



OSTS Notes



Newsletter of the United States Naval Academy
Offshore Sail Training Squadron



DIRECTOR'S CUT

We've wrapped another successful season of fall training! Thanks to all the volunteers who came out to help instruct our new recruits, and to everyone in the BST department for getting you all through your Navy 26 (Colgate) B-qualifications.

We have a great group of people in the incoming XO class, and a few more new volunteers who will join us starting with winter training. There's a lot to learn, whether you're a seasoned sailor or just getting started. Our focus in the fall is to get you through Senior Crew, with an introduction to the Navy way of doing things. You get time on the boat to practice procedures and start committing them to your muscle memory, learn the Navy 44 boat systems and work on your teaching skills. We'll work your brains over the winter and go more in-depth on boat systems, safety, operational risk management, navigation, and the core of our program, leadership. Spring sailing is designed to be a refresher and to fine tune your skills. The DELMARVA is your final exam. Instructors will be looking at many factors in their final evaluations: leadership, attitude, communication skills, command presence, teamwork, and last but not least, your mastery of sailing and seamanship skills.

Summer training will bring a very different perspective as a new XO. Your crew will be pretty much all novice sailors, and your focus will be on providing them opportunities for leadership and guiding them while they figure it all out. You'll be hands-on teaching during the week of local area sailing, and will transition to having them do everything by the return leg of the trip. It's a great challenge to teach them enough to be safe (and to enjoy the sailing!) and then step back to let them make mistakes – as long as they don't hurt people or boats. It's a leadership lab, because sometimes the most difficult thing to learn is how to lead their peers, but this is an amazing opportunity for them to do that, in a real-world environment with real risk at stake. The best part is that it's very rewarding to be a part of that process!!! It's not always easy and your crew doesn't always want to be there, but that's a part of your leadership challenge too.



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The Navy Sailing program was invited to participate in the New York Yacht Club (NYYC) Chesapeake Cruise this fall. We put together a "hybrid" Navy 44 crew with an OSTs Skipper, XO, and crew 1/C **JP Morrisson**, 2/C **Madeleine Pershall** and 1/C **Ashley Harris**, three Junior Varsity sailors, and the OSTs Program Director as their safety officer. Unfortunately, the cruise was cancelled due to one of the many hurricanes passing offshore this fall that prevented the members from further north attending. Our *INTREPID* sailors came up with a modified plan to sail the boat over to St. Michaels (Maryland), spend the night, and sail back the next day.

The best laid plans, however, didn't quite pan out when the engine wouldn't stay on in Eastern Bay about the time we were going to take sails down and motor up the Miles River. Plan B was enacted. We headed back to the Academy and sailed our local operating area until we could get a tow in from Cutter Shed at 0700. Troubleshooting after our return revealed that the reason the engine wouldn't stay on was because the fuel supply valve had been turned almost all the way off. This is not something that is part of any of our checklists because the supply and return valves should always be left open, and they



normally are. Our lesson learned will result in a winter job to zip tie the valves open so this doesn't happen again. The Midshipman crew did a great job handling adversity (and seasickness) in the 15-20 southerly, coming up with an alternate plan and getting home safely.

Fleet Captain **John Formisano** discusses another collaboration of our Midshipmen sailors on *SUMMERWIND* in his article. Over the winter we'll focus on getting our Midshipmen XO trainees together through our mentor program. Active duty and retired military OSTs volunteers who teach at the Academy work with Midshipmen Skippers as a chain of command to mentor upcoming Midshipmen XOs and Skippers to help them achieve their qualification and leadership goals for summer. This includes getting through the D-qualification exams and mentally preparing to lead their peers offshore. We're continually working to get more Midshipmen or soon-to-be Navy Ensigns or Marine 2nd LTs on the water in leadership roles. It's a great opportunity for them and for their crew.

We look forward to seeing you in January for the leadership training series!

ASK THE FLEET CAPTAIN

by John Formisano



Skipper John Formisano

As I write this the last of the Navy 44s are being moved across the Severn River to go "on the hard" at the Small Craft Repair Department (SCRD) for winterization. CAPT Dave Jackson's article overviews the plan for annual fleet maintenance, Sail Training Craft (STC) updates, and Santee Basin repairs. *SUMMERWIND* now has her

winter coat so she will stay in Santee Basin for winter maintenance.

