



The Portlight



Commodore's Corner – July 2016

The season is screaming along. It seems like the spring was not kind to us from a weather and sailing perspective. We only got Silent Running out 3 times before we sailed south for the rendezvous. In prior seasons, we would have been out at least a dozen times by the end of June. I know many others had similar experiences, so I am very hopeful that the remainder of the season is better.

The Chesapeake Bay Hunter Rendezvous was held Spring Cove Marina in Solomons during the last weekend of June. Fifteen members of NSHSA made the trip. A strong west wind on Wednesday made for a great sail from Middle River all the way to Cove Point. It took Silent Running 10 hours with reefed sails most of the way. I would rather not talk about the return trip on Sunday...

There were many interesting topics presented by a wide array of speakers; including PAX NAS operations, the health of the Bay by CBF, what we look like to large ships by the Association of Maryland Pilots, In-mast furling systems and sail care, Understanding and using your boat's electronics by Raymarine, Boat interiors and canvas by Patuxent River Canvas and a presentation about War on the Chesapeake during the war of 1812. In addition to the presentations, there were cruisers forums, firefighting and flare demos, Safety inspections and the ability to have representatives from Raymarine look at your instrumentation on your boat. The program concluded with the Keynote Speaker, Melanie Neale, author of Boat Girl and Boat Kid.

Many of us remember Bob Holmes, a longtime member of NSHSA who sailed *Seabreeze* for many years before needing to go to the dark side when he could no longer manage the physical requirements of sailing. Bob passed away in April at the age of 90. He was a WWII Navy veteran, who served on the diesel submarine USS Seahorse in the Pacific. There will be a Navy Honor Guard ceremony on July 23rd to remember Bob and other veterans. It will be held at Cutter Marina at 13:00. I would encourage everyone to attend.

The schedule for the rest of the season has a few opportunities to host an event. While we have been able to schedule something each month so far, August currently has nothing scheduled. Please consider volunteering to host or help host something. If you have an idea, please just let any officer know and we can help to get it started. We have had a few impromptu raft-ups so far this season. These are an excellent example of how the club can work. It starts with a simple email to the membership mail list (membership@nhsa.org) saying when and where and inviting anyone to come. Remember, any member can send an email to the mail list, not just the officers or webmaster.

Please check out the [schedule on the website](#) for the most up to date list of activities! We always try to have at least one organized activity per month during the season.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone on the Bay this summer!

Bill

Secretary's Report

6.30.2016

Congratulations to the Rendezvous Committee for putting together a great first meeting. We left well-informed and enjoyed the entire weekend!

For this issue I thought I would write on an environmental topic that, for years, has plagued those of us who rely on the Bay. Over the years, I have seen little mention about the tens of thousands of gallons of wastewater released by our city and county systems during storms and system breakdowns. During this time, proposals have floated around in Annapolis about significantly increasing fines for boaters who release waste into the bay, yet the environmental issues caused by the municipal systems are being ignored. While no waste should ever contribute to the decline of the Bay's health, I proposed to my local State Senator that the projected increase in boater fines would be appropriate only if a similar per-gallon fine was levied on the city/county. The issue was later tabled. I was particularly aggravated recently when an article gave the Baltimore Harbor Water a failing grade, primarily due to the failure of the city's sewer systems and a 10-mile sewage backup. Plans for fixing this issue are not to be completed until 2020. A long time IF it stays on schedule ;-)

I have included the article below and would encourage you to read it as it gives some of the reasons why our precious natural resource may not be up to the standards that we would like it to be for our children and/or grandchildren to enjoy in the future. As a result of the article, I wrote the Governor of Maryland to see if he could use his influence to expedite the solution. To my surprise, I received a letter back from Ben Grumbles, Maryland Secretary of the Environment, on behalf of the Governor. I have attached the letter as it describes some of the complexities in completing the project, as well as some of the items that have already been completed. I have also attached a spreadsheet of YTD Sewage Overflows reported within the State of MD.... 32,191,963 gallons!!!

I would encourage all of you to contact your local official(s) if you have issues of concern. Your voice is important to our elected and appointed officials! Hopefully we will see continued improvement in the water quality and overall health of the Bay!

