



THE DRUM



A Publication of the Seneca Sail & Power Squadron

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Report any errors or omissions to:
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Please join the Bridge in welcoming our newest members to the Seneca Sail & Power Squadron family!

- Frank & Cris Broderick, Family Members & Sail Students
- Nicolas Burdick, Junior Sailor
- Daniel Kingsley, Family Member, Seamanship Graduate & Sail Student
- Ken & Sherri Mansfield, Family Members and Seamanship Graduates
- Samuel Michel, Junior Sailor
- Nathan Slack, Junior Sailor

From The Commander

By Mark Erway, AP

View From The Bridge

On Saturday, 16 July, at 1745 Annie and I were approaching the Seneca State Park in Geneva eight hours after departing Watkins Glen. At 2200 rpm, our little Westerbeke diesel was giving us about 3.5 knots into the 10 knot wind coming directly on our nose. “Annie, I see the red marker and according to the chart we have to keep it on our port side.” We’ve got a cruiser and a party boat right on our tail and I feel bad about going so slowly in front of them. “When do you think we’ll see the State Park docks? The gal on the phone said go to the third aisle and turn in, and the slip will be on the left.” We finally start to figure out the landmarks as compared to the chart. We look over and see *Tomfoolery*, who had motored by us a couple hours back, she’s already in a slip and I holler out, “Hey Tom! Do you see slip 94?” A couple, sitting in chairs next to their boat at the end of the third pier overhear us and jump up from their chairs and point the way to our slip. As we gently motor in they help us get tied up. I love our boating family. “Whew, we made it!!!”

For Annie and I this was our first Rendezvous, and it was our very first transit to Geneva, making the trip in our new-to-us sailboat *F5*, a 1987 O’Day 272. The fickle wind was strengthening out of the north all day requiring us to motor most of the way, which was the only downside. Our little fleet was composed of four sailboats and five



power boats and after the Skippers’ meeting Saturday morning we were basically on our own until we reunited in Geneva, where Jim McGinnis graciously tendered us, with his outboard *Little Toot*, from our various moorings to the Crow’s Nest and back. We had a great evening despite the fact that 26 of us seemed overwhelm the already busy restaurant. We slept soundly and securely that night.

The Sunday morning sunrise was spectacular and Geneva bay was like glass. We decided to get an early start in case it was going to be another eight hours back to Watkins, so we motored out of the canal at 0800. As we glided along the perfectly smooth water, we noticed a familiar black and yellow sailboat on the hook, so we went over said, “Good morning” to Tim Waite and his sleepy crew on *Shimera*. They put in a heroic effort sailing up the lake, and pulled in about 2130 Saturday evening.

We continued to motor south on a calm and sunny day, not finding any wind until well below Peach Orchard. Our VHF crackled to life near Hector Falls as we heard the familiar voice of Ray Margeson on the *Hattie L* as he and

Mary welcomed us back home to Watkins Glen.

We pulled into our slip with a new feeling of accomplishment and gave each other a kiss and a high five. Annie and I were able to celebrate our accomplishment because of the encouragement, support and relationships from people in our squadron and the squadron education that we received. We're already talking about doing it again and look forward to other adventures on Seneca Lake and beyond.

Speaking of the Rendezvous, thank you to everyone who took part in making our portion of it a success and especially the Friday night BBQ at Clute Park. Enough tickets were sold to not only cover costs, but we went over the top and raised funds. Participants came from as far away as South Carolina (they trailered in), and others boated in from Watertown. Vessels ranged from a Heritage East 44 m/v to a Catalina 25 s/v. An enthusiastic contingent from the Watkins Glen Yacht Club (thank you Merrill and Carrie Sproul) joined us and I think we did pretty well over all.

So, what makes things happen in our squadron? People being involved and participating. Our Bridge is currently functioning without an Executive Officer or an Administrative Officer. Both of those positions are important to our future well being because they work with and support the other officers in fulfilling our purpose of education, civic service and boating together. We are over halfway through the year and soon we'll be talking about year-end happenings and with that we'll be looking for people to help us continue moving forward in 2017. Serving on the bridge is not a sentence, it's an opportunity and is part of your civic service.

Our strategic plan set out a simple goal of doing at least one event each year, which would engage not only the squadron members, but some measure of the public as well and that takes planning and involvement. Please help us be able to make boating possible for someone who comes to us and says, "Hey, that looks like fun. Can you show me how?"

Old Business

Update on my Sirius SOS C-1001 battery operated 'flare' which I purchased in Jacksonville from the Weems and Plath booth at the national conference. It had failed after only owning it for five months. Weems and Plath responded immediately and replaced the unit without cost. My new unit operates perfectly and I am a very happy customer. The Sirius company itself has a short-lived warranty, but the Weems and Plath gives it a life time warranty. That's a class act! As a Squadron member you get a 25% discount with Weems and Plath, bringing the unit cost to only \$75.00. Not bad when you only have to replace the batteries from time to time.



