

Mainsheet

Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter, Traditional Small Craft Association

January 2006

Notes from Cap'n Frank:

2005 was a great year. Lots of good things occurred for the club. To name a few, hollow spars were built and excessively varnished for MARION BREWINGTON; new by-laws were created and voted in, to prepare for our formal incorporation; the April bid and buy was a huge success with a record amount of dollars raised and junk ridded; we had a wonderful turnout of members at both Mystic and St. Michaels; a beautiful June night for our pond yacht regatta at Cooper River Yacht Club; we all became chan-ty singers; our own messabout at Union Lake was a huge success; and the October paddle/row on the Menantico was lots of fun. Much more was done but time did not allow us to mention it at the December meeting.

2006 dues are due. Whether you joined for \$10 at the September Messabout, or paid up sometime in 2005, the standard \$20 Chapter fee should be sent now to Ron Gibbs, 107 Orchard Road, Paoli, Pa., 19301. Also, please see page five, for a form to join the National TSCA for an **additional** \$20.

Anyone interested in having a scrimshaw class? Karen Rutherford will be organizing an event if

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January Meeting: First Tuesday of the Month, 1/3/2006 7:30 pm at Independence Seaport Museum

The cost of parking at the Museum has increased to \$15; there is parking for \$10 at a nearby hotel. **There is a chance that we may not be using the main entrance doors; as we go to press, there is a POSSIBILITY that we will use the rear entrance, instead.** Watch for shipmates when you arrive, to direct you the right way.

John Brady, director of Workshop on the Water, will talk about the replica that is being built of SILENT MAID, a Barnegat Bay B-Cat. More info can be seen at the Seaport's website:
www.phillyseaport.org/boatshop_current_silentmai.shtml



Also Coming in January, the annual Cabin Fever Expo!

January 21-22, 2006, York, PA

More details here:
www.cabinfeverexpo.com



MARTHA WHITE and the 2005 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race (TGCBRSR)

by John Bailey

MARTHA WHITE is a 65-ft. wooden gaff schooner, fashioned after the famous BLUENOSE of Nova Scotia. She was started in 1959 and launched in 1973. New owner Bob Kay uses her as a floating bluegrass stage at the Chestertown city dock most summer Wednesday evenings. This was her first schooner race. The following is an approximate log of the voyage.

Monday, 10/10/05: Partial crew — Dario Panfili, John Bailey, Bill Robinson (all TSCA members), Chris Rossi, and Capt. John Drew — arrive Chestertown, Maryland. Aboard are owner Capt. Bob Kay and first mate Cherri Reese.

Despite inclement weather the captain decides to shove off in order to give the green crew shakedown time on the way to Fells Point, Baltimore (race gathering point).

Main, fore, jumbo, jib and yankee are raised while running down the Devil's Reach of the Chester River. MARTHA does well except for a slow response to turns to port.

The anchor is dropped near the throat of the Chester River and the crew settles into the onboard routine that includes grog rations.

Tuesday, 10/11/05: MARTHA sails off her anchor for the open bay. Rainy day, but a happy crew arrives with many other schooners to Fells Point, just out of the Inner Harbor.

MARTHA is docked at Henderson's Marina, next to the beautiful and famous schooner WHEN AND IF (General G. Patton's wooden schooner, circa World War II).

Capt. Bob buys dinner for the crew and then we go to the rum party at Woody's for crews only. Mate Bill beats a twenty-something at arm wrestling. Not bad for a fifty-something. Meanwhile the rest of us try to have the bartender make some "dark and stormies", but in this case, we get "light and misties" (no black rum or ginger beer).

Crew strolls the docks admiring the competition of 30 other schooners.

Wednesday, 10/12/05: We attend the skippers' meeting where we receive our official t-shirts (a.k.a. admission to the parties).

We join the parade of schooners around the inner harbor of Baltimore, complete with many rounds of cannon fire.

A mate remembers to hoist the burgees. One is the official red TGCBRSR, another, the white TSCA (Traditional Small Craft Association) shown below.

Thursday, 10/13/05: Race day and the start is scheduled for just south of the Bay Bridge at 1330.

1100 hours: the MARTHA WHITE shoves off with 30 other schooners for the starting line: two Navy patrol boats just south of the bridge. This is a fun run for sizing up one another. MARTHA is flying her powerful genoa, fore, and main, and moving smartly.

Capt. John Drew helms the schooner to a first-over start, with ADVENTURE having to do a penalty 360 around the committee boat for crossing ahead of the gun.



Our national burgee proudly flies from MARTHA'S mast.



