



Catalina Association of Puget Sound Newsletter

December 2009

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Commodore's Corner

By Dan Clawson

On Friday the 13th after learning about winter season preparations, diesel engines, boat electrical systems, and rigging from Pat at Pat's Marine Engine and Leif Hagen with Northwest Rigging Services, the club met to choose new officers and plan the Christmas party.

The officers-elect are:

Commodore - Rich Lerz
 Vice-Commodore - Jack Henderson
 Treasurer- Nancy McKenzie
 Secretary - Sally Hamel
 Measurer - Ken McKenzie
 Cruise Coordinator - Jim Kitchen
 Newsletter - vacant
 Hospitality - Dan Clawson
 Safety- Dick Eagle
 Historian - Rod Sparks
 Webmaster - Dave Fend

We did not have a formal vote for the officers. Rather the Commodore, acting as Chair of the meeting, nominated candidates and announced their election immediately, before they had the chance to say no.

Although the elections did not conform to Robert's Rules of Order and were conducted in a totally arbitrary and unreasonable manner, I have determined that as a nautical entity CAPS is governed by Pirate's Rules of Order, which do not require a formal vote for officers. Therefore the elections will stand, although we will confirm the results at the Christmas Party for the official record.

The **Christmas party** will be at the Laurel Park clubhouse on Saturday, December 5. Cynthia Jones-Ellis is coordinating the arrangements. Barb Jenkins will cook the ham, and the rest of us will bring salads, side dishes, breads and desserts to share along with our own beverages. Arrive at 6 and we'll start eating at 6:15, then exchange gifts. Each boat (or boat partner) can bring a "nice" gift (\$20 or less suggested) which someone else might actually enjoy, and a "nauti" gift (usually something you've really wanted to get rid of for a long time - think fish gutting equipment). And, to get a gift in either or both categories, you'll need to bring one for the category(ies) of your choice!

Come to the party! And, dress for a photograph. Dave Fend and Dick Eagle will have cameras at the party so we can begin the process of putting pictures with members in the roster. We'll add your boat later, what else is Photoshop for?

The **Awards Banquet** will be Saturday, January 16 at a place to be announced. New officers will be installed. If you got an award last year, you get to pass it on (other than the Cruising and Racing awards)! So be thinking about the most deserving boat to get your award. Now is the time to gossip and share the misadventures of your CAPS friends. And to remember the contributions that so many members have made to the success of the club – events don't just happen – so that we can show them our appreciation. Be sure to get the date on your calendar.

The officers will be meeting on December 9 to plan for 2010. Suggestions made by the members on November 13 included having a Life Sling demo earlier in the season, CPR training, and establishing a policy for charitable contributions. Send your suggestions to me or any officer before December 9 and we can bring it up for discussion. See you at the Christmas party.

New Year's Eve Party at Elliott Bay

Once again, Linda Loux and George Fogg have offered to be the host boat for a wonderful New Year's Eve celebration on Branwen at Elliott Bay Marina. CAPS members are welcome to come by boat or by car to celebrate the arrival of 2010.

Linda and George would like for you to RSVP if you plan to attend. Call Linda at (206)713-1609 if you plan to be there. If you arrive by car, call Linda and she will give you the gate access code.

Brownsville Cruise Report By Dan Clawson

The Brownsville cruise usually features blows and heavy rain, and this year was no exception. But those of us who disregarded the forecast of near gale force winds for the last official cruise of the season on October 16-18 (is this report a bit late?) enjoyed a laid-back weekend with good company, good food and drink, quite a bit of blue sky, and a fantastic rainbow!

The high winds and rain forecast for Friday held off (barely) until all four boats were safely moored. Friday evening we met on host boat Auntie Beryl for drinks and snacks while the rain came down. Fred and Fely Aylstock brought their Catalina 34 Neptune's Court up from Bremerton along with a friend. Fred

issues authentic Royal Navy grog to his crew, or at least to the Skipper, to keep morale high. Linda Loux and George Fogg (Branwen) shared their usual tasty treats with us at the pot luck on Saturday while faithful Haley guarded Branwen. We enjoyed hanging out with our incoming Vice-Commodore Jack and Margaret Henderson, recent immigrants from the East Coast, who brought their Catalina 34 Castlewellan from Everett.

The rain let up late Saturday morning and we enjoyed exploring the town, reading, or preparing for the Saturday evening pot luck. Brownsville is a country village with friendly locals and a great little general store as well as a small meat market. That's about it except for the deli at the marina. On Sunday morning we fired up the propane heater at the marina's picnic shelter and breakfasted on donuts that Fely Aylstock contributed, leaving most of them for the Marina's crew, before departing for our home ports after a most enjoyable and relaxing weekend get-away. Thanks to Cruise Coordinator Gary Wilson for arranging reservations at the Brownsville Marina and to all who attended.

Life With an Airhead By Linda Loux

I think most of you know that the local Tartan group had their rendezvous in Bremerton the same weekend as the Catalina Rendezvous. George and I moved over there Saturday in time for me to see the presentation one of our members made on the use of their new composting head. I found it very interesting, and thought some of you might as well. Kath gave me permission to share her newsletter article with you.

Life with an Airhead
By Kath Sercu, S/V Thin Ice

Denis & I spent four months cruising with an Air Head this season and life will never be the same. We weren't cruising with a young person or a flaky adult. The Air Head we lived with was a composting head (toilet).

