



Welcome to the (Unpredictable) Sailing Season

By Martina Sestakova

Our May 29 raft-up got cancelled due to a gloom-and-doom weather forecast. A few of us ventured out on the Chesapeake Bay Thursday, Friday, even Saturday... But Jordan and I retreated to our home and took up a home improvement project of two. While we look forward to our June 12 gathering, enjoy this month's updates: our members share their sailing adventures, Ron Harbin presents notes on Chesapeake Bay Current, and SpinSheet captures our April sock burn event!

Member Happenings



Bob Morrow shared, "I had 4 crew from Singles on Sailboats join me for a day sail on Saturday. I knew from the wind forecast that it would be a relaxing sail, not an exciting one. We had a 5-hour exercise proving that my boat would float when not tied up to the dock, but only about 1 hour of that with enough wind to do what I would call really sailing, although just enough to keep the sails full most of the time. This was the first time I had my boat out this year, and the temperature was good and no rain. We had a good time socializing and talking, so it was a good day, even though we didn't even get out past Hart Miller Island or Pooles Island."



Hilary Howes shared, "What a beautiful weekend on the bay. The Laughing Spirit stayed in her slip at Horn Point Harbor Marina because I was across Back Creek at Annapolis Sailing for my ASA Instructors Certification. That got me out on the bay both days in their Rainbow 24' keelboats. Our final exam was in 16-20 knot winds so it was a really good test! I'm now certified and I'll be teaching this summer at Annapolis Sailing for your friends who want to start their journey into sailing life." (Hilary and her first clients in the photo).

Bob and Pat Murphy shared, “Pat and I received our vaccinations in February and feel great. Bradenton YC reopened with majority of our members getting vaccinated. Sailing and racing have been sporadic due to the pandemic but we are slowly getting back to our regular schedule. I have several committee and BOD meetings in May and June, then Pat and I head North for family reunions. We left our new RV at our daughter’s home in Franklin Lakes, NJ, so we didn’t have to store it in Sarasota, FL. We have two weeks reserved in the Lake George area to give us some time with our oldest daughter & her family, and time to search for a family campsite. Due to covid, I cancelled our sail plans for 2021 to sail to the Keys and then up the East Coast to NY-and out Long Island Sound. So, as long as health remains good, I have put the trip back on my calendar for April of 2022. It does take a significant amount of planning and locating crew. Pat said she will do the planning but not up to making this cruise. I am determined to revisit my favorite stops up the East coast and will likely sail down the Chesapeake on my return trip. I will certainly send a copy of my sail plan and would love to be able to meet up in your area. Yesterday, our youngest son, Matthew returned home to Pearl River, NY, with two of his three young girls. A great visit, and always too short. So far three of our four children and their children have visited over the last two months. All have had their covid vaccination and are looking forward to our land cruise this year as much as our many sails and are delighted to actually see friends and family face to face.”

Do you have an update you would like to share in an upcoming newsletter or with our club members via email?

Reach out to Martina at martinaprague@verizon.net.

Chesapeake Bay Current

By Ron Harbin

For many years I have had an interest in Bay Current. I’m writing this as a very practical look at why and how I use several tools to help me in sailing on the Bay. First of all, since we are all sailboat boaters, our boats are limited to speeds under 10 knots – often under 5. When we are traveling 10 nautical miles and the current is with us vs. against us for just 1 knot, that current can make a big difference in how long it takes to get to our destination. When there is little wind, current can make a big difference on how long it takes. When I’m traveling up or down the Bay for any distance, I ALWAYS take the current into account in deciding when I leave.

Basics: Current is caused mostly by the rising and falling of the water levels (Tidal Current). Tides are the result of gravitational pull from the moon and sun and the inertia caused by the earth spinning. In the Bay, our tides fall in about 6 hours cycles. So, we have high tides about every 12 hours or twice every 24 hours. Tides move up and down. Current moves from side to side. One key thing to remember is that tide and current are not in sync in the Bay. It would be logical that just after high tide, the water would start ebbing. But in the upper Bay there is a 2-hour lag. So just after high tide, the current will continue to flood for about 2 hours.

Terms: Please remember to use “current” terms when talking about current. You don’t “go with the tide”. If you did, you would only be rising or falling a foot or two. For the same reason, you never “fight the tide”.

Factors:

Geography – the Bay is more restrictive in areas like the Bay Bridge, off Worton Point, and off Cove Point. In these areas the current will be stronger – both ebbing and flooding because the same volume of water must squeeze through these “narrow” areas. Also, where large rivers like the Patapsco and Potomac flow into the Bay, the current will be stronger when it is ebbing and weaker when it is flooding. Also, because of friction, water in more shallow areas will move slower than water in deeper channels. This makes it better to be in the channels when the current is with you and to be in the shallows when it is against you.

Wind vs. current

When the direction of the wind opposes the direction of the current, it will make the waves steep and make for a rougher, less comfortable, passage. This isn't usually a big deal in the upper Bay but can help explain why an area is so rough.

Wind history

A south wind will blow the water up the Bay and a North wind will blow it down the Bay. If it has been blowing out of the north for 2 or 3 days, the tides will be low in the upper Bay. If the wind turns to the south after that, there will be a lot of water flooding back into the upper Bay. That will make the ebbing tidal currents weak and the flooding tidal currents very strong.

Tide vs. Current

Because of many geographical features like the size and length of rivers, the current cycles lag the tidal cycles. I find this fascinating and have lots of detailed info. If you are interested.

