

THE CLASSIC YACHT CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

The Ancient Mariner

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35
years
of
classic
boating
1971 - 2006

Flag Raising 2006

by Newsletter Editor

Cheryl Spaulding

I'm a sucker for ceremonies. Maybe it comes from being an Army brat. I don't know, but flags flying and cannon firing and people in crisp uniforms saluting starts my heart to fluttering and brings a tear to my eye.



Our Flag Raising at Maryland Yacht Club was an especially good ceremony this year. That club is one of the oldest and their site on the top of a high bluff overlooking the river is really impressive. The wind was blowing hard but the sky was bright blue and the sun was shining brilliantly.

Twenty CYCA member boats with their crews and owners came from all over the Bay. Many other members drove down. In the face of all manner of problems, our Fleet Captain Mike Haines managed to get the boats into the marina with little help and still hold two very nice parties outside despite small craft warnings.

*I find the great thing
in this world is not so
much where we stand,
as in what direction
we are moving.*



*To reach the port of
heaven,
we must sail
sometimes with the
wind and sometimes
against it, but we
must sail, and not
drift, nor lie at
anchor.*

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Our Commodore Patrick Dunlap and his volunteers really did a fantastic job of overseeing and orchestrating the event. The blessings of our Chaplain Bonnie Heath; flag raisings by the Sea Scouts as Honor Guard; introduction of visiting commodores, officers, governors, dignitaries and beauty queens from other yacht clubs; introduction of 13 of our past commodores and the rose wreath tossed out to sea in memorial to deceased CYCA members all went smoothly.

The Treasurer of the Maryland Yacht Club, Alice Snively, who sang our national anthem for the event, was astounded at the large turnout and at the professional quality of the ceremony CYCA does for Flag Raising. She had not seen anything remotely like it in years. Her opinion was shared by many in the crowd. Most clubs do flag raising in a perfunctory way if they do it at all.

Perhaps our Flag Raising is special because we are essentially vagabonds. Unlike so many clubs, we call no real estate our home. We are a group of people from vastly different backgrounds and varied geography who share a simple, but deep and profound love of old boats. Flag Raising is important to us. It is the one time in the year when we come together to stand on terra firma to declare ourselves as a Club; recognize our many volunteers; and open our season. Whatever the reason, it's a great event. If you didn't come this year, come next year. Dig out your flag pins and put on something red, white and blue.

Enjoy! 



Top: The CYCA burgee flies with the Stars and Stripes and Maryland state flag.

Below: P/C Ken Jordan prepares to throw the memorial wreath.



Right: Maryland Yacht Club Treasurer Alice Snively sings the National Anthem.

Below: Past CYCA commodores



The View from the Bridge

by Commodore **Patrick Dunlap**



While I was relaxing in the cockpit of his beautiful classic express cruiser, one member expressed his concern about the future direction of our Club and his personal sentiment that the Classic Yacht Club of America should be limited exclusively to wooden boats. Actually, that used to be the case. I'm certain many of our newer members are unaware that some ten years ago there was an emotional and divisive debate within the Club regarding its future, specifically regarding the then "radical" notion that fiberglass boats should be granted full membership status.

As Commodore, I have no interest in reigniting those emotional flames or reopening those now bound wounds. Even one of our long-time members who was most vociferously opposed to the acceptance of fiberglass yachts agrees that to attempt to reverse our course now would be "counter-productive" at best.

However, reasoned debate and reaffirmation of our Club's core purpose and mission is never a waste of time in my book. So today I put this somewhat rhetorical question to the membership, "What makes a classic yacht 'classic'?" Currently, the chief element of the definition of a "classic water craft" according to the Club Handbook is the minimum age requirement of 25 years. If we rely too heavily on the age requirement alone, it is conceivable that one day we may find ourselves simply as members of the *old* boat club. I believe determining any boat's status for membership has much less to do with either her age or primary construction materials than with her overall fitness, appearance and—most importantly—her design cues. For example, do you really believe that a 2005 Hinckley picnic boat is *not* a true classic?

I've done a little delving into some thinking by other antique and vintage boat organizations. Much like the divisions of CYCA's Judging Event, the designation "antique" is typically reserved for boats manufactured before WWII, and "classic" refers to boats built after the war, but before the beginning of the fiberglass era. When the definition is discussed in such groups, it appears a single definition is rarely agreed upon. They usually wind up with a line something like: "Well, I can't define one but I know one when I see one."

Aye, there's the rub! One captain's timeless design is another's floating junk heap. Ultimately, the definition of a classic is very subjective. Classic status may well be like beauty—it's in the eye of the beholder. But if we try hard enough, perhaps together we can develop a bit more precise set of standards to preserve the unique quality of the Classic Yacht Club of America.

Hopefully, we *can* all agree that classic boat ownership is a uniquely satisfying and happy endeavor. And the boats themselves are the best places to be, be seen and certainly the ones to own. In an era where pure functionality has largely replaced craftsmanship, grace, style and warmth, we classic boat owners always have a special place that reflects those values to which to retreat. It's more than a small pleasure. 

