

July 2006

REPORTS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Ken Schneider of the Communications Committee asks that you tell him or Bonnie McLaughlin if you are unable to get your newsletter electronically. This way your name can be added to the newsletter mailing list. Our website is www.sailing-singles.net Ken is always looking for submissions to the website.

By the way, Bonnie has the summer off so the newsletter is being edited by other club members until the fall season starts.

CRUISE CORNER BY DEENA

Will return in the fall. Take a look at articles submitted by other club members in this months issue of our newsletter.

UPCOMING SAILS

No summer sail list is available; we will be sailing by gosh and by golly instead of by schedule. More about our summer activities down the page.

Who's Who

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Joy Hansen	6/06	Gene Kaser	6/16
Janet Bush	6/27	Lois Polaski	7/04
Richard Cashman	7/20	Christine Hankins	7/24
Mike O'Mara	7/24		

A Memorial Day Journey by Bob Hammer

It was 2:30 in the afternoon on Tuesday, May 23d, when Gheorghe, Mary and I arrived at the Driftwood Marina, in Marathon, for a Wednesday departure aboard Ken and Suzi Hammer's 52 foot Irwin Ketch, "Journey" bound for Beaufort, N.C. The floating docks at this joint looked like orange crates nailed together. They rocked and swayed when walked on and they were connected to land by narrow boards so that every entry and departure was like "walking the plank"! The boat was all pulled apart and 3 from the electrical/systems contractor were hard at work below in the stinky heat doing wiring. Captain Ken had said to me over a week ago that the work completion/departure would look like a "photo finish"...he was right! The sad part was that they had all that time from January on to do this project...and saved it for the hot, muggy, airless days of May!

Mary, Gheorghe and I headed out to explore Marathon and we found a cute restaurant at a small marina and enjoyed a nice meal while watching the boats and birds. When we returned, they were still working. They said they would "work to completion", which turned out to be about 7:30 PM. At the restaurant, we three had made a list of what we wanted to eat during the next few days but, Suzi, Mary and Gheorghe all decided to send just Ken and me off to Publix to do the shopping...an error in judgment! We each took a cart and began our shopping spree... pulling and seeking...no coordination at all. We arrived at the checkout, paid for it all, loaded the car and took off for the boat. When it was all aboard (over narrow plans at night) and revealed...there was tremendous redundancy, which was good for a few laughs. The key elements were there, however; cases of Corona Beer, chips, nuts, cheese and crackers! "Journey" was back together and things seemed to work. Sleep time arrived and I chose to sleep up on the bow with the mosquitoes and no-see-ums. Morning arrived and after one more Ken and Suzi "conference" with the contractor, we were supposed to catch high tide at 10 AM and depart. Well, the meeting took longer than expected because there were cost over-runs to negotiate. By 11 AM Suzi and Ken arrived back at the boat after signing the SALT Treaty with the contractor! We were rapidly losing our high water which we needed to get out of that wacky marina. We shoved off at 11:30 AM and proceeded down a narrow, winding channel towards the ocean, occasionally plowing through the sandy high spots. I was really glad that Gheorge was at the helm in that too narrow, too shallow, winding channel. Visions of personal groundings in the past flashed through my head. After a long passage we finally saw the open sea, but we still had some low water to clear. We had to "muscle" our way along, with grass and sand churning in our wake. There were a few spots that stopped us dead but Ken powered through them. Free at last, we now had crab traps to watch for as we headed for the Gulf Stream as fast as we could. Finally we were in open water heading north.

The Gulf Stream is represented on the GPS by a series of arrows pointing north. The Gulf Stream is interesting; it varies between 50 and 90 miles wide, up to 3,000 feet deep and moves at about 70 miles a day from its source up to about S. Carolina...the it drops to about 40 miles per day and keeps dropping. Night closed in by about the time we approached Key Largo. We had fair winds from the SE, had all of our sails up, and we were making about 10.3 knots over the ground. A huge dome of light pollution slowly appeared to our west...Miami, then another Ft. Lauderdale. It was truly an interesting phenomenon...here we were well off-shore and these huge sources of light produced a "twilight" for us until we at last passed them at about midnight. I turned in to my cozy V-berth where I promptly fell asleep. Ken wanted the 12 to 6 watch and Gheorghe and Mary chose to sleep in the cockpit so if something did go wrong...they were right

there. There was a bit of ship traffic around the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area which fell off as we cleared those cities. The next morning Mary commented how Ken, the ever vigilant Captain, adjusted the sails all night long.