It works much like a conventional toilet or head except there is no flush water, (nor water hoses nor holding tank). The top is a regular toilet lid and seat. Liquids drain out the front of the bowl into a separate container underneath. A coffee filter is placed on the trap door near the rear of the bowl, solids land on the filter and there is a lever to open the trap door so the

solid deposit falls into the composting tank on the bottom.

Unlike other composting toilets I have run across, the Air Head first separates liquids from solids. This means there is no need for a heater to dry the combined waste so it can compost. The other composting toilets I know about all have heaters or very large compartments for the compost, like the Washington State Marine Parks. Instead the Air Head needs only a small fan to help keep the compost aerobic and ventilate new additions to the compost tank. With a current draw of 80 milliamps our fan uses only about 2 amp-hrs per day. The composting tank at the bottom of the unit has a handle that is turned to mix in new deposits and help aerate the compost. With the mixing action and fan the contents are kept aerobic (in the presence of oxygen) and this eliminates the usual odor. Holding tank odor is from anaerobic bacteria, which live without oxygen and are not present in the Air Head.

The Air Head has its own unique smell that we are unable to describe. After the two of us used it for a week and then it sat unused for 10 days we put the entire unit into our car, parked it in the sun and left it all day in order to show it to someone. There was hardly any smell when we opened the trunk. I wouldn't think of doing this with a porta potty or a cleaned out holding tank! After sitting another week unused we put it in the car again and drove to the Tartan Rendezvous in Bremerton. Ask anyone who was there about the odor.

The composting tank starts off with one coir brick, soaked in 6 C of water, crumbled and mixed with a couple tablespoons of enzyme. Coir is made from coconut shells and is used for planting soil. We found it for sale at nurseries and in the plant section of stores. The Coir absorbs more moisture and we are told works better than the peat moss that was used originally.

The Air Head came with a 5 ft length of hose, a 12 V fan, coffee filters, coir brick, enzyme, mounting bracket with fasteners for the bottom and a lid for the compost tank. Everything you need to install and use the unit. (We chose which side the mixing handle and air hose were on.)

The cruising we did this past season was a road trip to Alaska with a van and small trailer. We installed the Air Head in the trailer and we were pleased with it even though we didn't get the ideal compost mixture, so we needed to empty the solids about every 3 weeks instead of 4 weeks. We will continue working toward the perfect compost mixture. We use a spray

bottle with water and a little vinegar to rinse the bowl after peeing. We emptied the liquid tank once a day.

What we liked

The only connection is one 1 ½ inch air hose with a small fan. It has a regular toilet seat. The liquid and solid tanks are easy to empty. There is a sight glass for liquid level. The compost can be used on my flowers or put in the composting toilets at the state marine parks or in an outhouse. Composting is a basic proven process. The Air Head is thoughtfully designed and well built with good quality materials. It is simple, has few moving parts and has been tested by a variety of users. Attention has been paid to the small details, like the gaskets on the toilet seat and lid to keep out the flies. The original designer, Geoffrey Trott, still owns the company. We found his knowledge and suggestions helpful for installation and perfecting the compost mixture.

The downside

Getting perfect compost is not the same for every user. That said, even really wet compost is more pleasant smelling than the holding tank odor.

Caution

There are copy cat versions out there which are a little less expensive and one gets what they pay for. We think we got our money's worth with our Air Head.

The Air Head was something I seriously considered for a few years and purchased at the Wooden Boat Show in Sept 2008. Denis was concerned about odor and this turned out to be a non-issue. The other resistance on Denis' part was if it wasn't broke why mess with it. We had replumbed the marine head to put everything into the holding tank and then we pump it out; either to a shore side station or "over the side" depending on where we are and what is available. This allows us to stay in an anchorage for 3 days without any discharge of sewage, as long as we pee in a bucket, over the side or ashore. Other than the replumbing, the marine head had functioned with only one incident, where it plugged completely with precipitate, probably calcium. Then we used a bucket for everything and rowed it out to deep water to dump. It was preventable if we had only known we needed to routinely put vinegar in the head to remove the precipitate. So, it should never happen again, right? Once was enough to make me realize the reality of what happens when the marine head doesn't function. My concern with the Air Head was it sounded far too simple. If it was that easy then why weren't more people using them? The answer I think is most folks just want to push a button or pump a handle and flush it 'away' without looking at it or thinking about where it goes. From my perspective, there really is no

'away' anymore. Everything that I throw or flush 'away' winds up in someone else's back yard. I think a little human waste in the ocean has little impact. Unfortunately there are more and more people using personal boats, more and bigger cruise ships and cities that all dump human waste into near shore water. If this isn't a problem now it is only a matter of time until it becomes a problem. I see the Air Head as a better way to dispose of my human waste by composting and putting it on land rather than in the water.

I am looking forward to installing the Air Head in Thin Ice. The fullness of our holding tank will no longer decide how long we can stay in an anchorage. I won't need to pee in a bucket to squeeze more days out of the holding tank. The holding tank odor will be gone from the boat and my clothes closet. The holding tank and associated hoses can be removed. We will be recycling our human waste in a responsible manner.

For more info go to www.airheadtoilet.com.

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Oct. 10 <i>Monthly Meeting</i> Saturday Crew Cook-off Laurel Park	Nov. 13 <i>Monthly Meeting</i> 6:30 Elections	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 HAPPY THANKSGIVING	Dec. 31-Jan. 1 Elliott Bay New Year's Cruise

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Newsletter	Your name could be here!		
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