

RAG-P T



*Kennebec River Sail and Power Squadron's monthly newsletter
Unit of the United States Power Squadron*

CHRISTMAS 2011

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to you. I hope you receive everything you wanted for Christmas. Was one of those gifts a VHF radio with (DSC) digital selective calling? Bring it to the February dinner meeting at the Gardiner Lions Club. Lynn Mecham is going to be giving a presentation on the Power Squadron's DSC seminar. Steve Hayes will be all set up to register you for your MSSI number. We'll also be able to power up your radio and help you install it. If you haven't updated your radio, you may want to think about it — DSC is a notable safety improvement and convenient too.

Steve has acquired a group MSSI number for the squadron, which is derived from his ship station license. When programmed into your VHF with DSC and other KRSPS member's radios, it will let you put out a message targeted to our members. I'll let him explain how it would work; I'm in awe of those who understand the workings of electronics and computers. It was Lynn Mecham and John Horton who helped me with putting my MSSI number in. Having these and other talented individuals in the squadron are an asset. The fact that they share their gifts and abilities is awesome.

We hope to provide more hands on seminars in the future. Do you have something that you would like to see presented? How about something that you could present? Please contact Steve Mclaughlin and he'll get you in the schedule.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone for the cards and phone calls of sympathy concerning the passing of my dad and mom. We shared a love for being on the water and I'm sure my memories with them on it will be relived every time I go out.

Hope to see you at the next dinner meeting.

Bert Glines, AP

KRSPS CALENDAR

Monday, January 9, 2012

Exec. Board Meeting
Hayes Law Offices
One Weston Court, Augusta

Friday, January 13, 2012

6 p.m. Social, 7 p.m. Dinner
Rolandau's Restaurant
Auburn, Maine

Pamela Parker of the DEP

Monday, February 6, 2012

Exec. Board Meeting,
East Coast Mortgage,
316 Center St., Auburn

Friday, February 10 2012

6 p.m. Social, 7 p.m. Dinner
Dinner at Gardiner Lion's Club

DSC radios & MMSI acquisition & programming

Monday, March 5, 2012

Exec. Board Meeting
Hayes Law Offices
One Weston Court, Augusta

Friday, March 9 2012

6 p.m. Social, 7 p.m. Dinner
Rolandau's Restaurant
Auburn, Maine

NEED A NAMEPLATE OR BURGEE?

If you need a new name tag for meetings, please let Steve Hayes know. It's easier and cheaper to do a group purchase through our vendor. You have the option of regular pins, the traditional studs or a magnetic mount that does not create holes. It's also been a while since we did a KRSPS burgee order, so if you are interested, please let Steve or Malcolm know so we can coordinate that too.

CRUISING WITH ADMIRAL BOB

By: Larry Irwin

On Saturday, July 30, 2011, Admiral Bob Sawyer and I sailed my 34 foot sloop, Solitude, out of Rockland Harbor. We had a favorable breeze. Steady at fifteen knots and out of the west. The sky was a crystal clear, bright blue. The temperature was in the upper 70's. Our destination that day was Tenant's Harbor. There, we would join other boats from the Kennebec River Sail and Power Squadron. It was the first day of an incredible sailing trip.

That was four months ago. Since that time a number of our squadron members have asked me what it was like having Bob Sawyer aboard Solitude for nine days. You see, I usually sail alone. I rather enjoy my time alone ... my solitude. Just me, the elements and, of course, Solitude. Ironic, that when I first saw my current vessel she had already been named Solitude. Kismet, I guess. Ah, but I digress. Bear with me while I do some more.

I took sailing lessons from Bob. He had a 28 foot Kelt at the time and was operating out of Freeport. I vividly recall the second day of my lessons. I think there were three lessons total. It was foggy that second day. Very foggy. It was just the two of us. We got underway, motoring out of his slip, into the Harraseeket River, and out into Casco Bay. At some point, early in the day's sailing lesson, Bob went below. I was at the helm. I had no idea where I was or where I was heading. Couldn't see a damn thing and his boat, Mary, Mary, wasn't equipped with a GPS chart plotter. So, I just held an easterly course line (I knew west wouldn't work) held my breath, and waited for Bob to return to the cockpit. That was about five minutes later. It was a very long

five minutes !! I'm sure it was just Bob's way of testing me. He probably wanted to find out how much mettle I had.