Thursday dawned clear and beautiful...there was a cloudless sky, fair winds from the south, calm seas, and lots of flying fish. The Gulf Stream was a beautiful, clean, cobalt blue with patches of light brown kelp occasionally floating on top. After a magnificent omelet breakfast, cooked up by Gheorghe and Mary, we got down to the business of ship-board life. Soon after Ken awoke us he has us preparing to deploy the huge red, blue and purple 'drifter' (like a spinnaker) to help our forward progress with that south wind. As the winds calmed, that huge sail would fill and deflate endlessly making that special sound only big sails can make. Ken finally got us all on deck to deflate and stow the big, pretty sail. We sailed and motored as best we could until, suddenly the motor quit. Ken initially thought it best to consider an anchorage, somewhere between St. Augustine and Jax, for safety reasons and ease of repair. Then our refrigerator quit as well, and a comfortable completion of our journey seemed to be suddenly in question. As an electrician, Gheorghe thought these things could be fixed at sea and he and Ken held a conference. Finally we were all asked for input on the situation and we all contributed. I opted for Jax mainly because I didn't relish a minimalist existence out in the Atlantic. Ken and Gheorghe quickly got on the case, however, and soon they had improvised a solution for the fridge and a filter switch cured the engine. We were soon off again headed north towards Beaufort, N.C.

That night my watch was from 2 to 6 AM. Ken was asleep in the Captains cabin and Suzi came up to the cockpit to join me on watch. It was a captivating night with good winds (no motor), calm seas and countless stars with no clouds. The "Milky Way" was clearly defined in a way that I've rarely seen before. Our watch passed quickly, in no small part to lots of conversation with Suzi, and I was off to sleep at 6:30 AM.

It was about 11:30 AM when I awoke to what was yet another super gorgeous day with bright sunshine. I discovered some grey, funny-looking critters in my sleeping bag and some scurrying along on the deck. They weren't roaches but they sure were strange. Gheorghe said he thought they flew over and into my open hatch from a cargo ship that came quite close while I was asleep. Whoa! They were slow movers so I managed to kill most of them. There were no clouds in the sky and the seas were calm, but there was an evil wind from the north and it forced us to haul in the jib and motor along. During a recent cruise to Venice (3 days) which I missed Gheorghe was aboard Mary's boat "Bright Star", and his fishing pole was at the ready. One of those days he caught a whole bunch of King Mackerel...big, heavy fish and one of hem even missed the cockpit and catapulted into the cabin where it flopped around with great vigor. Gheorghe was trying to duplicate that success in the Gulf Stream. He got one strong hit from something that left big bite marks in the lure...but it got away. All afternoon he patiently played with that pole. When it was nearly dinner time, and it looked hopeless, there was a sudden whirring sound as the line quickly played out. After what seemed like a pretty long time, probably especially to Gheorghe, he finally had a beautiful, approx. 30 inches long, Skipjack Tuna aboard! Ken suggested that Gheorghe filet it in the dingy and soon there were two sizable fresh fish filets. Ken started the grill and soon we were enjoying a feast in the cockpit complete with wine, fresh vegetables and tasty roasted potatoes.

After a lovely sunset and good conversation it was time for me to turn in to my comfy V-berth. In the wee hours of the morning I was awakened by fierce sounds up on deck. My initial thought was that we had re-deployed the huge drifter again and it was making a racket. I carefully made my way aft to the saloon where chaos prevailed...stuff was everywhere and the two heavy lounge chairs had slipped the bungee cords and Suzi had lodged them in the companionway. When I popped my head in the cockpit I saw that the weather had turned terrible. There was white water everywhere and I could see that Ken was trying to find the direction where the waves were coming from. The seas were all confused, however, and in a complete jumble. I was reminded of the night I spent on watch on a Navy training cruise in April '66. We were off Cape Hatteras and I was the lonely lookout on the fantail. The seas looked then just about what they looked like now. It was just a hellish scene and I held on for dear life! What probably happened this time is that a squall line came through...I could see lightening off in the distance. Mary and Gheorghe were faintly smiling and seemed to be enjoying all of the excitement. When Captain Ken had things under control and the seas began to calm, I returned to my bunk. When I awoke, we were heading NW for Beaufort with a nice west wind. I estimate the waves were about 8-10 feet but "Journey" rode them like a champ. I became mesmerized by the patterns of waves and the way the sunlight played off all their facets...I thought it looked awesome. Suzi brought fresh fruit, muffins, and good strong coffee to the cockpit and it all tasted delicious. Suzi didn't feel like eating, however.