Tide and Current Stations

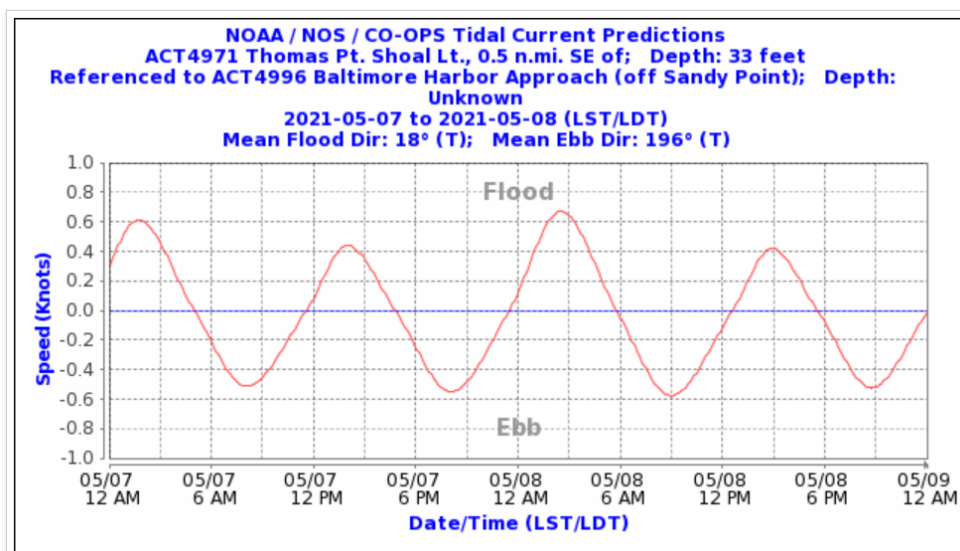
NOAA has designated many tide and current "stations" all over the Bay. If you look at the charts or tables, you may notice that the tide stations are near shore and the current stations are away from land. That's because we are primarily concerned with depths only when it is shallow and we are primary concerned with current when we are moving.

Tools for predicting current

Technology has made determining currents MUCH easier. When I'm at home or at the dock, I use a phone app to determine the current. I use primarily Navionics and Garmin Active Captain. The both have good displays to show current points (on the charts) and to view current levels vs. time. They also make it easy to skip ahead several days to look at current forecasts. When I'm underway, I usually use my Garmin chart plotter to look at currents now and in the future. The current "stations" are represented by arrows on the chart that show real time direction.

Those in love with "old school" approaches can use the tables in Spinsheet every month. And, of course, NOAA has a good site that shows both current graphs and tables. Below is a link that shows a two-day current forecast for over a hundred current "stations" on the bay: <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaacurrents/Stations?g=455>

The stations are listed first for the Bay itself (South to North) and then by River. Clicking on a link will give a two-day forecast shown below. The "stations" are named after some nearby point followed by the distance and direction from that point.



Planning passages

I love cruising in the Chester River. It is a fairly large river with lots of water volume. When the current is ebbing in the Bay, it is also (usually) ebbing in the Chester. My home port is Middle River which is North of the mouth of the Chester. So, I try and time my leaving the Chester so the tide is near the end of the ebb cycle. That way, the current will help push me out of the river and when I get to the Bay, the current will just be beginning to flood – which will push me up the Bay to my Marina. This often saves me an hour or two.

Two factors come into play when you are traveling some distance up or down the Bay.

1. Maximum current at the Bay bridge will come almost an hour after max. ebb at Thomas Pt. Light. This means that you will have more time in a flood tide when going north and less time in an ebb when heading south.
2. The maximum ebb currents are generally stronger going South, simply because of all the water that is flowing into the Bay from its tributaries. This will always favor heading south.

PSA Featured in SpinSheet

Cruising Club Notes *presented by*



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Chesapeake Bay Pearson Sailing Association Update

By Martina Sestakova

The Chesapeake Bay Pearson Sailing Association (CBPSA) members had a fun and productive Annual Sock Burn and Treasure Swap at Oak Harbor Marina on April 17. Thanks to all who gathered to celebrate the beginning of this year's sailing season. Joan and Ed Criscuolo organized a lovely get-together. To kick off, we excitedly traded anything and everything boat related. Let's just say some sailors scored real treasures! Joan shared updates on the club's happenings and Bob Morrow officiated the election of the incoming 2021 officers. We thank Joan for being a commodore in an unprecedented (thanks, Covid!) 2020 sailing (thanks, Zoom!)

season. And here is to burning socks... Strengthened by a rich array of yummy dishes, we gathered around a small fire and indeed, burned socks. Reading of the "Ode to the Sock Burners" by Jefferson Holland kicked off this annual tradition. What a nice time of sharing and planning of a successful sailing season on the Chesapeake Bay and beyond.

During the sailing season CBPSA holds monthly events. These consist of multiple raftups throughout the middle Chesapeake Bay and other social gatherings. At our May 29 event we will meet at Whitehall Bay for the "Red, White and Blue Raftup" to celebrate Memorial



Day. We always welcome new club members to share sailing experiences, rendezvous, and stories. Find us at cbpsa.org.

Coming Up Next

On June 12, we will gather for a land/sea raft-up on the Magothy River. Our hosts will be Bob and Elaine Leigh. Keep the RSVPs coming in to Elaine (leigh445@hotmail.com) so that our lovely hosts can be prepared for the crowd. Follow our event schedule on our website at www.cbpsa.org.

SAIL ON!

Questions/comments? Contact the 2021 CLUB OFFICERS

Commodore: Jordan Snyder (josnyder@comcast.net) * Vice-Commodore: Martina Sestakova (martinaprague@verizon.net)
Treasurer: Anne Martin (annekmartin45@yahoo.com) * Secretary: Joan Criscuolo (stampbyjoan@yahoo.com)