



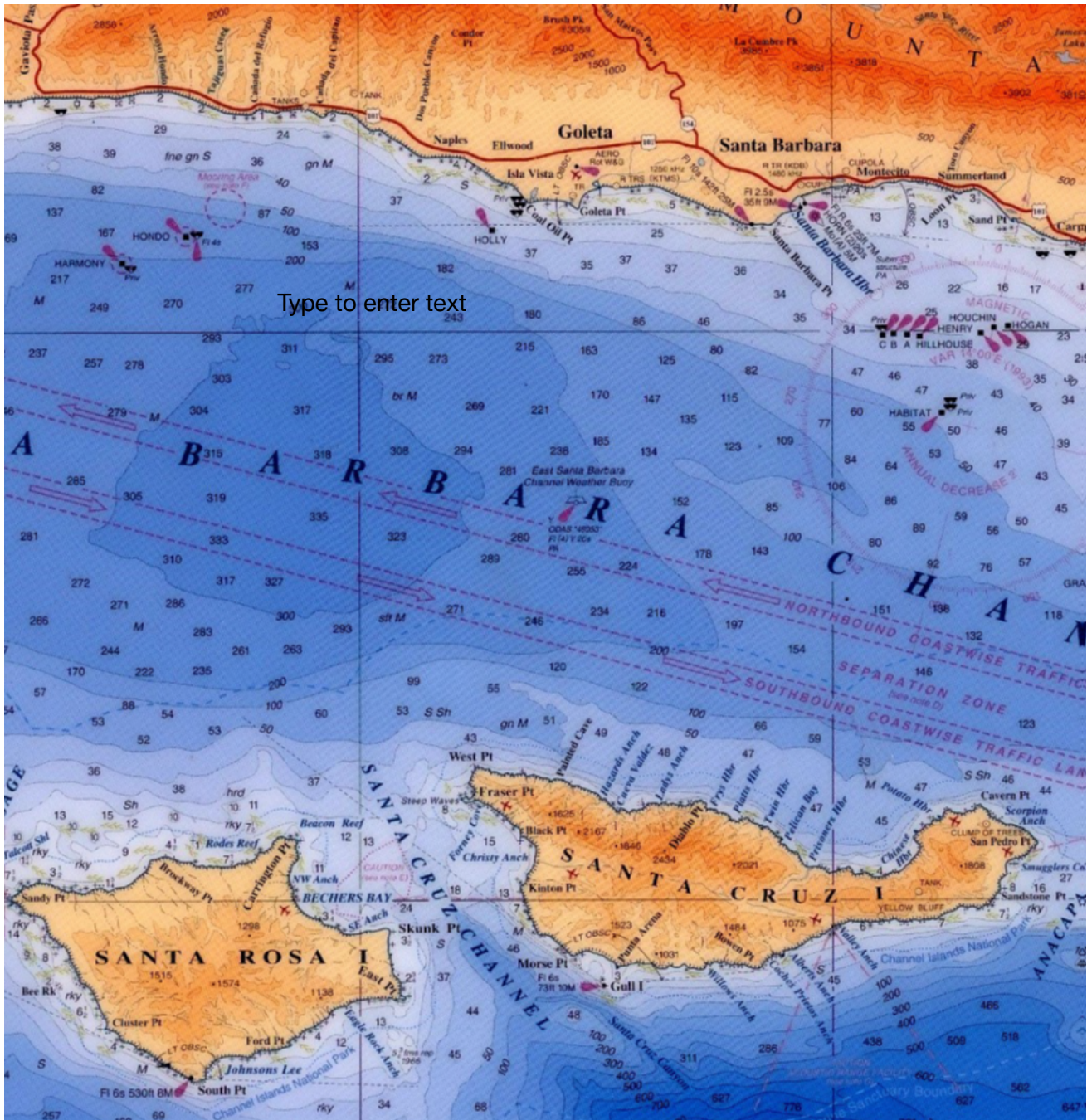
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Signal Hoist