SUMMERWIND finished her season in style by placing first in her class during the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race in October. She completed the 127 nautical mile trip from the start off Hackett Point to the finish line at Thimble Shoals in 11 hours and 53 minutes, pushed along by a 20-25 knot Northeasterly. *SUMMERWIND* also gained bragging rights over the local schooner *WOODWIND*, in our ongoing friendly rivalry.

Two OSTs veterans, MIDN 1/C **Erika Hoffman** and MIDN 2/C **Trent Meekin**, served as watch captains for the race. They led their crew of nine JVOST team members and one sailing club (ECA) sailor to success. While OSTs typically doesn't race, it was great way to for Erika and Trent to exercise the leadership and training skills learned during OSTs. Each sailed on *SUMMERWIND* the past two summers, gaining the experience needed to lead other crew members who had no experience sailing a 100' schooner or sailing at night down the bay.

The schedule for winter training classes is attached to this issue. I encourage all of our existing Skippers and XO's to attend these classes when possible. Your contribution brings a sense of what really happens during the summer blocks. Your input into the leadership and technical portions of the training enables our new volunteers the opportunity to interact and ask questions both in class and after class should you join later at the Naval Academy Club for our informal "debrief" at *The Alley*.

I look forward to seeing you at the winter training.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NOTE

By CAPT David M. Jackson, USN(ret)

It's starting to get cold in Santee Basin. As I write this column, all boats are all hauled and being winterized. Last issue I provided an overview of the jobs planned for this winter. We are still tracking on accomplishing that work. If you were Skipper or XO last Summer or crew this Fall and you are concerned about something not working on your boat, please drop me a line and I will confirm that it was or is repaired.

By the time you return to Santee Basin the seawall repairs will be completed and the Cutter Shed will be easier to access. That should make it easier for those of you who had a hard time submitting chits for items that needed repairs. We need the chits as soon as you return from sailing so that the Cutter Shed can work them starting at 0700 the next morning and have the boat "up" that afternoon. When you don't submit a chit that just delays repairs. Please help us help you.

This Spring we hope to institute a Google Spreadsheet that will allow you to review active and closed chits for a particular boat. Renee and I are working that now and will send it out for comment later this Winter.

I look forward to seeing you at the boat maintenance training session this Winter.

MIDSHIPMEN AWARDS

The *LTG Robert C. Tabor Award* is presented to the Midshipmen serving as a Skipper who best demonstrates outstanding leadership and command skills while participating in the SAILTRAMID Summer Cruise Program. It was a very difficult choice this year. All of the Skippers who were nominated gained the respect of their peers onboard and from the Skippers, XOs, and crews from the other squadron boats. The award went to MIDN 1/C **Cori Sullivan**.

The *RADM Robert W. McNitt Award* is presented to the midshipman XO demonstrating exemplary leadership while participating in their OSTs summer cruise block. Recipient's performance in seamanship, navigation, leadership, and sailing skills set them apart from their contemporaries during their cruise block. The award went to MIDN 2/C **Aaron Dunn**.



DNAS and MIDN 1/C Cori Sullivan

earned by MIDN 2/C **Aaron Dunn**, MIDN 2/C **Joseph Roehm**, and MIDN 2/C **Madeleine Pershall**.

Bravo Zulu to all of our outstanding Midshipmen.



DNAS and MIDN 3/C Ryan Eilers



DNAS and MIDN 2/C Aaron Dunn



MIDN 2/C Kori Sorensen, DNAS, & Mr. Pete Carrico

The *CAPT Robert D. McWethy Award* was presented to an outstanding Midshipman participating in the SAILTRAMID Summer Cruise Program for seamanship. MIDN 3/C **Ryan Eilers** was the award winner.

The *Bing Simpson Maintenance Award* is presented annually to the Second or Third Class Midshipman who stood out as the best engineer. MIDN 2/C **Kori Sorensen** was honored with this award.

