



# SWYC PILOTHOUSE

Issue 2011-1, January 2011

**Attention all hands!!** This is the first SWYC newsletter. We hope there will be many more on a regular basis. This was a frequent suggestion at the planning sessions held last year, and we are finally out with issue number 1. We plan to cover club news and coming events and other items pertinent to the club's purpose. We welcome comments, suggestions for future issues and, of course, articles from members. These should be sent to Bilge Rat using the "radio Room" tab.

**SoundWaters 2011:** Each year WSU Island County BeachWatchers holds a one day "university for all" with a focus on stewardship of our marine resources. This year's event will be held on February 5th at South Whidbey High School. SWYC is a sponsor and will have an information table with club promotional materials. Registration is open until January 28th, and the cost is \$40.00 per person, with an optional catered lunch for an additional \$7.50. Club members are urged to consider attending and to sign up as soon as possible. Many classes fill up quickly. More information and on-line registration forms can be found at [http://beachwatchers.net/sw\\_2011/](http://beachwatchers.net/sw_2011/)

**Other Coming Attractions:** Tom Stinson is lining up an interesting array of programs for our general membership meetings this year. Remember that we meet the third Wednesday of each month (except July and November) at the Honeymoon Lake Community clubhouse. We gather at 6:30 to share potluck munchies and BYO beverages. A brief business meeting starts at 7:00, followed by the evening program. The scheduled line-up for the next three months is as follows:

**January 19:** The South Whidbey Yacht Club is pleased to announce an evening with John Johnson. Captain Johnson has just about done it all in the maritime area, including long-range commercial fishing, open ocean work and boatyard management and ownership. He also has extensive experience in long-range cruising in his trawler "Carpe Diem". John is a well known marine trouble shooter, so bring your difficult questions regarding your boat systems. He will also provide the sort of valuable boat handling guidance only available from one with many miles under his keel.

**At the January meeting, we will also brief the membership on the club's tax exempt status and the changes the Board is pursuing to maintain that status. See the article on "Responding to Change" below.**

**February 16:** Rod and Becky Nowlin will present the high and lowlights of a fourteen year cruising life, including fighting off pirates and being run down by a Baltic ferry. Find out more and ask your cruising questions.

**March 16:** Past Commodore Derek Pritchard will share the details of his circumnavigation of the British Isles-a voyage of historic and personal perspectives.

## **Responding to Change and Fulfilling Our Vision** The Board is considering changes to our tax status to allow the continuation and expansion of our popular training programs

Our club is a dynamic entity and some of its very active members have taken initiatives to move the Club in the direction of our collective aspirations. As you all know, last summer was the realization of our goal to reach out to the community and offer sailing classes to children, grandchildren and adults. We also established an important partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department. It was a great success and a milestone in our development. Bob Rodgers was hired as the official qualified American Sailing Association instructor, but he did not have any boats suitable for young beginners to sail singlehanded! So we scrounged borrowed and otherwise acquired twelve, of (the now unfashionable), 8ft El Toro sailing dinghies. They were a motley fleet from the unfloatable to the unsinkable, some needed paint, others major surgery. It was a very "green" initiative to recycle a discarded fleet of dinghies and use them to teach a lifetime skill and a love of the sea. Bob Rodgers was the mover and shaker and was strongly supported by other club members. He established the program and helped train the many club members who volunteered to assist with the training programs.

All in all it was a great success, and what's more, it brought in sufficient funds that it was not a drain on the club's treasury. In a meeting recently, the Board was reviewing the program with the intention to expand, and they discovered a surprising road block. SWYC is registered as a not-for-profit organization, of which there are more than 26 IRS subcategories. Unfortunately, our present category 501(c)(7), which is the group for social clubs and organizations, has a major limiting clause: A section 501(c)(7) organization can receive up to 35% of its gross receipts, including investment income, from sources outside of its membership without losing its tax-exempt status. Of the 35%, up to 15% of the gross receipts can be derived from the use of the club's facilities or services by the general public or from other activities not furthering social or recreational purposes for members". Thus providing sailing lessons to non-members for a reasonable fee will put us over our IRS limits, even if those fees are used to offset program expenses.

The Board then began exploring options and discovered that a 501(c)(3) status will allow us to do what we already do and run first class educational programs as well. The Board has decided to follow up on this option. and pursue a course of action that will change the status of SWYC from a 501(c)(7) to a 501(c)(3). In essence we will maintain exactly the same character and be able to receive money from non-members and operate adequately funded programs. a side benefit is that donations to our education programs, such as boats, will be tax deductible to the donors. The process of officially changing our status will require modest surgery to our Vision and Purpose statements, in addition to a lot of paperwork which must be filed with and approved by the IRS. It will also require some changes to the bylaws. Here is an example what revised Vision and Purpose statements might look like.

### **Vision**

To be a respected member of the Whidbey Island community, valued for our good stewardship of the marine environment, our quality boating education and, above all, our great gatherings.

### **Purpose**

To foster safe boating and the responsible enjoyment of our marine resources by our members and the community at large through educational programs, community outreach, and boating related activities afloat and ashore.

If you would like to comment please use the SWYC website "Radio Room".

**Pay your Dues:** Please pay your dues now, if you have not already done so. Dues letters were distributed by e-mail last month, and payment is due by the end of January. If you didn't get one or if yours got lost in the holiday e-clutter, contact Merv Floyd, our membership chair for 2011 (thank you Merv), and he will make sure you get another copy. Make sure you update your personal information on the return stub. We will have a club roster book this year, and you need to make sure your listing will be correct. If you have any specific objections to all or any part of your listing being published in the book, please let us know this at the time of submittal. We have a great year planned. See calendar article below. Renew your membership now so that you don't miss out on any of the fun and good work we have planned.

**Event of Possible Interest to Members:**

***14<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Boating Seminar***

Latitude Sailing Association will conduct their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Boating Seminar on February 26, 2011 from 8:45 to 5:30 at North Seattle Community College. They have put together another great program covering new topics presented by a host of talented Northwest women professionals. Every year seems to be the best event to date and this year promises to be no exception. There is no better way to get enthused about the upcoming boating season, build confidence, and to expand your horizons. Please share this information with fellow women boaters and we look forward to seeing you there. Details of the event and online registration are available at [www.latitudesailingassoc.org](http://www.latitudesailingassoc.org)

**Calendar:** The club calendar for 2011, as it now exists, has been loaded onto the website. Transfer the important dates to your personal calendar, PDA, e-gadget or whatever you use, and make plans now to participate in your favorite activities. For those adventurous enough to try, the calendar data can be directly downloaded from the website to your Microsoft Outlook calendar, if you use that system. It will probably also work with other systems capable of accepting comma separated value files. Both the calendar and the download instructions can be found under the website "Events" tab. Thanks to Merv Floyd and Chris Jerome for working out these details. Note that some events are accompanied by names. These are the people who have volunteered or have been otherwise drafted to run these events. You should consult these folks if you have questions or want to offer assistance or suggestions on those particular events. Other calendar entries include a notation that a host or coordinator is still needed. Please consider taking on one or more of the open items. For questions, suggestions or volunteer sign-up on social events, contact Debra Richardson. For cruise events, contact Dennis Pittis.