Baltimore harbor water quality again gets failing grade, casting cloud over 2020 swimmable goal

May 8, 2016, 10:00pm EDT Updated May 8, 2016, 10:03pm EDT

Joshua Gordon Reporter Baltimore Business Journal

There is a lot of work being done to try and make Baltimore's harbor swimmable and fishable by 2020, but even more will have to happen if that goal has any chance of being met.

The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore on Monday will release the 2015 Healthy Harbor Report Card, once again rating the overall health of the harbor as F.

High levels of fecal bacteria, nitrogen pollution and low water clarity were cited as primary causes of the poor score. This is [the third consecutive year](#) the harbor has been rated an F following a change in the way the data was collected for the first two years of the Healthy Harbor initiative.

"It is definitely still achievable, but a lot more work has to be done," said [Adam Lindquist](#), director of the Healthy Harbor initiative for the Waterfront Partnership, in response to if the 2020 goal is still realistic.

The health of the harbor itself and the tidal Patapsco River saw a decline from the 2014 report while the Gwynns Falls and the Jones Falls both saw slight improvements. The Gwynns Falls once again had the top grade with a D, up from a D- last year.

In partnership with Blue Water Baltimore, the study tracks the levels of fecal bacteria, algae, total nitrogen and phosphorus, water clarity and dissolved oxygen. Blue Water Baltimore samples every week for six months out of the year starting in the spring, alternating between the streams and the tidal area.

"With three years of data this is the baseline of the Baltimore harbor and the health of our streams and harbor right now," Lindquist said. "To get to 2020, we will need to see a significant increase in what is being done and see more innovation and support from the public."

Halfway through the study that began in 2010, Lindquist said the biggest detriment to the health of the harbor continues to be the fecal bacteria level. Sewage from the city's pipes are overflowing into the streams, forcing the water to be unsafe to swim in.

The most crucial aspect of the sewage issue is a misalignment of pipes from the Jones Falls Expressway east to the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant. The misalignment causes a permanent backup of sewage in the 10-mile area, with the issue being worsened when it rains. Lindquist said the city in the process of negotiating a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency and hopes to have a bigger tank and pump in by 2020 to help alleviate the problem.

"The (Department of Public Works) thinks they can get this done by 2020 and we think it will have a significant impact on the amount of sewage that ends up in the Baltimore harbor," he said.

Other initiatives have been implemented to help improve the health of the harbor. Fundraising continues for another water wheel in Canton as Lindquist said the Waterfront Partnership hopes to have the \$550,000 project funded and built by the end of the year. [A \\$200,000 donation](#) by the Maryland Port Administration brought the project up to 80 percent funded last month.

The Great Baltimore Oyster Partnership also saw 150,000 baby oysters [planted in the harbor last October](#) that will be transplanted over the next two months to a protected sanctuary in the Patapsco River. Historically, there have been enough oysters to filter all the water in the Chesapeake Bay every three days, but dwindling oyster numbers

has made it so it takes a year to filter the same amount of water. The goal is to plant 5 million oysters in the river by 2020.

More programs will be instituted going forward as Lindquist said by getting people to engage with the harbor it shows how much work is still needed to make it swimmable and fishable by 2020.

"A lot of people don't think of the harbor as a living, breathing ecosystem, but as a dead and toxic body of water," he said. "Do we wait for (the water) to be totally safe to invite people back or does the mere act of people interacting with the water influence decision makers to make the changes necessary?"



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd Rutherford
Lieutenant Governor
Ben Grumbles
Secretary

June 24, 2016

Dear Mr. Coppage:

Thank you for your email to Governor Larry Hogan regarding sanitary sewer discharges from Baltimore City's sanitary sewer system. The Governor received your email and asked me to respond on his behalf. The Maryland Department of the Environment (Department) shares your concerns regarding failing infrastructure and its very real impact on Marylanders and on the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

The City of Baltimore, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department has recently finalized modifications to the current Consent Decree after the City requested an extension of time to complete improvements to the sanitary sewer. On June 7, MDE held a public meeting to receive comments on the modifications of the Consent Decree. The comment period is open for 30 days. The following is the link to the proposed modified decree and information on how to submit comments: [http://www.n7de.maryland.gov/programs/Water/Compliance/Pages/consent decree info. aspx](http://www.n7de.maryland.gov/programs/Water/Compliance/Pages/consent%20decree%20info.aspx)