Midshipman D-CS qualifications were earned by MIDN 3/C **Sarah Boyken** and MIDN 3/C **Carter Edwards**. D-OS were

OSTS VOLUNTEER TRAINING SCHEDULE

Our training schedule for the rest of the year is attached. We offer real and virtual learning options for winter training. All of the classroom sessions will be recorded with Tegrity, a lecture capture program that records the instructor's voice and PowerPoint presentation. These are uploaded at the end of each class. Your Tegrity username is your last name, all lowercase,



and your password is your first initial and last name. You can also download the Tegrity app or listen to them through Blackboard, which has a tab for direct access. Blackboard is a web based program that hosts all our online tests and study guides for the D-qualification, and fillable forms for training and summer blocks. Anyone who joined us this fall now has access to Blackboard; your user name and password are your email. For faculty and staff with a usna.edu email, you can access with your network information. Link for Blackboard is: <https://www.usna.edu/Blackboard/>. Tegrity can be accessed through Blackboard (link on left side of Blackboard home page).

Winter classes will start the end of January with the leadership series. This is a great introduction, since it's at the heart of what we do and why we need you. Professors who teach in the Leadership Department will give you an overview of what the Midshipmen are taught, to help you relate to them in the summer. We encourage our existing Skippers and XOs to attend these classes to contribute techniques on how to implement the theory, and there will be a session where they present lessons learned on how to effectively manage the crew and facilitate leadership opportunities for the Midshipmen. We highly encourage new volunteers to attend at least one or more of these sessions in person.

for any of our already qualified volunteers who want to get out on the Navy 44s. We will have a couple of shore-based orientation sessions for anyone who joined us between fall and winter training, and Saturday sessions throughout April/early May to get extra time. The actual A and B blocks include a full day Saturday, weeknights Monday-Thursday and an overnight Friday-Saturday. You can sign up a la carte to suit your schedule, but are responsible for getting your time logged and signed off, skills signed off and the all-important instructor sign-off at the end of each section, so that we know you've been recommended to continue with the next step.

Sign up for Spring refresher sailing and DELMARVA is at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1exjloh0x3-5zBgrSecmeYedpiJMSzqfHkNpZRrZ5TCs/edit#gid=1940938673>

D-QUALIFICATION EXAMS

There are 14 sections of online tests. The navigation test is a practical that requires chart plotting. You can take the tests in any order, any time, and they don't have to be taken all at once. Each online test has a time limit of one hour, and you get two attempts to pass each one. Minimum score of 70% required in all sections except Rules of the Road (90% required). Celestial is not required for the D-CS or D-OS qualification. Blackboard has a "D-Qual Study Material" tab, and a recommended additional reading list in the "Books & References" tab. There is a LOT of material to cover to ensure we operate safely on the water, so if you're new to sailing, you may need to do some extra credit studying to pass the tests. We have textbooks that you can check out, and the references use the editions that we have here. The reading list cites the pages or chapter that test questions come from.

The following is a recommended D-Qualification examination schedule, based on the winter class schedule:

- **February** – Communications, Electronics, First Aid, General Seamanship.
- **March** – Charts & Pubs, Electrical, Engineering, Heavy Weather.
- **April** – COB, Emergency Situations, Safety, Weather.
- **May** – ROR, Safety (Must pass ROR prior to your DELMARVA)

SUMMER PREFERENCES

The temperature is falling, so it must be time to start thinking about summer! We have set up a Google Doc page to record your summer preferences for OSTS, since there are always volunteers who need to commit early with work, and also those who are more flexible. This will give us an idea of what we can support for summer training. Our target is to get 30 boats on the water to train 240-250 Midshipmen. We need 30 Skippers and 30 XOs to meet that goal. Assignments and pairings won't be announced until after DELMARVA in the spring, so consider this a working document that we know will change

2018 Winter Training Schedule			
Dates	Course	Time	Room
By appt.	NAV Exam (MIDN only)	1600-1800	Sailing Center
30-Jan	Leadership 1	1600-1800	Rickover 110
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8-Mar	Nav 102	1600-1800	Luce 101
10-Mar	Navigation Exam	0900-1200	Luce 101
24-25 Mar	Safety at Sea Seminar	0800-1730	Alumni Hall
5-Apr	Teaching Methods/XO Prep/Lessons Learned	1630-1800**	Chauvenet 100

**later start time (1630)

The Winter Training Schedule is also attached to this newsletter.