Santa Barbara Sail & Power Squadron

Monthly Newsletter June 2020





COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Cdr. Virginia Johns, P

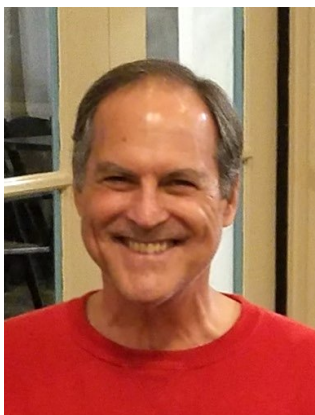
I hope you are all well and keeping those minds and bodies active. I know that I have to ration my viewing of sailing videos on YouTube to ensure that I get out for a walk, tinker in the garden, visit Libertad, and check in with family and friends on the phone or computer. In one of my recent calls I learned that one of our members makes 8 pizzas every Friday night for his family/friends that are helping him and his wife with grocery shopping and other errands. They recently upgraded their service to include real cardboard pizza boxes! Can you guess who?

I am so grateful to our newsletter Editor, Peggy, and to all of you who continue to contribute articles for the Signal Hoist. That monthly communication is keeping us connected.

National Headquarters has also been supportive during this time. Hopefully you have been receiving their notices to all members about developments such as *America's Boating Channel Live*. Six weeks ago they started this weekly online magazine show which airs Wednesdays 1-2pm Pacific time. This past week I heard a variety of topics, including some educational items: AIS, first aid kits, hurricane preparedness, as well as lighter entertaining items: boating movies, boating books, nautical crafts. They reviewed an interesting adventure series called Paddle Tales (kayaks, canoes, SUPs), to add to my YouTube addiction. If you miss the live airing, they are saved on the Channel for later viewing.

I am trying not to get prematurely excited about seeing all of you in person, but with state restrictions easing, the squadron's bridge/executive committee is meeting via Zoom to develop plans for restarting our classes, speaker meetings, and group activities. I can't wait!

Stay safe and stay connected.



ADMIN OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Lt/C Dennis Johns, AP

I'm sorry to report another approaching month with little for the squadron to participate in (compared to our calendar that was packed earlier in the year). We've learned that even Old Spanish Days Fiesta will be conducted in a different fashion than usual. However, there are a few activities we can still enjoy.

Two weeks ago we learned that the Santa Barbara Yacht Club's Monday Noon Forum has gone online via Zoom. So watch for the next email announcing the next forum you can enjoy from home.

The Commander has scheduled a Bridge Meeting on Thu, May 28 in which suggestions for other appropriate June activities will be reviewed and may yield something that we can find a way to break the isolation syndrome.

Finally, Scott's water pump is supposed to be repaired this week (read about the May Shakedown Cruise to Fry's) and the June Cruise to Pelican Harbor is still on for June 19-21 weather permitting.

Stay well and be safe.

Upcoming Activities

June 19-21

Fri-Sun

Weekend Cruise to Pelican's — complete with all social distancing protocol (point person Scott Burns)



SEO's MESSAGE

Lt/C John Profant, SN

I suppose that most people are suffering from cabin fever and are itching to get back to some normalcy. As far as education is concerned not much has happened the last couple of months. I am hoping to get something started this summer even if it means offering a virtual course on Boat Handling. I have been reviewing the material and feel that this is something that could be done. Those interested in taking the course could order either the printed material or the eReader course. The eReader student kit would be \$28 whereas the printed kit is \$45. The material for the eReader is downloaded once you purchase a key. I would have to figure a way to get the printed material to you. I also need to see which platform would be best to use.

Also, I am thinking about getting Vessel Safety Checks started up again. This would be done in a social distance sort of way where I would be on the dock wearing a mask and asking the boat owner to bring me the flares, life jackets, fire extinguisher, documentation for inspection and then the owner can turn their lights on and toot their horn. It is just a routine that every owner should check periodically.

That is all I have for now, hope to have more to report next month.

A May Shakedown Cruise

Scott Burns, Dennis Johns, AP, Virginia Johns, P

Three sailboats made it to Fry's for the May 8th- 12th weekend, and notice we didn't say "sailed". *S/V Benchmark* left the harbor about 8 am with *S/V Libertad* and John Blaustein and Owen Stromo on Owen's boat *S/V*

Kamala leaving around 10 am. Scott Burns and Steve Carlson motored through fog until about 3 miles to the Island the sun broke out. Friday afternoon at the Island was sunny and hot.