Dario, foreground, and John perform their daring bowsprit-balancing act as they prep the jib for hoisting.

MARTHA'S bowsprit is only feet short of the start line when the gun goes off.

With all the other class "B" boats on the chase, MARTHA'S crew contemplates cracking on more sail. She still has six more rags she could fly! Meanwhile, the north wind and the seas start to pick up and it begins to rain.

Some boats are doing wing-and-wing downwind, straight for the finish. 80 miles (or 127 depending on the class) away. We opt for a reaching strategy, which means a gentler ride that increases distance and speed.



At the start of the Race: MARTHA WHITE is faintly visible at far left background. Foreground left-to-right is LADY MARYLAND, MYSTIC WHALER, an unidentified boat, Sultana and an unidentified schooner in the background.

The captain has a rivalry of sorts with another Chestertown boat, the schooner replica SULTANA. As with these old boats, she sports a wooden carved maidenhead, a fine semi-nude wooden lady.

Not to be outdone by speed or tradition, Capt. Bob breaks out his secret figurehead weapon. From below he emerges with a full-sized, anatomically correct blow-up doll, marches forward and secures "Dolly" under the bowsprit. One can only imagine what a crew made of 50% women think of this pirate-like maneuver, but it does seem to slow them down.

MARTHA leaves the insulted schooner on the port quarter as the sun sets somewhere behind the rain clouds. Wind and waves seem to increase in strength and size. Later we learned that gusts were about 34 and the waves were about 6 ft. with occasional 8-footers mixed in.

MARTHA seems happy flying through the dusk. A strong gust hits her, she almost broaches, and a crack is heard aloft. Pieces of wood are falling; cables and lines are flying. The main top is now floating above our heads. So much for "cracking" on more sail.

This situation could be bad, and as with most sailing craft, the stresses are transferred from rigging to spar to rigging. Maybe not the domino effect, but perhaps the schooner effect. The crew quickly drops the mainsail and genoa to lighten the stress on the remaining rigging. On we go.

Attempts at feeding the crew are thwarted by increasing wave action. Pots will not stay on the stove and cooking becomes dangerous. Rations are reduced to crackers and Chris' zucchini bread. Things get so rough that the port-a-potty is dismounted twice, with Cherri in chase but not spilling a drop (huzzah!).

Friday, 10/14/05: MARTHA sails on, but in what direction? It seems the old Constellation compass is stuck at 210 degrees. There is nothing left to do but steer by the wind. Thank goodness the burgees are still flying in the rigging! The TSCA burgee is clear and reading the wind's direction perfectly!

While sorting out the wreckage, it was noted that one of the jib sheets was trailing in the water and did not want to come up. It is most likely fouled on the propeller; impossible to sort out under the conditions, so boat and the crew slog on.

As the "watches" come and go it is obvious that the crew is tiring of the "sleigh ride" down the bay. After many encounters with ships and other schooners visible and invisible, MARTHA WHITE crosses the 80-mile class B finish line at 04:26.

Continued on the next page

Schooner Race, cont'd.

She is now in it for the long course (127 miles) and going for the coveted "Perpetual Trophy." This is given to one of the smaller boats with the best time for the entire 127-mile course.

With a lightening sky, but continued rain, *MARTHA* crosses the 127-mile finish at about 2300.

Capt. John D. tries to sail her into Norfolk harbor, but with contrary wind and current this was not possible. At this point the engine-to-propshaft coupling was found to be disconnected! The line wrapped around the prop must have walked the shaft out of its coupling. It is a lucky thing the shaft did not fall out of the boat causing a "real" problem.

We anchor and wait for a tow from the dear old *NORFOLK REBEL* with Capt. Steve at the wheel. The *REBEL* was the Norfolk schooner/tugboat (tugintine) representative in the first Great Chesapeake Schooner Race some 16 years ago. She came to us accompanied by some playful dolphins, taking *MARTHA* and a tired crew into the wonderful flat and calm Norfolk harbor, then on to the Rebel Marina.

The *REBEL* and Capt. Steve's expert boatmanship were like magic maneuvering us in tight quarters and bringing *MARTHA* safely to a dock. Sadly most of the fleet was tied up 10 miles across the harbor, at Waterside.

Practically minutes after docking, a diver and former schooner crewmember introduced himself and offered to investigate our

"snagged" line. Within an hour of docking, we had a freed-up prop.

