

Labor Day Weekend Cruise - 2009

After weeks of very hot weather around the Chesapeake Bay, we were excited to take a long weekend after hearing the forecast of cooler temperatures and low humidity! CHEERS started out a day early on Thursday to enjoy **Baby Owl Cove** ahead of the eight other boats expected from SMSA that were due to join us either on Friday or Saturday. As is often the case on trips planned north or south on the Bay, the winds were on our nose all the way north, the forecast of wind gusts of 10 kts turned out to be steady winds of 17 – 20! The seas were not rough, so it was not a bad ride. No chance to turn off the “iron-genny”, however. By Friday afternoon SWAN (Ken & Ellie) REFLECTIONS (Rich & Patty) KALYPSO (Fred), a guest of Joel & Mary, arrived; and then Kelly ANN (Frank & Nancy), WALKABOUT (Dave & Lois) rafted with CHEERS! CHEERS hosted Happy Hour. We watched an eagle sit high on a tree until sunset and then he flew away when no one was looking! Mary & Joel arrived on the “other” KALYPSO about then, after being delayed with changing their fresh water impeller. It was a cool and peaceful night with a full moon! GREAT weather for sleeping!



A unanimous decision was made at Happy Hour to leave the next morning and anchor in San Domingo Creek the next day to enjoy St. Michaels and forego plans for Dun Cove. We called the two boats planning to join us on Saturday, SAFINA & RUSTE NAYLE, and they wanted to see St. Michaels, also.



We were pleased to see lots of room to anchor when we arrived in San Domingo Creek on Saturday morning and most of us met at the Crab Claw for a delicious lunch at 1 pm. Now we numbered nine 9 boats and 17 sailors, so it was a bit crowded on CHEERS for Happy Hour @ 5 PM! The discussions and stories lasted until darkness arrived. No need for a meal on the boat tonight! Fantastic sunset and full moon!



Sunday morning, KELLY ANN & REFLECTIONS headed home quite early and then SWAN decided to head over to Plaindealing Creek near Oxford to enjoy a quiet evening. The rest of the group went by dinghy to the dock early to walk around St Michaels; it was a good idea, as room for additional dinghies was almost non-existent by noon! During the afternoon, when we all had returned to relax, nap and read on our boats, the clouds had rolled in with a few raindrops. WALKABOUT hosted our Happy Hour @ 5 PM and the weather had cleared by then.

On Monday morning, KALYPSO (Fred) and CHEERS left before 7 AM and the others, with the exception of Joel and Mary who elected to stay one more day, followed soon after. We had an easterly wind and an overcast sky that turned into a stronger east wind (14 to 20 kts) for the remainder of the sail home!!

PERFECT!!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Board of Directors approved the following new applications over the past few months, so please join me in extending a WELCOMD ABOARD to our newest batch of SMSA members! Let's all chip in and do what we can to introduce them to other members and seek out their help when a volunteer hand is needed.

Mark & Robin Witte. Those involved in the small and big boat programs are familiar with Mark Witte and his wife Robin. Mark has been racing aboard *Rhumb Punch* for a few years in both the Wednesday night program and formal weekend race program. Mark and Robin own a JY 15 named *Catalyst*, which they race in our Thursday Night Small Boat Program as often as their schedules allow. Mark and Robin are interested in the racing and social programs of SMSA and were sponsored by Joe Szymanski.

Jacob Hornberger. Jacob owns a Buccaneer named *Corona* and his is active in our Thursday night small boat program as well as our weekend

small boat race events. Jacob will likely be a fierce competitor in the Buccaneer Nationals, which SMSA will be hosting in June of 2010. Jacob is interested in the racing, membership, cruising, and training and education programs at SMSA. Jacob was sponsored by Jimmy Yurko.

Nancy Cole. Nancy relocated to the area over the past year to work at the Nuclear Power Plant with Constellation Energy. Nancy, a Connecticut native, has sailed for many years. Nancy joined SMSA to reconnect with sailing and her love of the water, and as a way to meet some new friends. Nancy has been to several of our Friday night socials and has been involved in helping with RC duty over the past few months. Nancy is interested in the racing, cruising, social, publicity, and training and education programs at SMSA. Nancy was sponsored by Laura Comeau-Stanley.