New Business

Now, looking ahead to the next three months, we will be having one more Bridge meeting this year, and that will take place on September 20th. After that we will have a Squadron Dinner Meeting on October 3rd, with Tom Alley presenting the Junior Sailing cruise (and all of its exciting happenings); and November 7th will be our year-end Squadron Dinner Meeting. As of right now we are negotiating to have those dinner meetings at Tags in Big Flats, and we are hoping for good attendance. We will NOT be meeting in December so that your calendars will be freed up for other holiday activities.

Regards,

- Cmdr. Mark
SV F5

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The Drum

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From the Education Officer

By Tom Alley, SN



Many years ago I remember that the “normal” mode of operations for your typical squadron was to have all sorts of classes and social activities during the fall, winter and spring and then

essentially take the summers off so that everyone could go boating. I think it’s fair to say that a significant fraction of squadrons still operate that way to this day.

That’s not the case for Seneca Sail & Power. In fact, summer is our “peak season” for educational activities. It’s not uncommon for us to run two, three or even four classes during the summer months so that we can make use of on-the-water time to augment our classroom presentations. The Junior Sailing Program also provides a rich experience for our young mariners to gain not just practical boating skills, but also to foster a passion for spending time out on the water.

Course Updates...

...Seamanship

Congratulations to our latest class of Seamanship graduates:

- Henry Cabezas
- Howard Cabezas
- Meg Cabezas
- Dan Kingsley
- Ken Mansfield
- Sherri Mansfield
- Jim McGinnis
- Sam Michel
- Zach Michel
- Sam Stewart

...Sail

I’m pleased to announce that we have a very active and engaged group of eight students in this year’s Sail class. We’ve been meeting on Friday evenings aboard *Tomfoolery* and *Sails Call* to learn both the art and the science of sailing.

Junior Sailing

Junior Sailing is half way through its third season on Seneca Lake. Tutorial sessions have ended and our students have begun competing in races with the Finger Lakes Yacht Club fleet. Despite

light winds, Junior Sailing race crews have finished in the top three places in each race so far.

Of the nine students enrolled in the program this year, four of these students participated in the Lake Ontario Cruise, the NY Canal Transit, and the District 6 Rendezvous Cruise to Geneva and back. I think it’s safe to say they are logging lots of miles and becoming confident and competent cruisers.

On The Horizon

Unfortunately, the month of September usually heralds the impending end of the boating season in this part of the country, and thus the end of our on-the-water sessions as well. However, it does not mean our educational program slows down. (Well, maybe a bit.) Plans are being made to offer several classroom-format courses to help pass the time until we can launch our boats again in the spring. Please check them out!

- Tom

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Youth Committee Report

By Katie Alley, P & Maggie MacBlane, S



Photo 1-A rainbow appears over the Junior Sailing fleet in Clayton, NY.

This may have been one of the more memorable Junior sailing seasons thus far! Several events took place this summer (not all of them planned) that included many of those seeking their sea legs. The summer began with an exciting number of new Junior Sailors and coaches learning all about our classroom boats and the art of sailing.

A few of the more advanced sailors were able to take advantage of a trip to Lake Ontario aboard *Seek Ye First*, skippered by Mike Crouse, and *Tomfoolery*, captained by Tom Alley. Henry Cabezas, Isaac Thomas, Katie Alley, and Maggie



Photo 2-Katie Alley at the helm in the NY Canal System.



Photo 3-Junior Sailors enter the last lock in Oswego, NY before arriving at Lake Ontario.

MacBlane had the experience of a lifetime cruising the great lake and learning from multiple on-the-fly situations. These crews navigated the canals, traveled through locks, and did a few remarkable sails on Lake Ontario. *Seek Ye First* and *Tomfoolery* first sailed from Oswego to Sodus Point, 25 nautical miles upwind in 4-5 foot seas, building to 6 feet, in 20 knots of wind, without any problems. Two days later, the two



Photo 3-Junior Sailors at the Boldt Castle "Playhouse" in Alexandria Bay. (l to r) Henry Cabezas, Katie Alley, Maggie MacBlane, and Isaac Thomas.

vessels sailed approximately 61 nautical miles from Sodus Bay to Cape Vincent downwind, in 4 foot seas, in about 12 knots of wind. Next, the crews navigated

the Saint Lawrence River under power to Clayton, and later visited the Thousand Islands and Alexandria Bay by car and ferry. The real fun began while attempting to motor sail from the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River to Henderson Bay, when *Tomfoolery* experienced a dangerous problem with her forestay. To read more about this exciting tale of cheating death, see the most recent issue of FLYC's *Port Tacks* and a feature article in this issue of *The Drum*. After recovering as best as possible from the malfunction, *Tomfoolery* was blessed with a very calm wind and glassy waters to motor from Cape Vincent back to Oswego in order to travel home.

