

BLUE WATER LOG

An Ode to the Joys of the Voyaging Lifestyle Big Bird's longest flight so far

Anna Sebok



A few weeks ago somewhere between New Haven and Cockles Harbor we looked at the GPS and it said 24 nm to go to our destination. It was a beautiful Indian Summer Day with the wind on our hind quarter blowing 25 knots true. We'll be there early. Leisurely dinner making, music-listening, reading, early sleeping. Meeting with our children and grandchild early next morning after a short sail to Three mile Harbor.

The GPS showed 685 miles to go on a similar Indian Summer Day a year ago with the wind also on our hind quarter. Destination: Bermuda. Dinners are made for many days ahead, two hurricanes (Irene and Jose) are behind. Soon we are into a life very different from the customary 25-35 mile day trips that end with the cocktail hour. Watch schedule is setup, all 4 of us know where things are to be found, where our bunks are, where emergency stuff is and everybody agrees to have single person watch responsibilities except when needed otherwise. Our bodies soon get into a constant isometric exercise routine. We soon empty our minds of the clutter of noises (phone, fax, TV, micro, beeper, sirens, etc.) and have free space for thoughts. We soon start seeing in the dark and noticing changes of wave patterns. We get to be in sync with the boat: we feel when she wants to do what. Slowly we get into the relaxed state of falling asleep easy regardless of the time of the day. By the time the gale comes the second day and lasts for 30 hours with 41 knots of gusts and a steady 38 knots from the Northeast with driving rain, we take it as par for the course. Also we gain trust in the boat, we see that she can handle it. We sail into St. Georges harbor in Bermuda with moderate winds and have a grand time for four days visiting old friends, making new ones, saying goodbye to our great crew welcoming new crew.

Food shopping and cooking for the next long trip, freezing all dinners. Listening to Gospel singing in a church was a highlight, also getting Johnnybread for our trip from the Minister. Steering cable repair was achieved without having to alter schedule.

The GPS says 923 nm to our next destination; Jost van Dyke, the Virgin Islands. Shipboard routine fills totally normal. The NE winds change from 25 knots to less, we swim on the 4th day, and plot the spot on the ocean chart. A fish flew in through the open window, bumped into the shower wall. The porpoises stayed out playing catch across our bow. We are very rested, three off, one on duty leaving 9 hours even at night for sleeping, and plenty of time for reading, talking, story telling. In record time, 5 days and 12 hours we are at anchor near Foxy's. The Big Bird's rum provisions have a dent in the wee hours. We deserved it: we found safe harbor even in the dark, even in a squall that arrived as we noticed Tortolla's first lights.

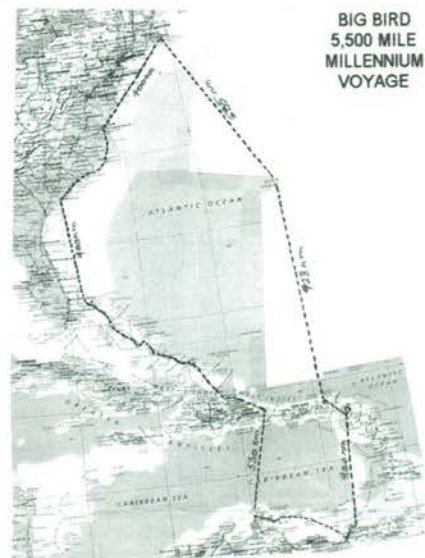
Our layed back cruising life begins, but gets rudely interrupted in 5 days: on November 15th the news, that late season hurricane, Lenny's eye may hit the Virgins changes our attitudes by 180 degrees to the opposite of layed back. Researching the best spot to be in, tying

up the boat with 3 anchors off the bow and 7 lines to the mangroves in Banner Bay, derigging everything takes two days of hard work for helping crew and anxious us. We find the last motel room in the last moments while the beginning of the worst is in full swing. All we forgot was to "provision". The boat is taken care of the best way, but who thinks of breakfast, lunch and dinner? Who can even imagine while in the live-a-board mode, that there is such

