



Soundings

Newsletter of the South Port Sailing Club

May 2005

Circumnavigation tales - British Virgin Islands

Late in 2003, Ian Dawson's sister, Sabina, and her husband Mitch embarked on a major cruise in their yacht, Gonzo, from Ottawa, down the Erie Canal, and down the East Coast to South America, intending to circumnavigate via the south pacific islands. "Their circumnavigation plans ended at the Panama Canal," said Ian. "Sabina and Mitch decided to return to Canada to be closer to family." In the October-November 2004 Soundings, we printed their account of surviving Hurricane Ivan while in Trinidad. Here is an account of their travels around the British Virgin Islands.

It was incongruous to be rowing our dinghy back to Gonzo in the blazing sun, with a frozen turkey for our Christmas Eve dinner tucked in our backpack. Being surrounded by warm, turquoise water instead of tall snow banks made it hard to believe that the New Year was around the corner. Nonetheless, the grapevine had told us that the cruisers of the area were meeting in St. John, U.S.



Virgin Islands to celebrate the holidays, so Mitch and I joined them in Francis Bay, one of the most sheltered and beautiful anchorages on the island. The bay is surrounded on three sides by tall cliffs covered in lush, insect-filled forest. The clear water makes for spectacular snorkelling and we spent many hours admiring the underwater gardens and searching vainly for the sea turtles who make the bay their home.

That evening, with the turkey in the oven and the homemade cranberry sauce cooling on the counter, Mitch and I set out in the dinghy for the Christmas Eve raft-up of cruisers. The raft-up involved about 20 dinghies all anchored together in the middle of the bay, passing hors d'oeuvres and tall tales from boat to boat. With the exception of the Gonzo crew and one other couple, everyone in the crowd already knew each other, as they had all participated in a

race known as the Carib 1500. This fun-race sets out every year in early November from Norfolk, Virginia and ends in Tortola, BVI. In fact, it was this race that prompted Mitch and me to sail to the BVI's in the first place. Long before we cast off our dock lines in Kingston, we had decided to tag along with the race participants, thinking that it would be an excellent way to make our first

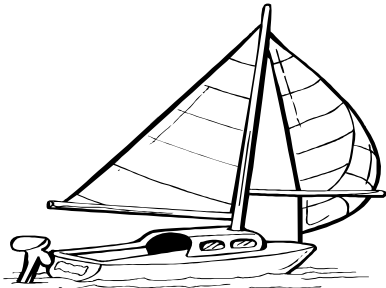
major ocean passage: we would be able to tune into the daily weather updates and be in the vicinity of the other sailors, without having to pay the hefty entry fee. As it turned out, Mitch and I were delayed at Rebel Marine, making repairs to Gonzo and tossing back beers with the locals, so that by the time we were ready to set out for the ocean, the race had long been underway. No matter, we decided that the

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Wednesday night racing R.C. boat schedule

May 11 th	Bill Noakes
May 18 th	Paul Ramey
May 25 th	Ken Blyth
June 1 st	Wayne Hind
June 8 th	Chris Eagen
June 15 th	Kevin Mogyorody
June 22 nd	Frank Macdonald
June 29 th	Bill Stridiron
July 6 th	NO RACE (Shark Worlds)
July 13 th	Sarah Bowsher
July 20 th	Rene Brown
July 27 th	Mike O'Brien
Aug. 3 rd	David Robichaud
Aug. 10 th	Tom Rindlisbacher
Aug. 17 th	Peter Soles
Aug. 24 th	David Colborne
Aug. 31 st	Derek White
Sept. 7 th	Dave Howarth
Sept. 11 th	(Sunday) Andy Hellenbart



Shark Worlds needs first aid volunteer

The Shark Worlds needs an additional RC volunteer with some experience and certification in basic first aid. This person will be asked to be on board the RC Utility boat with one of the sailing instructors, acting as a run-about boat to assist the mark setting and signal RC boats and respond to medical emergencies. If you or someone you know is able to help from July 3 to July 8, please contact Ian Dawson at 979-9652 for more details.



2005 RACING

May 14 th	St. Clair Doublehanded Race
May 21 st	LMYC Shakedown Race
May 28-29	RCYC Shark Trillium
June 3-5	BYC NOOD Regatta
	CIYC Night Race
June 10-11	Toledo YC Mills Race
June 11-12	RHYC Shark Provincials
June 17 th	WYC Overnight Race
June 18 th	SPSC C Course Race
	Mackinac Solo Race
June 25 th	SPSC Invitational Regatta
	Huron Doublehanded Race
June 26 th	SPSC Women's Challenge
July 2-3	TRYC Regatta
July 4-8	SPSC Shark Worlds
July 9 th	LMYC Pelee Fun Race
July 23 rd	BYC Mackinac Race
	CIYC Maple Leaf Race
July 23-24	KYC Shark Canadians
August 1-3	ILYA Bay Week Regatta
August 6-7	PCYC Shark Coupe de Quebec
August 20-21	BHYC Shark Golden Horseshoe
August 28 th	LMYC Fighting Island Race
Sept. 4 th	CIYC Labor Day Regatta
Sept. 10-11	NYC Shark Gold Cup
Sept. 10	SPSC Hospice Race
Sept. 17 th	SPSC Harvest Moon Race
Sept. 24-25	NOLSC Shark Homecomers
Oct. 1 st	St. Clair Solo Race
Oct. 5 th	WYC Chimo Race

