

# The Semaphore

Fairfield Harbour Yacht Club



Vol. 42, No. 7

35° 04' N., 076° 58' W.

July 2024



## Commodore's Update

Ahoy Members,

The July message to the Club is "Stay in the Boat." The education seminar that was developed by Steve Hart was on recovering a man overboard and was an enlightening experience. It was clear that it is not an especially easy task to bring someone back onto the deck after going overboard. Both John Jackson and Leigh Hart were MOB "victims" that were recovered from the water using various techniques. Those in attendance were "shown the ropes" on this potentially lifesaving task.

The program at the General Meeting on the Club trip to the Sea of Abaco was wonderfully presented by Ritchie Thomson and Matt Esmacher. It was fun to see these two talk about their individual and combined adventures with pictures. It was a splendid trip, and the show was well done. Ritchie asked "Belize 2025?" Perhaps.

We moved on to the "Thin Water" Cruise to Latham Whitehurst Nature Park, taking the leisurely trip four miles up Broad Creek. Cruise leader Ritchie

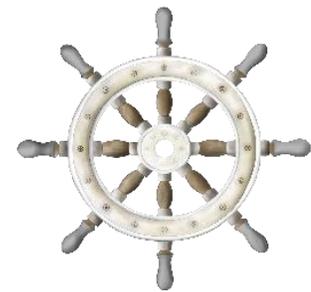
Thomson took a dinghy ride the whole way and everyone enjoyed light snacks and camaraderie in the serene envelope of nature along the creek.

On the business side of things, Buddy Jewell was appointed to the position of Vice Commodore by the Board of Governors, filling the post vacated by Steve Hustad. The Board also appointed Stan Eakins to the remaining term of the Treasurer's position vacated by Buddy. Congratulations to both Buddy and Stan.

July's activities will include the July Fourth raft-up on the Neuse River and the Full Buck Moon raft-up in the Harbour. Both of these adventures will be led by Rear Commodore John Jackson.

Start planning now for participation in the Oar Race that has been in hiatus since 2020. It will take place this year on August 31. This has always been an exceptional event hosted by FHYC and includes participants from other clubs.

And the Adventure Continues!  
*Craig Myler, Commodore*



## What's Happening in July

July				
	Th	4	Raft-up on Neuse at Duck Creek – Fireworks	1900
	Mo	8	Board Meeting (AC)	1600
	Th	11	General Meeting (CC)	1900
	Fr	12	Education Seminar (AC)	0900
	Tu	16	Dinner Out: Michael's Pub	1800
	Th	18	Raft-up – Full Buck Moon	TBA
August	Sa	31	FHYC Oar Race	TBA

(CC)=Community Center, (RS)=Red Sail Park, (CB)=Cart Barn  
(AC)=Activities Center, (V)=online.

**Deadline for next issue is noon, Monday, July 15**  
Delivery by Saturday, July 27, 2024

## Jim Fortuna

Former FHYC member Jim Fortuna has passed away. He and his wife Jody had a 43' Taswell sailing vessel. They joined FHYC in 2016, and were members until 2019.

As many know, Jim was fortunate enough to receive a lung transplant three years ago. Jody reported that Jim fought as hard as he could, but lost his battle last week. Jim's service was held on June 21.

### *The Semaphore*

*Fairfield Harbour Yacht Club*

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#### Deadline

The deadline for receiving articles is 1200 noon on the Monday following the General meeting. Please email articles to: [fhycsemaphore@gmail.com](mailto:fhycsemaphore@gmail.com)

## Coming Up July Fourth Raft-Up

The Fourth of July Raft Up is always fun. The boats meet at Duck Creek and share snacks and favorite beverages while they wait for the fireworks to begin. There is not a better place to view the fireworks, and there are no better friends to share it with than FHYC folks! Traditionally, we have met outside Duck Creek at 1900, and can still do so.

Alternatively, John Jackson, headmaster of raft-ups, will have many family members on his boat, and plans to anchor straight out from the Cunningham drawbridge. Their plan is to eat dinner between 5 and 6, and then be able to listen to music and enjoy the goings on. He invites anyone to join them for the evening: they will have the Club burgee and other flags flying.

## WhaSuP?

Our Club has a fantastic variety of very talented people that do some really kuul stuff.

