



President's Letter by Claire M. Gerrish

Let me be transparent: I am not a sailor and in fact, I have never sailed. However, I believe strongly in boating, safety and women. My father was a truck driver and gender equality was almost at the top of his list. He taught me how to rebuild an engine. He gave me confidence that if I put my mind to an assignment, I could do it.

I became aware of NWSA when I was working at an insurance company that insured a good number of sail boats. I just happened to be at the other end of the telephone one day when Joan Thayer called and asked if the company would purchase an ad in the program for the Women's Sailing Conference. I said yes and the rest is just a series of building blocks. I met Joan at a local U.S. Power Squadron course. I joined NWSA. I continued supporting the conference for several years.

In 2010 there was an outreach to the NWSA membership for board positions. I figured, why not. I had no idea how I could help, but I believed in the mission of the organization. I accepted the position of secretary. Having been a secretary for another volunteer organization for

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Take the Helm®

Official Newsletter of the National Women's Sailing Association

WINTER 2012

NWSA Women's Sailing Conference

On June 2, the Corinthian Yacht Club hosted the 11th annual Women's Sailing Conference with a day-long series of classes and workshops, giving the novice-to-expert women sailors a terrific opportunity to network with other women while learning new skills or brushing up on old ones. Over 100 women participated with instructors as far away as Seattle, WA. Commodore John Velluto welcomed the participants in the morning. The Commodore and his wife, Flossie, returned for the cocktail hour and joined the women for dinner and the evening program.

Over the years, the day of the conference had no wind, too much wind, rain, lots of sun and perfect sailing days. This year there were heavy seas and wind, making it not only difficult and unpleasant to be on the water, but unsafe as the day progressed. Just two of the morning on-the-water courses were held. Nonetheless, everyone was upbeat and committed to the day. The real challenge lay with the courses that would have been on the water.



The spinnaker session was held outdoors under the porch. Workshop leader, Carol Arnold, converted a supporting

pole into a mast and using Legos and chairs and lines she created a virtual boat. A four-foot spinnaker was hoisted up and fastened to a mini spinnaker pole. The Take the Helm workshop was held inside the canteen where leader

"Instructors did an awesome job of adapting their teaching to the unsettled weather conditions."

Karen Lubeck took Optimist pram tillers and secured them to the backs of chairs. She tipped over other chairs to fasten lines for a makeshift main sheet. A back of the boat scene was created! Through multiple scenarios from basic to more advanced situations, women experienced a hands-on dry-land experience of steering the boat. I think everyone was surprised at the success of the workshop. The boat couldn't get out of control, but you found out what would happen if you under or over steered.



The other workshops – crew overboard, charting, right of way, diesel –engine troubleshooting, suddenly singlehanded, advanced anchoring, understanding the wind, night navigation, understanding the motorboat, circumnavigation, knot tying, and a discussion of smartphone apps rounded out the day.

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A program of the
Women's Sailing Foundation

NWSA

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Membership allows us to provide the seminars and workshops to all members. Current memberships get first notification of events. We appreciate your continued support.

www.womensailing.org

Conference Cont'd from p.1

The keynote speaker in the evening was Teresa Carey, a U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain, writer and educator from Traverse City, Michigan. Teresa supported the creativity and resourcefulness of women in sailing, particularly when sailing alone or away from home-



port when assistance is not available. Following the conference, Teresa headed to Maine, where she would be a leader in an Outward Bound School, in which people have to call upon their inner resources and creativity in a variety of situations.

The Leadership in Women's Sailing Award, a joint award of NWSA and BoatU.S., was presented to Elaine Dickinson, former editor of BoatU.S. Magazine. More details on Elaine and the award are in a separate article.

The evening concluded with raffle awards and a silent auction, both raising funds for the Women's Sailing Foundation's AdventureSail® program for at-risk girls and sailing scholarships for those girls seeking a formal learn-to-sail program. Co-chairs Joan Thayer and Marcia Bennet could not have asked for a better day despite the weather.



Elaine Dickinson Honored with Leadership In Women's Sailing Award

Elaine Dickinson was honored Saturday, June 2, 2012 with the National Women's Sailing Association/BoatU.S. 2012 Leadership in Women's Sailing Award at the 11th Women's Sailing Conference held in Marblehead MA and hosted by the Corinthian Yacht Club.



Elaine Dickinson (center) accepts NWSA/BoatU.S. Award from NWSA President, Joan Thayer, (L) and BoatU.S. Public Affairs Associate Claire Wyngaard (R).