Anyway, I found myself on Saturday, July 30, 2011, embarking on a nine day journey with the man who taught me the basics of sailing in 1993. It remained to be seen whether I would be able to learn, and incorporate the intangibles of sailing. You know, instinct, intuition ... one's ability to use those intangibles, and other skills, to get from point A to point B safely. To be sure, we all learn 'red, right, return.' We learn how to read a tide chart and a basic navigational chart. We learn how to use the compass and steer a course line. In fact, there are many basic

boating things we learn to do. But are we all capable of incorporating both the internal and external cues that constantly bombard us while underway? Maybe not. And here I was, sailing with Bob Sawyer ... Admiral Sawyer, a man who honed those skills over many years of sailing. Truth be told,

even at the ripe young age of eighty-six Bob didn't miss a single cue during the entire trip.

For nine glorious days, my good friend and highly respected mentor, Bob Sawyer, gently and patiently assisted me in honing my own skills as a sailor and navigator. He probably didn't realize it while we were underway. But at every opportunity I watched and observed as he tended to the business of sailing Solitude. It's amazing how much you can learn just by watching a pro in action. Bob would literally read the wind, making subtle, but important changes as he did. He was attentive to changing patterns ... in the air, the sea, the clouds. He could coax a reluctant Solitude through the

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gentlest of breezes and make her dance with delight while she feasted on gusty northwesterlies.

Our daily routine was fairly mundane. I was almost always up first. I'd have my coffee and do some reading while the Admiral slept in. When he rose from his slumber he'd fix his breakfast: peanut butter on untoasted bread and chocolate soy milk. I'd remind him to take his meds. He'd remind me to take mine. We'd socialize with some of the other boats, maybe go ashore, and eventually prepare to get underway. While underway our watches lasted 30 minutes. Bob's skill at spotting and avoiding lobster pots was a sharp as ever. And, he was never shy about reminding me to trim the sails when necessary. We only reluctantly used Solitude's auxiliary power, which is why we were often among the

very last to arrive at our intended destination. And, when fellow boaters met with unexpected challenges along the way Bob was quick to offer his experience and insight to try to remedy sometimes difficult situations. He did that when Solitude picked up a lobster pot and was unable to shake it loose. He did it again when Miranda Moon II became disabled while crossing Jericho Bay and had to be towed to the night's anchorage, arriving just in time for the darkness of night to clutch us to her bosom. At the end of each day's journey, after the evening dinner and camaraderie, Admiral Sawyer and I would retreat to Solitude's cabin for the night. And before turning in I'd remind Bob to take his meds: he'd remind me to take mine.

I had many 'favorite moments' during my nine

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[A Renforth Boat Club](#)

[Christmas poem](#)

December 3rd, 2011

by Rev. Eric Phinney

The Boats are all wrapped
The bilges all drained
There are stands and cribwork
all secure and maintained

Cushions and tea cups
Wine glasses and sunscreen
all put away waiting for
sunshine,
and a first mate to obey.

But now the days are short
The nights are long
there will be ice in the harbor
and fishing shacks to put on.

Some boats have gone
Others are new.
Some captains and mates
Have found their shores too.

The season of Advent
is here right now
It is the count down to
Christmas
and remembrance of just how

It's a season for the giving of
thanks
And the pondering life
It is a time to end hunger,
violence and strife.

This is the day
and this is the hour
When God himself
made his advisory cower

He walked in our midst
He traveled our roads
He sailed our great ships
And he listened up close

He shared with us
his thoughts and his heart
He modeled a life
that he could impart.

Jesus a savior
A fishermen's friend
Stands in our midst
on this night once again.

(Continued from page 3)

days with The Admiral, as I've come to call him with the utmost affection and respect. My absolute most favorite of all the favorites, and a prime example of how Bob still possesses many of his skills, his knowledge, and his instincts when it comes to sailing is appropriate.

It was the last day of the cruise. A Saturday. That particular Saturday greeted us with overcast skies and fog. We were in Perry Creek. Most of the boats that had spent the night in Perry Creek had departed by 9 am. Bob and I were among the last to leave. We both wanted the wind to rise up some. It was forecasted to do just that. By 10:30 the breeze had come 'a knockin' on Solitude's hull.

I raised the mainsail. Bob had the wheel. I went forward and dropped the mooring pennant. Solitude grabbed hold of the light breeze, Bob pointed her bow to the Creek's entrance. We ghosted out of Perry Creek under her main and genoa. No motor. Bob and I had a mutual (and unspoken) goal that day. **NO TURNING THE MOTOR ON!**

We headed north, entering the Fox Isle Thorofare before turning west. The breeze was light and very fluky for the first hour. At times we barely moved, especially since the current was against us, flowing west to east. We were heading east to west. Squeezing everything we could out of that light breeze we tacked our way through and across the Thorofare. Thom



Hoffman and Louise Hamilton were sailing close by, aboard Miranda Moon II. They too were struggling to find the breeze. As both boats became more exposed to the southwest, the wind's direction, Miranda Moon, II and Solitude began picking up speed, slicing confidently through the water. The breeze was quickly filling in, becoming steady at 15 knots. Just as quickly, the fog thickened.

