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Cover photo: One of the joys of being on a sailboat is getting off the sailboat!
Photo @shutterstock

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We're happy to bring you a special feature again this year on "pocket cruisers"—those smaller cruising boats that are designed to fit a broad cross section of the sailing public. We usually use 35 feet as the top end and go down to 25 feet or so. And every year we get letters and emails from readers thanking us for paying attention to sailors who don't want or can't afford the much larger cruising boats offered by most builders. And we get a few notes from readers who say thanks but the boats we feature are still "damned expensive."

And that's true. If you look at a new Beneteau 25, you'll be out all of \$75,000 by the time you have the boat the way you want it. If you look on Yachtworld, it is hard to find a new 35 footer for less than \$180,000 and well fitted out new 35 footers can get up to \$250,000. But prices are really all over the place in the 35-foot range. A new Jeanneau 349 can be had for around \$130,000 but will probably need options added while a new, well fitted out Pacific Seacraft 34 will run around \$380,000.

So, what is a sailor with a serious need for a cruising boat to do if he can't afford a new boat? It's perfectly obvious: he needs to look at the brokerage market where he will find a wide array of boats in all shapes, sizes, levels of condition, age and prices. Yachtworld is a fun website for browsing and daydreams and even for outright shopping.

It is helpful to have some guidelines when looking at boats that have been around for a while. Is the design suitable for how you plan to use the boat? If you will be cruising the Chesapeake Bay, you won't be happy with an ex-racing boat that draws eight feet. Is the boat well constructed by a reputable builder? Is the company still in business? Does the hull and deck have a balsa-wood core?

For *Blue Water Sailing* readers, you may be looking for a smaller, affordable cruiser that is also a capable passagemaker for cruising trips to the Caribbean or Mexico or Alaska. If you are going far afield, you don't need a full keel double ender from the old days. But you do want a boat that was designed and built to withstand heavy weather and high seas.

For offshore sailing, it may well make sense to fix your price point and then calculate how much of that will have to do to fit a boat out for offshore sailing if it is not already very well equipped. In our experience, if you are looking for a blue water boat you should keep an eye on Yachtworld, but also engage the services of a buyer's broker who knows all about all of the brands and models out there and knows which ones would be suitable for your dreams. Often you will find that a newer, well fitted out brokerage boat is a better value than a cheaper boat that needs a ton of work.

The ultimate brokerage boat for those heading offshore will be what a broker friend of ours calls a "disaster boat." That will be a good boat with

an offshore pedigree that has been completely fitted out by an eager and well-heeled owner only to find out on his or her first passage that he or his spouse hates offshore sailing. The boat goes right back onto the market, where it will be snapped up by a patient and knowledgeable cruiser.



photo by Bill Kund

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Day".

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In Love with Love City

Maho Bay on St. John Island
by Zuzana Prochazka



I'm not really sure how the U.S. Virgin Island of St. John got its moniker, Love City—maybe because it's such a popular honeymoon spot. Or maybe, it's because once you go, you're in love with the place and can't wait to go back just to while away the hours in one of its beautiful bays.

The United States purchased St. John from the Danish West India and Guinea Company in 1917 for \$25 million. It's the smallest of the U.S. Virgins and is perfectly positioned, four miles from St. Thomas and four miles from Tortola in the British Virgins. Almost two thirds of the 20-square-mile island and its bays is protected as the Virgins Islands National Park and the Park Service takes its management of it seriously, as we found out.

We chartered our cat from The Moorings in Tortola, quite possibly the busiest but most efficient base I've ever visited. Once briefed and provisioned, we rushed to customs at the other end of the harbor to check out of the country before the office closed,

not a fast process given the amount of officialdom. Thus, we arrived late into Maho Bay on St. John and in the fading light, just made out a row of mooring balls. We hooked up, made dinner and went to bed.

The next morning we woke up in a quiet bay fringed by a white sand beach that extends 60 feet out into turquoise water where it joins a reef. It being the first week of December, we shared this blissful bight of St. Francis Bay with only four other boats, all but one on moorings. Not having yet officially checked into the U.S. via Cruz Bay, we couldn't go ashore, so instead, we opted to SUP around the anchorage, stopping to put \$20 into a box on a floating raft as payment for our night on the mooring. Curious turtles surfaced all around and dozens of stingrays glided by. It was a quiet Sunday morning in paradise as the beachside church services hadn't yet gotten started.

Just as we pulled the boards back up on deck, a Park Service vessel with red lights flashing, rounded

the corner and went straight to the sportfisher with a Puerto Rico hailing port on his transom, the only boat anchored about 70 feet off the beach. Anchoring is not allowed in these park waters and I heard steep fines, upwards of \$5,000, may be assessed. As we ate our breakfast, we watched the sportfisher undergo a detailed "inspection" that took the better part of two hours. When the Park Service left, the sportfisher scooted over to an available mooring ball. I bet that \$20 fee looked good by comparison.

After we checked in (a breeze compared to the British version) we circumnavigated the island, hiked a few trails and visited Skinny Legs bar by car where the requisite T-shirts were purchased. In all, we had only two days to spend on this lovely island but I'm already planning a way to get back there, especially to the pristine Maho Bay, to swim with turtles, walk the sugary white sand of the beach, lay under a swaying palm tree and oh yeah, definitely catch and pay for a mooring. **BWS**

Staying Safe at Sea

by Suzanne Wentley

While the rest of the world is worried about terrorism, it's easy to feel safe from attacks when living aboard out at sea. Days go by without seeing another boat. The vast majority of cruisers never have to be concerned with safety; thousands of good-hearted people have wonderful years living aboard their sailboats and powerboats. But Christina "Tina" Curtin, who, along with her guy Mark Beiser, had a very different experience.

Bad guys exist everywhere—but inexpensive, simple preventative methods are all that are needed to keep liveaboards safe at sea. Tina and Mark are seasoned cruisers, having lived aboard their 39-foot Westerly Sealord ketch *Rainbow* for years. They



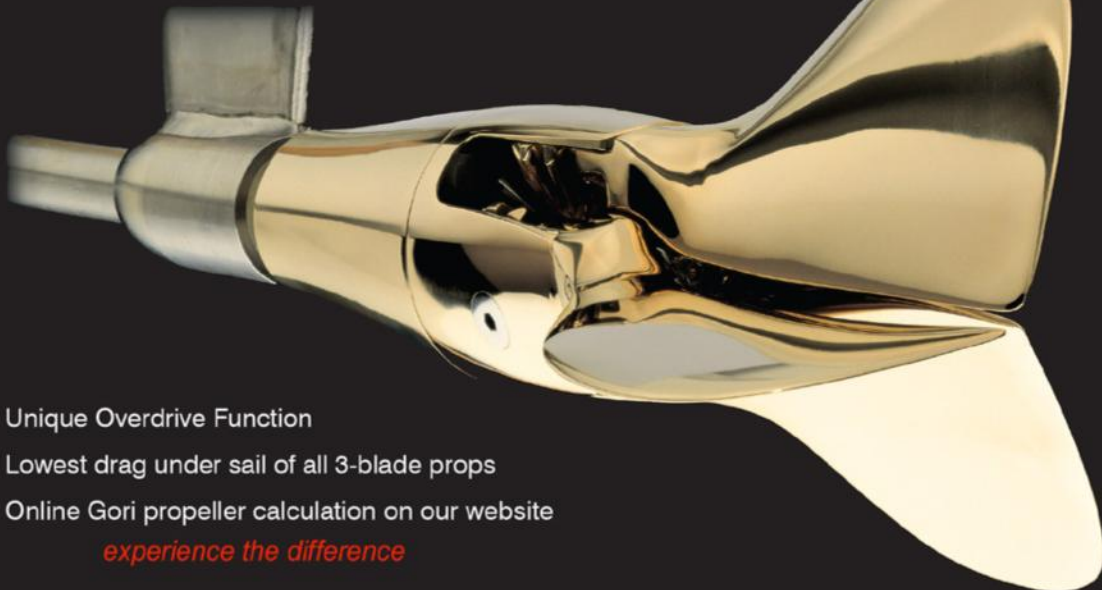
loved snorkeling, fishing and relaxing in beautiful anchorages throughout the Caribbean.

Then came the one fateful day a few years ago, which started with them exploring Clifton Harbor and Frigate Rock off Union Island, a nearly uninhabited part of the chain of islands that make up St. Vincent and the

Grenadines. It was that evening when their idea of safety up-ended itself.

They had found a quiet anchorage and settled into dinner as the sun set. That's when Tina saw what she thought was a towel flapping on deck. Turns out it wasn't a towel. It was a 15-year-old boy, who boarded the vessel along with a 16-year-old boy.

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“We feel like messengers for the cruising community, because of our strength,” Tina said. “It could have been an elderly couple or a family with small children that was attacked.”

**ALTHOUGH RARE,
PIRATE ATTACKS HAPPEN**

Somalia isn't the only place where pirates exist. According to Noonsite.com, an online resource for reports on piracy against cruisers, more than 200 attacks were reported in the last five years throughout the Caribbean, Bahamas and Haiti. Many end more tragically than the attack on *Rainbow*, with some cruisers being held hostage or even killed.

Another teenager was waiting in the dinghy they had rowed about a mile offshore to *Rainbow*, presumably with plans of a robbery.


When one of the boys tripped on the jib sheet, Tina poked her head up the hatch to check and she was at-

tacked with a knife. Thankfully, Mark was there to defend her and fought back with the knife he used to fillet fish. He saved her life, forcing the pirates off the boat. From the incident, the couple learned valuable lessons they were quick to share.


The number of piracy and armed robbery instances against larger-scale commercial vessels is on the rise as well, with 246 incidents reported globally in 2015, according to the International Marine Bureau. That's an average of one vessel being hijacked

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by pirates every day and a half, with Southeast Asia and the African coasts being the hot spots for danger.

While the U.S. Coast Guard and the International Maritime Organization implement best practice techniques for safety among commercial mariners, there is less formalized knowledge among cruisers. But, criminals do exist. Tina and Mark say it's just smart boating to have simple safety mechanisms in place to reduce the risks.

"We are our own 911 out there," Tina said.

EASY, INEXPENSIVE PREVENTION

Just like buying provisions and back-up engine parts, cruisers and liveaboards should check a few important tasks off the to-do list. These safety tips include:

Turn on the lights: Install a simple halogen spotlight in the cockpit (facing stern) that is wired to be turned on

from inside the boat. By turning off the inside lights, you'll blind whomever is on deck. A strip of LED lights, specifically designed for marine purpose, is a good idea under the Bimini, too.

Know the area: Log on to the Caribbean Security and Safety Network and Noonsite to learn about piracy and other safety-related reports in your region.

Meet your neighbors: Ensure any boat anchored around you is on the same radio channel as you, in case either of you need emergency help. Leave the radio on, (it may be a little noisy, but you'll be quieted by peace of mind) and keep an eye out for unsavory characters who may be in the area. Luckily, most boaters we have met cruising are quick to be friends.

Fit in as best you can: Flashing jewelry and money attracts attention in poor countries, no matter how far

offshore you think you are anchored. Be smart about items left on deck and hoist the dinghy out of the water so it's not an easy target.

Install a companionway gate: Cruising in a poverty-stricken country is a lot like living in a poverty-stricken



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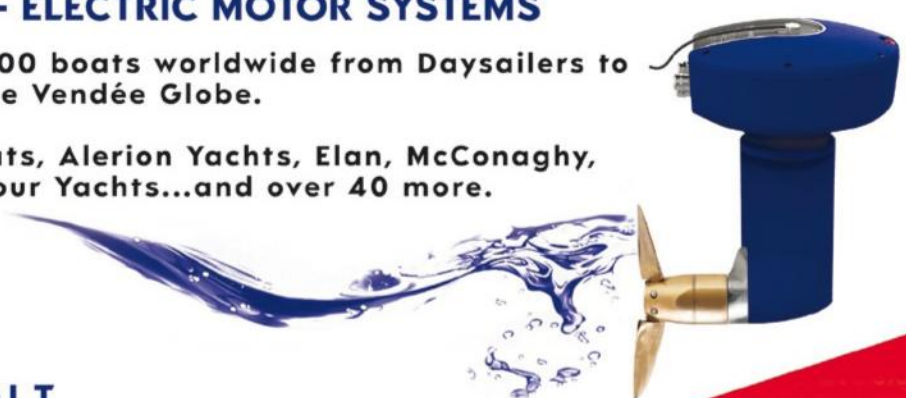
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neighborhood. A simple and inexpensive aluminum gate that locks might not stop a persistent pirate, but the noise will alert you to trouble. Tina

and Mark also installed bars (that can be removed from the inside) in the hatches.

