

# The SHALLOW WATER SAILOR

NUMBER 61

DECEMBER 1996

## CAPTAIN'S CORNER

I had planned on a long newsletter for the last issue of 1996, but like most of you, I am finding it hard to squeeze in all the things I *must do* on top of all the things I *want to do* this holiday season. This letter, then, will have to convey just a few thoughts and comments.

First, Mary and I want to wish you all peace and joy this Christmas season and hope you are able to celebrate this special time with your family. This year with our three children scattered over ten time zones, we plan to go back to Wisconsin for a week visit with our parents. One of the most important things on my *must do* list is to find the warmest clothes I own for the trip home.

Another *must do* is tomorrow night's Annapolis Boat Parade of Lights. They are predicting rain. I hope not. Sunday afternoon is another *must do*: the Naval Academy and Hood College presentation of Handel's Messiah in the Academy chapel. And so it goes!

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,



## LETTERS

Here are some of your comments about my buying a ten year old Nimble 20 last July and running an ad in Messing About In Boats and the local newspaper to sell my Dovekie.

Don Janes of Fort Meyers FL said: "So good to see the latest SWS. But, wherein I must say, I saw no mention of sale of ZEPHYRUS. I did see an ad for her in Messing About in Boats. I hope it was a mistake and leave the subject at that."

Nick Scheuer of Freeport IL said: "Hey! I was surprised to see in MAIB that the ZEPHYRUS is for sale. Have you got your eye on something else?"

Sally Thomson of Ipswich MA said: "Fair winds and happy days in the new boat, John!"

Mike Cranford of Shepardstown WV said: "Congratulations on your purchase of the Nimble 20. I know you'll enjoy it."

Charolette and Peter Soechting of West Orange NJ said: "Congratulations on your new boat! We look forward to cruising with you."

Fred and Evelyn Peckham of Carthage NY said: "How are you going to live without the Dovekie waddle?"

George Hume of Toronto Canada said: "I was interested to see your reincarnation as a Nimble 20 owner. Since I am not yet a subscriber to MAIB I haven't seen your confession. I keep an eye out for interesting boats, hopefully a Dovekie, and yet I haven't seen an ad for the Nimble 20 that I can remember. I immediately dug out my copy of David Seideman's article (SBJ No. 59, Mar 1988). I like your choice."

Richard Dix of Hesperia MI said: "When I saw your ad in Boats I thought perhaps you were joining the Sea Pearl 21 cause! (Editor's note: Guess what kind of boat Richard owns and sails?) With the Ted Brewer design, the Nimble 20 gives the appearance of a Rob Roy 23. (Editor's note: Ted Brewer designed both, the RR in 1982 and the N20 in 1986.) Pretty boat, good luck with her."

Al Athearn of Jobstown NJ said: "So you and Don Hurd are selling your Dovekie. Wow! (Editor's note: Don took delivery of Shearwater No. 11 this fall.) Are you getting a replacement or getting out altogether? Don was a big influence on our purchase of a Dovekie. Another reason we liked the Dovekie was that there seemed to be a close-knit family of owners. It is sad to see family members leaving. Hopefully we can keep in touch with family members after they leave the nest."

Guenter Arlt of Chicago IL sent this letter:

"Congratulations on your new boat. I too like the Nimble 20.. saw it in a Milwaukee sailboat show a few years ago. My admiral said not get any ideas.

This spring I outfitted the Dovekie for cruising: built storage underneath the seats for extra fuel cans and mounted a three gallon fuel tank under the rear deck. In this way I can carry 10 gallons of fuel. I built a tarp from instructions I found in the SWS with some of my own improvements. It worked perfectly.

On June 14th I towed the Dovekie to Crane Lake Minnesota, 600 miles from Chicago. Next morning I launched the boat at Beddow's Campground and went on a ten day solo cruise. I call this area God's country. It is a roadless wilderness of lakes and rivers, a landscape without people. It is also known as Voyager's National Park. Here you can slow down your pace of life, get in contact with what's around you and also with Greater Spirits than yourself. I made my way up through Sand Point Lake and up Nauakan Lake to Kettle Falls Hotel. The only way to get there is by or float plane. Since it was Father's Day, I treated myself to a wonderful fish dinner prepared by a chef.

