



Owner's Association

NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

44th ANNUAL DICKERSON RENDEZVOUS

Dickerson Owners Association (DOA) Secretary Dick Young and Commodore Barry Creighton have made arrangements to host the 44th Annual Dickerson Rendezvous on June 17-19, 2011 in Oxford -- one of the nation's most classic seaport towns on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Festivities will begin on Friday June 17th with a parade of arriving wooden and fiberglass Dickerson Yachts sailing up the Tred Avon River into Mear's Marina. After docking and cooling off in the swimming pool, a welcoming reception will be held about 6 PM on the marina grounds. Saturday after breakfast, Dickerson captains will be seen hustling their crews to arrive for the start of the annual race -- gun at 10 AM. The DOA has a unique "bittersweet tradition". The captain 'fortunate enough' to be the overall winner becomes Commodore for the next year and as such, is responsible for the Rendezvous and the race, but CANNOT race. No wonder there are so many close finishes.

The highlight of the weekend is the Saturday night dinner with the awards ceremony, musical entertainment, and really great comradeship with stories—of course, never to be repeated to shore side people. We are fortunate this year—with the help of long time member and Oxford Boatyard executive Jim Karr—to again be able to have the dinner at the first class facilities of the Tred Avon Yacht Club.



Tred Avon Yacht Club

Mark your calendar now, and plan to sail over (or if that is not possible, use ground or air transportation) to see your Dickerson friends. We promise a great time with many fond memories. Last year we had over 60 at dinner and 13 boats racing.

A registration form will be mailed to all known Dickerson Owners, published on the web site <http://dickersonowners.org/> and in the DOA News Letter in about 30 days.

For additional information contact Membership Committee at jws2827@aol.com

DICKERSON SAILOR'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

(These resolutions were featured in the January issue of SpinSheet)

Al Sampson resolved to sail from Rhode Island back to Oxford for the Dickerson rendezvous in his 37 ft Ketch, "Wander Lust".

Debbie and Patton Ewing resolved to "thank our boat for giving us legs to be able to walk on the water, and to thank the bay for giving my boat a perfectly paved "road" on which to stretch her legs".

Joe Slavin at 84 is resolved to sail at least 20 days as in 2010 and to have his great grand children from New England aboard his wooden ketch, "Irish Mist" next year.

John Freal pledged not to hit the committee boat with his 35 ft ketch, "Rainbow" when going over the starting line.

Bruce Franz resolved to sail ANOTHER 2,000 plus miles for 2011 on his 41 ft. ketch,

“Hemisphere Dancer”!

Eric and Jackie White resolved to watch the weather carefully so we spend less time motoring and more time sailing between the Caribbean Islands on our 41 ketch, “Compass Rose”.

Dickerson Commodore, Barry Creighton, plans to spend more time with the sails UP and the engine DOWN on his 37 sloop, “Crew Rest”.

Randy and Barbara Bruns resolved to spend two weeks sailing their 36 ft ketch after the 2011 Dickerson Rendezvous.

Mike Aitken and Una Folan from New England said they would “Fly the mizzen staysail more - because a Ketch can!”

Doug Sergeant vowed to fix his 32 ft ketch or scrap it—do something.

Dennis Stockwell-- from New Hampshire-- sailing resolution for 2011 is to “sail my 32 ft ketch, “Skybreaker” to new places farther east!”.

A DICKERSON ODYSSEY

Barb and I were busting up the Bay in a 20-knot WNW breeze, rail near the water, on a passage from Solomons to West River. Not often do you get these fantastic conditions that you could actually lay West River G1 (Roundup folks know that mark) without a tack. We were just completing a two-week cruise after the 2009 Rendezvous. We were congratulating ourselves on a very successful trip; one of the best cruises we have ever had. Visited the Potomac up to Leonardtown and Branson Cove as well as the St George’s Creek, Yeocomico, Coan, Tangier Island, Chesaneseck Creek to our daughter’s summer home, Crisfield, and Deal Island. I was actually wondering how long I could sail the boat in these 20 knot conditions; the boat’s got some helm and it was probably another 4 hours to West River and Barb sure couldn’t handle the helm. We were just off Sharps Island, and

BAM.

