



SAF Station Meeting Minutes for 3 May 2023

By Chuck Hawley, Secretary

All photos courtesy of Dick Enersen

The 3 May 2023 meeting was held at the historic Spaulding Marine Center in Sausalito. Approximately 35 were in attendance. We were treated to a brief history of the boatyard, as well as its current function, by Bill Edinger, President of the facility, which is summarized below.

R/C Schaper thanked Bill Edinger for his efforts to host the CCA meeting and dinner.

THOSE IN ATTENDANCE:

Clark Beek, Robert Bernheim and guest Brenda Bernheim, Diane Barker, Mary Crowley and guest Cynthia Gerlinger, Bill Edinger and guest Heather Richard (who has recently become a Captain of our favorite tallship, Matthew Turner), Peter English, Dick Enersen, Bill and Karen Foss, Neil Gibbs, Chuck and Susan Hawley, Todd Hedlin, Micheal Johnson, Stafford Keegin, Michael Lael with guests Ponnaka Pok and Francoise Ramsy, teve Mason, Bruce Munro, Christopher Parkman and Joan McCune, , Synthia Petroka, Michael and Susan Proudfoot with guests Hans and Sophie List (crew for Hank Eason for many years), Richard Schaper and Ginger Souders-Mason with guests Nicola Accult and Melanie Hamburger.

Note: The Secretary may have made some assumptions about who was whose guest, leading to embarrassing conversations after the evening and the Secretary apologizes in advance if this is the case.

ABOUT THE VENUE

Bill Edinger explained about how the old boatyard had been transitioning into a school of marine crafts, including a legitimate apprenticeship program where promising individuals are



Almost all of the 35 attendees shown here.

paid to learn the skills that are required in the marine industry. Of the recent graduating class of six, five had found employment in the industry. Another class of six apprentices is now approaching their graduation. Bill gave much of the credit to Bruce Holaday, who as a lifelong educator, knew how to put a school together. This resulted in accreditation with the California Department of Apprenticeship Standards.



R/C Schaper looks on as Bill Edinger gives the audience a brief history of the marine center.

In addition to the school, Bill told the group about their summer program for children where they build Pelican class



Proof that dinner was, in fact, held in a boatyard. That is not some Chart House restaurant decoration in the background.

sailboats and then, naturally, sail them. The emphasis is on having fun on the water, as opposed to racing. Bob Berkheim was called out as a financial supporter of the summer program.

Bill pointed out that, while the results were very positive, running an apprenticeship program is not an inexpensive undertaking since the cost per student runs \$25,000. However, as a 501(c)3 organization, grants to the program are tax-deductible (and welcome!) Rear Commodore Schaper mentioned that the SAF Station had contributed \$500 towards the program.

DINNER

Dinner was provided by Steven Singleton, who is the Executive Chef of CEO Farmacary, Inc. It consisted of a tossed green salad, lots of cornbread, red beans and rice, jambalaya, and Toll House cookies. So many people asked how to get in touch with him that we're including the following information for your convenience:

(808) 446-6337 or www.farmacary.com or www.eyeofpie.com (under construction, apparently)

MEMBER NEWS

Sally Honey has been elected to serve on the CCA Board of Governors, replacing Rowena Carlson, whose term has ended.

MEMBERSHIP

There was no membership report.

ENVIRONMENT OF THE SEA

Mary Crowley said that she had recently received documentation from Swire Sailing, which had invested heavily in making commercial shipping under sail feasible. Apparently they have stopped their efforts, and have given their information on the project to Mary's non-profit.

Mary also mentioned that she's headed to Boston to visit SeaLegacy.org, which is an "global marketing, education, and communication agency for the ocean." Gorgeous underwater photography can be seen on their site.

TREASURER'S REPORT

We had \$3600 at the end of April, and expect to receive \$1700 in dues shortly.

CRUISE REPORT

While there have been a few cancellations, the Benecia Cruise has 8 boats participating and 21 members (and we presume friends as well). Very successful, and we're anticipating a lengthy report on its success next month.

SAFETY AT SEA

The Safety Officer presented another story of a boating trip gone bad. Fireboat41, operated by the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, and crewed by an experienced crew of four, sank in the Chesapeake Bay about a year ago.



Chuck Hawley, hardly able to contain his enthusiasm, while describing another boating accident.

Luckily, there were no fatalities, but the report of the accident has many lessons learned for anyone who borrows a boat that has an unknown maintenance history. Quoting CCA member, the late Capt. John Bonds, Chuck reminded the audience that “Fred from the boatyard doesn’t go to sea with you.” A copy of Chuck’s summary of the accident is attached to the minutes as well as being available on cruisingclub.org under Safety and Seamanship.



Angela Abshier, founder of Sail to Shelter.

GUEST SPEAKER

Our guest speaker was Angela Abshier, founder of [Sail to Shelter](http://SailtoShelter.org). Angela started sailing in 2016, and became aware of the lack of solutions for recycling or repurposing sails at the end of their useful life. With 97% of used sails ending up in landfill, she sought to find a use for sails that in many instances are replaced annually. Based on her knowledge of how the fashion industry deals with “deadstock”, she investigated uses for sails that would benefit from their extreme strength and durability, without having to invest a lot of money to transition them into some other purpose. Something, as she said “more than bags.”

After creating a 501(c)3 to allow sail donations, she enlisted [ARUP Engineering](http://ARUPEngineering.com) to find applications for used sails around

the world, using Google Earth to figure out custom solutions for shelters that could be made from, for example, used Farr 40 mainsails. These were used to create a shelter for goods for World Central Kitchen in Poland

One challenge of using discarded polyester (Dacron™) sails was the potential fire hazard if used for shelter. Angela, working with [North Carolina State University](http://NorthCarolinaStateUniversity.edu), was able to create a treatment that dramatically reduced the fire risk, which can be applied in a single process.