Solitude was approaching a red nun, one located near the entrance to Southern Harbor. The water shoals up to the north of that nun. I was at the helm. I was pinching to windward, trying to get as close to the wind as possible ... trying to pass the nun on the southern side, keeping it to starboard. Call me lazy but I didn't want to tack again if I didn't have to. We were approaching that buoy fast when I realized I wouldn't make it. I shouted to Bob that I was going to have to tack again, exposing us to a sea of lobster pots in the process. Miranda Moon II had already done so. I told Bob to get set up for the tack. He looked at me and shouted: "I think there's enough water on the northern side of that nun. Keep it to port." Now, taking that nun on the northern side, keeping it to my port, was the wrong side. Plus, it was low tide. The margin of error was small." Are you sure?" I shouted. "Well, I'm pretty sure," Bob responded with his trademark smirk. That was good enough for me.



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I checked the chart plotter, confirming it with my paper chart. Yes. There appeared to be a wide enough sliver of safe water on the northern side of the red nun, even at low tide, to get by. I fell off the wind by about ten degrees, making Solitude much happier in the process as she gobbled up the building breeze. We passed by the nun. My eyes shifted from the chart plotter to the compass, to the paper chart, to the depth meter, and back. We passed over the gunky stuff without a problem. The depth meter never showed less than 8 feet of water as we did. Admiral Robert Sawyer, a man who has been sailing those waters for over sixty years, remembered that the water was safe there. He didn't even have to check the charts. Instinct. Knowledge. Intuition. Yes, perhaps luck sometimes too. But Bob's vast knowledge of boating, sailing especially, remains a formidable body of knowledge to this very day. I am in awe of his skills today, just as I was when I first met him, now almost twenty years ago.

The fog lifted as we passed the monument marking the western entrance to the Thorofare. We sailed to Rockland without incident. The wind stayed steady at between 15 and 20 knots. There was no additional tacking once we left the Thorofare and were in open water. It was a straight shot to the inner harbor and my mooring. As usual, we took turns at the helm ... 30 minutes each. In no time at all we passed the Rockland Breakwater, leaving the lighthouse to stern. On the final approach to the mooring Bob had the wheel. As he brought us in for the landing I went forward to retrieve the pennant. "Got it ! Perfect landing,

Admiral." I shouted back to Bob, who was still at the helm. He had sailed us off the mooring in Perry Creek and onto my mooring in Rockland Harbor. We didn't use the motor at all ! Admittedly, it's not unusual for a sailboat to sail off of and onto a mooring. It's almost expected. It's a sailboat !! But to watch Admiral Sawyer perform this sometimes difficult task is to watch fine art come to life. More knowledge to take with me now that the trip was coming to an end.

I have many fond memories of those nine days with my good friend, my teacher, and my mentor, Admiral Robert Sawyer. It was great



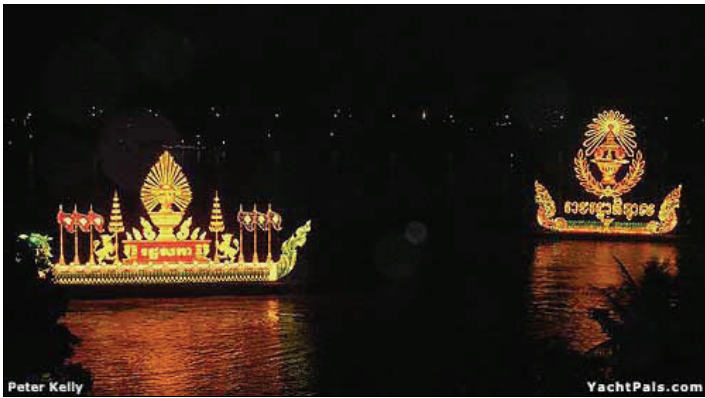
having someone with his sailing experience at the helm whenever I was off watch. I didn't have to worry about a thing. I could relax knowing Solitude was in the capable hands of Admiral Sawyer. And, if he is looking to crew for someone during next years cruise I hope he once again considers Solitude. She, and I, would love to have him aboard.

So, to those who wonder what it was like having the Admiral aboard Solitude during the August 2011 cruise the answer is short and simple: It was awesome !!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YACHTPALS!

<http://yacht pals.com/christmas-boats-7090>





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Your editor made the mistake of showing Larry's fine article to its subject in advance of publication. The aforesaid subject felt compelled to pen a response for inclusion in this edition. Only because it is the self-described Capt'n Bob (the promotion to Admiral in Larry's article is apparently only on s/v Solitude) is the following included.

