



Konza Sailor

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Founded 1963

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Ooohhh, that smell ... and it's on purpose

Kevin Elliott Staff Writer

Blue Valley Yacht Club member Henry Otto is getting ready to make a big stink.

"We can't let those East Coast sailors think they're better than us," Otto said, "just because they have more water, more boats and more wind."

In a show of Kansas spirit, Otto and other Manhattan area sailors recently issued a challenge to members of the Annapolis Maritime Museum, located on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. The contest — the annual burning of the socks at Equinox. Otto admits it sounds strange, but it's actually a way of ushering the spring and saying goodbye to Old Man Winter.

The tradition reportedly started at the Annapolis Maritime Museum. Because socks are not worn with boat shoes, the idea is to burn the winter socks, and along with them the evil winter spirits as a way to usher in the sailing season.

Otto said he read about the tradition in the March issue of Sail magazine and sent a challenge to the Annapolis club. While he said the rules of the contest are not exactly clear, the winner is determined by which group has the smelliest sock burning.

"They proposed each side having four judges standing downwind and judge on an odoriferous scale," Otto said. "We assume both sides are going to cheat." Otto said the secret weapon for the Blue Valley club is to load the judges panel with fishermen and sailors, who have a reputation for exaggerating the truth.

"We already conceded defeat," Otto said. The Blue Valley Yacht Club sent several t-shirts to the Annapolis club as payment for losing. In addition, participants will have to recite a "terrible" poem written by the Annapolis Maritime Museum director Jeff Holland.

The burning is expected to begin at about 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday at the Blue Valley Yacht Club. Otto said hotdogs will be served, but it's strictly "Bring Your Own

Socks." "We'll have two fires," Otto said. "One for the socks and one for the hot dogs."



Photo by David Mayes, Manhattan, Mercury, March 22, 2007

Bart Bartholomew gets a little help from Nathanael Martin, 7, pitching a colorful sock on the fire at the Blue Valley Yacht Club Wednesday evening as Bob Mullen and Wayne Martin wait their turn. The traditional sock-burning takes place to drive out evil winter spirits and usher in the sailing season.

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All members of the Club are encouraged to submit articles for inclusion to the newsletter.

Editorial

By Bart Bartholomew

As you have already noticed, this edition of the Konza Sailor is somewhat different than most editions, in that several of the items are reprints of items from other sources. I have republished these items for those who do not subscribe to the Manhattan Mercury or didn't attend our recent Vernal Equinox Sock Burning Ceremony.

It all began with a short article in the March edition of **Sail**. That article, "Off With Your Socks" by Rachel French prompted our very own esteemed secretary, Henry Otto, to assist Commodore Martin in gathering more information about the annual event, to challenge the yachters of Eastport, Maryland to a contest, and finally, to plan and organize the festivities that took place on our Club grounds on March 21.

I am sure that those club members who participated in the sock-burning event will agree with me that a good time was had by all and that we hope that this event will become another yearly tradition for the Blue Valley Yacht Club. A very special moment occurred when Bob Mullen burned a sock in memory of Carl Hinrichs, a former long-time, very active member who passed away this past year. Edith Hinrichs, Carl's widow, continues to stay abreast of BVYC activities via email and the Konza Sailor; Edith contacted Bob Mullen and asked that Bob burn a sock for Carl.

Once again, the members of the Blue Valley Yacht Club are indebted to Henry Otto for his creative efforts in devising activities that provide enjoyment and richer meaning to the concept of being sailors. Thank you, Henry.



At right: Meerman receives BVYC award in Florida

During the 2006 BVYC annual meeting in December, John Meerman of Kentucky and Florida should have been awarded the Summer Series Race Trophy but was not present for the ceremony. His sister, Jane Mullen, received the award for him. Then, in February of this year Jane re-presented the trophy to its rightful owner. The stern of Meerman's 13 foot racing dinghy can be seen on the dock behind Jane. Meerman spends the winters racing on Apalachee Bay but enjoys summer vacations at Tuttle Lake, especially competing in a Sunfish during BVYC races.

Article and photograph are by Bob Mullen



Spring Tides

By Wayne Martin, Commodore

As our weather warms and the days get longer we start to think about the upcoming sailing season. Tuttle Creek Lake is now at "normal" pool, coming as a great relief to those of us who saw the lake toward the end of last year. The long range forecast anticipates adequate rainfall for the spring months over the flood plain and we look forward to a good beginning to the BVYC season. What is unknown is how the Corps will manage outflow in the summer months, and if they release for down river navigation we could see lowered pool elevations again if the summer months turn dry. Hopefully the entire Midwest will see adequate moisture and the lake levels staying constant. The stumps have lots of bottom paint on them from last year we hope they stay submerged where they belong.

