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Pacific Northwest CLASSIC YACHTING

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY AND FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST FLEET OF THE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION

Rowed Warrior

Completing the Inaugural Seventy48 Human-Powered
Race from Tacoma to Port Townsend

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Photo by Paul Sabin

The FO'C'S'LE

By Matt Paynton, Newsletter Editor

We've all heard - maybe even used - the phrase, "This picture could have been taken yesterday!" usually as a remark about an old photo's clarity, vivid colors or even the subject of the photo. However, it's usually said out of disbelief that a photograph could be as old as it is, or that something that seems like a recent memory could actually be *that* long ago.

Photographs represent so much to us, from special events to the special people and places in them that may not even be around anymore. A moment in time, forever preserved.

I've been looking through old photographs lately, and what has struck me is that photos that I remember being taken, in a moment that seems fairly recent, *look* old.

It's not necessarily because of how much younger everyone looks in them, or even anything about the photo itself. It's the technology that was used to take the photo in the first place.

Think back to the photographs of the teens and twenties, that were usually crystal clear, revealing details so minute that it's mind-boggling. Like being able to read the time on a clock on the background of the photo, or the numbers on a license plate of the 1929 Hupmobile they're attached to.

Now, these photos were all black and white, but even the early color photos of the late 1930s and 1940s for the most part share this exquisite clarity.

Then the era of the "snapshot" was born. Cameras that were small and portable were only meant to take photos that were "good enough" to preserve the memory and not much more. The "chunk-chink" sound of quality in an Kodak Instamatic's shutter button



▲ *THE GANG'S ALL HERE: The assembled crew of Doryann II (Maranee) in a photo taken July 3, 1946. Why, that looks like it could have been taken yesterday!*

already had you knowing how the photo would turn out. Usually the subject was a tiny dot in the middle of a square photo that may as well have taken a magnifying glass to view it.

In the intervening years, cartridge film cameras, the ill-conceived disk cameras and a host of other virtually disposable technology came and went, all capturing moments in time we had intended to preserve forever, but just not very well. So much in fact that when we recall these moments of our lives, our memories are betrayed by the grainy faded photograph of them rather than a memory of what it was actually like to be in that moment.

Which brings me back to my original phrase. Many of these low-quality images would never have you believe that they were "taken yesterday" - they *look* old.

It wasn't until the advent of digital photography that these images started improving. Not very fast, mind you. Think back to the photos you took on your first camera phone, and you'll know what I mean.

But now, our phones take crystal clear pictures and get displayed on screens

that far exceed even the clarity that the human eye can even distinguish. The only problem now is that the ability to take unlimited photos means that in all likelihood, the photo you're looking at *was* taken yesterday!

But that's what they're for. So go and make memories, and be sure to take lots of pictures.



*Official Newsletter
of the
Pacific Northwest Fleet,
Classic Yacht Association*

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**Next Newsletter Submission
Deadline December 15**

South Sound Cruise

By Jim Paynton, #427



Sonata, Zanzibar and Maranee enjoy the quiet at Longbranch Marina

Commodore Bill Foulk put the full force and power of his lofty office into what was intended to be the only “official” PNW cruising event this summer. Predictably, as with so many other arrangements in our Coronavirus lives, this affair transformed itself several times as the realities of Covid impacted it. Nevertheless, seven CYA vessels attended all or parts of the summer gathering, which consisted of a few pre-arranged stops, several unplanned ports of call, and careful social distancing for the duration.

The lovely marina at Des Moines was the starting point of the cruise on July 18. *Zanzibar*, *Riptide*, *The Ionius*, *Sonata*, *Marian II*, *Sunshine*, and Rear Commodore Todd Powell’s new Grand Banks *Grandy* moored at the guest dock for the weekend, and enjoyed the lovely summer weather and the attractions of the town. On Monday the 20th, *Zanzibar*, *Riptide*, *Marian II* and *Sonata* headed for Dock Street Marina in Tacoma, where they were joined by *Maranee* and Commodore Bill Foulk along with Nancy Williams. While there, former commodore David Huchthausen made arrangements for the participants to take a private tour of the renowned Tacoma Glass

Museum, which was closed to the general public due to the Coronavirus restrictions. Wonderful potlucks on the dock were perfect ways to end each day.

