

Hueston Sailing

ACTON ACTION

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Scene from *Adrift* with actor Shailene Woodley at the helm of the damaged yacht.

Photos from film courtesy of London Mirror



Adrift

She was 1500 miles from land with no masts, no electronics and no engine. And she was alone. A true tale of the sea.

The Off Season Film Festival (OSFF) is gathering steam. It isn't even Christmas and your very own, homegrown, snowbound sailing film aficionado has now seen five stories of the sailing sort and one that has a sailor but no sea.

In our Christmas issue of the *Acton Action* earlier this month, we ballyhooed the film *Maiden* and if you haven't seen that film yet, you are in for a treat. We have also seen *Kon Tiki*, the 2012 dramatization of that singular sailing feat that Thor Heyerdahl completed back in 1949. And we have returned to our favorite naval nautical narrative *Master and Commander: Far Side of the World* with Russell Crowe as lucky Jack Aubrey, he of the Royal Navy circa the early 1800's.

But the three most recently viewed films have all been devoid of testosterone and full of Dahomey Amazonian sailing women warriors. In addition to the above-mentioned *Maiden*, we recommend 2013's *Maidentrip*, another true yet incredible story of the sea, this time with Laura Dekker, the 14-year-old New Zealand born Dutch girl who sailed around the world by herself in 2009, the youngest person to ever do so. A mere girl. (continued next page)



Gust Control

.03

Ease, hike and trim? Or pinch, hike, and steer? An article about gust management and some of our club's best sailors' responses.



Red Sky in Mourning

.02

Some background on the *Adrift* sailor's harrowing adventure. This is the couple who faced the wind.



Red Sky in Mourning

- Richard Sharp's boat was a 36' ferro cement cutter *Mayaluga* that was built at a South African boatyard where he had worked. (Yes, there is a class of sailboats made out of cement. Who knew?)

- On October 8, they had a WWV broadcast that informed them that tropical storm Raymond was headed toward them on a westerly course, so they steered north-northeast.

-On October 10, they changed their course to north-northwest and flew as much sail as they could carry to try to get as far north of Raymond as possible.

- The genoa blew out on the morning of October 11

-On the morning of October 11, the broadcast reported Hurricane Raymond on a west-northwest course. They changed course and steered toward the southwest. This proved to be a mistake.

-On the afternoon of October 11, the storm was on a westerly course with put them on a collision course. They changed course to the northeast. That evening, the mizzen sail was damaged and taken down. (cont. page 7)

Adrift (cont. from page 1)

The third chronicle of female daring do is called *Adrift*, in which 24 year old American Tami Oldham finds herself alone on the 44 ft. Trintella ketch *Hazana* after being dismasted in 1983's Hurricane Raymond, hundreds of miles from anywhere.

Oldham met 33-year-old Richard Sharp while both were vagabonds sailing in the Southern Pacific. She decided to accept his invitation to join him on his boat, a 36 ft cutter and the two sailed together for six months before being hired to sail the *Hazana* from Tahiti to San Diego.

That four thousand mile journey was rudely and fatally disrupted when they ran into a category four hurricane. In those forty-foot waves and 140 mph winds, Richard was lost overboard and Tami, who was in the cabin, was knocked unconscious for 27 hours after one vicious wave pitched the yacht and took sails and masts down. For the next 41 days, Tami, injured and with loss of blood, would have to find a way to survive despite having no engine, no electronics, and only a sextant to navigate with. Yet, navigate she did. She managed to rig a sail plan with a broken spinnaker pole and a storm jib and abandoned plans to reach the coast of the U.S. Instead she turned back west and hoped her sextant could guide her to Hawaii on favorable wind and current.

The film is a love story but begins with the storm, moving back and forth between those romantic days aboard Richard's boat to terrifying scenes of storm battle and survival aboard the *Hazana*. The film has a major surprise but we won't spoil that here.

