



Susquenago SeaChest



Monthly Publication



February 2022

Volume 67 Issue 2

District 6

Susquenago February Happenings

16 February 2022

General Membership Meeting
Grande's, 1250 Front Street, Binghamton NY
1800 Hours—Dinner, Order off the Menu
1700 Hours Squadron Business Meeting

On the Horizon

12 March 2022: Change of Watch and Founders Day

Jonathan's Endwell NY– 1800 Hours

Delmonico Steak, \$37.00; Stuffed Flounder or Chicken Picotta, \$34.00
Prices Include Tax and Tip, Soup; Salad; Potato; - Coffee, Tea and Dessert

Reservation-Linda Rought-607-760-6388, Reservation/Cancellation Deadline

2 March 2022

8-10 April 2022: D/6 Spring Conference—

The Holiday Inn in Binghamton, NY

20 April 2022: General Membership Meeting and Dinner

Theater, Location TBD

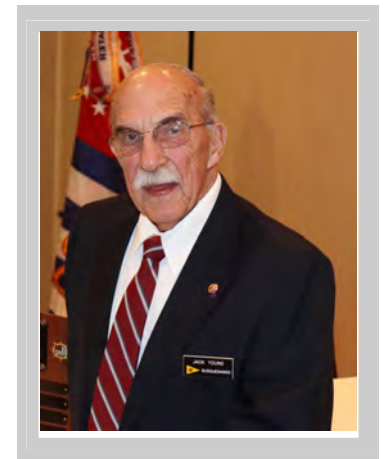


Susquenago 2022 ABC and Advanced Class Schedule

Piloting	January 4 – March 15 (In Progress)
ABC	February 28 – March 2
Boat Handling	April 4 – May 23

For more information - Email: class@susquenago.org
or contact Les Smith (607)797-7391

Classes will be held at the Johnson City High School, 666 Reynolds Rd., Johnson City, NY



P/D/Lt/C John Young, AP
Editor Emeritus



SeaChest

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Commander's Comments



Commander
Michael Acciai, AP

We got right down to business at our 19 January Executive Meeting. Attendance was down due to a Covid-19 exposure and pending test results for two of our committee chairs, but we had a quorum and our missing comrades sent in their reports by email, so I had all the information needed to pursue our plan to upgrade our IT equipment used for our ABC and Advanced classes. The Squadron currently has two laptops upgraded to the latest requirements at no cost to the Squadron. One is the newer of our original two and the second is a donated laptop of newer vintage. Our thanks to P/C Dave Olds, AP for installing all of the required software. The Bridge and Committee members then passed a motion to purchase a new recertified Epson 1288 digital projector at a cost of \$699.00. This unit will meet the needs of both our ABC and Advanced courses regardless of room size and ambient lighting. Again thanks to P/C Olds for doing all of the required leg work in specking out the projector.

P/C Mary Kurcharek, P and Lt Ann Smith, S are working out the plans for the District 6 Spring Conference we will be hosting in April at the Holiday Inn in Binghamton. I attended a meeting on site with Mary and Ann and the venue will meet all of our requirements and needs for making an excellent D/6 conference.

SEO Les Smith, JN reported that our scheduled ABC class has six students signed up so far and that Marine Navigation (aka. Piloting) has four students in attendance. P/D/C Bill Herrick, JN is teaching this ten week course which is in its fourth week on Jan 25th.

Lt/C Linda Rought, P is working on having our 16 February 2022 meeting at Grande's Restaurant in Binghamton. We will ask to use the same room where we had the Christmas Holiday Party. We ask those who plan on attending to come to the meeting around 1800 hours and order off the menu and share in an hour of fellowship prior to the 1900 hour business meeting. Linda has also booked Jonathan's restaurant in Endwell for our Change of Watch on 12 March 2022. A menu offering of Steak, Chicken, Fish or Pasta is in the plan. More details will follow in the March issue of the SeaChest.

P/D/C Nancy Bieber, P is also working on a Dinner Theater Play titled "Death by Chocolate" for our 20 April 2022 meeting. More details to follow in the SeaChest.

After we adjourned the meeting at 2021 hours, everyone sat back, had cookies and libations and spent the next hour in casual conversation.



And remember the sage advice of Yogi Berra when it comes to Covid-19 "It ain't over till it's over."

Boat battery care

From : America's Boating Compass

My boat's safety depends on its batteries being able to start the diesel engine and run the boat's systems and instruments. Proper boat battery care ensures that they'll be ready when I need them.

My boat has two batteries with a switch to turn on one battery, two or none. [One is a starting \(cranking\) battery. The second is a deep cycle \(marine\) battery](#), which has less instant energy but thicker plates so it can withstand a number of discharge cycles.