On Tuesday the 22nd, the fleet departed for beautiful Filucy Bay, tying up at the Longbranch Improvement Club floats after bucking a bit of an ebb current in the Tacoma Narrows. The gorgeous summer weather continued, and the crews soaked up the solitude and quiet of Longbranch after being surrounded by the constant buzz of downtown Tacoma for a couple of days. The only interruptions to the silence were the cheers and jeers

from the contestants in the First Annual CYA Longbranch Cornhole Contest, held in the marina pavilion. Boats and crews started heading for home or other destinations on Friday. *Maranee* went through Pitt Passage for a couple of nights at the dock at Penrose Point State Park, before riding the hook at Oro Bay for two peaceful days.

It may have been a rather unpredictable event, but like a fine tossed salad, the ingredients all came together to make a wonderful offering. Thanks again to Commodore Bill for all of his tireless efforts toward making the 2020 South Sound Cruise a reality during these challenging times.



▲ *Sonata, Riptide and Maranee bask in the afternoon sun at Dock Street Marina*

Rowed to Adventure

By Paul Sabin, #1495



“You know”, he said, the tone in his voice shifting to alert me to the gravity of his next statement - “I built that dinghy to fit the classic lines of *Tomara* . . . it’s more like a piece of ‘nautical jewelry’ than a serious rower”. You couldn’t fault the comments of the builder, Doug Serrill, who constructed the strip plank mahogany Compumarine design and was *Tomara*’s owner and caretaker for 15 years prior to our purchase of the Monk Sr. designed bridge deck cruiser. The dinghy sits at 8 feet in length by 4 feet wide, hardly the dimensions of a craft that you’d want to race, much less row a great distance, but sure enough, the dinghy that we hang off the back of *Tomara* had just successfully completed the inaugural Seventy48 human powered race from Tacoma to Port Townsend - - Seventy48 based on the 70 miles from city to city, and 48 for the hours allotted to complete the event. So how exactly did this come to pass? What compels a man in his mid-fifties with no crew or rowing experience to embark on a seventy-mile rowing “race”, in a fixed-seat vessel shaped more like a bathtub than a rowing scull

- - primarily at night and backwards? Short answer: adventure, but first, a bit of background on the event. The organizers, the Northwest Maritime Center, who also sponsor the more well-known Race to Alaska, or R2AK, a non-motorized 750 mile race from Port Townsend to Ketchikan must have felt the need for something else in their repertoire. A quirky group, the Maritime Center is renowned for its two prizes awarded for R2AK - first place wins \$10,000.00, and of more notoriety, the second-place finisher - - a set of steak knives. So, from this group, Seventy48 was born; possibly they wanted a smaller pre-function event that ended just as the more worldly Race to Alaska started, maybe they wanted something that was more local, or perhaps they all had one too many good ideas at the local watering hole. . . . From a time and effort standpoint, the Seventy48 was achievable, but not necessarily easy. R2AK is hard, 750 miles, and unless you’re a competitive sailor it takes potentially weeks, not days, with involved logistics, navigation planning and weather concerns. So as a guy who has never sailed, the

R2AK seemed out of reach for me, but late in 2017, the Northwest Maritime Center announced Seventy48 and that caught my imagination.

Part of me wanted to build a purpose-built rower, maybe one of the Angus Boat Designs or a kit from Chesapeake Light Craft or Pygmy, but in the end made the decision to just row what I own, the tender for *Tomara*. Nautical inefficiency aside, some work was required to get the vessel in “racing” configuration. A set of 8’ scalloped oars were procured, giving me better leverage than the standard 6’ flat oars that I use to propel us around our routine anchorages. There were no plans (or room) to adapt a sliding seat station, but I reinforced the forward thwart seat to sustain the hours of constant rowing. A kayak foam applique seat was added to provide some relief from the mahogany plank. The oar locks were also reinforced to withstand the torque of the longer oars, and I constructed a navigation station on a strip of mahogany skinned plywood to hold a compass, race supplied “Spot” tracker, chart pack of the Sound, and handheld VHF radio with solar charged battery pack. An inexpensive solar walkway light was mounted to the bow to provide the required nighttime 360-degree illumination, and red and green chemical wands (“chem-lites”) marked starboard and port sides of the craft.