BVYC had its inaugural Equinox Sock Burning event on March 21st. The turnout was not large but a good time was had by those in attendance. We drove out the chill of winter by incinerating our winter socks after brashly issuing a challenge to the Annapolis Maritime Museum, where the tradition has been alive for many years. As anticipated, we lost the challenge and the sailors in attendance recited the *Ode to the Equinox*, found in this issue of the newsletter. There were many good-natured exchanges between our club and the AMM, and BVYC

received some needed positive press coverage from the event. We hope to expand on the theme in coming years and continue our own tradition of Equinox Sock Burning.

The BOD anticipates beginning some of our improvement projects as the weather becomes more amenable to outside ventures. The steps leading to a patio just off the shelter may become reality early in the season if we secure bids close to the budgeted amount. This will enhance the over all appeal of the area and make a great venue for social activities, as well as increase safety and comfort while at the club. The dock walkway is slated for repair and that project has already been started. New handrails are to be installed which will be much sturdier and more attractive. The BOD has discussed several other improvements and will continue to enhance our facility as member demands dictate and funds allow.

We have social activities planned for every month during the sailing season and we hope that the membership responds and attends as many as possible. Turnout for several club hosted events last year was encouraging. Getting to know those in our membership is always fun and rewarding- looking forward to seeing you



Thanks to Chef Bob Mullen, everyone enjoyed delicious grilled hotdogs immediately after the sock burning.

Just as the burning socks ushered away the evil spirits, hopefully, the hot dogs will usher in many more enjoyable, delicious feasts during the forthcoming sailing season.

Poem that was recited by all attendees at the Blue Valley Yacht Club's Equinox Sock Burning event

Ode to the Sock Burners

By Jefferson Holland, Poet Laureate of Eastport

Them Eastport boys got an odd tradition
When the sun swings to its Equinoxical position,
They build a little fire down along the docks,
They doff their shoes and they burn their winter socks.

Yes, they burn their socks at the Equinox;
You might think that's peculiar, but I think it's not,
See, they're the same socks they put on last fall,
And they never took 'em off to wash 'em, not at all...

So they burn their socks at the Equinox
In a little ol' fire burning nice and hot.

Some think incineration is the only solution,
'Cause washin' 'em contributes to the Chesapeake's pollution.

Through the spring and the summer and into the fall,
They go around not wearin' any socks at all,
Just stinky bare feet stuck in old deck shoes,
Whether out on the water or sippin' on a brew.

So if you sail into the Harbor on the 21st of March,
And you smell a smell like Limburger sauteed with laundry starch,
You'll know you're downwind of the Eastport docks
Where they're burning their socks for the Equinox.



At left:

Ken Hays tosses his sock into the fire to send the evil spirits on their way

Bottom right:

Katie Philp pauses to insure that her sock has ignited

Bottom left:

Hoover patiently awaits the start of the burning festivities so he, too, can be freed from the smell that has become trapped under his collar



Rear Commodore hopes for early start on mooring maintenance

By Bob Mullen, Rear Commodore

Above average March temperatures have the BVYC Harbormaster hoping for an early start on mooring maintenance. Mooring maintenance is conducted throughout the sailing season depending on availability of committee members and favorable weather. However, it is much easier to service the moorings before the keelboats are attached to the buoys.



Photograph by Bob Mullenp

View of the weak links in the BVYC moorings

Last season one third of the moorings were raised and serviced. Three moorings were the first in a series to be completely refurbished. This season the rear commodore has plans for an ambitious project requiring the inspection of 14 moorings that were last serviced in 2004. Some of the 14 will be completely refurbished. Normal servicing requires a team of not more than 3 persons to raise the anchors, inspect all the components and replace chain where necessary. Refurbishment requires the team to replace all chain and replace the buoy or buoy stem. The picture above shows a mooring chain with a pencil thin link that was found in the nick of time. Also note that the 3 buoy stems all have the bottom nuts rusted away. The club will disband the replacement of buoy stems because many of the stems have curves making replacement iffy and not very cost effective.

New buoys will be slightly smaller than those used in the past. The new buoys have a buoyancy of 60 pounds, meaning that half the buoy will be above water when attached to a 60 pound weight. The club's 40 foot mooring rodes are under the 60 pound weight.

Past instructions said that mooring pendants should be connected to the bottom ring on the buoy. This is not necessary because all BVYC buoys have safety chains from the top ring to the chain rode precluding disaster if the bottom nut fails because of rust.