How batteries die

If you take good care of your batteries, they should last you at least four years. Eighty percent of all battery failure is related to sulfation build-up, which occurs when sulfur molecules in the acid discharge onto the plates. When this happens, the lead plates become coated, and the battery dies. Here are a few things that can cause sulfation and shorten your battery's life:

- sitting too long
 - dirty or loose battery cables
 - storing without power
 - undercharging
 - letting the electrolyte level get too low, exposing the plates to air
 - sitting in extreme heat (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- [cold weather](#), which slows down the chemical reaction and provides less energy

being drained without being charged (A short or running electrical equipment, such as an automatic bilge pump, could discharge a battery completely.)

Preserving your battery

Battery charging is important. Energy must be put back, and the sooner, the better. Your engine's alternator is a battery charger, but be aware that it can overcharge. While I tend to charge the batteries before taking the boat out, it would be wiser to charge them upon returning to the dock. This would leave the battery fully charged and ready for the next outing.

Check your batteries' age. (The month and year of manufacture should be printed on them.) You can check the specific gravity with a hydrometer and the output with a voltmeter. Compare these numbers to those recommended for your battery.

If a new battery is in order, determine the type you need. Starting batteries should have the highest reserve capacity available. Deep cycle batteries should have the greatest amp hour rating available.

Make sure that the battery type and size are appropriate for your boat and that the terminals match your boat's cable hookup.

Lastly, make sure to buy a fresh battery. Check the date to see how long it has been sitting on the shelf. *—Rex Allen Holden*

Winter boat checks get your boat ready for spring

From: America's Boating Compass

In the winter, I visit my boat or have a friend “put an eyeball on it” regularly. During these winter boat checks, I make sure the jack stands are tight, the tarp is still on and, if necessary, use a plastic shovel to clear snow from the partially covered cockpit.

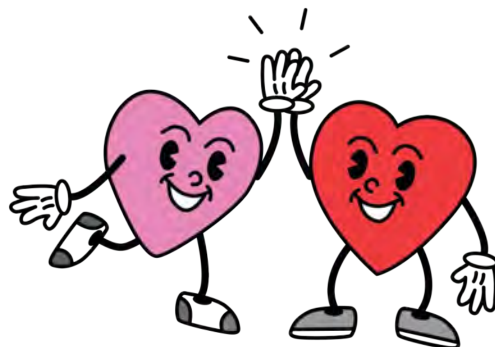
Every few weeks, I go below to look things over and crank the engine a couple of revolutions. This keeps the engine’s moving parts lubricated and the water pump impeller from being squashed in one spot the whole winter. While below, I refresh my memory about the things I observed at haul-out that need taken care of before the next boating season.

Winter is a great time to deal with items that need repair or other servicing (like replacing the [EPIRB](#) battery). You can get better and quicker service now than in June. Sailmakers and repair technicians will soon be busy as more people think about [spring commissioning](#). Marine suppliers will start sending out catalogs and spring sale fliers. Take the time now to start planning your repairs, replacements and new gear additions; you can take advantage of early season deals and be ready for spring launch.

Now’s a great time to get some better life jackets you might actually wear. If you don’t already have them, consider adding a carbon monoxide detector in your cabin and a [DSC VHF radio](#) to your nav station.

Don’t forget your compass. If it has an air bubble in the dome or the dampening fluid is all gone, fix it now. A good compass isn’t cheap, so if yours needs help, think about repairing it.

And while you’ve got some downtime, tune up your boating skills; take an [America’s Boating Club](#) course or seminar. –*Brian Nelson*



The Lure of the Sea: The Story of the Sailor's Valentine



THE LURE OF THE SEA:

*the story of
Sailor's Valentines*

by Donna Fee

Sailor's Valentines pictured in this story by Sandy Moran

In this day and age, if we are separated from our beloved, we can stay connected via fiber optic wizardry and magical cell towers that transmit our passion through the air on invisible waves.

We can also write love letters the old fashioned way with pen and ink, dropping our completed words of love into the nearest sapphire-blue mailbox made available by the United States Postal Service.

Imagine not having access to these modern modes of communication, coupled with a separation that would endure not just the length of the average business trip or even the time from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but span the course of three to four years. It was that 19th century world full of hard work, azure seas and rowdy ports of call that fostered the delicate shell mosaics we now call Sailor's Valentines.

Popular around 1830 until about 1900, these shell mosaics surely enticed many waiting women to welcome home their sailors newly returned from the sea. The shell mosaics were not known as sailors' valentines at the time. It is thought that collectors and antique dealers began to call them sailor's valentines when the mosaics became collectibles beginning in the 1930s. These valentines from the sea were mosaics of intricate symmetrical designs encased in wood, and were usually inscribed with sentimental messages such as "For My Pet," "Ever Thine," "Think of Me," "Home Sweet Home" and "Forget Me Not."

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There are about 100,000 specimens of shells world-wide, but only about thirty-five specimens appear in antique sailor's valentines.

