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Seven Seas Cruising Association



Commodores' Bulletin

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July 2008

CRUISING STATION UPDATE:

Martha's Vineyard, MA

Martha's Vineyard is the second largest island on the U.S. East Coast. It lies only three miles off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The island is comprised of six towns with a winter population of approximately 15,000 people and a summer population of over 100,000. The waterway that separates the island from the mainland is Vineyard Sound, a great sailing area during the summer. Nearby there are many interesting areas to cruise and visit including Nantucket, Chatham, Hyannis, the Elizabeth Islands (including Cuttyhunk), Buzzards Bay, Cape Cod Canal, Narragansett Bay, RI (including Newport, Bristol, East Greenwich and Jamestown), Block Island, RI, Essex, CT and eastern destinations on Long Island, NY.

Martha's Vineyard has about 12 mooring or anchoring locations (see Martha's Vineyard Cruising Station Data) but if this is your first trip to the Vineyard, I would recommend that you head to Vineyard Haven Harbor, a central location in the north-middle of the island where there is lots of room to moor or anchor and where the harbor is protected from all but NE winds. If you



are interested in seeing the island, and there is much to see, you can rent a car or bike from Vineyard Haven (sometimes called Tisbury) or take reasonably priced public transportation, which runs frequently from this town to all points on the island. You can buy food in Vineyard Haven and there is a West Marine Express store, a post office and several places to buy groceries. For repairs and supplies try MV Shipyard and Gannon and Benjamin Marine Railway, a small shipyard that builds or repairs wooden-hulled vessels only. Fuel, water and ice are also available. And of course there are lots of great of restaurants.

Vineyard Haven is home to probably the largest fleet of old wooden vessels on the east coast. Among these are the tall ships Alabama (a 90' Gloucester schooner) and Shenandoah (a 108' square topsails schooner) plus many other smaller and very old wooden boats.

Sail MV, an organization that teaches Vineyard kids to sail for free, is sponsoring the Vineyard Cup from July 18 to 20. This will be a weekend of fun activities including some friendly racing, food and drink, and lots of parties and camaraderie. If you think you would be interested in attending the Vineyard Cup, then please call or write me and I will send more information: Art and Carolyn Spengler, 72 Stone Bridge Rd., Vineyard Haven, MA 02568, Tel. 508-693-1063, cwspengler@capecod.net. We plan to participate in the Vineyard Cup aboard our 30' Nonsuch, *Raven*. We will be on island all summer with the following exceptions: July 6-17 and July 23-August 6. If you plan on being here during our absence, you can contact Pete McChesney (508-696-5357) for any assistance or information.

Do you know someone who might be interested in providing this most appreciated service? Contact Joan Conover, SSCA CS Coordinator at cruisingstations@ssca.org for more information. Become an active part of this great SSCA membership benefit!



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RECOMMENDED COMMODORES

Welcome Aboard

Jon and Jill Danzig	<i>Sirius</i>	Annapolis, MD
John Amber and Judy Chan	<i>Encanto</i>	San Francisco, CA
Karyn and Stephen James	<i>Threshold</i>	Albuquerque, NM
Herbert and Ruth Weiss*	<i>Windpower</i>	Marion, MA

*Welcomed Aboard as Rear Commodores

FOURTH MONTH

Richard and Lynn Bisanz	<i>Wind Pony</i>	St. Paul, MN
Rick Walker and Robin Willstein	<i>Endangered Species</i>	Jacksonville, FL
Tom and Gretchen Carbaugh	<i>Glass Slipper</i>	Newport, RI

THIRD MONTH

J.M. and Gail Kiel	<i>Geneth</i>	Seattle, WA
George and Pixie Noyes	<i>Silver Sea</i>	Cape Coral, FL
Jann Hedrick and Nancy Birnbaum**	<i>Saga</i>	Pt. Richmond, CA
James (Jim) Roberts	<i>Revery</i>	Huron, OH
George and Sylvia Kay Detray	<i>Liahona</i>	Newport, RI

SECOND MONTH

Kenneth and Carolyn Loving	<i>Paws</i>	Annapolis, MD
Roger and Janice Dance	<i>Beaujolais</i>	Jacksonville, FL
Don Mockford and Heather Mackey	<i>Asseance</i>	Toronto, Canada
Paul and Erin Moore	<i>Romany Star</i>	San Francisco, CA
Irv Halper and Marcia Fox**	<i>Hangout</i>	Norfolk, VA
John and Sandy DeLappa	<i>Caliente</i>	Cocoa Beach, FL
Doug Nash and Sylvia Fink	<i>Windcastle</i>	Dana Point, CA

FIRST MONTH

Lynn and Glenn Stevens	<i>Steel Sapphire</i>	Portsmouth, England
Chris Mooney and Barbara Leachman	<i>MoonSail</i>	Kemah, TX
Pete and Maribel Penichet	<i>Paper Moon</i>	New Port Richey, FL
Jonathan and Marcia Petersen	<i>Nonlinear</i>	New Bern, NC
Glanda Johnson	<i>Our Country Home</i>	Corpus Christi, TX
Michael and Barbara Dallas	<i>Evening Star</i>	Marietta, GA

**Applying for Rear Commodore status.

New Rear Commodores

Joe and Cindy Barnes	<i>Maggie Drum</i>
Dave Roberts	<i>Maiden Song</i>
Jack & Patricia Tyler	<i>Whoosh</i>

Important Note from the Editor

SSCA reserves the right to edit the letters printed in the *SSCA Commodores' Bulletin*. Additionally, the SSCA reserves the right to publish letters on appropriate websites and in compilations, unless specifically requested otherwise. SSCA assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or validity of information printed in the *SSCA Commodores' Bulletin*. Furthermore, the opinions stated in the *SSCA Commodores' Bulletin*, either expressed or implied, do not necessarily reflect those of Seven Seas Cruising Association, Inc.

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LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Sloepmouche – 46' Norman Cross trimaran - 5' draft – Oct. 2007- May 2008

Subject/Area: Vanuatu – Part 2: Central Part

Dear SSCA,

After developing our video promotion business in Port Vila for the last year, we finally have some time to cruise again! Here is the info collected during several of our three to five week mini-cruises. As we wrote in our previous letter about Vanuatu (May 2007 *Commodores' Bulletin*), the ultimate cruising guide here is the *Rocket Guide* (www.cruising-vanuatu.com). With charts, aerial photos and sailing directions to most anchorages, you will have no problem making landings. C-Map CM 93 electronic charts are slightly off, so don't rely blindly on them or on cruising guides or our waypoints. This cyclone season (La Niña) was not the best for cruising around Vanuatu as numerous depressions brought us a lot of northerlies with NW and W swells making most anchorages quite uncomfortable or impossible. The previous cyclone season (2006 El Niño) was much better cruising weather-wise!

A few general notes about cruising the islands:

Approach to Port Vila from south: The Pango Pt. lighthouse is not operational, so don't expect to see it. There is now a giant wind generator with a red light for air traffic about halfway along the arm of land between Mele Bay and Devil's Point that may confuse you if you don't know what it is. There is a leading light into Port Vila. If the light is white, it is clear to go straight for it. If you are off the line, the light will be red or green.

Lumpy sailing is generally the case between islands. There are often strong currents running around points of land and between islands. It can be very nasty in strong winds (there may even be overfalls). Don't underestimate. One large catamaran that was trailing their dinghy for the short trip from Havannah Harbor to Vila broke the painter in big waves, and the seas were so rough that they dared not try to recover it and just had to watch it drift away with the expensive outboard. Last season three boats went up on reefs and were lost. Always be sure to have 360° swinging room at anchor, and do not navigate at night. Stand way off if you heave to. The charts are off in most places.

EFATE

Tukutu Bay offers a convenient anchorage just west of the infamous Devil's Point. Waters in this area can be very rough as strong trade winds and currents can make it quite choppy. If you want to take a rest before rounding Devil's Point (going to Port Vila), this is a good spot. The whole bay is surrounded by pastureland with some new construction going on. Anchor in about 25' between coral heads (17°42'58"S, 168°10'67"E) favoring the east side of the bay. Good light is needed to see the coral plateau that sticks out quite a ways from the shore in some places.

Havannah Harbour: While in Port Vila, visit the Cultural Center Museum and find out about the Chief Roi Mata Heritage site. It may be possible for a group of yachties to pre-arrange a guided tour of the Cave (Lelepa Island) and the Burial Site (Hat Island) while in Havannah Harbor.

Ai Creek: Tricky anchorage in 50' over good sand with coral heads, but the bottom slopes quickly to 70-80'. Take your dinghy into the river estuary (at the point of land behind the moorings of Coongoola Cruises), and leave your dinghy at the bridge. Cross the road and walk in the riverbed for 30-45 minutes. You will find several nice swimming holes and mini "jacuzzis" in crystal clear water.

Matapu Bay: Easy anchorage in good sand – stay in about 30-40' depth in order to not get too close to the reefs ringing the shoreline. A short walk south on the main road will lead you to the American pool. It has finally been cleared after years of neglect. It is now beautiful, blue and clear. Nice bath there! There's supposed to be a plane wreck you can see while snorkeling, but we did not find it. The *Rocket Guide* gives good descriptions of the other Havannah Harbour anchorages and activities.

Nguna/Pele Islands: Anchoring near the pass between Nguna (pronounced noo-nah) and Pele was very nice in white sand between widely scattered, easily-seen and deep-enough coral heads in around 25' depth. Even in moderate N winds we didn't roll too much.

The snorkeling out from the guesthouse bungalows on Nguna was some of the most colorful and diverse that we've seen in Vanuatu. You can ride the current holding on to your dinghy in the pass between the two islands. Both have beautiful white sand beaches and swimming-pool-blue water.

NW Nguna, Nawora Matua Bay: We anchored here twice just for a rest stop without going ashore to the village. If you use this anchorage, go in carefully with good light because the chart doesn't show that there are some isolated *bommies* too shallow for comfort. Bottom is coral and hard plateau.

SHEPERD ISLANDS

Tongoa: Because of NW winds and heavy cross swells, we were unable to dive the wall or to stay at Panita. We did hide from a SW blow on the SE corner on the small plateau (25-30') of **Ewose Island**, which was swelly but protected. There are very healthy corals here; buoy your anchor chain if you anchor here.

Cooks Reef: We anchored (day) in the area described in the *Rocket Guide* in dead calm. We went by dinghy all around the outside of the reefs but did not find exceptional snorkeling or diving. Perhaps diving was better a long time ago; perhaps we were spoiled in other places? So far we have not found any really exciting reef diving.

Masquelyne Islands (SE corner of Malekula): We did a direct overnight passage from Port Vila to **Pescarus**. We made sure we would arrive in good daylight as the approach is tricky due to numerous reefs way off the low-lying islands. With good waypoints from the *Rocket Guide*, it is no problem as long as you can eyeball for confirmation!

There is a well-protected anchorage off **Pescarus** and the other two villages. We did some bartering for fruits (grapefruits, papaya, lemons, mini-apples, and more) and lobsters. Being spoiled by many cruisers, they were quite demanding, but with patience and good will you can have a good relation. There is local music, kava-drinking and a small resort aspiring to develop tourism. An unfortunate event over a year ago (the looting of a local yacht that went aground at night on the outside reefs) kept some cruisers away. Villages are often jealous of each other, and each tries to lure yachties'

money and goods their way. We are all the same on the planet. Ask Kalo to show you the best snorkeling spots around. There is also a giant clam and marine reserve they can show you.

We also anchored behind the reef (Mamu AB on *Rocket Guide*), but did not find the good sand at 6m – it must have shifted away and left only coral rubble.

We had quite a washing-machine sea just outside those reefs when rounding them to sail to Port Sandwich. By luck it only lasted for two miles (seas and currents), and we had an easy sail the rest of the way in 20 knots ESE.

Malekula: We decided to go up the east coast. Our first stop was Port Sandwich. Definitely a good hurricane hole if ever needed! Although there's a three-mile fetch if the winds are out of the N. There are majestic views as you enter. You have the choice of several placid anchorages with occasional breezes. Across the bay, opposite the Ballande dock, you can dinghy into the river for quite a ways at high tide. Ask locals how to find the river mouth. Too bad for the shallow bar at the mouth because inside would be the perfect hurricane hole! Snorkeling in the bay is not recommended because of low visibility and past shark attacks but it is nice on the outside of the bay around the Lamap area. Bread is available at Lamap, a nice walk away. It's a little depressing to see remains of the French pre-independence time. Their quality of life was better in the outer islands in those times with better communications, schools and health care. Banon Bay offers a great anchorage in normal trade winds with friendly natives. No fees, no begging. The chief of the small community near the beach can organize some very interesting custom dances for a group of yachties (the dances involve the whole community). There's also a pleasant little waterfall where you can stand under the cascade in the fresh water. It's about a 20 minute walk away.

EPI

Rivelieu Bay: Calm anchorage as described in *Rocket Guide*; good holding in volcanic sand in 10m. The young chief is welcoming cruisers with fruits and veggies. There's also a river where you can do your laundry, but it's not deep enough to swim in.

Lamen Bay: Most popular anchorage on the island. Meet Tasso at Paradise Sunset Bungalows. He is a very nice fellow who organizes lots of activities for his guests. He often organizes a barbeque or pig roast. We did a nice, but long, day hike to a large, high waterfall (about three hours one way for good hikers). The transport to the starting point of the hike was itself an adventure with some great views of the bay and Lamen Island. Tasso's son, Douglas, has a small boat to go deep-sea fishing or to take you to Lamen Island where the dugongs are staying mostly now. We were lucky to be here for New Year 2008, and the celebrations were quite impressive with bonfires lining the whole bay at midnight! Our older flares made for extra fireworks. The village had a whole week of activities. After a few days, the winds veered to the NW-SW so it was time to move to a better-sheltered anchorage. We went around the north of Epi and first checked **Lamaru**, a beach anchorage between the two north tips of the island. It was not protected as the wind moved to the NW, so we continued down the east coast and stopped for two nights in **Mapouna Bay**. Anchorage around 16°35'85"S, 168°12'66"E in about 40' of coral with sand channels. Dugout canoes came shortly after our arrival to welcome us and ask if we needed any help getting in. Chief Pharmacopee invited

us to his village the next morning. Little did we expect a royal welcome with flower leis, fresh fruits and lots of smiles from his extended family! Very nice to be genuinely welcomed. We're glad we had some gifts with us to offer.