Boat Genealogy: *Hermione*

This is the third in our series of articles that explore the history of the old boats we all love. We've begun with some of the oldest boats in the club.

In this case, the boat is Hermione, a 57' motor yacht built by Elco Works in Bayonne, New Jersey.

Elco began building boats in 1892. By the 1920s they were building mass-produced motor vessels, providing thousands of people the opportunity to enjoy a luxury yacht at an affordable price.

Solid and elegant, *Hermione* evokes all the history of the era of her birth: the roaring 20s (1925), when Calvin Coolidge was president and George Gershwin had just written “Rhapsody in Blue.” Her history is well known because Sloan Wilson wrote a book about her, *A Talking Boat; The Story of the Yacht Hermione*. Mr. Wilson is also the author of *A Summer Place* and *The Man in a Grey Flannel Suit*. When he saw *Hermione* on the Potomac River in 1990, he fell in love with her. Although never her owner, he continued to be her admirer.

Christened *Ruben*, the yacht was first owned by a vaudeville couple known as Ruby and Ben Troup, from New York. For two years or so, she cruised the waters of Florida. In 1927, *Ruben* was sold to Thomas T. Firth, a DuPont Company executive, who brought her to Colonial Beach, Virginia. She remained in the Firth family for many years, cruising mostly the Chesapeake Bay but with cruises from Cuba to Nova Scotia. It is easy to



BOAT GENEALOGY TIPS

The Marine Museum of Newport News, VA has listings of Merchant Vessels of the United States. This roster included yachts. The listings include: official number, signal letters, rig, name of yacht, gross weight, net weight, length, breadth, depth, where built, crew, horsepower, name of owner, home port and address of owner. If you have a large older boat, it just may be listed there. My great-grandfather's 69' yacht, *Water Nymph*, which was built in Baltimore in 1899, was in the 1930-1936 rosters.

Also check out the place your boat was built. For example, City Island, NY where *Trouper II* (the subject of our last genealogy article) was born, has a large museum with lots of information on the boat building history of the area.

picture *Ruben* cruising along under the direction of her paid captain and uniformed crew while family and guests lounged in their formal attire.

In 1946, the Firth family sold *Ruben* to Edward Montgomery who had been the American ambassador to Great Britain. His captain, Bill Wilson, described Montgomery as a man of great wealth, but with little knowledge or love of boats, who used *Ruben* for entertaining and spent very little on her upkeep. A few years later, and by now in very poor condition, the boat was sold to banker Joe Parker and his wife, who renamed her *SalanJo* and cruised the Chesapeake Bay for many years. While in the care of the Parkers, the boat was repaired and kept in reasonable shape.

In 1968, the Ragsdales family bought the boat, which was sound but shabby, with poor bright work and in need of repairs. They renamed her *Hermione* and began a full restoration, including replacing the engines with twin V8 Chrysler 318 gas engines. When Sloan Wilson, the author, first saw her, he was stunned because she looked brand new. The boat remained the pride and joy of the Ragsdales and in pristine condition until about 1998, when she was sold to Bill Bowman, a collector of wooden yachts.

CYCA members and current owners Richard and Charla Thomas had been looking for a large wooden boat for a few years, when they learned about *Hermione*. A trip to Edgewater, Maryland sealed their fate and they became her proud new owners in May 2002. She has been a joyful part of their family now for a few years. *Ruben/Hermione* is now in Galesville, Maryland, where Richard has modernized the boat, adding additional air conditioning and electrical improvements. Yet *Hermione* retains all her antique charm, including a claw-footed bathtub! 

Next Stop: Chesapeake City

by Fleet Captain **Mike Haines**

Thanks to all who joined us for Flag Raising 2006 with a record attendance for a Flag Raising event! The next stop on our Back to the Bay 2006 Tour is Chesapeake City, Maryland. From July 14-16, our boats are going to take over the marina—make that take over the town!

The town may be small, but the welcome is large: Chesapeake City plans to put out the welcome mat and treat CYCA members to a taste of the past—as well as the fun it is known for today. Start by bringing hors d'oeuvres to our welcome cocktail party in the charming garden at the Inn at the Canal on Friday at 6:00 p.m. Afterwards, enjoy dinner at one of the town's well-known restaurants, or just relax on your boat or the deck at the Chesapeake Inn and enjoy the live music and atmosphere.

Saturday, after the Captain's (and Mate's!) Forum, stroll the streets and visit the stores. Chesapeake City resident Fiona Hirschfeld has already arranged discounts for CYCA members at some of her favorite stores. If shopping's not your thing, explore the town's history on a guided tour during the afternoon, or meet with local author Robert Hazel.

Dinner on Saturday evening is at the Chesapeake Inn, which is known throughout the Bay for its fine food and entertainment. We're doing things a bit differently this time: Members will sit as a group in our own area as usual, but we'll order and purchase our dinners from the restaurant's menu, allowing everyone to suit their own tastes!