Consider a dog: The best deterrent

by far is a loud canine companion. Of course, there are pros and cons to bringing a dog aboard while cruising. Mark and Tina cruised with three cats,

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Breeze, James and Manta, furry friends who helped soothe them after the incident.

Be prepared: Have a few cans of wasp spray located near the companionway and don't be scared to fight if necessary. Be loud.

Be ready. Don't back away from the guy," Mark said. "The objective is getting him off the boat."

DON'T BE SCARED, BE SMART

Prevention and awareness are the keys, Mark and Tina said, years after the attack. While guns remain a controversial topic in the cruising community, they recommend not carrying a firearm. It's an added hassle when checking into most countries, and in their case, a gun really wouldn't have done much good.

After the incident, the couple worked with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Tourism Board to discuss ways of improving services and safety with local merchants and residents. Clearly, countries where these incidents occur want to improve safety for cruisers. But it's unknown how much will change and how much can truly improve with the current economic realities. That's why cruisers should not hesitate to improve the safety of their vessels.

"There's no need to live in fear," Tina said. "These types of attacks can be prevented. Be safe and keep sailing." **BWS**




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How to coax out more speed and miles when the wind goes light



Waves of rising heat seem to distort visions of the distance, and the sounds of insects seem to increase as everything else grows more silent. The surface of the water has assumed a flat, patchy appearance. Wind speed has dropped below 5 knots and appears to be headed through the floor! It's time to dig deep into the bag of tricks if you're going to win this one. Whether you're cruising with the family and trying to coax a

few knots and miles out of a passage or you're racing against friends, summoning up a few light air racing tricks will help to increase your spectrum of options.

If you know that the race is going to be run in light air or you're going to be crossing through a high pressure ridgeline, you may already be further up the learning curve. Set the boat up accordingly, and only take necessary equipment and a minimum of backups. One design boats will want to set up their rigs for the expected light weather. Keeping your boat light

will pay big dividends, and the longer the passage, the greater the payback. Kenny Read, now President of North Sails and former World Champion J-24 sailor, suggests easing the upper shroud tension to 500 lbs. and the lowers to 250 lbs. on a Loos Gauge for expected wind speeds of three to four knots on those smaller One Designs. The resulting six to eight inch of headstay sag will add shape to the 150% genoa, add prebend to the lower part of the mast and flatten the bottom of the main. Shroud tensioning on One Designs acts much the same

way as runner/check stay tension on larger boats in helping to control sail shape. On smaller boats, the shrouds need to be tensioned in concert with one another to ensure maximum performance from both main and headsail, and that can only be done prior to the race. On larger boats you will want to pay attention to how your backstay, runners and check stays are offset to your headstay, inner forestay and baby stay if you have those mast control options. Ultimately, the shape of your mast will influence the shape of your mainsail, and for light air sailing you will want a fuller, more powerful main to take advantage of every wisp of wind.

WORK WITH TIDES & CURRENTS

Current and tide also play an increasingly important role in winning races as the wind drops off. If the current is favorable and is expected to remain that way for some time, obviously, the smart racers will try to spend the most time in the strongest current. If the current or tide is foul, it may become critical to find shallow water towards the mark with less current and keep open the possibility of anchoring rather than drifting backwards if the wind completely shuts down. Passagemakers will also find that current plays an increasingly significant aspect in their daily runs as the wind goes light. With boat speed through the water reduced by light winds, the amount of speed over the ground gained in favorable Gulf Stream currents, as an example, will provide a larger component to the overall speed over

the ground. The wind speed may only grant you a knot or two of speed through the water, but with a favorable current of three or four knots, your overall speed over the bottom will keep you moving towards your destination at five or six knots.

THE PROPER ANGLE OF HEEL

While working to weather, it's important to keep sails "quiet" and consistently working at their optimum. The boat may need to be heeled over to a 10 or 15 degree angle of heel by moving crew weight to the leeward side and centering them in the middle of the boat in order to help hold sails to the leeward side. Each boat has its own preferred attitude and weight distribution, but generally, keeping the weight centered helps to reduce pitching in the left over swell or waves and may get the stern out of the water, reducing wetted surface. Read says, "J-24's are a little different from most One Designs. They tend to drag their sterns, so in light air it's important

to keep the weight forward and low. Sometimes we'll have most of the guys down below on the leeward side. When we're in flat water, one or two of the crew may even be forward of the bulkhead." He goes on to mention, "Over heeling is not fast for the keel on a J-24. We try to only heel the boat enough to keep the sails out. Even if there's a little lee helm, it's better to fight a little lee helm than to induce drag in the keel." Bigger boats operate in much the same way, although each will have its own characteristics. Keeping the sails "flopped out" to leeward with wind quietly and smoothly flowing across them will help to get the most out of each puff.

LOOKING FOR BREEZE

In order to power up the sails, the Apparent Wind Angle may need to be increased to as much as 50 degrees as the wind drops to drifting conditions, but in order to achieve maximum performance on the race course, on larger boats keep a record of wind





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speed, wind angle, and the resultant boat speed in order to develop accurate light air polars. If you're lacking electronic instrumentation, you may not be able to generate highly accurate data for good quantitative analysis. But the theory remains the same. Sail the boat to achieve the greatest velocity towards the mark or your intended waypoint, keeping in mind that you don't need to make the boat go the fastest in the fleet. You just need to get to the mark first or better understand how to get the most out of your boat on a light air passage.

As the wind angle is opened up to keep the boat moving the sheet lead will need to be moved outboard and forward in order to open the slot between the genoa and main and keep sails at their peak performance. If the sail cloth is too heavy to allow good, consistent sail shape in the Light Number 1 range, it may become necessary to change to a wind seeker or drifter in less than four knots of breeze if you have that available. Keep the Light Number 1 in a position to go back up quickly, especially if there is a leftover sea that causes surge loading in the sails as the boat pitches off of a wave; the drifting sails can be easily damaged. More sails or larger sails do not necessarily result in more boat speed in light air. Staysails seldom work well in conjunction with larger headsails in light air. However, having said that, sometimes smaller sails with less fabric weighing them down, have the ability to fly when other larger sails merely droop and only interfere with air flow across something that is working.

KEEP IT QUIET

Throughout sail changing maneuvers, crew movement must be kept to a minimum, and walking softly is required. Jarring motions on deck translate into wild gyrations at the masthead, shaking wind out of sails and slowing the boat down.

Just as tacking angles widen in



light air, jibing angles also widen. If your destination or the mark is located directly downwind, it gets progressively more difficult to get there as the wind gets lighter. On one hand, to keep the boat moving, it is necessary to get the apparent wind forward; on the other hand, tactically, it is better to maintain a deeper course. The way to balance these two mutually exclusive conditions is to bring the wind forward of the beam, generate boat speed and more apparent wind, and bear away closer to the desired course while keeping the spinnaker up and pulling. Movements with the pole need to be smooth in order to keep from shaking the wind out of the sail. In the lightest conditions, sometimes keeping the outboard pole end low will help to steady the luff of the sail. Choking down the sheet may also help to close off the leech of the sail, keeping the sail inflated, and it may help to hold the sail away from the boat as additional heel is induced. Under normal circumstances it may not be the ideal way to trim the chute, but light air sometimes requires innovative solutions. Occasionally, in the lightest conditions, the only way to fly the spinnaker is to reef or drop



the main, allowing at least one sail to work properly.

The helmsman can help the whole process by moving the rudder as little as possible. Tiny moves made gently will help to keep the boat going. And to help the helmsman and trimmers know where the wind is and what it is doing, wool telltales taped to the shrouds 10 feet apart will help to indicate both wind speed and direction and how the wind shear is affected at various heights up the mast. Trimmers can trim to the greater wind aloft or to the greater sail area lower down on the sails.

As the wind drops to nil, try to get to the side of the course from which the new breeze is expected. Look for wind under clouds; frequently the clouds set up their own circulation and boats underneath can be ghosting along while others are parked on a mirror. We have used the technique of “connecting the dots” below the clouds on several round the world races as well as other transatlantic passages. The light breezes may be indicated by “cats’ paws” on the surface of the water, but that is not necessarily the case. Occasionally the wind is higher aloft due to the wind shear, and

it may not be indicated on the surface. When cold water and warm air are present, as in Marblehead to Halifax races or early season sailing in the Great Lakes, wind shear will be at its maximum. The cold water sets up a buffer of cold air at the water’s surface – a marine layer of air – that keeps the warmer air from getting all the way down to the water’s surface. The result is that your instruments may indicate 15 knot winds at the masthead but your sails are flopping from side to side in drifting mode. Identify where the wind is actually working and try to trim to that.

Above everything else, remain patient and work consistently while battling the light conditions. Winning a light air race and getting where you’re going frequently requires more technical skill than racing in moderate conditions; enjoy the challenge. And if the other guy loses his patience and starts spinning the helm from lock to lock, you’re certain to win! **BWS**

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Exploring by pedal kayak

Everyone knows that a balanced diet and regular exercise are the pillars of maintaining a healthy lifestyle but it can be difficult to put that knowledge into action, especially on board

We spent 2016 exploring the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Choosing to stay close to the equator meant that we were well out of the typical cyclone zone, allowing us to linger at the places that we found most welcoming. However there are disadvantages of skirting “The Line” for so long. Extended windless periods meant putting up the iron spinnaker more than we liked, and when we were able to sail it was more akin to drifting with the sails flapping. Our usual daily sailing activities—those of hauling halyards and grinding winches—were almost non-existent.

To compound matters most of the villages we visited were accessible only via sea, so there were no roads for a brisk afternoon walk. Murky water in

many of our anchorages meant that not only did I often skip jumping in the ocean to cool off, but over the months I missed out on long hours of snorkeling and swimming. As the end of the year rolled around I was beginning to feel a little lazy.

Sticking to a healthy meal plan and fitness regime can be hard when you live on land, but on board it often feels impossible to maintain a routine of any kind. Being constantly on the move means diet is often dictated by how thoughtfully you provision ahead and how much effort you put into preparing meals on board. Trying to exercise on a boat that is in motion can be very difficult, not to mention the space restrictions that many of us face. Finding alternatives ashore when your typical on board activity levels dip isn't always possible but there are ways to keep active and have fun while you cruise.

DIP, DIP and SWING

Kayaks have long been a popular addition to cruising boats and are a great way to get out and explore an anchorage. Long and slender but with a lower profile than a canoe a hard kayak will fit nicely on deck. Gaining popularity over the past decade are inflatable kayaks, perfect for those sailors who have limited space or don't want to store items on deck while underway. Stress reducing, low impact and a perfect activity for the whole family, kayaking offers a host of physical benefits.

Traditional paddle kayaking strengthens the chest, back, shoulders and arms. You also work the core muscles of the torso as you rotate your body through a paddle stroke. Leg muscles are used to balance the kayak and to push during a power stroke. Depending on your location and the conditions kayaking can also provide

a cardio workout, for instance if you have to paddle against a current or race against a fellow kayaker.

Available in single or double seaters kayaking can be a great way to spend time with the kids or just escape for a little quiet time by yourself. Some kayaks are also available with sail kits, making them a more versatile and exciting choice. Newer pedal-powered kayaks are gaining popularity as well, perfect for those with shoulder injuries.

GET UP, STAND UP

Stand-up paddleboarding is thought to have originated in Hawaii. Invented by surfers who were looking for a way to get some exercise, and have a bit of fun when the waves were small they basically changed their stance on the board and added a paddle. The sport has recently gained enormous popular-

ity and it seems everywhere you go these days someone is SUP-ing.

I have been very interested in trying out a SUP for a while now but only recently had the opportunity to borrow a board. Like most people who try the stand-up paddleboard I was hooked. With equipment limited to just a board and a paddle, you are required to use almost every muscle in your body, including your brain.