This award is given to an individual who has built up a record of achievement in inspiring, educating, and enriching the lives of women through sailing.

Elaine took up sailing in her mid-twenty's, when she took an Outward Bound course at Hurricane Island on the Maine coast. Elaine immersed herself in the world of boating, both personally and professionally as a journalist and lobbyist for BoatU.S. She served on the National Safe Boating Council, a three-year appointment the US Coast Guard Boating Safety Advisory Council, and NOAA's Hydrographic Services Review Panel which advises NOAA leadership on navigation issues.

She raised awareness about women's sailing educational events and women in maritime fields in articles for BoatU.S. Magazine, started the BoatU.S. Women in Boating website and served as a dedicated National Women's Sailing Association (NWSA) board member for ten years.

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Director Profile: Scottie Robinson

Scottie, a resident of Essex, MA, grew up in Connecticut and spent much time there messing about in boats. Scottie now sails with friends in New England and Canadian waters and charters in the BVI whenever possible.

She is a long-standing advocate for women and girls. For many years, she has worked with the American Association of University Women, her local Girl Scout Council, and array of human services agencies. And Scottie has work with the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women to advance opportunity, equity and well-being for females of all ages. This commitment motivated her to seek out opportunities within the Women's Sailing Foundation. In July of 2012, Scottie was elected to the board.

Scottie's prior experience in event planning and fundraising is most welcomed and will be beneficial to NWSA and to the Foundation. She will be working on the annual conference in June of 2013. Scottie hopes to expand access to the broad range of experiences for women that sailing provides.

1st Day of Christmas: A Partridge in a Pear Tree....or a cormorant making a stopover during a race to Maine.



Photo by: Anne Kolker

West Coast SCYA Women's Sailing Convention

Southern California Yachting Association (SCYA) held its 23rd Annual Women's Sailing Convention on Saturday, February 4 at Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club, Corona del Mar, CA. Attendees reported a fantastic day filled with interesting workshops and super networking. The SCYA Convention is the model for NWSA's Women's Sailing Conferences.

Just around the corner - **February 2, 2013**, is the 24th version of this outstanding event. We will have three new workshops as part of a 30-workshop offering. Our featured speaker this year is world-class professional sailor, **Katie Pettibone**. She is a two-time America's Cup veteran and participant

in two Volvo Ocean Races! And her latest adventures in the middle east will amaze you! Come to sunny (almost every day) Southern California in February and experience the ORIGINAL women's educational and networking gathering! *It's truly a fabulous day!*

Visit our **new** website: www.womenssailingconvention.com. Look for early-bird discounts (Dec.10-31) and online registration, too! Contact: gail@scya.org



Fabulous Tall-Ship Experience for Women!

A shared-learning experience just for women. Tallship Unicorn's all-female professional crew establish a fun and stimulating learning environment. Work side-by-side with other like-minded women and learn...**Paper navigation** – we have all the electronic bells and whistles • **Tall ship sail theory** – Unicorn has over 7000 square feet of canvas • **Climb the rigging** – you know you've been dying to try this • **Take the helm** – an awesome feeling.

PORT TO PORT	DATES	DESCRIPTION	SPECIAL EVENTS
Boston to Lunenburg, NS	May 19 - 25	Challenging Sail	TBA
Lunenburg to Miramichi, NB	May 26 - Jun 1	Challenging Sail	Festival in Miramichi
Miramichi to Ramouski, QC	Jun 2 - 8	Challenging Sail	Festival in Miramichi
Ontario Port to Erie, PA	Sept 1 - 7	Cruising Sail	Battle of Lake Erie Reenactment
Erie to Buffalo, NY	Sept 8 - 13	Cruising Sail	Festival in Buffalo
Buffalo to Montreal	Sept 14 - 22	Challenging Sail	Festival in Montreal

Current members of the National Women's Sailing Association may enroll in any voyage at a discounted fee of \$550/pp. Schedule subject to change. \$200 is required to hold the reservation.

www.sistersundersail.org

Sisters Under Sail

Phone: 908-713-1808

dawn@sistersundersail.org





Events for Women Sailors

February 2, 2013— Southern California Yachting Association's 24th Women's Sailing Convention

Newport Beach CA. Contact
Gail Hine at gail@scya.org
for info.