These improvements include but are not limited to; sewer line repair and replacement projects, sealing and replacing manholes, replacing and upsizing sewer pipes and sewer cleaning. To date, the City has eliminated sixty (60) engineered sewage overflow structures, upgraded the Jones Falls sewage pumping station, constructed a 20 million gallons per day sewage pumping station at Stony Run and developed and implemented a GIS and mapping database to collect information to better address the operation and maintenance and performance of the sewer system. While the City has completed work at the cost of over \$700 million, a sizeable portion of the work remains at a significant capital expense.

The pending consent decree modifications take into account the City's financial and logistical challenges while insisting on continued environmental progress as soon as possible. Please be assured that the Department remains committed to addressing needed improvements to sewage systems statewide through its regulatory and enforcement initiatives.

Thank you again for your email. The Governor appreciates hearing from you and, on his behalf, I thank you for your interest in this very important issue. If I may be further assistance, please contact me at 410-537-3084.

Purser:

De-Tox Your Boat

At the recent rendezvous we were fortunate to have a speaker from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Alice Christman. Her topic was "Health of the Chesapeake." Many of us know that the bay isn't what it used to be and others just know it needs help.

We can all do something and one area would be to use alternatives for toxic household products that we use on our boats. Many suggestions use products that are easily found on our boats and also cost considerably less than those found at boat supply stores.

For example:

Glass cleaner: 50/50 mixture of vinegar and water

All-purpose cleaners: 1 cup of baking soda in 1 gallon of hot water

Oven cleaners: apply a baking soda paste, let stand for 1 hour to overnight

If interested, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has a link to a poster that lists alternatives to toxic household products. The ideas are helpful for the boat and at home. It can be found at:

www.cbf.org/document.doc?id=37

Thanks for your part in "Saving a National Treasure"

Rendezvous Wrap-up

Seventy-two Hunter owners were delighted with the results of 16 months of preparation for the 2016 Hunter Chesapeake Bay Rendezvous in Solomons. From opening with a trio playing *Vintage Music* during desserts under the tent at Spring Cove Marina to closing with the sounds of the rock band *Wheelhouse* at the Calvert Marine Museum everyone had a good time, ate well and learned a lot.

Speakers and demonstrations were the heart of the Rendezvous, social activities its soul.

Sparked by feedback from previous rendezvous, the "Vous Crew" sought topics of broad interest. Use, state and history of the Bay; sail selection and trim; boat interiors; electronics; and a panel discussion dubbed "cruisers forum" were presented in the air conditioned Museum. The Rendezvous went outdoors for hands-on firefighting and flares exercises. The local Power Squadron performed Vessel Safety Checks while Raymarine's expert did onboard electronics checks.

One Simple Question gave a feel of what it is like to live aboard and hunt for icebergs in a 38-foot sailboat. It highlighted scientific observations about stewarding our environment. Before the movie with theater-style popcorn, the group donated half a pickup truck full of groceries to a local food pantry.

Professionally led Yoga and nautical craft activities added to the social interaction. Financial support from Marlow-Hunter, Nortons Yachts, and Thrivent Financial along with promotional materials and 40 door prizes from 18 sponsors gave the Rendezvous a special boost.

The keynote by Melanie Neale, author of *Boat Girl*, was preceded by the last of the Rendezvous' fine meals. Before the meal the Museum expanded the Rendezvous room to include the Museum Lobby and set up the dance floor and stage for the five-piece rock band. So cool. Live soft jazz during dinner and eclairs for dessert were a hit too.

The Rendezvous rocked!



Out of Area Reports

"Information's pretty thin stuff unless mixed with experience."

- Clarence Day

As most of you know by now, Rex and I have safely returned from our second trip to the Bahamas aboard Xtasea. A lot of folks have asked what, if anything, did we do differently this time. I'll try to give you some idea of the key areas where we experienced differences.

The ICW

It definitely was easier the second time around. Knowing what to expect was a great stress reliever. Having successfully made it all the way down the ICW from Portsmouth to Miami on our first trip, with only a few missteps, we had gained the necessary confidence to successfully navigate it again. We learned from our mistakes. We remembered the importance of staying mid-channel going down the Alligator Pungo River Canal. Yes, there are indeed stumps/logs along the edge that can grab you if you get too far over when a boat/barge passes.

