

APRIL 2022

FROM THE FRONT
SAILING — THE CURE
FOR TECHNOLOGY
OVERLOAD

FROM THE REAR
GETTING TO KNOW
... BILL BRENNAN

RACE REPORT
HOW ARE YOU
DOING SAILING-
WISE?

MEMBERSHIP
CHAIR REPORT



SMALL YACHT SAILING CLUB OF OREGON

STARTING LINE



Nelly expresses all of our hopes and prayers

Sailing—the Cure for Technology Overload?

Lately, our dedicated web volunteers have been wrestling with SYSCO website issues—disappearing websites, emails not being redirected, general wonkiness and little help from our web host (to the point we are switching hosts). I'm glad we have folks with tech experience to handle all this, otherwise I'd have pulled all my hair out by now.

This recent glitch led me to thinking about how sailing can be a comforting respite from our busy tech-laden lives. Yes, you can have high tech boats that basically sail themselves, but the underlaying mechanics of sailing really hasn't changed much in hundreds of years. Not much has changed since the invention of sails that produce lift replaced square-riggers. Yes, there are thousands of tech items you can buy for your boat, but you can also still jump in a basic dinghy and have a blast.

I think a lot of folks that have tech-based jobs tend gravitate to sailing because of the relative simplicity of sailing. You can shut off the motor, put away your phone, and just focus on catching the wind—a connection sailors have going back thousands of years.

I heard an interview a while back where a woman compared her job as a graphic designer to her hobby of fly-fishing. She explained that it is extremely hard to master her vocation because the tools are constantly changing, and she has to spend so much time re-learning the tools of her trade every time there is an upgrade (now where did that save button go in Windows 11??). Compare that to fly fishing, which really hasn't changed much in hundreds of years. *Because she doesn't have to constantly relearn how to use her tools, she has the time to continually hone her fishing skills.*

I think that goes for sailing as well. We know where the halyards, sheets, and winches are and what they do-- so we can focus on getting the trim just right to squeeze that extra half-knot out of the boat. The rules haven't really changed much so we can confidently apply them for racing strategy. Imagine trying to play chess if the pieces are constantly re-arranged and their movements change each year!

FROM THE FRONT

GREGG BRYDEN – COMMODORE



Crew overboard drill on the Nile.

Sure, technology has its place-- I don't want to go back to the bad old days of polio and pollution. However, sometimes it's good to put all our "advancements" aside and enjoy a sport that connects directly back to the Egyptians plying the Nile 3,000 years BC. So, get out there and **Sail Like an Egyptian!**

Fair Winds and Clean Starts!

Gregg Bryden

Getting to Know . . . Bill Brennan

Anna: What have you been up to? We haven't seen you on the river in ages. You were a fixture when I got involved in 2006.

Bill: I sold all of my boats and gave away all my equipment, and I don't have a garage anymore to work in. I've been helping out at a health retreat on the Washougal River.

I stayed there once on a ten-day program—three days of juice fasting. I got down to a hundred-and-twenty-five pounds and they told me I'd better get back on a regular diet. I loved the place

and the people so much I didn't want to leave, and I just started helping out. It's really neat when you work with people and help them to overcome some issues or fix some of their physical problems. It's not as exciting as racing, but it's good for the heart. I miss racing. It was such a big part of my life. I loved working with boats and fixing stuff.



Anna: Clearly you like to help people.

Bill: When a tree fell on Bad Habit, Charlie McDonald said she would never sail again. I told Carrie and Todd that it wouldn't be cheap, but I could fix it. The boat had been stored in the off-season on a trailer up next to our place on Skyline Road, and there was a big storm that came that through and a tree came



Bill Brennan driving Lipstick with Todd Boire trimming. Photo by Dena Kent

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE

down on it. It broke the cabin top, smashed all the starboard windows, the keel got bent. Bent the mast, inverted the hull on one of the trailer pads. The deck joint for the whole 13 feet was ripped open. It was a feat to get her back into sailing shape, but look at her today - she's perfect.

Anna: How did you get into sailing?