Having northerly winds for over three weeks, we also explored the south coast of Epi and found two anchorages in good black sand with a depth of about 20-30', **Kambokia Bay** 16°50'37"S, 168°28'20"E and **Sakao Village** 16°48'16"S, 168°23'06"E. Both anchorages would be exposed in any southerlies.

PAAMA

Tahi anchorage: 20-35' over good volcanic sand bottom. There is a wreck on the northern end of the beach (copra boat that caught fire in 2000). This is a small, shy, but welcoming community.

Ambrym: We were lucky to anchor close enough to **Olal** to be able to walk to the new North Ambrym Yacht Club and Bungalows. The anchorage is not mentioned in guides and is much more protected than the small exposed anchorage just north of Olal. We anchored with six other yachts at 16°06'6"S, 168°07'7"E in **Nebul Bay** in 13-20 m in black sand. From the beach there, it is an easy 45-minute walk past several villages to Olal or a five-mile dinghy trip best done only in mild conditions. You can ask Chief Johnson from Nebul Bay village. Chief Sekor in Olal now has a handheld VHF, so you should be able to hail him from the anchorage if you want to arrange dinner or custom dances. We were lucky to be there for the inauguration of the first Rom Nakamal. Be sure to ask Chief Sekor to explain this to you. One young Czech cruising couple even had a custom wedding while we were visiting. A memorable experience! Nice villagers here too. It takes a little effort, but to witness one of their festivals and Rom Dance is definitely worth it. Unique to the northern region of Ambrym, the Rom dancing truly gave us the feeling of stepping into a living *National Geographic* magazine. There's a long, complicated cultural significance to the dance. The high chief decides who can dance. Men pay high prices in pigs and goods for the privilege. Some of the dancers disguised themselves with layers and layers of dry banana leaves and wore elaborate tall conical masks, the design of which is closely guarded by each clan and passed along to initiates who pay. The masks are destroyed after the ceremony, which is why ancient masks that exist in collections are so rare. The other male dancers were clad only in *nambas*, a woven sheath that covers only the penis and is attached to a wide bark belt holding it straight out or erect. Women danced in grass skirts only. The rhythm was primitive and compelling to the deep bass reverberation of a gigantic three-meter *tam-tam*, accented by the energetic higher pitched beats of smaller *tam-tams* and handheld bamboo models. The dancers sang and chanted and stamped, vibrating the ground around them. This was the first dancing we witnessed where we could believe they were actually dancing the dance for its original spiritual purpose, not as a show to entertain tourists. Very powerful! Pigs were killed and the *nakamal* was revealed with its painted *tiki* guardian and giant masks.

Back at the YC, where burgees and flags donated by yachties gaily flitted on bamboo poles, everyone dived into the abundant *kai-kai* feast with the dancers and villagers. Chief Sekor and his village recognize the great resource that yachties can be to isolated islanders. Don't expect cold beer and watching the World Cup finals on the big screen at this YC as there is no electricity yet. Do not miss the festivals each year in

July and August. In 2008 the Magic Festival is scheduled for July 22-24 and the Back-to-Your-Roots Festival with Rom Dance on August 20-22.

PENTECOST

Homo Bay: Anchor in 25' of good black sand with good holding just south of the old pier. Chief Luke (son of famed Chief Willy who passed away in 2007) is as welcoming as his father. He believes in offering fruits to visitors instead of asking fees or begging. He knows that cruisers are helpful folks always ready to assist when they can. We took a walk (90 minutes one way) to Ratap Cultural Village. Alas, the whole community but one was gone to Bunlap for 100 days of mourning. No custom dancing, but a nice walk back following the river this time. Nice swimming holes and a pleasant hike with Chief Luke.

Being here in April gave us the great opportunity to witness the famous Pentecost land diving. That traditional ceremony happens every year in April-May-June to start the yam harvest season and as an initiation ritual. Most of the ceremonies are only for the communities themselves, but a few can be seen by visitors. They will put on a performance for a minimum cost of 30,000 *vatus* (VUV) or just over \$300 USD any day of the season, but for a group or on a regular performance day (every Saturday), it will be about 8,500 *vatus* per person. Extra fees for video filming might be demanded. This year there are three different towers for public performances. The tallest is the one near Pangí Village at the north end of Homo Bay. There is another near Wali Bay and one near the Airport of South Pentecost. The confusing thing was that Donald Wayback (telephone: 38107) lives in Pangí but organized viewing the jump near Wali Bay, and Luke Fargo of Wali Bay organized viewing the jump at the tower near Pangí. Men, if you can, ask permission to go to the tower the day before the jump and see the jumpers preparing the vines and the platforms. Very interesting. Women are not allowed to go to the tower until the day of the jumps and cannot go near the base until the native women dancers go up there. Chief Luke will organize land dives at the tallest tower for yachties to view for 8,000 *vatus*.

Wali Bay: We met Luke Fargo, who organizes land diving shows for tourists (including cruise ships a few times in the season). He is a great host, running the Londot Garden Beach Resort (telephone: 38120/38444). With the first cruisers we saw this new season, we had garden visits, hikes to the hot springs, a kava break (women allowed) and a meal. His whole family was very welcoming. We also were lucky to be invited to a double wedding in the village nearby with about 200 guests.

Martelli Bay: South Pentecost. We had to shelter from a northwesterly that came up while in Homo, so we went into this south-facing bay. It is very picturesque with wild, tall cliffs and jungle on one side and, on the other, a beautiful, gleaming green-blue church perched on a hill overlooking a small inviting beach that is protected by giant rock outcroppings forested with trees and pandanus. Steep, jungled hills form a backdrop and reminded us of the Marquesas. We anchored on the side near the church, not getting any closer than 30' depth, and found good black sand unencumbered by reef. Any closer, though and the reef rises to just under the surface. The bay is huge, and there are many places to anchor. There looked to be a reef extending out from the rocky cliff area that separates the bay's two black sand beaches. Anchorage: 16°00'4"S, 168°13'5"E. From the church there is a beautiful view of your boat in the bay, and from

the anchorage is a view of the beautiful bay and beaches and seaward, a beautiful view of Ambrym and the cone shaped Lopevi Island. If the wind goes N or W, hopefully you'll have a chance to visit this lovely place.

Waterfall Bay: You will see the waterfall as you approach the anchorage off the nice beach. We met Jeffrey, who guides visitors to their two attractions: the Madiut waterfall (an easy 15-minute walk to a bubble bath pool and big waterfall) and the worthwhile Rell Waterfall Cave (an easy 15- minute walk to a waterfall inside a two-chamber cave; bring a waterproof light). Jeffery and his community decided to clear a path and beautify those two areas for the pleasure of visitors. The 500-*vatu* fee can probably be negotiated for a DVD or other trade items. A 20-minute walk on the main road brings you to the High School (Wadi College) on the hill, where you can buy bread loaves.

Loltong Bay: Protected from all direction but west. Calm anchorage in 15-20' of good sand behind the reef seen in the *Rocket Guide* aerial photo. Follow the alignment of the two triangular markers on the beach (70°T) as you approach the shore to anchor. We found the anchorage waypoint in the *Rocket Guide* slightly off, putting you in the shallow corals to the south of the sandy anchoring area, so beware! There's not much room for more than two to three boats, and the transport boat uses the channel and lands on the beach. If you need to use the phone, you can use the public phone at Chief Richard's. String bands can be heard by arrangement. No natural attractions were mentioned.

MAEWO

Asanvari: Well-protected anchorage with occasional frequent rainstorms. We met Chief Nelson and his son Nixon at the well-known yacht club. They've been welcoming yachts here for a long time and are well organized in doing so. A small green light marks the dinghy landing at night. A hydro-generator powers the village with 220VAC-500W, so there are several lights ashore at the yacht club (cold beer, DVD movies), nearby houses and in the *nakamal* where you will drink kava. We did some hiking (with swimming in waterfalls and rivers) and snorkeling around the bay, so we slept well at night. The waterfall does not fall right into the sea, but is so close that we enjoyed seeing and hearing it from the anchorage and swam in the refreshing water every day. There's another smaller fall up above the main fall. There's lots of rain as Maewo is the wettest island in Vanuatu with over 175 inches of rainfall a year! Luckily, we had no rain during our all-day hike to the *tabu* bat cave. Be careful not to slip on the muddy tracks! There's a lot of climbing during the first hour of the hike on sometimes slippery mud; the second hour follows the river itself, and there are several nice swimming holes. You enter a long, large chamber and quickly are engulfed by darkness with thousands of small bats and lots of smaller stalactites hanging in places where rain drips through the ceilings. Take a strong light to get the full effect. Zenne, our 2½-year old Schipperke, is getting used to hiking, swimming across river rapids and jumping from rock to rock in the riverbed.

Nixon and his father are quite smart to realize the value of yachts visiting the otherwise very isolated village. The village is one of the prettiest we've seen in Vanuatu, all natural thatch and bamboo, flowers and colorful plants all around and lots of space between houses. They are welcoming, do many things, organize custom dances,

hikes, dinners, laundry, etc., for very reasonable fees. From the amount of help and compliments showered on the chief and village from yachties, we can see that there is a special bond formed on both sides. Unfortunately, their very welcoming nature is also the very thing that could bring big changes to their lives and create jealousies where before there were none. There will be some rallies going to Asanvari this 2008 season with 20 to 60 boats. Try to find out the dates and avoid them if you don't like crowds. Also the anchorage is deep: 50' dropping quickly to 70' on coral bottom.

So far, it is still only a rumor that the government is considering extending the maximum length a tourist can stay in the country (from the usual four-month, one could get up to a year with various fees, naturally). But as we understand it, no change has been made yet, so it's still the four-month, non-renewable visa. To get temporary residency is fairly expensive relative to other countries, but for us it was worth the hoop jumping. You might be lucky in the future to be able to plan a full year here as the cruising grounds quite warrant this much time, and with appropriate planning and good attention to weather bulletins, you can take advantage of the best weather for cruising during the traditional cyclone period. There are several cyclone holes to take refuge in during the few cyclone alerts you might get. You may have heard that two cyclones passed through Vanuatu this 2007-2008 season, which is true, but as with most South Pacific cyclones, they were quite compact. Only Futuna Island suffered big damage, while Tanna, which was close by, got some blustery winds, and in Port Vila we had nothing much over 25 knots.

Our next letter will cover more of the central and northern Vanuatu. Check out our revised website for lots of technical and cruising info www.LSAC.bravehost.com. And be sure to check out Zenne the cruising Schipperke's webpage on our site!

COMMODORES LUC CALLEBAUT AND JACKIE LEE

Solstice – Sceptre 41 – 6'1" draft – April 2008
Subject/Area: **Isla de Providencia**

Dear SSCA,

As we were planning our voyage north to Florida from Panama, we chose Isla de Providencia as our first stop because of its location, less than three days out from Colón. Other cruisers we talked with said it was easy to clear in and out and the Rains guide, *Cruising Ports: the Central American Route*, indicated that it was friendly and less developed than its big sister San Andrés. Nothing we learned in advance prepared us for how enchanting and friendly Providencia is.

Approach

The channel to the anchorage at Santa Isabel is well marked and lighted, so this is one place you could enter and anchor at night. However, the sea buoy and channel buoys are not exactly where our Navionics chart plotter showed them. Rains gives the location of the sea buoy as 13°23.95'N, 081°23.75'W, and that is close enough for route-planning purposes. Boats anchor north of the channel in the lee of Isla Santa Catalina. The holding is good, but there are a few shallow spots, so you have to be careful.

The population in the anchorage varies. When we arrived, we were the tenth boat

there, but we left 20 boats on the hook when we departed and it wasn't at all crowded. SSCA Commodores Chris Kuehner and Marianne Bremer on *Shamu* were there when we arrived and still there when we left. The day before we took off, SSCA Associates Susan and Michael Beilan on *Infini* and Nancy Patterson on *Willow* arrived and stopped by to say hello.



Formalities

We arrived on Sunday afternoon and hailed "Bush Agency" on VHF Channel 16 when we were in range. You are required to use an agent here and that's Bush Agency (bushagency2001@yahoo.es, telephone (578) 098 514 8050 or 514 8411, cell 311 530 0399). We didn't really expect an answer on Sunday, but the reply to switch to Channel 12 came back promptly. When Mr. Bush wanted to come right down to the dinghy dock to meet us, we had to explain that we were still at least an hour out. So we agreed to meet at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

As soon as we dropped anchor, a neighboring cruiser stopped by to welcome us and point out the dinghy dock. Mr. Bush was there waiting to welcome us when we tied up. He explained that the Immigration agent would meet us at her office there at the plaza, and then we would go to Mr. Bush's office to meet the port captain's representative. When we expressed surprise at the off-hours service, he said that the government of Columbia places great importance on service to the yachting community. Whether it's the government or Mr. Bush himself, the service is certainly extraordinary. Clearance in and out costs \$90 USD including the agent's fee and is payable on departure. It took us less than 30 minutes with Mr. Bush to expedite.



Services

As we walked to Mr. Bush's office, he pointed out restaurants and stores along the way. Free wireless is available in the plaza by the dinghy dock, where there is also an ATM. There's another ATM at the bank near Mr. Bush's office. Although the local merchants will take dollars, Mr. Bush advised us that we would get a better deal if we got local currency at the ATMs.

Cruisers are invited to bring their trash to any of the public trashcans around the dinghy dock. The island is very clean compared to other places in Mexico and Central America that we've visited. Laundry services are available, we're told, across the footbridge on Isla Santa Catalina near the Sea Bamboo restaurant. We didn't need water or fuel, but they are both available on the island. Just ask Mr. Bush. He's the one-man cruiser welcome and information center.