Angela’s projects range from providing shelter on farms, to shelter for asylum seekers in Mexico, to creating backpacks in California. With a budget of around \$500,000 per year, and no paid employees, the audience was impressed by what she’s been able to do to solve the issue of sails going to landfills, while solving vexing problems around the world.



Lessons from a Fireboat

Fred doesn't go to sea with you.

"Safety Moments, presented at CCA Stations and Posts"

By Chuck Hawley, San Francisco Station, May 2023

The late CCA member Capt. John Bonds used to admonish his Safety at Sea audiences that relying on the guy (or gal) who works at the boatyard to make sure their boat was ready to go to sea was a mistake. In his booming voice, Bonds would say "Remember, Fred doesn't go to sea with you!" Thus, the onus falls on the captain and crew of the boat to ensure that it's ready for a voyage.



Fireboat 41 in happier days.

This can get complicated, however, when you're asked, or choose, to take someone else's boat on the water. If you charter a nice big catamaran from the Moorings in Tortola, it's pretty common to hop aboard and, after a brief pre-departure talk from one of the boat captains, cast off for a week of sailing. Or if you're asked to use an unfamiliar mark-set RIB prior to a regatta, there's a tendency to just "get out on the water" and learn about the boat as you go. Even the generous offer to "use my boat anytime you're in San Francisco" creates a situation where you don't actually know if the vessel is ready, or safe, for a trip on the Bay.

When marine incidents occur, whether due to hasty departures or other causes, we study them to figure out how to keep them from occurring in the future. Accident reports, whether from the Coast Guard, or US Sailing or the National Transportation Safety Board, are full of information that can be applied to recreational sailing. As an example, in March of 2022, fireboat *FB41*, operated by the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, went out on a routine training voyage and ended up sinking, thankfully with no loss of life. The list of contributing factors was lengthy, and one could argue that no single factor was responsible.

Here's a partial list of the contributing factors:

1. The crew of four was experienced, but not with the exact model of boat since their normal boat was being serviced.
2. The boat was an aluminum catamaran with two large outboards. Each of the hulls had two large bilge pumps with cylindrical bilge switches. The bilge pump switches both turned on the pumps when the water level rose and turned on a visible and an audible alarm to warn the crew that the pumps had been activated.
3. Each hull had a large deck hatch covering a generator in one hull and a fire pump in the other hull. The hatches had recently had their perimeter seals replaced due to wear.

4. The side decks had two scuppers apiece to allow water to drain, as well as a gap under an aft boarding gate on each side, but the scuppers did not go as far back as the transom. Thus, water could collect on deck.



This image shows water inundating one of the hulls due to a deck gasket that does not seal properly.

5. On the day that the training ride took place, a small craft advisory was forecast, but the conditions deteriorated to gale warnings. Seas were expected to be 2-4', but actually were 3.8-5.4'.
6. The visual indicators on the bilge pump alarms were located aft of the helmsman so that he could not see them while at the helm. The audible alarms had been bypassed because of nuisance alarms in the past.
7. The floats in the cylindrical bilge pump switches would "stick" in the down position, and fail to turn on the pumps. The pumps were supposed to pump 3700 gallons per hour, but when tested, they only pumped half that amount. (Although not stated in the article, it is my guess that the floats also stuck in the high water position, leading to the disconnection of the audible alarms.)
8. The boat had been repowered recently with larger engines, and gained approximately 200 pounds aft as a result.
9. The crew chose a course that was downwind and ran with the seas, which allowed water to flood the area in front of the transom so that water pooled above the deck hatches.
10. The crew noticed that the boat appeared sluggish and could not get on a plane and was pulling hard to port. When they realized that they were taking on water, they broadcast a MAYDAY while heading for shallow water, but before they could beach the boat, it sank

in 26' of water. Their MAYDAY call was heard, and after a short period of time in the water, the crew was picked up without injury. The boat was later salvaged.

What can we learn from this incident?

1. The fleet of boats fireboats underwent weekly inspections with written notes regarding any discrepancies. The issue with the bilge pump switches was documented, but not deemed to be important enough to prohibit the use of the boat.
2. The replacement seals on the hatches were not the correct ones, which allowed water to flood into the aft section of the hulls.
3. Due to the inoperative bilge alarms, the crew was unaware of the flooding issue until the performance of the boat noticeably deteriorated.
4. The lack of scuppers aft caused water to pool on deck, thus putting a premium on the watertight construction of the hatches.
5. There were three drysuits and a single deck suit for the four crewmembers. The crewmember without the drysuit suffered more than the others from cold exposure.

OK, sure, that's a bunch of stuff that went wrong or could have been improved upon. But the fundamental issue is that the boat leaked from above. The boat sank due to downflooding (water from above) rather than a leak or broken hose. If you fix the hatch seals, you fix the problem. Then work on all of the other stuff that should have been in better order. This is not an argument that you can forget about pumps and switches, but they are largely there to take care of nuisance water and not to keep the vessel afloat. And remember: the guys in the boatyard, or the charter company, or the yacht club, don't go to sea with you. It's up to you to make sure that your vessel is prepared correctly.

More information can be found in the [Fireboat 41 Post-Incident Report](#) by the County of Anne Arundel County Fire Department Operations Bureau.

The Cruising Club of America is a collection of accomplished ocean sailors having extensive boat handling, seamanship, and command experience honed over many years. "Safety Moments" are written by the Club's Safety Officers from CCA Stations across North America and Bermuda, as well as CCA members at large. They are published by the CCA Safety and Seamanship Committee and are intended to advance seamanship and safety by highlighting new technologies, suggestions for safe operation and reports of maritime disasters around the world.