and where those lead racers came off the line. Be sure not to be in the racing box and interfere with the other starters.

No. 2. As was discussed in the March issue, the current can have a major effect on the start of the race. In light air, it is tricky business judging when you should go for the line. In these conditions, it is probably better to be a bit cautious as it is painfully slow to return to the line against the current if you are over early. In moderate to strong wind conditions you should have a good idea of how the current affects your approach toward the line. If there is 1 minute to go and you are only a few boat-lengths below the line, then you are probably too close and in danger of being over. You should practice this a few times to get a good idea of how the current is affecting your approach. An East wind is one of my favorites. Not only do you get to look at Mt. Hood for much of the leg, but you can actually stabilize yourself near the line pulling in your sails when necessary to counteract the current.

No. 3. Timing is everything and having a calm crew member with a good voice speaking off the time as you count down to the start is invaluable. There is often a lot of chaos at the start. Perhaps you got moved off your spot at 90 seconds, or there is a barger coming down the line creating havoc. If you are skipper, you have a lot to focus on - other boats, wind conditions, whether you have enough beer onboard for postrace celebration, etc. I find it somewhat relaxing if someone else is calling the time, as you think of your duties. Special stop watches with 5-minute increments or a good iphone display, set for your countdown, are good to use. Always important to have a back-up, just in case, and when the horn goes off you should be off to the races.

No. 4. Clean air. It is what we live for after the start. It can even make you want to start a little away from the favored end as you will be able to control your own destiny. If 6 boats are crowding the pin end, and there is a whole lot of shouting going on, there are only 1 or 2 of them that are going to come off the line in good shape. 9 times out of 10, if you are in clean air, you will have good opportunities to tack if you want to or just pedal to the metal to get a good jump on the fleet. Usually if there are one or two boats with you, it is better to be to leeward of them to be sure you have clean air. This still means you need to be going at full speed once the starting horn blasts. If you get caught to windward and a bit behind, you should look for chances to tack over, perhaps go behind a few transoms and still fight for clean air. Once you settle in clean air, concentrate on boat speed, and just go fast. You should be in good shape and perhaps by playing some good shifts in the middle of the leg might get you to the top three by the windward mark and ready to rock and roll.

No. 5. Boat speed at the horn. As stated previously, when the starting horn goes off you want to have optimal boat speed and pointed in the right direction. If everything is perfect, you hit the line at the horn with jib/genoa and main trimmed in, everyone sitting on the rail and you have a clear vision of how the windward leg might play out. It is one of the best feelings in the world. Depending on your boat size you may want to have someone trim the main as you do some quick maneuvering at the start. In looking at the SYSCO fleets, there is often a big difference in the top boats who are on the line moving at top speed while others might be 2 or 3 boat lengths behind the line, which gives them a handicap from the beginning. While starting can be intimidating to a beginning racer, you should become