My strategy for this adventure was simple - - just keep rowing . . . non-stop until I reached Port Townsend, and as the event did not start until 5:00 p.m., that meant rowing at night, or more specifically, all night. I spent time doing hard things in the military, so the idea of rowing through the night wasn’t a significant issue for me, and

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since I couldn't see where I was headed without turning my head, figured it didn't really matter whether the sun was out or not. The course consisted of two check points, one near Point Defiance, the other at the Port Townsend "cut" near Indianola Island. The only specific guidance was to stay out of the shipping lanes that bisect the Sound. There were seven Washington State Ferry crossings to be negotiated, most transpiring at night. While not conversant in naval architecture, and knowing little about the benefits of length at the waterline (LWL) versus length overall (LOA), I had loosely calculated I'd be able to average about 3 knots per hour, although doubtful I could sustain that for the entire event, especially when the currents were against me.

As the race started, I had enough sense and humility to stay out of the way of the true competitors until they all crossed the line - - and it's safe to say that out of the 125 entrants, there

was probably less than two dozen "racers", the rest of us were just out to partake in the adventure. When it comes down to it, that was what I was doing - - seeing if I still had the will to push myself both physically and mentally to achieve the satisfaction of completing a difficult goal. Some of my

lesser thought-out exploits have been framed by the general adage that "Adventure is nothing more than attempting great things with inappropriate equipment" and that certainly rang true with this event, even if I did plan more than usual for this endeavor. Even starting out in the rear of the pack I could not help but notice how much faster every other contestant was. . . perhaps having the shortest entrant by three feet at the waterline had something to do with it, or four feet of beam, or perhaps it was just the aging power plant.

"Rower, alter your course westward, you are encroaching

the shipping lanes. . ." commanded the disembodied voice from the deck of the entirely blacked-out Coast Guard Cutter patrolling the Sound. Although I deemed a Coast Guard boarding highly unlikely, I complied with the order with the realization the current or meandering navigation had put me closer to the shipping lanes than I'd prefer. Not certain how the USCG was roped into supporting this event, but I'd like to think it was during a "what if" session by race organizers . . . put a hundred small boats in Puget Sound at night with weather than even in June, can create 2-4 waves and gale force winds - "What's the worst that could happen?" It was about 2:00 a.m., nine hours after the 5:00 p.m. start of the race and I was approximately mid-way along Bainbridge Island, and at about the thirty-mile mark of the course. Winds were light and the slight flood tide was close to slack, and I was feeling good about the progress so far. I had passed a great number of



participants that disembarked on Blake Island for the night and was a bit jealous of the race strategy that included campfires on the beach and bedding down for the night. Reaching Kingston and Apple Tree Cove by around 6:00 a.m., and invigorated by the early sunrise, and riding a favorable ebb, I

continued the "row straight through" strategy that was fruitful for the first twelve hours of the event. "I may actually complete this thing in 24 hours. . .", I absurdly thought to myself, somehow forgetting the 2.6 knot flood tide that awaited me around Point No Point, and the literally millions upon millions of gallons of water that were going to push me backward, or at least, to a standstill. I attempted to mitigate this dastardly effect of lunar action by finding the elusive ebb current running close to shore but could not help but notice the landmarks

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I selected were passing much more slowly than before. At this point it was time to reach deep down and keep grinding away - - it's my hallmark, I've always been a bit obstinate when faced with a challenge, it's just how I am. Then, the afternoon southerly wind picked up. . .