The Kettle Falls Hotel was built in 1913 by W. E. Rodie. Local legend has it that a famous Madam Nellie Bly financed the building. Written accounts and recorded memories affirm that fancy ladies lived at the hotel, however evidence suggests that the origin of the hotel had more to do with the lumber industry. Nearby is Kettle Falls Dam built by Edward W. Backus. Mr. Backus was a lumber tycoon who used the dam to control the

log runs and generate power for the papermills. At the dam you can portage your boat by truck into Rainy Lake. I passed that up and instead explored the many bays and back waters in the area. Since I towed my Klepper Arius kayak behind the Dovekie I had a chance to paddle up little creeks and small rivers to explore and fish. Towing the 65 lb. Klepper behind the Dovekie was no problem. I sometimes lengthened or shortened the tow line according to sea conditions.

Time flies by when you are having fun and soon I was back at Crane Lake and on my way home. On cruises like this the Dovekie really shines. The boat is easy to handle and, oh ja, the draft is so important on water like that.

I hope to be back to cruising soon in that great North country. I have been there more than ten times and will never see it all in my lifetime."

Finally, Paul Follansbee of Highstown NJ sent this letter this week:

"I have been completely disoriented since learning you've sold *ZEPHYRUS*. You know compasses point north, the sun rises in the east, John Zohlen sails Dovekies: these are some of the verities I rely on. What next? Soon, I suppose, you'll be telling me the world is round. Seriously though, best of luck with your new vessel.

We got in a fair amount of sailing this summer, though never as much as we (I) would like. Beginning with the Spring Cruise, which was delightful, we developed problems with *SWAN*'s electrical system that were to plague us until August. Without boring you with details, this meant that our two week cruise in Rhode Island and Massachussets waters was accomplished without reliable electricity. *SPARTINA*, our Dovekie, never gave us such problems.

The cruise itself, except for the electrical problems, increased our confidence in the Shearwater. In addition to her shallow water ability, she can stand up to pretty stiff conditions. Our first week saw four days of winds at or above 35 knots (one hurricane and two gales): we sailed on one of those days, with a northwest wind at 25 gusting to 35. Double reefed in Narragansett Bay, *SWAN* was making 6.4 knots to windward (admittedly not close hauled) and never heeled more than 20 degrees. Later in the day we nosed her onto a beach at the head of the Sakonnet River and walked ashore for dinner at a waterfront restaurant.

The second week brought virtually no wind, but beaching the boat at Cuttyhunk and Vineyard Haven was memorable, as was zipping through Wood's Hole without the kind of apprehension doing so in a keel boat brings. The four of us survived the two weeks on board nicely, and except while holed up for 36 hours during the last gale, did not feel claustrophobic. As you reflected once regarding Harry and Alice Mote's boat, it s amazing that a boat can be this versatile.

After a year of sailing *SWAN*, the only thing I would change would be the system for raising and lowering the leeboards. The block and tackle system introduced on the later boats is effective and has the advantage of being able to solve the leaking leeboard pivot problem. I removed and greased our boards prior to our cruise, and we still took on quite a bit of water, so I think eventually I'll have the new system rigged.

Have a good winter. Hope to see you and your new boat on the Spring Cruise."

## SCUTTLEBUTT

First, the rumors that *ZEPHYRUS* is sold are, as Mark Twain said, premature. Four persons have looked at the boat. None had seen a Dovekie before, none had done any beach cruising and none made an offer. Just as well. As I decommissioned *ZEPHYRUS* for the season last month I thought about all the reasons I was attracted to and bought a Dovekie boat in 1984 in the first place. Nothing had changed. Then I thought about all the adventures and friends we had shared together and, I came to the conclusion that I did not want to give them up. Can I have two boats? Why not! People own two cars: a family sedan and a pick up. The Dovekie cannot be tied to a publicly accessible pier for prolonged times, it is unballasted and it leaks in a downpour. The Nimble 20 is not easily rigged and launched by Dovekie standards and at 2500 lbs (boat and trailer) is a load behind the Aerostar van. In my particular situation I can moor the Nimble at our community pier for \$100 a year. It is a five minute walk to the pier, start the old Honda and motor down Church Creek for a quick sail on the South River. The Dovekie is safe and secure under the tarp in the back yard until some friends and I want to tow to St. Michaels to watch the log canoe sailboat races and over night on the water. So for now, *ZEPHYRUS* will stay in the will for the grandchildren (ala Robert de Gast) and we plan on participating in our fourteenth consecutive Annual Chesapeake Bay Spring Cruise next May on the Chester River. Retirement and buying a much larger boat like Hanson and Linda Robbins talk about in their attached letter are several years away in the first case, and probably not reality for us, in the second case.