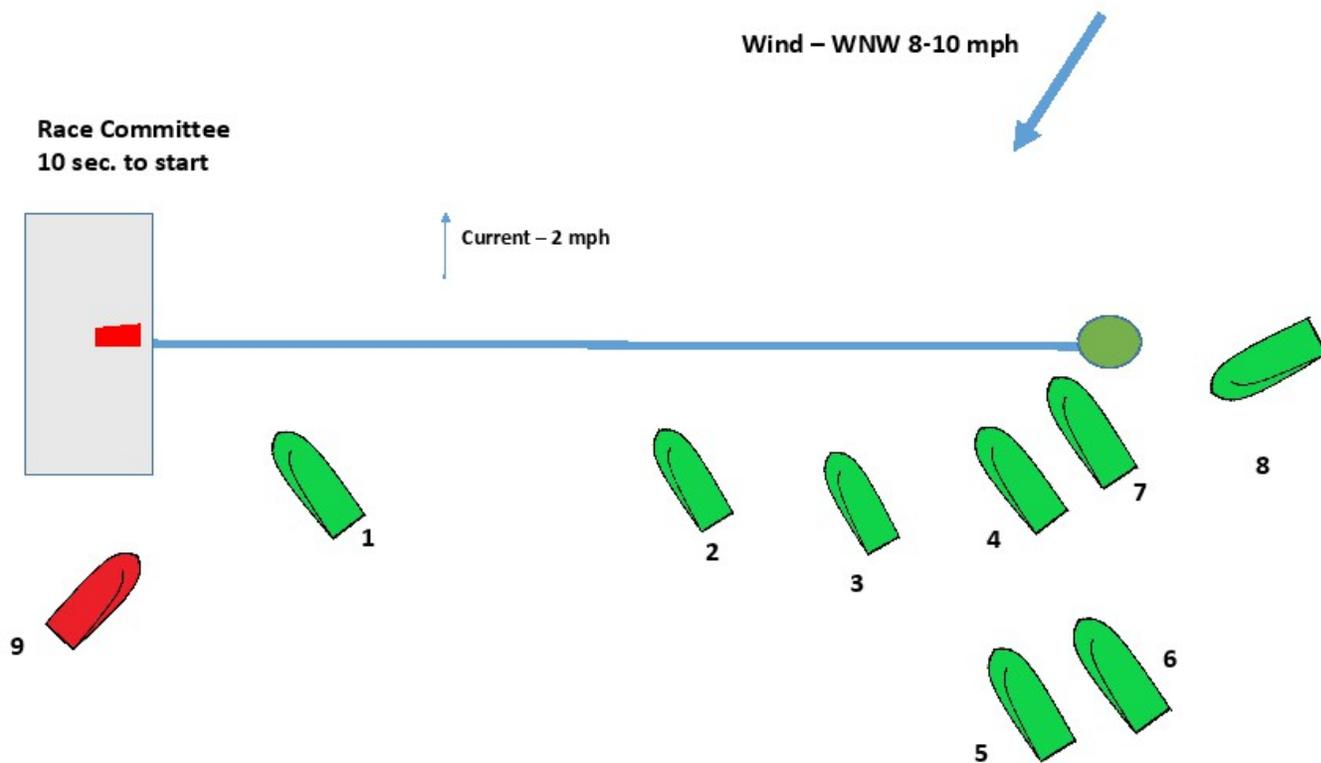
more comfortable as the season progresses and before you know you are fighting it out with the experts on the starting line.

So what happens when you get a bad start. You misjudged the current or you got tangled with another boat, or you were late for the start. It happens to all of us. There's no reason to panic (yet) and you should do your best to work your way out of a bad situation. Like a good jazz musician, you improvise. You may need to tack over to get clean air, or head to the best side of the course. The silver-lining is that you can judge the puffs better with all those other boats in front of you. Stay calm and only curse under your breath. Make some good decisions and slowly work your way up the fleet with smart sailing and good boatsmanship. Clawing your way back to 3rd or 4th can feel as good as winning a race (not really, but close!). Anyway, we are out there in part to enjoy the art of sailing, good camaraderie and good stories after the race is over. Have a good race!

There are some great websites and videos to help you out too, here are a couple:

<http://www.czajka.at/html/en/prestart.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EexmOSXx6xo>



Here is a Tuesday night start with a typical wind from the WNW at 8-10 mph and a 2 mph current. The starboard end is slightly favored so boats are beginning to bunch up at the pin end. There are 10 seconds to the start. Boat 1 is too close to the RC and needs to be careful that they do not hit the RC and get a DSQ. Boats 2, 3, and 4 are setting up pretty well and have some maneuvering room to leeward if they need it. They should be able to cross the line at the horn at full speed. Boats 5 and 6 are playing it too safe and are sailing in dirty air behind the line. They should tack to port once they cross the line to get clean air and boat speed. Boat 7 is at the favored end but maybe too close to the line (at 10 seconds) and nowhere to go. Boat 8 is barging and should tack around and come back onto the line. Boat 9 didn't get the memo and is trying to start on port, which is very problematic.

