



Catalina Association of Puget Sound Newsletter

November 2009

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Commodore's Corner

By Dan Clawson

Friday, November 13 will be the last CAPS business meeting of the year as December 5 will be the Christmas party only. We'll be electing officers for 2010 from among the many talented folks in the club. Rich Lerz will take the helm as Commodore next year. The 2010 Vice Commodore will help with meetings and events, schedule speakers, and serve as 2011 Commodore. The other positions, of no less importance, are Treasurer, Measurer, Cruise Coordinator, Newsletter, Hospitality, Safety, Historian and Webmaster.

Of course current officers may be willing to continue for another year but there are opportunities. Gary Wilson has put in two years as Cruise Coordinator as well as holding other offices in years past and is ready to be just a cruiser. The Coordinator delegates responsibility to a host boat for each individual cruise, so it's not as much work as it used to be. The Newsletter position is open, and Dick Eagle has figured out a simple way to manage the formatting so basically all the editor needs to do is collect the articles and cut and paste them into a template. As a relatively new member elected as Commodore this year, I've found everyone willing to help with suggestions and sharing the load. It's fun and rewarding to get involved in

CAPS at whatever level works for you. If you are interested in being the Editor or Cruise Coordinator please contact Dick or Gary to find out more about what is involved.

It's been good to see some new faces at the meetings and on our recent cruises. Hope to have a good turnout for Friday the 13th for a speaker (as yet to be announced as this is written), sandwiches, drinks, elections, and relaxing with our fellow sailors.

Foulweather Bluff Race

October 3, 2009

By Tom Madden

The Foulweather Bluff Race is the last of the CAPS races of the year, and is sponsored by the Corinthian Yacht Club of Edmonds. It takes place the first Saturday in October, and usually attracts from 80 to 100 boats, broken into about 10 PHRF rating divisions. I had been watching the weather forecasts the last two weeks prior to the race day. Two years ago, it was also a real blow, with winds in the 30 to 35 knot range for most of the race. Last year was even more wind, with broken boats, 40 to 45 knot winds, and a skipper overboard (we finished with only a few broken mainsail slugs). I had promised my crew that if it was

going to blow that hard again, I would be willing to drop out.



Sea Trek II packed in like a sardine with the other 50+ boats staying at the Edmonds Marina the morning before the Foulweather Bluff Race

It looked like the weather was going to be good this year, and just before I left Bellevue, the forecast had settled in on partly cloudy with 5 to 15 knots from the north. My trusty locks-helper/boat transporting person Kathy agreed to meet me at noon on Friday to get me out from Lake Washington to Puget Sound, so we headed off towards the Montlake Bridge, dodging showers as we went out through the ship canal. By a little after 3:00, I had dropped her off at Shilshole and was headed north for Edmonds alone. The showers had cleared, and the wind was light and warm, and it was a beautiful day to be out on the water. I got to Edmonds around 5:00PM, paid my moorage, and settled in for a nice dinner at Anthony's with my wife, and a quiet evening on the boat.

Morning arrived with a very cool 10 knot northerly breeze, and broken clouds over Puget Sound.

At the skipper's meeting, I got the class breaks, and had a few minutes to talk with Ken McKenzie (*Scotch and Soda*) and some of the other competitors in the race. Both Ken and I had registered to be in flying sails divisions, but there were only two CAPS boats in the entire race, and we were placed in different divisions with different courses. Ken told me his crew included Dave Motter, Steve Peterson, Roger Jenkins, Steve Malan, and Jay Curren who sails with him regularly.

Scotch and Soda was placed in Division 2 - sailing the short course, along with 11 other boats. The short course starts at Edmonds, runs across the Sound to a temporary buoy at Pilot Point, (just south of Point No

Point) back across to Scatchet head, and back to Edmonds - a distance of about 16 miles.

Sea Trek II was placed in Division 3 along with 7 other boats, and would be the first and slowest of the divisions to sail the longer course. The long course starts at Edmonds, runs up to the Foulweather Bluff Buoy, back down to Scatchet Head, and back to Edmonds - a distance of about 25 miles. My competition consisted of a Baba 40: *Airloom*, a Peterson 30: *Lady Bug*, a Moore 24: *Frecklebelly Madtom*, a Beneteau 411: *Izarra*, A Laser 28: *Corrida*, a C&C 34: *Jammer*, and my nemesis from the Milltown Sailing Club: *Mei Li*, a Beneteau 32. *Mei Li* rates exactly the same as *Sea Trek II*, and I have sailed many races against him in the past at Milltown, and in the Foulweather Bluff race for the past several years. We know each other pretty well, and have a friendly rivalry.

After the skipper's meeting, I headed back down to the boat to meet up with the rest of my crew and get a quick last minute check of the weather. The latest was partly cloudy/showers, with northerlies from 5 to 15 knots, rising to 10 to 20 very late in the afternoon and evening hours. That was a lot better than last year, so all was a "go" weather-wise. My crew consisted of myself, Laura C, Tom B, Doug M, Bryan C, Sara S, and Cynthia I. All are regular crewmembers on my boat, and all but two of them have been on "the Bluff" before.