a thing ashore that no restaurants are open, no supermarkets either, that there is no more water to drink, or to flush toilets with in the motel? That there is a curfew. There is darkness. No electricity. At least the motel is built of concrete, even the roof, so it will not blow away. But the rain comes in by the sheets from a leaky second floor window. The sound of the wind is louder than we ever heard before. Luckily from the next motel unit three young crew members of a charter catamaran bring over a cooler filled with gourmet appetizers and drinks and we party all night to redirect focus. Next day we sneak down to the boat while the "eye" makes the world around us much too calm. Big Bird seems to be O.K. The winds are back, but not for long. We are on the right side of the swirl. Northwest of the eye. The wind speed is deducted and not added. It is not 144, but "only" 84 miles/hour. Another few hours and we are aboard. No damage. Even the dinghy, tied to a discarded refrigerator behind a beach-bar is intact. It takes two days to untangle all the boats from the jam packed mangrove jungle. It takes a few weeks to get the rigging and the attitude back. How lucky we were. And how many were not: we keep hearing about lost, damaged, sunk boats all over the Caribbean.

We finally cruise the Virgins we know so well, but never get tired of. One overnigher takes us to Saba on Christmas Eve befitting the Holiday as this Island's peak seems to hit the heavens. A climb to the top is really heavenly. To St. Barts we sail, then to St. Martin, all of this to give a flavor to our daughter of our post hurricane cruise lifestyle. (She joined us in St. Thomas at mid December)

The BIG event, the millennium was a truly unforgettable happening. We sailed back to St. Barts, where EVERYBODY had to be on New Years Eve who ever was not at Foxy's (on Jost Van Dyke). Several thousand boats created a decoration around the tiny island,



BIG BIRD
5,500 MILE
MILLENNIUM
VOYAGE

Maine Cruise 2000

This years Down East cruise had close to thirty boats savoring a variety of cruising experiences which began for most with an overnight passage to Northeast Harbor. Much was learned navigating through periods of no wind, brisk wind, fog, passing squall lines and fuel management requirements until we all tied up to the beautiful facility at Northeast and sunshine. A gala Commodores Dinner welcomed everyone at the magnificent Asticou Inn after the proceeding days cocktail party aboard Eye Of The Tiger. On to Frenchboro and lunch at Lunt's and an opportunity to walk this picturesque harbor and then continue to Burnt Coat Harbor, Swan's Island. The following day took us through Eggemoggin Reach under mostly clear skies to Buck's Harbor. The passage to Camden was the setting for a challenging day of racing under blue skies and the incom-



parable vista of mountains and windjammers. Our next stop, Port Clyde, hosted a gala clambake on the docks; then on to Moffat Cove in Boothbay where Bob and Gene Shepard graciously hosted a catered chicken barbeque dinner on the lawn of their home after clearing the cove of neighbors' boats so BWSC vessels could tie up. A second exciting day race under sparkling skies and good winds brought us to Portland. Then on to Biddeford Pool and finally to Portsmouth. A big thank you for the meticulous planning of the Co-Chairs on the cruise and the many captains who graciously hosted impromptu cocktail parties/cook aboard dinners in those harbors where accommodations ashore limited leaving the boats.



Spring Regatta / Memorial Day Weekend at Spinnaker Island Y.C.

May 26-29, 2000

Judging from the enthusiastic response by those partaking in this gathering of our club at Spinnaker Island yacht Club in Hull, MA for the Memorial Day weekend; this was a splendid event. The committee responsible for this weekend long party which included: Dorothy and Mike Martindale, Mary and John Kennan, and Brenda and Ed Green; should all be commended.