However, they must be very shy because we don't hear about it.

We just finished the Thin Water Cruise last week, but that doesn't mean this has to be a Thin Article Semaphore! If you are involved in a boating activity, or a safety event, or have an innovative arrangement to share your boat with your boat mechanic, let us hear from you! Till next month.....Stay cool!

*Buddy Jewell, Co-Editor*

## And More WhaSuP?

Our Club also has a variety of quick-witted, very clever, very knowledgeable, and adventurous,

some very fun and very funny escapades on the water, as well as on land. As many of the long-time members know, these challenges, adventures and foibles are celebrated at the Fall Appreciation Dinner in October.

The Fall Appreciation Dinner is led by the Vice Commodore, who generally has 20 months on the Bridge to collect information for the coveted awards given at the dinner. Unfortunately, this year, the Vice Commodore (Buddy Jewell) has about 90 days to collect information for the event, and needs some help. We would like to hear about YOUR escapades, foibles, and challenges. We also ask you to share how other club members have made a difference in your lives, either by helping, sharing knowledge, using their skills or just having fun!

Thanks for helping out!

*Chris Jewell, Co-Editor*

Follow this space next month for more information on the **OAR RACE.**

This is an FHYC sponsored race, and will take place on August 31, 2024.

This space has been left blank intentionally. It's waiting for your stories, pictures, fun stuff. Email your interesting stuff to [fhycsemaphore@gmail.com](mailto:fhycsemaphore@gmail.com)!

## Latham- Whitehurst Thin Water Cruise

One of our traditional cruises is the Thin-Water Cruise up Upper Broad Creek to the docks at Latham-Whitehurst Park. The distance is relatively short at about six nautical miles from the Harbour. Navigation is delightfully simple; turn left at 1N, go up past Blackbeard Sailing Club and keep going up the creek. There is one oxbow with a shallow water cut off which is navigable in a dinghy with care if the water is normal or high. After passing the wildlife launch at Lee's Landing, the only decision points come when the Creek splits. Take the left-hand branch (the water is deeper) and go onto the docks.

The scenery was exceptionally fine and totally different from sailing out on the Neuse. There are reeds with pine and bald cypress stands behind. Although the water was low this year, the depths in the creek were good although the creek is narrow, and you need to stay alert and in the center. The only issue was at the oxbow short-cut where we touched bottom and had to take the long way round.

In the event, three power boats, one PWC, one powered canoe and two dinghies traveled up the docks with about eighteen hardy mariners aboard. At the docks we retired to the pergola to get some shade while we had our picnic.

The weather, for mid-June, could not have been better with sun temperatures in the high 80's and relatively low humidity. What little wind there was came from the north and surprisingly no afternoon sea breeze. Best of all, there were no bugs. All returned safely with no incidents. It was an excellent cruise and hopefully enjoyed by all.

*Ritchie Thomson, Past Commodore*



*All manner of watercraft ferried the stalwart sailors*



*Above: a good time was had by all*

*Below: Serenity*



## Educational Seminar: Save John!

As Education chair for FHYC, I apparently decided to use my second worst idea ever for our June session. How about a live, on the water rescue of a “Man Overboard.” It will be educational and fun, I thought...several others I spoke with about the event thought it would be worthwhile as well.

I called Captain John Rahm of “Third World Sailing” who has given several seminars for us including a didactic Man Overboard discussion. He was most enthusiastic about helping and thought it would be a great idea.

As the day approached, many members emailed with thoughts and suggestions. One of our newer members, Ed O’Dowd volunteered his “Markus MOB net system” to demonstrate which actually took first prize for the day. A few folks conveyed concern about the plethora of jellyfish recently appearing, and a few others were worried about ‘Charlie’, our neighborhood alligator, attending.

The morning dawned as a beautiful one, promising good weather for our demo. Captain John and I moved *Graça* out to our mooring where we planned to stage the happenings. Unfortunately, the TV coverage that I had been lining up for months (this seminar was first planned for last September but had to be cancelled due to weather considerations leading up to “Ophelia”) fizzled out for some lame reason. David Miller had worked hard to ready his boat *Shenanigans* to host the TV crew enabling them a 360-degree view of the goings on.