With all aboard, we headed off to the start line about 0.4 miles north of the marina. The wind was blowing its advertised 5 to 10 knots, and we got the sails set and waited our turn in the start sequence. Our start was good and uneventful, and off we went towards Point No Point, with about a 10 knot northerly breeze and the enough from the northeast that we were only close reaching in stead of close hauled. We had *Frecklebelly Madtom* to windward, and the rest of our competition a little to leeward, all heading northwest for Point No Point. As we went across, we gained and lost a few feet at a time to both *Frecklebelly* and *Mei Li*. *Airloom* and *Lady Bug* gradually pulled ahead, but that was expected given their faster ratings. The wind was a little puffy, both in strength and in direction. We had the option to go more close hauled, but would have been heading more towards the south end of Whidbey than the Foulweather Buoy. As we made our way up to Point No Point, we could see another wind line a mile or so to the north. The water was darker, telling me "more wind". When we hit the wind line, the wind came up to 15 or so with puffs near 20 knots. The wind also shifted more from the northwest, so being close hauled was in order, and we were no longer able to clear Point No Point. This was about the top of the wind range for my headsail, so we had to start

feathering through the puffs. The waves started getting bigger, and we were beginning to get a little over-powered. We made a tack in the protected waters below Point no Point, and once well clear of other boats and the point itself, went back on Starboard and headed for the Foulweather Buff Buoy. I sent Cynthia up forward to rig the spinnaker sheets, but the wind and waves were getting pretty bad, so I told her to head back into the cockpit until after we rounded the Bluff buoy.



Sea Trek II and crew hard to weather approaching the buoy at Foulweather Bluff

As we approached the buoy, the wind continued to build, and now was running in the low 20s most of the time. Although it is less than 4 miles from the point to the buoy, it seemed to take forever to get there. The tide had changed against us, and the wind kept building as we slugged our way north. By this time we had left *Mei Li* behind us by about ½ mile, and *Frecklebelly* had run way in close to shore and I was not paying that much attention to her. *Airloom* and *Lady Bug* had left us behind in the heavier winds, and I had lost track of the rest of my division way back in the rest of the fleet. The tide was against us, so I knew when we got to the mark we should be sure we were well past before we made our tack. With the winds as high as they were, I decided not to fly the chute until we got back south a little and hopefully the wind would die down a bit. I figured we could reach across to the Whidbey side of Admiralty Inlet before we popped the chute and headed pretty much dead down. Just as we were passing the Bluff Buoy, I heard some yelling and noise to port, behind the headsail. About that time I saw the bow of *Frecklebelly* **below** our genoa, and about 5 feet from my lifelines! Apparently they had thought we were going to tack as soon as we were beside the buoy, and they were now way too close to duck our stern. They made a crash tack right below us, and their stern cleared our port side by mere inches. Wow, that was close!

As soon as I was sure we were past the buoy with enough room to tack and not have the current carry us into it, we went ahead and tacked. As we rounded the buoy and headed for Scatchet, we were making over 8



Frecklebelly Madtom after a crash-tack under our lee bow. This tack by them was way too close for comfort! Notice his stern wave is up on our lee rail.

knots, and the wind was holding in the low 20s. We watched several of the other bigger boats try to set their chutes with varying success, and I decided to just stick with the main and jib for the time being.

Frecklebelly tacked behind us, and as we were going downwind, I hailed over to be sure everybody was OK. They hailed back that they were “just getting everything back in order”, and all was OK, so we went back to our own strategy. I could not see *Mei Li* at all, and I looked way up forward and picked out *Airloom’s* spinnaker over a mile ahead. I knew *Lady Bug* was not far from him, so I was pretty sure 3rd and 4th place were between us and *Frecklebelly*. They ran alongside us for a few minutes, then they decided to try to raise their chute. After a few miss-cues and a little shrimping, they got their chute flying, caught a wave, and began surfing. I knew they would beat us to the line, but I really did not want to break anything, and we were still well ahead of our nemesis - *Mei Li*.

As we made our way back down the Scatchet, it began to lighten up just a bit, and the wind was now running in the high teens. I looked back, and sure enough, there was *Mei Li* with spinnaker up about ½ mile behind us. He was gradually gaining on us, so we got our chute out and got ready to fly. We managed to get our chute up without incident, and carried it all the way to the finish line. *Mei Li* ran way off to the west, presumably to stay in the favorable current, then finally tacked back towards us as we headed for the finish line. I was sure they still wanted to cross the line ahead of us, and the friendly competition was still raging. The wind

began to build again as we made our way south of Whidbey. We flew across the finish line at nearly 9 knots, spinnaker flying, and pulling a wake that should belong to a powerboat. Our time around the course was 4 hours 15 minutes, and a corrected time of just 4:00:19. Our time secured a 4th place finish, behind *Airloom*, *Lady Bug*, and *Frecklebelly Madtom*. Finishing after us was *Izarra*, *Corrida*, *Mei Li*, and *Jammer*.

Ken McKenzie on *Scotch and Soda* finished 5th in his division with a time around the course of 2:41:46, corrected to 2:25:50.

So that was the Foulweather Bluff for 2009. No glass trophy this year, but a good race, we beat our nemesis, and we didn't break anything. Maybe next year...

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Oct. 10 <i>Monthly Meeting</i> Saturday Crew Cook-off Laurel Park	Nov. 13 <i>Monthly Meeting</i> 6:30	Dec. 5 Annual Christmas Party Potluck and Gift Exchange (Boat Gift and/or White Elephant) Laurel Park
Oct. 16-18 Brownsville Cruise	Laurel Park Program: TBA	Dec. 31-Jan. 1 Elliott Bay New Year's Cruise
	HAPPY THANKSGIVING	

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