In about 2 milliseconds the main mast was down with the boom just over our heads but cushioned by the bimini. Needless to say, we were in a bit of a shock as no real calamity had ever occurred on “Rhythms in Blue”. My first brilliant move was to call the Coast Guard; took a few minutes to realize the antenna was in the water. Even though we soon assured ourselves we were not in immediate danger we finally got them on the cell phone and they indicated they would show up. Much of the rig was in the water, the mast had buckled about 7 feet above the deck, and it’s butt end was slowly making its

way across the deck taking out pieces of deck and bright work such as a dorade box, handrail, and toe rail. I tied the rig up somewhat and contemplated uncoupling the whole mess and throwing it overboard. But I soon realized this would be too much for me to handle at my tender age. It definitely wasn't safe to motor the boat somewhere in these three-foot seas with all the mess hanging overboard. Barb did great; kept cool, handled the communications and position reports, and tried to keep me below decks out of the way of the shifting debris. The Coast guard and Auxiliary showed up. I mostly hung around looking dumb trying to persuade these two boatloads of able-bodied seamen to give me a hand. They were not in the business of boat work. However, they did call around for a salver, but being July 4, all were busy. We did arrange for one to show up the next morning out of Knapps Narrows. I was planning to anchor the boat and stay with it. The Admiral overruled this gamut, and since I wanted to sail with her again, we securely anchored, tied up more rigging, gathered up some stuff, showed a light, reported our position to the Coast Guard, and accepted a boat ride to Chesapeake Beach by the Auxiliary. It was rather comical riding home in a limo in our foul weather gear and PFDs as no taxis were available. Driver asked if we wanted champagne, but we were not really in the mood.



“Rhythms in Blue” loses a wing.

I was still rather spun up, and didn't sleep much that night. But, I didn't need to as I was on the road to Knapps Narrows at 0330 to meet the Tow Jam folks. Two jovial, competent, and muscular Eastern Shore guys got the mast cut up, and put it on deck with some struggling, and towed "Rhythms in Blue" to Knapps Narrows Marina.



TOW JAM Having Fun with my Boat

I've since contemplated several times on what I could have done to rescue myself if I had needed to. I did observe that my brain was not working at its best at the time. I think that is common. I recall an episode where a sailor documented a hairy incident he faced at sea. From my armchair, the solution was obvious. He did finally figure it out only after several terror filled hours. Hopefully, if there is a next time for me,



Ugly but Seaworthy at Knapps Narrows

I will handle it better. In my dismasting scenario, the only possible solution I could think of, other than to slowly uncouple all the stays and somehow shove the stuff overboard, would be to get a line around the end of the mast and winch it up out of the water with the mizzenmast. Your comments are welcome. If I had been at sea, I'm sure I would have been equipped with all the necessary cutters, as well as more crew, that is, if I ever go to sea, it will be in a better boat.. Continuing my story after all that philosophical discussion, first thing I did was to buy a hand held VHF. Then, I spent the next three days resting up, drinking plenty of "psychotherapeutic beer", and getting the boat shipshape for a motor home. .

I made it home fine, and the next adventure began.

That was figuring what happened and getting some insurance money. After some examination and consulting with a forensic engineer, the problem was obvious. Ten years ago, I hired some professionals to put on roller furling and install a new genoa. The furler was done right, but the sail luff was made too short and the upper swivel was not close enough to the top of the foil. This caused halyard wrap and eventually unwound the forestay and it failed. The sail maker should have added a pennant, which would have avoided the problem. Guess I should have read the instruction manual to check on these guys. Guess I should have inspected the mast more often.

The insurance worked out OK. The damage was well in excess of the value of the boat, but with the help of the surveyor, hired by the insurer, we negotiated a fair payment. Just took a couple of nervous months to do all this and get the funds to get started on the boat.