Undaunted, from 0930-1000, Mark Johnson and Ritchie Thomson ferried folks out to get a close-up view, while several others came out in their own dinghies and various other watercraft. Our courageous Rear Commodore John Jackson and my faithful sidekick Leigh Hart both decked out in wetsuits (Leigh borrowed two from Skip Hird to layer) volunteered to be our MOB victims. At 1000 dull (as opposed to sharp), we began with John slipping into Northwest Creek.

My plan was to demonstrate four methods of retrieval from the water. To get a soaking wet and possibly unconscious adult back about a larger boat is no easy task (as I was about to demonstrate as well). I was using a sheet secured from a solid point on the stern, looped down to the water, and then through a midship fairlead and run back to a self-tailing winch.



*it was a beautiful morning for a rescue*



*Look closely; You can see Leigh Hart being “rescued”. She begins to climb in the picture above, and is about to reach the boat deck in the picture below. It’s not easy.*



*(Save John, cont'd.)*

When trimmed, the sheet will elevate the victim vertically so that they can come back on board. Easy-peasey right? WRONG! After a number of attempts to try to raise John, we discovered it was very difficult to do. One's feet and legs tended to curl under the hull and John's former toenails cleared many barnacles for me.

We then moved on to Method Two of the seminar: the lifesling. The apparatus was deployed, and John donned it expertly. I had rigged, from the stern end of my boom, a single pulley block and looped a line with a shackle down to our wet volunteer and then through the block and over to a winch on the opposite side of the cockpit. Aha!, I thought here we go! However, even though I took Physics in undergraduate college, my arrangement caused several overrides on the winch causing our friend John to look like a wet teabag for many unnecessary minutes. Ritchie Thomson, in a dinghy several feet away (and who apparently scored better in his Physics course) yelled to place another block more horizontally to the winch. After returning John back into the creek and doing as Sir Thomson suggested, John was successfully plucked from the creek but not quite clear of the lifelines. You see, the boom was not high enough to raise him higher and clear of the obstruction to get him aboard. John was then folded several ways, but fortunately not spindled or mutilated. A halyard to lift John would have been a much better idea.....

We then moved on to the winner of the day, Ed O'Dowd's "Markus MOB scramble net." This has two ways to get a victim back on board. The first, if able, the victim can crawl up the scaffolded net and over the lifeline or railing to safety. The second way is that if unconscious, the victim can be maneuvered into the netting and "rolled up" via crew strength or by halyard once again (see pictures).

All in all, I learned once again that:

1. THE LEARNING IS IN THE DOING!
2. It was great the TV crew couldn't be there!
3. Well, see the rest on the next page.



*Below: John Jackson gets "rescued" from Northwest Creek. It is not easy to get back on the boat.*



Volunteer John "Soggy" Jackson followed up with his own observations from the water:

"I could not get on board using the bow to stern line. I had trouble standing on the line, but Leigh was able to. One difference was that she was wearing water shoes and I was not. This may have given her a better grip on the line.

I was the only one using the life sling. I never felt like I had the sling correctly under my left shoulder. However, I was able to be lifted, and with some help I was able to get over the boat's lifelines. Leigh was lifted using the sling. It worked, but when she was all the way up, she sort of rolled out and came to a hard landing on the deck.

It is important to note that the two people on deck were both larger/stronger than the people being rescued. Also, the water was warm, and the boat was on a mooring. When I was in the life sling I was able to have a foot on the prop.

Often we sail with just a couple. With just one on board all the rescues would have been much harder. It would have been even harder if the larger person had been the one in the water."