While there are Internet cafés, the one we tried (Coffee Red Internet) had only dial-

up connections and was much slower than the free wireless in the plaza. Next door to Coffee Red, however, is a coffee shop without a sign next to Panadería Sunflower. This no-name coffee shop apparently has a long history with cruisers. The wall by the door holds a collection of boat cards. On the top row we found *Saga*, the boat that former SSCA Bulletin editor Nancy Birnbaum sailed to Florida. We added our card at the bottom.



Things to do

Dive centers abound on the island and there is also snorkeling. We rented mopeds and toured the island. There are several beaches complete with beach bars. And there is a hotel zone, but it's a far cry from the high-rise hotels and condos in Costa Rica and Cancun. It feels remote and unspoiled and we loved it.

The island's past as a pirate haven is much in evidence, and the name Morgan features prominently in the geographical names: Morgan's Channel, Morgan's Head (rock formation) and Morgan's - well let's call it the opposite of head - or more properly it's called Split Hill. The ruins of Fort Warwick (Fuerte de la Libertad) on Santa Catalina have cannons pointing out over the harbor and are easily accessible on foot by means of a *malecon*. (In the Rains guide, this is labeled Fort Aury.)

Providencia is a beautiful island, a mountaintop sticking out of the sea and surrounded by a reef. The people are friendly and obviously proud of their island. It's what I always imagined a Caribbean island would be like. Boats tend to come for a few days and stay much longer. Our planned three-day sojourn, for example, turned into six, and we would have been happy to hang around for another couple of weeks. Although it's off the regular Caribbean cruising route and a long way from anywhere else, if you have the time for a detour, we highly recommend a stop here.



ASSOCIATES JOHN FORBES AND SHIRLEE SMITH

Spetakkel – Ericson 29 sloop – 5’ draft
Subject area: **Niue Island**

Dear SSCA,

At sea, when the seas are rough, I feel pretty safe simply because there is no land to crash into. The boat can rock and squeal and might even capsize (but will hopefully erect itself) and I would probably survive. On a mooring close to a reef held only by lines, I don’t feel safe at all. The boat is pulling on the lines and fighting the waves instead of riding them like it is meant to and if a line chafes off or simply snaps - it could be straight onto the reef.

Niue is literally a rock in the middle of the ocean. All around the island steep cliffs dive down into the violent sea. The edges have been shaped by the wind to be razor sharp. It’s no wonder Captain Cook never dared to come ashore. When he arrived in 1877 (or sometime around there), the locals looked so threatening that he did not go ashore and he christened the island “savage island.” For cruisers arriving, the only option is to use the moorings provided by the Niue Yacht Club.

Never have I been closer to losing the boat. When I arrived alone in Niue on *Spetakkel*, a storm was brewing and it was pitch black. I knew it was going to be a night arrival, but I was counting on the full moon and the stars to guide me. The night before I had problems sleeping because of the full moon. It had been like daylight outside. But not tonight. Tonight it was dark. I flipped open my laptop and connected the GPS hoping C-map would be accurate enough to use for navigation. But no, the computer was showing me two miles out but I could hear the waves breaking on the reef that was only a half mile ahead. The navigation lights on the pier were out too, probably destroyed by Hurricane Heta two years earlier. The only light on the pier was a light post for the dingy crane. It was shooting a beam of light out towards the sea. That’s it I thought. I went back and forth along the reef using the beam looking for moorings, as I was creeping ever closer to the reef. After what seemed like an eternity I finally caught glimpse of one and headed for it, grabbed it and tied on. I was safe for now although the weather seemed to be getting worse. That night I did not sleep well, and could feel the flu developing.

The following morning my friends Paul and Andrea from South Africa on *Tafadswa* arrived and despite the surge and waves we headed for land to clear in and get a cup of coffee. The trip was short though because the sea was mounting and from up on the “rock” our boats looked like they were about to tear the moorings apart and break loose. That night, the already high sea and bad surge got worse and Paul decided to head for open water to heave-to and motored off to sea. I realized that my two bladed propeller was too small to get me out to sea and that I physically was not up for it anyway. I now had a toothache, fever, motion sickness and severe lack of sleep that gave me a bad headache.

The night was long and I never slept more than 15 minutes because of the tossing around and constant jabbering on the radio. I tried to protect myself by laying a mattress down in the middle of the boat and jamming myself between the table and the couch. It did not work. I had to keep the radio on Channel 16 in case I needed help myself. It seemed that whenever I fell asleep the radio knew and would blare back to life. I awoke

to find that someone was trying to save the fishing boat on a mooring next to me from going on the rocks. A drag alarm was giving warning but the captain could not get out to the boat because of the weather, so the police had to get involved and a mobile crane launched a big boat at four in the morning. All this commotion going on around me was not helping at all but at least I knew that help was close at hand if I needed it. From time to time the boat would make a big toss or jerk that pulled so much on my lines that it made a gigantic “bang” and I would jump into action with the flashlight trying to figure out if the rope had finally broke free. Luckily it never did, but I will never forget the noise it made. It was indescribable. My heart stopped every time and I swear that I was on the bow looking at my lines before it started to pump again. I am not sure why I bothered because I would be on the rocks within ten seconds and would never get the engine going in that time anyway. I guess it was instinct.

After the second night of pure hell, I knew I had to get away, with or without the boat. Thinking about how good the mooring had been I decided to abandon the boat and launched the dingy. I removed everything that was loose, even the oars, because it would be impossible to row anyway. It was not raining now, but the surge and waves were still massive. At the pier I could see the waves sucking away the water before slamming into it again and again. Between waves there were about 12’ of concrete pier that disappeared when the next wave slammed into it. I knew there was a ladder about one third of the way down the pier and I headed for that. I was lucky and managed to time my arrival at the ladder between two waves and therefore avoided being crushed against the concrete. When the ladder was within reach I jumped to it and rapidly climbed up, bringing the long dingy painter. I was so happy to be on land that I almost forgot that I was alone and would never be able to save the dingy or engine. I was holding on to the painter, trying to think of a way to get my dingy up, when the next giant of a wave lifted it so high that all I had to do was give it a firm jerk and it was washed on to the pier and set gently down beside me. It was the most amazing and beautiful sight that an almost broke and ill sailor could see.



I did not know how bad I looked, but after the first two cars I met stopped and asked me if I was feeling alright, I knew it could not be nice. Keith, in the second car that stopped, was the Commodore of the Niue Yacht Club and after I accepted his offer to give me a lift “somewhere” he had a second look at me and drove me straight to a hotel where he personally paid for a room. He gave me a hot cup of coffee before ordering me to rest.

Keith came by every day and checked on me. After three days of heaven, with cold milk from a working fridge, hot showers and best of all, a big soft bed with fresh sheets, I was feeling good enough to check out. Paul and Andrea, *Tafadswa*, arrived again after two days of riding out the weather on the lee side of the island. Since Paul and I were happy with the way the yacht club had greeted and treated us, we volunteered



to fix the roof that Hurricane Heta stole from the cruisers' toilet block. It took us three full working days, but when it was finished, it looked real nice and by the time cruisers start to arrive there will be hot showers and a big sink to do laundry in.

One of the best things about Niue is the yacht club itself. It is the only club I have ever seen where the members are

so enthusiastic yet no one has a boat. Because of the seasons there, it would be very hard to have your own boat, but that does not discourage the club. Since day one, we were helped and welcomed in a spectacular manner. We have been invited to "Hash House Harriers" for Monday rum and beer, borrowed bikes, and Ernie even loaned us his car for a day so we could get around. Keith took us everywhere we wanted, including a dinner at the hotel. He also arranged a surprise BBQ for Paul's birthday and gave us both free memberships to the club, t-shirts and showers in return for the work we did on the toilet block. He even did my laundry! We are very grateful and recommend that every sailor stop by Niue and support the club so they can keep up their good work. For more 29' Norwegian stupidity have a look at my website at www.trafficated.com.

ASSOCIATE KJELL O. STAVE

Ahquabi - 45' Custom Steel Cutter – 6' draft
Subject/Area: **Crossing the bar into the Rio Dulce**

Dear SSCA,

Our journey to the Rio Dulce of Guatemala began in Utila, Honduras when we tried to clear out of Honduras and the Immigration officer in Utila was not available. The Port Capitan was willing to issue a *zarpe* without an exit stamp in our passports so we left with just the *zarpe*. We anchored in Bahia la Graciosa (15°51.8'N, 88°32.26'W) to time our crossing of the bar into Livingston, Guatemala with high tide. High tide was at 9:30 a.m. with a .98' datum.

The depth at MLW is 5.5' and we draw 6' so theoretically we should have 6" to spare. We had entered into our GPS the waypoints from the cruising guides for the entrance buoy and a point inside the bar that would allow us to safely turn to the Livingston town dock. We timed our entrance for 9 a.m. to give us a half hour of rising tide if we had problems. The buoy was a little west and north of the waypoint. We took it to port anyway. Following the heading to the next waypoint (not the heading in the cruising guides), the depth sounder read 6.5' most of the way across the bar with 6.2' flashing a couple times. Instructions said to line up the two cell towers before turning toward town. There are now three towers but we could still figure out which to turn by. We never saw the 8-9' depths the guide said we should find but when the cell towers lined up we turned. About halfway to the dock area we touched bottom, but the boat just slowed; it did not stop and soon we were through it. Next time we will be more careful about going all the way to the inside waypoint. Another sailboat that had entered about

45 minutes ahead of us told us that they had run aground and had to pay \$50 USD for a tow. I am glad we did not know that or I would have worried needlessly.

We anchored off Livingston and called the Port Captain on VHF 16 and were told they would be out in ten minutes. They came to the other boat first and got to our boat fairly soon afterwards. There were six officials and an agent named Raul. They took our papers and asked a couple of questions. The health officer reviewed the dog's papers. They noticed that we checked out of Utila in Honduras and asked if we had seen Immigration. We said we had not been able to get an exit stamp. Raul said because of the CA-4 agreement it was not a problem. They gave us a 90-day visa even though we had been in Honduras 60 days. (CA-4 is an agreement between Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua to allow free travel between the signing countries). Raul said to come to his office in an hour with local currency and the paperwork would all be done. He told us where to find the bank with an ATM. The Quetzal was 7.6 to the USD and the ATM would only give us 2,000 Q. But that was enough to pay for the clearance. Total fees were 875 Q, which included 150 Q for the agent. Apparently you are not required to use an agent, but I don't know how we could have avoided it since he just came with the officials. Raul spoke good English and did provide a service.

We were cleared in by noon and were free to go up the Rio. La Marina, which is mentioned in the guidebooks, was totally deserted and appeared not to be in operation at this time (Feb. 2008). It was a beautiful trip through the Rio's gorge.

We anchored at the entrance to the Rio Tatin and explored the river. The next day we moved on to El Golfete and anchored for a couple of days and explored the NE corner of the gulf. Then we traveled up river to the marina area and anchored off the Catamaran Marina while we visited each of the marinas recommended to us by cruisers we met in Honduras. They had pretty similar offerings with small differences in price. They all have wooden, fixed docks that wind along the banks of the river. Generally electricity is extra. Water quality, swimming pools and Wi-Fi are some of the variables. Most marinas require use of the dingy to get to and from town. Catamaran Marina would not allow dogs. We ended up staying at Mario's but could have just as easily stayed at the others. The monthly charges for a side-tie dock ranged from \$200 to \$250. It was less for Med moor spaces where this was offered. The marinas charge a one-size-fits-all price for monohulls. The dingy dock in town is at Bruno's and seems safe enough during the day. The name of the town on this side of the river is Fronteras and it is just a line of businesses along the side of the highway. We found the air quality was very bad at times with the exhaust fumes from the highway and smoke from the cooking fires of the local Indians. It was very hot even in February so we decided to get the marina projects done and leave. It took a week and then we returned to anchor in El Golfete where it was cooler.

We anchored off Texas Bay, a new marina on the SE end of El Golfete. Having the boat in fresh water was an interesting experience. A few days after arriving we had clogged the refrigerator and head intake lines. Apparently the saltwater creatures living in the lines had died and got sucked up to clog them. After leaving the Rio we were pleasantly surprised on how clean the bottom of the boat had become.

We emailed Raul to get the clearing-out process started before we arrived in Livingston so we could get out by high tide. High tide was at 10:30 a.m. and we did not

want to anchor overnight in Livingston. We arrived in Livingston at 8:30 and were done checking out by 9:15. The cost of clearing out was 410 Q. So the total cost of clearing in and out was \$165 US. The tide was 1.38' when we left and we saw slightly higher depths than when entering. There were about two-foot waves coming in as we went out and one dropped us low enough to touch bottom but not enough to slow us down. From Livingston we headed north to Belize. Because the seas were a little rough we did not try to stop in Punta Gorda but went on to Placencia. We stopped overnight in the Mangrove Cays and went on to Placencia the next day. We went up Big Creek to clear in, anchoring in the turning basin. The cost of clearing in was \$70 Belize plus \$20 Belize for the taxi to the police station to complete Immigration. The quarantine officer said he could charge \$200 Belize for the dog since we did not have an import permit but he accepted our five-month-old dog health certificate from the U.S. and did not charge any extra for the dog. The exchange rate is fixed at \$2 Belize to \$1 USD. It's best to provision before getting to Belize as everything imported is very expensive compared to neighboring countries, especially liquor and beer.

Swimming around the boat later we found lots of scratches in the bottom paint at the bottom of the keel. We assume that was from debris on the river bottom going in and out of the Rio. Belize is beautiful but we found having a 6' draft was a disadvantage. The waters are very shallow, requiring vigilance to avoid running aground.

COMMODORES PAM (KF4WMP) AND BRUCE DAGE

Monashee II - 52' Catamaran AeroRig - 5' draft

Subject/Area: **Papua New Guinea: Part I - The Port Moresby Myth**

Dear SSCA,

Several articles have been written in different magazines about Papua New Guinea (PNG). Most of them are based on hearsay and are false. A particularly egregious example was published in 2007. The author obviously had little insight into countries visited and made outrageous quotes from other unfounded sources. Having never been to Port Moresby or Lae, he claims that "they are rife with crime rivaling some of the worst - in the world." Nonsense! My wife and I arrived in Tagula at the eastern end of the Calvados Chain from Vanuatu at the beginning of September 2007. We spent 11 weeks gunk-holing our way to Port Moresby via 33 different anchorages. The last seven weeks we had all the anchorages to ourselves (more in Part II).

