

DARIEN SAIL & POWER SQUADRON
DISTRICT 2, UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS®

Our website: DSPSCT.org
October, 2020

It's Been A Dangerous Summer — Part 2

We were returning to our slip at Harbor Point on Saturday, October 3, when we heard a call on VHF Channel 16: “Coast Guard, Coast Guard, there’s a boat on fire at the Hinckley yard in Stamford.”

In the background, we could hear someone calling 911. About 4 or 5 minutes later, a Stamford fire engine appeared in the Hinckley yard. Unfortunately, by that time the boat had drifted into the middle of the channel.

Only a few minutes later, the burning boat fetched up alongside several boats docked on the east side of the channel. One by one, these boats began to burn.



When the tiki bar, seen at the right above, caught, we could hear small explosions and the smoke reached high above the buildings. The original boat continued to drift down the channel, threatening more docked boats. Unfortunately, the Stamford fire boat had been taken out of service the day before because of a mechanical issue.



Eventually, through the efforts of some volunteers

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The Bridge

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Jeff Brown, S

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Roger Klein

Neal Konstantin, AP

Advisors

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Peter Lasalandra, AP

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(including two from the Stamford Yacht Club who tossed an anchor into one of the burning boats and pulled it back into the channel), TowBoat U.S., the tug Buchanan 5 from New Haven, the Norwalk Fire Department's fire boat, and additional units from Norwalk, Darien, Greenwich, and even New York City, the fires were extinguished. A Stamford Fire Chief estimated that the fire caused over \$500,000 in damage.



So, how did all this happen?


The owner of a 24½-foot 1978 Sea Ray power boat with an inboard engine had just finished fueling at the Hinckley Yachts dock. The fire started as he started the engine to leave. The owner and his daughter got off the burning vessel. The dock attendant used two fire extinguishers, but to no avail. He then pushed the burning boat off the dock and into the harbor. The owner of the Sea Ray said that he had used his blower before turning on the engine, but something obviously went awry.

If you've taken the Darien Sail & Power Squadron's Coastal Boating Competence course, you'll know that the best way to check for gasoline fumes is to stick your nose down near the bilge and sniff. Sorry — we don't have a picture of Dick Woods demonstrating that technique. Use these checklists:




Before-Fueling Checklist

- ⇒ Fuel in daylight
- ⇒ Tie securely to dock
- ⇒ Put out all flames; no smoking
- ⇒ Shut off engines & electrical equipment
 - especially the bilge blower
- ⇒ Close doors, hatches, portholes
- ⇒ Fire extinguisher close-by
- ⇒ All passengers off the boat




While-Fueling Checklist

- ⇒ Close hatches and portholes
- ⇒ Keep fuel nozzle in contact with deck plate
- ⇒ Estimate fuel needed
 - fill only 95% full



After-Fueling Checklist

- ⇒ Close filler pipe opening
- ⇒ Wipe up any spillage
 - leave wipers on shore
- ⇒ Open all portholes, doors, hatches
- ⇒ Turn on bilge blower, if so equipped
 - run blower minimum of 4 minutes
- ⇒ Sniff bilge for vapors



FUELING – A ROUTINE

SNIFF

Get down on your belly and SNIFF

Classic Yacht Regatta at Indian Harbor, in Times of Covid-19



On September 12, 2020, a Covid-19 adapted version of the Classic Yacht Regatta was held at Indian Harbor Yacht Club in Greenwich. Four catboats owned by Darien Sail and Power Squadron members entered: Roger Klein's *Owl*, Joe Hliva's *Pearl*, Frank Kemp's *Lovinde*, and our *Malo*. These catboats are not yachts and are not wooden or technically "classic," but we are invited due to the classic lines of these boats, and have participated in this race for many years.

Due to Covid-19, dinner and dancing to live music for captains, crew, and family on the night prior to the race was cancelled, and the Award ceremony went to Zoom. The Captains' breakfast meeting prior to the race was also cancelled. The race course was broadcast over VHF two hours prior to the race.

The true beauty of this race lies in the classic lines of the magnificent old boats that compete, including Scott Frantz's 72-foot *Ticonderoga*, which is normally docked and opened for visitors after the race. Ted and Sheila Graves, who also graciously host this event, entered their *Nor'easter*, a 50-foot Q Class yacht. Many Herreshoffs, Concordias, Aldens, and two one-design classes – Catboats and Shields – also competed.

This makes for a great afternoon of watching from land or from the water. This year, there were 25 boats registered, a much smaller number than usual. Nevertheless, we were in good spirits as most of our catboat regattas had been cancelled due to Covid concerns. The first start was at 12 noon; catboats, Classics, and Spirit of Tradition classes were to start at 12:30. The wind was brisk out of the East, and we had reefed our sails. With a long fetch down the whole length of the Sound, the wind caused 2.5-foot to 3.5-foot waves coming at a 45 degree angle to the bow. Surfing down them at a closer angle was complicated by how close the waves were together.

Six boats started in the Catboat class, and we had a reasonable start: third across the line. We headed for the windward mark set by the race committee, rounded on the starboard side and headed to Gong G "1" at the entrance to Captain Harbor. Sally E, an Atlantic City 24 sailed by JR Reffner, had moved into second place, Roger Klein was in first place, and we were third. Our places didn't change: I was unable to catch them and no boat passed us.

The next 3 hours were grueling: the weather buoy was rounded in a recorded 15- to 17-knot wind, with gusts passing 25 knots. A good thing we had reefed or we would have broken something. As you may know, catboats have a very large sail relative to the size of the boat, and at our third mark, we were on a reach and would have to jibe. Jibing such a large sail on a 20-foot boom can be hard to control in a brisk wind, and if not controlled, will break something and finish your race right there. Some boats had turned into the wind and tacked, doing a 270 degree turn, which is a much safer but slower operation.

We, on the other hand, had practiced this jibe: pull the sheet as fast as possible to the center of the boat, and as the wind catches it on the new tack, let it out rapidly. If you don't have gloves, you should wet the sheet to help prevent rope burns. The trick is to reduce the amount of free swing that the boom has so that it doesn't build enough momentum to break something. That nearly 20-foot boom has over 250 square feet of sail on it, which produces a lot of power.

We finished exhausted, but the beauty of being on the water with those classic sailboats is something that we treasure every year.

— Mark Dam