We knew where the worst trouble spots were as far as shoaling. This trip we chose to avoid some of them altogether by going outside, BUT getting through the shoal areas is quite doable if you know where the deep water is and go on a rising mid to full tide. Listen on the VHF, talk to fellow boaters, and check Active Captain, etc. We also referred to the notes we made the last time and once again took advantage of Southport marina's nightly ICW talk where Hank provided detailed and very up to the minute information about the shoaling, complete with colored handouts of where the deep water is.

There is very little, if any, tidal difference in North Carolina which makes it more of a challenge to travel through this region. The depths pretty much are what they are. There is not much room for error. We found that about the only thing that really impacts N.C. tides is days of strong wind which can either blow water in or out of the ICW, depending on its direction. To us, the South Carolina and Georgia waterways are much more forgiving. There are huge tidal differences here which make it easier to maneuver through thin spots and under bridges, IF we played these tides to our advantage. The trade-off is that these large tidal ranges also create strong currents which present their own set of challenges when we went into marinas and fuel docks. Once again, having prior experience with these conditions made a world of difference.

We had learned how to maneuver past or through the inlets and knew to anticipate the impact that their currents would have on the boat. Nine foot tides can produce some pretty fierce currents. Also we remembered that wind against current never makes for favorable conditions.

Overall bridges were less of a challenge this time. We knew where to look on the bridge boards to find the acceptable bridge clearance. That being said, we still found ourselves slowing down and holding our breath every time we went under a bridge. We can't stress enough how important it is to know your mast height and the additional height of rigid instrumentation.

No matter how many times you do the trip though, you must never let your guard down. Unexpected things can and do happen.

Anchorage/Marinas

On our first trip done the ICW, we stopped at just about every town/city along the way. This time we were a little more selective and chose to spend more time in some of our favorite places like Savannah and tried some different places like Hilton Head and Cocoa Beach. We opted to go outside frequently to

save time and avoid some of the more challenging areas, like Isle of Palms around Charleston. (They have since dredged this trouble spot.)

We knew where we could find safe secure places to tie up or anchor and we avoided the ones we had found to be uncomfortable due tight corridors, currents, or lack of protection. For example, on our first trip, we discovered the moorings in St. Augustine can be very uncomfortable; so this time, we found a very protected marina that was within easy walking distance and we were able to relax and enjoy the city without having to worry about the boat or get soaked just trying to get ashore.

Boat Bits and Gear

One of the first upgrades we did in preparation for future trips was purchase a new higher, drier, faster dinghy and outboard. We had been forewarned that our original dinghy would probably be inadequate, but we chose to make do with our old dinghy the first trip. We got by but it definitely hindered our ability to get around safely and still stay dry. Anything placed inside the dinghy (clean laundry, groceries, etc.) got covered with sea spray and we were never dry. One top of this, we were unable to venture out safely in any kind of chop. This upgrade was definitely worth it and I would highly recommend it if you are going to go to the Bahamas where you will be more exposed to the open waters.

Last fall we upsized our Spade anchor and made it our primary anchor once in the Bahamas. Our 66# Bruce, which we absolutely love for the Chesapeake Bay mud, had to play second fiddle. We found that the spade dug deeper and easier into the Bahama's sand.

We took more chafe gear this trip. Our anchor bridle tends to rub against our toe rail and 2nd anchor. Since Hunters are notorious for wildly swinging at anchor, the additional chafe gear gave us extra protection and allowed us to sleep a little better at anchor.

Provisioning/Spare Parts

The first time I took an overabundance of canned goods. This time I took more of the items that I couldn't live without, those that were hard to find, and those that I felt were too expensive to buy in the Bahamas (my favorite crackers, dark chocolate, olives, happy hour things to name just a few). This trip I discovered that I need to add those unusual little round batteries to the list! (Thanks Deb and Chris!)

What is absolutely crucial is that you take a good inventory of everything onboard and make note of exactly where it is stowed on the boat. I can pretty much guarantee that 3 months in, you will no longer remember where you put the jar of tapenade or where that spare piece of wire is. Too often we relocated things to make room for other items and then they were no longer in their usual pre-cruising spot.