The Blue Water Boats sailing into to slips at SIYC on Saturday afternoon included: "NOSE" Duane & Pat Marshall, "THERA" Dan & Mary Klocke (guests of the Pasquiers), "LANGUEDOC" Colin Richardson & family, "EARLY LIGHT" Mike & Pat Gardner. These boats joined up with SIYC member boats "LINDESFARNE" Dorothy and Mike Martindale with Commodore Merrill Feldman and wife Avis on board, and "JONATHANS PRIDE" Brenda and Ed Green with Vice Commodore Sue Lavoie and husband Paul on board. During the weekend Peter and Marion Bishop and daughter Ellen joined us for the events and brought their "SUNRISE" from around the corner in Hingham for the Sunday racing. Also joining us for various events without their boats were: Joe and Nancy Greene (SUNRISE), Joe and Pat Ribauda (IMPULSE), Elaine Freedman (NO HASSLE), Peter and Christine Keen (WHITE WINDS), Mary and John Kennan were put up by SIYC members Jack and Judy Richmond on their boat "MOMENTS". Jack and Judy joined us for portions of the weekend, as guests.

The weekend festivities began on Saturday evening after all the boats were secured, with a cocktail party and potluck supper in the SIYC clubhouse and scenic veranda. The weather cooperated on Saturday for the journey to SIYC and continued on Sunday for a day of camaraderie and racing around the buoys in site of Boston Light and the outer Boston Harbor Islands. (*Race Results...??*)

Saturday evening events started with a cocktail party at the Marina clubhouse overlooking the Hull-Hingham Bays on a beautiful summer-like evening. We then boarded a school bus for a one hour meander through the Hull peninsula with a wonderful historic and humorous tour guided by SIYC's dock master Bob Corcoran (also Vice Principle of Hull H.S. as well as a very funny person). The tour ended with some sore sides from laughter, a snippet from Merrill Feldman's youth, and a succulent Twin Lobster feast for 42 people at Jakes Seafood Restaurant (Nantasket Beach, Hull), where we were also joined by SIYC Com-



modore Alan Goldstein and wife Linda as well as Bob Corcoran's wife Barbara.

On Monday, after breakfast at the Marina club house, some BWSC members lingered before their trip to home ports, and walked across the island's causeway to the Hull Memorial Cemetery where they were treated to an old fashioned, small town, Memorial Day parade, ceremony and a tearful tribute to the fallen heroes of this country's wars – including a company of French Marines who died in Hull while helping this country gain its independence.

The BWSC visiting boats, guests and members left in deteriorating weather, but we trust with a satisfied feeling of a club weekend well spent.

July 4th Weekend Cruise 2000

The holiday weekend opened with a truly memorable event hosted by Ernie and Cecily Grable at their home on Sippican Harbor in Marion. As Saturday, July 1st dawned sunny and clear, 30 boats eventually arrived in the harbor and approximately 120 members and their guests showed up to enjoy the magnificent Buzzard's Bay views, the usual BWSC camaraderie, and a great barbecue dinner. The music and dancing were still going strong on the deck as darkness descended. A great time was had by all with both Ernie and Cecily earning great praise and thanks for their gracious hospitality.

The 30 boat fleet sailed off in several directions on the next day with 20 boats heading for Padanaram and the New Bedford Yacht Club for the next scheduled event, a cocktail party and lavish buffet dinner on Monday. Forty seven members had another very enjoyable evening, a good night's sleep and headed for home the next day.

In summary, the weather, sailing conditions, and sociability made for one of the best and most memorable of July 4th BWSC weekends.



The Millennium Southern Cruise, July 16-30

The Southern Cruise this year was a wonderful success enjoyed by a small but mighty core fleet of six boats, joined at various times by other Blue Water members along the way. The cruise put into port at Newport/Jamestown, RI; Stonington, CT; Hamburg Cover / Essex, CT; Coecles Harbor and Greenport/Dering Harbors – Shelter Island, NY; Block Island, RI; and Cuttyhunk, MA.

We rendezvoused for the first time at the New Bedford Yacht Club, Padanaram for a high-spirited steak, chicken and salmon feast. The fun was punctuated by one solemn moment while the American flag was lowered, as behind us the setting sun glowed brilliant red-orange across the lead-colored harbor. The trip took on three distinct phases: the sunny cruise south along the East coast; the brief hiatus going south to Shelter Island; and the final, long beats up along the sweep of islands to Block and on to Buzzard's Bay.