Bill: I dunno, I just decided I wanted a sailboat. I had never sailed before. I thought I wanted a swing keel because I didn't want to moor it. I was looking for a Cal-21, and I stopped in at a boat brokerage. The owner told me what I really should be looking for was a Cal-20. So Warner Bittner walked in and asked me if I wanted to go for a sail. My wife was there and we were both dressed up in professional clothing, but we went anyway. I had a little bit of background on how to sail because I had read up a little bit. It was blowing 25. And I thought, going up the river with the wind behind us, that was kind of boring. But coming back, beating into the wind, that was really fun! I was riding motorcycle trials at the time (that's what kind of an adrenaline junkie I was) and I found a used Lido for sale. I took it out on Lacamas Lake in 15 knots of breeze and I really caught the bug. I met some people in the Ranger 22 Fleet. They had seven or maybe ten boats. I liked the One-Design aspect—competition you could see very clearly. I started racing with John Lefors on his Ranger 22. We took off to do the 6-Pack (just the two of us) and at St. Helens the wind kicked up like it usually does. The winches were under water. Neither of us knew much about sail trim. I wondered, What do I have to do to keep the boat a little more flat? So I learned a few things about spilling power using the vang. Neither of us knew much, but we beat everybody. Pulled off two bullets in two days. We had two bay races in Astoria (in the bay we were absolutely planing!) and two races back upriver. To make a long story short, we won the 6-Pack, and we learned a lot.

Anna: Did you race all the time with just two guys on the Ranger 22?

Bill: The problem with having three people in the boat is, the other guy just gets in my way. John drove and worked the traveler, and I did everything else. We made a great team.



Hard to believe you can cut the transom out like that and the boat still floats! Photo by Dena Kent

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA – REAR COMMODORE

Anna: What did you do during your non-sailing hours?

Bill: I drove a concrete truck for Avis Ready-mix. I hung out at a boat brokerage and went sailing on a bunch of different boats. One three- or four-day weekend we took a 34-footer up the river to Washougal. Jim Kenton really got me into racing. I wound up buying a Ranger 22 – she went to weather really well. I lived on that boat. When I wasn't driving a truck, I was sailing that boat. I helped build that fleet to ten to twelve boats. They stopped making the Ranger 22. We would find one for one for sale and then get the Iversons to bring it into town, and then we would beat the rush – we took people out so they could see what the boat was all about. You know, you can take any boat on the ocean... depends on the degree of suffering you want to endure. That fleet had an amazing camaraderie – more like a family than anything else. Some people are never going to win. They just want to be part of a fun group.

Anna: How did you move on from a Ranger 22 to racing a Martin 24?

Bill: the first time I saw Martin I said, That's the boat I want. Jack Fossett had one but he didn't take very good care of it. There was six inches of water inside. We convinced Jack to sell it to us. The boat cost \$3000. Phyllis, my wife and I, sailed it the rest of the season. You could put your thumb through the mainsail. At the time I was working at a boatyard on Whidbey Island. I told Phyllis to take the sail into Dale (Banks Sails) and get it repaired. Dale said to take that sail and bury it in the backyard!



Wild Willy in front in the PYC Grand Prix Regatta in 2009. Some skippers feel that putting on major backstay (Kermit, in second position) spills excess wind when it's blowing too hard to keep the boat reasonably flat. Bill says you

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE

Then we put the Martin 242s and the 241s together. The 242 is faster in heavier air and lumpy seas. The 241 does better in light puffy stuff. Has a hard chine to the hull, flat bottom and wide transom, bigger cockpit. She has more stability downwind.

Anna: I have heard the stories of how you modified so many of the Martins.

Bill: I didn't want to be in a fleet with tight restrictions and rules on modifications. We as a fleet agreed that if you did something that made the boat go faster, you couldn't keep it a secret. If it was beyond the capabilities of the skipper, I did it for them. Karen Anderson, Mary Ann Thompson... (Dragonfly, Bad Habit, Wild Women) They did n't know the first thing about boat maintenance. We grew that fleet to eight or nine boats. I have a picture of five of them in my yard. Somebody dedicated, and a good boat. That's what you wind up with.

Anna: So then you changed the mainsail shape. And the whole fleet followed!

Bill: Kevin McAllister, he decided he was gonna be my buddy. He had a real contemplative mind. He understood heights and depth of sails, and that a sail was more like a wing. I wanted Dale to build me a square-topped main. I shortened the boom to thirteen feet. The Martins have a thirty- or thirty-one-foot mast. We couldn't drive in heavy air. I thought I could give away some sail area on the bottom and add it to the top. But Dale wouldn't build it. So I went up north and had it built. Shortening the foot makes the sail more like a wing. Upwind, racing on the Columbia, it was really an improvement. He called me "The Boat Butcher". Then we went to Whidbey and I asked Dale again to make me this sail. He finally agreed. We had both speed and climbing ability over the whole fleet.



