



The Clew

Cruise

Sat. Jan. 10 @ 9am: Cruise Planning Meeting

Board of Directors

Tue. Jan. 13 @ 7pm: Monthly Meeting

Social

Mon. Jan. 5 @ 5pm: Undecorate the Clubhouse

Wed. Jan. 14 @ 6pm: Trivia Night

Wed. Jan. 21 @ 6:00pm: Social Committee Mtg—Initial Gala Planning

Mon. Jan. 26 @ 6:00pm: Social Committee Mtg—Final Gala Planning & Preparation

Training

Sat. Jan. 17 @ 1pm: Racing Basics, a Precursor to the US Sailing Course
(see page 5 for more info)

Sun., Jan. 25 from 8:00am—5:00pm: US Sailing Basic Race Management Course

Commodore's Dinner

Fri. Jan. 23 @ 6:30pm

Smallboat

Fri. Jan. 30 @ 6:30pm: Smallboat Feedback Session

HS/MS

Thursdays from Jan. 8—March 5 @ 4:30pm: D&D

Tamale Making Party

Sat., Jan. 24 @ 1:00pm (see page 2 for more info)

Happy Hour

Fri. 5:30pm—9:00pm

Members' Corner!



The 2026 Small Boat season is coming up and it is time for the annual yard assignment lottery as prescribed by club policy. Please email your request for 2026 yard storage to Dockmaster Mark Witte at mcwitte@md.metrocast.net by **Jan. 31, 2026**. Please include boat type, model, length and beam.

The policy can be found in the SMSA Policy Manual located on the SMSA Website: <https://www.smsa.com/location.php>



PERPETUAL TROPHIES

If you still have a perpetual trophy and have not yet returned it to the clubhouse, please do so no later than January 17, 2026. Our Vice Commodore in conjunction with the Keelboat Chair need to get them updated prior to the Gala.

Tamale Making Party

Saturday, Jan. 24 @ 1pm

Ever wanted to make Tamales, but don't know how? Or just want to speed up the process and make Tamales with friends?

Based on requests received during The Patuxent Pursuit - we are having a tamale making party!

Join us for laughter and tamale rolling.

12 tamales: \$10

Fee covers ingredients and 12+ tamales to take home at the end of the afternoon.

Depending on the number of registrants, you may be able to purchase more.

Select from Bean and Cheese (Vegetarian), Red Chile Pork or Chicken Verde.

Click here to signup:

<https://southernmarylandsailingassociation.theclubspot.com/event/BJESP5NNqA>





Commodore's Corner

By John Blaney
commodore@smsa.com



Well Members it's that time where I get to bid the role of SMSA Commodore adieu. My last actions are to handover the role to my successor Russell Miller and wish him well in steering the club for the next year. I have signed on to assist him in being the Membership Chair so I am not going away.

The Commodore is a surprisingly complex position where you get to make some decisions alone, but most are board decisions. So my thanks goes out to my other volunteer officers and directors who make up the board for their efforts on the club's behalf. I've had the privilege of working with a group of strong organized ladies in Laura Stanley, Robin Witte, Barb Whited, and Jacki Meiser who all made the job easier. Thanks to David Meiser, Jim Whited, Scott Patterson and Scott Roland for the multiple years of effort on our behalf. My apologies to those volunteers I haven't named but whose efforts make a big difference to the clubs wellbeing.

Our volunteer chairs are the key implementers of the clubs programs and they deserve not just my thanks but yours also. They do it for the membership all of whom have sailing as the major objective. Russell and his team have a few chair positions to fill, so help him out and either step up and grab one or say yes when asked.

Hoping you had a great holiday season whichever one/s you celebrate.

THANK YOU ALL

John

MARINE WEATHER CLASS

(ASA 119)



**AMERICAN
SAILING**



*Kinetic
Sailing*

Weather is the greatest factor affecting ALL mariners. Learn the basic principles of marine weather, take observations, interpret traditional weather charts, use the latest tools and apps. Apply the information for local, coastal and offshore voyages, to make your time on the water as safe and efficient as possible. This 4-day course combines lecture, video, hands-on practice, and an offshore voyage weather planning practical exercise. Max 25 students for full engagement.

