

**The Rendezvous as Sort of a Fall Figawi**  
**P/C Hugh Blair-Smith, SN**

Finding myself with no three-day crew for Nantucketing this year, I joined **Capt. Walt Penczar** and **Marc Venables** aboard Walt's O'Day 272 *Serenity* for the two-day version. Weather forecasts were all over the weather map per this year's custom, but we just loaded up and went, noting that **Dave Akin** and **Vicki** were doing likewise in Dave's Presto 30 *Cirrus*.



Dave and Vicki got away first, tacking industriously against the flooding tide, while we putt-putted behind them and watched the clouds over Yarmouth put on some of their ugliest faces. Well, that's what the foulies are for, so we set about having a pickup race with *Cirrus*. In the northerlies, *Serenity* ran straight with the jenny wung-out on a pole, while *Cirrus* tacked downwind rather broadly and then ran wing-and-wing, which is a lot wingier in a cat schooner than a sloop. What with that and their waterline length, 29 to our 24 or so, not to mention that her centerboard was pulled up, she was waiting for us in

the glorious sunshine of Nantucket and vicinity.



An interesting advantage of *Serenity's* 27-foot length is the ability of the Boat Basin crew to warp her right around inside the slip so she faced out for easy escape. I don't think that could have been done with *Mashantam* at 35 feet. We learned from the dozen CCSPS folks who were there that the ugly clouds had discouraged those who were coming by ferry, so we'll give them a hard time about missing all that nice summer weather in ACK. Right, Commander?



As tradition demands, we had enough docktail goodies for twice our number, but all did their duty very happily, and nobody thought of trying to pile dinner on top of all that. I give special credit to **Gary Seasholtz** for a hot bean chili that assured an ample supply of wind throughout the night. We of *Serenity* went strolling through the town afterwards, trying to locate old favorite watering holes, and stumbled across **Dave Atwood** sitting on a bench across from the fast ferry dock. Turned out he was sending Norma home, and we were too polite to ask what she'd done to deserve such treatment. Anyway, Dave joined us for a beer at Sea Dog, a pub located where one of the places we were looking for had once been.

*Serenity* turns out to be a perfectly comfortable cruising-and-snoozing vessel for three, and we could have accommodated a fourth person of short stature. The skipper packed cockpit and other cushions into the usually void under-cockpit cavern and slept as comfortably as the rest of us. In the morning, we thought of Dave in his un-Norma-lized boat and twisted his arm to come and breakfast with us, which was a good thing because Walt's production of hammed-up eggs was plenty for twice our number (again, as tradition demands).



Thinking of possibly light airs bang on the nose, we got cracking, though again a little behind *Cirrus*, which tacked through a lot of the channel against the flooding tide and fell far behind ... for a while. We motor-sailed for a while and figured the wind was just enough, combined with carefully plotted currents, to get us somewhere. Sure enough, the breeze veered just enough to take us on a long port tack. It looked as if *Cirrus* was taking time out to have a morning snack at Great Point light, but that was just their wide tacking, and the improved wind brought her by us at good camera range. Then Dave slowed down a bit so we could pass his port side, block some of his wind, and get pictures. In the dying wind, we'll call it a tie for the finish, achieved at a comfortable hour of the afternoon.



A lightly attended rendezvous compared to some, but we did have a novel treat in the presence of *Spirit of 76*, the freshly upgraded Sea Scout Catalina 27, with **Tim Millar** in command, assisted by **Lee Johnson** and a couple of Scouts. Their Coast Guard connections got them a free mooring at the USCG base, for which their reward was a long hike to come and visit us.

