

THE BOWSPRIT

Commodore: Jim Robertson

Rear Commodore: Steve Indrelunas

Vice Commodore: Walter Crawford

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Commodore's Watch

Although the club cruise to Conn Brown harbor over Labor Day weekend had more land yacht than boat participation, dinner at Redfish Willies was well attended. On Saturday September 12, BYC/MORF hosted our series race #7 and for this event the All Sails and 150 classes were joined by four kite board sailors who raced as a third class. Race Committee Rick Bell and Richard Rincon did a great job keeping the boats and kites separated. The kite boarders, flight students and instructors at NAS Kingsville and Corpus Christi, appreciated the amenities of BYC and Cathy and Chris Colley's fine rotisserie chicken dinner served that evening. Congratulations to Doug Weakly, Paul Magnini and Lucas Edegram for their 1st place finishes in All Sails, 150 Class and Kites respectively. On the 19th, Stoners and Gallagher's provided a meal of

meaty, cheesy lasagna which was followed by our annual fund raising auction of mostly nautical goodies. The auction was great fun and raised \$2,350 for the club, which is a near record.

Thanks to everyone who donated items and all who purchased them. On Friday September 25 the Roses served a Cajun dinner of shrimp etouffee with dirty rice, sausage and salad. The next day, Saturday,



Jim Robertson - Commodore

Commodore's Watch ...continued

crews. So what's on tap for October? Start with game nights on the 1st, 15th and 29th. The October cruise is to Spinnaker Hole October 3 and 4. Padre Island Yacht Club is hosting a meal Saturday night and also providing dock space for boats not wanting to anchor out. On the 10th, we have an education seminar about the Captain's responsibility for safety of his or her boat and embarked crew. That evening, our fall general membership meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. be followed by dinner at the conclusion of the meeting. The Texas Jazz Festival at Heritage Park is October 16, 17 and 18. Our club dinner will be on Saturday the 17th. Friday and Saturday, October 23 and 24, the club will participate, as we have done for several years, in the Harvest Moon Regatta by selling food and beverages at the Port Aransas Marina pavilion. Harry Armenia and Jo Ann Robertson volunteered to lead this year's event. Our sale of food and beverages at the HMR finish is a fundraiser for BYC and supports the sailing community. The BYC Food Court is much appreciated by race crews, their visiting families, and the Lakewood Yacht Club race organizers who have specifically requested our club's assistance. This is an event where many hands make light work. If Harry or Jo Ann invite you to sign up for a shift on the serving line, please consider helping out. We'll close out the month with a Halloween social on Saturday the 31st. Find your favorite ghoulish or goblin costume and be ready to party.

We'll see ya' on the water.

Jim Robertson
Commodore

Guest Writer's Corner

Sundowner Sails Again

Crossing the Gulf of Mexico Jan 2015

By Tate McDaniel

After sleeping for days at Rabbit Island, I felt the pressure dissolving. Slowly at first but then in a rush all the stress and worry and nervousness of leaving home (of finally cutting the dock lines) had left me. It had been good for that at least. We had partied and visited with friends and family almost continuously up to the point of our leaving and our bodies had been tired and our livers pickled. Our minds were both in a fog born of the mix of grief and excitement. We'd be leaving our families and friends but by God, we were on our way now! A couple of days into our rest I started to wonder what we'd do next. We discussed the topic lightly over the next few days. We'd gotten so used to people asking us "when are you leaving" or "where are you going" that I think we both felt the need to avoid any


discussion of movement. It isn't that we don't want to talk to people about these things but that we don't have a satisfying answer because we've become slaves to the weather. The weather dictates all. And so the answer was always, "When the weather is good." Which is not exactly a great and forthright answer. So we just danced around the topic not really discussing it.

However, once we had been at Rabbit Island for almost a week another type of pressure crept in. That of the cold. Louisiana got really cold and foggy and so every day Dani and I were living in bundles and layers of clothes and hardly daring to go outside at night for fear of rattling our teeth out of jaws with the shivers. Other thoughts began to creep in too. Was the boat **REALLY** ready? Were we **REALLY** ready? What about all the people that would ask us, "Have you done a blue

water passage?" and then look at us slyly as though they'd discovered some secret when we answered no?

Something inside me brought me around the realization that staying in Louisiana any longer was wrong. And that coast hoping might be fun in the spring or fall, but I wanted to get someplace warmer, and further, and perhaps deeper, I wanted to cross blue water.

I told Dani. We decided on the weather window we wanted. We planned to wake up early and head out on Sunday, but the night before neither of us could sleep. We both laid in the v-berth, bundles of raw nerves dreaming about what would come when we finally set off "for real". Sunday came, I called the whole thing off. I thought it was pretty stupid to suddenly set some sort of arbitrary time table for leaving and Monday's weather looked just as nice. So I told Dani we'd just wake up when we felt like it on



Monday and go. It worked a trick and we slept better and woke up refreshed and excited to be leaving our home waters.


