



Palacios Yacht Club Newsletter

Located At Serendipity Marina

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"The Rhumb Line"

ARE WE PREPARED ?

by: Robert W. Fellingham, Jr.

The December 1994 issue of Sailing World magazine recounts the events surrounding the tragic death of three time World Champion and 1989 Rolex Yachtsman of the Year, Larry Klein. In the incident on San Francisco Bay, the hiking rack on his boat broke, dumping seven of the eight crewmembers in the cold waters of the bay during the Big Boat Series races. Two factors led to the death of Klein. The first was that none of the personnel involved were wearing personal flotation devices, not even Type III. The second was a lack of the needed skills on the part of the crewmember who remained on board, to get the boat turned around and recover the lost crew. The remaining crew member was new and the least experienced. This technique was even lacking on a nearby cruising yacht. This is a basic skill which was recently taught in our Red Cross "Beginning Sailing" course.

We all enjoy sailing and, occasionally, racing one another. The races test our skills and challenge us to think about what the wind and the other person is doing or going to do. This is good. However, I have seen some of us hanging on the shrouds outside of the lifelines without the benefit of hiking gear or even a lifejacket. This, is not good. The U.S. Sailing rules do specify that the crew should not have any part of the trunk of the body outside of the lifelines, unless specified in the class rules. These rules are written from long, hard, and sometimes tragic experience to make our sport safer for all to enjoy.

I would make the following two proposals to our membership:

1. No hiking outside of the lifelines is allowed unless the people hiking are wearing a PFD.
2. For our spring series of races, institute a new, pre-race seminar. Man Overboard Recovery.

The first proposal is to ensure that even if one of us ends up in the drink we can float safely until someone can pick us up.

The second proposal is to help us all improve in a basic and necessary skill. For the Man Overboard Recovery drill, I propose that we take it in at least two steps. The first time would have the captain and crew work together to recover a cushion dropped overboard on a signal from the race committee. The second time would simulate the skipper being overboard, leaving the less experienced crew to handle the recovery.

In a recent experience, I was glad that I had taught my son how to handle *Wind Dancer II*. I was clobbered by the boom during an accidental jibe. While I lay there stunned, my son took control of the boat and kept us in the race. I could just have easily been knocked overboard. I have confidence that he could have brought the boat around and recovered me. I feel that my crew is prepared. Are you and yours?

Responsibility of a Skipper

By: Lane Hollister

I have read five accounts of the accident that resulted in the death of Larry Klein. Two sub-factors, directly relating to those pointed out by Bob Fellingham, stand out in my mind. 1st is - time in the water, and 2nd is - your ability to tread water.

This situation like most emergencies occurred after and unexpected event and unless prepared, you have but a few short minutes (seconds) to survive. Have any us stopped to realize how long it takes an experienced crew to return to a man-overboard? Ask the crew member on the MacGregor 65, who was washed overboard during the Harvest Moon Regatta. What if you were the only one on board who knew anything about the boat and you were the MOB, would you see them again? Once overboard how long can you tread water? Now, factor in cold water, heavy clothes, boots, choppy seas, and lack of a PFD. For Larry Klein it amounted to 12 - 15 minutes.

(Responsibility of a Skipper,..Cont.)

In most every set of sailing instructions there is a paragraph, basically stating; *It is the sole responsibility of a yacht to start, continue, or end a race.* Also see Rule 24 and Rule 62 (as per Bob's article).

Does this paragraph allow us to ignore general safety practices - "accepting the consequences for our, in-action"? But who else will it affect, if a mishap occurs? **It will disrupt everyone on the water around you and then some.**

In a near sinking off Port Isabel, I felt good that we could tell the US Coast Guard that we were prepared to be assisted back to shore. And that, this incident was not the result of carelessness or stupidity. They gladly came out and helped us; **WITH-OUT** complaint, charges, or fines. The crewmen even pumped out the hull at dock, then helped us load it on the trailer. Good Seamanship makes a difference and it saves lives.

Please pay attention to safety requirements (and suggestions), practice Man-Over-Board drills, cross train your crew so that anyone can handle your boat, equip your vessel to handle emergencies. Chances are your mishap will become a "War-Story" and not a tragedy.

Christmas Party

Twelve members brought their favorite snack foods, photos, the BIG RED BUCKET of sodas and Christmas music to the Serendipity REC-Hall for our 3rd annual PYC Christmas party. We ate and visited with each other from noon till about 1:30pm. Once again, there was more food and goodies than there were people to eat it. What would it take to get the rest of you guys out? For those that were not there; we wish you a merry Christmas and a joyous New Year. See you in January.

M26 Special Deal

For anyone wanting to join the PYC M26 Fleet, Charles Smithy has advised that the price goes up in March by \$1,000. He has a brand new 94 model on the lot discounted to move. Call me or Charles for more details.

Clear Lake Lighted Boat Parade 95'

Since we did not come up with a coordinator for a Palacios Harbor Parade, the Hollister's left the PYC Christmas Party and went to meet the McClendons at Portofino Harbor. We arrived just before the first boats were making the bend before the bridge over Clear Lake channel. It was cold and windy but I video-taped every boat. What a sight, this is one of those events I had been trying to make for 4 years and I was not disappointed. These guys are very creative with Texas Flags, Santa's wonderland, Toy Shops, Reindeers & Sleighs, Carolers, Chorus Lines, Fish, Jimmy Buffett Party, Giant Santa on a 72' Yacht with a giant red nose, Trees, Stars, Candy Canes, Marlin, and a full production of the Nightmare Before Christmas. For those who did not stay out in the cold wind there is a large \$ fee to view my tape. Ha! Ha! Ha! - Merry Christmas.

Planning Meeting

All 95' Officers & Board - Gov's (and members) are requested to meet at the PYC House on January 21st, 10:00am. This is the meeting where all plans for 95' calendar and programs are adopted and finalized.

C&C Sails = February 18th

The planned member's program for 95' will be a "SAILS SEMINAR" given by Ed and Mike of C&C Sailmakers. They like and open forum format and we will begin at 10:00am at the Serendipity Beach House.

Dues reminder!

Please forward your 95 dues ASAP! \$25.00 basic membership. Add \$15.00 for each fleet you plan to race in. And shirts \$10, Caps \$5 are optional.

F.Y.I !

Louis Vuitton Cup (challenger selection series)

Jan. 14-20Round 1
Jan. 29-Feb. 4Round 2
Feb. 14-20Round 3
Mar. 2-8Round 4
Mar. 18-31Semifinals
Apr. 11-22Finals

Citizen Cup (defender selection series)

Jan. 12-20Round 1
Jan. 29-Feb. 6Round 2
Feb. 14-22Round 3
Mar. 2-10Round 4
Mar. 18-31Semifinals
Apr. 10-22Finals

America's CupMay 6-20