In addition to navigating and sailing the seas, Junior sailors learned what living aboard a sailboat for two weeks is truly like. This included filling water tanks, provisioning the boat with groceries, cooking,



Photos 5-8: (L) Henry Cabezas at the wheel. (Center-top) Ruthie during race training session. (Center-bottom) Coach Jerry & Sam during race training aboard *Tomfoolery*. (R) Junior Sailors aboard *Brewster* during a training session.

washing dishes, pumping out, doing laundry, carrying out maintenance on the floorboards and the spreaders, resisting the urge to carry out mutiny, and finding the right marinas to park at. The crews were also able to choose and plan some tourist-like activities, such as shopping in Clayton and Alexandria Bay, visiting Bolt and Singer Castles, and eating out in Cape Vincent. All in all, the trip was a successful learning experience and definitely a lot of fun. The Junior sailors are all very excited to return to Lake Ontario next summer, as well as the coaches.

As a part of the District 6 Rendezvous, which took place in mid-July, the Junior sailors had their first annual fundraiser - a BBQ picnic in Clute Park. Attendance for the event exceeded our goal and the Junior Sailors were able to raise a fair amount of money to fund future needs in the program, such as necessary safety equipment and new learning materials. Discussion has already begun that we should continue this as an annual event!

Junior Sailors Katie Alley and Sam Stewart, along with Coaches Tom Alley and Jerry Tinz, aboard *Tomfoolery*,

Junior Sailor Henry Cabezas aboard *Ruthie*, and Junior sailor Robert Waite aboard *Shimera* traveled with the Rendezvous fleet to Geneva.

To top the summer off, the Junior Sailors have been competing in the weekly FLYC's races every Saturday. Using the skills they have learned in June and July, the Junior Sailors have been able to take hold of the helm and put their knowledge to use. Racing is very different from just a Saturday morning cruise and just about anyone can say that calling rights is extremely satisfying. In one of the recent races, *Tomfoolery* took 2nd place and *Ruthie* took 3rd, proving that we have been taught well!

In the upcoming weeks, the Junior Sailors will continue to compete in the FLYC summer series races. The Junior Sailors are also hoping the annual Barge Race with Seneca Yacht Club in Geneva will have an exciting sail in store for them.

Additionally, the Squadron has several new youth graduates of the ABC class. These students, taught by Jim McGinnis with assistance from Katie Alley and

Maggie MacBlane, all enjoyed acting out what to do if your boat hits an iceberg or rock in the classroom, as well as actually steering a powerboat and a sailboat on the water. We hope to have them come back and join us as Junior sailors in future years! (Don't worry, we also discussed how to prevent hitting that iceberg and/or rock in the first place.)

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Joke of the issue:

"Do yachts like this sink very often?"

"Usually only the once."

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Like us on Facebook:
Seneca Junior Sailing

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Upcoming Classes and Seminars

By Seneca Squadron Education Department

Junior Navigation

The Junior Navigation course is the USPS's introduction to celestial navigation.

Part of this course involves a fair amount of field work to collect observations of the sun. In the past, this work was delayed until the end of the course, but this has proven to be impractical. As such, we will begin the course with the field work required to build a sight folder in preparation for the classroom portion of the course. We will focus on collecting the sights necessary while the weather is still conducive to outdoor work.

We will meet at the Watkins Glen Village Marina where we can go out and take sights from various boats so that everyone can learn the proper techniques

for handling a sextant and for collecting the sights needed in the course.

- **When:** Sight-taking sessions begin in July. Classroom sessions begin this Fall.
- **Where:** Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- **Instructors:** Tom Alley and Jim Morris.
- **Cost:** \$150 (new students), Free for returning students.

Sailboat Repowering Seminar

The planets have aligned and created a circumstance for another informal "seminar" for Seneca Sail & Power Squadron members. Have you ever wondered what's involved with swapping power plants in a sailboat? If you'd like to get some hands-on experience repowering a sailboat, please contact me ASAP, as *Tomfoolery* will be

getting a new engine in early to mid September!

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Policy reminder: It has been our practice in the Seneca Squadron to offer scholarships to our outstanding students. If you receive a perfect score on the final exam of any of the Advanced Grade or Elective courses, the next course is on us! (In plain English: It's free. No charge. Gratis. Got it? Good! Now sign up for one of our classes!)

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If there is a particular course you are interested in taking that isn't listed here, please contact Tom Alley, the Squadron Education Officer, with your request:

SEO@SenecaPowerSquadron.US

The Reigning Champs Prepare to Defend Their Title, With Michigan Engineers In Their Corner

Michigan Engineering, University of Michigan

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The picturesque waters of Bermuda's Great Sound have become a living laboratory for extreme engineering.

Ripping through the wind at nearly 45 knots (52 mph) are the defending world champions of sailing, Oracle Team USA. The 45-foot catamaran hulls literally fly above the water as the crew battles to maintain a precarious balancing act. Capsizing at these speeds can be catastrophic.

The next America's Cup is on the horizon (June 2017), and time is running out. "It's coming down to the wire as far as having to commit to final designs," says [Scott Ferguson](#), [Oracle's design coordinator and Michigan Engineering alumnus](#). "Are we making the right choices? Are we focusing on the right things?" It's a fine line between speed and stability. "On paper you can design some really fast foils, but when you go out and race them they're really hard to control," warns [Bryan Baker](#) a [member of Oracle's design team and Michigan Engineering alumnus](#).