It was Saturday and we were beginning to close on our destination. We sailed all day and into the night and Captain Ken was determined to anchor in a safe harbor before sunrise. At last we saw the lights of Beaufort and Ken was planning our approach through the apparently well-marked and well-lit channel. Even with these aids to navigation, however, it is often quite disorienting to enter unfamiliar channels at night. After one episode of wandering out of the channel we finally arrived at a good anchorage just around the point where the Coast Guard Station is located. Right before anchoring I was briefly at the helm and became completely disoriented because of lack of local knowledge and the typically slow reaction time of the GPS. Moral of the story: study the chart carefully! Whew! Finally we were anchored and I happily hit the V-berth...it was 3:30 AM!

I awoke at about 9:30 AM on that same Sunday morning to yet another gorgeous, sunny day. After a nice breakfast we weighed anchor and were off to seek out Northwest Creek Marina in New Bern. Gheorghe with his exceptional eyesight, stayed on the helm for hours, treading our way from channel to channel. We passed lovely homes, quiet forests, countless docks and boats, and finally the Neuse River opened to a wide expanse of water. By mid-afternoon we were secure in one of the front berths of the marina. Shortly after Bud, the Dock-Master, caught our line he asked us to do it all over again and back in this time...for ease in getting the boat into deeper water should a storm threaten. We went through that drill for a while and Captain Ken did a great job backing us in. The NW Creek Marina had terrific facilities, lots of boats, lots of friendly boaters and we all wandered around on the nice, solid docks once again. After an excellent "wrap-of-one's choice" dinner, Gheorghe, Mary and I were off to pick up our rental car at the New Bern Airport.

After a good night's sleep we all awoke to yet another lovely Memorial Day 2006. Not thinking, I was all for leaving for home immediately until Gheorghe patiently reminded me that there was lots of work yet to do. Boy, was he ever right! We all got down to cleaning out the fridge and giving "Journey" a good wash down. After a few photo ops we were finally ready to bid New

Bern adieu. We shared hugs and kisses and were finally off to make our way to Ft. Myers. Gheorghe ended up doing most of the driving (why not utilize that terrific eyesight?) and 11 hours later we were safe at home. All in all, it was a truly wonderful cruise, with a terrific Captain, Co-Captain and crew, who really were compatible and worked well together as a team. Thanks to all it was a successful mission accomplished.

Pool Party at Carol Burns' Sunday June 18.

The skies threatened then dumped buckets of rain, but it didn't discourage nor dampen the fun at Carol's pool party. Thirty members and 3 guests gathered to enjoy the afternoon of socializing, swapping tall tales, and eating. When each person brings a little something it's amazing the variety and quantity of food that this club can produce. A few people actually got into the pool and the challenge seemed to be which inflatable pool toy could be ridden successfully. An article that appeared in the prior week's News Press featuring an interview with Jocelyn Erickson was a topic for discussion along with the misrepresentation of our attitude on smoking and drinking. Carol was the contact person in the article and she related the variety of phone calls she received, all from men. Maybe it was because the article appeared in the Sports section. The Club extends a big thank you to Carol for opening her home to our group. It's great gathering like this that keeps interest going in our Club between sailing outings.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

July 4 Spend the day in Lehigh Acres at Martha Daglier's home. Arrive anytime after 2 PM to enjoy her swimming pool then a pot luck supper with hot dogs on the grill at 5:30 PM. Bring a dish to share and your own beverages. Later in the evening we will attend the fireworks display at Veteran Park. RSVP by July 2 if you are attending and let Martha know many hot dogs you would like so she will know how much to prepare. Keep in mind she has said it is a big hot dog.

July 22 or 23, Commodore Gheorghe is looking for a member with a pool to volunteer their home for a Hawaiian party. Think Mai Tais, Aloha shirts and maybe a bikini or two. It's easy and fun. The members bring the food and their own beverages. Just provide the pool, some ice and coolers and you have an instant party.

August 19 Gather at Jan Hladik's home, 1595 Main St, Ft. Myers Beach for a fun afternoon of cards and/or board games, pot luck supper at 5 PM, then walk or short drive to Parrot Key Restaurant for entertainment and dancing. Stop back at Jan's for coffee and dessert on the way home. Bring your favorite cards/games.