I'll give more details about the Spring Cruise and launching at Rolph's Marina in the next issue. In the meantime Jim Plourde's attached letter gives some hints on where I propose we go.

## 1996-97 SUBSCRIPTION

If the number behind your name on the mailing label is "96" or lower, this will be your last issue of *Shallow Water Sailor*. The subscription price is ten dollars for 4-6 issues plus a roster of the subscribers. Please let me know if the roster information is correct and what kind of gasoline or electric powered outboard motor you mount on your Dovekie and where. I will add that listing to the roster to be mailed with the next issue of SWS.

## BOATING CALENDAR

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Jan     | Annual Edey & Duff Christmas Party. Aucoot Cove Boatyard Mattapoisett MA. Details will be sent by E & D in a flier. |
| May 2-4 | Eighteenth Annual Chesapeake Bay Spring Cruise on the Chester River. See details in the next issue.                 |

HANSON C. ROBBINS  
207 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

3 September 1996

Dear John;

Enclosed is \$10 for my 1997 SWS subscription. Your efforts as editor continue to be impressive. Keep up the good work.

At the risk of being accused of blasphemy, I have to report that Linda and I have succumbed to the call of improved cruising comfort. We bit the bullet and bought a used Island Packet 32. It only draws 4ft 4in., so I hope that I still qualify to be a subscriber to SWS. We are very excited about the acquisition, which we have named DRESS CIRCLE. Perhaps a Magnum Opus group may need a mother ship someday. The boat is now in Dunedin FL. We will use it down there this coming winter, (I retire in November) and sail it up to Boston next spring. Don't be surprised if you get a phone call as we pass by Annapolis.

This action also means that I have to put my beloved RUMPUS up for sale. Would you be so kind as to place it among the other classified ads? It is hull #96, deep green hull color with tanbark mainsail and a nylon drifter. Included are all camping amenities, such as standup mosquito proof back porch, sleeping mattress, stove, ice chest, and port-a-potty. Interior has been improved with decorative cedar ceiling, dining room table and custom seat cushions. The trailer is a Cox roller/tilt type of the new design. Hubs have bearing buddies. Boat is stored in Gloucester, MA. Asking price is \$6000. I can be reached at (617)266-1321 for further details.

We did use RUMPUS once this summer in Essex, MA, which I highly recommend. We launched at an excellent ramp in Essex (cost \$15) with good parking about two hours before high tide on a beautiful July day, romped around scenic Hog Island and back through Conomo Point, pulling the boat about two hours after high tide. We got some stares from powerboaters, but we are used to that. Overnight parking is permitted. It would be a nifty place to consider for a Dovekie rendezvous.

The reality of early retirement is about to happen. A year ago I wrote you about my dream trip, the circumnavigation of half the United States via the Mississippi. It is hard to believe that it is beginning to come together. We now have the boat that sleeps four, and we intend to complete some of the route next Spring. Who knows, perhaps after 1997, we will do it. Want to sign up for a leg?

Linda and I send our best regards to Mary and hope that the wedding went smoothly.

All the best;



Hanson

114 N. Marshall Street  
Allentown, PA 18104  
September 18, 1996

The Shallow Water Sailor  
John Zohlen, Editor  
3 Wilelinor Drive  
Edgewater MD 21037-1006

Dear John,

Thank you again for your efforts with the SWS. Enclosed is my renewal. My boat has no name (not the name listed) and I continue to use a 4 HP Evinrude outboard.

With vacations and other family activities, I didn't get a chance to go sailing between the beginning of July and late August. However, I finally spent a couple days on the upper Chester River (August 25-27) and had some good sailing as well as some drifting. This completed my tour of the Chester River which started in 1993, the first season I had the Dovekie. At that time I spent three days on the lower Chester, sailing from Rock Hall around the southern tip of Eastern Neck Island and north to somewhat beyond the Corsica River and back, including inspections of many of the creeks along the way. This time, I went from Chestertown down to the area that I had previously reached. You had mentioned the possibility of holding next years spring cruise on the Chester (it's on the upper Chesapeake Bay, for people out of this area), so I thought I'd pass my comments along.