We had contacted Commodore Brian Hull, the SSCA Cruising Representative for PNG. He lives on his motorsailer, *Duck Soup*, at the Royal Papua Yacht Club. Brian has sailed 60,000 NM on his boat in the SW part of the South Pacific with various members of his extended family as crew. Although Brian was not born in PNG he has spent most of his life there and is one of the few white PNG passport holders. Incidentally, Brian runs Century 21, the most successful real estate company in PNG. Through Brian we were put in touch with Brent St. Hill, the manager of the RPYC and his able assistant, Jossie. They all assured us they would be able to find space for a rather large catamaran. We came through the reef pass the last week of November and anchored at Manubada Island which gives good protection for both the SE trades and the NW monsoon winds. RPYC monitors VHF 84 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. They have a high, powerful aerial with a reputed range of 40 miles. We contacted the club and when we came through

the marina entrance one of the club rescue boats was there to help us tie up to one of the club's mooring buoys. You can stay there for 15K/day (April 2008 ATM rate 2.63K=\$1.00 USD). After being ferried ashore and discussing docking areas with Brent we first went into an extremely tight space and realized that at low tide we would have one hull on the rocks so we moved out to a T-head as the owner would not be returning for some time. The docks are well made, securely fastened floating docks with metered 220V, 50Hz electrical outlets. The water supply is so pure in Port Moresby that it can be used to fill your battery.

RPYC is a superb large, modern club with a large dining room, extensive bar, TVs, pokies (slot machines), Internet, exercise and weight room, laundry facilities, very clean showers and heads and two large play areas for children. Wi-Fi is present for the docks although be careful as it is 100K for 80MB - not time related. We had not had our computer hooked into the internet for two years so many of our programs were automatically updated. We got through 80MB the first day!

Since then we restrict usage to email and some Noonsite (www.noonsite.com) research and Skype. The club has a marine staff and I had noticed one of these repairing an outboard on a club rescue boat. Our outboard had frozen about 10 days beforehand. I asked Cecil if he could help me one day. Although he is not a trained mechanic, he has done a course on outboards. In order to find the problem, Cecil took the entire engine apart to find that the part around the top of the shaft had fractured because it had never been greased by Yamaha at the factory! Cecil put everything back together while I ordered the part from Ela Motors. These eventually turned up and Cecil did everything in reverse - all at no charge, although I did give him a good tip. I had a problem with my KISS generator and by now I had no worries about his taking the entire motor out to see what was wrong - all part of the club service!

If you need the boat washed or waxed there is a lot of good inexpensive help. It was not until late in our stay that I discovered Jimmy. He works on a houseboat near the end of C dock on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He is one of the best and brightest and most pleasant workers we have ever had onboard. Normally he and the other workers get 25K/day but I was so impressed that he only took a 10 minute lunch break that I paid him 30K/day with which he was very pleased.

The RPYC is patrolled 24 hours a day and no one can get into the club unless they have a key or an approved pass - all the day workers need one. Near the club is Anderson's Supermarket, which is excellent. Initially, from listening to the local expats, we walked there with some trepidation carrying pepper spray. However once you stop listening to the Aussies, it really is quite safe. As I have developed a bad hip, my wife would walk alone there and back with no worries.

There is a bus system but we decided not to use it. Port Moresby is scattered over a wide area with the necessity of going to several parts of the town to find things. This would mean numerous bus changes. We used Scarlett Taxi which is the only metered taxi firm; Red Dot has a regional fare system. By using Scarlett we soon learned the correct fares so when using a taxi off the street, we would just say what we would pay before entering and this stopped a lot of hassle. Downtown is small but safe to walk around during the day. There is a good high-speed Internet café upstairs at the Steamships Mall which is only 15K/hour and no MB limit. Lohebergers is the nearest and only chandlery, but like most of PNG, is quite expensive. PNG has almost no

manufacturing base so everything must be shipped in with a 25% duty from Australia.

To have propane tanks filled you can leave them at the front desk or the club will take you there. As Indonesia will not fill U.S. type propane tanks, it is necessary to fill up before leaving. The marina has a fuel dock at usual prices. As PNG gets so few visiting yachts, there is no organized infrastructure enabling one to buy duty-free fuel or alcohol before departure. Goods can be shipped in via DHL or FedEx duty free. It is best to label packages "Ship in Port" as they do not understand "Yacht in Transit."

Brian Hull was a wealth of information and unbelievably generous. The day of arrival he invited us out to lunch. Many times either he or one of his drivers would take us to places we needed to find. I also went many times with Brian to various parts of town where his company was buying, selling or managing rental properties. This meant we saw all the good and so called "not so good" areas. Neither my wife nor I ever felt worried in any area either with Brian or on our own. I got to like Brian a lot. He is the only person in the marina who knows about cruising.

PNG has one annoying peculiarity. On our second day we bought a SIM card for our cell phone only to find it did not work for the numbers we needed. We had bought a Digicell card. Telecom is the only system for land lines and all businesses. It has its own cell phone system B mobile. So far Telecom and Digicell cannot work out an agreement so one system cannot talk to the other! From the practical yachting point of view you need B mobile even though international calls are cheaper via Digicell. However, we made our long distance calls via Skype. Take your computer into the club to get a fast enough Wi-Fi connection. As Skype is not downloading material from the internet to your computer it does not intrude on the 80 MB limit.

Another favorable aspect of Port Moresby is the climate. The RPYC has its own micro climate. It is warm, sunny and breezy every day. If it rains, it is only for a short time. There is a small range of hills behind the club and bad weather and thunderstorms usually stay behind them. We wanted to leave *Monashee II* while we flew back home for Christmas. Although the RPYC is at 9° 47'S and below our insurance cyclone limit of 8°S, Port Moresby has never had a cyclone. Therefore it is a good place to stay for the cyclone season.

We had been hoping to wait until Singapore for a haul-out but after three months in the marina the bottom was so foul we had to haul out. MES is nearby and has four different ramps for haul-out. They mainly haul large steel boats but they have pulled out yachts. Our initial conversations were not good. The operation manager, Angelito, had only just arrived. We were worried that if anything went wrong there was no expertise in PNG to repair a hull made with Corecell and fiberglass. However, by the middle of March I realized we could not sail for another six months in tropical water without having to scrape the hulls weekly. Therefore I went back to discussions with MES. This time everyone seemed more confident. Berthrom, the assistant manager, has been there for years. Rowa who is in charge of haul-out and launch has been there for over 30 years and knew exactly how to make it safe. Rowa had two other divers with him in the water and put six people on deck to handle the lines.

Angelito, a qualified experienced engineer, had delayed the haul out by 24 hours to reinforce the cradle that our bridge deck would sit on. Everyone was determined nothing would go wrong - nor did it. We used Hemple paint because of previous good experience. Subsequently, we found it was much cheaper than the International paint all

the other boats used. The yard likes to spray paint but because it is almost impossible to cocoon our boat, to prevent overspray, we put on four thick layers of rolled paints. In addition, at each coat, we had an extra man with a brush putting another coat at the water line. As we insisted on emptying all the drums of paint we had bought, we ended up with ten coats at the waterline! Just what Davies and Morgan suggest in their *Cruising Guide to SE Asia Volume III*! We were hauled out on slipway #4, which is at the extreme end of the yard near a local village where a lot of the MES employees live. We had some concerns because every evening before dark, and every dawn, kids would come through the (now non-existent) fence to grab scrap metal. We hired our own guard from "The Corps" for 12 hours each night at the great expense of \$4.50K/hour. The guard is fully armed - with his radio! We lived on board at MES and it was the most pleasant experience we had ever had during a haul-out. The cost of the haul-out was not cheap. It never is unless the yard has a 32' wide travel lift.

As you will have now realized, we have found Port Moresby and PNG delightful. The people are always polite, happy and smiling. Obviously there is crime but everywhere there is crime. In one's own country people ignore the thefts, burglaries, shootings, muggings, beatings and numerous murders (accidents and deaths) from motor cars. Yet if one of these should occur in a foreign country, it is widely pronounced as a dangerous place! The myth is maintained and perpetuated by Australia Aid and Kiwi Aid people who come here. Not only are they paid a huge tax-free salary with generous car and living allowances but also additional "hardship" allowance for being in a dangerous country! Washington, New York, Sidney, LA, London, Paris etc. all have a much higher and more lethal crime rate.

"It is the mark of little men to like only what they know, one step beyond and they feel the black cold of chaos." ~ Mary Renault, *The Bull from the Sea*.

While at the RPYC, I went out to anchor at the west end of Daugo for a week while my wife had to fly home. Daugo Island is part of the reef protecting PM. The west end has a beautiful beach and good anchoring. About three miles away at the east end was the village. I was looking for solitude. Over Easter Saturday, I saw a boat leave the village and head towards me. Two smartly dressed men asked if I was leaving but I told them I liked the place so much I was going to stay another two nights. Only then did they politely ask if they could use *Monashee II* as a turning mark for a sailing canoe race that day. How polite. There were four laps and it was great watching the skilled, and not so skilled, tack or jibe around me. Only one canoe misjudged. I realized this and was up on deck waiting to fend off. However, at the last minute the helmsman let go of the sheet and sailed backwards!

When I returned after the week on my own (*Duck Soup* had join me for the last two days), several club members asked if I had been afraid of all the crime from the village. When I told my sailboat story, they were amazed.

Obviously they never try to communicate or become friendly with the locals. Whenever we anchor we always go outside and wave or chat with passing boats. The advantage of a catamaran is we know what is happening. We also keep *Monashee II* ship shape and leave nothing lying around. Try the RPYC at Port Moresby. It's great.

COMMODORES IAN AND VALERIE MUNRO

Dear SSCA,

As you’re nearing the bottom of your “Cruising To Do List,” here’s a safety-related entry that you may have missed. Go online to www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/mars/ship_search.sh and verify that your radio call sign and MMSI number (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) are accurately listed in the ITU’s MARS database (International Telecommunications Union’s Maritime Mobile Access Retrieval System). MARS is the international informational database Search and Rescue organizations (including the U.S. Coast Guard) query when they receive digitally-encoded emergency calls from vessels in trouble. The MARS database lists a vessel’s name, ship radio call sign, MMSI number, owners name, a host of other fields, and a password-protected link to the vessels emergency contact information.

In all probability your search results will match the results found by this author and other cruisers checking the database; the call sign and/or MMSI number are not listed, the listed data is incomplete or inaccurate, or the data is seriously outdated. Searching the MARS database for *Spiritress*’ call sign WAQ2735 (my Hans Christian 38T), returned data that was more than 11-years old (1997), even though the ship’s radio station license was renewed in 2005. Additional queries using other known-to-be valid call signs produced mixed results. In some instances the call signs were listed and the associated information appeared to be up-to-date; in other instances a searched-for call sign, MMSI number, or vessel name, was totally missing.

Whose job is it to list these data in the MARS database? After you’ve received a ship radio call sign and/or MMSI number, what person or agency has the duty to drive your vessels particulars into the ITU’s MARS database? According to ITU online documentation “...*Only notifications submitted either by the responsible Administration or by an Accounting Authority, authorized by a licensing Administration (ITU-T Recommendation D.90), will be accepted...*” (Italics are mine). For U.S.-documented/registered vessels this roughly translates into: Only data submitted by the FCC will be written into the ITU’s MARS database. A March 8 check of the ITU’s online Submission of Operational Information List www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/mars/latest.notifications.list.sh?lng=en&sort=5 showed that the last data submission received from the U.S.A. was on February 8, 2008. A phone call to the FCC on March 8 resulted in the FCC assigning a case number to investigate and find answers to the questions:

- Why are the data associated with my vessel’s call sign, renewed in 2005, 11-years old?
- Why are the call signs and MMSI numbers issued over the past five to six years to some of our customers (we own and operate Dockside Radio and act as agents on behalf of cruisers and commercial vessel owners, filing and bird-dogging FCC Radio License Applications), not listed in the MARS database?

Three days later, on Tuesday March 11, the same FCC agent who fielded my

original questions called to say that the data associated with the questioned call signs would be updated in the ITU's MARS database by the end of March (yes, the FCC is good at returning phone calls). When pressed to explain why the data associated with *Spiritress* is 11-years old, and why several other searched-for call signs are not listed, the FCC agent replied that she was given no explanation or information other than that the missing call signs and data would be sent to the ITU by the end of the month. The FCC was true to their word and the accompanying search results show that *Spiritress'* information was updated on March 26.

So what's a cruiser to do? If you're planning to head off to the Bahamas or Mexico any time soon, now is a good time to search the MARS database for your ship radio call sign and MMSI number. If your call sign and MMSI number aren't listed, or if the information associated with your vessel's call sign isn't consistent with the information you have on file with the FCC, call the FCC at 1-877-480-3201 and ask them to send your updated information to the ITU. Wait a couple of weeks to allow time for your information to make its way through the system and then check the MARS database again. Repeat as necessary. Remember, it's your life and the safety of your vessel that are at stake, so don't give up until the job's done.