Saturday, 10/15/05: Now three crew members, Chris, Bill, and David sadly needed to depart. The engine room crew sprang into action, captains and mate started sorting the mess on deck and aloft. Within a few hours *MARTHA* was ready to travel. Reluctant to miss the awards party that afternoon, the remaining crew traveled by taxi and paddleboat to Portsmouth's Waterside Park.

Capt. Bob accepted a plaque for *MARTHA*'s seventh-place finish in her class. The event raised over \$9,000 for educational programs. All were thankful to have finished and in the spirit of old sailors, "did not give up the ship."

Swapping damage stories became the thing to do. In one case, comparing spilled pasta sauce on *WHEN AND IF* to *Martha*'s broken spars became laughable.

We learned a term for a concept we already were familiar with, which was "schooner time." These great old and not-so-old boats take a special kind of patience, loving respect and care that knows no conventional time.

Sunday, 10/16/05: Time to shove off for Chestertown, 150 miles up the bay. The weather forecast is not good. North and northwest winds. This means that *MARTHA* will take it on the nose and the ride will be lumpy, even motor-sailing.

Motoring north, while trying to hug the lee of the west shore, quickly became a "dirty" and bumpy business. Not long after

the start, the boat had a brief encounter with the bottom of the bay. Later the engine's coolant system sprang a leak. An undaunted crew slogged on.

As night approached, the crew all appreciated a safe calm cove in the Rappahannock River. It is surprising how in a few minutes the human desire for food can change from thinking of only saltine crackers to devouring a spaghetti dinner with candlelight.

Monday, 10/17/05: The sky is clear, winds are down, and now from the west. This means sailing today! *MARTHA* proudly sails out of the river with jumbo, fore and main sail.

Then, just when you would think nothing else could go wrong, it is discovered that the main gaff is cracked. The captains decide that there is no pressure on that part of the spar on this tack so we sail on. This same tack was held most of the day until Holland Island (just north of Smith) forced us to drop the main and motor on with the foresail and jib. This combination finally made for a smooth ride. On through the night *MARTHA* motor-sails up the bay.

Watches pass as do many commercial ships.

Tuesday, 10/18/05: At sunrise *Martha* pulls up to the town marina at Chestertown. Home again. The crew has one last breakfast at Ellen's Diner and then go their separate ways taking with them a memory of a wonderful adventure.

Support National: benefits include a quarterly magazine and discounts at BOAT/US, as well as its value as a lobby and sponsor of small boat education. Annual dues are \$20. Address is P.O. Box 350, Mystic, CT 06355. Apply online, www.tasca.net/join.html, or use the form below. PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS IN ADDITION TO DELAWARE RIVER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP, WHICH IS ALSO \$20.

TSCA MEMBERSHIP FORM			
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Mail to: Membership, The Traditional Small Craft Association, Inc., P.O. Box 350, Mystic, CT 06355			
Notes: Individual and Family Memberships qualify for one vote and one copy of each TSCA mailing. Family Memberships qualify all members of the immediate family to participate in all other TSCA activities.			
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Notes from Cap'n Frank, cont'd.

there is enough interest. Look for an e-mail from her with more info. You can contact Karen at karen.s.rutherford@verizon.net (Sorry, don't have her phone number).

Plans are being discussed for more row/paddle events in 2006, hopefully not within prime greenhead season. One trip under discussion is a continuation of the Menantico trip to the lighthouse.

We are **still looking for new members — and a name — for our R/C yacht club**. For info contact Frank Stauss (details on the back page) or Tom Shephard, tsshep41556@aol.com, or 856-691-4053.

Kudos to Bill Covert for supplying visual entertainment at the dinner, with a collection of slides from the last three years of

Chapter activity; **and to Wendy Byar**. Wendy brought slides of student models from her design class. The class project was a tabletop display that explain our club's purpose and activities.

The TSCA Grammy Award goes to Dave Soltesz. He serenaded us with a great new rendition of a favorite Christmas tune: "Grandma Got Run Over by the (something-something) Cashier." He wrote the words himself. Can't wait for his next tune.

Runners-up in our Grammys were everyone attending the

dinner. Together we voiced a rousing, "chantey-esque" rendition of a Christmas favorite "I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In."

In the dramatic reading category, John Bailey gave a touching portrayal of life at sea in a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson.

And finally, outgoing president Pete Peters was presented with a beautiful cedar paddle as a show of the club's gratitude for leading us over the past three years. He just needs a new boat to go with it.



All tied up about learning the ropes? Why not learn your knots by watching animated Internet videos? Check out:

www.animatedknots.com

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Monthly Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter TSCA
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Please pay your \$20 Chapter dues for 2006 now

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