Laura Comeau-Stanley
SMSA Membership Chair

Cruise Report

Couples Race/Cruise to Battle Creek
August 22/23, 2009

Saturday began with thunderstorms and rain early AM. We had doubts about whether or not this event would take place at all. However, by about 8 AM, weather radar indicated that, although it was very cloudy, the rain had stopped and the storms were now off to our East. We arrived at Sandy Point just before 10:30 AM to be greeted by Joy Dorethy and crew on the RC boat. They had just completed the starting sequence for the racers and reported that four boats had started the race. The wind was very light and "on the nose", so Calypso opted to motor on up to Battle Creek to be in place to welcome the racers after the finish. As we motored up the Patuxent, we passed *Whiskers* with Jim and Barbara Whited, *Sabrina* with Mike and Becky Ironmonger, *Krugerand* with Sarah Southworth and crew Craig, and *Little Latitudes* with Jeff and Donna Moore. We were in the creek

and firmly anchored as we watched the racers ghost past the creek entrance now under spinnaker on their way to the finish at Marker 18. Little Latitudes had previously indicated that they would not be able to stay for the raft-up and they immediately headed for home. Sabrina came into the creek to say that they had to return home to their teenagers and because the weather still looked “iffy”, elected not to raft up for awhile as planned. That left Calypso, Whiskers and Krugerand. Once we were all rafted up, it was time to fold sails and clean up boats. With all these chores completed, cool beverages began to appear and it looked like everyone could finally relax. Not so – almost immediately it became apparent that we were going to get more storms. According to Sarah’s iPhone and Craig’s computer, more “weather” was on the way. So we broke up the raft and anchored separately with a plan to get back together for more socializing as soon as the storm passed.



Unfortunately, that opportunity never materialized. It thundered and rained and rained and rained some more. We kept in touch via VHF. There was some discussion as to how well we were provisioned to ride out the storm – specifically how much rum and what kind of food for dinner. Responses confirmed that each boat had an adequate supply of each. Jim contacted Joy with finish times and she promptly

replied with race results. He referred to our situation as a “virtual raft-up” and announced the race results via VHF: fourth *Little Latitudes*, third *Krugerand*, second *Sabrina* and first *Whiskers*. Each of the finishers got their fair share of radio cheers. Of course, Sunday dawned dry, bright and sunny and no one was worse for wear. Krugerand swung by as she weighed anchor and we agreed that our weather “cautions” were appropriate. Whiskers stopped alongside for a visit before motoring back to Solomons. Battle Creek is a very picturesque anchorage, but *Calypso* eventually tore herself away and had an uneventful trip home to Solomons. Well – we didn’t have our usual 12 to 14 boat raft-up and tons of appetizers, but we do give credit to those dedicated four couples who started, persevered, and finished the race. Above all, they sailed well in spite of some frustrating conditions.

Frank & Rita Gerred
Cruise Leaders

The Commodores Dinner

On the third Thursdays of the next few months will be doing a potluck dinner at SMSA. We will do some kind of theme to be determined by the Commodore just to add some structure to what to make and share with your fellow sailors. The theme will be posted in the Clew and on the calendar with plenty of time to get your dish together. Should you have any suggestions for a theme shoot the Commodore an email. Doors will open at 6PM and the first dinner will on October 15th and the theme will be Italian. Bring a great Italian appetizer, dish, or desert to share. Should you know anyone that is into boating bring them along to check out SMSA. So mark your calendar for the third Thursdays of the month as a night to be at SMSA with a dish of your own making.

Volunteers Needed

SMSA is looking for a few good men...and women. The Social program offers several fun events throughout the year and all help is welcome. We are seeking volunteers to step forward to take over the Social program, be they male or female. Ideally, one or two people serve as Social Program chairs and various volunteers offer to run individual programs that suit their interests and schedules. Don't stop and think about it, just sign up. We will be glad to take your name and number.

Social@smsa.com or 410 586 1958.

HOT, HOT TODAY, CHILLI TAMALE (Oysters too)

Dig out your "secret" Chili recipes and brandish the Crock Pots. Join us for the Annual Chili Cook Off and Oyster Scald after the Fall Invitational Race. Oysters will be provided by SMSA, and are first come, first serve.

Members are always welcome to bring their favorite side dishes.

