

HIGHLAND YACHT CLUB

SOUNDINGS

February 2002

Commodore: Max Hailey
Vice Commodore: Donna Cayce
Secretary/Treasurer: Janie Turpin
Harbor Master: Don Jones
Port Captain: Kevin Baker
Newsletter Editor: Andy Myrick

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MARCH MEETING: March 11 at 6 p.m. at Rafael's in Tullahoma. See you there.

SPRING BANQUET: The annual HYC Spring Banquet was held on February 23 at the Lakeside Club on the base. I will not attempt to name all those present, but there was a good turn out. I always look forward to the Spring Banquet because sailing season is not far behind.

Remembrances of a Fall Afternoon

It was one of those unusually warm fall afternoons. The air had just enough nip to let you know that winter was not far away. The lake stood glassy smooth as if time was standing still. There was no motion outside of a few patches of small waves as a cat paw of wind would touch down to caress the surface. Occasionally Canada geese moved across the flat water to alight on yet another portion of the lake. Free spirits as they were and yet bound together in a common goal. The simple mystery of their intent was sheltered from insight by barriers common between all species of animal. They traveled with ease both in the water and the air alike. Their transition from one medium to another was not without struggle however. There was always that tentative moment when it was not clear that the passing would actually occur. The flapping of wings, the splashing of feet as their speed gathers finally transitions to graceful flight.

A short distance away the rhythmic sound of a halyard slapping against a mast appears incongruent with the near breathless air. I moved to the end of the dock in anticipation. A sailboat was to soon make an appearance from around the point. The bell like clanging continues as if a death knell were tolling. The day was not gray nor dreary but clear and crisp. The mountains in the distance appeared usually close, the shadows of the trees were darker than normal, the skies vivid blue. Rocking rhythmically to and fro as the helmsman sculled the boat. The motor was not functioning, as the sails would be useless to the task. Paddling and sculling were appropriate. Two friends were transporting the boat to the dock as a final act of friendship for a fallen member of our small sailing club. We once again had lost a member from our midst. This act was a right and fitting thing to do. Closer to me they came. "Will they ever make it" I thought? All it would take is a small adverse wind to negate their effort; but no winds would arrive. The boat made pitifully slow progress as the incessant clanging of the metal halyard against a metal mast continues to beat out its message.

The boat belonged to John, Jack to some. I was there on the day he first sailed it. It was one of those first shakedown cruises in which things often just don't go well. He and a friend had managed to rig the boat and seemed to have it under control. Not so as he related later. One part gave way, quickly followed by the mast, the gooseneck fitting and several sail slugs. I met them at the dock that day to provide a word or two of encouragement and to help them get it back on its trailer. Most first cruises seems to have some element of disaster. I remembered mine. Another former member of the club had helped me by literally leaping into the water, painter in tow, to save us from a

botched docking. These tests are not often life threatening. They are; however, just enough to remind the new skipper that sailing can and does have its moments of sheer terror. These moments readily point out how precarious our human condition is.

That trial for John and the boat was not the end as all could be and soon was repaired. The boat sailed again and again but with less frequency. Then a for-sale sign appeared and word soon spread that John was terminally ill. The boat remained in its slip. Occasionally we would go by and admire the lines of the small boat as she gathered dark mold and whatever other life-forms that seem to seek out the bottoms of all boats. It was a well-built craft perhaps more seaworthy than one might judge at first glance. But now it was moving through the water toward the dock, symbolically carrying its former owner through a transition period. We wish John a good flight now that his struggle to escape this earth is over.

Tom Bentley 2001

PLAQUE DEDICATION FOR CLIFF WURST: Motlow State Community College will be dedicating a plaque to Cliff Wurst on March 19 at noon at the Tullahoma campus in Simon Hall in the physics lab.

DUES ARE DUE: Commodore Hailey asked that I remind all (including me) that dues are due by April 1.

PAY YOUR DUES*DUES ARE DUE*PAY YOUR DUES* PAY YOUR DUES*DUES ARE DUE*PAY YOUR DUES*

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED: Congrats to those brave souls elected to office for the next term:

Commodore: Dawn Utley
Vice-commodore: Donna Cayce
Harbor Master: Matt Crawford
Port Captain: Tom Gillard
Race Program Director: Mike Wasner
Newsletter Editor: Chad Schnaer (just kidding...still stuck with me)
Air Force Liaison: Jeff Utley
Website guru: John Garibotte

PAY YOUR DUES*DUES ARE DUE*PAY YOUR DUES* PAY YOUR DUES*DUES ARE DUE*PAY YOUR DUES*

WISH US LUCK: Max Hailey, David Bergevin, Chad Schnaer, April Golden, Todd Browning, and myself have chartered a 43 foot Benteau that we plan to sail from Miami over to the Bahamas from March 2 to March 9. Hopefully, there will be a detailed story in the next newsletter.

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50K RACE ON KENTUCKY LAKE: Chad Schnaer, Janet Rogers, and Myself thought it would be fun to take my C22 up to Kentucky Lake for their annual 50k Regatta. The race started around 9:30 and there was only one other boat less than 30 feet long, and it was a J22. Our chances of a glorious victory were not looking good, but we had plenty of beer. It was a simple course. There was only one buoy, and it was about 15 miles or so up the river. We just had to round the buoy and come back. Sounded simple enough. Unfortunately, we had a head wind all the way to the buoy. Tack. Tack. Tack. About two hours in to the race, we still had visual contact with a few of the boats now on the horizon. Believe it or not, there were actually two boats behind us. They must have had a lot more beer than we did. By the time we rounded the first mark, most of the fleet was back at the yacht club discussing the days race. The second leg was an easy down wind run (Although, I had expected the wind to shift so that we had another upwind run on the way back). Our luck did not hold for long. The wind DIED about 3 miles from the finish.

The beer ran out about 4 miles from the finish. This was getting serious. We finally made radio contact with the committee boat that we could not find in the darkness, and they pointed us in the right direction. No. That's probably not legal, but they did not seem to mind. Besides, I think they were contemplating moving the finish line toward us. Like it matters when you finish 5 hours behind the rest of the fleet. In any event, we had a great time, but next time we are getting a bigger boat.

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