We should consider launching at Rolph's Marina on the upper Chester. The problem with the Chester in general is that although launch ramps are located here and there, they require a county permit which is rather expensive for just a few days of sailing. On my 1993 trip, for lack of finding anything better, I launched at a private camp ground outside of Rock Hall. The ramp was narrow, short, in poor shape, and very exposed. I think it would be difficult to use in winds out of the WNW to SW, the prevailing directions! This time, I launched in Chestertown at Kiblers Marina, immediately next to the Old Wharf Inn restaurant. Parking was quite limited, and the ramp was usable, but in only fair condition, and restricted to boats less than 22'. I wouldn't recommend this launch area either. However, Rolph's Marina looked good. I passed it on the east shore of the river a couple of miles south of Chestertown. I didn't go in to look at the ramp surface, but three boats hauled out quickly while I was passing by, so I assume that it's in good shape. A large field was available for parking and the ramp was sheltered by piers and boat slips. I tried calling Rolph's (410 778 6389) to get details but only got their answering machine. I'll continue trying. The river at this point is somewhat like the Piankatank at Freeport in width. It's wide enough for good small boat sailing even when beating and the shoal areas present no problems. My cruising guide said that the Chester can have a current of several knots but I experienced less than a knot at most on this trip. The river had some power boat traffic on Sunday but not enough to be annoying, and on Monday, no one was around except a few boats with crabbers. I didn't see any stinging nettles, but three years ago there were many on the lower Chester. They shouldn't be a problem in May, however. Except for Chestertown, the river had a mixture of marshes, woodlands, farms and scattered cottages along the banks, and in general was much less developed than the Piankatank. I went into Shippen Creek for the night, which is located on the west side of the river about a mile or so above Comegy's Bight. I anchored in two or three feet of water and was totally alone, the only boat. Only one cottage could be seen and most of the time no man-made sounds could be heard. It was great.

A disadvantage to launching at Rolph's is that it's fairly far up the river. Another alternative would be to launch at one of the marinas at Kent Narrows and head up the Chester. However, the Kent Narrows area's very developed and currents would probably be a problem for those boats without motors. I think Rolph's would be better if everything checks out.

Best wishes,

  
Jim Plourde

Wednesday, October 2, 1996

John Zohlen, SWS Editor  
3 Wilelinor Drive  
Edgewater, MD 21037-1006

Dear John:

Enclosed is \$10 for our subscription renewal. Pardon my delay - it took 3 weeks to find time to finish this correspondence!

For your roster, we have some updated information about our 1983 Dovekie #73, which we bought from Roger Stone in early 1994. Courtesy of Edey & Duff (for a small fee, of course) we now have Beckson hinged oarports, new larger leeboards, mirror-finish black Awl-grip topsides, and E&D's convenient side engine mount. Add to that a new 4HP Johnson longshaft outboard to replace our leaky (though reliable) British Seagull. And a new name, too, the "RAM," which is derived not from our occasional style of seamanship, but from the initials of Rebecca, Adrian and Madeline, our three young children/crew members. And after spending many summer hours resewing deteriorated luff seams that magically open after every Buzzards Bay sail, a new tanbark sail is planned for next season.

We are impressed with the Dovekie's versatility. She is easy to rig and forgiving to sail, yet provides plenty of opportunity for busybodies like me to fine tune the shape of the sail, the rake of the mast, and the leeboard, bowboard and rudderboard settings. Her high freeboard keeps our kids from venturing overboard too often, and the storage bins make great nap-time bunks. Based on your recommendation, we usually tow a plastic kayak, which is just tossed in the cockpit for trailering. Most of our time on the water has been spent on Slocumb River and Buzzards Bays in southeastern Massachusetts, but we have also travelled much of the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts (avoid summer weekends - too much powerboat traffic) and even spent 3 days on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire (overnighting on the water not allowed).

Here is hint to speed rigging the boat if you do a lot of trailering. I replaced the standard shackles where the shrouds attach to the mast with 1/4" captive key pin shackles. They are easier to release than those awkward wire circular rings, and are much cheaper than snap shackles. I use one for the snorter also. From Jamestown Distributors, part #WICH01433, about \$9 each.

Sincerely,

*Bob Cann*

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