Despite the fog and despite it taking an entire hour to raise the anchor, due to gobs of horrible Louisiana muck all over the chain, we made a fair departure and motored through the ICW and then cut under Cat Island to head in the Gulf Of Mexico. The early going wasn't too bad and having AIS was very nice because we could track all the barges around us. Shortly after entering the Gulf, the fog lifted and we were in a very gentle swell with just enough sunlight left to engage our windvane for the first time. (I had finished rigging the lines while at anchor). So as the sun dropped low in the sky we set the sails and let go of the tiller, setting a course for Key West. The first night at sea was the only night of the trip that the sky was truly clear. I took the first night watch and let Dani go below to experiment with domestic

duties at sea. She made PB, her speciality. And while I'm not one to complain about PB, the real bright spot that night for me were the stars. They were so bright I could see the deck by them. The dipper was almost unmistakable and I could see how mariners in times gone by were able to navigate by them. They're so much more obvious than the sky we see from the cities. That first night I had a lot to think about. The night passed well and I came off watch and slept without any real problems. One of the things that we found interesting about going below to sleep was how intensely noisy it can be. We'd gotten used to the sounds of slapping halyards and banging boats and fenders in the marina. I began to call the mast's the Devil's wind chimes. But once we anchored at Rabbit Island we were in an aural hole. Almost complete silence. Now that we were underway again, there was again noise. The

sound of the water on the hull, the sound of the wind howling through the rigging, the wood creaks, and sometimes waves crash. Luckily, we brought ear plugs. And I slept like a baby.

The next morning, we have coffee, which became a sort of ritual. We make coffee in the morning out of freshly ground beans that we use a ceramic hand grinder on and then brew the coffee in an Aeropress. It makes for better coffee than I had been having at home all these years in a drip brewer. And don't worry, it wasn't all just Peanut butter along the passage. Dani had made fresh loaves of bread and we cooked eggs for 3 of the nights.

After getting my sea legs though I actually got brave enough that on the last two days of the passage I was cooking real meals. Chicken and rice type dishes that went down exceedingly well after a long watch. There is just something about having a warm meal after a particularly cold and



trying time. And there were times that the watches could be long and trying. Dani and I decided not to break it into the classic "4 hour shifts" but instead to just wake each other when we got tired. This seemed to work for us. Typically Dani would take more of the night watch and I would take most of the daylight watch.

What makes a watch hard you might ask? Well believe it or not, it has nothing to do with steering or sail changes. It has to do with stress. Late at night seeing a light far away deep in the fog sets your mind a reeling. What is that? Is it coming this way? Will I hit it? There were several watches that I was awakened so we could take bearings on a target and watch it for safety. Most of the time we'd hail the traffic we saw on the VHF in addition to making sure we weren't on a collision course. Every one of them answered and saw us. Apparently all that double bubble foil insulation we put into the

boat really lights up radars.

To make the nights a little less stressful I shortened sail every evening. It became a thing. In the evening take down sails. In the morning put up sails and throw flying fish off the deck.

Speaking of sailing... We did really well for our boat. We motored for a total of 8 hours in the crossing. We also hand steered the boat for only 8 hours, those being the ones during which we motored. We rode a front from the north south making for mostly a nice beam reach. Sail configuration during the first day was genoa only as the wind was actually out of the west for a time and variable. But after that we switched to a double reefed main depending on the wind or time of day, the genoa and full staysail. That gave us between 4 and 7 knots almost the whole way.

I'm truly convinced we could have made the trip even faster if I hadn't shortened sail in the

nights, but this being our first blue water passage, I didn't want to "stress" the boat and I didn't want to stress the crew. We could afford time. Only one night did the weather get pretty fierce. I believe it was the fourth night when the wind and waves kicked up to the point that I notified the mapshare/FB friends we'd no longer be able to respond to messages that evening. We don't have a wind speed instrument on board but I estimate 30kts. The waves were probably around six feet. Totally manageable under double reefed main and staysail. We weren't dipping the rail and all was stable and good, but it sounded scary. The wind would howl through the rig and the boat was going so fast that all you could hear inside was the sound of very fast moving water. Dani tried to sleep but had dreams the boat was breaking apart. Probably her subconscious mind at work with all that noise. We were also blessed by experience in one other way that helped


us relax. The terrible mal de mar (sea sickness) Dani had at the Harvest Moon Regatta was an invaluable lesson. We both took meds the entire trip and both of us stayed free of the affliction. In fact, after about two days I believe I could have stopped taking it and been okay. I finally got my "sea legs". Reading below didn't even bother me and my hungry grew. It was a great thing. Dani had a bit of nausea in the really high windy weather but recovered quickly. The meds she takes had little to no side effects. I'm sure she will write of it later.

So somehow, before we knew it we were "almost there". On the last day at sea the sun FINALLY came out. We enjoyed the beautiful blue of the real ocean. It was like nothing I had seen before. We scooped it up and put it in a glass and compared it to tap water and you couldn't really tell the difference by sight. We'd never seen water like that. And when you're sailing over parts of the

ocean that are thousands of feet deep it took on a greyish blue hue that dazzled us both. And finally, on that day before landfall, we were treated to a sunset. That night we really had to slow down. We were going to make landfall before morning which is not good. You always want to arrive in daylight. So we timed it pretty well and dropped anchor safely in Key West the next day after having travelled 639 miles and averaging better than 5kts. We sailed in bigger waves than we'd ever seen and through 30kt winds. We were further from "help" than at any other time in our lives. We were living our dream. We were in love. And all is well.

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Calendar

October 2015

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1 HCY J-22 North Americans Game Night	2	3
4	5	6	7 Morf Race, 6:00 PM	8	9	10 Education- General Membership Meeting & Dinner
11	12	13 New Moon	14 Morf Race 6:00 Pm	15	16	17
18	19	20 First Quarter	21 Morf Race 6:00 PM	22 Harvest Moon Regatta	23 Harvest Moon Regatta	24 Harvest Moon Regatta
25 Harvest Moon Regatta	26	27 Full Moon	28 Morf Race 6:00 PM	29 Game Night	30	31 Halloween Social