*John Jackson, Rear Commodore*

*(Educational Seminar, cont'd)*

## **LESSONS LEARNED:**

- 1. MAKE THE PICK-UP/ RETRIEVAL PLAN IN YOUR LIVING ROOM... BEFORE LEAVING THE DOCK.**
- 2. DON'T GO OVERBOARD!!!! SAVES TONS OF SCARY EFFORT!!! SPEND THE EFFORT DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO EDUCATE AND KEEP YOUR CREW ONBOARD.**
- 3. FOR OFFSHORE TRIPS, THE "MARKUS MAN OVERBOARD NET SYSTEM" WAS GREAT. IT WILL SERVE AS A SCRAMBLE BACK ON-BOARD SCAFFOLD AS WELL AS ENABLE A ROLL-UP BACK ON BOARD OF A DISABLED OR UNCONSCIOUS VICTIM.**
- 4. VICTIM.....DON'T RAISE YOUR ARMS WHEN BEING HAULED-UP IN THE "LIFE-SLING."**
- 5. WHE USING THE LIFE SLING...USE TWO BLOCK AND TACKLE UNITS TO LOAD THE HAULING WINCH Laterally so that you don't get "OVER-RIDING" happening. ONE FROM THE BOOM AND ONE LATERAL TO THE WORKING WINCH. MIGHT BE BEST TO USE ONE OF THE SPARE HALYARDS IF ON A SAILING VESSEL.**
- 6. WHEN POSSIBLE (FOR A CONSCIOUS VICTIM) RIG A LINE TO THE BOAT SO THEY CAN USE IT TO CONTROL THEIR UPPER BODY WHEN BEING HAULED ABOARD.**

Next month I will tell you about my first worst idea.....

**HOW TO INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE FUN---BUYING A BOAT.**

*Steve Hart, Education Chair*

*Editor's Note: In all seriousness, John Rahm's observations and advice will appear in next month's Semaphore. Steve is still pondering his first worst idea, and reserves his right to publish.*

I

## **THE "BEST LAID PLANS" CRUISE**

### ***A hot summer cruise with a ten-year old and no air conditioning***

*Editor's Note: George and Lynn Stateham are no strangers to adventure in general, and certainly no strangers to adventure on the water. These are excerpts from George's Report on a 2007 cruise.*

The plan was to take our ten-year-old grandson, Jack, on a cruise up the ICW, Dismal Swamp, Chesapeake, and Potomac, departing August 1, 2007, and arriving August 10. His family would meet us in DC the next day for a family vacation. And we had reservations at the Capital Yacht Club. Our boat at the time was a 38' Prout Manta catamaran named *Sunspot Baby*. This was planned well in advance with plenty of time to prepare. We put the boat in a yard to do the bottom and service sail drives in early July.

Bottom paint went well but with a July 4 three-day shutdown in the yard, other work didn't really begin until the second week. Then a rigging inspection showed a crack in the halyard block. The mast had to come down. New stays were ordered and by the time the rig was back up and sail drive service was complete, there was only a week left to prepare for the trip.

With a full court press, we were provisioned and equipped, and Jack arrived July 31. The next morning was hectic, but by 1400 we were out of the slip, fueled, and on our way. Little wind meant a leisurely motor down the river to Oriental. We did the Tiki Bar Wednesday night thing and had a light dinner at the Toucan Grill.

*The "Best Laid Plans" Cruise (cont'd)*



*Great Expectations: It started so well...*

The next day was our longest planned day, light winds and motoring, but we anchored in a pretty shallow bay behind G39 off the Alligator River. The windlass refused to work, so we used the back-up Danforth. Jack worked on his pirate flag and knots. His favorite spot was the forward bow seat on the starboard side: trying to keep sunscreen on a ten-year-old isn't easy. He had his first shower on the deck while Grandma stayed out of sight in the cabin because he wanted privacy. He fished a little in the evening but no luck. Hot dogs for dinner with a *Sorry* game after. The next morning was so still it was eerily beautiful. We pulled the hook and headed for Elizabeth City's free dock, making the Alligator River Bridge in good shape along the way.



*And was such a promising journey...*

There was nary a breeze on the temperamental Albemarle Sound, we made Elizabeth City in the early afternoon. We found a mechanic to look at the windlass and he found nothing that could be fixed quickly. One always hopes. We tied to the face dock

because their free slips are a maximum of 18' wide, just a few inches too tight for *Sunspot Baby*. The famous "Rose Buddies" showed up and when they saw Jack they loudly exclaimed "No Kids!" to their happy hour invitation. We hadn't planned to go, and went to the museum anyway.

August 4 (Lynn's birthday) we timed our departure for scheduled bridge openings and found that weekends are not restricted. We were soon in a narrow winding channel that would eventually take us to the historic Dismal Swamp Canal. This is the oldest manmade canal system in the Americas and is rich in legend and history. On time for bridge and lock openings, we spent the night as the only boat at the visitor center docks. We rode bicycles down the trail and used shore side conveniences to charcoal steaks for Lynn's birthday dinner.