You use your legs and core as you constantly work to stabilize yourself and the board. The arms, back and shoulders are exercised while you paddle. When you're new to the sport it can demand a lot of mental atten-



Rowing ashore can be challenging and fun

tion as you concentrate on balancing and paddling at the same time. This focus and the almost soundless motion through the water lend a lovely meditative quality to the workout that is akin to yoga. But don't let the calm fool you, one trip around the anchorage and you'll feel the burn. Stand-up paddleboarding is also a cardio workout and a great way to increase your endurance.

Like kayaking, the SUP is consid



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Photo: Troels Rosenkrantz-Anderson

Markus Pukonen of www.routesofchange.org using a SUP to paddle ashore in Palau as part of his mission to travel around the world without ever using a motor

ered a low impact activity, perfect for young and old alike. And because of its popularity there are many different styles, sizes and designs of boards to choose from.

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT

It is true that good quality kayaks and SUP's are a bit of an investment and not everyone has a room in their cruising budget for "toys." I understand that extra equipment takes up extra room, even if you decided to go the more compact, and small-boat friendly, inflatable route. The thing is you don't *need* fancy toys or extra equipment to incorporate a little activity into your day; you just need a little change of perspective.

Chances are if you own a sailboat you also own a dinghy, and no matter the design you can use your dinghy as a rowing machine. You don't even need to remove the outboard. Whether it is up a quiet stream for a picnic lunch or just back and forth to shore, rowing is a great way to keep your daily routine active. Like kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding, rowing is a low impact activity so it is easy on the joints and tissues. It is an exercise that concentrates more on the upper body but you'll find with proper technique it works the core and legs too.

Some of the flat bottomed inflatables don't track that well, but instead of seeing this as a disadvantage think of it as a challenge; you'll get a little more exercise as you try and reach your destination. No doubt you'll be surprised how much of a workout you can get by pulling on the oars instead of the start cord.

We all like the laid-back, easy-going lifestyle of cruising but sailing demands a certain level of fitness. It is important to keep active even when circumstances seem stacked against you but it need not be difficult and should definitely be fun. It is easy to turn the next anchorage into your new favorite gym, with a view. Just pick up a paddle and get out there. **BWS**

Heather Francis is from Nova Scotia, Canada and for over a decade has worked and lived on boats throughout the world. In 2008 she and her Aussie partner, Steve, bought Kate, a Newport 41', and have been sailing ever since. They are planning to do a lap around the planet, albeit slowly. You can follow their adventures at www.yachtkate.com.

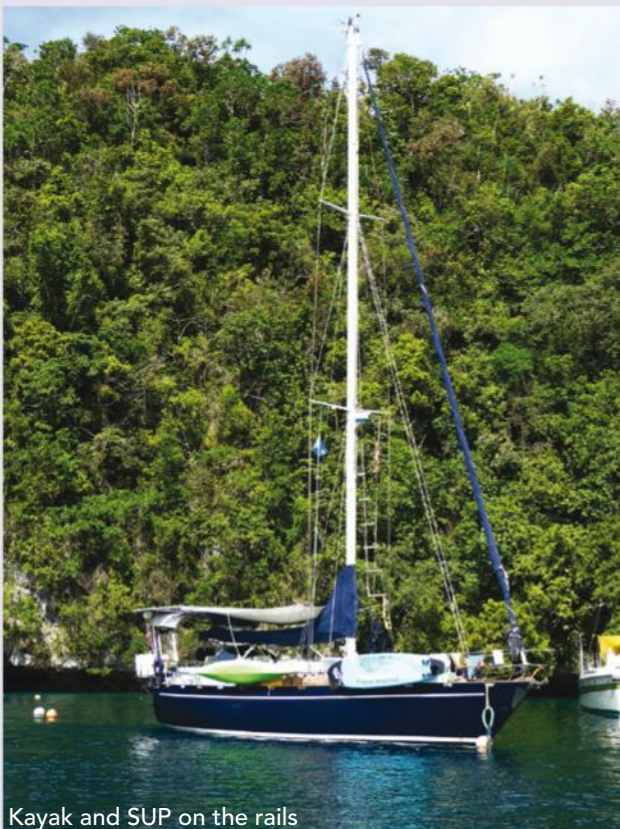
SUP BASICS

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY: Many resorts, sport stores and paddling clubs provide lessons and equipment rental to the public. This is a great, and inexpensive, way to try a new water sports activity or test out new equipment if you're looking to upgrade.

DO YOUR RESEARCH: Choosing what board or boat is right for you can be difficult. Checking online forums and talking to users are great ways to get first-hand opinions about equipment performance and longevity.

PADDLE IN PAIRS: Sticking to an exercise plan is easier if you have someone to motivate and support you. Many communities have Paddling Clubs and welcome visitors to participate in their regular scheduled activities. Or ask around the anchorage and start your own mobile paddling club!

STAY SAFE: Exploring new waters can be exciting but it is important to be aware of potential hazards and dangers. Check tides and weather conditions before departure, tell someone where you are headed and how long you'll be gone, wear a PFD when it is appropriate and never let children play on the water unattended.



Kayak and SUP on the rails



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MANKIEWICZ

ON TO CUBA

by Grace Brookshire

Six friends take in the sights and sounds of Cuba

Plate after plate of food piled in front of us as our crew of six eagerly crowded around the open-air picnic table. In the distance, the lush green mountains of Viñales jutted up out of the earth. Our friendly Cuban cab driver sat to my right snapping pictures on his flip phone as proof that he had indeed eaten dinner with six Americans. We had been advised not to leave Viñales until dining at Casa de Confianza. The delectable piña coladas and plates overflowing with fresh ingredients from the restaurant's garden made it obvious that we had been well advised. With a full belly, I leaned back looking around the humming table of friends and then gazed out over the gorgeous hazy blue landscape: Cuba had my heart.

The sea has always been my home, though I am no salted sailor. Growing up, I was never more than a sea breeze away from the Atlantic. But, the honorary title of sailor is something I have only recently acquired. My husband,

Joel, is a true sailor at heart. He grew up racing International 420s and when I met him, he already held the dream of living and traveling aboard. We were married in Hatteras, North Carolina in the midst of a fall hurricane and one week later moved onto our first cruising boat, a 27-foot foot sloop. So

we began our trek down the U.S. East Coast as newlyweds and recent college graduates, each clocking-in with only 23 years under our belts. We were wide-eyed and thirsty for knowledge, experience, and the next opportunity life might send our way.

Six months into our journey, Joel



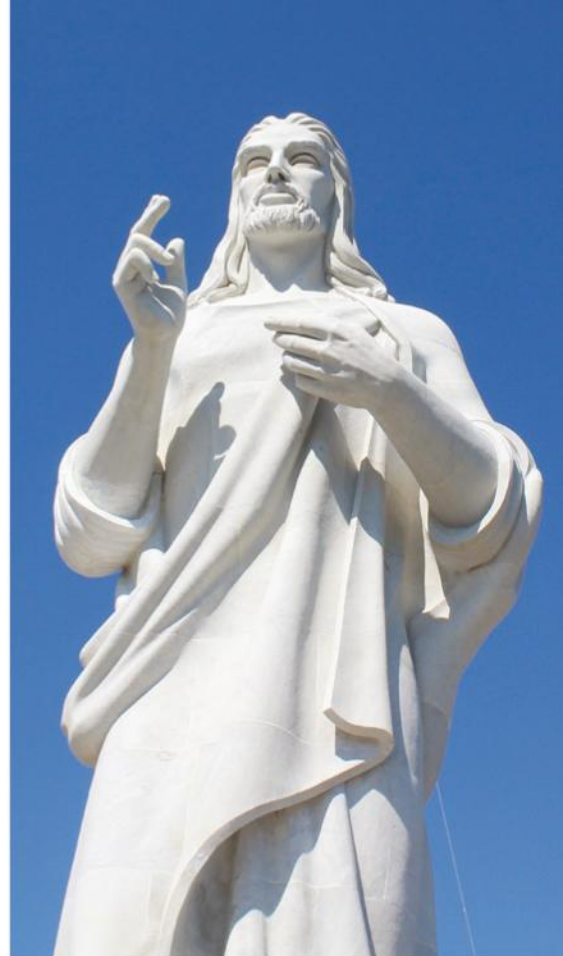
and I found ourselves in the Florida Keys enjoying the company of several fellow cruisers. One couple close to our age, Asheton and Nina, quickly became our close friends. The topic of Cuba had been buzzing in the American sailing community since the U.S. Treasury's Officer of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) started loosening the requirements for a Cuba travel license. Asheton and Nina were already planning to make the trip themselves and invited us to join them. Just like that, Cuba became our next destination. How could we say no?

A month later, we were onboard Asheton's 44-foot *Reliance*, *Soulmate*, departing Stock Island to cross the 90 miles that separate the Florida Keys from Cuba. We had a lively crew of six, and besides a few strangely lit cargo ships and the spontaneous excitement of reeling in a tuna; our passage was uneventful. By daybreak, the following

morning, the haze of Cuba stretched across our horizon.

We were greeted at the Cuban customs dock by a cocker spaniel puppy, an energetic and less than intimidating search dog. This was the first of many signs that Cuba was not going to be as we had expected. After being cleared for entry, we motored through the narrow canals of Marina Hemingway to our designated spot along the crumbling seawall (plans are being implemented to upgrade Marina Hemingway). As we stepped onto shore to greet the dock master, it was obvious that the once thriving marina had suffered from neglect over the years. Later, we would discover that Cuba, as a whole, seemed to exemplify the same inconsistency—gorgeous, yet crumbling.

Our 10-day visas would enable us to explore a good deal of Cuba so, after settling in, we got to work planning.





The hotel, within the marina limits, offered a place to exchange money, as well as a good spot to pick up Wi-Fi. With a few *cucs* in our pockets, we bought Internet cards and sat outside the hotel mapping out our Cuban adventure. Clearly, visiting Havana was a must as was a trip to the beach. However, what was perhaps most appealing to our crew was taking a road trip to the mountains of Viñales.

Transportation in Cuba can be procured in several different ways. Car rentals are available if you search well enough and the marina hotel offers tour trips; but you can't walk far in Cuba without passing a vintage Ford with a taxi sign stuck to the roof. Our crew decided that being chauffeured around Cuba in a selection of classic cars was the way to go. So, with a trip to Viñales in mind, we got to know a few locals and kept an ear out for a taxi driver who would cut us the best deal. Asheton did some friendly haggling and found a ride to fit the bill. The cab driver agreed to meet back at our spot along the seawall in a few days and drive us the three hours to Viñales.

With almost a week before our big Viñales road trip, we set out to see everything within a "day-trip" distance of Marina Hemingway. We bargained with cab drivers in our broken Spanish and rode back and forth along the roads connecting Havana, Marina Hemingway, and the nearby tropical beaches.

We found Havana to be a lively city with loads of culture. It is easy to see why Jimmy Buffett speaks so fondly of the place. Every inch of Havana is photogenic; you can't help but look upward as you walk through rows of crumbling Spanish architecture, vibrant with Caribbean colors. The cobblestone





streets are crowded with a mixture of tourists, street vendors, and neighborhood locals. We rode into the city at least three times during our stay in Cuba and, with each trip, we saw something new.

The historic sights are a big draw in Havana. Crowds of tourists joined us as we climbed the bell tower of Havana's historic Cathedral de San Cristobal, which offers the best aerial views of the buzzing city streets. We made sure to visit the fort, Castillo De Los Tres Reyes Del Morro, and the statue of Jesus located high on a cliff, looking over Havana. There, we enjoyed a spectacular view of the entire city. A few cucs were even spent on a personal tour of Havana in two gorgeous, classic convertibles. Our drivers cruised down the city streets telling us every imaginable fact a visitor would want to know. Our hours spent roaming the streets of Havana were undoubtedly highlights of our expedition in Cuba.

However, as we continued to explore; our group developed a long list of favorites. Within walking distance of Marina Hemingway, we found ourselves marveling at a neighborhood covered in the hodge-podge craftsmanship of a Cuban artist. One night we even taxied our way to Fabrica de Arte Cubano, a sort of nightclub-art gallery where modern art and the strums of live music fill the halls. Bartenders on every floor whipped up mojitos and *cuba libres* for the crowds of people who filed through the museum-like exhibit. After making sure we saw every corner of Fabrica de Arte Cubano, our crew caught a taxi back to our floating home. The next morning we would depart for Viñales.