In the last America's Cup, new racing tech – the hydrofoil – was allowed for



the first time, which spawned a space race in foil development and control. The hydrofoils act as underwater wings that lift the boats out of the water, practically eliminating drag – and introducing unprecedented speed and danger for the six-man crew who wear little more than bicycle helmets for protection.

The risk factor and additional expense associated with racing on hydrofoils was controversial for the historically

traditional sport. The high speeds and risk has repositioned the America's Cup as an action sport, widening its appeal to the X Games generation. "You take a 45 foot object, lift it out of the water and you ride it around on something that's about the size of a surfboard – it really is like balancing on a unicycle," says [Baker](#). Optimizing control of this dangerous dance above the waves requires pushing the limits of the equipment and the crew. Innovative risk-taking and critical analysis is led by a top team of engineers – three of which hail from the University of Michigan: [Scott Ferguson](#), [Bryan Baker](#) and [Ricardo Bencatel](#).

The technology and teams have become so competitive that a mere 1% advantage in speed is enough to win. Secretive experimentation and creative problem solving are a must in this battle.

Soaring above the water, crowned with a rigid wing sail, Oracle's multi-million dollar catamarans are now more aircraft than sailboat. They are constructed from state-of-the-art carbon composites, dripping with advanced sensors – including the kind

used by missiles and other systems that require high precision navigation.

In this critical time for the defending champions, Michigan Engineering is going behind the scenes. From August 22-26, we'll visit Oracle's base of operations where gutsy engineering shapes decisive designs. We'll ride along in chase boats and see how data-driven risk-taking is helping the crew optimize flight control. We'll explore the engineering and technology being developed for this extreme sport and how it might make waves outside the world of sailing.

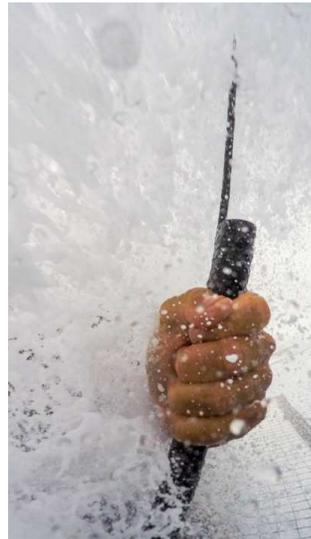
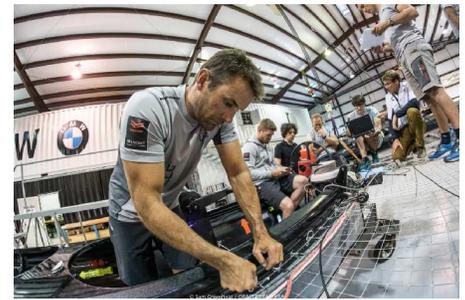
“You need to contend with nature – harness nature,” says [Bencatel](#). “Seeing these boats fly will inspire the world in unimaginable ways.”

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Follow along with behind-the-scenes accounts of the quest for the next Americas Cup at:

<http://umoracle.tumblr.com/>

Photo credits: Sam Greenfield, Oracle Team USA.



We Have Liftoff: The Space Race of Sailing

Michigan Engineering, University of Michigan

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The yachts that race for sailing's most prestigious trophy, the America's Cup, have evolved throughout the event's

165-year history. For decades, evolutionary traits remained familiar to the average sailor: narrow decks,

soft sails and hulls that splashed through the sea at predictable speeds.

Then in 2011, a radical mutation in that evolutionary chain occurred. And like a superhero who's discovered his new found power, sailing will never be the same again.

As teams prepared for the last America's Cup, New Zealand did something unprecedented by equipping their 72-foot catamaran with hydrofoils. The foils are underwater wings that lift the hulls out of the water, practically eliminating drag. “Once that was discovered we followed suit quickly and managed to engineer our boat to foil well and still be legal,” says [Scott Ferguson](#), [Oracle's design coordinator and Michigan Engineering alumnus](#). “We won the 2013 cup, barely.”



© ORACLE TEAM USA / PHOTO SAM GREENFIELD

The sport launched into a rapid technological arms race. And like the space race of the late 1950s, international teams of engineers began working in isolated unison to find previously unknown answers. Their calculations and designs have led to new ways of moving massive objects through the air at high speed - with the added pressure of bringing the humans on board safely home.

“Before, boats relied on buoyancy to stay afloat and keep it level,” [says Bryan Baker a member of Oracle’s design team and Michigan Engineering alumnus.](#) “Now it has nothing to do with buoyancy. It has to do with hydrodynamics and pressure.” Calling these sail-flying machines “boats” no longer seems like an accurate noun. Both hulls levitate above the waves with only the slim rudders and daggerboards still in the water. Composed of lightweight carbon composites equipped with rigid wing sails, sophisticated sensors and telemetry equipment, the catamarans have more in common with aircraft.