Mainstays

Wednesday, May 18th at 10.00 am. All ladies very welcome to help flower planting, the more who help, the easier the job. Each year the Mainstays buy, plant and care for the flowers that enhance the club's appearance. Please bring your own gardening tools. Let's make a special show for our Shark Worlds visitors in July.

Thursday, May 26th at 6.00 pm. Wine and Cheese evening. If the weather is good, we plan to have a short sail. Otherwise we will meet in the Clubhouse. Please bring some snacks to share or perhaps your favourite beverage.

Club house security - close the door!

We are all are responsible for security of the club house. The doors to the club house should be closed by any member who sees one open. If you must use a door stopper (or other thing) to prevent the door from closing for a short time, please ensure you remove it. All members must act. It's not good enough to think another person is responsible for closing doors and ensuring they are locked.

Thames River Y.C. Cruise

A cruise is being planned to the Thames River Yacht Club on the July 1st holiday weekend. In order to vacate wells for the Shark Worlds, it has been suggested that we leave our boats there for a week and return to the Club on July 10. The TRYC is happy to cooperate.

Transportation by car back and forth between the club will have to be arranged. If you can help in this way, please contact Lorne Mann, at 948-9904, so we can give TRYC an idea of how many boats to expect.

Games Night summer format



On the last Saturday of the month meet at the Club at 3 o'clock for Happy Hour, followed by a barbeque & cards. Join us for all or part of the activities on Saturday May 28, June 25, July 30 and August 27.

Contact: Lorne & Rita Mann

Roster/Mailing changes

Please report any change of mailing address, email address or telephone number during the year by email to:

Jackie Timothy (mailings) robtim@cogeco.ca
Irene East (Roster) i.east@sympatico.ca

Life Jackets Wanted

The Sailing School is teaming up this year with the Optimist Club of Tecumseh to offer sailing lessons children who might not otherwise have the opportunity to learn sail.

The Optimist Club of St. Clair Beach will be sending 10 children to take part in the morning session of the Kidsail program, taking place this year between August 1-5, 2005.

In order to help facilitate this program, the Sailing School is looking for lifejackets donations from SPSC members to be used by these kids. Please contact Renée Dawson at 979-9652 if you have lifejackets you would be willing to offer.

Soundings

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South Port Sailing Club

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We attempt to go to press by the 20th of each month. Please get your contributions to:

Renka Gesing

254.5015

renka@gesingconsultants.com

Commodore's Corner, from Phil Peck

Nothing feels more like summer than to have your boat in the water, your sails up and a steady breeze blowing. Before you head out, please encourage club mates to clean up after themselves.

June 1 is the deadline for having unsailed boats, masts and other equipment removed from the property. It's especially important this year, as every effort is being made to put our best face forward when hosting the Shark World Cup. You'll see lots of activity around the club that's part of the beautification effort.

The old dredgings are being removed, thanks to the ongoing efforts of Doug Watson (sorry for the inconvenience while the work is carried out). The new walkway is being installed along the shoreline. You've probably noticed the seawalls have been painted, wood bumpers and ladders installed, thanks to a number of people working with Harbour Master Jamie Halpin. There have been improvements in the kitchen, with new countertops and new splash plate tiling, thanks to John Bufton's property committee.

I must remind everybody of their responsibility to keep the clubhouse secure. We can't afford to leave the doors open when there's nobody around. So please, don't prop the door open except for a

short duration when you're moving something in or out of the clubhouse. If you see the door propped open, please close it.

The OPP Marine unit will be at the club on May 24 to offer free, voluntary safety inspections. They'll look at your emergency equipment and give you a sticker if your boat meets all the requirements. People from the community who have boats on trailers will be inspected in the driveway, boats in the water will be inspected at the docks.

You may have spotted the posters for Sailabration. Social chair Jeff Labonte has a great day planned. Please plan to attend what has traditionally been the biggest event of the year.

This year, Sailabration may be second biggest event, as the Shark Worlds committee has a full week of activities planned, in addition to the sailing. I hope you can attend some of the events during the first week of July and met the out-of-town sailors.

The Sharks World committee is trying to arrange for a number of boats to be away from the club during the competition to make room for additional Sharks. Thanks to everybody who is pitching in various ways to make the event a big success.

Property committee, from Bob Linton

Waste oil

Please remember it is the responsibility of the owner to dispose of waste oil. Would the owners of the oil left by the waste container please remove the oil and depending on where you live, either leave out with your recycle collection (Clearly mark the container "Used Motor Oil") or take to the recycle centre. For a residence this is a free service.