A large pothole put our taxicab on the side of the road halfway to Viñales. Our friends, Patrick and Kristen sacrificed some hammock



straps and jerry-rigged the loose part back in place. Two breakdowns later, we finally arrived in Viñales. Like our taxi driver noted— “Ah Cuba”—it was all a part of the experience. Our time in Viñales proved well worth the struggle getting there. We stayed in one of the many “casa particulares” offered throughout the country. A sweet lady, named Xiomara, was our hostess and she cooked some of the best meals we had during our time in Cuba. She also proved to be a great trip advisor.

With her help, we were quickly checking off every activity on our list. We rode horses through the mountains of Vinales, toured coffee and tobacco farms, hiked through an incredible cave tucked in the side of a nearby mountain and, of course, ate at the Casa de Confianza. I could have remained in Viñales, eating 50-cent pizzas from the local street vendors for far more than three days. But, our visas were soon to expire so our crew of dear friends headed back to *Soulmate*, tied along the Marina Hemingway dock patiently awaiting our return. Our 10 days of roaming Cuba were drawing to an end.

Cuba had been good to us. In fact, it had given us far greater experiences than we ever imagined. Of course, like every country, it struggles with its own internal battles but after roaming through the country and engaging with the people, we were all captivated by Cuba’s rich culture and gorgeous landscape. Departure would be bittersweet but with a clear weather window, expiring visas, and stomachs hungry for the variety in our American cuisine; we pointed *Soulmate*’s bow toward home. Cuba, and its people who we had grown to love, would be dearly missed. **BWS**

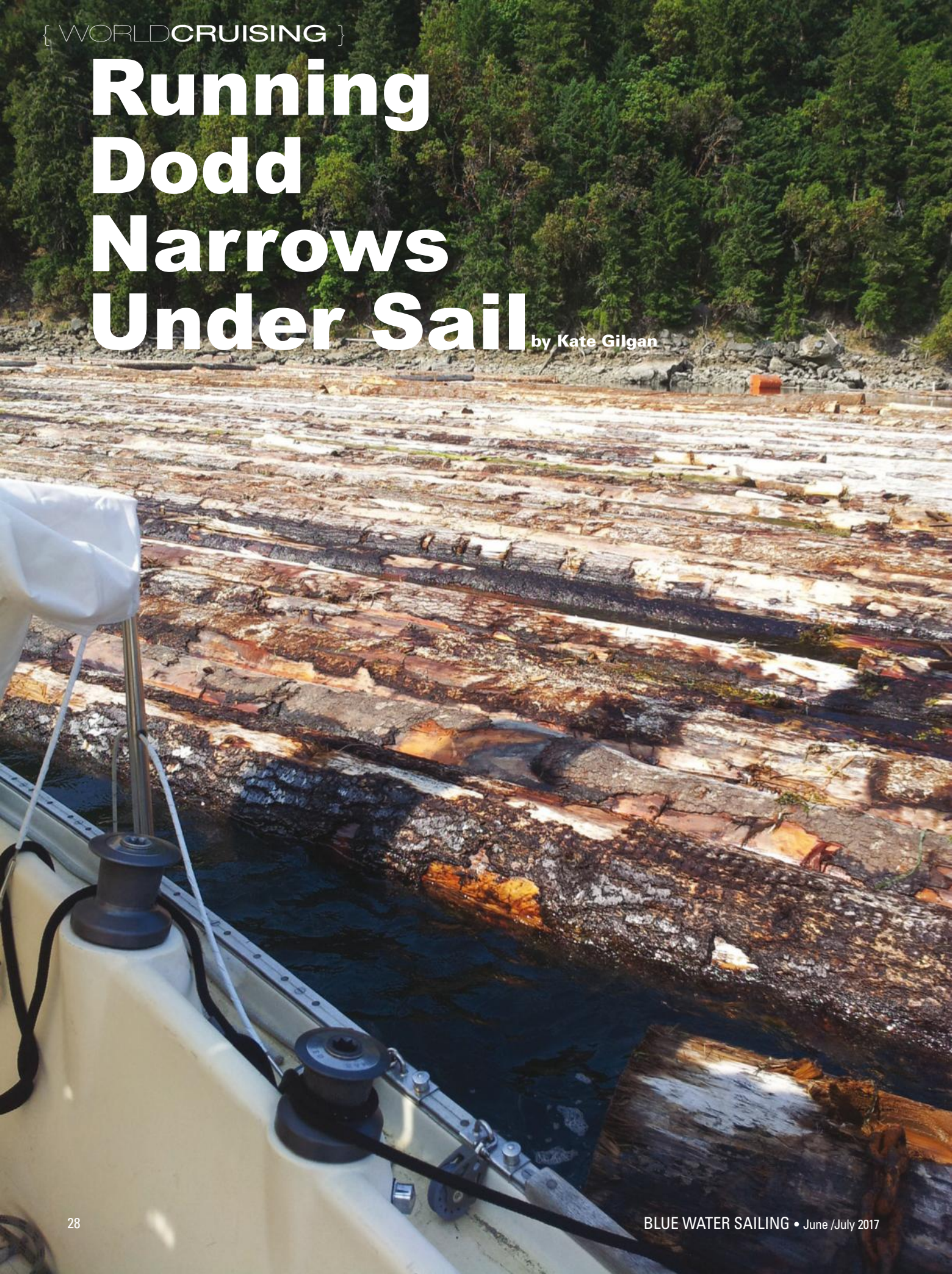
Grace Brookshire lives aboard and cruises with her husband, Joel.



{ WORLDCRUIISING }

Running Dodd Narrows Under Sail

by Kate Gilgan



Skibo tied to a log boom on north side of Dodd Narrows, awaiting slack tide; below, the author helming aboard *Skibo* on Gulf Islands sail

We moved aboard *Skibo*, our Con-
tessa 26, in April
of 2012 and by
July had twice
conquered the
challenge of sailing across Georgia
Strait from our False Creek marina
slip in downtown Vancouver, Brit-
ish Columbia. We were eager for the
delights and sights of summertime
Gulf Islands sailing. But first we had
to contend with a tidal pass.

We had replaced *Skibo*'s original
diesel engine with a well-mannered
electric motor with a top speed of just
two knots. While motor-sailing had its
allure, we wanted to sharpen our pur-
ist sailing skills. Thus, the challenge
of transiting a pass under sail.

Gabriola Pass, Porlier Pass, False
Narrows and Dodd Narrows are all
within relatively easy sailing dis-
tances from our stopover anchorage
in Nanaimo. We opted for the closest
though perhaps more challenging
Dodd Narrows for our first attempt.
As the water passageway between
Vancouver Island and Mudge Island
sitting just south of Gabriola Island,
the currents in this pass are known to
reach nautical speeds of nine knots
amid spinning whirlpools and swirling
eddies, creating a potentially raucous
whitewater sailing adventure.

Steerage would be critical in this
particular pass, which shrinks to only
60 yards wide at its slimmest point
between the bold rocky crags that
line the nearly one nautical mile long
channel. Short of a workable wind, we
would have no recourse for steerage
through opposing currents with any
force beyond 1.5 knots.

Enter our need for a slack tide,
that short period between tides when
tidal water stops flowing before the
direction of the tidal stream reverses.
At slack tide, we would have the least
amount of adverse current and thus

the best chance of helming through
the passage under sail power alone.
Slack tide at Dodd Narrows generally
lasts for about 20 minutes. Timing was
everything.

We awoke the morning of our de-
parture to a mild 10-knot southwest
wind. We set sail in light airs under
main and Genoa and we handily made
the jaunt from our protected anchorage
off New Castle Island in Nanaimo
harbor to Dodd Narrows in less than
two hours.

Our newly purchased *Current Atlas*:
*Juan de Fuca Strait to Strait of Geor-
gia* put Dodd Narrows slack tide at
approximately 4:30 pm on July 11,
2012, well after our arrival at the pass.
Looking ahead through the binoculars
to the churning waters at the mouth of
the pass we knew we had to wait for
slack. But where? The waters we were
in were far too deep to consider an-
choring and to sail beyond the mouth
of the pass to an anchorage of a decent
depth would put us too far away to be





able to properly and predictably position ourselves to take advantage of the change from the ebb to the flood tide.

A NEW TYPE OF MOORING

“Over there,” Michael declared from his perch on the bow and pointed to a floating log boom some 300 yards from the entrance to Dodd Narrows. “We can tie up to that boom.”

“We can’t tie up to a log boom,” I sputtered. “There’s nothing to tie to.

There. . .there are no cleats on a log,” The growing anxiety already present in my mind and body was now becoming amplified by this new adventure.

“Eh. I’ll figure something out,” he said. “Ready about.” “Wait. What?” I clamored. The tension produced in an average day of sailing was an exhausting experience for me. Still relatively new to ocean sailing, I had happily assumed the position as helmsman in our two-person crew and from my

post in the aft seat of the cockpit at the tiller I found the perfect spot to practice my transition from the “rail-meat” crew member role during gentle summertime sails of my youth on southern British Columbia lakes to the full scale reality of blue water sailing.

“But Michael. We can’t . . .”

“Ready about!” he called out again. Though it’s typically the helmsman that calls out to alert the crew of a change in point of sail, Michael as-



Skibo surged forward, gaining speed towards our destination.

“OK. So, just like when we dock. We’ll come up alongside the logs to port after we round up. I’ll drop the main but you keep the genoa tight until we’re close. Got it?”

This was posed as a question but voiced with the tone of an order from his position above a stanchion where he bent over to tie a fender for our approach. Michael had also filled three old and damaged fenders with water to sink them low enough below *Skibo*’s waterline to protect her from the logs. He was in his element. He loved the challenge of sailing. He loved the challenge of testing himself and his skills. I, on the other hand, was still warming to the idea of such a challenge being a friend.

“OK. Yes. OK.” I stood up, shifting the tiller from my right to my left hand and reached for the jib sheet, uncleated it and tested the tension of the wrap on the winch to make sure I could hold the sheet with one hand.

With the mainsail dropped we slowed to a manageable speed as we approached the logs. “Just like docking, just like docking, I can do this,” I whispered, my eyes fastened to the

logs ahead of us as I tried to measure the distance to somehow match it to the subtle movement of my hand upon the tiller, willing the two elements to come together in one fluid movement.

I eased *Skibo* alongside a three-foot diameter log on the outside of the 50-yard wide log boom and I released the jib sheet. We slowed to a near stop and Michael stepped from the bow to the logs with a dock line in hand. He set about doing as he said he could do, figuring out how to tie us up to the log boom. I went below to make us some lunch and wait for my breathing to return to normal.

Three sandwiches later we were still seeing white water and running current at the north entrance to Dodd Narrows. An hour later and the tidal streams alongside *Skibo*’s hull had abated to an almost imperceptible crawl.

TIME TO GO

“It’s almost 4:30 and I’d say that current has definitely slowed. I think slack is almost upon us. Let’s get over there and get ready. Let’s sail through our first pass,” declared Michael.

We approached the opening to the pass as a power boat easily motored

sumed this task, as our skipper, while I was still learning the art of reading water, wind, current and telltales.

“Ready,” I replied, the force of my exhaled breath as sole testimony of my disagreement with his decision.

“Hard alee!” he exclaimed.

I pushed the tiller hard over to starboard to bring us across from our beam reach to a close hauled approach to the foreboding log boom. As the Genoa filled with wind once again,





Mike and Kate, becalmed after transiting Dodd Narrows

through the narrow channel, seemingly unaware of the monstrous challenge that stood before us and our small sailboat.

With the pass now clear of oncoming vessels, we launched forward, Michael up on the bow to guide us through any obstacles and me, hand fastened to the tiller with the jib sheet gripped steady in my other hand, standing at attention in the cockpit.

Before we cast off the logs, Michael had switched the Genoa for the jib so as not to risk being overpowered. I was happy to have the jib hanked on if only because its smaller size gave me a much greater view of the seascape before me.

Precaution abounding, we motored for perhaps one minute, just long enough to position ourselves in the middle of the channel and provide some directional stability. Then, we shut the motor off.

Michael raised the mainsail and jib and the main filled with a glancing breeze from our own apparent wind. We were underway. The ebb, having given way to slack tide before the flood, boasted great rises of rounded shoreline rock, lapped by the now shallow waters to reveal lucid pools of damson and mulberry starfish.