**Potential:
Diesel Engine Workshop**
with Mack Boring
Middleboro, MA
March 2013

June 1, 2013 —
NWSA's 12th Women's
Sailing Conference —
Corinthian Yacht Club
Marblehead, MA.
joan_thayer@comcast.net.

July 9, 2013
Fun Regatta for Women
Courageous Sailing Center
Charlestown, MA
joan_thayer@comcast.net.

Spring and Fall, 2013
Tall Ship voyages for
women only
www.sistersundersail.org

Check the website for up-
dates on all our events! Go
to www.womensailing.org

**Making Changes
Come About®**

Northern California Women's Sailing Seminar

By Linda Newland

Seventy-one women, students and instructors alike, gathered at Island Yacht Club in Alameda, CA, to learn from each other and to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Northern California Women's Sailing Seminar (WSS) the weekend of September 22 and 23. Amid much energy fueled by camaraderie and good food, the attendees participated in either on-shore or on-the-water sessions.

Sunday the women had a choice of match racing in Santana 22's with an instructor on board who was not allowed to touch the helm or they could elect to do a cruise on San Francisco Bay to learn more about open water sailing. This venue continues to be a strong annual draw for women of all experience levels. Participants engage in learning new skills or helping others capture the power of self-confidence as a helmsperson or as competent crew.

For more photos of the 2012 event visit the website, www.iyc.org, and be sure to check back in during the year for details on the 2013 WSS.



ELAINE DICKINSON Cont'd from page 2

Retired in 2010 after 26 years with BoatU.S.' Government, Public Affairs and Publications departments, Elaine now enjoys cruising the Atlantic coast with her husband, Naval Architect Jack Hornor, on their Catalina 42.

As a sailor herself and a journalist writing about boating legislation and news, Elaine contributed her own boating safety experience to workshops and readers, including writing about women boaters in maritime fields and women-only events. She conducted informal surveys of women asking them about boating topics and how they like to learn, finding many women feel more comfortable learning from women instructors and speakers. NWSA programs continue to offer that format. Publicizing the all-female forum has contributed to the rise of more all female programs across the country.

Elaine's life-long work has impacted women of all sailing and boating levels of experience as well as the general public for more enjoyment and safety on the water.



BoatU.S. and NWSA

NWSA participates in the BoatU.S. Cooperating Group Program. That means that NWSA members are eligible for BoatU.S. membership at \$15.00, half the regular annual \$30 dues rate. We receive announcements with information that we pass on to you the member through our own website or our e-Breeze emails. There are discounts at West Marine retail stores with BoatU.S. membership—another good reason to get more for less.

Other benefits include:

- Discounts on fuel, overnight slips and repairs at more than 750 marinas nationwide
- On-the-water and on-the-road towing service
- Low cost marine insurance
- Full year subscription to the award-winning BoatU.S. Magazine
- Discounts on fuel, repairs and transient slips at over 900 marinas.
- Discounts at West Marine
- An effective lobby that fights unfair taxes, fees and government regulations that single out recreational boaters.

You can sign up for a BoatU.S. membership on line at www.boatus.com/member. Give NWSA's Group ID number **GA 84104B** when prompted to receive the special discounted rate.

Or call BoatU.S. membership services toll free number 800-395-2628.



Update on Restoration of *Felicity Ann*

By Linda Newland

Ann Davison, a native of the UK, was the first woman to sail singlehandedly across the Atlantic Ocean in 1952, and she did so on a 23-ft wooden boat named the *Felicity Ann*. The *Felicity Ann* was built in England in 1939 and is planked in larch over oak frames. After completing this epic voyage, the boat was sold and eventually came to her present owner, the NW School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Hadlock, WA in 2009.

She has been stabilized and had initial restoration work. Through contributions from history lovers and wooden boat enthusiasts, *Felicity Ann* is serving as the centerpiece for a community-based project to introduce women to basic shipwright skills. The program is supported by the local 4H program, the Port Townsend School District and the NW School of Wooden Boatbuilding which is an accredited non-profit vocational school with the mission of teaching and preserving the fine art of



wooden boatbuilding and traditional maritime crafts.

Presently a group of at-risk high school girls have begun to learn how to use basic tools and have completed the bow shelter housing the *Felicity Ann*. A professional shipwright has been hired part-time to oversee the project and direct a team of volunteer women in the basic restoration process which will



also include the high school girls as they acquire basic woodworking skills.