The run down the east coast was full of sunshine, good breezes (sometimes on the nose) and varied experiences of gentle coves and quaint historic sea villages. The harbors were interesting – a random sighting at 5:00 p.m. out of Newport included five small navy warships, a large fleet of eighty-foot sloops with enormous sails, a candy apple-red tugboat, lobster boats and a returning racing boat with people poised, bottles in hand, looking like a Coke ad.

The trip to Stonington was 37 miles of thick fog and winds gusting to 24 knots. We sailed six - seven hours in rough seas and then within shouting distance of the harbor, the heavens opened up and it poured. Once in the harbor the weather was Oz-like sunny and calm, as if we had passed through a magic curtain.

The captains, crews, and guests of the various boats had a two-day diversion in Mystic Seaport touring the historic buildings, exhibits and ships. On the second night Merrill and Avis Feldman joined us for the first of many cocktail parties aboard the ever gracious Snowflake, (one of the few boats capable of making ice) and the Commodore's dinner of delicious seafood or filet mignon and a choice of many high-calorie desserts. Merrill and Avis bunked in their sleeping bags on Pamina, one of the smallest boats in the fleet, which Merrill declared to be the "flagship" for the duration of the trip which got a big laugh from everybody.

The next stop was Essex and its alternate harbor, Hamburg Cove. The fleet spent two days relaxing, motoring up the river for supplies, shopping, swimming and kayaking. Jonathan's Pride and Lindesfame stayed at Essex. In Hamburg Cove, both Seahawk and Pamina needed minor repairs to their masts, JoAnne Weinert of Snowflake braved the bosun's chair to be hoisted aloft. She made the repairs and took a few pictures of the three rafted boats while she was in the rigging.

Next we made our way in light air to Shelter Island, New York where the weather became muggy and we only had a short while to enjoy the small town of Greenport, a ten-minute ferry ride from Dering, to look



at their carousel, a bakery and the many little shops. Because of a Nor-easter reported brewing and heading our way, the captains made the decision to cut out the stop at Three Mile Harbor to head on to Block Island, RI but not before a large group crowded into the cabin of Sea Hawk for birthday cake for Kay Kay, Fred and Anne's thirteen-year old daughter. We listened to the chuckle fish (North Atlantic croakers) making woodpecker-like clicking sounds beneath the hull.

All but Fred Kern of Sea Hawk power-sailed to Block Island under moderately rough, six foot dark gray-green seas, with a nineteen knot wind almost on the nose. Those of us who had used the iron wind plotted at one time by radio to linger at the entrance of the harbor, cut the engines and pretend we had sailed just as Fred would arrive. Fred, the "true" sailor who refused to power (almost) ever, arrived almost at the same time as the engine-using schemers.

The first night in Block Island the crews of Blue Moon, Pamina, Sea Hawk and Snowflake celebrated yet another birthday – that of George Weinert – who received a gift of cracker jacks wrapped in tin-foil. We had a day and one half of serious rain in Block Island. The third night we had our final group dinner/lobster bake at the Harbor-side Inn at the Old Harbor. On Day 14 after a quick coffee and croissant from Aldo's Floating Bakery boat, "I Gotta No Charge," we set sail for Cuttyhunk in choppy seas, thirty-six miles due east in a north-east wind. We passed Buzzard's Light rising up out of the water on its delicate legs looking like a cross between a Star Wars war machine and a bird house. We moored outside Cuttyhunk harbor in very choppy water, with final dinners of lobster delivered by boat. Then came the farewells. It was the last night for the fleet. Two boats rendezvoused for one last lunch in Quisset on the last day; the rest headed off to their respective home harbors.