Mr. Bill repairing Wild Women. Still loves the sound of the drill. March 2022.

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE



Lipstick on the run

Anna: Well, I have sailed on several 241s with this big roachy main, and seen few masts busted! Don't you think you went too far?

Bill: No.

George Brown, he would always push it in heavy wind. He broke his mast four times. I had enough spare pieces of masts around, I could make a sleeve. By the time Friday came around, George was back, racing in the Beercan.

Anna: I was on George Brown's boat, Skookum Too, when we lost the rudder. He said, "Gee, this tiller seems kinda loose..." and then he pulled the wooden tiller right off the rudder post. It was like watching a Keystone Cops movie. He said, "Oh, that's not good." A second later the rudder became dislodged and went straight to the bottom of the river. George is just an un-flappable sailor... So then you moved on from Martin 24s to Venture 21s.

Bill: Todd and I bought a Venture together. We dragged it home from St. Helens. Lipstick. It pops up on a plane really nicely, but you don't even feel it. You just start passing people. Sixteen knots up to the mid-twenties. That is the most stable boat downriver. Spoon bow, goes over the top of the wave instead of digging in. Wonderful boat. I bailed, and the fleet stopped growing.



Dragonfly and Skookum Too, neck and neck. Notice how far back the rudder is—another famous Bill Brennan modification adopted by most of the fleet. Makes the boat turn on a dime. -

Photo by Dena Kent

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE

I retired from racing, mostly due to back pain. I do miss sailing and being on the river. I've sailed enough for two or three people. I had to stop working on boats because I had trouble breathing. I was winded just walking up and down stairs, so I went to see a lung specialist. He asked me what I spent my days doing, and I told him I worked with fiberglass. He said "You can keep doing what you're doing, but you're going to die." Fiberglass dust - it's just impossible to get rid of it. So I gave away all of my equipment and quit working on boats.

So now I live at a health retreat called Thy Healing Ways. It's a faith-based ministry, not advertised, it's pretty much word of mouth. It's amazing. I live in a cabin on the Washougal river. I make smoothies for folks out of organic fruit and wheatgrass. Wheat grass is the best thing you can put in your body. I feel great! I just love helping people. Things haven't changed too much.



Wild Women is a Martin 242. Note the absence of the hard chine. Bill never got around to cutting the transom out of this boat. Photo by Dena Kent

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE



Rocinante is the new Dragonfly. This is a good illustration of the hard chine and the sexy cut-away transom, courtesy of Bill Brennan. Rocinante is for sale—if you want to get into a Martin 241, call Jacqueline Pitter! She and Kelly would rather focus their attention on Thunder Pig (Ranger 20) than tilt at windmills - Photo by Anna Campagna

Anna Campagna

Rear Commodore

How Are You Doing Sailing-Wise?

When I was in my late twenties and early thirties, I began to think about the word “wisdom” and realized I really didn’t understand its meaning. I knew that wisdom wasn’t synonymous with “smart,” but I really couldn’t put my finger on what it meant. I didn’t have a lot of time to think about it because my life was full of school, chasing advanced degrees, and then kids and work and, and, and ... But then again in my mid to late forties as I was managing a group of smart folks in their early twenties who were software designers and programmers, graphic designers, and writers, I had the opportunity to observe the personal life, career, and even daily work related choices they were making and think about wisdom again. Their choices ranged, as you can imagine, from very smart to the very not-smart, but they all had in common a sort of a short range view of the inputs and outputs of their decisions. They so often never looked too far ahead.

What was astonishing to me was that I routinely could see, especially for the work related choices since I was their manager, a kind of holistic or big picture view of where these choices would take these folks. And then one day I realized that what I was seeing or understanding about these situations was a type of business and life wisdom. Without consciously trying, I had somehow gained a modicum of actual wisdom. The distinction between being smart and being wise was finally beginning to make sense.