Other training that you will need to attend in person includes the N44 systems class that we teach at the Small Craft Repair Department (SCRD) or our boat yard across the river. You'll learn engine maintenance from the mechanic, onboard sail repair from the sailmaker, and how to troubleshoot and fix the head from the cutter shed maintenance people, to name a few of the skills. You will also need to attend the Safety at Sea Seminar in March. It is offered free of charge for OSTS volunteers to attend on Saturday, and that is a requirement for your D-qual. More information on the Seminar will be published in the next newsletter.

The spring sailing schedule is designed to get you enough time to finish up your Senior Crew, Watch Captain and D-CS qualifications, so you are ready to volunteer as an XO with the Midshipmen during summer blocks. It also serves as a refresher



significantly. Sign up for when you are (and aren't) available at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OgLLmReqDkhasUMkCc3roAcetOyLhud-eXR8d5YwiGg/edit#gid=0>

This notice will be repeated in the spring. Thanks to all of you for your support, we couldn't run this program without you!!

OSTS SOCIAL HOUR

Thursday after-class gatherings at *The Alley* (downstairs establishment at the Naval Academy Club) have become part of our winter training tradition. It gives our new volunteers a chance to meet and interact with our seasoned Skippers and XO's and OSTS staff. You can ask questions about class material and get the scoop on what it's really like on the water during the summer. We also get a chance to know you, which helps when it's time to put people together on the Navy 44.

HAIL & FAREWELL

Christmas came early this year for OSTS, we got our new LT last month, much earlier than expected! LT **Matt Vernam** is working with Travis on turnover, with cross-training in both operations and training. Congratulations are in order for **Travis** and Mrs. **Beth Norrell**, who were married on November 10th!! The newlyweds will be moving to the West Coast in February for new assignments.

Matt is a 2012 graduate of the Naval Academy and played lacrosse during his time here. He is a Surface Warfare Officer and his most recent assignment was as Navigator aboard the USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10), successfully completing a voyage from Mobile, AL to San Diego, CA, including a transit through the Panama Canal. Matt is quickly picking up sailing skills and has been working on his B-qualifications and D-qualifications concurrently this fall. Matt is excited to be a part of the OSTS team and is thrilled to be sailing with everyone this upcoming season! Please give **Matt** a very warm welcome to our team.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items from Fall sailing and our end of year sweep of all the boats left us with an assortment of items. We have two and a half pairs of gloves, some sunglasses, a small notebook, a navigation kit with a nautical slide rule, a watch cap, orange camping pad bag, and an inflatable PFD. Let us know if any of these are yours.

ADMINISTRATION

We need our foul weather gear back for winter inventory! If you checked out boots, jackets and/or pants at any point this year, we need them back so we can do our inventory. Please bring them back clean and dry. We continually order new gear, to "phase replace" the stuff that's no longer waterproof, but we don't know how much to order until we know what we

have. The OSTS program needs a minimum of 104 sets to get through each summer block.

Academy Yard vehicle access for actively participating volunteers is available for active duty and retired military, and DoD CAC card holders. If you don't have that or know what it is, you'll need to fill out some paperwork and we'll get you a pass. Parking is often a challenge during the day, but should be easier for the late afternoon classes. We'll send you a map of winter classroom location and any parking/traffic pattern updates prior to classes starting. You can park in unmarked spaces. If you see "1/C" that's for 1/C (seniors) and "F/S" is Faculty/Staff.

Construction to rebuild the seawall in Santee Basin by the Cutter Shed should be done the end of November, so that road will re-open to traffic flow and parking. The infamous parking garage over by Alumni Hall is also progressing, and could be open in time for our winter classes.