I rowed for at least one hour off Point No Point and likely gained less than a hundred feet of progress, but I just kept rowing away, futile in my stubborn grinding, hard-headed way. When I looked at the never changing size of the light beacon on the point, the breeze generated chop of the water, adverse current and state of rowing stasis, I reluctantly made my way to the shoreline. Hauling myself and the dinghy up on the beach was a painful admission of defeat - - certainly outside the strategy for rowing straight through, but at that point, roughly eighteen hours of non-stop rowing, I was feeling less obstinate than usual. Sheltered behind a good-size piece of driftwood, I attempted to consume some provisions I brought for the event, so I dug into a "MRE", or "Meal, Ready to Eat" left over from a career in the Army. I've always figured the masses that abhorred the preservative-laden, calorie-loaded meals just must not have been hungry enough, but in this moment I dutifully joined their ranks. Barely able to stomach any of it, I drifted off in fitful sleep, uncertain of the possibility of completing the race if the winds did not subside. Thirty-minutes later I awoke somewhat refreshed to take note that the wind had significantly decreased. Taking a few moments to reorganize the boat, I retrieved my cellphone from a waterproof bag and noticed a text from my wife - - she had arrived at our rendezvous point at Port Townsend. This notification

cemented my resolve, no excuses now for not making it to the finish line, as the quickest way home was still twenty nautical miles away. The long slog past Foulweather Bluff to the Port Townsend Cut was still against the flood, but the absence of strong wind made forward progress obtainable. I was now at twenty-fours from the time the event started and could feel my reduced energy and the effects of thousands of oar strokes. Buoyed by spectators at the rail bridge, I felt a renewed sense of urgency to just get the job done - - satisfaction in its completion to be sure but knowing this was the last leg of the event propelled me northward. The distance from the railway bridge to Port Townsend is roughly eight miles, but felt much longer on this day, at least for me. Having missed the "maybe I'll finish in twenty-fours" objective, the new goal was to finish during daylight. I rowed onward, fighting what seemed to be a renewed flood current, with the city docks and buildings beckoning my long-awaited arrival. So single-minded were my efforts that I came to the late and somewhat bewilderingly realization that there was one more ferry crossing that I had to negotiate - - a combination of weariness and sleep deprivation, perhaps acknowledging that Port Townsend was the finish, without accounting that the actual finish line was north of the Coupeville - Port Townsend ferry terminal. I looked left to see a large white and green behemoth bearing down on me, which definitively had the right of way both as a working vessel and on the time tested "laws of tonnage" principle. It was twilight, and I quickly snapped the red and green chemlights and planned my somewhat limited evasive maneuvers

just as I could discern the big boat's engine reduce to idle. . . The captain, likely alerted to the fact that his route would have additional navigational challenges during Seventy48, brought the ferry to a crawl while I deliberately rowed through his path to the dock. I thought instantly of activating the handheld VHF radio and thanking this fellow mariner, or perhaps briefly standing to render a salute, but at this point, I just wanted to be done. . .

I arrived at the finish line at 9:15, p.m., twenty-nine hours after beginning the odyssey to the cheers of a few participants and locals that lined the dock. Rising weak-kneed from the dinghy I stepped onto the dock to the arms of my wife for a congratulatory hug. I then grabbed the "U-R-Next" ticket dispenser near the race judges - - number "76" finisher for the race - - a rather pedestrian effort considering the winners, a multi-year Olympian kayaker and his partner finished the race in just over nine hours, but I can say without hesitation that I felt a significant sense of achievement in the result. Looking back, it's a safe bet that for this adventure I rowed the shortest boat in Seventy48's brief history, and likely the widest, too.

Shortly after acquiring *Tomara*, we purchased a copy of Bet Oliver's book, *Ed Monk and the Tradition of Classic Boats*, and in it found a quote that we admired so much we placed it on a bulkhead in our stateroom. Whether rowing a long distance in an inappropriate vessel, or cruising and maintaining a classic yacht, we felt this phrase, "saltily" muttered probably seventy years ago, still resonates:

"A spirit of adventure is what it takes. . . and them as haven't got it, better stay away from boats."

Around the Sound

Scenes from the 2020 South Sound Cruise



◀ *Marian II and Zanzibar moored together at Dock Street Marina on the Thea Foss Waterway in Tacoma*

▼ *Thelonius arrived first at Longbranch*



◀ *Rounding Brown's Point, Mt. Rainier welcomes the fleet to Commencement Bay*

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