To be a true sailor's valentine, the shell mosaic must be in an octagonal box. Some dealers say that this shape comes from the compass boxes which served to protect one of the ship's most valuable assets: the compass. This is not to be confused with the compass rose, which is a drawing on a map. Portuguese map maker Pedro Reinel drew the first now-standard 32 point compass rose with a fleur-de-lis, indicating north and across indicating east (toward the Holy Land).

The other feature of a sailor's valentine is, of course, the shells. The shells went into the boxes, and still do, in designs that varied in style and manner befitting the individual who made the valentine. There are about 100,000 specimens of shells world-wide, but only about thirty-five specimens appear in antique sailor's valentines. Valentines of old usually contain shells that are found commonly in the West Indies. Contemporary valentines contain shells that are found all over the world. To get the bright colors evident in newer valentines, the shells must be harvested live. To see a valentine made recently, visit some local antique shops where they will show you valentines made by award-winning artist Sandy Moran.

Lynn Walsh, owner of the former Sailors Valentine Gallery on Nantucket, has been following the evolution of this maritime art form. "Go back before the time of sailors valentines and consider the China trade and the seafaring merchants of Europe who traveled around the world and brought home exotica. It was very fashionable among the wealthy to collect exotica, which included seashells. Ladies began collections, and from that came arranging the shells into designs. It was fashionable to have sewing boxes and other similar items decorated with shells. It was this ladies' parlor art that inspired the sailors to do their valentines."

There is some discussion among decorative arts scholars and collectors as to who really made these tokens of affection from the sea. Many valentines were not made by sailors at all; rather, they were purchased by sailors from the tourist trade in Barbados. Barbados, the easternmost island in the Caribbean, was often the last port of call for many sailors. It was also their last chance to get that special little something before returning home to those who waited with open arms and ready hearts. It was not unlike buying a last-minute gift from the airport for those waiting for you at home.

It is sometimes easy to determine the valentines that were made in Barbados. They consist of a variety of shells native to the West Indies. These include the limpet, crab's eyes (*Abrus precatorius*), and venus clam. The octagonal boxes are made from Spanish cedar or mahogany. Most sailors' valentines have at the base of the shell compartment crumpled newspaper. Oftentimes, it was an issue of "The Barbadian," the local newspaper. Still other valentines from this area tell of their origin with inscriptions that say, "A Present from Barbados," or simply, "Barbados." One valentine has a label still attached that says, "B.H. Belgrave, Dealer in Marine Specimens and Native Manufacturers in Fancy Work. Barbados, W.I." There is a trade card from the Barbados New Curiosity Shop. It states that they have "specimens of natural history in shells. Crabs, lobsters, fish, pink and white coral and mounted birds." They also announce that they have "fancy work in fish scales, rice shell, coral shell, green pea shell, aurora shell." The card ends with the following marketing request: "An Inspection Respectfully Solicited. One could wish that current marketing campaigns would be so gracious."

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Another argument for the belief that sailors didn't make their own valentines is the sheer amount of materials needed to construct one. On the materials needed list are thousands of tiny shells, wood, nails, newspaper, cotton, glue, wax, cardboard, gold and colored paper, varnish, hinges, screws and hooks. It is indeed intricate work and it may have been difficult to do the tedious gluing of the tiny shells while sailing a rolling sea. Could you glue tiny shells onto a surface while on the Steamship Authority?"

The sea does have its moments of calm, and there were often times when ships remained in port for months at a time for repair and restocking. There were probably ample opportunities for the sailors to create their own valentines, and they would certainly have had the motivation to do so.

Sailor's valentines of old were inexpensive to make. The dividing walls were made of cardboard and covered with a variety of paper. The shellwork was glued to newspaper or cotton batting. Naturally, Elmer's glue was not available at the time, but you could make glue from any number of things in those days. "They could have made glue from fish scales by melting them down in a double-boiler situation. The sailors had access to hide glue and used paperboard," said Sam Sylvia of Sylvia Antiques, now owned by John Sylvia, Sam's son. "They weren't dumb."

While some valentines incorporated extensive artistry, the majority of them featured designs that were easy to achieve. They were most likely inexpensive to purchase, which made them easy for the working-class sailor to obtain. If a sailor wished for a valentine unlike any other, a center medallion or a photograph could easily replace the standardized center of a manufactured valentine.

"While the majority of the existing sailors' valentines were indeed made as souvenirs from Barbados, I contend that the art form itself originated among the sailors. Certainly the most beautiful ones are made from shells that come from all over the world and have boxes made from different types of wood," said Walsh. "The controversy of who really made them has become the focal point of everything that's being written, as opposed to the fascination with the evolution of the art form itself. If you parallel it to patchwork quilts or other folk arts that evolved over time, you'll understand that we don't concern ourselves with who originated the quilt; rather, we are fascinated with how a utilitarian object became fanciful and embellished as a token of the giver's esteem."