SEAMANSHIP – 3 COLLISIONS AND A GROUNDING

*The following is an article by our Vanderstar (Safety) Chair **Jon Wright**. He examines the recent Navy incident report that was just released regarding the USS Fitzgerald and USS McCain, and two other lower profile incidents, and why they're important to OSTS. Lessons learned are a big part of training – constant analyzing our own mistakes and others can lead to better seamanship and fewer incidents.*

I must admit I've been a bit mystified about the two Navy collisions that killed 17 sailors earlier this year. As a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy I have been on the bridge of both Naval and merchant ships and was always amazed at the vast difference in the number of personnel required on the bridge. A merchant ship may have as few as four while a naval cruiser might have 10–15, depending on the evolution. The Navy has just released its findings of the McCain and Fitzgerald incidents which can be found at this link:

<http://gcaptain.com/u-s-navy-releases-report-on-preventable-uss-fitzgerald-and-uss-john-s-mccain-collisions/>

If you really want to get into the weeds the comprehensive report is available at:

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/CHINFO/Comprehensive+Review+Final.pdf> (see pages 11-15 for an overview of all four incidents).

Many of these findings have common root causes seen in past incidents during our OSTS sailing. The overriding finding of this report is loss of situational awareness (SA). In the McCain case, the bridge lost SA when focusing on a perceived steering loss and in the Fitzgerald's case the Officer of the Deck (OOD) mistook another ship with a greater closest point of approach (CPA) to be the Crystal, which they eventually collided with. I estimate that 90% of the incidents we have with OSTS are when the Skipper or XO are involved in a teaching moment with a

Midshipman and lose focus on what’s going on around them. That’s how we run aground and hit things! Another common thread in both cases was lack of communication on VHF radio with the other vessel and not using the danger signal. In both cases there was a lack of adherence to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Navigation Standards or Standing Orders. The McCain CO failed to set the sea and anchor detail when entering the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) as required, which would have put more experienced personnel at the helm and lee helm. In the Fitzgerald incident, the OOD did not call the CO as required under his Standing Orders.

The reports didn’t mention this, but why were both ships doing 20 knots in high traffic areas? Trying to stay on the navigation PIM (plan of intended movement)? OSTS has occasionally had a similar problem. Although we don’t go 20 knots, we sometimes rush to get to port or risk sailing in bad weather in order to keep a schedule.

In both cases there was little or no input from the lookouts on the target’s constant bearing and decreasing range (CBDR), and inadequate use of AIS to determine the CPA. In OSTS with small watch units, everyone’s opinion is important (Command Leadership). We especially need to communicate that to the third classmen that are coming out of plebe year. If it doesn’t look or smell right, speak up! Lack of systems training (McCain steering) and knowledge of the COLREGS (Fitzgerald) were also contributing factors to the incidents. We need to be aware of this with our crews who have very limited sailing experience and only limited classroom knowledge of the Rules of the Road.

I have noticed that the current technology-reliant generation is more comfortable looking at something on the onboard chart plotter, than out the windows to see what is really going on around them. I think that was a major factor in both cases. Binoculars trained on the horizon are a powerful tool.

I’m sure a lot of good will result from these reports. The Navy has already decided to start transmitting on AIS in high traffic areas so other vessels we be able to see them. Many of the findings are basic seamanship attributes that we use in our OSTS programs. I urge you to at least read the first link referenced; the narrative of the sailors trying to escape the flooding is a hard read but, there are many lessons learned in the description of events and the findings.



OSTS FACEBOOK PAGE



OSTS has its own Facebook Page! In addition to this newsletter, we will post important information about the program to this Facebook page. Please “Like” us so you have the program information as it is released. We have 316 “likes” to date and growing every month. Help us get to “500” likes in 2018. Please encourage your midshipmen to send photos and video from their spring training sails and summer block sortie. Anyone can post to our Facebook page. We are generating a good following of OSTS family and friends that are following your sailing experiences. Do not be shy and please post!

Please “Like” us at:

<http://www.facebook.com/USNAOffshoreSailTraining>.

EMAIL OPT-OUT

If you are on this email newsletter and would like to be taken off, please let us know. If you have any articles or information you would like to share through this newsletter please email to richard.robey@gmail.com. As always, thank you for your support of OSTS.

THANK YOU!

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