The energy level is high and fund raising is in high gear to ensure the restoration is moving forward at a regular pace. For more information on the *Felicity Ann* and to make tax deductible contributions, please visit www.felicityann.com.

Linda Newland, also a WSF/NWSA director, sits on the Board of Directors of the NW School of Wooden Boatbuilding and is serving as liaison for the Felicity Ann project. The project coordinator is volunteer, Penelope Partridge, a graduate of the Sailmaking and Rigging Class of 2011.



Ann Davison aboard the Felicity Ann

AdventureSail® 2013 Events:

June 2013

Courageous Sailing Center
Charlestown, MA

June 2013

Gold Country Y.C.
Grass Valley, CA

TBD

Oregon Women's Sailing
Association (OWSA)
Portland, OR



"I loved tying the knots and was pretty good at it."

For the Girls

NWSA continues to identify new opportunities beyond the AdventureSail® program. Scholarship funds are available to assist girls who, after participating in an AdventureSail® event, have expressed a desire to take lessons in a sailing program. Information on the scholarship program can be found at www.womensailing.org/scholarships.htm.

You may send tax deductible contributions to:

Women's Sailing Foundation
c/o Stacy Shoti
591 Bailey Pond Road
Voluntown, CT 06384



Fun Regatta in Boston Harbor

by Joan Thayer

After the June 1st conference, women were off sailing in various locations. As we did not have a racing component at the conference, we thought we'd test the waters for an introduction to racing at a different location.

Courageous Sailing Center in Charlestown, MA, the site of an annual AdventureSail® event, was eager to partner with NWSA on this new event. On July 10th at 4:00 p.m., 15 women arrived at the Center. The sky was clear, the breeze was gentle and the sun still held its warmth. The expectations were different but the sole purpose was the same: To learn something new or hone skills in a noncompetitive and supportive surrounding. As they arrived, most said "I don't know the first thing about racing" or "I raced many years ago and don't remember much." You could hear the doubt in their voices. Some women had been at the conference so familiar faces lessened the anxiety.

Randomly we were assigned to the five J-22s with an experienced Sailing Center female skipper. The skippers were supportive and patient with all the questions. They offered the helm to the



women as we went out to the race course and also on the way back. The time went very quickly. Five short races were run from a whaler in the harbor. No time to rest. Because the racing was close, the race committee person blew that whistle to go again within a couple of minutes after the last boat crossed the line.

We glided back to the pier 90 minutes later and found a superb buffet awaiting us. Perhaps it was just being on the water that increased our appetites or that the CSC staff had simply outdone herself. Either way we enjoyed our food as we shared the experiences of racing. We were all laughing and smiling. The race board was presented. Lo and behold, after 3 races there was a tie. And each race had a different winner! Prizes were awarded and reluctantly we headed home, nodding to ourselves "yes, I can" and "yes, I did." Visit the website, www.womensailing.org, for more photos.

P.S. I followed up with a couple of the women later in the summer. One had signed up for the women's racing just down the road at Boston Harbor Sailing School women's night and one had done a race in her own boat and she won her class.



Short Tacks

• espnW

More PR for women sailors in the making?

We are all familiar with ESPN and the great job it does with televising sailboat races. ESPN is gathering information on women in sailing with the possibility of producing website videos or some other medium on women in sailing.

A director contacted NWSA for some background and trends of women in the sport. We know there is so much to say about women on the water, it's hard to know where to start. The Olympics obviously captures everyone's attention.

But how about at the base of the pyramid. Sailing has much to offer women. Women sailors are continuing to swell the ranks of competitors, circumnavigators, tall ship owners and boat builders.

We hope espnW does become a reality.

• US SAILING

NWSA had a permanent seat on the Women's Sailing Council of US SAILING. With the recent reorganization, that Council has been discontinued. Women are leading or are involved in various other committees and councils within US SAILING, but there is no longer a forum specifically for women.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Karen Reisch of Louisiana. Karen was recently installed on the Board of Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans, LA. Karen is the first female to become a member of the Board in 163 years of the club's existence. Karen was also the chair of the Women's Sailing Council at US SAILING.

AdventureSail® . . . Across the Country

By Joan Thayer

The Women's Sailing Foundation supported six AdventureSail® events for some 135 girls in 2012. The events stretched across the country from Massachusetts to California and a few stops in between. The weather this year was favorable at all events. Each event is conducted in a manner that works well for the specific location. Some

involve cruising boats. Some involve smaller one-design boats. Events take place on the ocean, a lake or on a river. Some events involve racing, always exciting. But in all cases, the girls experience the joy of sailing in a supportive and safe environment and learn skills that will last a lifetime. Laughter and giggles and even a few shrieks as the boats heel are heard from the water.