MARS Database Search Results

Particulars - Ship station: SPIRITRESS	
Admin. Geo. Area	: <u>United States of America</u>
Ship Name	: SPIRITRESS
Call Sign	: WAQ2735
Selcal No. (s)	:
MMSI No.	: 367071050
Inmarsat No. (s)	:
NTLX No. (s)	:
Boats	:
EPIRBs	:
Ship class	: PL SLO
Corresp.	: CP
Hours	: HX
RTG Band	:
AAIC	:
AA info.	:
Owner	: JENSEN, RICHARD A
Ex Ship Name	:
Ex Call Sign	:
EPIRB Id. Code	:
EPIRB Hex ID code	:
Vessel Id. No.	: 664713
Gross Tonnage	:
Person Capacity	:
Radio Installation	:
<u>EMERGENCY CONTACT</u>	
Last Update	: 26/03/2008

ASSOCIATES GARY AND PEGGY JENSEN

Nine of Cups - 45' Liberty - 7' draft
Subject/Area: **Colon, Panama**

Dear SSCA,

Though Colon, Panama (Caribbean side of the Panama Canal) is probably one of the seediest cities we've ever visited, the area offers lots of local color and reasonable facilities. The designated "F" anchorage, known as the Flats, provides 24-hour entertainment as vessels of all shapes and sizes make their way past the anchorage heading to or from the Gatun Locks. It's only a 10-minute dinghy ride to the legendary Panama Canal Yacht Club where the cold draft beers are still only 75 cents and the indigenous Kuna and Embara women sell their molasses and woven baskets to a large and transient cruiser population. The PCYC, though a bit dilapidated, offers slips, fuel, restaurant/bar and lots of character(s?). Several SSCA burgees were flying there and a get-together of about 20 cruisers discussing possible trips to Ecuador encouraged a few new members to join.

Across the bay, the year-old Shelter Bay Marina is billed as a luxury marina and is currently the only haul-out facility on Panama's Atlantic coast. Cruisers seem to be taking advantage of this opportunity before heading to the Pacific or into the Caribbean. SBM was a scheduled stop for the 40+ boat ARC Round the World Rally and the site for the filming of a new James Bond film in which many cruisers and their boats participated (sorry, no photos allowed!).

Shelter Bay is situated at the old U.S. Army base at Ft. Sherman. It offers great amenities including floating docks, restaurant/bar, lots of showers, laundry facilities, a workshop and Wi-Fi. Sitting "on the hard" on the periphery of the jungle, the *Nine of Cups'* crew might not have enjoyed sanding, varnishing and bottom painting, but the proximity of the local wildlife was wonderful. Howler monkeys roared and white-faced and Capuchin monkeys swung from trees nearby. Anteaters, coatimundis and capybaras roamed freely during the night, sloths hung lazily in trees and we awoke to a veritable symphony of bird songs each morning. The San Lorenzo National Park is within walking distance offering an old fort, trails and beaches to explore. The marina's free morning shuttle that takes you to a modern shopping mall or most anywhere you need to go in town, crossing the narrow, single-lane of the Gatun Locks, which closes only briefly between transiting vessels.

Whether you're waiting for your canal transit or just stopping for a visit, this area offers all the cruiser amenities, information sharing and camaraderie you could expect at the "crossroads of the world."



COMMODORES MARCIE & DAVID LYNN

New Address II – 38' Catalina – 7' draft
Subject Area: **Turks & Caicos**

Dear SSCA,

If, like us, you haven't visited Providenciales or Grand Turk for a while, you would be amazed at the development of the Turks & Caicos. We were stunned. Even West Caicos, at the Sand Bore Channel entrance to Provo, has a massive managed residential estate, Molasses Reef, where once was a barren island. Although not yet finished, the workmen are ferried daily to West Caicos from the landing at Sapodilla Bay. This estate is clearly visible to the south of the entrance channel, while the previously charted wreck to the north seems to be gone.

We decided to stop in Provo in route from the Chesapeake Bay to the Panama Canal, having purchased *New Address II* in the U.S. and returning it home to Australia. Provo provided a good stop for us to refuel, restock a few items, socialize and relax for a week following our two gale, nine day passage from the north. We cleared from Newport News, VA and headed east towards Bermuda, which gave us an excellent angle to sail down the longitude line to Provo. The Sand Bore Channel entrance was easy to locate. Crossing the bank required just a lookout for clearly visible dark spots showing coral heads.

ANCHORING: With our 7' draft we had to anchor out from the beach in Sapodilla Bay. The wind was boisterous, so close-in anchoring with a shallow draft would have been more relaxing. Holding was very good in 9' of water at 21°44.5'N, 72°17.4'W.

CLEARANCE: After anchoring, we walked from the beach around to South Dock to clear Customs and Immigration at the port office. The charge was \$15USD upon entry and \$15USD upon departure for a maximum seven day stay. Cruising permits for 90 days were available for \$75USD, but we only stayed a week.

FUEL was available up the road from South Dock (by jerry can). This gas station also had a shop with a variety of food items. Along the road towards the gas station was another small convenience store. The nearest marina for refueling was South Side Marina. Our 7' draft kept us from using the facilities at South Side. Check for maximum draft (5.5' seemed OK) and tide times with Simon on VHF Channel 16. South Side Marina provided a daily cruisers net at 7:30 a.m. on Channel 18 (Provo was on eastern daylight savings time in April) plus they sponsored a Wed. night BBQ at the marina with free car pick up for anchored cruisers at Sapodilla Bay.

CAR RENTAL: We used Grace Bay Car Rental (call Tod at 649-946-4404 or 941-8500) as it seemed to be the cheapest. We hitchhiked to Grace Bay (other side of the island) to pick up the car. A Grace Bay driver, who was taking a car to the airport, took us back to Sapodilla when we returned the car. They had a \$39.99USD special, but the cars that were on special were not available. They had 100 vehicles and all were rented every day.

FOOD: Great dining was found around the island. We ate cracked conch at the Tiki Hut, jerk chicken at Hole in the Wall and Saturday brunch at Bay Bistro at Sibonne Beach Hotel and enjoyed them all. For reprovisioning we found the IGA Supermarket large and fully stocked, however everything was shipped from the U.S. so some fresh items seemed to have a shorter shelf life.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Providenciales, and found it a very good stop when travelling from the Chesapeake to Panama on a tight time schedule.

COMMODORES COLIN AND JEANNE HARRISON

Osiris – 53' Gulfstar – 5' draft
Subject/Area: **Trinidad, the Good, the Bad, the Ugly**

Dear SSCA,

Three-and-a-half years after my last visit to Trinidad I am back again in Chaguaramas Bay. The government officials and the TT Coast Guard are just as indifferent to our existence as they have always been, and occasionally are openly hostile. But mostly they just tolerate our existence and hope we will depart quickly. The latest wrinkle is the Customs official who visits your yacht as you check in and hands you a flyer telling you that they will assess you fines if your courtesy flag is flown incorrectly or is faded. The TT Coast Guard is still threatening and harassing cruisers who check out and then stage themselves near or in Scotland Bay in preparation for a midnight departure. They demand that you depart TT waters within one hour of checking out with Customs/Immigration. Most islands allow 24 hours to leave their waters, recognizing the time and distances involved and the speed of cruising boats. Chaguaramas Bay is heavily-congested and not the place to go motoring through after dark. The marinas, boatyards and bay anchorages are filling up with local boats, reducing the available places for visiting cruising boats and the prices are increasing accordingly.

On the other hand, Trinidad does have some spectacular sites and areas to visit. The turtle watches on the east coast are a fabulous experience as one-ton, two-meter leatherback turtles heave themselves up on a beach and dig their nests. The beaches are patrolled and guarded by very courteous and knowledgeable wardens interested in protecting the turtles from damage or interference from humans. It is quite inspiring. The same with the nature preserves with knowledgeable and efficient guides who really enjoy showing you their flora and fauna.

North American spec appliances and other equipment are readily available. There is a wider selection of goods, albeit at higher prices than before. Prices have escalated about 33% in the last 3.5 years and then you have to add in the 15% VAT tax on everything you purchase. There are no bargains here and some things commonly used on cruising boats just are not available and you have to have them shipped in. On the other hand, importing “Vessel-in-Transit” parts is reportedly much simpler here than many other islands. It does not seem to be necessary to offer bribes or pay arbitrary fees made up by the whims of the officials. And there is the \$1 USD per gallon cost of diesel. That is one big plus for Trinidad!

But then there is the crime and thievery. Outboard motors disappear off your transom rail or dinghy even when you are in a marina. Walk across the street to a bank to get some cash and the local thieves queue up arguing about who will get to mug you. Walk along the road at the wrong time of day and packs of yard dogs will attack and chase you. You do learn to have eyes in the back of your head and carry a stout stick as you navigate from one area to the next. Local boats race across the harbor and by the marinas in competition to see who can make bigger wakes and knock you off your feet and dislodge the contents inside your boat.

All in all, it is probably no worse nor better than any major American port city. But who needs this kind of treatment? We left on cruising boats to get away from all that. On the other hand, being in a large industrial city has advantages such as lots of restaurants (Tony Roma, Ruby Tuesday, Benihana, Häagen-Dazs, numerous Indian,

and even a very fine Thai restaurant). There are several large malls just like in the U.S., PriceSmart warehouse shopping and lots of espresso and cappuccino bars with gelato.

However, just 82 NM north is Grenada with a very civilized and gracious population who really enjoy your presence and go out of their way to make you welcome. The facilities in Grenada and the other islands to the north are growing and expanding such that any reason to visit Trinidad is no longer cost-effective. And certainly not stress-effective. And add to all that the recent ugly prowling by Venezuelan pirates in the waters along the rhumb line from Trinidad to Grenada shooting at you as you try to approach or leave Trinidad. It is advisable to plan your arrival to be at Boca de Monos at sunrise and run without lights for the last 40 NM. Departures northbound are usually done in the morning (or daytime) due to Customs/Immigration requirements, and the first 40 NM are the most dangerous.

But then there is the boat insurance problem. Under standard policies any place north of Trinidad is considered inside the hurricane exclusion box. Surprisingly, the north limit is now north of Florida and even Georgia. However, for extra money and maybe extra-high deductibles, it is sometimes possible to maintain coverage while inside the box. That would certainly be worth it, in my humble opinion. My tactic this past season and the upcoming season is to remain in the Grenada to Grenadines area and if anything serious threatens, then make the run for Trinidad. You can safely get to Trinidad in a half-day to a day depending upon your motoring speed. I say motoring speed because it is not uncommon for the trades to cease and the seas to flatten for the day or two before a big one. And now with Internet available almost everywhere keeping an eagle eye on the weather is much easier.

ASSOCIATES JIM AND GALINA GRAHAM

The 2008 Equipment Survey is Now Online!

This open-ended survey will run indefinitely, with equipment reports growing ever larger as more members take the survey. And best of all, the ratings and comments are coming from the most demanding of test beds: liveboards and cruising sailors.

New! Search Members by Boat Make

Can't remember someone's name or boat name? Want to contact members who own your sister ships? Look it up! Search by cruiser name, boat name or boat make to locate friends and fellow members. Used alone or in conjunction with the Member Locator Map, this benefit provides easy access to member contact information and location.

The suggestion to add a search of the SSCA database by boat make was the great idea of SSCA member Bruce Bongar of Sausalito, California. Thanks Bruce!

So What's Your Great Idea?

The next time a light bulb goes off in your head, remember to slip a note into the SSCA Virtual Suggestion Box by sending an email to office@ssca.org.



Occupation: Circumnavigator; How to Finance a Lifestyle

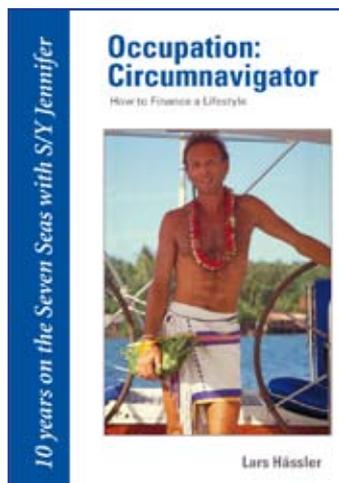
By Lars Hässler

SSCA member Lars Hässler spent ten years on a circumnavigation that was financed by paying crew and charter guests. And although this book delivers on its title of how to finance a cruising lifestyle, pointing out the pros and cons of having paying crew and guests aboard (as well as how to find paying clients), this book offers a great deal more and will appeal to a much wider audience than those looking for a way to earn a living while cruising.

Those looking for the nuts and bolts on managing a business on the high seas won't be disappointed. Lars shares his very complete ten years of bookkeeping records on income and expenses (he had 700 paying crew/charter guests aboard his Beneteau Oceanis 50, *Jennifer*, during this time).

But *Occupation: Circumnavigator; How to Finance a Lifestyle* is not written solely for the cruiser who is looking to finance their cruising lifestyle. The real delight in Lars' book lies in his wonderful stories and his candid opinions on the many places that he visited during his circumnavigation. Sailing aboard *Jennifer*, Lars journeyed up the Amazon River, was the first sailing vessel to visit Vietnam since the end of the war, and enjoyed cruising "off the beaten path" in the South Pacific. *Jennifer* took him (and his guests) to seldom visited Andaman Islands, to Chagos atoll, and Bora Bora. He describes his adventures and misadventures in places such as Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Cuba, Bikini atoll and Niue (where Jennifer was even pictured on a \$1 Niue stamp).

Readers will be inspired by his amazing adventures, educated by his historical references, and will often find themselves contemplating his thought provoking questions. Lars is a business man, a sailor, an adventurer, and a talented storyteller. Join him aboard *Jennifer* for an entertaining read. Go to www.occupationcircumnavigator.com. The book is available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.



Surfing the Net?

Check out this month's pick:

The Coastal Passage

A bit irreverent, quite humorous, and always chock full of great information on the Australian cruising scene.

www.thecoastalpassage.com



The *Equinox* Approach

When we started this column I stressed that we would like to have other people contribute their experiences to “Dreamer’s Prism” so future cruisers could learn from a variety of cruisers. Last month we received an e-mail from our good friends and cruisers, Moira and Dick, on *Equinox*. We spent the summer of 2006 with them in Trinidad and cruised the West Indies with them the following cruising season. Moira and Dick commented on our column on Cruise Planning and had a somewhat different approach from ours that obviously worked for them.