Racing Report

Jeff Eastes, Race Captain

It's April - let the racing begin.

With Spring Series starting this month, 4/24 Tuesday and 4/26 Thursday, it's time for Fleet Captains to organize their Race Committee (RC) responsibilities. Because of our volunteers, SYSCO has a strong reputation for putting on great races. Each fleet will have a minimum of 3 RC dates, one each series, throughout the season. RC is a critical part of having a successful evening of racing on the Columbia River. Fleet Captains need to get a platform boat, designate a PRO, get 6-8 volunteers from your fleet, set the course, run and record finishes. It's a great opportunity for new or veteran sailors/racers to view an evening of racing from a different perspective. There are a number of resources to help fleets be successful; Race Coordinators, Dennis Damore Tuesday and Randy Poff Thursday; SYSCO Backup PRO Assistants, OCSA, and SYSCO instructions, SYSCO Race Clinic April 12th, and Fleet/Race Captains and Pancho training April 14th. Fleet Captains please take advantage of these resources if needed as you organize your fleet's Race Committee. Thanks in advance for volunteering for Race Committee duties.

I reviewed some of the race comments from last year's April newsletter and felt they were worthy of mentioning again as we kick off the 2018 racing season.

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. In the Spring Series, our skills could be a little rusty, the wind shifty and the current strong, which always requires good concentration and full knowledge of the starting rules and regulations. 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. A great review of the starting procedures will be given in the SYSCO Race Clinic on April 12. This is open to all sailors and especially helpful to new and beginning racers. Once you feel you have a good understanding of the rules you should be ready to race. Here are some important points to keep in mind.

1. The OCSA race courses are by letter or by course description listing OCSA marks individually. These are shown on pg. 62-63 of the 2018 OCSA Race Book. Remember, a rule change 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 or Northwest 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 for an upwind start but because of drift, wind changes, or anchoring difficulties, this may not happen.
5. Sail by the RC well 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 display a course board that lists, by pennant, the race course for that pennant. 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 that a boat can receive an automatic DSQ if you hit the RC boat (not its anchor line). This keeps our volunteer RC equipment and boats out of harm's way and keeps the RC on task for sending the fleets off to a good start. Be sure to know your fleet flag/pennant as the races will start in 5-minute sequences beginning at a set time (around 6:30 pm for Spring Series). An excellent visual review of Starting Procedures and rules are given on the syscosailing.org website.

8. Remember to stay clear of the Starting Box once the first start sequence has started until your fleet's pennant and sequence (Sailing Instructions 11.4). This gives the fleets starting a clear and safe starting area.

I hope these reminders have been helpful as we start 2018 racing series.

One additional note or comment from Craig Daniels is on SAFETY and barge traffic. I need to remind SYSCO members that commercial traffic (e.g. barges) have the right of way on the Columbia River. When a barge sounds his horn, it's for our SAFETY. A 3 horn blast means it's time to get clear of the barge's path, a SAFETY warning, 17.2). A 5 horn blast means "Commercial traffic that signals 5 horns has indicated that a vessel is interfering." The RC may score a DSQ for a boat violating these rules without a hearing. Safety Regulations 17.1). SAFETY is the intent of the horn blast. SAFETY is more important than WINNING the AMERICA'S CUP on the Columbia.

Important Date to remember;

- April 12th SYSCO Race Clinic, OSU Food Innovation Center, 1207 Naito Parkway, 6:30 pm
- April 14th Fleet/Race Captain and Pancho training. 10:00-Noon McCuddy's Marina, Marine Dr.
- April 21st SYSCO COB Challenge
- April 24th and 26th Spring Series starts

Please join OCSA and SYSCO, and register for the SYSCO races.



Barge running down river. Photo courtesy of Michael Morrissey.