COURSE DETAILS

- Course Length: 4 days
- Date: Mar 21-22 & 28-29, 2026
- Time: 0900-1700 (219 +1hr)
- Venue: Live Zoom with audible & visual Q&A
- Cost: ASA 119 \$495, Combo ASA 119/219 \$650 (includes text & presentation books, certification material)

Taught by Capt Lisa Batchelor Frailey: Marine Meteorologist, Oceanographer, Ocean Passage Maker, USCG Master & ASA Master Instructor.

CONTACT FOR
MORE DETAILS

SAIL SOLOMONS
410-326-4917 | info@sailsi.com
KINETIC SAILING
410-474-7844 | lisa@kineticsail.com

REGISTER
ONLINE



A Message from your Commodore Elect, Russell Miller...

SMSA Members,

Your 2026 Officers appreciate the trust you have given us and have been preparing for the new year. This month's Clew article is being written by current Commodore John Blaney. Last month John did an excellent job of explaining the budget process, which we are working diligently to complete and hope to approve at our first Board of Directors meeting in January.

One of my priorities during the election was education, and I am pleased to announce that our club will host a US Sailing Basic Race Management Seminar on January 25th (see page 7 for more information). This seminar is a precursor to an advanced Race Management education series offered by US Sailing to be held later this winter. Hosting this event affords our club an opportunity to assume a leadership role outside the Solomons area as we open our doors and welcome other clubs who want to attend this national level education series.

Vice Commodore Randy Gross will host the January 25th event. Information, including a sign up link is on page 7 of the Clew, as well as on our website. Any questions can be emailed to Randy at vicecommodore@smsa.com.

During the winter season, we intend to host several other educational sessions that will include basic sailing, racing rules, and some advanced racing skills starting on January 17th. This series is intended to end with Dan Trammell hosting a Round Table rules discussion where we will use a protest format to discuss how the racing rules apply. Should you have any specific topics you would like us to address, please feel free to share your suggestions at training@smsa.com.

Commodore Elect
Russell Miller

Racing Basics, a Precursor to the US Sailing Course

Saturday, January 17, 2026 @ 1pm

Led by Randy Gross, the plan is to review basic sailing, polar graph, start sequence and rules that apply, basic upwind tactics, rules on the upwind legs, mark roundings and rules that apply, down wind tactics and the finish.

The goal is to provide a broad brush review and get folks up to speed for the January 25th US Sailing Basic Race Management Seminar and for Dan Trammell's Racing Rules session on March 14th.

This is not intended as a deep dive, but to see the current understanding by our racers and determine what other training can be offered in the future.

SMSA Annual Gala and Awards Banquet

The Greatest Event Off the Water!



Saturday, February 7th, 2026
Olde Breton Inn
5:30PM - 9:30PM

An evening to celebrate our love of sailing, enjoy some music, acknowledge the hard working volunteers and hand out a few awards

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres 5:30 p.m.
Buffet Dinner: 6:30 p.m.
2025 Awards Presentations following Dinner

Buffet Selections:

Round of Beef with carver, au jus and horseradish
Stuffed Chicken Breast
Southern Maryland Crab Balls
Dinner includes Garden Salad, Red Roasted Potatoes, Long Grain Wild Rice,
Whole Green Beans, Dinner Rolls, Tea and Coffee

Tickets: \$80 per person; RSVP with payment by February 3rd, info at www.smsa.com

Seating capacity limited to 120 people. Get your tickets early!

Featuring fun dance music with a DJ

Cash Bar available for drink purchases.

Make it a Night to Remember!

Questions? Email social@smsa.com or call 443-684-SMSA (7672) and leave a message and we will return your call.



Basic Race Management Seminar at Southern Maryland Sailing Association

Sunday: January 25, 2026 (1-day)

[Enroll Now](#)

There are 25 available slots

[Southern Maryland Sailing Association](#)

PO Box 262

Solomons, MD 20688-0262

Contact: [Randy Gross](#)

Instructor: [Sharon Hadsell](#)

IN-PERSON Basic Race Management Seminar hosted by Southern Maryland Sailing Association and Herrington Harbour Sailing Association.

The seminar will be held at Southern Maryland Sailing Association
14490 Solomons Island Road, Solomons, MD.