In reading your previous article you described all the years of planning and preparation you put into your Cruise Plan. Our experience was slightly different. After completing a 60-day trip around New England and the Maritimes in 2002, we began thinking of doing some longer cruising. We got a chance to crew on a sailboat heading back from Bermuda in 2003 and decided then that we wanted to extend our cruising horizons. We began the search for a bigger boat that was up to the rigors of bluewater sailing. We found Equinox and purchased her in June of 2004. Then sailed her back to Maine. That winter we began converting her to a serious cruiser. The work we took on amazes us to this day. By August when the house sitters moved in, we were concerned that the boat was not ready. The boat was filled with boxes of things still needing to be installed. We were really bummed out at that point and had not even sailed the boat since launching her. We decided to sail up to the SSCA Gam in Islesboro and had a wonderful time. We were given a guide to the ICW as a prize for being the shortest liveaboards (five days) at the Gam. Since we now had no place to live we decided to start heading south and finish things along the way.

We installed the SSB and wind generator in Annapolis. The autopilot failed off New Jersey and that cancelled plans to sail with the Caribbean 1500. We installed refrigeration in No Name Harbor, FL. By Christmas we were in the Exumas. In April we had made it to the BVIs and called the house sitters to see if they wanted to stay another year. When they agreed, we headed south and made Trinidad by July.

So you see *Equinox’s* experience was very different from ours, yet they were still successful at realizing their cruising dream. I would really like to have other “seasoned” cruisers share their preparation experiences with other members. What you might think is obvious or trivial may, in fact, be a key to someone else’s success.

Raise that waterline by subscribing to the
WebOption of the *Commodores’ Bulletin*

SSCA History

The Equipment Survey – A Great Idea from 1987

The April *Bulletin* just arrived here in Puerto Vallarta and I read with interest the article by Mark L. Cain about the new electronic Equipment Survey. I wish to correct one slight misstatement of fact regarding the genesis of the SSCA Equipment Survey. It is true that Ginny was the editor of the SSCA *Commodores' Bulletin* at the time (1987). In fact, back then, Ginny was SSCA. She virtually ran most of SSCA's business out of her home in New Orleans, while taking care of her daughter at the same time. She was swamped with work and rarely got the recognition or remuneration that she richly deserved.

However, the idea for the survey was mine. I was working in computer systems at the time and had been using spreadsheet software on mainframe computers prior to the PC revolution. I was quite impressed with the capabilities of the new PC-based packages that hit the market in the mid-80s. My work also involved market research and I happened to be reading both *Consumer Reports* and *Practical Sailor* magazines at the time. Then it hit me: SSCA has this rich base of bluewater cruisers using the hell out of their gear. If we could collect the data from them, we could produce a database that would be of tremendous value to those of our members who wanted to follow in the wakes of our senior members.

My wife, Kay, and I had just recently visited Ginny in New Orleans, so when I called her about the survey idea she knew who she was talking to. She didn't hesitate for a second: "Go for it!" she said.

I designed the questionnaire and the rating scheme and mailed it off to Ginny. I think she ran it by the Board before we printed it in the *Bulletin*. I then created the spreadsheet programs that munched and printed the data. Kay, not me, deserves the credit for typing the first Survey and for keying all the data into the spreadsheet program.

We were overwhelmed by both the number and the quality of the responses we got. It was literally a gold mine of information. It took Kay and me about 300 hours to execute the entire project from conception and design, through collation, proofing and editing. But it was a labor of love.

When we finally set out on our own cruise in 1990 we were gratified to have many members in faraway places recognize the *Kavenga* crew as the creators of the survey and take the opportunity to personally thank us.

And it is now great to see the Survey take the next evolutionary step, becoming even more useful and accessible in its online format. Although Ginny didn't come up with the idea, she had the courage to "green light" the project from the start, realizing that there could be legal reefs up the channel. Today's SSCA members owe Ginny much more than they can possibly know. Without her it is easy to imagine that SSCA might have withered and died in the mid-80s. But because of her selfless dedication and willingness to take risks like the Survey for the benefit of the members, the organization has increased greatly in size since then.

Another person that deserves credit for the continued existence of the Survey is Chuck Houlihan of *Jacaranda*. If Chuck hadn't volunteered to take up the lance in 1991, there might not have been any more equipment surveys beyond the first one.

Kay and I have had the pleasure of meeting Chuck and Linda here in Mexico as the serendipity of intertwining wakes brought us together. They are great people and huge supporters of SSCA.

Regards,
Rear Commodores Steve and Kay Van Slyke, *Kavenga*
Cruising Station Hosts, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Editor's Note:

Steve and Kay sent me the above bit of history on the Equipment Survey, not for the Bulletin, but rather to enlighten me on the history of the original equipment survey in which they played such an important role. However I thought it was such a wonderful bit of SSCA history that I wanted to share it with all of you. I find several things remarkable about Steve and Kay's account. Obviously they had a great idea and Ginny had the foresight to act upon the idea. But what I also find remarkable is that the Van Slykes didn't just have a great idea. They had a great idea and acted upon it! Their hard work has benefited so many of our members!

And when, after nearly 20 years of serving our members, the Equipment Survey - in its original form - had become outdated, someone else had a great idea and acted upon it! Jack Tyler knew that the ES could continue to benefit our members - if it could be brought into the computer age. Jack persuaded Mark Cain to work some virtual magic on the ES and, with the help of many SSCA volunteers, they did what they set out to do. It's wonderful to know that our members not only have great ideas, but that they're willing to make those ideas a reality!



Ginny (center) recently visited with SSCA Founders John and Betty Nissen at their home in St. Augustine, FL. They're shown reminiscing while looking at SSCA photos from the 1950s.

Some SSCA Financial Matters

Elsewhere in this *Bulletin* you will read an explanation from your Board on our decision to increase annual membership fees. The last time this was approved was roughly 2 ½ years ago, certainly a time when things cost much less than they do now.

As those who have attended the last two Annual Meeting budget reviews will remember, it has been apparent for some time that our financial health was deteriorating. Our fundamental conclusion as 2007 began was that we had to invest in the organization – expanding services, especially to cruising members, and building from scratch a viable, robust website – or we were going to become a less valued and therefore less viable organization. As we saw it, we faced two paths: We could either start increasing the fees with a promise of what they would bring to the members or we could produce the results first, and then ask for a fee increase that we felt we had “earned” and that you could support. We chose the latter approach and it appears to be working: 9+% membership increase over the last year, steadily increasing website usage, and we continue to build value in our various programs and services, both on- and off-line. (Because most members aren’t aware of it, let me mention your Board has an independent Finance Committee of three finance professionals who consult with the Treasurer and advise the Board on financial matters. Their view was that this increase was appropriate in size and timing). But even with this fee increase, we still face financial challenges.

As your representatives we realize our responsibility isn’t just to bump fees based on rising costs or even increased services. You expect us to provide thoughtful stewardship of the organization’s resources as well, including reducing costs that will keep future fees down. One example of this is our Ft. Lauderdale Home Base, a double suite leased facility that most of you have never seen. Technology has made it possible for storage to become primarily electronic, and we’ve now proven the concept of a virtual office. (Barb Theisen, your editor, is very much a “real” person but she works remotely while being connected via “the grid”). Consequently, we are now living beyond our physical needs (and means) by occupying a double suite and we are planning to consolidate into a single suite when our lease expires mid-2009. (I mention this because we were hoping to do this now, but the building owner’s loan was recently sold and the new lien holder will not approve lease modifications). Because utilities and building services are grouped into one of the two suites, this will mean that we will be able to occupy a smaller but still completely functional space while saving the organization over \$10,000 annually. So we expect to enjoy the benefits of relocating to a less costly facility without the disruption or cost of moving and without an address change. We’ll keep you posted on these plans. And let me add my thanks to Judi and Patti at Home Base, who have been supportive and even urging us to consider this despite the fact that it is they who will lose the luxury of space and be responsible for the engineering and execution of the actual consolidation.

The one regret we have is that this may not allow for the retention of all the SSCA Library contents. These days the library is more symbolic of the SSCA tradition of sharing and mutual support than an actual service, as the office itself has very few visitors and we have only lent – literally - a handful of books to members during the last year. Obviously, an unused library does not justify a \$10,000 annual expense,

but we will retain as much of the library as is possible and will seek local member assistance in identifying “the keepers” – especially the out-of-print classics. We will seek an alternative home for the balance of the library that will keep them in the local community and available to members. Look for more on their future as well.

There’s much more to share but I’ve already used my fair share of space for now. We continue to work hard on your behalf. We have set our sights during the next fiscal year (July 2008 – June 2009) to further expanding our services to you, and intend to accomplish more financial success, as well. Meanwhile, thanks for your support, thanks for your understanding about our new fee structure, and best wishes for some good cruising.

Jack Tyler, President
SSCA Board of Directors

**Free One-Year
Blue Water Sailing Magazine Subscription!**

Beginning in August, when you join SSCA or renew your membership online, click on the BWS link to sign up for this new offer. You can choose whether to receive a year of *Blue Water Sailing* magazine in the mail or per online digital format. Either way, this is an added value worth \$29.95, included free with your SSCA membership dues.

You can extend your membership at any time for an additional year in order to take advantage of this one-time free offer. Free offer begins in August.

**Nominations for the Bateman Cruising
Station of the Year Award Wanted**

Nominations for the Bateman Cruising Station of the Year Award should be submitted to Awards Committee Chair Nancy Zapf by sending an email to Home Base (office@ssca.org) by July 15. This award is presented to a volunteer Cruising Station Host who has assisted visiting cruisers, particularly SSCA members, in a significant capacity, and who has made an effort to promote SSCA and recruit new members. In recognition of outstanding service, a certificate suitable for framing is issued. In 2008 this award was renamed in honor of George and Dorothy Bateman, appointed one of the first Cruising Station hosts in 1984, who have welcomed and assisted thousands of world cruisers visiting Opuia, New Zealand over the years.

Previous winners include:

2005 - George & Dorothy Bateman, Opuia, NZ

2006 - Rick & Carol Butler, Beaufort, SC

2007 - Jack Dausend, Trinidad

Any SSCA member can make a nomination. The SSCA Cruising Station list can be found on the Members’ Section of www.ssca.org.

22nd Annual SSCA Annapolis Gam

Saturday September 20, 2008

Camp Letts Edgewater, MD USA

Admission \$15.00 (SSCA Members) or \$20.00 (Non-Members)

Join SSCA Today!

Secure online registration available at www.ssca.org

Non-members - save some money by joining SSCA today! You are instantly eligible for the member discount for this event.

Volunteers Needed!

If you can help out for two hours or more during this event please call home base at 954-771-5660 or email Helen at Helen@IMIScorp.net. Thank You!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

7:30 a.m.	Boat House	Registration Opens, Continental Breakfast - Provided Compliments of St. Brendan's Isle Mail Forwarding Service
8:00 – 2:00	Picnic Area	Flea Market in Picnic Area
8:00 – 4:30	Boat House	Vendor Tables, SSCA Gear, Book Swap
8:30 a.m.	Dining Hall	Welcome
9:00 a.m.	Dining Hall	Al Golden – Insiders Guide to Cruisers' Insurance
10:00 a.m.		<u>Demonstrations</u> Fitness Program for Cruisers Provisioning and Cooking for Cruisers – Lisa Schofield Sealants, re-bedding and stopping deck leaks - Paul Esterle Rigging /Emergency Sail Repairs - Chuck O'Malley
10:30 a.m.	Dining Hall	Karl Allen - Advanced Diesel
12:00 noon	Dining Hall	Lunch and Round Table Discussion New To Cruising – Dennis & Lisa Schofield Don't be A Galley Slave – Christy Tinnes Basic Electronic or E-Charting – Mark Doyle
1:30 p.m.	Dining Hall	Panel Discussion “What To Do If You Have A Loss In Foreign Waters/Countries” Markel Insurance Claims Supervisor Casey Matthews, IMIS Agent – Al Golden
1:30 p.m.		<u>Demonstrations</u> Fitness Program for Cruisers Provisioning and Cooking for Cruisers – Lisa Schofield Sealants, re-bedding and stopping deck leaks - Paul Esterle Rigging /Emergency Sail Repairs - Chuck O'Malley
2:30 p.m.	Dining Hall	Claiborne Young – Cruising the ICW from North Carolina to Georgia
4:30 p.m.	Dining Hall	Cocktail Party
6:00 p.m.	Dining Hall	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Dining Hall	Auction
8:00 p.m.	Dining Hall	Entertainment – Calico Jack with Janie Meneely and Paul DiBlasi

22nd Annual SSCA Annapolis Gam Registration Form
Saturday, September 20, 2008 at Camp Letts
NEW LOCATION - Plenty of Room in Excellent Anchorage
38°53.933' N 76°26.150' W

Secure online registration is available at www.ssca.org

Members: before Aug. 29 - \$15. Aug. 29 & on-site - \$20 Children under 12 free

Name under which to hold tickets:

Boat Name _____ Your name _____

(Boat name and your name(s))	Member	Non-member	Child
	\$15	\$20	Free
_____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
_____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
_____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____

REGISTRATION TOTAL \$ _____

LUNCH \$10.00 - includes beverage

Beef sandwich	Number _____ @ \$10 = \$ _____
Turkey sandwich	Number _____ @ \$10 = \$ _____
Vegetarian sandwich	Number _____ @ \$10 = \$ _____

DINNER Camp Letts Special Picnic Buffet includes 2 drink tickets (beer, wine, soda, water). Dinner tickets will be held until 5 pm - unclaimed tickets will be given to others.

Register early, only 350 dinners will be available

Adults	Number _____ @ \$15 = \$ _____
Children under 12	Number _____ @ \$10 = \$ _____

FOOD TOTAL \$ _____

REGISTRATION & FOOD TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to Seven Seas Cruising Association or complete the following:

Name as it appears on the card: _____

Card number: _____

3 digit security code: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Billing address: _____

INCOMPLETE, UNREADABLE, OR INVALID CARDS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED

Add to your enjoyment of the Gam, volunteer some time to help. There are lots of jobs large and small. And it's lots of fun. _____ Yes, I'd like to help at the GAM

Special Note: If you register before August 29th, you will receive a free 3" button with your name and boat name.