Indeed, the most rare and most beautiful valentines are those that possess secret letters of love hidden within them or special daguerreotypes (an early form of photography). Additionally, crafting with shells was enormously popular in the 19th century, so materials would have been readily available to those who wanted them. The October 4, 1867, issue of the New Bedford "Mercury" printed an article that announced that Captain Leonard Bronson of New Bedford won a \$1.50 prize at the Bristol Country Agricultural Society Fair and Cattle Show for "shell work and corrals." We don't know if the award was for a sailor's valentine, but clearly the idea that men at sea created their own shell crafts. Nantucket whaling Captain Jared Wentworth Tracy returned from one of his voyages with a valentine for his wife, Mary Hussey Tracy. The Tracy shell mosaic, as it is known, is a prized item in the Nantucket Historical Association's collection. Jared himself made this valentine.

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If you would like to see more valentines, the Strong Museum in Rochester, New York, houses an extensive collection. With approximately fifty sailor's valentines, it is one of the largest collections in the world.

Shell collecting was an elevated art form in the 19th century. It was part of a larger cultural element that sought to follow in the Darwinian tradition of scientific understanding of the natural world. Shells were studied, catalogued and displayed carefully in cabinets. Typically, the shells were arranged in order of specimen type. These cabinets were sometimes embellished with inlaid designs varying in color and wood type. Some even incorporated mother-of-pearl or other decorative elements. The drawers in the cabinets were often divided into geometric compartments in order to display several different shell types. When viewed from above, these drawers resembled the designs we see in sailor's valentines. It's easy to see how there may be some disagreement as to who may have created the art form of sailor's valentines, but, as with many art forms, inspiration comes from many sources. Luckily for us, the art form exists and we reap the beautiful benefits, regardless of its origin.

Some Humor for February



Do you suffer from shyness? Do you sometimes wish you were more assertive? Ask your Doctor or Pharmacist about Tequila.

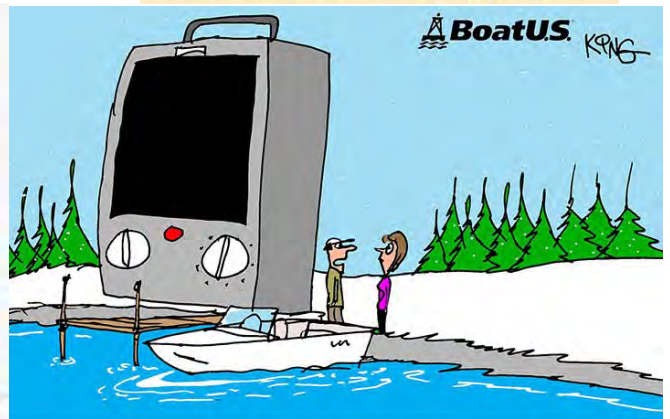
it's been months since I bought the book "how to scam people online" it still hasn't arrived yet.



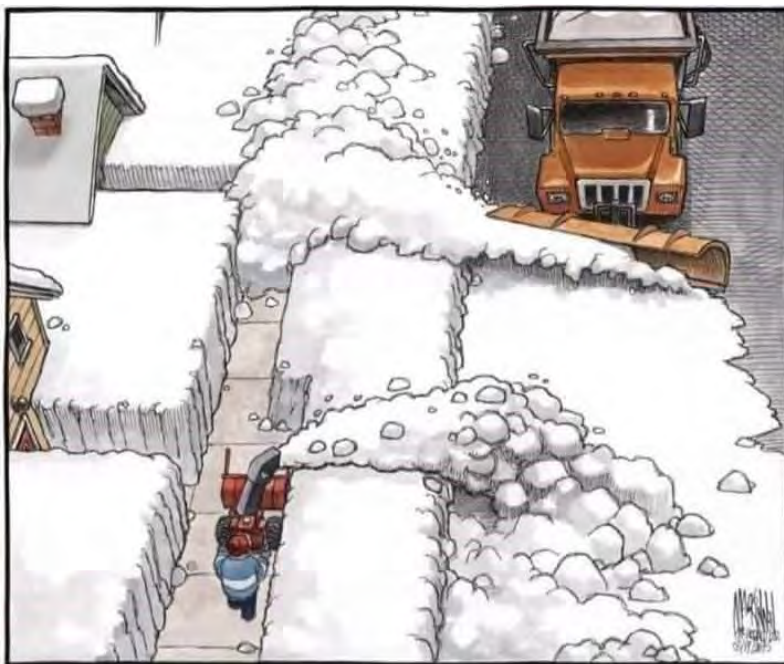
"You're kidding! I was struck twice by lightning too!"



"What are you gonna tell your dad?"



"It's a giant heater. Now I can take the boat out no matter how cold it gets."



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