I have just recently finished absorbing the latest Rag-Pot articles; specifically the piece entitled "CRUISING WITH ADMIRAL BOB."

I think your readers should be aware of the fact that the author, although a good friend, accomplished sailor, gifted guitarist and some kind of a lawyer is inclined to exaggerate on occasions. This appears to be one of those occasions. I should probably inform him that flattery will get him nowhere and will only increase my hat size.

He was accurate in describing my breakfast menu, but he was definitely exaggerating in regard to the capabilities of the "Awesome Admiral."

I do take pride in knowing that I contributed to the education of this skilled sailor. Many times on our power Squadron cruises this question would arise. "Where's Larry?" The answer might have been, "The last we saw of him, he was tacking off toward Metinicus or somewhere else." He is not inclined to follow his fellow sailors in a direct route from anchorage A to B, but prefers to get in more sailing time and distance by sailing off in "Solitude" and in solitude.

As a result, he typically arrives at the designated anchorage late when mother nature is turning off the wind fan. However, it is usually early enough to join "Happy Hour" and to sip and sometimes tip a little wine. And, his presence is always enjoyed because of his sense of humor and evening guitar concerts.

Captain Larry was kind enough to include this old sailor as crew on the recent Power Squadron Cruise which I greatly appreciate and will remember fondly until the day that I flat line.

Capt'n Bob Sawyer

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Review:

***THE SAILING SHIPS OF NEW ENGLAND,
1607-1907* BY JOHN ROBINSON & GEORGE
FRANCIS DOW, MARINE RESEARCH SOCIETY (1922).**

It's winter and most sailing is done from the armchair with our imagination. Time travel is no problem, and a visit back to the age of sail is well-spent.

Shortly after the close of the age of sail, Robinson (curator of the Marine Room, Peabody Museum of Salem) and Dow (Curator of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities) determined to produce a volume that summarized and pictorially presented the best of the New England vessels and nautical instruments. While (quite amazingly) you can still buy a hardcover or paperback version on Amazon, the book is also readily available as a free electronic book. Several electronic (and free) formats are available at this link: http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6648560M/The_sailing_ships_of_New_England_1607-1907.

This is not a dry recitation of what boats were built where and when, although it appropriately starts with the construction of the *Virginia* at Popham in 1607. In a few short pages, they have covered the early history and moved into descriptions of the types of boats prevalent in New England: the pinnace, sloop, canoe, two-masted boat, pink, pinky & Cherbacco boat, ketch, whale boat, schooner, bilander, brig, hermaphrodite brig, brigantine, topsail schooner, the snow, etc. Each gets its own short description, including specific examples built by New England shipwrights. Life on board and nautical instruments (astrolabe, cross-staff, quadrant, sextant, log-line, sounding leads, charts, etc.) are given their due.

The book continues in print, however, because of its extensive collection and reproduction of ships pictures. Rare prior to

1800, the turn of the 19th century found accurate, detailed reproductions of ships in great demand. Hundreds populate these pages, each annotated with type, name, tonnage, place built, year and a bit of history (when known). Many were of paintings done in Europe, where artists were apparently more plentiful. Most are presented alphabetically by name, two per page in simple profile, but others depict dramatic moments.



Snow "America" of Marblehead, Archibald Selman, Master. on Monday, January 2, 1803

In truth, perusing the ships is a more leisurely process than reading the 67-page introduction. There is incredible variability. Surprises await with every turn of the electronic page – who knew ships were built in Freeport? A boat built in Newcastle is depicted in an oil painting made at Hong Kong, another of 1350 tons for the California trade is noted as “foundered in the China Sea.” #97 is the Flying Cloud of Boston, a gargantuan 1782 tons but one of the fastest clippers ever launched, achieving 433½ statute miles in one day’s sailing (why measured in “statute” and not “nautical” miles??)

It's a great read for a snowy day, adventuring on the high seas from the comfort of your rocking chair.



Kennebec River Sail & Power Squadron



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JANUARY DINNER MEETING

DATE: January 13, 2012

TIME: Social Hour 18:00 Meal 19:00

LOCATION: Rolandeau's Restaurant 775 Washington Street, Auburn.

SPEAKER: Pam Parker of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection will give a presentation on coastal no-discharge zones, boat pump-out facilities and environmental requirements on boat bottom preparation. The rules are changing, so don't miss this very important talk.

COST: \$20.00 PER MEAL

RESERVATIONS: *Contact Harold Wood at 623-1926 on or before 7:00 P.M. on November 8th. Sorry but it will not be possible to accept any reservations after this date. If you make a reservation and do not attend you will be charged for the meal as the Squadron is assessed the cost of the meal by the restaurants.*

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