By this time the sailing season was about shot. So, I was faced with the fall and winter fixing the boat. I did find some replacement masts and a friend, Joe Slavin, and I brought them back from the Eastern Shore. Since the boat was going to be out of commission over the winter I thought this would be a great time to strip off about 20 layer of flaking off bottom paint and fix the blisters that had been obvious since I bought the boat in 1992.



Busted and Replacement Masts at Home

- Damaged but Useful Mizzen Mast for Sale Cheap-

Hmm. After soda blasting the hull it looked like this bottom is in worse shape than I thought. Several area of previously poorly repaired gelcoat failure, maybe 300 good sized blisters, maybe 500 tiny ones, and several areas where the gelcoat was gone in little spots. Oh well. I spent many hours in the fall coupled to an air grinder digging out all the blisters. I pulled up the floorboards, locker bottoms, and let the boat sit over the winter to dry out. When it warmed up nicely in early May, I started throwing epoxy at the mess. I hired help to fair the bottom, and to help with putting on 6 coats of barrier coat and hi tech bottom paint. Surely, the boat would be ready by Rendezvous time, as I had also hired a rigger to do much of the mechanical mast work. You know how that goes.



The Bottom was Uglier than the Top of the Boat



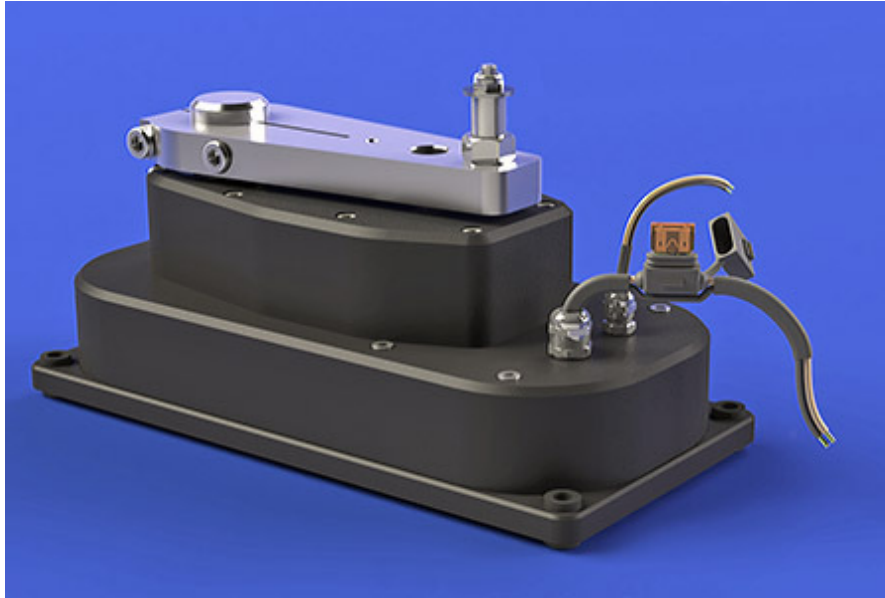
“Rhythms in Blue” at the Western Shore Round Up

Finally, after more than a full year with the boat out, we were back in business in mid July. New rig, new sails, new bottom, and some rigging stuff I was always too lazy to do were in place. So, it was great to be out on the water. Best of all, Barb would still sail with me.

Randy Bruns

A BELOW DECK AUTO PILOT

I installed a Simrad AP24 autopilot with a Jefa drive unit. This worked out well because the power of the smaller linear drive unit was almost too small and the large one was over kill. Below is a picture of the drive.



As you can see, this unit drive has a shaft that is attached to a drive arm. A similar arm was attached to the rudderpost, which eliminated any need to modify my quadrant, and made me very happy. There are two other things to note on the picture below. First, the connecting rod on the right, which is going out of the picture, actually attaches to the drive unit's stud. You can also see where the rudder reference unit attaches to the quadrant. This was part of the wheel pilot, so I reused it when connecting the new rudder reference unit.



Next, I had to build a platform for the drive unit. For me, this was the most difficult part as nothing was flat or square, and I was working on my back, upside down at times.