(Postscript from Barbie Owens, Pamina) The organizer of the trip, Fred Kern, is to be thanked not only for plotting a delightful, interesting and scenic trip, but for his solicitous attention to the members of the cruise en route. He made sure people were included in planning; he sometimes swam around boat to boat, offering to help people look at a damaged water pump or assist with quick errand into port and back. Fred took the job seriously of keeping us comfortable and in touch. We in Pamina are especially grateful to Fred and Anne of Sea Hawk, and George and JoAnne, of Snowflake, for their kindness during several unexpected incidents that otherwise would not have been resolved so wonderfully for us in Pamina.



BWSC Skis Utah

BWSC broke new ground in 2000 with the first (hopefully annual) western ski trip. The destination was Utah, site of the 2002 Winter Olympics, and home of "The Greatest Snow on Earth." We were not disappointed.

Stu Lehman, Tom Devins and John Quarles coordinated the trip, and seventeen hardy skiers turned out for a week of great weather, terrific skiing for all tastes, including some fresh powder, and the usual BWSC conviviality.

Highlights included the daily trips to Alta, Snowbird, Solitude, Park City, The Canyons and Deer Valley. We shared great dinners at The Tuscany and Mulboons, a unique restaurant in Salt Lake City. The response from the attendees was enthusiastic, and arrangements are already underway for 2001



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that made its jewel-likeness sparkle like the diamonds floating in the mega yachts. Even the spectacular fireworks were dimmed in comparison. Lucky us we were treated to a memorable dinner only the french can cook up by friends we cherish. One lives a millennium only once and this was THE once in a lifetime event.

Back in St. Marten with new friends arriving, the GPS says "only" 400 miles to our destination on this third passage South to the Venezuelan Island Isla Margarita. The winds are strong and not about to ease in the next few days. But the direction is good for the boat, she likes that hind quarter. So we do not sit around waiting, especially because the crew has started to feel better after some virus began to leave some of us. The seas were huge and appetites faded. Maybe departing too soon after illness? The "hospitalship" made a record time again: one hour less than three days. Towards the end we all started enjoying the trip, the starlit nights, the sparkling crests of mountainous waves. getting into these voyages takes a little adjustment, but once accustomed, one does not want to arrive. Saying farewell to our crew, the two of us began a month and a half cruise between the Venezuelan Islands and mainland. Writing about this most exciting area, sparingly frequented by American yachtsmen would take up another long chapter. Maybe another time.

We welcomed the arrival of new friends for the next passage after spending time in the Netherland Antilles: Bonaire, Curacao and Aruba. 530 nm to sail to the Dominican Republic through the Mona Passage that is usually a very treacherous passage, but for us was tame and gorgeous. The beginning of the trip as by now customary was in 35 knots of wind and this time the direction was too close for comfort.

We are heading North and there is not even the slightest southerly component in the Easterlies, but the winds are rather North of the East. Two reefs in the main, storm jib on the cutter stay. We bounce up and down for 24 hours. The huge spinnaker pole bounces out of its harness off the mast and needs to be attended and tied down on deck. Tough job, handled well. We eat regular meals which keeps us strong and well. On the second day the NE wind eases to 15 knots and as we get around the eastern point of the island on its North shore the seas are calm, so calm that we go swimming. We also are very close to a school of whales probably migrating to the North being early March. We are not even anxious to get into Porto Plata, it is so nice out at sea. Fantastic pancake breakfast cooked and served elegantly by the crew to give more swimtime for the mate. Much appreciated.

This country requires another chapter, and further chapters have to cover the next three months, which got us through the Turks and Caicos, Mayaguana, Acklins island, Long Island, Conception Island, the Great Exumas, Nassau, the Berry islands, Grand Bahama Island, to Charleston, SC. Then on and off the Intracoastal to Norfolk, where our final passage to our home in Falmouth began on June 8. Another 400 miles said the GPS and this time we had the spinnaker out almost all the way to the way to the elation of two considerably younger crew. What a difference it made: it took only two days and 14 hours to sail the 400 miles. We had dinners left in our freezer and came back to the boat from our house for supplies the next several days. We also spent more time during this unusually cold and rainy summer sailing, than in our home. This voyaging life grew under our skin and into our souls.

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