The self esteem and self confidence the girls display at the end of the day cannot be understated.

After each report from the coordinator and seeing the smiling faces in photos, we renew our commitment to this program and to identifying new locations and sources of at-risk girls. We are very



grateful to the many volunteers at each location who give their time, their boats, their skills and their desire to offer these girls a chance at see the good side of life.



In Boston this year, we had the unique opportunity to have among the skippers Maureen McKinnon-Tucker, a gold medal winner in the 2008 Paralympics. Maureen passed around her medal. Just holding it in one's hand brought joy.

We also had the good fortune to have a female fiction writer, Julie Hanke, give us a preview of her new book, *War Correspondent*, a novel about the War of 1812, as told by an eleven-year-old girl (disguised as a boy) serving aboard USS Constitution.

In Oregon, Judi Davis and Linda Starr managed to coordinate two AdventureSail® days with two different groups of girls. At the end of each day, there was a Celebration Picnic with everyone including the girls' families. In one instance a mother joined the Oregon Women's Sailing Association (OWSA) as a result of the event. The OWSA was the organization hosting the event.

The Foundation awarded three



scholarships to girls for the Island Sailing Club Junior Sailing Camp in Portland. The Foundation receives its money entirely from individual donations or raffle and silent auction receipts at our annual conference.

For more details and photos of other AdventureSail® events, visit www.womensailing.org. Click on Activities.

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Women Pirates

from *The Everything Sailing Book* by Michael & Nikki Smorenburg

Since they had to dress and behave like men in order to operate in their ferocious world, many women pirates went unrecorded in history. These are two that we know about:

Mary Read (*English pirate, died 1720*)

Read fought as a soldier in Flanders. As a pirate, she was captured in 1720 but escaped hanging due to her pregnancy. However, she died of illness in captivity shortly thereafter.



Mary Read, Anne Bonny and Calico Jack

Anne Bronny (*Irish-born pirate, active 1720s*)

Anne joined Captain Calico Jack Rackham while posing as a man. There she met Mary Read.

In 1720 her ship was attacked by a British Navy sloop off of Jamaica. She fought like the rest of the pirates, but was captured as was fellow pirate Read. Bonny also escaped trial due to pregnancy, but there is no trace of her fate after her capture.



Nominations being accepted for the BoatU.S./ NWSA Leadership in Women's Sailing Award

The Leadership In Women's Sailing Award, sponsored by BoatU.S. and NWSA, and begun in 1999, honors an individual who has built up a record of achievement in inspiring, educating, and enriching the lives of women through sailing. This award is normally awarded at the Women's Sailing Conference in Marblehead, MA in June.

Below are the past recipients:

- 1999 – Bernadette Bernon
- 2000 – Betsy Alison
- 2001 – Gail Hine
- 2003 – Dawn Riley
- 2004 – Doris Colgate
- 2005 – Cory Sertl
- 2006 – Nancy Erley
- 2007 – Janet Baxter
- 2008 – Pat Seidenspinner
- 2009 – Maureen McKinnon-Tucker
- 2011 – Dawn Santamaria
- 2012 – Elaine Dickinson

Visit the BoatU.S. site at www.boatus.com/women/leadership.asp for write ups on each of the above women.

Send your submission to Susan Epstein at sjeppa@aol.com. Please provide as much information to support your nomination. **Deadline for nominations is February 1, 2013.**

Cont'd from page 1 President's Message

15 years, I knew what lay ahead. The board was very welcoming and very supportive of the nonsailor. I enjoyed working on membership and organizing the diesel engine workshop last year. Unfortunately at the last minute, I could not attend.

At the annual board meeting in June, we needed to elect a new President. Board members with sailing experience had other commitments professionally and personally that prevented them from moving up, but the organization needed a steward. So I agreed to step up on an interim basis. One gains a new perspective of this position once in it! We had a great year in 2012 as you will read in the various articles. We came together in several different forums, challenged ourselves and laughed along the way. We are planning to do the same and more in 2013. Keep your membership active and check the website periodically. Stay with us.

Claire M. Gerrish

More AdventureSail® in California...

"Sailing is a great opportunity that not many people have, so I am very lucky."