Sailboat racing requires both sailing smarts and sailing wisdom. Why? Because the two are the opposite sides



Breakaway in the SYSCO COB Challenge - Photo by Michelle Bennett

RACING REPORT

DENNY DAMORE— RACE CAPTAIN

of the same coin – the winner's coin. You cannot be a consistent winner if either one is lacking. If you don't know how to trim a mainsail, i.e., you're light on trim smartness, having all the sailing wisdom in the world won't make you go fast. Likewise, if you are sail trim smart and can identify with just a glance whether the headsail draft is back too far by as little as 5%, but then you routinely put yourself in a place where you are stuck making snap, unproductive tactical or strategic decisions, i.e., you lack consistent sailing wisdom, you will be routinely going fast in the wrong direction and will just as routinely finish out of the money.

If you accept my premise that you need both, how do you get them? The smart part is easier. There are books, websites, YouTube videos, seminars and a host of other resources to teach you the fundamentals and then the nuances of trim, tactics, and strategies. The wisdom part is harder. Why? It's because the nature of wisdom requires that a person integrate and combine experiences over time. Sort of like letting Nonna's Sunday gravy recipe simmer on the stove for hours that turns the liquid of just canned tomato sauce and paste to this rich, savory Italian sauce that makes the ravioli sing. For the pasta sauce, you read a recipe, make it a couple of dozen times, and, bada bing, you feel like Clemenza when they went to the mattresses in the Godfather. Sailing wisdom, on



Misty preparing for COB - Photo by Michelle Bennett

RACING REPORT

DENNY DAMORE— RACE CAPTAIN

the other hand, is not so easy to train on even if you watch the movie *Wind* a hundred times.

Where do you start? Obviously, time on the water is essential. You don't gain sailing wisdom by going out only a couple of times a month when the sun is shining. That's one reason why the SYSCO three evening series in the summer is so great. It is 19 weeks of sailing. Each week builds on the previous week of racing, and if you go out on a few weekends to practice, well, now you're layering experiences just like adding some oregano, basil, and thyme to the sauce. If you want to kick it up a notch, so to speak, do Sailing on Sundays through the winter when non-participants atrophy their sailing muscles and their sailing wisdom regresses. That's 22 additional weekends of gaining new experiences to add richness to your wisdom sailing recipe.

But just like simply getting old doesn't mean one gains wisdom, just going out there doesn't mean that you are becoming wise because you made it around the racecourse a bunch of times. In life, I believe, we gain wisdom, in part, by looking in the mirror with truth seeking eyes. If we're not honest with ourselves as we make life choices, we gain nothing from the decision-consequence cycles we all face every day. Likewise, one has to be self-critical about the day's sailing. Review your performance during the race, note the mistakes, make adjustments, mentally catalog them for the future. Do a post-race discussion with the crew. Be proactive before the next race to remind yourself and your crew what worked and what didn't. The goal is to build wisdom by building clear objective memories that form a foundation for the sailing wisdom to sit upon.

The second pillar in this wisdom building process is to consider what is important for overall success. This means that before, during, and after the race, as you have or had race choices to make, you ask yourself, "What is important now and what will be important later?" Another way to think about it is, "What is the immediate picture and what is the big picture?" Train yourself to think about both levels of importance. On the upwind leg, note what side of the course is getting the breeze more consistently. That observation is not important now, but it will be shortly. Then, on the turn to downwind, whether bear away or gybe set, you are on the right side of the course. Another example, before the start given the competition as well as the wind, waves, and current, ask yourself whether it is more important in either the short run or long one to be a few boat lengths to leeward down the line in clear air than to fight for the pin? Either could be right. While it seems like that decision is only, or is primarily, of immediate importance, it really could have long term consequences in the race if you are pushed OCS or have to do turns because of a protest.

RACING REPORT

DENNY DAMORE— RACE CAPTAIN

I could go on. But note that in these examples, either choice could be the right one depending on the circumstances. The goal is to manage the immediate importance verses the big picture importance, balance those competing interests, catalog the results, and then return to that catalog for future decisions. In the heat of the battle that process is often hard. But using the idea of relative importance as a yardstick for your decisions, and then measuring and reflecting on the results becomes a clean, straightforward training method for you to build sailing wisdom irrespective of whether, at the time, you realize it or not.

With more time and more cycles, and the more that you look at you and your team in your sailing mirror with clear eyes and an honest desire to understand the outcomes of your race choices, you'll begin to recognize that the visage looking back at you with all those aging sailing wrinkles is not just the consequences of sun, wind, and age on your skin, but rather the tangible evidence that your growing sailing wisdom is changing the way you look at yourself, your competition, and each race. You will see yourself building a storehouse of knowledge and understanding from your successes and failures. You will become, most assuredly, sailing-wise.

