



West Coast Trailer Sailing Squadron News

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January Chills the Squadron!

The weather this month was no friend to our planned outings! Cold north winds put a damper on our events this month! However several brave souls attended the First Annual Egg Nog Sail, and Terry Poling's 10,000 Island Cruise, and the Lake Tarpon daysail on the 22nd!

I don't yet have a report on the 10,000 Island cruise except I know that the following were in attendance: Denis Bradley and his Egret, Kay and Rodger and their SeaPearl Tri, Terry Poling and his SeaPearl tri, Ken Williams in their MacGregor X 26 and Mary and Dave Forrester in their Mac 26. The only event that had no takers this month was the New Year's Eve Cruise on the St. John's River.

On New Year's day I posted the following report on the WCTSS Yahoo Group Discussion regarding the Egg Nog Sail first proposed by WCTSS veteran Art Gregory:

Well, Eric and Jane were at the docks when Bob Wood and I got there. They launched the John's Sharpie, and took off like a star ship. By the time we got Whisper off the docks I couldn't see them. Later we caught up with them reefing their mizzen at anchor on the east side of the ICW. They had never even raised their main sail!

The wind increased dramatically after we launched, and I had a message from Art Gregory that he was going to be late... something about a wild party in Englewood with Brenda Bell. So we decided to wait for them at "one tree island" off of the Clearwater Sailing Center. After a shivering and wet Jane climbed out of their boat, saying that "This is NO FUN!", we watched a kite surfer do his thing (Liked the video!), and waited about 1/2 hour for Art and Brenda... and Mark Stewart in Sharkbait! Art had Kiva well reefed and Mark only had one sail up on Sharkbait, and they were flying.

They were so busy staying up right that they didn't see the four of us waving at them frantically from the beach. We really wanted some of that EGG NOG!

So after we watched them sail by, Bob and I hopped in Whisper and gave chase! Eric and Jane decided enough was enough, and wisely headed back. Jane said, "You're not REALLY going to continue in this wind, are you?" We did... but it was really too much.

We caught up with Art and Mark at the Clearwater Causeway Bridge, and headed down the channel at breakneck (7 - 8 knot) speeds. The beach rushed up to meet us as I let the stern anchor out to slow our approach. It didn't hold! So we landed somewhat haphazardly and right on top of Mark in Sharkbait. He obliged by pulling Shark out of the way. The wind was really strong at this point, probably 20 knots, and pushing us right onto the beach. I managed to get the stern anchor to hold enough to keep us from being further beached and we walked up to The Bait House. Surprisingly, it wasn't busy... yet. Bob and I sat down, and were joined by Gil Walker who had driven over to join us from his home in Lutz. Good move, Gil!

Art and Mark and Brenda was enjoying the egg nog aboard Kiva, and didn't join us for a while. But they did eventually arrive, and lunch and brews were ordered. About that time, we spotted another small sailboat coming down channel. It was Dimitri aboard his little yellow sailing kayak! And he had his two adorable blonde girls with him, Sophia, and I can't recall the other one's name. So now we were NINE!

The place suddenly got busy, and time passed as we enjoyed the meal and company. I was watching the tide, from the dockside table and it appeared that quite a bit of Whisper was now out of the water! When we finally paid our bills and returned to the boats, Kiva's bottom was visible, as she was sitting on her stub keel, and Whisper was half out of the water. The wind hadn't really calmed down, and in fact seemed to be increasing. Art decided that Kiva was going to have to stay where she was until higher tide, and Mark wasn't too enthusiastic about sailing dead to windward in the whitecap conditions. So we determined to lift Whisper into the water, turn her around, put everyone except Dimitri and his girls into Whisper and tow SharkBait back to the ramps at the Belleaire Bridge!

Everything went as planned. I got the little Honda 2 started, everyone jumped in, and we shoved off into the waves. Needless to say, with five large people aboard, Whisper didn't respond quite as nimbly as she usually does, and I was really wishing I had my new Tohatsu 4 hp installed on the yet to be delivered side mount bracket, but we did make forward progress. I figured it would take about 90 minutes to make the 3 miles back to the ramps, and I was just about right. Whisper handled the conditions pretty well, and there were many hands to make light the work of bringing in the AKAs at the end of the trip. Thanks for all the help, everyone!

We all worried about Dimitri, but his girls both had their lifejackets on and they only had a few miles to go to get to the Clearwater Sailing Center. They survived also. So that's the story of the First Annual Egg Nog Sail! Except I haven't yet heard how Art got Kiva back!

Art's Reply

Sunday morning about 1030 AM, Brenda and I returned to the Bait House, sat at a waterside table for two, consumed tea, and read the morning paper while awaiting KIVA to float free from the mud. An hour passed before we observed her bobbing and weaving. Subsequently, I motored her over to Seminole Street boat ramps where Brenda was waiting with truck and trailer.

Our previous plan to haul out at the nearby Beach ramp was aborted when we found the ramp and accompanying parking area barricaded for extensive rework and a crane parked in the middle of the single ramp. This we discovered, much to our chagrin, Sat. night about 10 PM when we thought we would recover KIVA via a short speedy end run past the Bait House. We were pretty weary from the day's activities by then and not prepared to do the longer run to Seminole ramp.

Thanks for your report and return ride to Belleair ramps. A big regret is not taking the egg nog materials with us to smooth out the wet chilly conditions. I'm a bit baffled that those of you who did not share the earlier pleasure didn't prompt this old coot to "bring the mix-in's along!" Looking forward to provisioning an egg nog fueling station in 2012.

Art