RSVP: Social@smsa.com or 410 586 1958.

Date: October 24, 2009

Time: 1600

Place: SMSA Clubhouse

Annual Membership meeting on November 1
at 0900

Delmarva Peninsula Cruise

After racing for three days in the ScrewPile Regatta, there is an almost euphoric feeling that surges within the crew as you make that last trip back to the dock. It was at this particular moment that I mentioned to our skipper that my upcoming plans included a sailing cruise around the DelMarVa Peninsula beginning at 8AM the next day. The skipper responded with "Now that's a cruise worth reporting on so can you send me a written report

with photos? That would be a great article for the Clew."

As to the inspiration for this journey, you might say that it can best be summed up in a quote from Mark Twain who wrote "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones that you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Aye, Aye Captain, here is your article:

Day 1 – Wednesday, July 23rd – Distance covered - 44 nautical miles. We left the Solomons area around 8AM and headed North up the Bay. The winds were light and then nonexistent until we came upon Kent Island when the breeze kicked up and we saw 15-18 knots from the SSW. Joining me as crew on the s/v Phoenix were my good friend James J. Smith from Pennsylvania and his wife Pat and son Ryan. Sailing vessel Talisman was our joining vessel with skipper and fellow SMSA member Mike Zoll at the helm and John Villani as crew. After a bit of confusion as to where we would spend the night we settled on Lake Ogleton off the Severn River in Annapolis.



Day 2 – Thursday, July 24th Distance covered - 53 nautical miles. We left the anchorage in Annapolis in the rain and headed into Back Creek to get fuel and make use of the bath facilities at one of the local Marinas there. Talisman headed North alone determined to get a head start as the day before s/v Phoenix proved to be faster albeit under power as there was little wind for much of the first leg. Early morning rain turned to just cloudy skies and the wind was on the bow such that the sailing was limited as we powered to the next stop which was the anchorage off the C & D canal. That later changed to an East wind and we were able to hoist

the sails and as we approached the Canal we were just south of some heavy rain and beautiful cloud scenery which then later that evening turned into more rain overnight. We overtook Talisman near the Sassafra River and found out later that they had a minor issue with the electrical system to the fuel pump which caused them to require a brief tow from a passing powerboat before they were able to resolve the issue thanks to Mike Zoll's keen electrical engineering skills. Talisman later that evening opted to once again take a lead and head for fuel at the next marina on the canal and then make a run for the Delaware Bay where they anchored overnight ready for their next leg to Cape May. We on the s/v Phoenix opted for a leisurely dinner and shopping in Chesapeake City which led us to a place called the "Tap Room" for local seafood and Italian fare. Two thumbs up for that stop I might add. ;-)

Day 3 – Friday, July 25th Distance covered - 41 nautical miles.

Day 4 – Saturday, July 26th Distance covered - 73 nautical miles. This leg took us through the Delaware Bay where many pods of dolphin were seen all around the nearby waters. We also rounded Cape Henlopen and entered the Atlantic Ocean for a humbling experience of pounding directly into the 20 plus knots of SSW winds and 6 foot waves which often broke over the bow. The Phoenix held up well but this leg proved to be the turning point for Talisman who decided that they were under powered for the next 100 mile leg which likely was to be more of the same SSW winds and heavy waves. We had planned to layover in Ocean City for a day and resume the trip on Monday but after a rather tumultuous entry through the Ocean City inlet followed by a brief grounding my passengers also decided that the ocean passage was a bit too rough to call a vacation and Jim's wife Pat was suffering from a sore throat infection which complicated matters and in short they opted out which left me at the halfway point, 211 miles and solo and looking for crew. With a second day's layover due to nasty thunderstorms I had managed to reach out to SMSA member Don Fletcher and his son Noah who crew with me on Status Quo and they anxiously accepted my offer to crew with me on the next leg of the journey and 2nd half of the circumnavigation now scheduled for Tuesday morning.