If I have to do dispose of the oil on behalf of the club we pay industrial rates, and I would prefer to put the funds to better uses. Thanks.

Anti freeze

This is considered hazardous material and must be handled either through a local garage or taken to the hazardous waste disposal site. They are open Monday, Wednesday or Saturday 8 am to 4 pm.

Washrooms

As you are probable aware the countertops taps and sinks in the washrooms have been replaced. To assist in keeping the club house clean, please wipe over the sink area after use.

General Repairs

The property committee is planning to repair some of the water line taps and electrical outlets in the basin.

from the Harbourmaster, Jamie Halpin

I am writing this the weekend before launch, shivering violently while watching the snow fall and cursing over all of the pre-launch projects that I can't do because of the weather. I guess we have to look on the bright side: the snow is bringing up the water level.

By now you are all either afloat and toasting me as the greatest Harbourmaster ever, or stuck in the mud and calling for my resignation. I hope it is the former and I hope that launch went well.

I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to help with the launch: Lynn Baker and her crew for running the kitchen, Jim Halpin and Scott Turner for acting as recorders, Andrew Barlow, Doug Watson, and Brayden Uttley for directing the cranes, Wayne

Hind and Rob Malone for driving the forklift, and everyone else who came out and lent a hand. Our soundings of the harbour showed that we had the bare minimum of depth in the entrance channel and along F-dock. The real proof is in now that we have boats in the harbour to find all of the shallow spots. Bob Fuller is working on estimates so that we can dredge if the need arises.

I have to thank Andrew Barlow and Jane McArthur for welding our new boards to the walls and adding tie-off loops. Hopefully no one has had to use them because they couldn't get into their well. I also thank Jason Helm for painting our safety ladders, the new tie off loops, and the parts of the wall that were under the snow when we did our winter painting.

BVIs, continued from page 1

BVI's was a good destination to begin our Caribbean travels, as it put us far enough south and east to allow for easy passages to the other Caribbean islands. As it turned out, our delay at Rebel Marine was fortuitous: the Carib 1500 participants had either no wind or severe squalls, so that many of them spent 14 agonizing days at sea, while Gonzo spent only nine. . .






A few days later, it was time to set sail and head back to the British islands. The return sail took us through many of the islands that we had visited during our first few weeks and we saw afresh the beauty that had greeted us at the end of our nine days at sea. Tiny islands huddled in protective groups rise out of the ocean from enormous depths. Just north of the British Virgin Islands lies the Puerto Rico Trench, an underwater valley that plunges eight kilometres down; the islands are merely the tops of these submerged mountains. As a Canadian accustomed to an impossibly large land mass, my reaction to these puny bits of land was to wonder how people could possibly feel safe on them. It seemed a simple matter for the ocean to swallow them up. But once on land, the bustle of human and animal life is obvious, with roosters staking claim to busy street corners and drivers stopping traffic to greet friends walking by. Many of the islands are virtually uninhabited, with a small beach bar or mini-mart as the only nod to modern convenience. Tortola and

Virgin Gorda are by far the busiest islands, the former housing the capital of the BVIs and the latter being the principal cruise ship destination. The strong tourism industry on the islands brings with it the usual mixed bag of results: the availability of Chef-Boy-Ar-Dee and Haagen Daazs at Bobby's Food Market, and grumpy locals tired of foreigners trampling their islands. Nonetheless, the sailing is magnificent in the BVIs, as the islands define several large waterways that provide shelter from the worst of the Atlantic swell, while still allowing strong wind for sailing.



Mitch body surfing

May 2005 SPSC Calendar

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
2 May Club House Duties  (May 1-7) Andrews, G&P Allum, P Arthur, W	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 7:00 pm Shark Worlds Meeting (May 8-14) Bennett, G Beaudoin, N Baker, M	10 7:15 pm Executive Meeting	11 Men's Lunch 6:45 pm KS1R1 Bill Noakes	12 <i>First race!</i>	13	14 St. Clair Double- handed Race	15
16 (May 15-21) Blyth, K Boivin, G	17	18 10:00 am Flower planting  6:45 pm KS1R2 Paul Ramey	19	20	21 LMYC Shakedown Race	22
23 (May 22-28) Bowsher, P Miernicke, M	24	25 6:45 pm KS1R3 Ken Blyth	26 6.30 pm Mainstays Wine & Cheese Evening 	27	28 Games Night 3:00 pm Happy Hour, followed by BBQ & cards  RCYC Shark Trillium 28-29 May	29
30 (May 29 - June 4) Brixa, K&C Braidford, E	31	June 2005 Club House Duties  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 22%;"> June 5-11 Watson, D&M* Shore, R </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> June 12-18 Barlow, A & McArthur, J* Young, B. </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> June 19-25 Braidford, E. </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> June 26-July 2 Brown, R&D* Brockman, L. </div> </div>				