The result is an exponential change in performance. There is one

ORACLE

TEAM **USA**

THE AC45F

SPECS

Boat Type	Catamaran of carbon composite construction
Builder	Core Builders Composites Warkworth, New Zealand
Hull Type	Carbon laminated over ultralight honeycomb core
Hull Length	13.45 m / 45 ft.
Max Beam	6.9 m / 22.6 ft.
Mast Height	25.6 m / 84.0 ft.
Max Draft	2.7 m / 8.8 ft.
Wing Span	24.3 m / 79.7 ft. (from ball)
Wing Weight	421 kg / 928 lbs. (with rigging)
Total Weight	Approximately 1,400 kg / 3,086 lbs. (without crew)
Wing Area	93.7 m ² / 1,001 sq. ft.
Gennaker Area	100 m ² / 1,076.4 sq. ft.
Jib Area	30 m ² / 332.92 sq. ft.

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thousand times less drag when an object moves through the air as opposed to the water. “Now we’re sailing upwind in a boat that’s half the length at three times the speed,” says Ferguson. “In the past with big monohulls we faced a completely different engineering design challenge. We were looking at tenths of knots. Now our design adjustments can make half-knot incremental improvements.” And like anything flying at high speeds with people on board, precise flight control is pretty important.

Stable, controlled flight on the water is not easy. Crews fight to keep the craft soaring at an optimal height – only a few feet above the waterline. This balancing act is in constant flux as helmsmen jockey for position amidst

unpredictable waves and wind. Like the “boats,” the crew has had to evolve too. “There used to be a lot of what I would call the old guard in the back of these boats calling the shots,” says Ferguson. “Now the boats have become so physically demanding, the crew is very much on the edge of danger. In the last cup someone was killed (on a different team) when the boat capsized.”

Flight control is not only imperative for the safety of the crew, but it’s also what wins the race. With final design deadlines for the 2017 Cup only months away, Oracle’s engineering team continues to pursue perfection. They’ve spent the last two years doing cutting edge experimentation to give their team the advantage. They even retrofitted one of their practice

catamarans with automated drone technology to see if a computerized skipper could offer any unknown insights to its human counterpart. We’ll explore that in a future update.

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Follow along with behind-the-scenes accounts of the quest for the next Americas Cup at:

<http://umoracle.tumblr.com/>

Photo credits: Sam Greenfield, Oracle Team USA.

Infographic courtesy of Oracle and its affiliates.

Cheating Death – A Novella

Two of Seneca’s Junior Sailors share a dramatic experience on Lake Ontario.

Katie’s Account

By Katie Alley, P

SV Tomfoolery



Our priorities were simple that morning: Tanning, listening to music, eating Oreos. It was the perfect summer day – blue skies and a comfortable temperature. *Tomfoolery* was motoring from Clayton out of the St. Lawrence River, onto Lake Ontario, with intentions of staying in Henderson Bay that night. Winds were from the west at 15-18 knots with waves on the lake about 3-4 feet. It was not any kind of weather that would worry an experienced captain like my dad.

Once on the lake, we continued to motor-sail under a reefed jib. We were

tacking about and monitoring the depth as we cleared the shoals on the southern end of Grenadier Island. I had taken my lifejacket off for a bit to relax in the cockpit. I remember looking at the forestay and thinking, *wow, that seems like it is bending a lot more than usual.* I dismissed the thought, figuring it was okay – we were in much bigger waves and stronger winds than Seneca. It makes sense for the forestay to have more of a bend to it with all that pressure on the jib.

Around two in the afternoon, the four of us (Captain Tom, Maggie, Isaac,

and myself) were sitting in the cockpit, just chilling, doing that navigation thing. Suddenly, I heard a

“bang”, as if something had broken away from something else quickly. I look up to the sky to see a pretty jib flying, like a free kite, from the top of the mast, attached to a forestay and a furler. (I instantly had a flashback to the 2014 Geneva Barge Race, when our mainsail and its track did a similar flying activity.) I also remember seeing the backstay come down like a thread and touch Captain’s back behind the helm. Along with some profanity, I heard Captain say, “We need to get that forestay secure or else we’re going to lose the mast.” That last part instantly made me nervous, but there literally was not any time for that, because a line of commands came next.

I remember Maggie radioing *Seek Ye First*, who was sailing less than half a mile from us, and her saying, “Yes, yes! We need help!”

Isaac and I had to put lifejackets on quickly before heading up to the foredeck to join Maggie, who was already wearing a lifejacket. I should have just kept mine on!

I was ordered to prepare a spare halyard to use as a temporary forestay. This is when I began to realize something was messed up – most of the halyards seemed to tangled up somehow. Instead of trying to solve a confusing maze of lines on the mast with trembling fingers, I needed to keep my friends from going overboard. I do not remember how Maggie and Isaac caught the end of the forestay, but somehow they did, and they were holding on to the end of it with all their might. Isaac had his arms and legs wrapped around the furler and Maggie was holding on just above him. Every gust lifted their bottoms off the foredeck, as a majority of the sail was still flying in the wind. So I threw myself on the foredeck too, pushed down on Isaac’s shoulders with one arm and held on to the back of Maggie’s lifejacket with the other.

You would think that we would all be panicking or crying or something along those lines, but we were actually joking about what would happen if we all died that very moment, and how

we would greet each other upon entering heaven/hell.