Shailene Woodley (she of the *Divergent*, *The Fault in Our Stars* films and *Big Little Lies* movies) holds this narrative together. The young actor had to film the movie aboard a 55 ft. yacht for 15-hour days on the Pacific Ocean off the Fiji Islands. The first day of filming involved a storm and a solid day of seasickness. But the now 28-year-old, a veteran of political protest if not stormy oceans (she was arrested in 2016 and jailed while protesting the Dakota Access pipe line construction) did spend five weeks at sea everyday making this film.

As for Tami Oldham, now 58, she eventually went back to sailing and has been at it ever since, earning her 100-ton license and sailing 50,000 miles since the incident. She wrote a book in 1998 about her ordeal titled *Red Sky in Mourning: A True Story of Love, Loss and Survival at Sea*.

(See the column at left for some of the book's details.)



The new film *Dark Waters* is now in theaters. The tense drama was filmed in Cincinnati and is now among those being talked about for an Academy Award. And yes, that is our own Dennis Hensley sitting on the left in this scene, portraying one of the lawyers for the movie's bad guys, the DuPont Corporation. The story is on page 7.

What do you do when your boat does this? The article below is all about that response.



Responding to Gusts: Ease, Hike, Trim? Or Pinch, Hike, Steer?

by Colin Gowland via International Sailing Academy
(used with permission)

In many conditions, we often see sailors with poor gust and/or lull response. In regards to hiking, particularly in gusts, there can be a tendency to “fight” the boat with hiking and often use too much steering to control power. We see heeling of the boat, pinching, corrective steers and other issues in gusts. These issues often lead to unnecessary strain on sailors and reduced speed and VMG.

During lulls, even advanced sailors tend to chase apparent wind around obliterating VMG and slowing them down unnecessarily. Much is often said about changing gears in up and down pressure in regards to sail shape, and while that’s very important, there’s a lot more to learn.

By handling gusts and lulls efficiently, you’ll feel an ease coming into to the boat because you’ll be working with it, not against it, and you’ll notice big performance improvements as well.

Gust Response

The Right Way

I don’t know who said it first, but it’s brilliant. “Ease, hike, trim.” This is the correct order of operations for handling a gust. Here’s why.

You’re sailing along and a gust approaches. Let’s assume for a minute, that the gust is from the same direction as the original wind direction – it’s just an increase in wind speed. At the moment it hits, your apparent wind instantly swings aft. As that happens, we want to achieve a few objectives:

1. We need to keep attachment and good flow on the sail.
2. We do not want the boat to “feel” the gust along it’s roll axis. That is, we do not want the boat to increase heel at all.
3. If we are able to given the wind speed, we want to apply the maximum amount of body leverage into

Gust Response (continued from page 3)

the boat

I love Nathan Outteridge's description of handling gusts in a 49er. He says "We let the onslaught of the gust rush past." Sounds effortless right? If you think about more flow creating more lift, this really makes sense. We want to increase the speed of the air flow around the sail. The faster the flow, the more lift we get. We don't want to allow so much force to enter the rig that the boat starts heeling up – that's just creating sideways force and drag – and it's tiring to hike against.

By accommodating our new apparent wind aft with sheeting out, we are able to increase flow on the sail and maintain a constant angle of heel.

We hike as much as is needed to do this – maximizing our hiking leverage if possible and sheeting out simultaneously to keep the boat heel angle the same. Complete these steps and your boat speed will instantly increase. If you're familiar with target speeds, you'll know that in a gust, you want to achieve your new target speed as quickly as possible instead of heading up and waiting, waiting, waiting for it to rise. Once this new speed is achieved, your apparent wind has moved forward again – so you're able to sheet in to accommodate that. Have you changed angle? No, because the wind has not changed direction.

In marginal hiking conditions, sometimes just adding weight in enough to instantly jump the boat speed up. In these cases, less or even no sheet release is necessary, because your apparent wind swings forward so quickly as you add weight that flow is not lost, and the heel of the boat is not affected by the gust.