Skibo underway in Dodd Narrows; below, view of Gulf Islands from the south side of Dodd Narrows

In the slim flash of time before we slipped into the pass, too far in to change course now, a bald eagle set to flight above us from its tree-top perch on the southeast shoreline of Mudge Island, dwarfed only by the sudden acrobatic dartings of the crush of swallows that flew overhead, oblivious in their whimsy to the weight of our bravery.

Water chortled along the hull as we graced our way into Dodd Narrows. During the ensuing 20 minutes we ghosted past rock bluffs that rose around us, dappled with the gnarled ferruginous limbs of arbutus trees

grasping outwards amidst thick stands of virescent fir and cedar that smothered the narrow shorelines on either side of us to create a stunning enveloping silence. Silence lay atop a moving scape of west coast wilderness. Into this silence, we sailed.

And then, we were through. We sailed out of Dodd Narrows into the protected waters of the southern Gulf Islands. We did it. We had sailed through our first ocean pass. As the tension of the task slipped away, my grip on the tiller relaxed and my eyes took in the previously hidden treasures of the islands laid out before us.

The wind had dropped to a whisper. *Skibo* sat becalmed. Michael and I left our respective posts, stood together in the embrace of *Skibo's* small cockpit and gripped one another in a thrilled embrace. This was our victory. **BWS**

Kate Gilgan is a writer, mother and hesitant adventurer. From a life aboard their Contessa 26 to a rustic wilderness cabin to life with two toddlers in Bali, Indonesia, Kate and her husband Michael delight in family style discovery and exploration. When not adventuring, they live a quiet life in the mountains of southern British Columbia.





Going Coastal to NEW ENGLAND

by Curtis Morris, Jr.

A flotilla cruise from Hampton, Virginia to Southern New England offers adventure, new friends and a taste of history

In the summer of 2015, my wife Carol and I thought about sailing our boat *Legacy*, a 2011 Hunter 39, from her homeport in Hampton, Virginia, to New England via a coastal route in 2016. Sailing in the company of some other vessels from our yacht club was also a possibility. Cruising with a small flotilla of friends would further enrich the experience. Going coastal would also allow us to meet new people and see new places.

With this decided, we started to lay a plan. We thought about departing at the end of May 2016 from Hampton to spend the Memorial Day weekend on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, and then sail the 10 miles out the bay to make the overnight, 140-mile passage offshore to Cape May, NJ. From there, we would sail to Atlantic

City, where we would leave the boat for three days so Carol and I could fly to Chicago for her high school reunion. Some of our flotilla would sail on while friends aboard a buddy boat named *Starchaser* would wait for us before continuing up the Jersey coast to Manasquan, and then Sandy Hook and Atlantic Highlands.

From there, we planned to cruise through New York Harbor, the East River, Hell Gate, and then into Long Island Sound where we could take our time visiting various ports of call in New York, Connecticut, and possibly Rhode Island. At some point, a rendezvous with other boats in the flotilla was also a goal. Then, we would return via Long Island Sound, the Jersey shore, Delaware Bay, the C&D Canal to the Chesapeake Bay, and be home by mid-July.

THE GETAWAY

The “to do” list of preparations was long but *Legacy* is a good boat and we had her rigged for ocean sailing. On May 26, the lines were tossed, and we set course for the charming village of Cape Charles 14 miles across the Chesapeake Bay. This short, windless cruise motoring across the bay under sunny skies was anticlimactic to say the least. However, we had a great Memorial Day Weekend visiting with friends and local sailors, sampling local fare, visiting shops, and dressing as pirates for a costume contest that we didn’t win.

On May 30 our cruising flotilla skippers listened to the weather forecast from Chris Parker on my SSB. It was not good. A nasty low was developing off South Carolina with likely movement north in a few days. Local weather had turned to a gray overcast. I evaluated Chris’ report and given the pros and cons, we all decided we would go as planned since

delay would make things worse. The adventure was on.

Our flotilla motorsailed the 10 miles down the Bay and slipped under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge into the foggy Atlantic. As I steered *Legacy* offshore and turned north several miles off the coast, four-foot quartering seas rocked the boat under persistent cold rain squalls. A weak seven-knot southeast wind made for a chilly time on deck as nightfall approached. We were in for 140-miles of uncomfortable motorsailing.

Then “Murphy” struck. The batteries were not charging, voltage was dropping, the fuel gauge dropped to zero and the tachometer failed to change regardless of the throttle setting. A cursory check of the alternator showed it was turning normally and the Yanmar diesel looked and sounded fine. Given the lumpy seas, it was impossible to do any real electrical troubleshooting.

Since we did not know our fuel burn rate because of the instrument problems and difficult sea state, I took the precaution of transferring five gallons of diesel into our fuel tank with a small electric pump.

At that point, I radioed the flotilla about our situation. Two well-lit boats, *Damn Yankee* and *Veritas*, found us in the gloom and offered to position themselves a half mile ahead of us. With fellow sailors showing their lights, I turned off all our lights, the SSB, and the radar, using it only occasionally to conserve energy. Carol switched off the freezer and refrigerator.

Thanks to AIS, the chartplotter, and the occasional radar fix, we knew where we were even when we lost sight of our lead vessels in the fog and darkness. It was uncomfortable, but we knew the northward slog could continue.

THE JERSEY COAST

Twenty-three hours after leaving Cape Charles, we found ourselves

emerging from the fog into sunlight. Three hours later, we were safely tied up in a marina at Cape May, NJ. The batteries were still good. Subsequently, after several false fixes and the eventual help of a mechanic, all of our mysterious voltage and instrument problems were traced to an ignition panel plug, which joins the panel to a plug on a cable going to the alternator and a common instrument ground. The plug had loosened slightly after five years and contacts had accumulated some grimy dust. After a simple cleaning, all systems began to work as advertised.

We enjoyed Cape May with its beautiful old houses, B&Bs, and local shops. All crews enjoyed a sumptuous lobster dinner in the evening. The following morning all boats departed except for us and *Starchaser*. Frankly, we wanted to chill. We were glad we did because bad weather and the cursed fog had returned with a vengeance forcing the rest of the fleet to duck into Atlantic City.

The following morning, our flotilla of two clawed our way through the ever-present fog into the Atlantic. Fortunately, by mid-morning all was well with the world and the fog began to lift as we sighted Atlantic City and its inlet.

The inlet was roiled up with the wakes of countless pleasure craft, but once out of the inlet the trip to the fuel dock and marina was pretty calm. Our pick of a marina adjacent to a casino proved to be a well-run and secure choice. Leaving the boat safely tied-up, Carol and I flew to Chicago for her high school reunion. We returned three days later and left the following morning for Manasquan inlet about 50 miles north on the



Jersey coast. Ducking into the inlet would break up the 80 mile or so run to Sandy Hook.

The uneventful, but sunny trip had us mostly motorsailing with sightings of coastal cruisers like us making their way north and sometimes south. Medium size cargo craft passed in the distance while closer in we were greeted by pods of dolphins playing in the waves. Manasquan inlet came into view in late afternoon.

This inlet can be impassable with a strong east wind. The current is swift and the tidal range was over four feet on fixed docks. As dumb luck would have it, we had no east wind and were soon moored at the fuel dock by an impressive dock crew. That evening all crews dined aboard and turned in for an early morning departure the next day.



We were actually able to do some sailing interspersed with motorsailing the next day en route to Sandy Hook and the anchorage at Atlantic Highlands. Finally, we began to shed some of our foul weather gear thanks to warming temperatures. Rounding Sandy Hook, we snaked through various dredging vessels and kept an eye out for cargo ships, most of which were either headed to or coming from New York Harbor a few miles away.

Contacting the Atlantic Highlands harbor master on VHF netted us a mooring ball, inside the breakwater, which we picked up on the first try with me doing the grunt work and Carol at the helm.

For the next several days, Ron and Sue from *Starchaser*, and Carol and I hiked the surrounding area, checked out several restaurants, and went to a farmer's market. Our daughter and her family who live in the area had dinner with us ashore. The hospitality and friendliness of all we met in the town, harbor, and yacht club were much appreciated.

Our last night on the mooring ball provided more excitement than we wanted. The wind speed and wave action increased dramatically. The wind was so strong the bimini connector started to unzip before I secured it with a bungee. We clocked 54 knots during the night. Below, copious amounts of alcohol were consumed. Fortunately, day break brought quiet, sun, and a mere 12 knots of wind from the north.

THE BIG APPLE

We left the mooring ball and cruised into the organized chaos of New York Harbor. I have never seen so many AIS contacts on the chartplotter. We used our VHF to alert ships of our intentions and, conversely, they told us where they were going, or where we could go. That said, the "big boys" ruled the right of way!

Our flotilla did lazy eights off of lower Manhattan taking pictures of the Statue of Liberty, Freedom Tower and other sights as Carol assertively and continually warned me about another approaching vessel threatening disaster. We entered the East River an hour before max flow through Hell Gate. Carol had studied the cruising guide and learned that if we did this the current would carry us the entire 22 miles to Long Island Sound.

Entering the river, we quickly hit eight knots with the engine barely turning over, and then sped up to 12 knots as we passed the United Nations, Roosevelt Island, and approached Hell Gate at the

junction of the Harlem and East Rivers. At that point, I contacted a mid-sized tanker quickly gaining on my stern. The captain and I agreed I would move a bit to starboard and he would move a bit to port. Minutes later a 30-foot high steel wall you could almost touch, or so it seemed, glided past as we both followed the river to the Long Island Sound. Our total transit time was just two hours.

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Once in the sound, we sailed for another hour and entered Manhasset Bay, where we fueled up and picked up a mooring ball. The following morning, on our way to Milford, CT on the other side of the sound, we spotted two elderly ladies in a 30-foot, minimally equipped sailboat. The stern showed a home port in Louisiana. I asked if they were from out of town, or actually locals. They said, "Yes, we are from Louisiana and we are bound for Maine. This is the first time we ever took a long cruise that wasn't on a lake". After wishing them well, I thought you are as old as you want to be, and the spirit of adventure exists as long as you want it to live.

We spent days in Milford enjoying this scenic New England town, which is replete with fine restaurants, a lovely town green and a convenient ice cream shop next to the town marina. We celebrated Ron and Sue's anniversary over delicious dishes of lobster paella paired with good wine.

From Milford we cruised to Mystic, CT, dodging lobster traps along the way. From *Legacy*, we launched our dingy and used its electric engine to motor several miles up the Mystic River to the Mystic Seaport Museum. The history of 18th and 19th century New England whaling was told in countless displays. We toured the *Charles W. Morgan*, reportedly one of the most successful whaling vessels ever, which was built in 1841 and taken out of service in 1941. We got to see how old vessels are restored with ancient techniques.



For example, the slave ship *Amistad* was in for a refit. It is the recreation of the ship that was taken over by its African slave prisoners, who were then recaptured at a New England port. The slaves were eventually freed from a U.S. jail thanks to a court defense by John Adams, later a U.S. president. The present-day *Amistad* was once captained by William Pinkney, the first African-American to sail solo around the world.

Leaving Mystic, most of the flotilla cruised to a rendezvous in Stonington, CT, famous for its New England charm, and repelling the British in the War of 1812. Beautiful old houses are everywhere, and good looking heirloom quality sailing craft lie smartly moored in the harbor. Crews of *Legacy*, *Starchaser*, *Merlin*, *Grace*, and *Damn Yankee* swapped stories and caught up on each other's travels while sight seeing and enjoying meals together.

HOMEWARD BOUND

We elected to begin the sail home as *Starchaser* had earlier commitments at home, and ours weren't too much further behind. We sailed back to Mystic, explored Noank, CT, and then pressed on to Oyster Bay, NY, where we were welcomed with a picturesque sunset sailing regatta.

Oyster Bay is the site of the Battle Ship Maine memorial, and the summer White House of Theodore Roosevelt. While President, TR laid out his foreign policy by saying, "Walk softly and carry a big stick". His White House is now a fine restaurant and micro brewery with advertising posters of him, beer in hand, saying "Walk softly and carry a big growler you will go far!"

From Oyster Bay, we retraced our route through New York harbor and down the Jersey coast. Underway to Cape May in sunny warm skies, we spotted numerous dolphins and a whale to say nothing of experiencing great sailing. Hull speed plus was the order of the day.