Captain finally joined us on the foredeck, after setting us on a course downwind (towards Grenadier Island) to put forward pressure on the rigging. He then discovered the fouled halyards on the forward side of the mast himself, and then ordered me to help with using the main halyard and its spare to secure the mast. I looked off our starboard side to see *Seek Ye First* with her sails down, not far behind, and figured if someone did fall overboard, they could retrieve whoever it was. The main halyards were run forward, tied to the anchor platform and a bow cleat, and tensioned.

The next part of this situation is a bit of a blur to me, probably because of the adrenaline rush. Captain ended up holding on to the the end of the forestay and sitting on the bow railing. By this time, the waves had built to 4-5 feet, with the bow burying every third wave. I was really afraid he would fall overboard. I should have taken it easy with those mutiny jokes (that began on the third day of this two week trip).

The tangled sail could not be furled, unfurled, or lowered on the bent furler. I remember bringing another halyard of some sort from the mast to the bow. I remember helping wrap the line around the flapping sail, with some success in collecting it. I remember watching Captain trying to hold onto the forestay while trying to lean out far enough to get the right angle with the line to collect the remaining flying sail, the middle section, just several feet above our heads. I remember standing on the foredeck, then falling forward when a wave broke over the bow, and the pain when my knee landed directly on a cleat. I remember running back to the cockpit to check the depth as we neared closer and closer to Grenadier Island.

Maggie and I asked what we should do while Captain and Isaac continued to hold on to the forestay and gather up the sail. Another slightly unsettling phrase came from Captain: “I am

exhausted.” He ordered us to see if *Seek Ye First* could send over a crew member to help finalize securing everything. *Seek Ye First* was still very close by, but had not been able to help much other than by standing by.

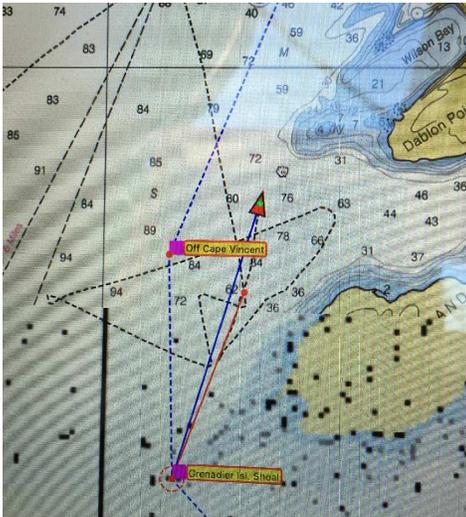
Transferring Andrea between the two boats in the given conditions could really be an entire story itself. I remember putting *Tomfoolery*’s swim ladder out on the port side and it instantly wanting to come out of its hooks because of the water moving past the haul. *Seek Ye First* came close up along *Tomfoolery*’s port side, with her dinghy in between. Andrea, wearing a lifejacket, leaped into the dinghy. I remember looking back after checking on Captain and Isaac, and seeing Andrea standing up in the dinghy, surfing along the waves. My jaw dropped. This was like, some James Bond-movie-type activity, except they usually film those in pools with fans, not in the middle of Lake Ontario. *We’re going to lose Andrea*, I thought. I couldn’t watch. Thankfully, Maggie helped her complete the leap onto *Tomfoolery*.

By this time, everything had been secured to the bow “good enough”. We were in less than 40 feet of water when we turned away from Grenadier Island. After attempting to continue our windward motor to Henderson Bay, we decided the pumping of the mast was a bit unsettling and that Cape Vincent was a really nice,



leeward, and sheltered place. This is when the reality of what had happened began to set in between us all.

I remember eating a lot of Oreos on the way back. I remember looking at our zig-zag course on the GPS screen. I remembering kissing the public dock and having a big group hug, celebrating survival. I remember a grandmother and her grandchild walking down the public dock, and asking where we were from and why Captain was at the top of the mast



taking our sail down. (She probably did not know what “almost dismasting” meant, but I told her anyway.) I remember folding the jib on the lawn and inspecting an 18-inch rip in the middle of it. I remember Maggie laying in the bunk next to me before we fell asleep saying, “Katie, we almost dismasted today.”

I felt a little sad afterwards, because of all the damage to the boat and knowing we would not be sailing for a while. But the sadness did not compare to how grateful I felt. The mast was still standing, the boat was still floating, the extent of injuries was limited to small bruises, and no one went swimming in the middle of Lake Ontario. Thankfully I had not nagged Captain enough to hoist the mainsail or turn off the motor earlier that day. I am grateful for the best crew around.

We still talk about what we would have done if the mast came down that day. I still think about the other half of that clevis pin that’s sitting at the bottom of Lake Ontario as you read this.

If a mast falls in the middle of Lake Ontario and nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound?

