

The Cruising DVDs™

www.TheCruisingDVDs.com

For Immediate Release

Free New Software Solves Longstanding Sailor's Dilemma

(Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada) -- Innovative new software is now available that helps sailors determine optimal tacking routes. When the destination is upwind, there is a choice between pinching as close to the wind as possible (which reduces the speed), or sailing farther off the wind (which takes you off course but at a much greater speed). Even experienced sailors have a difficult time picking the optimal sailing angle. Variations in the heading from the optimal course can add substantially to the arrival time.

Part of the spirit of sailing is the freedom to go where the wind takes you, with no rushing and no schedules. But even without the constraints of racing or passagemaking, at the end of the day even a daysailer out for an afternoon needs to get home as efficiently as possible -- across an ocean, a lake or even just across a pond. Dr. Craig Summers is the publisher of The Cruising DVDs and developed this innovative navigational tool for sailors. He notes that: *"For sailboats on passages, defining the optimal course and knowing how long it will take can have important consequences -- for making landfall before dark, for example"*.

In the age of satellite phones, wireless internet access and GPS, electronics could potentially solve the problem of choosing the best tacking route. However, the current generation of GPS chartplotters assume that the sailboat travels like a motorboat, straight along the rhumb line (i.e., the direct route to the destination). GPS devices were designed for the military and are still marketed primarily for power boats. However, sailboats have to tack back and forth when heading upwind (and sometimes when the wind is directly astern, as well). GPS chartplotters assume that parameters like distance to destination and estimated time of arrival should be calculated as the crow (or seagull) flies, based on the shortest straight line to the destination. This has little value for tacking sailboats. Whether in a large yacht or a small sailing dinghy, the skipper is therefore left to their own judgment, or trial and error, about the heading.

In the long history of seafaring there has never been an easy method for determining which heading will lead to the fastest arrival time. Because the problem relies on trigonometry and speed calculations, there is nothing intuitive to help in determining the correct tradeoff. What sailboats need is a "Tacking Time to Destination" (TTD) that takes into account the tradeoff between speed and distance as the boat heads off the wind.

SailTimer is a simple software program available as a free download from www.TheCruisingDVDs.com. This is the only sail navigation program that allows route planning before the trip (patent pending). It is revolutionary in the long tradition of sail navigation, in providing a simple display of the route for the earliest arrival time. The results are often dramatic. In one illustration on the web site, the destination is 10 nautical miles away, straight into the wind. While the Current Route looks more direct, it will take 5 hours and 18 minutes heading upwind. The Optimal Route is 2 nautical miles farther but actually results in an arrival time over 3 hours faster!

The SailTimer software is also being released for different brands of GPS chartplotter. This enables more features, such as overlaying SailTimer routes on charts and aerial photos. This integration also makes the software more accessible while sailing, in GPS systems onboard. Rapid dissemination of a free version online may build an expectation that all GPS chartplotters should include Tacking Time to Destination (TTD) as a standard feature for sailors.

Further information can be obtained from www.TheCruisingDVDs.com or by email from info@TheCruisingDVDs.com