Our early morning departure from

Cape May up the Delaware Bay saw us motorsailing in light winds, marked by non-stop ship traffic and a lone guy in a 20-foot row boat rowing up the bay. At least he was going with the tide.

In late afternoon, the wind piped up to 20 knots as we waited for a massive car carrier to exit the C&D canal. The captain asked if I could move to the starboard side of the Delaware Bay channel to which I replied *Legacy* will be happy to go outside the channel! The C&D canal itself is 450 feet wide and for our passage through it was devoid of any other ship traffic.

As the sun was starting to set, our little flotilla ducked into a rustic marina off the side of the canal in Bear, DE. It actually had a traffic light to let you know when it was safe to enter or exit the marina.

The following morning, we completed our trip through the canal and entered the Chesapeake Bay. We decided to take a detour to visit the colonial town of Georgetown, MD, so we turned east into the beautiful Sassafras River. It was then Carol and I heard a mayday from an overturned sailboat at the mouth of the river. By the time we got there, the Coast Guard had rescued two crewmen and the sailboat was being towed to safety.



From Georgetown, we sailed in tee-shirt weather down the bay and stopped in Annapolis and Solomon's Island before heading home to Hampton. A month had passed and we had fulfilled our quest to sail *Legacy* to New England. We'd made new friends and visited charming and historic ports. And, we had the pleasure of sailing with a flotilla of friends. **BWS**

Curtis Morris is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel and international security consultant. He does freelance writing, and is a presenter to sailing groups. He is the Past Commodore of the Old Point Comfort Yacht Club in Hampton, VA.





SEAMANSHIP FOR CRUISERS

ship at sea: tips and advice in dealing with a wide range of conditions.

BEFORE DEPARTURE

Becoming an accomplished sailor takes knowledge and practice but there are a number of skills you can study before you go sailing. Take the time to learn the terminology not only of the yacht's parts but also the sailing commands, realizing that sailing's unique and specific language varies from boat types and skippers. Therefore, study the terminology for the type of yacht you will be sailing and ensure that you understand and can execute the commands given to you by captain and crew. When an onboard situation becomes stressful, there may not be time for someone to explain what they require you to do. There should be no need for shouting, which may result when a person is unsure or unable to explain what is happening or needs to be done.

Two concerns that frequently affect new sailors are heeling or falling in the water. Gaining an understanding of yacht design, understanding why vessels heel and what you can do to reduce heeling frequently helps reduce anxiety. A competent swimmer comfortable in the water will always have less anxiety than those who are not strong swimmers. Whether in tropical or temperate climates, we swim at most opportunities incorporating long swims as part of our personal fitness program. We both enjoy maintaining our underwater skills and this has proven useful for clearing lines around the prop, dealing with failed

Two of the world's most experienced offshore sailors and dedicated seamanship educators, share what they have learned over lifetimes at sea by John Neal & Amanda Swan Neal

Having spent most of our lifetimes sailing and teaching ocean passagemaking, we enjoy following those new to sailing as they start mastering skills and assuming responsibility for their own safety. To a sailor, this comes under the broad term of seamanship. We've come to understand that seamanship is gained from many sources and only partially by reading books and taking classes. It's often repeated practical experience combined with basic common sense,

preparation, awareness and respect for one's surrounding environment that makes for good seamanship.

Seamanship is one of the keys to your safety and enjoyment of your sailing experiences whether you're going out on a day sail or on an around the world cruise. It applies to all vessels and their crew and poor seamanship or judgment can result in damage to your vessel and injury to your crew. In this article we've separated seamanship into two categories, pre-departure: how you prepare your boat, yourself and your crew; and seaman-



Provisioning carefully will help crew morale

ball valves and cleaning the antifouling and prop.

A sailor who knows their location is one who is more at ease with her surroundings. Complete a coastal navigation course and become proficient at navigation so that you can quickly and accurately plot positions on paper charts. Practice using radar and AIS. *Starpath Radar Trainer* is an excellent computer instructional program. If your MFD/radar is an older unit not AIS-compatible, consider adding a separate, stand-alone AIS transceiver such as Vesper Marine's Watchmate. Another more expensive option is to install a new integrated MFD (multi-function display) combining radar, chartplotter and AIS. If you're planning extended voyages, you'll certainly appreciate the fact that newer systems draw considerably less power and are fully integrated and easy to operate.

Establish and review emergency procedures for crew overboard, fire, sinking, abandon ship, rig and steering failure, first aid, communications and tsunami response. A crew that has an understanding of these procedures

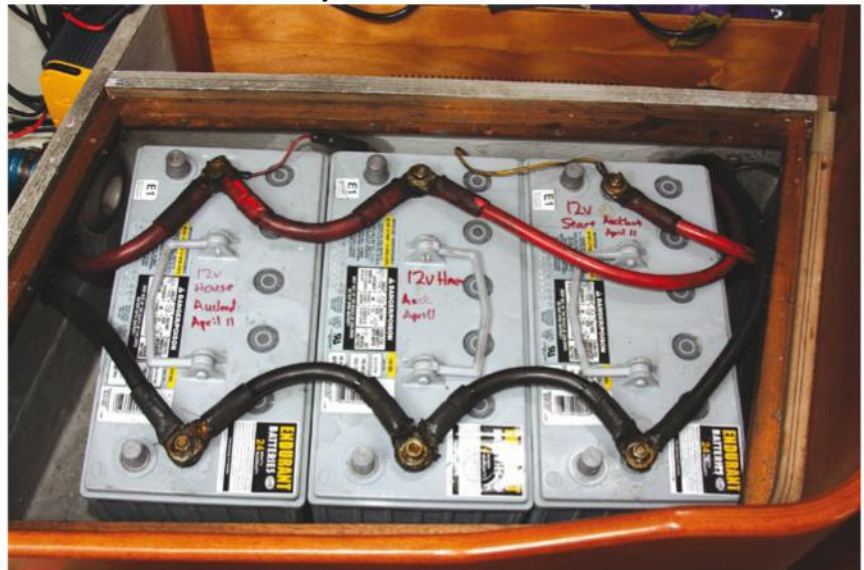
is one that is well prepared.

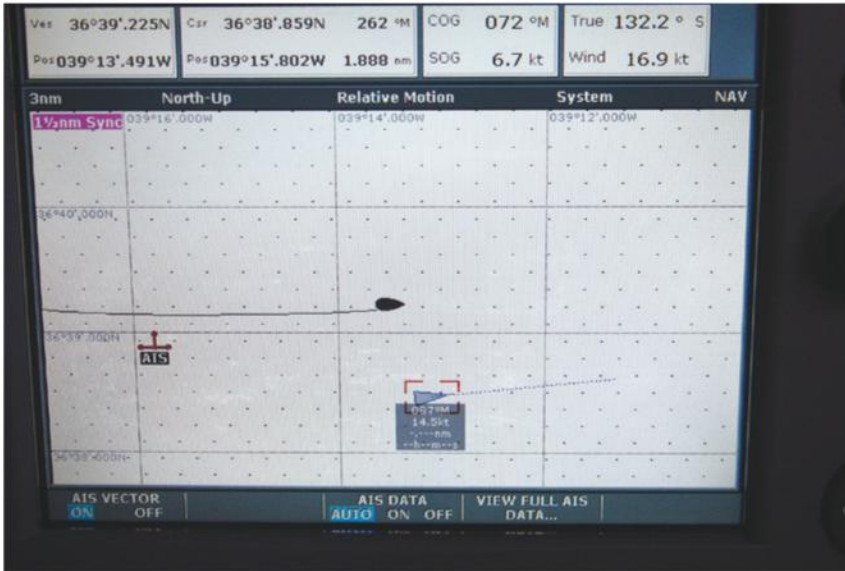
Post a Sail Reduction Guide so everyone knows the correct sail combination for specific wind speeds. Having reliable wind speed and direction instruments takes the guesswork out of determining appropriate sail combinations. Ensure that everyone understands how the sails are handled, including reefing and safe winch

procedure. Can the main be reefed in under three minutes? If heading offshore, gain an understanding of storm management tactics and if possible, formulate a plan. Practice the deployment of storm tactics and devices.

Don't overload your boat as that makes it slower and more vulnerable to damage from breaking seas. Establish dedicated safe stowage procedures

Make sure batteries are safely secured





both above and below decks. Evaluate and eliminate items on deck and below to keep your boat free of clutter that might become airborne during storm conditions or slip down into the bilge and block the bilge pump. Prepare your vessel for a knockdown or for a large wave dumping into the cockpit; you may need to add a pin or strap to secure companionway wash/drop boards. Ensure that batteries, floorboards, locker doors and drawers are substantially secured.

Keeping your crew hydrated and fed is important not only for morale but it turns into a seamanship issue in heavy weather. A crew that is not well nourished or properly hydrated will sooner suffer from fatigue, which often leads to poor judgment. Provision with meals that are easily prepared by anyone aboard and include some freeze dried meals and healthy, high-energy snacks such as trail mix, granola bars, instant porridge and soup, dried fruit and nuts. A top plunger Thermos strapped into a corner of our galley counter saves us having to boil the kettle each time we'd like a hot drink or instant meal. If a boat has skanky-tasting tank water, plan on thoroughly cleaning the tank and consider installing a quality water filter to purify your drinking water.

Nothing affects your safety and

comfort on the water more than weather. Learn the dynamics of weather patterns by ideally taking a marine weather course, or at least studying Chris Tibbs' RYA *On-Board Weather Handbook*. Get in the habit of checking the weather daily, whether via internet, on the television, in the newspaper or on the VHF. Have a method for getting weather updates at sea. A simple no-cost resource we use daily worldwide are GRIB (gridded binary files) forecasts from www.saildocs.com received over an Iridium satphone. Occasionally, requesting a

SECURITÉ CALL

1. SECURITÉ, SECURITÉ, SECURITÉ
2. This is the Sailing Yacht _____
3. Our position is _____
4. Our course is _____ degrees magnetic and our speed is _____ knots.
5. We are sailing in reduced visibility

detailed text forecast from a private weather router such as www.commandersweather.com or www.wriwx.com can prove invaluable, particularly in an area of dynamic and volatile weather conditions such as crossing the Gulf Stream or Bay of Biscay.

When undertaking a passage with two people where there is an increased chance of rough conditions, consider taking an experienced third crew person. An extra watch person greatly decreases your chance of sleep deprivation (three hours on watch and

six off instead of three on, three off). This may also be a requirement of your insurance company, particularly on your first offshore passage.

AT SEA

Basic seamanship follows protocols and rules born from tradition. Competency, organization and prudent decision making along with a continual awareness of safety generally creates a happy ship with minimal drama. Often an errant event can snowball into something more serious so trial and error may not be the best method of learning for the beginning sailor. Slowly build your skills realizing that everyone learns differently; for example, some people are tactile learners, learning by repetition while others are conceptual learners, learning easily by studying diagrams or instructions.

Establish a watch schedule. Many cruising couples alternate three hour watches at night and sharing watches during daylight hours. Standing watch in a sheltered location in the cockpit rather than below increases overall situational awareness. Hourly log entries with position, course, speed, log, wind speed and direction and barometric pressure are an important part of watch duties along with plotting

your position on a paper chart at least every four to six hours. Don't rely solely on electronic charts as some reefs and rocks may not be displayed.

Avoid seasickness and keep everyone involved with shipboard life. Try to maintain a civilized routine, even in rough weather, with set mealtimes together. Maintain hydration and encourage crew to keep the boat clean and tidy; we even post a duty rooster. Monitor battery voltage, charging when necessary and inspect rigging and sails daily for signs of wear or

anything amiss. Consider checking in with a radio/weather net with your daily position report. This often relieves anxiety for those new to passage making.

Ensure that everyone understands the watch instructions and have them written in the log book. Maintain leadership, responsibility and open communication. Encouraging communication of problems promptly is an excellent way of avoid misunderstandings.

Once settled in on passage, practice all points of sail, reefing, heaving-to, rigging a preventer and if appropriate the setting of light air sails and storm sails. Practice single-handling the boat (with crew staying below) and Lifesling man-overboard retrieval.