The Wrong Way

"Pinch, Hike, Corrective Steer, Stall" Due to the nature of gusts swinging the apparent wind aft, it's easy to see why many sailors react poorly to gusts. When your apparent wind comes back, weather helm is created and the boat naturally wants to head up. If you don't let the sheet out and hike at the precise moment, some heel will be induced because of the increased rig load, and this creates even more helm. Telltales indicate that you "need" to head up, so, why not? Heading up seems and feels like a good idea for two reasons:

1. You can keep attachment over the sail through the Angle of Attack (AOA) change made by steering.
2. You depower the rig because of the AOA change made by steering and this keeps the boat heeling under control.

There is a sense when we feather/pinch that VMG is increasing. This is a false gain, and is very deceptive. You've "pointed high" and you even have decent flow... but it's only momentary, and you haven't increased speed yet in the gust. Slowly, you'll speed up to the new target speed to match the new higher wind speed. But, as this happens, your apparent wind is now moving forward again. **(continued on page 5)**



Brian Callahan

"I agree that "ease, hike, trim" is the way to go. I probably only manage that 25% of the time and I'll do it more in light air when boat speed is paramount. I don't think I'm as bad as "pinch, hike, corrective steer, stall" though because I use a cleat (something I'm not likely to give up).

"I miss out or am at the least slow on the ease/trim part. I don't think I pinch though when in a gust response; I do plenty of pinching when not in a gust situation - ha ha.

"When a gust hits me, my first response is to hike and try to maintain whatever heel seems appropriate because too much heeling is such wasted wind energy.

"Then If I feel I can't keep my heel, I'll sheet out. I could be wrong but I think that's the instinctive response... to hike first. It might be reversed if I didn't have a cleat. it's interesting that for one of my better races at our regional I was uncleated most of the time.

"I attribute that though, to necessity because of light but puffy air rather than a good understanding that that might be a better way to sail all the time. "

Brian is a Sunfish racer and has qualified for next year's Sunfish Worlds.

Gust Control (continued from page 4)

Looking at your telltales, now it seems like you're getting headed!

At this point, flow is compromised and telltales request you to bear away – you're forced to make a "corrective steer" back down to the original angle. Every corrective steer you make actually decreases flow over your sail and foils. In this scenario, the seemingly free ride up to a higher angle cost us speed (speed that was reached almost instantly by those who were able to sheet out in the gust) and was eventually disastrous to flow as we came down.

It's true that strong pointing is absolutely achieved through higher speeds first, not steering angle changes. The increased speed and flow over the sails and foils creates more lift and this means less sideways force – and good pointing is actually a reduction of leeway. When you're pointing well through good speed, apparent wind is forward and hiking is easier. So we do NOT want to feather or pinch up in gusts to manage them because it's not really giving us better pointing/leeway reduction, just the opposite. Think about increasing flow and speed – ease, hike, trim.

Gust with Shift Components

What happens when the direction of the wind actually changes? What if it's a gust AND a shift? This is actually pretty common in "fanning" type puffs that spread out from the middle, typical in offshore breezes. Depending on where you are on the radius of the puff,

you'll get a different wind direction. If you're on the lifted side, it will feel just like a "normal" gust and your reaction should be the same. Ease, hike, trim – and then come up once you've accelerated.

If you're in a gust with a header component, it will be clear instantly because instead of your AW moving back, it will slam forward and you'll see your windward telltales come up. Try to anticipate this and just sheet out and steer down quickly to angle.

"The article does indicate that heading up is bad in a gust, against what I/we have always done. So, in a gust, you ease the sails, hike it flat and then trim back in. That makes sense. HOWEVER, on our lake when the gust is almost always a change of direction, heading up might be the right thing because that is where the new wind is coming from. Maybe!!

"It would be interesting to try this method, but it would be hard to do without a lot of thinking. I tend to head up and ease the effect on the boat. Apparently, that is wrong. Ease, hike, trim - have to remember that next year."

Roger Henthorn

Roger is a Y and Sunfish sailor and has won the club's Boies Series, a race between fleet champions, ten times.

Bill Molleran

"I agree with the article and would like to think that it is what I do (ease, hike, trim). The boat naturally wants to head up in a puff, and I fight to keep that from happening. As the puff hits, I ease sheets to power up, match the new apparent wind angle and help the boat accelerate. Once the boat speed increases, the apparent wind comes forward, and I pull the mainsheet in to keep driving.