This is the base for the platform, and I used marine plywood to make the top. I found interesting screws at either Home Depot or Lowes. They were coated deck screws, and are not supposed to start with the stringer seen here. I used screws everywhere except through the hull. That was glassed in as you can see, and then the top was screwed in place.



I had already trial mounted the drive unit, and had nuts pre-mounted to the bottom to the plywood so, it was easy to complete the final mounting of the drive unit.

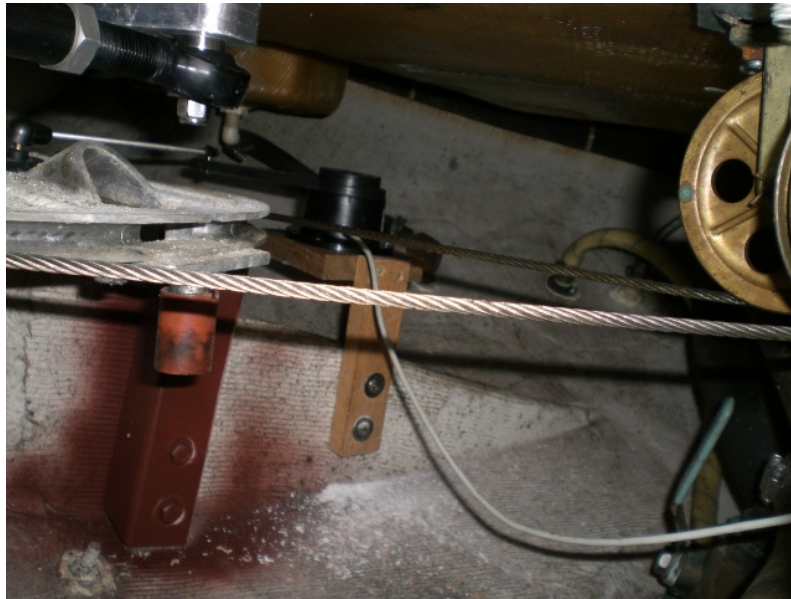


Then it was a matter of connecting the tie rod and the hard part of the installation was finished. The course computer was mounted on a bulkhead close by, and then, I had to install the control head. Luckily, or by great planning, it mounted in the same hole as my Raymarine wheel pilot was in, and only required minor modifications.



The original kit came with a bracket to mount the rudder reference unit on as part of the drive unit. As the installation proceeded, I realized I would not have enough vertical room to use this bracket. I therefore, just used some teak pieces to put together a

mount, and attached that to the stringer on the other side of the rudderpost. As you can see below, one end of the connecting rod is attached to the quadrant.



One thing I had to do was slightly restrict the amount of travel of the rudder itself. This drive unit required no more than 37 degrees from rudder center on either side. The prior rudder stops were U shaped cast iron. I found some square steel and used that instead. It worked out fine and I don't notice that slight loss in steerage.

Overall, I am very happy with this system. It is extremely quiet, draws very low power, and holds a course well. I travelled to Annapolis for the boat show this year, and when heading north, I had four foot seas with six foot swells on the stern quarter and "Dexter", the autopilot, held course very well. At one point, I thought I could do better and turned "Dexter" off. I quickly discovered I was not doing as well, and quickly reengaged "Dexter".

This year, I have not had any problems with the unit. It has proved strong in rough waters, and held its course better than I could reasonably expect. On my return trip, I was in 20-25 knots of apparent wind and never worried about the AP. I would recommend this configuration to anyone interested in a below decks AP.

Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

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We want to hear from you. Contact us at: jws2827@aol.com and send us a note on your latest adventure, creation, or just plain fix it. Also, get ready for Spring with an

order from the Dickerson Treasure Chest of a burgee, cup or travel cup, hat, or sweat shirt. Delivery guaranteed within one week after your order. Visit the Dickerson Web Site <http://dickersonowners.org/> for your order form or contact John Freal at: jwf@brackenusa.com

Edited by Bruce Franz

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