Sail your boat to the conditions. Modern sailboats sail best at moderate angles of heel, not with the rail under water due to the boat being over-canvased. Caution should be taken with

multihulls to not over stress the rig or sails. This is frequently a problem for inexperienced sailors and it pays to be conservative until you understand how much speed your crew and boat can handle. The best time to reef or reduce sail is when you first think about it as waiting to see if conditions worsen increases strain on the crew and equipment. We often discover that after reducing sail, when it was borderline whether or not an additional reef was required, boat speed remains the same, leeway is reduced and the comfort level increases.

The following topics contain notes on conduct and seamanship in certain situations.

COLLISION AVOIDANCE

Modern ships may travel at speeds up to 25 knots so the time from first sighting a ship until potential collision may be under 10 minutes. Rule Five of the International Regulations for pre-

venting Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) makes maintaining a watch a matter of law. This rule applies in any condition of visibility, and states, "Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and the risk of collision."

The COLREGS clearly creates an obligation to maintain a continuous visual and audible watch for signs of other vessels and to use equipment such as radar and AIS to supplement those senses when the situation requires.

AIS (Automatic Identification System) is an excellent collision avoidance tool, but is not required for fishing vessels. We've noticed that in the Pacific not all vessels required to be transmitting AIS signals are doing so. In the Atlantic and Europe, it's rare to



encounter any vessel including yachts that are not transmitting AIS signals.

Never assume that a ship you sight has someone on watch or can see your vessel. Never assume that a ship can quickly alter course or stop, because they can't. Never attempt to cross in front of a commercial vessel. It's safer to make an easily visible major course change, passing astern of a ship. Don't cross close astern of a fishing or towed vessel.

Be prepared to quickly take evasive action if a ship alters course towards you. While on passage, if you judge your course will take you within two miles of a ship in clear daylight weather, or within 2 to 4 miles at night or with reduced visibility, attempt to contact them on Channel 16, explaining your intentions. Keep radio communications short. Speak clearly and slowly, using single digits for positions and courses especially when advising vessels of your intentions or course change. In international waters, English is rarely the watch keeper's first language. Example: "Motor Vessel *Silver Star*, *Silver Star*, this is the sailing vessel *Windsong*, four point five miles on your starboard bow. Our position is . . . and I am slowing down so that you will pass ahead of me. Please reply on Channel 16".

Broadcast Sécurité (see-cure-eh-tay)

messages if sailing in heavy squalls with reduced visibility or if you are hove-to and have reduced maneuvering ability.

Monitor your radar and AIS continuously whenever you are within 100 miles of land or are experiencing reduced visibility. At night, when more than 100 miles offshore, turn the radar and AIS on for two minutes every hour to check for ships, squalls and land. The power consumption when doing this is negligible.

A masthead tricolor running light ensures maximum visibility and cannot be blocked by headsails or heeling and is essential to good seamanship when night sailing.

SQUALL AVOIDANCE

Several times in the tropics, we've experienced wind speed increasing from 12 knots to 60 knots in five minutes. Our most intense tropical squall occurred between New Zealand and Tahiti; the wind went from 5 knots to 80 knots and back to 5 knots in less than one hour. We saw the squall line approaching, dropped all sail and steered downwind in flat seas.

Keep a watch for squalls. If no one is on watch and you get hit by a squall you may discover your boat becomes quickly overpowered thus making

it difficult to reduce sail. At night, squalls are generally visible as a dark cloud formation and on the radar usually display as a distinct mass.

When you see a small squall approaching it's wise to change course and avoid it if possible. If you can't avoid a squall be prepared to quickly reduce sail. When about to encounter a powerful squall line or frontal passage, one frequently sees lightning at the leading edge and may possibly experience a blast of cold, damp air before wind speed increases. To lessen your exposure to these systems, reduce or drop sail and motor directly towards the area of least activity using radar as a tool.

SEAMANSHIP AT LANDFALL

Every year we hear of yachts becoming total losses after piling onto offshore reefs or islands. Don't let this happen to you. Ensure that you are well rested for landfall. If you are fatigued from a difficult passage, the strong urge to get into port can overpower good seamanship and judgment.

Continually calculate your arrival time to ensure a daylight arrival. Be prepared to slow down or possibly heave to. Be patient. Don't be tempted to make landfall in an unfamiliar port in the dark, squally, foggy or stormy weather as far more boats are lost while making landfall during these situations than are lost mid-ocean.

Electronic navigation charting systems don't allow for safe landfall at night as few of the charts in third world waters have been corrected using satellite imagery. Maintain a watch with a good 360-degree look-out, remembering to check astern for overtaking traffic and monitor all electronic equipment: radar, depth sounder, GPS, and radio. Check current and tide tables and study the cruising and pilot guides. Expect the surface current to increase as you approach land.



RESOURCES

On-Board Weather Handbook, Chris Tibbs, International Marine

Understanding Weatherfax, Mike Harris, Sheridan House

Illustrated Navigation, Ivar Dedekam, Fernhurst Books

Offshore Cruising Companion, John and Amanda Neal, www.mahina.com

World Cruising Routes, Jimmy Cornell

Surviving the Storm, Steve Dashew. www.Setsail.com

Radar Trainer, www.starpath.com

Heavy Weather Cruising, Tom Cunliffe, Fernhurst Books

Black Wave, John and Jean Silverwood, Random House

Ten Degrees of Reckoning, Hester Rumberg, Penguin Books

SEAMANSHIP AT ANCHOR

Seamanship doesn't end once your anchor is down. Make a practice of always plotting your GPS position on a paper chart as soon as you drop anchor in a new bay. This is a quick and simple way to check chart accuracy.

Ensure you always have an "out" if the anchorage conditions change. It's prudent to set a course and enter waypoints to an alternative anchorage in event of a major wind shift. If possible, dive to check the set of the anchor.

If the wind should increase substantially or change direction, put out to sea, move to a more protected anchorage or set additional anchors. Don't wait to see what other skippers do. Monitor the position of surrounding vessels as they may prove to be your highest risk.

If you're safely anchored and an arriving vessel anchors directly upwind of you or in a way that blocks you from raising your anchor or you don't feel comfortable don't hesitate to either re

anchor in another spot or ask the new arrivals to move. After you've had a few boats drag down on you during a midnight squall you'll understand that this affects the safety of both vessels.

Sailors can be like sheep, exhibiting strong herd instincts. If there is only one vessel anchored in a bay, an arriving skipper may anchor as close as possible to them. Don't be guilty of this; perhaps the crew of the original vessel enjoys their privacy.

Gaining seamanship skills should be viewed as an ongoing process. Continually look for ways to increase your knowledge and practical application

of shipboard tasks and procedures. Ensure your vessel is well maintained and always have consideration for the comfort and safety of all aboard. **BWS**

John & Amanda's current boat, Mahina Tiare III is a Hallberg-Rassy 46 which they have sailed 198,280 miles since launching in 1997. They update their website, www.mahina.com by satellite from around the world.

John and Amanda Neal annually sail 10,000 miles teaching seamanship and related skills on ocean passages aboard Mahina Tiare III. Details and expedition logs on www.mahina.com.





SMALL BOATS, BIG DREAMS

*It is not the
size of
your boat that
matters, it is
the size of your
dreams*

by George Day

Back in the Seventies, I had the good luck to be invited to join my old friend John Kiley aboard his Tahiti ketch *Josepha* for a cruise from Jamaica to Tahiti via the Panama Canal. At 30 feet, the little ketch was a proper little ship. While there were a few larger yachts out cruising in the Pacific in those days, 30 feet was not considered small and there were plenty of cruisers out there in boats from 27 to 35 feet.

Today's cruising fleet is made up of much larger boats, with 45 feet being about average, and there are many couples cruising in boats over 50 feet. There is a lot to be said for the comfort and speed of larger cruising boats. And with all of the modern sailing gear and electronics available to us, big boats

are much easier to handle than they used to be. But they are also much more complicated and thus more prone to need maintenance and repairs than small, simpler boats of yore.

POCKET CRUISERS

The term "pocket cruiser" was coined a generation ago to identify the many small but capable cruisers that were launched at the beginning of the fiberglass age of boat building. Boats like the Pearson Triton, Tartan 27 and Catalina 30 were all considered perfectly suitable boats for a family to cruise for a week or an entire summer.

That is how I started cruising. In the early Sixties, our family bought an early version of the Tartan 27 and we took it everywhere. We often piled five or six of us aboard for an

MORC regatta or just three or four for a two-day passage from Cape Cod to the coast of Maine. We sailed in all weather conditions and never felt that the boat was too small.

The early fiberglass pocket cruisers were often designs based on hull shapes that had evolved from the days of wood construction so they had long overhangs, attached rudders and narrow beams. They were cramped and tended to heel over hard in a blow. If the leeward rail went under, you knew it was time to reef.

Today's pocket cruisers make the best use of fiberglass technology and offer much beamier and voluminous hull shapes with longer and thus faster waterlines. Boats like the Beneteau 31, Jeanneau 349 or the Catalina 315 have the space inside of 40 footers from

the old days. And the modern designs sail so much better.

Today's boats are designed to sail fairly upright and use beam and even chines to provide a lot of initial stability. Sailing flat is more comfortable for everyone onboard and is faster than pushing the boat too hard and burying the rail. With roller furling headsails now standard on all cruisers, and with in-mast mainsail furling available even in the smaller cruisers, adjusting the sail plan is dead simple and easily done from the cockpit.

There are a lot of good cruising boats in the pocket cruiser category between 25 and 35 feet. Beneteau offers their 31, 35 and the First 30. For entry level cruising or for those who just like and want a modest size cruiser, these designs will get you on the water and really cruising at an entry level price.

Beneteau's sister company Jeanneau builds two designs in this category—the 33i and the 349—that are big little boats. They are beamy, have long waterlines and spacious interiors. The 349 that was introduced two years ago is a stellar performer under sail and has accommodations of a much larger boat.

Catalina's 315 is a similar kind of pocket cruiser. Light and powered with an ample rig, the boats sail very well and is a real pleasure to handle. Catalina continues to build "American Style" into their boats so you will find solid joinery below decks and a lot of traditional features that set them apart from the fleet.

Com-Pac yachts from Florida offers the very capable Com-Pac 27 that is a truly proper little yacht with ocean sailing capabilities. Very solidly built and with a lot of traditional touches, the 27 would make a safe and comfortable entry level cruiser for a young family or a fine last boat for a couple





J/95

who are aging out of big boat sailing.

Germany has become a world leader in production boat building in the last decade and three companies—Hanse, Bavaria and Dehler—have small cruisers that are modern pocket cruisers. The Dehler 29 is one of the most popular racer-cruisers in Europe with large well established fleets that get together to both race and cruise. The Dehler brand is not that well known in North America but the boats and the builder behind them are first class.

Hanse has quietly but steadily built a market for their boats in North America that now accounts for a significant slice of new boat sales. The Hanse 315 is a perfect little cruiser that is fast, easy to sail, roomy and affordable. It even has twin wheels.

Bavaria made a big push into the

American market over the last five years and is still trying to build market share. Their 33-foot cruiser, designed by Farr, is a huge 33 footer with a lot of interior volume, a large cockpit and wide open side decks. Bavaria builds a lot of value for the dollar into their boats.

American builder J Boats offers several racer-cruiser designs that fit the pocket cruiser profile. The new J/97E that was introduced two years ago is a smart sailing, high quality boat that will acquit itself well on any race course and will double as a fun and comfortable cruising boat between regattas.

Seaward Yachts in Florida builds two smaller cruisers that are both lifting keel designs that prove great “thin water cruising.” The 26 and 32 both

have very salty lines and traditional appeal. With the lifting keels and kick-up rudders, you can beach the boats for an afternoon of swimming and beachcombing. But, they are both capable blue water boats that can take you across the Gulf Stream from Florida to the Bahamas.

Last but not least in this category, Tartan has three boats that will appeal to sailors who want that special combination of performance and cruising comfort in their under 35-foot cruiser. The Tartan 3400 is a beautiful, traditional cruiser that brings all that Tartan is famous for to the market for smaller cruisers. The 3400 sails sweetly and has very pleasant accommodations.

The Tartan 101 and 115 started life under the C&C brand, which is also owned by Tartan. When the company decided to split off the C&C brand, they renamed and re-engineered the two designs to meet traditional Tartan style and construction. Both boats are fast racer-cruisers that have done well in fleets all around America. But, they are also great little cruising boats that will be the right combination of qualities for couples or family who want the best of both worlds.