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Katie Alley is 17 years old but has been sailing for over 18 years. A majority of this time has been spent

on her dad’s Alberg 35, Tomfoolery, on Seneca Lake. She has also traveled (by boat) to Cayuga Lake and Lake Ontario, and additionally has Sunfish experience on Lake Owasco. She has been a member of the Junior Sailing program since its inception in 2014 and Youth Committee co-chair since early 2015. Katie owns a 12 ft kayak too, Knot For Sail. When not breaking something on Tomfoolery, accidentally sailing to Canada, or planning mutiny, Katie enjoys figure skating, skiing, writing newsletter articles, and creating art. She plans to study art and business in college after graduating high school next June.

Maggie’s Account

By Maggie MacBlane, S

Seneca Junior Sailing



BOOM! That was the first thing that indicated something was terribly wrong. The sound of the snap. Then

the flap of the sail. It rang out in the wind like thunder on this beautiful, bright summer day. A summer day meant for sailing. We were motor sailing so we could pinch a little higher and maintain our course. The foresail was reefed and we kept the main down due to the near 20 knots of wind we were lucky enough to have.

“GO GRAB THAT SAIL!” were the first words that I remember after the snap. I already had my PFD on, unlike my crew mates, so I was the first to go forward to the bow and catch the sail. The forestay and furler had broken free from the bow and were swinging uncontrollably, dangerously disturbing the balance of the mast on our 35-foot sloop. While swinging back across the foredeck, I was able to grab the bottom of the furler and sit on it, much

like a rope swing. For a brief second I thought I had it under control. Then another puff of wind came. Then another. And another. I was being tossed by the sail like I was weightless. I was able to secure myself between the lifeline and the foredeck so I wouldn’t be tossed over the side.

It seemed like an hour before Isaac, my crew mate, came to help me when really it was only a minute or two. He sat on the furler just how I was, but with our combined weight, it was still not enough to keep the forestay, furler, and sail from breaking free of the boat. At the time, I was only thinking about how I could hold on a little tighter, not about how a several hundred-pound mast could fall and possibly kill someone. I didn’t comprehend that our combined weight

was what kept the mast up long enough for Captain and Katie to tie a couple halyards to the cleats on the foredeck.

Once the halyards were tied, and the weight of the mast was somewhat secure, the sail had to be conquered. Still catching wind, the foresail was pushing the boat towards an island that extended underwater for nearly a mile and the risk of us running aground was great.

After nearly an hour, and several different attempts to get the foresail furling, we were all exhausted. My grip was weak on the furler and I knew I wouldn't be able to hang on to it much longer. Captain told me to go back and radio for help. I carefully passed of the furler off to Katie and made my way to the cockpit. I radioed the boat traveling with us, who were already standing by to assist. I told them that we needed another person as soon as possible.

I found the ladder in a cockpit locker and secured it to the port side of the boat. I also unclipped the lifeline and prepared to help a fourth crew member aboard. The assisting boat crossed our stern and pulled up to the port side, nearly 15 feet away. I had forgotten about the tremendous wind and six to seven foot swells that would make the success of this transfer next to impossible. We finally had a plan. The crew mate would carefully climb into the dinghy, then a line attached to the dinghy would be thrown to me and I would pull her over.

Junior Sailing Coach Andrea went to step into the dinghy and immediately the bow was buried in the water. She then stepped to the back of the lifeboat in attempt to balance it out. The line was then thrown to me but before I could pull her over, she launched herself out of the waterlogged dinghy and was able to grab the ladder and pulled herself aboard. I told her to go to the foredeck to help secure the still flapping foresail while I secured the dinghy to our stern.



Seneca Junior Sailing Expedition members (l to r): Captain Tom, Coach Andrea, Captain Mike, Henry, Katie, Isaac and Maggie. Tomfoolery's damaged genoa lays on the dock after having been cut down from the damaged forestay.

Before going forward to help, I checked the depth. Forty feet. We would soon reach dangerously shallow water. I went forward to tell Captain but it was done. He and the rest of the crew were miraculously able to furl the sail and take back control of the boat.

When we pulled up to the dock, everyone knew there was a huge mess that we had to take care of on the foredeck. It took hours to sort through the seemingly endless number of lines tied down to the foredeck, to get the sail down, and to secure the furler and forestay. Captain ended up climbing the mast in order to get everything detached. He ascended to find out that the furler was jammed at the top, making it impossible to try to get the foresail down. He had to cut the top of the sail to free it from the furler. From there we were able to get it off the boat and assess the damage to the sail and to the furler and forestay. The sail was torn in several different places, the furler was cracked and kinked everywhere but there was hope that the forestay, threaded through the furler, remained unharmed.

After everything was done and taken care of we were able to relax. It was still hard to comprehend what had really just happened and the severity of the damage. We knew that the journey back home would be dangerous but we had no other choice but to literally power through it. But we weren't going to worry about that until we had to. Right then we were just happy that we had made it out of that situation with the best possible outcome - nobody was hurt, the mast was upright, and the boat was still floating. As we say, "We've cheated death again."

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Maggie MacBlane, a Senior at Notre Dame High School, has participated in Seneca's Junior Sailing program since its inception in

2014. Before this she sailed on J-Y's, 420's and Optimas. She is the Co-Chair of the Seneca Sail & Power Squadron Youth Committee and is a

regular crew member aboard Tomfoolery, a 1965 Alberg 35. When not sailing, Maggie is an avid

horseback jumping competitor, scuba diver, and an accomplished downhill skier.