The seminar consists of One In-Person session
Sunday, January 25, 2026. 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

There is approximately 90-120 minutes of REQUIRED pre-course work prior to the In-Person session. Attendance is required to complete and pass the course. Please be sure to download the Racing Rules App at: <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/the-racing-rules-of-sailing-2025-2028/>

About 10 days before your course begins, you will receive an email from Canvas Free for Teachers, inviting you to participate in the course through Canvas, US Sailing's online learning platform. Please click the "Get Started" link to complete your profile in Canvas and access the required course materials.

The lead instructor will email you with additional course information.

US Sailing course registration fee: \$40. A discounted US Sailing special introductory membership is available for first-timers during the registration process.

Lunch will be available for pre-order (Blue Wind). Go to www.smsa.com to pre-order. Contact info@smsa.com for questions.

Registration closes Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Walk-In registrations are NOT allowed.

JUNIOR

Kati Keith

Junior Chair

junior@smsa.com



Settling in for Winter? How about Next Summer?

We're over the holidays but just getting into real winter (or at least what passes for it around here), but we may want to start planning for next summer – specifically Sailing Camp at SMSA!

In Summer 2026, we will be offering 7 weekly sessions from June 22nd through August 7th. Sailing camp is here at our wonderful SMSA facility from 9 AM to 4 PM. We welcome beginning and experienced sailors ages 8 to 16. This year we will again offer a discount for campers attending multiple weeks of camp.

Registration will open for SMSA regular, young adult, and emeritus members in the middle of January for all members and the general public the beginning of February. For more information, visit our website, www.smsa.com, and look for the Junior Camps tab. Any other questions, please contact the Junior Chair, Kati Keith, at junior@smsa.com.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM



Rebecca Wingate

High School Program Chair

hssailing@smsa.com

The high school and middle school sailors spent the month of December getting back to their schoolwork and other activities after a busy fall sailing season! Sailors have been spotted at the club on various occasions, playing Dungeons & Dragons, sailing in Freeze Your Bucc Off, and participating in the Solomons Christmas Walk.

Congratulations to Nolan Wingate, who won the Freeze Your Bucc Off regatta, sailing with Bill Shoemaker, and to Tommy Birchfield and Colt Touchton who participated in a club 420! Later that day, a group from the sailing team decorated Barba Roja for the boat parade during the Solomons Christmas Walk. Tommy Birchfield, Colt Touchton, Ryan Deibler, Nolan Wingate, and Annabelle Yurko helped to decorate and sail in the boat parade. Thanks to Steve Birchfield and crew who made this sail happen!



Crusty Crab Dive Services, LLC, maintaining vessels in the SOMD area.

Crusty Crab Dive Services started as a passion and hobby for Phil Sibley Jr. Phil began boating at an early age and has been sailing for 10 years, once he completed his dive certifications, he started maintaining his own boats hulls throughout the year.



We offer the following services:



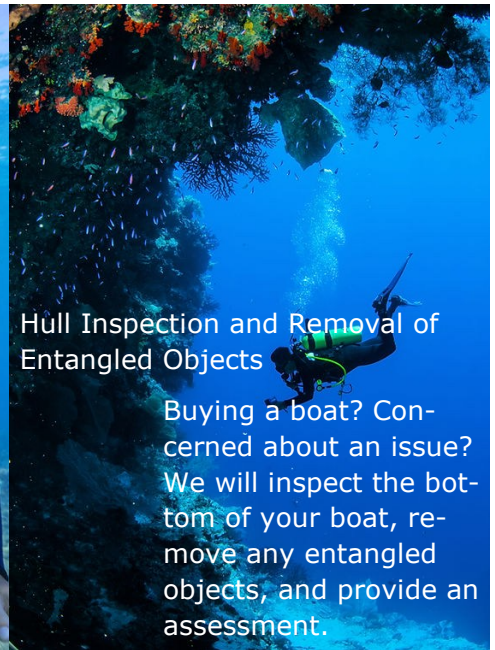
Hull & Bottom Cleaning Plans

Buying a boat? Concerned about an issue? We will inspect the bottom of your boat and provide an assessment.



Hull & Bottom Single Cleanings

Maintain your hull and lengthen your bottom paint by keeping your hull cleaned throughout the year.