"Heading up first just kills speed and speed is your friend. If a gust hits really hard, I might head up to stay in control, but that is a last resort. Sailing without a cleat makes the 'ease' part easy."



Bill is a former Hobie 16 racer and currently races a Sunfish. He is a multiple winner of the club's Sunfish Series and a former Boies Series champ in 2004.

Jerry Callahan

Jerry sailed a Y-Flyer and a Sunfish and is a three time National Champion in the Y class. Jerry also won the club's Boies Series Championship a record 15 times from 1959 to 2000. Here is his response to the gust article.



"I've spent years trying to determine why the elite sailors were so much better than I was. I probably always knew but used the excuse that my hands/arthritis wouldn't allow it. It has to be the constant trimming of the sails, i.e., no cleats.

"If one thinks about it, all the big boats have sail trimmers separate from the helmsman and they are constantly adjusting. I knew the geometry and relied almost exclusively on that, and I was successful, but so did the elites.

"I could see what was happening to almost every boat on the lake which helped with wind power and shifts. That helped a lot. Besides that, I was lucky. Later on I had a different crew nearly every weekend and, being a teacher, I

trained my crews in what I wanted on the way to the starting line.

"I wish I were still sailing so I could try what the article is advocating. On the Sunfish I'd get rid of the cleat and suffer. I'd probably have side cleats.

On the Y, I used to trim the main excessively, including the vang, to bend the mast to accommodate high winds. That and using the traveler, which I guess is the same as easing the sail. I just didn't do that in all kinds of winds. In medium winds we just hiked but could have adjusted the sails too. I usually eased the main on every tack (in all wind) and then trimmed again.

I liked the article and wish I could try and perfect the technique. "

Don Fecher

I think it is a good read. The advice depends on the type of boat you sail. I know that in Cats you wait for the gust to hit, then make corrective action. Sometimes heading up, but smoothly, not jamming the boat into the gust. The real trick in a Cat is to know when to fall off. If I can pick up a few degrees to windward the less I have to sail to the lay line.

One thing the article doesn't talk about is if the boat sailed at the correct weight. When sailing solo a quick head up will increase speed but will not allow you to tip over, which I have seen many times over the years. Just easing out the sail sounds good, but how much so as not to capsize? Then you are out of control. There are a lot of ways of handling a gust. I agree with some of it but not all as I'm a Cat sailor, and we sail differently than others.

(Don is a Hobie 16 sailor and has won nearly every club series in that class for a good while. He has also won the club championship in the Boies Series twice.)

Red Sky in Mourning (continued from page 2)

-At dawn on the morning of October 12, the wind was a steady 40 knots. They continued under sail with a deeply reefed main and jib.

-At 10:00, the wind was a steady 60 knots. They took down all sail and headed into the wind with the engine running. They had one EPIRB, and Richard insisted that Tami wear it.

-By noon, the wind was a steady 100 knots. Richard clipped his tether to a cleat on the cockpit coaming and sent Tami below. The anemometer registered 140 knots before failing. The barometer was below 28 inches.

-At about 1:00 that afternoon, the boat pitched or capsized. Tami was knocked unconscious and didn't come to until about 4:00 that next day. When she went on deck, she found that the D-ring at the end of Richard's tether had failed and he was gone.

PFAS, short for per and polyfluoroalkyl substances, is any number of man-made chemical compounds, often known as "forever chemicals", that don't break down when absorbed by the human body. These compounds often accumulate in the body over time and leading to adverse health issues, including immune deficiencies, low infant birth rates, thyroid issues, and cancer. These chemicals were the responsible for the development of Teflon, the coating all of us have used and seen in our frying pans.

Although DuPont and others stopped making Teflon for pans in 2015, the "forever chemicals" are still out there and still in the news. Most recently, this month NBC carried a story about these chemicals contaminating water supplies at military bases in the US where they are used in fire fighting foam.