March 2018 SYSCO Board Minutes

Gary Bruner

The meeting was held at Elmer's Delta Park. Present were: Commodore Michael Morrissey, Treasurer Scott Stevenson, Rear Commodore Bruce Newton, Denny Damore, Warren Dalby, Thomas MacMenamy, Mike Daly, Tod Bassham, Jan Burkhart, Naomi Reichmann and Gary Bruner.

Membership Report

Chair Jan Burkhart announced that SYSCO now has 95 members, including 10 associate memberships. The board voted to accept memberships from 3 new families: Cathy and Ron Hodgson with a Cat 31, "Flo", David and Karen Shepardson with an Ericson 33, "Margaret", and Mike Fitzhugh with a Martin 241, "Surge". Welcome to SYSCO! Jan reported that there are a total of 27 skippers who raced last spring who have not paid dues to SYSCO yet this season. She will enlist fleet captains to help remind these sailors, and Jan will reach out to them as well. SYSCO is somewhat behind projections on memberships, but it is hoped that folks will sign up soon, as racing is soon to commence!

Financial Report

Scott reported that the club has 5,342.94 in its checking account and \$3,690.75 in savings, which is the "Pancho Reserve" account. Nearly all bills that have come in have been paid, including Pancho moorage for the season. Outstanding expenses remaining include upcoming dry storage monthly payments, meetings and BBQs, banquet expenses and, primarily trophies for the end of the season. \$6,000 is currently budgeted for this item alone.

Racing

Jeff Eastes was not present but sent a brief report which was read by Michael. The first SYSCO race of the season will be the COB (crew overboard) race to be held on Saturday, April 21. There was discussion about a possible rewrite of the Sailing Instructions to mandate that the downwind leg drill be conducted after the spinnaker has been hoisted. That change would be made in time to notify skippers before emails are sent with boats' start times since it's a pursuit start. Tod Bassham has volunteered his boat, Chinook, to serve as the RC platform. Jeff Eastes will organize the RC. Spring Series starts on Tuesday, April 24.

Pancho

Thomas MacMenamy reported that Pancho has been given a number of significant repairs, including 7 holes in the hull, likely a result of the underwater logs that support the docks at McCuddy's where the boat is stored. Thomas also reported that the center console is getting quite loose, due to rotted wood which connects it to the hull. Thomas suggested that SYSCO start looking for a much needed replacement vessel, possibly an aluminum hulled work boat around 18' long. Thomas volunteered to take the lead of a small committee to shop around to see what might be available for next season. The tune up of the 40 hp Yamaha engine at Pacific Boatland is complete, and Pancho is scheduled to splash next week. Saturday, April 14 at 10 AM at McCuddy's B-28 is the Pancho 'clinic' to teach people who may serve as race committee volunteers (most of us) the ins and outs of Pancho, its engine, and mark deployment and retrieval. Jeff will contact Randy Poff to see if he's available to teach that lesson.

Race Clinic

Thursday, April 12 is the date for the SYSCO Race Clinic, this year in a completely new venue, the 2nd floor of the OSU Food Innovation Center at 1207 Naito Parkway in Portland, where there is ample FREE parking! Jan will contact all new members to make sure they know about this event which new racers will find invaluable.

Newsletter/Social Media and Other Business

Editor Jacqueline Pitter was again commended for great work on the newsletter. Historian Bill Sanborn will do a write up on the very successful SYSCO 40th Anniversary Reunion held a couple of weeks ago. Thomas will ask at PYC for any good photos of that event. It is hoped that we will soon get the 3rd and final installment from Kris Amundson about his R2AK adventure last June. Jan suggested that SYSCO include an article about the OCSA Safety Regulations required of boats racing on the river, and that we include the Coast Guard Safety Regs for any boats using the river. Bruce Newton will take the lead on that article.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted for Secretary Don Woodhouse by Gary Bruner