Hull Inspection and Removal of Entangled Objects

Buying a boat? Concerned about an issue? We will inspect the bottom of your boat, remove any entangled objects, and provide an assessment.



Protecting Maryland's Waterways in SOMD



For more information contact:

Philip Sibley Jr.

Lexington Park, MD 20653

(c) 484-.390-.4044

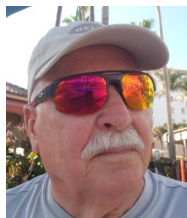
CrustyCrabDiveServicesSOMD@gmail.com

Or check out their website:

<https://www.crustycrabdiveservicesomd.com/>



KEELBOAT RACING



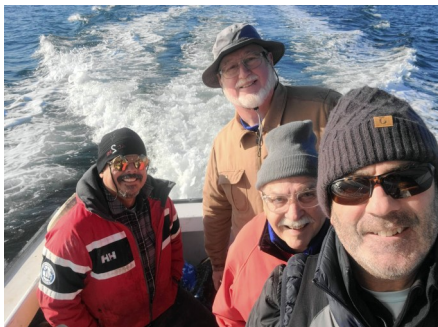
Larry Ray & Tom Moulds

Keelboat Race Co-Chairs

keelboatrace@smsa.com



You know that the Keelboat season is officially over when the river race marks are retrieved and onshore for cleanup and repairs. Thanks to Randy Gross, Shawn Stanley, Kevin Pachas and Larry Ray for a job well done.



The Keelboat Co-chairs held an open forum feedback session December 3 with excellent attendance and good feedback. Everyone should review the new calendar for next year related to the race schedule. Discussions centered around the following topics/ideas:

- How can we aggressively advertise the free races on our race schedule to encourage new participants and overall participation.
- Change some of the races to pursuit type races.
- All members should try to attract boats from outside of the club to participate whenever possible, particularly for the Invitational and Summer events.
- Consider more ways to encourage existing members who are not racing to become part of the racing fleet, particularly by personal contact from current participants.
- What are some ways we can build the Non-Spin fleet.

These are just some of the highlights from the meeting. More to come later.

We would like to thank everyone for volunteering and providing great support for the Keelboat program this past season.

Wishing everyone the best for this Holiday Season and a Happy and prosperous New Year!

Best to you all and thanks for what you do.

Larry and Tom



THE SOCIAL SCENE

Paige Smith, Chair

social@smsa.com



Happy New Year! Here's to a great 2026! We hope that everyone enjoyed the holiday season with family and friends. The SMSA clubhouse was quite festive and eventful in December with a fun, chilly and windy sailing event, Freeze Your Bucc Off, the Annual Christmas Dinner and the Solomons Christmas Walk and Open House. The clubhouse was adorned with green and red and many twinkling lights for our Annual Christmas dinner. We had close to 85 attendees and members brought delicious salads, side dishes and desserts. The following week, at the Open House, we had a steady stream of guests for mulled cider and cookies. Creative boat building occurred in the back room while waiting for the boat parade on the Pax! Many thanks to all the volunteers that made each event successful.



Check out the January and February calendar to see what is happening at the club as we begin the new year with sailing and membership activities! This year the Gala and Awards is scheduled for Saturday, February 7th and will be held at The Olde Breton Inn. Reservations are required for this event (see page 6 for details). Please contact Paige Smith at social@smsa.com to help with Gala preparations, to include baking and decorating, gala table prep and cleanup. There are TWO Gala Committee meetings scheduled in January (January 21st and 26th) at the clubhouse. These meetings will help us organize and prep for a beautiful and successful gala!

* Back by popular demand: Wednesday Trivia Nights!! First Trivia Night is January 14th 6 - 9pm.



Freeze Your Bucc Off! 2025

For well over a decade now the SMSA Buccaneer fleet has been hitting the water in December to close out the year in style (what kind of style, we're not sure yet, but it's definitely a style).

Over the last few years we've opened the event to "similar" boats & crews. By which we mean...you've got sails right? Sixteen teams hit the water this December on what turned out to be a warm day, with sunshine and air temps in the low 40's, wind gusts into the mid teens and water that was still liquid in most of the area.