The cost for this amazing weekend? Only your slip fee (see box) and \$33—\$10 of which is a deposit that goes toward the cost of your dinner at the Chesapeake Inn on Saturday. We look forward to your company! 

Chesapeake City Rendezvous Highlights

FRIDAY, JULY 14

2 pm: Boats start arriving at the Chesapeake Inn Marina. Dockage is \$2/foot incl. utils; \$50 deposit required.

6 pm: Complimentary cocktails, beer and wine at the Inn at the Canal.

Dinner and evening activities on your own.

SATURDAY, JULY 15

10:30 am: Captain's and Mate's forum. A representative from the Coast Guard Auxiliary will discuss safe boating practices, such as landing and leaving a dock (including mid-cleat landings). Chesapeake Inn deck.

1 pm: Guided tour of the town's historical district; cost to members \$3 per person. Meet in Pell Gardens, tour takes about 45 minutes.

Information on other events will be included in your welcome packet.

6 pm: Club Dinner and live music on the deck at the Chesapeake Inn.

SUNDAY, JULY 16

8 - 9 am: Getaway breakfast on the Chesapeake Inn deck. BYOC (bring your own coffee); Club provides pastries from a local bakery.

Membership Update

by Vice Commodore **Jim Gartley**

I want to thank Mike and Susan Haines for their tireless work in planning our Flag Raising and Commodore Patrick Dunlap for the ceremony itself. The entire weekend was one of the best I have ever attended. Members who did not attend missed a lovely affair.

I talked to three or four members of the Maryland Yacht Club who seemed interested in joining our club. They told me their interest started because we had almost 20 boats in attendance.

The three new members were voted in at our board meeting. They are:

Dick Burkhard and Dale Maahs, sponsored by Mike Haines. They have a 1958 14' Chris Craft, *Kit*.

Timothy Drake and Paula Harrington, sponsored by Claudia Redman and Marvin Hall. They have a 1958 80' Broward, *Miss Mimi*.

Lasse & Vigdis Syversen, sponsored by Judy Willingham. They have a 1980 42' Ocean, *Aloha III*

Any member who has not been on a rendezvous in a year or two will be pleasantly surprised with what Mike and Susan have planned. The more members who attend, the more interest there will be in our Classic Yacht Club.

Just a reminder that if you need a new burgee, call or email me—or pick one up aboard *Cherokee Lady* when you attend one of the cruises. 

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Dick Burkhard and Dale Maahs
1958 14' Chris Craft
Kit



**Timothy Drake and Paula
Harrington**
1958 80' Broward
Miss Mimi



Lasse and Vigdis Syversen
1980 42' Ocean
Aloha III

On With "The Show"!

by Rear Commodore **Ed Rosenthal**

First, kudos to the Haineses for a very nice Flag Raising event. Speaking of events, the Annual Judging is coming soon. To illustrate how strongly I feel about participating in this event, I'm going to tell you a story about my boat, the *Kassie B II*. You may know she was damaged in a storm prior to the CYCA Mid-summer rendezvous. (See the August 2005 issue of *The Ancient Mariner*.) But I still plan to enter her. I've done so most years (not last year, though, for obvious reasons!) I have never received a ribbon, but it's been a lot of fun.*

So this year, let me see, what remains to be done? Paint the six-year-old deck paint? Finish the hard top. No one sees the top, even the judges, trust me on this. Oh that's right, better get my priorities straight—she has to *run* for the judges to see her.

Last year we had a great turnout for our Annual Judging, but many of the boats weren't actually entered. Why? You probably think, "It's too much work" or "My boat is not ready." As Rear Commodore, I want you to remember this: If your vessel floats and runs to St. Michael's, she's ready. All the judging comes down to is a good cleaning.

Preparing for the judging has many advantages. They may not mean a ribbon or an award—but they are prizes you give yourselves and your boats. For me, it means sorting things out that I collected all year and do not need on the boat. I clean places aboard that I forgot I had. And, by participating, we all learn things from the judges that we forgot we knew—or never knew in the first place.

We want this to be fun and we want the public to see a cross section of nautical history gathered in a historical maritime setting dressed to the nines. Forget the judges, ribbons, plaques. The accolades from the community only enhance my pride as steward to the *Kassie B II*.

CYCA ANNUAL JUDGING RENDEZVOUS

When: September 15-17

Where: St. Michaels, MD

Who: All of you (hopefully!)

Why: It's fun!

*Editor's note:

You've heard how realtors "stage" a house they have on the market, telling owners to set the table for a dinner party or place fresh flowers just so? Well, Rear Commodore Ed Rosenthal is known for "staging" his boat for the judges. Rumor has it that one year he set his boat up as if an intense poker game had just been interrupted, complete with cards, booze, and cigars. It certainly put a smile on the judges' faces!