BIG DREAMS

Since the early days of yachts there have been many great adventures and cruises in pocket cruisers so it is fair to say that it is not the size of your boat that matters, it is the size of your dreams. Here are some of my favorites.

In the 1950, not long after the end of World War II, Susan and Eric Hiscock had a 30-footer built to a Laurent Giles design with a circumnavigation in mind. In 1952, they set off from England and spent three years sailing westabout via Panama, the Torea Strait and the Cape of Good Hope. Their voyage was a model of seamanship and prudent adventure and they laid a wake that many, many sailors would follow.

Also in the 50s, Englishman John Guzzwell succumbed to the call of the



JEANNEAU 30i

FIND
MORE
FREE
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Susan and Eric Hiscock

sea. With a modest budget, he built a 21-foot Laurent Giles design that he named *Trekka* and in this little boat he set off from his home in British Columbia around the world. In 1959, after many adventures and several years, he returned to B.C. as the youngest solo circumnavigator in the smallest vessel to sail around the world.

In the Sixties, a young Californian decided at the age of 16 that he thought it would be a good idea to sail his family's 24-foot Lapworth sloop singlehanded to Hawaii. Along the way, he hatched the plan to sail his little boat around the world. Surprisingly, his parents went along with the plan and even more surprisingly the *National Geographic* agreed to take installments from him along the way. In 1970, Graham returned to California as the



Robin Lee Graham's *Dove*

of the America via the NW Passage and Cape Horn. The grueling and arduous adventures took him 10 months yet he prevailed. And along the way he raised \$130,000 for a local Maryland charity.

Dreaming is a good thing. Following your dreams to sail away is even better. As Lin and Larry often say, "Go small and go now." **BWS**



Lin and Larry Pardey

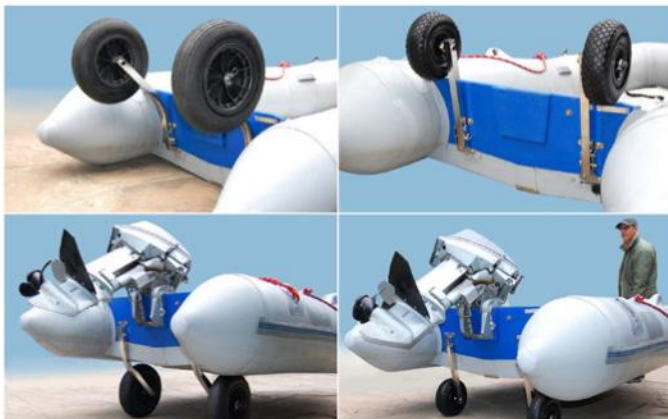
world's most famous sailor and the one who instilled visions of world sailing in thousands of young dreamers who had followed his trip.

In the Seventies, Lin and Larry Pardey began their lifetime of seafaring aboard their 24 foot Lyle Hess designed *Serrafyn*. In this little cutter, they made epic voyage after epic voyage as they sailed eastabout around the world via Panama and Suez Canals. Their books and lectures inspired a whole generation of cruisers.

In the Eighties, young Tanya Aebi convinced her father that instead of attending university she would get a much better education if she sailed solo around the world. Her



Matt Rutherford



WHEELS FOR YOUR DINGHY

Modern dinghies with outboards, especially RIBs, are heavier than ever and hard for one person to move up a beach or across a parking lot or lawn. Folding wheel systems have been around for a long time and are used by a lot of long-term cruisers. Davis Instruments recently introduced their take on dinghy wheels with their new Wheel-a-Weigh, which comes in two models, Standard and Extra Duty. The wheel systems can be installed by anyone handy with tools. The wheels fold up and down and are held in place with quick-release detent pins. And, they can be removed when not needed. For more information log on to www.davisnet.com.



SELF-STOWING DECK CLEATS

The modern lines of today's new cruising boats, with low profile cabins, flush deck hatches, below-deck anchor lockers and windlasses, are a pleasure to look at. But, big stainless steel deck cleats, which are necessary on any cruising boat, can look ugly in the new style environment. Accon Marine offers its new and elegant solution to this problem. Their new 209 Series Lifting Cleats fold away to the flush position at deck level when not in use so you won't stub a toe or ruin your boat's look. When ready to dock, the cleat pops up and is ready to take a heavy line. The cleats are available in sizes from 4.5 inches to 10 inches. For more information log on to www.acconmarine.com.

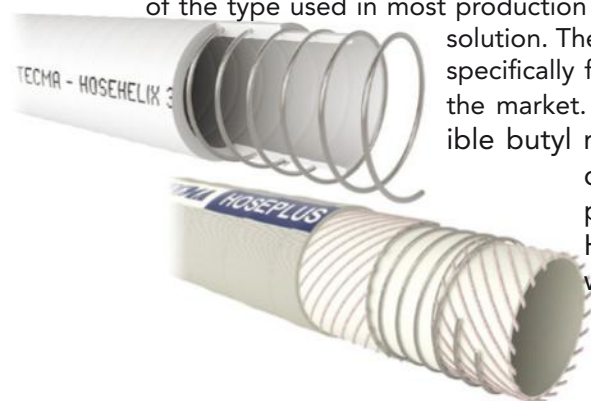
DOCK BOX LIKE MINI-STORAGE UNIT



If you have owned your boat long enough, then you will probably have too much stuff onboard, stuff that you know you will need one day, but not necessarily every day. Also, a lot of us have flammable items on board that could be trouble in a fire or even contribute to starting a fire. For those of us who keep our boats in marinas, adding a dock box is just like having your own mini-storage unit where you can keep paint and thinner, spare lines and hardware, and much more. Better Way Products is a leading manufacturer of dock boxes and offers them in a range of sizes and colors. The boxes are made of fiberglass with gel-coat finishes, are UV resistant and the lids, built with sandwich core construction, are strong enough to sit on. For more information log on to www.dockbox.com.

BEAT THAT HEAD AND HOLDING TANK ODOR

Any boat with a marine head, hoses, a holding tank and thru-hulls is bound to develop a certain odor over the years. While holding tanks can and do give off an odor, the real culprits in the crime often are the hoses that run from the head to the tank and then from the tank to the thru-hulls. Standard, plastic hoses of the type used in most production cruising boats simply do not keep the odor contained. But, there is a solution. Thetford Marine offers their Tecma HosePlus 38 which has been designed specifically for use in marine head systems and is the most impermeable hose on the market. The vanilla-scented hose is also built to last, using highly flexible butyl rubber that's resistant to abrasion, ozone, seawater and marine chemicals, and reinforced with double steel wire. For those who prefer PVC, or have a unique installation, crush-resistant Tecma HoseHelix 38 is an ideal choice. For more information log on to www.thetfordmarine.com.



COOL NOTEBOOKS FOR SAILORS DESIGNED NEAR CAPE HORN

There is something about products made from recycled sails that seems to be the hip, cool thing right now. There are several companies making bags of supposedly used sails that have been repurposed. Now a company in deep South America not far from Cape Horn has introduced a series of handsome notebooks that are decorated with swatches of sail cloth that have been cut from old sails abandoned by sailors who have conquered Cape Horn. There is something romantic about owning a piece of a sail that has rounded the ultimate Cape in the land of glaciers, shipwrecks and seafaring heroics. You can choose your swatch from all types of sail cloth. So, if you want a unique notebook for jotting down your best ideas, or writing about your plans to sail around Cape Horn, here's one just for you. For more information log on to www.capehorn.us.



MODULAR WATERMAKERS FIT TIGHT SPACES

Larger cruising boats almost always are equipped with a water-maker. But even on large boats, finding a place to install a high capacity unit, one that is built as a single integrated system, can be difficult and will inevitably require sacrificing an otherwise useful locker. The boffins at FCI Watermakers have solved this problem with their new Neptune+ Series that are completely modular so each piece of the system can be mounted separately and in an unobtrusive way. Neptune+ watermakers are commercial grade and certified by the ABS, CE and other agencies. The smallest unit will produce 50 gallons an hour, which is ample for most cruisers. The Neptune+ is simple to use and is completely automated. For more information log on to www.fcwatermakers.com.



MORE ON MARINE HEAD PROBLEMS

Flushing a marine head with seawater introduces tiny ocean organisms to the hoses and holding tanks. When they die, an offensive, rotten egg smell can permeate the boat. Raritan Engineering's innovative SeaFresh system lets users select between salt and freshwater sources with the touch of a button, eliminating the cause of the odor. It's available on the company's Atlantes Freedom, Marine Elegance and SeaEra QC toilets. With SeaFresh, users flush the toilet with seawater and, before leaving the boat, rinse with fresh to clear the lines. This not only conserves onboard water resources, but removes the microorganisms trapped in the rim and other inaccessible parts of the toilet, that lead to odors. An unobtrusive wall switch control mounts conveniently on a bulkhead or other flat surface. SeaFresh has a built-in check valve system that prevents raw seawater from contaminating the fresh water tank. For more information log on to raritaneng.com.



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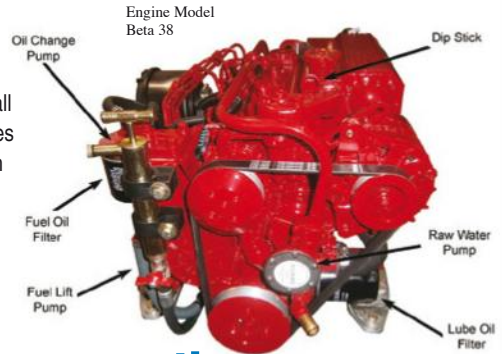
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For the Love of Alaska

Achieving a cruising dream

With our bright blue spinnaker poled out and full of wind, we sailed across the border between British Columbia and Alaska in perfect downwind style. Bathed in April sunshine, our family of four whooped and hollered at the occasion. It had been nearly 700 mostly downwind miles since leaving Victoria four weeks prior and a sense of accomplishment swirled in our wake.

After leaving the friendly confines of the San Juan Islands in early March, we weren't in a rush to reach Alaska, but it was our goal for the summer. Helped along by spring southerlies, we opted for an outside route along the west coast of Vancouver Island then hopped north to Haida Gwaii. From there, Alaska was in our sights and favorable breezes kept blowing us north.

When we bought *Yahtzee* five years ago, sailing to Alaska was a goal. A dream. At the time, we didn't know when it would happen, how long it would take or what the actual route even looked like. We just knew we'd get there. Being that we're not the type of sailors to sit at the dock and ramble

on about fixing our boat and half-baked aspirations for what we'd do with it, we chipped away at the dream and made it happen. And here we are.

For boaters, reaching Alaska from Washington via the Inside Passage can be daunting. It's far. And at times, it's not easy. While cruisers make the trek north every year, sometimes over and over again for many years, many leave the Pacific Northwest and turn left to head south without ever seeing Alaska, which is an absolute shame.

For the crew of *Yahtzee*, though, the voyage has been more than just a trip north. We did it in an unconventional way and are making the experience all our own. There aren't many other northbound boaters around, the recreational fishing crowd has yet to arrive and cruise ship season is in its infancy, so we're basking in what it means to be here early—enjoying spring southerly winds, open wilderness and meeting hearty locals who are getting their first taste of visitors after a long winter.

For Jill, Alaska is her home state, which means that being here amongst its mountains, trees, water and residents is a homecoming. Born and raised in "The Last Frontier" by adventurous parents who drove across

the United States and Canada in a converted school bus in the mid 1970s, built a house with their bare hands and then raised two children is about as Alaskan as you can get. Throw in the fact that their family staked claims on a gold mine in the Alaska Range north of Denali National Park, which her brother still has, and we're talking full on Alaska pride. And if one thing is certain, it's that Alaska is a VERY prideful state.

For good reason. Few people live in this humongous state and even fewer are born and raised here. It is a cruising destination that is truly like no other and the residents who call it home are equally unique. From the moment we tied to the dock in Ketchikan to clear customs we've been welcomed with open arms by nearly everyone we've come in contact with, making us feel right at home.

Now, sitting at the doorstep to Glacier Bay National Park, summer awaits, and we can't help but feel that a cruising dream is being achieved. **BWS**

Andrew, along with wife Jill and sons Porter and Magnus, are currently cruising the Pacific Northwest aboard their Grand Soleil 39 Yahtzee. Follow their adventures at threesheetsnw.com/yahtzee.

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