The regatta is designed for maximum action in minimal time. We know December sailing is challenging and digits get cold fast so racing begins and ends at the docks with minimal down time. Race 1 starts at noon at the docks, the "Last Race" ends at the bar, no time wasted on formalities. No Starts after 3pm so everyone can get back and catch the Army-Navy game. Fun from the go and until you're gone.



The first race of the series begins at the SMSA docks with RC sighting the line and sounding the starting signal from the T-Dock behind the clubhouse. It's a one way reach out to the river where the finish line is already set with RC on station just outside of the creek. How did they manage to start and finish in separate places? The world may never know. Today it was a reaching race, boats inches from one another most of the way, as the starting line is awfully short for 16 boats, and the narrow strip out of the harbor doesn't give much room for maneuvering. The wind most of the time shifting you

Continued on page 14

from close hauled to beam reaches. Inches separate catching a lucky puff and pulling ahead or being left behind. The islands, docks and moored boats all create narrow channels and vortices for the wind. Each an opportunity to break free or be stuck.



Clarke McKinney & Scott Patterson (Bucc 5218) got an early lead with a great start off the line, and held firmly most of the way, giving up the lead just before reaching the docks by the "Rachel Carson" research vessel. They were not giving up that easily though, and took a surprisingly favorable lane by sailing tightly against the windward side of the channel somehow avoiding the wind shadow of the research facility docks, then maxing out boat speed on the final beam reach to the finish line securing the first win of any

race on this day.

Races 2-4 were short course two lap windward-leeward style races similar to SMSA's typical Thursday night races. Each lasting about 30 minutes, and adding the joy of some very cool water splashing at you. We had exciting conditions in the river as the gusts were in the mid teens most of the afternoon, with the 'light' races averaging over 9 knots of windspeed. Vladimir Eremeev *smoked* the fleet in races 2 and 3 with his newest hot rod "Super Sonic". Super Sonic is a Nacra F17 catamaran that he's been fitting out for an Everglades Challenge run this upcoming spring, so it was really great to see him out making it work so smoothly. Keep an eye out, he'll be hard to miss. I'm willing to bet it will be the only yellow beach cat solo sailing at 20+ knots across the river this winter. Mark Witte & Hali Kilbourne won race 4 putting it all together and showing what can happen when you simply sail smoothly (and faster).



I don't know how busy the RC was pouring hot chocolate that day, but I know our boat definitely took that pit stop before race 5 to recharge. My feet were getting numb since I left my waterproof socks at home and I was just starting to remember where this regatta got its name. Yes, RC had hot chocolate ready for racers. Preparation is key. (Thanks Kristi and Cora Yurko for making that happen)



Race 5 is the "last race" and it's a real unique one. As the official start of the race is whenever your boat retires from all other racing for the day. The start line is wherever you are when you turn in, and the finish line is the bar at SMSA, where you have to place your hand before your competitors. Since the race 'starts' once you've retired from other racing for the day, the conventional RRS is out of the window. You still need to follow the basic rules of the road and avoid collisions, but there are

no marks to honor, no rule 42, just get back any way you can. It's a real race...it can make or break your chances at the prize for the day and many sprints across the gravel, down the road, from the neighboring docks and anywhere crews can get a foot ashore to gain advantage have been used as leverage to get in. This year's winner of the "last race" was John Herbig & Aaron Shiffer who made the wise decision to turn in after race 2 and get to dryer shores.



This year's overall winner of Freeze Your Bucc Off! is everyone who stayed home and kept warm. No -- scratch that -- we're excited to pass the major award over to Nolan Wingate and Bill Shoemaker who once again showed us that being fast is good, but being consistently fast is great. Nolan and Bill were never first across the line in the regatta, but consistently were at the top and kept it together sailing smart, and very fast. As a result they will have their name ~~forever engraved on a precious piece of sailing history~~ *written in sharpie on an old chamber pot.*



We've already scheduled the 2026 Freeze Your Bucc Off! for December 12, come join us it's definitely better than watching TV on a Saturday afternoon.