One new piece of galley equipment we did add this year was a SodaStream. We discovered that a lot of cruisers had one onboard. We personally don't drink a lot of soda but it proved to be a nice way to have a steady supply of tonic and club soda and freed up some much needed storage space.

Weather

Year One was dry, moderately windy but warm and almost zero mosquitos. This year was VERY windy, wetter, colder and much buggier due to all the rain! So as you can see, each year is different. This year's weather made the trip very challenging. Weather conditions often dictated our travel making it necessary to have a plan B or C or even D. The key is to stay flexible. We had wanted so badly to make it into the Jumentos this year, but the winds just weren't in our favor...perhaps next time. The weather did, however, allow us to venture to new and fun places like Cat Island, Conception, and Little San Salvador.

Old Friends/New Friends

It was so nice to reconnect with some of the fellow cruisers that we had met on our first trip. That's where the boat cards we had collected came in handy. Whenever we saw a familiar boat, I was able to pull out their card and read the notations I had made on the back. That refreshed our failing memories about the people on board, where we had met them and things we had in common.

Unfortunately some of the folks we met in 2013/2014 were no longer cruising the Bahamas. Some had only been on sabbaticals, some bought trawlers and stayed stateside, some moved on to RV's and some retired from boating all together. Fortunately there are always new friends to make. Cruisers are such a diverse and fascinating group of people who are always willing to share their experiences and knowledge or just lend a helping hand.

A few things had physically changed. Last September, Hurricane Joaquin hit one of our favorite places, Long Island, pretty hard, forcing the closing of several establishments and destroying others. The hard-working locals and cruising community have done a great job getting things up and running again. A bigger and better fishing dock was built in Thompson Bay. Cruisers brought in tree seedlings to help reestablish the greenery and donated much needed school, home and building supplies to help support the communities as they rebuild.

We found that sometimes you can't relive the memories you made the first time you visited a place, but the good thing is there are always new places to explore, new adventures to take, and new people to meet so that you can continue to make unforgettable memories.

As those of you who went to the Marlowe Hunter Rendezvous found out, there are many different styles of cruising. Everyone has their own interests and comfort levels. What is important is to find what works best for you as a couple at this point in time and do it. What is great about cruising is you can always change your style whenever and wherever you want. Your boat is your magic carpet that can take you to either familiar or unexplored destinations Just enjoy the ride!

Written by Amy Noel (Admiral of "Xtasea")

Life Aboard a Boat

Dave Knauer asked us to put some thoughts together about what's like to live <6 months' aboard s/v Windkist4 in the Chesapeake Bay. For 6 months + 1 day we return to our townhouse in Vero Beach, Florida. So you can say it is "sort of like short term cruising".

For provisioning we still have our car and access to all kinds of shore stores and conveniences. We usually get a Wednesday or Sunday local paper to check the bargains and activities around, above and beyond NSHSA. We work on errands lists until we go out once a week or so. Beer, ice, liquor, and wine are bought as needed. Canned goods still help fill in the 7-10 fresh meats we get and freeze for later use. As always, milk, eggs, butter & bread products and paper goods go fast!

At our slip at Oak Harbor Marina we also have access to fresh water and pump-outs, with diesel and gas nearby. There are also one washer and one dryer available for laundry chores.

Home projects include getting our forwarded mail from our daughter, Becca, in Annapolis, balancing the checkbook and paying the few bills that are not automatically deducted, mostly medical deductibles. If Cath has any spare time, she putters with her genealogy research, but needs basic WiFi signal.

Work projects have included getting Windkist4 "shipshape" from her recent repairs. We still need 2-3 batteries, debug water system pump, etc. Cath tries to do some small regular cleaning inside and out before it gets away from us. Garry does some canvas work and makes improvements on the boat all the time. We are still trying to master our new SSB radio.

Spending time aboard, we watch some limited tv, read books and magazines and plan our next sail or land trip. We go out to see an occasional movie or walk at the mall.

Hope this is helpful to some of you. It makes our transition from fulltime cruisers to part-time more bearable, being "snow birds in Florida".

Catherine & Garry Johnson
Aboard s/v Windkist4