Again this year, keelboaters will be asked to volunteer on the harbor committee. Working on the barge team is an interesting and rewarding duty that often allows the boat owner to give first hand inspection to the stuff that keeps the boats from floating away. Call 539-4759 to become a member of this committee. By the way... the committee welcomes women as well as men because the team deals with inspections and location decisions often performed more adroitly by women who read maps!!



Shelley Hays gets her pick of the hotdogs grilled by our master chef, Bob Mullen, after the Equinox Sock Burning had taken place.

Editor's note: You have already received this information via email. This reprinting is to remind you to RSVP.

Spring Launch Party

By Jeff and Jen Hancock, Social Directors

Fellow Boaters:

The spring season is upon us and the evil winter spirits have fallen to the depths, thanks to a few stinky socks. The "official" start of the sailing season begins on April 14th with a work day at the Blue Valley Yacht Club and Spring Launch Party.

The work day is tentatively scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Spring Launch Party begins at 6:30 p.m. at Mel's Tavern located at 105 North Third Street across from the Manhattan Town Center. There will be a \$12.00 charge for those wishing to attend the party. The fee will get you a "surf and turf" dinner consisting of an 8 oz. steak and fried shrimp served with potatoes and either corn or green

RSVP!

beans. *(If you have special dietary needs please let us know.)* The fee also includes all drinks other than alcoholic drinks.

At the party enjoy the company of your shipmates, and if don't like your shipmates come for the raffle prizes. Mark your calendars and plan on attending both events, the workday and the party.

We do need you to **RSVP** regarding the party, this will let us know how many cows to herd up and how many shrimp boats we need to pirate.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the party!



Spring Work Day

By Ron Frey, Vice Commodore

Spring Work Day is just around the bend. Since many of you have taken time to clean out your old sock drawers it is now time to focus on some clean-up at BVYC.

General clean-up at the grounds will be the main focus, cleaning up old weeds, sprucing up the dingy park by ridding it of junk and abandoned stuff.

Another idea I had (actually my wife's) is to plant more flowers and/or ground covers. This could be your donation to BVYC and the care of these plants your responsibility also. There are plenty of areas that this could be done. Jen Martin has made a nice contribution this way, as well others I don't know about. So bring your planting tools you like to use, plants, bulbs; also clippers, shovels, etc.

We are also planning some new steps and patio slab at the shelter. We need to move some rocks to prepare for that project, so some of us can work on that.

See you Work Day at 9:00



This photo has been put here to give new members an idea of what does get accomplished by club members on work days and during other periods of concentrated effort.

We've come a long way! Does anyone remember when this photograph was taken?

Red sky in the morning

By Bob Mullen, Rear Commodore



Red sky in the morning of July 17, 2006

Photograph from Bob Mullen

Last summer Gene and Coleen Lindgren accompanied Jane and me as we sailed the North Channel of Lake Huron for part of July and August. In July a record storm hit Ontario, Canada including Manitoulin Island and waters of the North Channel. The storm destroyed buildings, uprooted thousands of trees, knocked out power for 100,000 people for several days and overturned a 42 foot yacht. Many boats dragged anchors as winds exceeded 100 mph. The Mullens and Lindgrens road out the storm while at anchor in a large bay near the small town of Gore Bay where one sailor snapped a photo of an anemometer that recorded wind speed of 120 knots. There was a brush with danger when the boats owned by the Mullens and Lindgrens dragged anchors but both boats escaped without damage.

The unpredicted storm was the main topic of discussion among sailors for the remainder of the summer and continued to resurface in sailing magazines and newspaper articles. The Mullens and Lindgrens were still relating Storm Stories after returning home to Manhattan.

And during the winter, Jane made a startling discovery: The picture shown above was taken around 0730 on July 17th, the storm hit shortly after 3 pm on the same day. We had forgotten the old weather proverb—“Red sky at night, sailor’s delight. Red Sky in Morning, sailor’s warning.”

There are many proverbs that have been around for a long time as people accumulated natural clues for predicting weather. The “Red sky” adage is mentioned in the Bible when Jesus referred to the red sky in Matthew XVI: 2-3. Many of the proverbs also have some scientific background but they are not consistently accurate because time and place are factors that play a role in weather prediction.

We normally scan the sky often checking for a red sky, but somehow we missed that observation last July 17th. The weather people missed it too as the storm came in unannounced. So, perhaps it would be wise to at least be aware of the “Red sky in morning, sailor’s warning.”