Motoring north, we started getting a strange sound transmitted through the shift linkage to the helm. We isolated the source to the port sail drive and soon found the port engine would not go in gear forward or reverse. Motoring forward on one engine is fairly easy, but backing up is a whole other story. We had to loiter at the northern bridge and lock, waiting for the opening, but surviving the few tense moments, we managed it. The props were about 18 feet apart, so the thrust was way off center.



*Until it wasn't so promising after all....*

Lynn was poring through cruising guides and found Chesapeake Yachts was only a couple of miles after the locks and we got to their dock. The owner drove down to meet us and had arranged a mechanic for the next day. We took advantage of the afternoon to go dinghy riding and swimming. Jack drove the dinghy but needed more time to get used to the counter-intuitive activity of steering with a tiller.

### *The “Best Laid Plans” Cruise (cont’d)*

The morning of August 6, we stowed the dinghy and waited for the mechanic, then learned he would not arrive until midday. He confirmed that the sail drive did not work, and we would have to be hauled. He isolated the problem on the windlass to the solenoid box. Of course, while this mechanic seemed to know his stuff, he was a Yanmar mechanic, not Volvo and did not want to repair our sail drive. Calling frantically all over Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Hampton, etc., we could find no one either willing or with time to do the job. Our on-site mechanic agreed to pull the drive and we would find someone to ship to take it to for service. The mechanic was scheduled for Wednesday.

Tuesday, we rented a car, drove to New Bern, and picked up our own car. It looked like we would need transportation and would be in the yard for a while. Burning up cell phone minutes we found two places that would repair our drive. One was in Maine and the other was the mechanic who just serviced our drives.

The boat yard could make for its own story. It was a huge yard sparsely populated by boats. There was a row of six wooden PT boats which last saw service in Vietnam. The Enterprise guy who delivered our rent car said it looked like a place where boats went to die. We shuddered at the thought.

Wednesday, August 8, the mechanic was at the boat early and did a good job of removing the sail drive and arranging it so it would not leak oil in the car. The upper unit had some problems, including the cone clutch, but in particular the input shaft and fly wheel output flange had severely worn splines. This probably explained the occasional problem getting the unit to engage which we had experienced for years. Another road trip to New Bern to deliver it to the mechanic was topped by a barbeque dinner at the old Moore’s. We arrived back at the boat about 2300. Our on-site mechanic had failed to find the windlass part at a distributor, so while on the road we called the manufacturer and coaxed them to sell one direct to us and it was scheduled to arrive at New Bern, so we planned to retrieve it when we returned for the sail drive.

Thursday, we took a break from the boat drudge work with a one-hour stop at a laundromat to catch up on clean clothes. We stopped at the library and retrieved email, did a little shopping, had lunch out and drove to the beach. We played mini golf, bought

tourist souvenirs and generally enjoyed the day. We even found a West Marine!

*George’s note for August 11:* we drove Jack to DC to meet his family. We will spend a couple of nights in a hotel and join them on some tours. By then, hopefully, parts for the sail drive will have arrived and it will be repaired. We will drive back to New Bern, pick it up and return. The mechanic can install it and the solenoid, and we will do a truncated cruise returning via the Virginia Cut route of the ICW. Of course, based on what happened to our earlier plans, we may end up with another adventure.



*Mini golf was a way to divert us from boat issues*

**Afterword (they did!):** Back on the boat after dropping Jack off, there was a cracking thunderstorm and a proximity lightning strike, and in the days that followed there were failures of our radar, manometer, inverter and other equipment. We were finally ready to head for home on August 28, and moved to the Great Bridge Free Dock. We anchored a short distance after Coinjock and at Belhaven, then home.

For the three of us, it was a good adventure even though we battled hot weather, mechanical issues and lightning damage and we had temperatures in the low 100’s some days (no air conditioning on *Sunspot Baby*.)

The Chesapeake Library allowed us to use a small conference room and Jack could meander in the library. There were kid movies and free popcorn to boot. He was mostly device-free. He was a graduate of the 2003 Stateham Family Yachts and Pirates School, so he had sea experience and could tie a bowline before he could tie his shoes.

*Lynn and George Stateham, Past Commodore*