Movie *Dark Waters* Features Epic Battle Between DuPont Chemicals and Cincinnati Lawyer; Local Sailor in Cast

Among the films shortlisted for an Academy Award this year is the Cincinnati filmed *Dark Waters*. The film, directed by Todd Haynes, was shot in Cincinnati and tells the story of Cincinnati lawyer Robert Bilott whose 15-year effort to bring chemical giant DuPont to task for poisoning the water in Parkersburg, West Virginia is chronicled in the film.

We saw the film at our favorite local cinema, the Neon, in downtown Dayton, not just because it is a good story, but because one of our favorite local sailors has a small part in the film.

Dennis Hensley, he of Dock A and the S/V Wuzzy, a 23 ft. San Juan at Hueston Woods, is a film producer as well as an actor, and has appeared in seven films, *Dark Waters* being his most recent. Dennis plays a DuPont lawyer and admits to being one of the bad guys, although if you know Dennis, he was not type cast.

Haynes also shot an earlier film of his in Cincy, a film titled *Carol*, and Dennis had a role in that one as well. More recently, Dennis was a producer/actor in another Cincinnati location film *Western World*.

The film *Dark Waters* uses a number of shots of the Cincinnati area. The law firm that Bilott worked for is Taft, Stettinius, and Hollister, whose headquarters are in the Queen City. The firm sued DuPont in the late 1990s for its willful contamination of the water near Parkersburg. A farmer there who lost his herd of cattle to the contamination first contacted Bilott by coming to Cincinnati and asking for his help after Bilott had done work for the firm that dealt with the EPA. Bilott's grandmother was the farmer's neighbor.

The film stars Mark Ruffalo as Bilott and Anne Hathaway as his wife. Ruffalo is outstanding. Hathaway is real. The film is devoid of CGI, a big bonus for me, and great storytelling.



Pete Peters

Pete and his crew Rose Schultz practically own the Y-Fleet right now and have for about three or four years. Pete insists that his success in the Y is because of his crew. Both race Sunfish as well.

It's been a long time for me to see Gust and I might add Puff's discussed in written form. When Rose and I sail the topic comes up regularly. With both of our extensive sailing experiences, we have been wired to address this topic on a continuous basis while on the water.

First of all, if the conditions are such that the wind will be gusting, we both have on our life jackets. Safety is foremost and like seat belts in the car, life jackets let us concentrate on sailing and not have to worry about surviving if we go into the drink. If one ends up on the bottom of the lake, you won't have to read any further.

When we are sailing, Rose and I are always talking about gusts and puffs that we see on the water or the effects other boats are having with the wind around us. You must be prepared to handle the challenge ahead. The biggest challenge is to control the boat and keep it moving forward.

If the boat is heeling excessively, the wind is exerting its power sideways without using its total force to keep you moving forward. We've all experience being heeled way over and just kind of sitting there with all this wind and going slower than you were before the gust or puff has hit. With gusty conditions, we are both on the high side and prepared for action. The goal is not to let the sails luff and somehow not to lose boat speed in the gusts. I'm not sure how this is possible but most of the time Rose does not cleat the jib so the jib can be eased out when necessary. The traveler can be taken off center to help relieve wind pressure, too.

With puffs, the challenge may be a little different. Sometimes skipper and crew are on different sides of the boat. It is important the windward person keep an eye out for puffs since that person will have the best visual advantage. The leeward person should be prepared to move gracefully to the windward side if necessary and certainly before the need arises. Once again, the goal is to keep the boat to minimum heel and moving forward.

Jerry Callahan taught me to run with the puffs or gusts when sailing off the wind for maximum boat speed. When the wind backs off, that is the time to head up or change course if needed. As the article states, prepare to ease the sails when faced with a strong gust or puff. Be sure to keep the boat as flat as possible and if you need to release the sail a bit and after the wind has passed, trim in and adjust your course if necessary.



Pete Peters is on the right at the helm of *Goodnight Moon* in 2018 on Lake Michigan. At left is Jerry Brewster sitting in the catbird's seat.