See you on the river,

Denny Damore

Race Captain



Rangers Heading for the start - what boat is making that bold move to port-tack the entire fleet? - Photo by Anna Campagna

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

CARISA BOHUS – MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

SYSCO Membership April 2022

Carisa Bohus

If you need to RENEW, do it now! Here is the link: [Link to renew or join](#)

In other important Racing Responsibilities- keep an ear out for your chosen volunteer task! If you hear about the Picnic coming up and you are on any kind of party committee, watch your email for the dates to be there for your club. You can reach out, too. Write the Race Captain, or the Commodore, and offer some help!

Next big ask: SYSCO Picnic! This takes serious effort! Clear the dates now, enjoy it twice! One serving and one relaxing, playing BINGO and learning about your sailing pals!

Have MS Excel and Access? Want to help out with some Membership lists? Write me: membership at syscosailing.org

Carisa Bohus
Membership Chair



Become a SYSCO member if you haven't already! Cin-cin!

SYSCO BOARD MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 4, 2022

Attendees: Gregg Bryden, Scott Stevenson, Cheryl Watson, Rick Samuels, Jan Burkhart, Denny Damore, Bruce Newton, Michael Morrissey, Carisa Bohus, Darren Knittle, Mark Salholm, Michelle Bennett (5:45), Anna Campagna (6:00) and Sloan Kimball.

Absent: Melissa Cearlock, Phillip Martindale, Don Schultz, Dennis Burkhart, Katie Braun,

Call to Order: This meeting was called to order electronically via Zoom at 5:33 pm.

1. Commodore's Opening Remarks

- a. **Race Clinic** – The SYSCO Race Clinic is ON for the 14th at Willamette Sailing Club. This will include the normal items as well as basic racing rules, geared primarily to new sailors.
- b. **SYSCO COB race** – needs a committee and platform boat. Signup is just like other races.
- c. **Trophies** – Gregg taking winners out to lunch rather than an event. Rest of them will go out at summer BBQs.
- d. **Website** – Transition is done, have domain reserved for next 7 years. We are having some email challenges, no SYSCO emails/redirects are working – expect resolution soon.

2. Membership Report

- a. **Membership** – 71 Regular and 10 Associates – 81 Members. As of now.
- b. **New Members** – Douglas Agnew, Junkyard Dog, Cruising Fleet – **approved** - unanimous
- c. **Picnic** - Leadership recruiting is happening

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. **Balances** – Checking Balance \$7,093.71. Reserve Balance \$13,868.72. Total Cash \$20,962.43

4. Race Captain's report:

- a. Cal 20 fleet is set up as first race committee. Phillip is on point for first Thursday night.
- b. Lots of registering happening – looks like great first series participation.

SYSCO BOARD MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 4, 2022

- c. Pancho is splashed and happy – flags and marks are in good shape

5. Fleet Reports

- Fleet 1 – J-105, Melges 24 – Doug Schenk
 - No report
- Fleet 2 – PHRF A & B – Open
 - No report
- Fleet 3 – PHRF C, D and Level – Tom MacMenemy.
 - No report
- Fleet 4 – Martin 24 – David Paul
 - No report
- Fleet 5 – Merit 25 – Michael Morrissey and Bruce Newton
 - Looking good
 - would like 2 starts for summer series
- Fleet 6 – J24 – Anna Campagna
 - No news
- Fleet 7 – Cal 20 – Cheryl Watson
 - Looking good.
- Fleet 8 – Ranger 20 – Jacky
 - National's hosting is on track
 - Boats are hitting the water and things look good for the season
- Fleet 9 – Catalina 22, Venture 21 – Katie Braun
 - 3 Ventures and possibly 2 more by summer
- Fleet 10 – Cruising Smaller Boats – Mark Salholm
 - Have 10 but expect several more as late registrations.
 - Assigned to second week for race committee.

6. Other Business –

- a. Newsletter always needs pictures and article writers. Please reach out.
- b. Michelle reminded us that the PYC Sailor's Dinner is this Friday 8 April open to all but must make reservations by phone.

7. Adjourned at 6:20

SYSKO BOARD MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 4, 2022

Respectfully submitted –

Sloan Kimball

SYSKO Secretary



Preparing for the first race of the Spring series