Please mail to: SEVEN SEAS CRUISING ASSOCIATION, INC.
 2501 East Commercial Blvd., Ste. 201
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308 USA

A Tribute to George Bateman SSCA Cruising Station Host in Opuia, NZ

Upon returning to our boat *Halekai* in Opuia, New Zealand after a year's absence, I was saddened to learn that George Bateman had passed away within an hour of my arrival on May 14. George and his wife, Dorothy, served as one of SSCA's most active SSCA Cruising Stations here in the beautiful Bay of Islands, NZ. They were appointed in 1984, the year that the CS program began, so they may well have been the very first. They have warmly welcomed and assisted literally thousands of foreign "boaties" over the 36 years since they emigrated from Canada, as their amazing guest book attests. I was privileged to personally present them with the first annual SSCA Cruising Station of the Year Award when we first sailed here the year before last.



The Bateman's were founding members of the Opuia Cruising Club, where visiting cruisers are welcome to become guest members and share camaraderie and meals with local Kiwis. George was the first OCC Club Captain, and ran the club for the first ten years. He and Dorothy created the annual Seafarers' Welcome, a weeklong celebration held in late November for the hundreds of South Pacific sailors who make Opuia their first landfall in New Zealand each year. A special memorial gathering in honor of George is being planned in conjunction with this year's event; information will be posted to OCC's website at www.opua-on-line.co.nz/facilities/cruising_club.htm.

For years George's cheerful voice could be heard on the VHF cruisers' net each morning from October to May, sharing news of local events and offering rides for shopping and errands. He then checked in with the Rag of the Air SSB net, relaying messages to cruisers in Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu. He and Dorothy kept the VHF radio in their home on all night, monitoring for emergencies among the fleet. Dorothy, who among other things was active with the local ambulance service for several years, plans to continue to welcome cruisers to Opuia.

George will be sorely missed; Opuia just isn't the same without his jovial presence. The many SSCA members who have been touched by the Bateman's extraordinary hospitality over the years wish to extend to Dorothy and her family our heartfelt sympathy.

Nancy Zapf, *Halekai*

From Jeremy Firth

***Rosinante* - Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise**

Every couple of years, the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania conducts a cruise-in-company to circumnavigate the Tasmanian coast. It is called the Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise, as this wonderful island was originally named. *Rosinante* has been the radio relay vessel for the last three cruises and I am the editor of the Tasmanian Anchorage Guide that is prepared for use by cruise participants and published by the RYCT (it is also for sale from the club or in some Australian nautical bookshops and chandleries for \$A49.95). A cruise-in-company provides an opportunity for visitors from other parts of the world, as well as the Australian and local cruising communities, to undertake one of the world's more adventurous and spectacular cruising experiences, supported by people with practical knowledge of conditions likely to be encountered on the Tasmanian coast as well as of the coast itself.

Planning has begun for the VDL-C 2009 to be conducted by the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in conjunction with the Royal Geelong Yacht Club. This will be the 9th VDL-C since 1992. This cruise will take five weeks, which should allow participants time to enjoy something of Tasmania's wonderful cruising grounds. It takes a lifetime to explore them thoroughly! The cruise begins in Hobart on Feb. 11, 2009. This is two days after the long weekend during which the 2009 Australian Wooden Boat Festival will be held there. The route takes a counterclockwise route around the island, with a planned return date in Hobart of March 17, 2009. Full details are contained on the RYCT website at www.ryct.org.au/cruising/circumnavigation.

Previous experience suggests that participants get the most out of the cruise by starting from Hobart. However, it's possible to join at some other point along the way, such as Beauty Point at the mouth of the Tamar River or in the Hunter Group at the northwest corner of Tasmania. There is a possible cruise plan on the website for participants leaving from Geelong and joining at the Hunter Group. The Preliminary Notice of Cruise gives details including conditions of entry such as minimum crew experience, safety requirements and useful information about cruising in Tasmania.

From Joe and Cindy Barnes

***Maggie Drum* (formerly) – Rear Commodore Status**

It is with bittersweet sadness that we are requesting Rear Commodore status for Cindy and me. We left Anacortes, Washington in 2004 and ended up in New Zealand via Mexico, French Polynesia, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia. We were able to spend two seasons in Mexico and two off seasons in New Zealand before selling our great *Whitby 42* in Whangarei, NZ, to a lovely Ozzie family who are taking her to Byron Bay, Australia, this month. We have had tremendous fun on and off board both with other cruisers and with the locals of each place we have been. We especially liked Mexico, the Tuamotos and Vanuatu, in each case because of the people, as well as the things to do and see in each locale. *Maggie Drum* never let us down, although she did call our attention to a few issues such as a broken shroud or balky starter motor. We don't consider ourselves done with cruising though. This will be a time to regroup and attend to other things and we will always be looking at other boats and going out with friends on their boats. We intend to settle back in Anacortes which has a large number of marinas, boats and destinations in the San Juan Islands and in British Columbia. Safe passages to all!

From Jutta Fernald and Ferdy Sant
Pipe Dream –

George Town Cruising Regatta

We be hav'n Island Time Fun! The George Town Cruising Regatta (www.GeorgeTownCruisingRegatta.org) took place from March 7-18. There were about 300 cruising boats in George Town for the festivities. Jutta and I signed up for several events, the first being the Coconut Harvest. In this event a four member team has to paddle out using one swim fin each in a dinghy without the outboard motor. The officials then release about 400 coconuts and each team has to gather as many coconuts as possible. We were allowed to have one bucket in the boat to try to swamp the other dinghies and have their coconuts wash out of their boats so we could steal them. There were about 25 dinghies competing and I can't tell you how much we laughed. After the coconut collection we had two-man coconut carrying races for most of the afternoon. The crew of *Pipe Dream* missed the winner circle by about 10 places. Oops! Another event was the Around Stocking Island sailboat race. Jutta and I crewed on a very large catamaran with three other couples. Luckily they held last place open for us. Oh well, we had a good time anyway. I signed up for beach golf which was a nine-hole (pardon me, nine-bucket) course on the beach played with one club, one ball and a tee for every shot. When your ball landed on a sloped sand beach and rolled into the surf you had to get it out of the surf with the club or take a penalty stroke. I was pretty wet at the end of the game. In case you were wondering, I didn't win any rum in that event either. There were activities going on every day during the ten days of the regatta including several dances on the beach under the stars. The last weekend of the regatta just

happened to coincide with the "Bahamian National Music Festival" held in George Town. This is a three-day event with many music groups from the Exumas and other Bahamian Islands. Two years ago, the cruisers in the harbor put a band together and showed off some of their talents. The tourist bureau asked the cruisers to attend again this year and the "White Folks on Boats" group scrambled to put a few songs together for the festival. Jutta was asked to play percussion in the group. The day before the performance the group did their dress rehearsal on the catamaran *Freebird* in front of a dinghy raft-up in the middle of the harbor. Needless to say, everyone involved had a great time. The "White Folks on Boats" was the opening act for the Bahamian headliners on Saturday night. They did a great job and had the crowd of 1,500 screaming for more when they finished playing. Check them out at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=OhZFG-GRAYg&feature=related>.

From Dave Roberts

Maiden Song –

Rear Commodore Status

After I completed my circumnavigation of the North Atlantic on *Maiden Song* I dislocated my hip. I have recovered now, but I have moved back into my house. I am therefore requesting Rear Commodore status, hopefully temporarily. I'm back home now at:

8514 Adelphi Road
Adelphi, MD 20783
<http://skipperdave.tripod.com>

From Jack & Patricia Tyler

Whoosh -

Rear Commodore Status

After eight years of cruising we are taking a year off with *Whoosh* nestled back into a berth at the St. Pete Municipal Marina.

Volunteers Needed for Newport International Boat Show

For the first time the Seven Seas Cruising Association is planning to participate in the upcoming Newport International Boat Show. This is one of the largest boat shows in the United States and a great opportunity for SSCA to promote the cruising lifestyle and the many benefits of our membership. The show will be held September 11-14, 2008.

We are currently in need of volunteers to help staff our booth. Each volunteer typically spends a few hours at the booth recruiting new members, renewing memberships of existing members and spreading the word about SSCA. Volunteers receive a free one-day pass to the show (daily admission is \$18 - \$29). If you're interested in volunteering please contact our Newport Boat Show Coordinator, Sue Torgersen at 860-445-0694 (home), 860-501-3644 (cell) or via email suetorg@gmail.com.

Volunteering your time is a great way to meet new members, share your passion for cruising with others and have some fun. We sure need your help, so please contact Sue and let us know when you are available.

Fair Winds,

Doug Moody, SSCA Volunteer Coordinator - Boat Show
904-284-1200 - doug@sbimailservice.com

Metro Coordinators Needed

Jeff Hazzard, Metro Manager for SSCA is seeking Metro Coordinators (MCs) for many cities and ports in North America. When these positions are filled, we will seek Metro Coordinators for all major metro areas and ports around the world. Especially needed is a MC for Baltimore/Annapolis/Eastern shore (upper Chesapeake Bay). If you are interested in coordinating local SSCA events in your city or port, Jeff will show you what to do and will support getting you up to speed. Email him at metromanager@ssca.org or call him 0600-2200 Eastern Time at 813-361-4322. Remember, even though SSCA is worldwide, members are all local. Please get involved and help SSCA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FREE TO ALL SSCA MEMBERS: JULY/AUGUST ISSUE OF *PASSAGEMAKER* MAGAZINE!

PassageMaker, the Trawler & Ocean Motorboat Magazine, is generously making the full online digital version of their July/August issue available free to all SSCA members. Look for the link that will be included in your July SSCA Coconut Telegraph email.

Though *PassageMaker* Magazine is geared toward trawler owners, many of the articles in this special bluewater issue will be of interest and relevance to all our members, whether sail or power. For more information about *PassageMaker* or *PassageMaker* events, visit www.passagemaker.com or www.trawlerfest.com.

Gearing up for Melbourne Gam December 5-7

This year's Melbourne Gam is really shaping up. Do you like Spanish guitar music? The Don Soledad trio will put you in the mood to mingle at the Friday evening kick-off cocktail party. Then on Saturday night, dust off your dancing Dockers and plan to party! The Pan Sharks steel band will have you tapping your toes and snapping your fingers to their tantalizing music.

Can't find your coconut bra or your favorite island shirt? You've still got time. This year's gam is scheduled a bit later (December 5-7) to allow those who wish to sail in the opportunity to do so after the official end of the hurricane season. Directions for both sailing or driving will be posted on the website soon, along with online registration and details of the seminar program.

If you're a vendor who'd like to participate, or if you know someone you think would make a good addition to our Vendor Area, have them contact our vendor coordinator, Doug Moody, at sbi@sbimailservice.com. SSCA members who are cruising authors may have a complimentary book signing table on a space-available basis.

We're looking for an emcee, an auctioneer, and helpers to join the Decorating Committee. Contact Judi Mkam at office@ssca.org if you'd like to volunteer.

All About SSCA CD Ready for Member Presentations

Would you like to help spread the word about your favorite cruising organization at your local yacht club, West Marine store, or some other venue that holds cruising seminars? We have a special PowerPoint 20-slide presentation to help you tell the story of SSCA, and a photo slideshow to play while answering questions and handing out sample *Bulletins*, brochures and membership applications. Email Judi Mkam at office@ssca.org to have an *All About SSCA* presentation packet sent to you. Alternatively if receiving mail is a problem, we can send you an internet link to download the presentation to your laptop.

Let Barb Theisen at editor@ssca.org know about your talk in advance and she'll be happy to put the details on the Event Calendar; send her a report with photo(s) for the *Bulletin* afterwards.

Many thanks to Jeffrey Hazzard, Marcie Lynn, John Stevenson and Nancy Zapf for their help producing this new SSCA recruitment tool. Doug Moody and Chad Carvey "beta tested" the presentation at the Strictly Sail show in Oakland, CA in April, and many new members signed up as a result.



Ocean Navigator Magazine Now Online Free to All SSCA Members!

That's right, as an SSCA Member you can now read, download, save, and even print out each full issue of *Ocean Navigator* and *Ocean Voyager*, a \$27.95 value at no extra cost! Just log on to the Members' Section of our website, www.ssca.org, and click on the *Ocean Navigator* menu item. You'll find the state-of-the-art digital format easy to navigate, search and read. Try it out today! The special annual *Ocean Voyager* issue is also available.

SSCA Breakfast in Houston/Galveston Meets for First Time



Cruisers from the Houston/Galveston area held their first SSCA breakfast meeting at Skippers in **Clear Lake** on Saturday, May 24. Eighteen people attended, many of whom are existing SSCA members, but also some friends who are interested in joining the organization. It was decided that the group should meet for breakfast on the third weekend of the month with possibilities for potluck suppers or cookouts at dates in between. It was also suggested that we invite guest speakers to add interest to the evening gatherings. For further information contact Mike Payne, *Dragonfly*, at mpayne@consolidated.net or 936-443-9153.

Wanted...

... more vendors for the expanded Vendors' Area of the Melbourne Gam in December. If you (or someone you know) are interested, let Doug Moody know at sbi@sbimail.net.

18th Annual SSCA Downeast Rendezvous to be Held August 2nd

Cruisers heading to Maine this summer should mark their calendars for the 18th annual SSCA Downeast Rendezvous at Islesboro, Maine. The Rendezvous, as always, will be held on the first Saturday in August to give cruisers time to get to Maine, cruise Maine or Nova Scotia and then head back south. This year's Rendezvous will kick off on Friday, August 1st with a dinghy raft-up cocktail party. Come ashore for a potluck next day at Dick and Kathy de Grasse's cottage on Islesboro Island. Coordinates 44°16.9'N, 68° 55.9'W will put you in the sheltered cove in front of the cottage. There's plenty of room to anchor in all-weather Gilkey's Harbor. Following lunch we'll have a speaker (yet to be named). New T-shirts will be for sale. SSCA members and non-members are welcome. Sixty-seven boats anchored in the harbor last year. For more information, call 781-635-5439. After June 1st, call 207-734-6948 at the cottage. Commodores Dick and Kathy de Grasse, *Endeavour*

Free Seafaring Music Online

Are you shoreside at present, busy filling the cruising kitty while dreaming of cruising? If you have high speed Internet, you can now enjoy commercial-free nautical radio music on your computer, 24/7 at www.seafaring.com. You can listen online or download songs to your iPod or MP3 player. Check out the other online Seafaring offerings such as free downloadable digital *Latitude & Attitude* magazine and free "How to" videos by Captain Jack Klang.