Below: Nolan & Bill showing us what fast looks like! (Left) The magnificent prize (Right)



FYBO—Overall Results

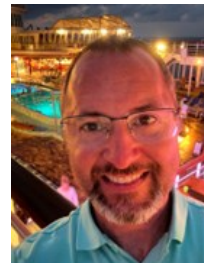
	Sailors	Sail Number	Boat Name	Club/Org	Net	Total	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	Nolan Wingate Bill Shoemaker	USA 52	Red Zeppelin	SMSA	21	21	6	5	2	2	6
2	Douglass Abbott Jimmy Yurko	USA 5233	Dark Horse	SMSA	23	23	2	7	6	3	5
3	Jolie Homsher Russell Miller	USA 5274	Jolly Roger	SMSA	23	23	3	4	3	6	7
4	Mark Witte Hali Kilbourne	USA 158	Water Rat	SMSA	24	24	7	3	4	1	9
5	Vladimir Eremeev	USA TBD	Super Sonic	Smsa	25	25	4	1	1	4	15
6	Mark Gyorgy Nichole Doub	USA 5209	Kick 'em Jenny	SMSA	27	27	8	2	5	8	4
7	Clarke McKinney Scott Patterson	USA 5218	Frozen	SMSA	28	28	1	6	8	5	8
8	John Durniak Adam Kimbal	USA 5450	FS-5450	SMSA	40	40	10	10	10	7	3
9	Robert David George David	USA 520	Black and Tan	SMSA	42	42	5	8	7	9	13
10	Alison Banholzer Chris Bates	USA 5279	Spanish Mackerel	SMSA	47	47	9	9	9	10	10
11	John Herbig AAARRRgggh-on Shiffer	USA 5035	Heckle and Gybe	SMSA	59	59	12	11	RET-18	DNS-17	1
12	Jeff Carlsen Glenna Kory	USA 10029	Sea Spirit	SMSA	61	61	11	13	RET-18	DNS-17	2
13	Dan Bowman	USA 438	Pilfered Flamingo	SMSA	66	66	16	12	11	11	16
14	Kevin Pachas Steve Birchfield	USA 445	Ricky Bobby	SMSA	66	66	15	14	13	13	11
15	Thomas Birchfield Colt Touchton	USA 10	Cluster Duck	SMSA	67	67	14	15	12	14	12
16	Brian Foveaux Nicole Foveaux	USA 5107	None	SMSA	70	70	13	DNF-17	14	12	14

CRUISERS CORNER

Phil Sibley

Cruising Chair

cruise@smsa.com



The annual Cruise Planning Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 10, 2026 at 9:00am, and a continental breakfast will be served. Join us as the cruising plans for the upcoming season will be discussed and laid out. If you think you want to join in on the cruising fun in 2026, please plan on attending.

GO CRUSING!!



SMALLBOAT RACING



Steven Birchfield

Smallboat Race Chair

smallboatrace@smsa.com

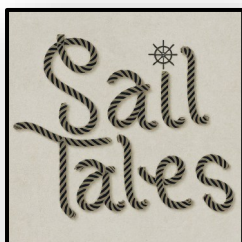
Hello SMSA Smallboat sailors! There will be a feedback meeting at SMSA on Friday, January 30 at 6:30 PM. We'll review the 2025 season and discuss the draft 2026 schedule. If you can't attend, please email your input in advance to smallboatrace@smsa.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Asymmetrical spinnaker/genaker/drifter for 35' Hunter Legend - \$500

Advent asymmetrical sail complete with lines, shackles and dousing sock and sail bag. Rarely used. The luff is 32 ft., the foot is 22 ft. and leech is 43-1/2 ft. There are two small patches which are visible in the last photo.

Contact Russ Fink at rfinklegal@gmail.com, 757-288-1339.



We invite all members to submit an article, story, photos, or anything they want to share with their fellow sailors! Please send all submissions to clew@smsa.com by the 20th of each month or contact us if you have any questions.

Condolences

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of former SMSA member Catherine "Katie" Kangas. Arrangements are pending and we will pass them along once they are published.



Southern Maryland Sailing Association
P.O. Box 262, Solomons, MD 20688

Place
Stamp



The Clew

JANUARY 2026

Volume 56 Number 1



Discounts at West Marine—Solomons

SMSA Members can receive a discount at our local West Marine during checkout. Just tell them you are an SMSA Member to receive the discount. West Marine may ask for your name which will be checked against our membership roster and a photo ID may be requested.

Please note: the West Marine Pro discount is only available at the Solomons West Marine.

Don't miss out on this great SMSA benefit!