The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN



In the last issue I mentioned that we had just started out on a 2-week cruise of the New York Canals and of Lake Ontario. By now most

of you have heard about our adventures underway. If you haven't, you can read all about it in the latest issue of *The Deep 6*, our district newsletter. (You can find a copy on the district web site, <http://www.uspsd6.org>.) There are also a couple of accounts of a portion of our voyage in this issue of the *Drum*.

To put things succinctly, comparing the Junior Sailors' typical sessions on Seneca Lake to their Ontario experience is like comparing an afternoon's hike through the forest with the expedition of Lewis and Clark. It was, shall we say, a bit more involved.

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As some of you know, I have a couple other hobbies besides boating. One of them is amateur (a.k.a., "ham") radio. Like the boating community, the amateur community is tight-knit and self-supporting. If someone needs help with something, it's easy to find a

number of willing souls to pitch in, whether it's to help raise a new multiband antenna or to help track down an annoying electrical issue in a piece of equipment.

New and aspiring amateur operators are often taken under the wing of a more experienced veteran who acts as their mentor. In fact, this is how I got my own start with the hobby after expressing an interest in my next door neighbor's shortwave equipment. The practice has a long history and, at least in North America, one's mentor is known as his "Elmer". I'm not sure of the origination of this expression, but every single ham operator can mention one or two "Elmers" who helped them get started.

I mention this because there is something to learn for us. The USPS has a far more structured organization than that found among the amateur community. We enjoy a formal education program with a wide selection of classes and seminars from which to choose while hams are pretty much on their own when it comes to learning new skills and technology. Still, I bet each of you can remember one or two individuals who helped you through those early days to show you how to pull into a slip without knocking down the dock and how to tie things up so they wouldn't come untied (until you wanted them to). We've all benefited from our own set of nautical Elmers to show us the

ropes and to help us build our skills and our confidence.

I don't know about you, but I am extremely grateful for the patience and perseverance of my many Elmers. Without their guidance, advice, and occasional admonishment, I would not be the sailor I am today. In the decades I have been boating I have also learned that there is but one way to honor their investment of time and effort, and that is to pay it forward.

While some people have the experience to pay forward technical skills or techniques mastered over decades of practice, we often overlook the simple mentoring that occurs by welcoming the newbie on our dock and making them feel at home. In my opinion, this is just as important as passing on the tribal knowledge of marlinespike or the fine art of sail trim.

I'll close with a simple question, which is also a challenge: To whom are you an Elmer?

- Tom, KD2VH

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As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

editor@SenecaPowerSquadron.US

Calendar of Events

September 2016

- 1 Seneca *Drum* September issue publication.
- 2 Sail Class
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- 8-11 Tall Ships, *Erie, PA*
- 9-11 Seneca Barge Race (Junior Sailing)
Seneca Yacht Club, Geneva, NY
- 9 Sail Class
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- 16 Sail Class
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- 17 Junior Sailing, Race #3 (1300)
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- 17-18 Tall Ships, *Brockville, Ontario*
- 20 Bridge Meeting (1900)
Stewart House, 2nd St., Watkins Glen
- 23 Sail Class
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- 24 Junior Sailing, Race #4 (1300)
Village Marina, Watkins Glen
- TBA Sail Class Final Exam
Location TBD

October 2016

- 3 October Dinner Meeting
Speakers: Tom Alley & Seneca Junior Sailors
Tag's Restaurant, Big Flats
- 24 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

November 2016

- 1 Seneca *Drum* November issue publication.
- 1 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date.
- 7 Year-End Squadron Dinner Meeting
Speakers: TBA
Tag's Restaurant

December 2016

- 19 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

January 2017

- 1 Seneca *Drum* January issue publication.
- 15 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles.
- 15 Change of Watch (1300)
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)

February 2017

- 1 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date.
- 19-26 USPS Annual Meeting
Orlando, FL
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA Deadline for *Drum* Articles

March 2017

- 1 Seneca *Drum* March issue publication.
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)

April 2017

- TBA Junior Sailing 2017 Organizational Meeting
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA D/6 Spring Conference
- 15 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles.
- 25 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

May 2017

- 1 Seneca *Drum* May issue publication.
- 1 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date.
- TBA Junior Sailing Organizational/Kick-Off Meeting
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA Safe Boating Week

June 2017

- TBA Junior Sailing regular sessions begin.
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 26 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

July 2017

- 1 Seneca *Drum* July issue publication.
- 15 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles.
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
TBD
- TBD D/6 2017 Rendezvous

August 2017

- 1 *The Deep 6* summer issue publication date.
- TBA Bridge Meeting (1900)
TBD
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

Calendars are "living documents." For the latest information on squadron activities, please check our web site:

<http://www.SenecaPowerSquadron.US>

or our Facebook page:

<http://facebook.com/SenecaPowerSquadron>

for any last-minute changes.