Day 5 – Tuesday July 29th Distance covered 59 nautical miles. With my new crew and a fresh supply of provisions, we got an early start calling for a drawbridge opening just before 5AM and back into the Ocean City inlet. With the absence of the sport fishing boats that had nearly swamped us during our entry here the previous Saturday, the inlet was tranquilly calm although the ocean swells were large and the SSW winds were once again building we had clear skies and a solid plan to make it to our next anchorage which would be in the Wachapreague Inlet adjacent to the now closed Parramore Island Coast Guard station. Located midway along Virginia's Eastern Shore, Parramore Island is the state's largest natural area preserve. More than seven and a half miles long, the island is one of 14 uninhabited Atlantic barrier islands that are part of The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve. The island features a high-energy beach and dune system, a globally rare maritime scrub community, and expansive salt marshes. Parramore Island can only be reached by boat. The Inlet turned out to be quite accessible and this leg of the trip gave us time to sail 5-10 miles offshore, enjoy some fishing while under sail and begin bonding together as a cruising crew. Once anchored near the Coast Guard station we took the dingy in to our own private beach and enjoyed both the beauty and the solitude of this isolated barrier island.

Day 6 – Wednesday July 30th Distance covered 60 nautical miles. Once again we left our safe haven at sunrise, passing through the near calm inlet with the falling tide. This day would prove to show us conditions that would test our skills and our resolve and I was reminded of the quote by Tom Culve who stated "A calm sea does not produce a skilled sailor. We can not direct the wind, but we

can adjust the sails.” This also explains why in the 119 nautical miles from Ocean City to Cape Charles we saw only 3 other pleasure craft, larger power boats who also seemed unruffled by the strong SSW winds and the now 2 day old small craft warnings. Once we sighted the lighthouse at Cape Charles a renewed sense of accomplishment rose within us and both Don & Noah shared in my triumph that we would definitely soon see calmer seas. Shortly after rounding the Cape and passing under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, one could only marvel at the skill and determination of those who had built this massive engineering marvel, especially while enduring the wrath of the inlet. About 10 nautical miles into the Bay, we were forced to seek shelter by an intense band of thunderstorms and after a quick review of our options on the charts, we headed quickly for the City of Cape Charles Town Dock and the harbor of refuge which lay there. Unfortunately Mother Nature moved faster than we and the storm hit us full force as we entered the narrow channel which marked the path to our nearest refuge. Confronted by unknown waters and restricted by draft, I made the only safe decision which was to hover in 20 feet of water and turn head on into the now violent weather which was quickly bearing down on us. Don & Noah took shelter below as I steadied the Phoenix and took the full brunt of the now 50 knot winds and 4 foot waves which while pelting us with rain had reduced my visibility to less than 100 feet. This lasted about an hour and 15 minutes although at that time it seemed as if time stood still and it was just us alone with one small water spout that fizzled out after a few minutes and dozens of lightening strikes that seemed too close for comfort. It was at that moment that I thought that perhaps this wasn't the right place to be at this point in time and I realized that I now faced the last of the human freedoms, the ability to choose one's own attitude under the direst of conditions. Only the old saying that was given to King Solomon would capture that moment. “This too shall pass” and so it did.



Day 7 – Thursday, July 31st Distance covered 73 nautical miles. Having spent the night in the City of Cape Charles Town Harbor and celebrating our previous day's adventure with a celebratory dinner in the town, we again rose at dawn and prepared for departure at sunrise. The primary objective of the Cape Charles Harbor is to provide a protected haven to small boats and it indeed did just that for us. This was a beautiful reemerging historic small town and I strongly recommend visiting it at some point in your cruising career.

Our reentrance into the Bay was again marked by strong headwinds now from the West and we were again hammered by waves but after enduring the previous day's adventure that no longer mattered. Today was the day we would arrive back home, and that was all that we focused on. Once out of the harbor and turning northward, we were able to hoist the sails and take advantage of the strong winds. This also kept the waves on the beam which after a while let us dry out and with each passing hour, both the wind and the waves which had for so long been our adversary, waned and by the time we passed the Potomac, we were nearly in calm waters. My crew passed the hours by taking turns in the dinghy being towed along and posing for pictures. Don also caught a nice size blue fish on a line that we had been trolling. I'll never forget the sheer look of delight that came upon young Noah's face at so many times during those past four days. When you can see the passing of a lifelong passion such as is shared by Don & myself, in the sparkle of young boy's eyes, there is no longer any doubt about why I sail and spend time on the water. I sail, therefore I am.

Total distance covered, 406 nautical miles, 9 days in total, and 7 days on the water. Total value of this trip, priceless.