Have You Made the Transition from Liveboard Cruiser to Landlubber?

We're looking for someone who's "swallowed the anchor" to write an article on the psychological adjustment of getting back to land life for the SSCA *Commodores' Bulletin*. If you're interested, please email editor@ssca.org.

The SSCA Family Can Be Found Around the Globe!

SSCA is excited to announce that we now have over 100 Cruising Stations throughout the world, ready to welcome SSCA members. Go to www.ssca.org for the complete list.

Power Cruiser Sought!

Are you a cruiser-under-power? Would you like to help SSCA welcome more "power cruisers" to our organization? SSCA offers many benefits of interest to all cruisers, whether under sail or power, and we'd like to spread the word. We're looking for a member to help us organize booths at TrawlerFests and TrawlerPorts and help us find other ways to recruit new "power" members. It's a fun and social job that can be done mostly by email. If you're interested,, please email volunteering@ssca.org or call Home Base a call at 954 771-5660 and ask to be set in touch with the Marketing Committee.

CALENDAR OF SSCA EVENTS

July 2008

July 12	8:00 a.m. - Punta Gorda, FL	Cruisers' Breakfast
July 12	9:00 a.m. - St. Petersburg, FL	Cruisers' Breakfast
July 19	Houston/Galveston, TX	Cruisers' Breakfast
July 25	5:30 p.m. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Home Base Potluck
July 26	8:45 a.m. - Southwest Florida	Cruisers' Breakfast

August 2008

Aug 1-2	All Day - Isleboro, Maine	Downeast Rendezvous
Aug. 9	8:00 a.m. - Punta Gorda, FL	Cruisers' Breakfast
Aug. 9	9:00 a.m. - St. Petersburg, FL	Cruisers' Breakfast
Aug. 16	Houston/Galveston, TX	Cruisers' Breakfast
Aug. 23	8:45 a.m. - Southwest Florida	Cruisers' Breakfast
Aug. 29	5:30 p.m. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Home Base Potluck

Weekly Cruisers' Breakfasts

Sundays	8 a.m. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Wednesdays	8:30 a.m. - Vero Beach, FL
Wednesdays	8 a.m. - Annapolis, MD		

Details on all SSCA events listed here and more, are available online at www.ssca.org, events calendar link.

LETTERS FROM RECOMMENDED COMMODORES

RECOMMENDED COMMODORES: LYNN AND GLENN STEVENS

Steel Sapphire – 50' Jarrett – 6' draft

HOME PORT: Portsmouth, England - **JOINED SSCA: 1997**

SPONSORS: Commodores: Bob and Judy Bailey – *Pooh Bear*

Commodores: – Joe and Leanna Minick – *Southern Cross*

Dear SSCA'ers,

We join the SSCA in 1997 when after 15 years of sailing on the south coast of England, we moved aboard and sailed to Turkey to begin the EMYR Rally. After spending two years in the Mediterranean, we sailed across the Atlantic and spent several years exploring Venezuela, the Caribbean islands and the inland Waterways before crossing back to the UK to resume work for a while. Since then we have returned to the Med and are now retired and living permanently on board with our dog Wilma, wintering in Kemer Marina. We love the cruising life, enjoy meeting new friends along the way and value the importance of leaving a clean wake.



RECOMMENDED COMMODORES: CHRIS MOONEY AND BARBARA LEACHMAN

MoonSail – 38' Catalina/Morgan - 5'5" draft

HOME PORT: Kemah, TX - **JOINED SSCA: 2004**

SPONSORS: Commodores Benno and Marlene Klopfer – *Diesel Duck*

Commodores Tom and Jean Service – *Jean Marie*

Dear SSCA'ers,

To steal a line from *Latitudes & Attitudes* magazine, in 2004 we decided to “live our dream, not dream our life.” We set a plan in motion to leave Texas in June 2005 and change from just local liveaboards to real cruisers. We sold the cars, the Harley, the house, and enough stuff to furnish two nice homes and took off. We have since been up and down the East Coast twice, to the Bahamas twice, and now south through the Caribbean to Grenada where we are spending a year running a marina and bar. We will resume cruising after the upcoming hurricane season and look forward to flying a Commodores burgee in the Caribbean anchorages we will visit for the next couple of years.



RECOMMENDED COMMODORES: PETE AND MARIBEL PENICHT

Paper Moon – 36' Morgan - 4'2" draft

HOME PORT: New Port Richey, FL - **JOINED SSCA:** 1999

SPONSORS: Commodores: Marilyn and Carl Thoreson - *Discovery*
Commodores: David and Marci Hutson - *Godiva*

Dear SSCA'ers,

We have been married 44 years. We've raised five children and have six grandkids, which put a small but joyful dent in our plans to cruise. Pete is a retired electrical engineer. We both have refitted two sailboats and a powerboat and have delivered multiple boats. We've sailed to Grenada on our Morgan 36. Maribel holds a Captain's license and Pete's knowledge of mechanics has been a godsend. We enjoy cruising and experiencing different cultures and cuisines. We enjoy traveling in groups or alone and meeting fellow cruisers, exchanging stories and information. We have been a regular net controller for the Coconut Telegraph (only net available in the Eastern Caribbean, 4060 at 0800 daily). We have been to many of the Gams and always enjoy the camaraderie and the wonderful information to be shared. We were honored to be asked to be Commodores by so many cruisers and will do our part to uphold the traditions of SSCA!



RECOMMENDED COMMODORES: JONATHAN AND MARCIA PETERSEN

Nonlinear – 37' Hunter - 5'6" draft

HOME PORT: New Bern, NC - **JOINED SSCA:** 2006

SPONSORS: Commodores: Marilyn and Carl Thoreson - *Discovery*
Commodores: David and Marci Hutson - *Godiva*

Dear SSCA'ers,

My wife, Marcia, and I started sailing/racing Hobie Cats in 1974 and after ten years we moved to a monohull for a dryer sail. In 2001 I took early retirement and we move aboard our 1993 Hunter 33.5 and for five years sailed the east coast of the U.S. and Bahamas. At that time I was just getting to know what SSCA was all about and learning more at potluck get-togethers. In late 2006 we purchase a 1998 Hunter 376 and headed out for the Caribbean. At that time I joined SSCA and found it to be a wealth of good information. Plus now I am able to get the *Commodores' Bulletin* online – a big plus! The new website has been a big help in keeping us informed. Along the way we look for SSCA burgees and have made many new friendships. Everyone helping each other - this is what life is all about. We pledge to uphold the traditions of the SSCA and always leave a clean wake.



RECOMMENDED COMMODORE: GLENDA JOHNSON
Our Country Home – 41' Hans Christian - 6'6" draft
HOME PORT: Corpus Christi, TX - **JOINED SSCA:** 1997
SPONSORS: Commodores: Susan and Dennis Ross – *Two Can Play*
Commodores: Steven and Kay Van Slyke - *Kavenga*

Dear SSCA'ers,

Beginning in 2000 Ralph Johnson and I sailed *Our Country Home* up the Oregon Coast and up the Columbia River to Portland, beginning a fantastic journey to Alaska. We thoroughly enjoyed all of the small anchorages, out of the way places and the fishing. While on Whidbey Island in March 2003, Ralph and I married and our travels continued down the West Coast to San Diego. We entered Mexican waters in 2006, with stops in Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and up into the Sea of Cortez. We chose to stay in La Paz for the hurricane season and stayed on for the second season. In January 2008 we crossed the Sea of Cortez again to Puerto Vallarta. This letter is written on the eve of our Pacific crossing. We expect to spend the next several years in the South Pacific. We value and happily uphold the traditions of SSCA. It is an honor to be sponsored for Commodore.



Editor's Note: Ralph Johnson became a Commodore in 2002.

RECOMMENDED COMMODORES: MICHAEL AND BARBARA DALLAS

Evening Star – 45' Fuji - 6' draft
HOME PORT: Marietta, GA - **JOINED SSCA:** 1993
SPONSORS: Commodores Beth and Richard Blackford – *Slow Dancing*
Commodores Herald-Bruz Roettger and Ann Roettger - *Abu Dai*

Dear SSCA'ers,

We started sailing in the 1980s on Lake Lanier and after doing a crewed charter in the late 1980s we decided we wanted to live the cruising life when we retired. Even before we brought *Evening Star* in Marathon, FL., we became SSCA members hoping to glean some tips and insight on the cruising life. We were not disappointed. We have been living aboard for nine years now. We sailed up the Florida Coast to Georgia, did the ICW, and cruised the Bahamas and Abacos before trying to head south. Lighting strike repairs and repowering held us up for a while, but we eventually made it as far as Venezuela in 2006, stopping in several of the islands. In February 2007 we sailed *Evening Star* to Puerto Rico and then again headed south. Now we have reached Venezuela again and plan to spend some time here before heading further west. We heartily support SSCA and are pleased to be nominated for Commodore status. We have always tried to honor the traditions and clean wake policy and will continue to do so.



Dear Members,

For the first time in several years, SSCA has been experiencing a surge of new member sign-ups and better retention of existing members that has resulted in a membership growth of over 9% since last summer.

We attribute this to our multi-faceted efforts to increase and improve the services of SSCA, as well to better methods of marketing and recruiting new members. Along with this, there's a sense of rejuvenation and renewed enthusiasm on the part of the many volunteers who are coming forward to support SSCA—for instance, with our many new Cruising Stations and new Metro groups, our boat show booths and our Gams.

Expanding our services, especially the many new website features, has necessitated substantial investment in web development, but we have been receiving significant positive feedback from the cruising community; our documented increase in website “hits” as well as our membership growth is reflecting this. Along with this, we've added much value to membership through our growing list of discounts and special offers to members, such as free subscriptions to *Ocean Navigator* and *Blue Water Sailing* magazines which have a combined value of \$58, more than the cost of SSCA membership.

A study conducted by the board of six cruising associations worldwide shows that not only are we the largest and best organization of its kind, but our dues are the least expensive.

Despite our growing membership numbers and attempts to increase revenue through other sources, we're struggling to remain fiscally healthy. The last modest dues increase was not enough to offset our growing overhead, due not only to new costs associated with new services, but the increased costs in all areas that we, like any organization, have experienced over the past few years. Therefore we find it necessary to increase dues according to the new fee schedule below, effective July 1.

Annual membership in SSCA is \$50 per year.

- This base rate includes the *Commodores' Bulletin* via bulk mail or the web at no additional charge. The Web membership will include an annual CD that includes (at least) the prior calendar year's issues.
- To receive the *Commodores' Bulletin* via U.S First Class mail an \$8.00 surcharge will apply.
- To receive the *Commodores' Bulletin* in Canada, Mexico or regular overseas mail a \$10.00 surcharge will apply
- To receive the *Commodores' Bulletin* via airmail a \$25.00 surcharge will apply

SSCA Board of Directors

Upcoming SSCA Board Meetings

Board Teleconference July 26, 2008, 9 a.m.

Board Meeting Dec. 8, 2008, 9 a.m. Melbourne, FL

All Board meetings are open to the membership. The teleconference phone number and access code can be obtained from Home Base the week before the meeting.

HOME BASE HAPPENINGS

Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it! Those of us in the Fort Lauderdale area, having suffered through a long recent drought, have of late been praying for rain. The grass is brown, the pools are evaporating, the foliage dying. Well, we got what we asked for! The first half of our Memorial Day weekend was a total washout as severe thunderstorms with strong wind gusts and hail dropped on South East Florida. Hopefully, those at sea all had safe harbors. We were fortunate that the second half of the weekend was absolutely beautiful, and thanks to the generosity of Laura and Bill McCourt, my husband, Mike, and I were able to travel the New River and ICW by boat on Sunday. (We have to introduce Mike to boating, little by little!)

Many thanks to all who have made me feel so welcome in my introduction to Seven Seas. Amongst those at my first potluck dinner at Home Base were Derek Jarvis, *Kestrel*; Sandy & Jim Fitzgerald, *Pandamonia*; Dick & Sue Long, *Tananarive*; Richard & Nancy Laub, *Cookie Monster*; Steve & Linda Leeds, *Maccabee*; and our wonderful editor, Barb Theisen, *Out of Bounds*, who I finally got to meet face to face, along with her husband Tom, and daughter, Kenna. It was great fun to hear all the different tales of cruising. Everyone's sense of adventure and courage is inspirational.

I owe much to the volunteers who are educating me and assisting me as I learn the ropes here at Home Base. From those who helped get our Bulletins off in the mail (recently Laura McCourt) to our dedicated Board of Directors (Jack Tyler, Craig Briggs, Nancy Zapf, Marcie Lynn, Steve Leeds, Patti Miller & Ernest Kraus), who keep my inbox full no matter where in the world they're traveling and to SSCA old timers Ginny Filiatraut & Bill Owra and past board members Kathleen Watt & Don Goodman who have provided me with history and perspective. My thanks too, to the great staff I have the privilege of working with; Administrative Coordinator Patti Berger, Editor Barb Theisen & Webmaster Pat Lynch. Their knowledge and skill makes us all look good.

Recent visitors to Home Base include Rankin Tippins & Sandy Hollis (*Heart of Texas*) who traveled from Houston, TX, Chuck Shrepack (*Dolce*) in from Tiburon CA, Janice Ross (*Friend Ship*) from Tallahassee, FL and locals Susi Henk & Teffy Koornsten (*Windover*), Neil & Lollie Dreizen (*Nautigal*) and Doris Joyner (*Isle Escape*). I encourage anyone in the South Florida area to drop in at Home Base and introduce themselves.

My goals are to remain true to the traditions of the organization while bringing it into the twenty-first century technologically and financially. Hopefully you will appreciate many of the changes and respect the fact that these changes are necessary so that SSCA will remain a vital and vibrant chain that links together the cruisers of the world.

Fair Winds,
Judi Mkam
Association Director



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