The May trip has always been considered a Shakedown Cruise, and this trip was no exception for *S/V Benchmark*. About ½ mile from Fry's the motor began smoking so Scott turned it off and sailed into the anchorage, sliding between two other anchored boats as he dropped the stern anchor. About 100 feet later he handed the bow anchor to his "New Best Friend" in a dingy who dropped the anchor about 150 ft. closer to shore. After setting the anchors and having lunch, Scott installed a new fan belt to replace the one that had failed and started the motor which seemed to function ok then.



Dennis and Virginia arrived about 2:30pm and John and Owen arrived right after them. S/V Kamala had a shakedown issue of their own – no working radar. Visibility through the shipping lanes only happened as the sun came out right when they arrived at the north bound lane! There were about 8



boats in the harbor Friday night and Saturday two large power boats came with families to play in the water and on shore. Saturday the sun never really came out. John and Owen both wanted to be home Sunday early to celebrate their wives on Mother's Day and thought waiting until an afternoon departure on Sunday would put them in too late on Sunday. With that in mind, *S/V Kamala* decided to leave when the visibility improved on Saturday.

Back on *S/V Benchmark*, Scott determined that the coolant water pump problem caused the fan belt to break. It was determined that the back bearing on the pump was shot and probably had about 1 to 6 hours of life on the pump until it would fail.

All was not well on *S/V Libertad* either. Dennis had swapped out the malfunctioning house battery alternator before leaving the harbor and when tested it seemed to work fine. On the trip to Fry's, the house batteries were depleted to about 85% because they had their radar and autopilot operating. So about 30 minutes from the anchorage they excited the alternator and it

brought the batteries up to 100%. Saturday morning after washing Friday night's dishes they discovered that the galley sink wouldn't drain. So they had to bail the dishwater out and put that on the To Do List for back at the harbor. Then Dennis fired up the motor to charge up the batteries for the day and the alternator would only put out about 8 amps. So Dennis and Virginia went into energy-saver mode. They didn't even switch on the mooring light that evening.

Dennis and Virginia had discussed a dinghy adventure with Scott. They launched the dinghy and lowered the outboard onto it. The outboard hadn't been run since the Catalina Cruise last August and Dennis had his fingers crossed as he pulled the starter cord. Unfortunately, all the pulling in the world was not going to get the motor going so it was returned to the mounting on the stern and the dinghy was hoisted aboard. Add that to the To Do List.



Instead of a dinghy adventure, Dennis and Virginia decided to take a short kayak adventure around the anchorage. Dennis explored the local caves while Virginia took pictures. Venturing around the eastern point of Fry's they explored a winding cove and discovered a huge sea lion sunning itself on a rock that allowed them to paddle by only about fifteen feet away.



Sunday morning, Scott started the motor, pulled anchors and made it about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from shore when the fan belt stopped spinning - so much for the 1 to 6 hours of remaining life prognosis. Dennis and Virginia had anticipated that *S/V Benchmark* might need assistance, so they had planned to leave right after they saw *S/V Benchmark* raise anchor. A short VHF communication determined that *S/V Benchmark* would need a tow.

Dennis and Virginia came by and they exchanged tow lines. Sunday was another day of heavy fog and Dennis was concerned with running radar and



the autopilot on his already somewhat depleted batteries. Thank goodness for redundancy. Dennis switched the batteries to be "In Series" and watched as the alternator that normally just charges the engine starter batteries went to work charging both battery banks. All batteries were back up to 97% when we arrived at the harbor.

It couldn't have been a better day to tow someone. There was no wind and virtually no swell. About an hour after leaving the anchorage we entered the Commercial Shipping Zone. The southbound lane appeared clear by radar and by visual confirmation. As we entered the northbound lane we saw two freighters headed north. The fog had started to lift and the freighters seemed to be about 5 miles off and it looked like we'd cross them even though we were only making about 4 kts. The accompanying photos show how close one of the freighters came.



S/V Libertad towed *S/V Benchmark* to the harbor which was alive with daysailers, kayaks, and SUPs. They all recognized the towing operation and gave us plenty of room. A short distance from his slip, *S/V Libertad* released *S/V Benchmark* and Scott had the motor on for about 10 minutes to get to

the slip. *S/V Libertad* returned to their slip to bring an end to the May Shakedown Cruise.



As advertised, this was an Island Isolation cruise. Each boat did separate activities. There was no happy hour on the beach and no potluck dinner. The most socialization we did was on the trip back from the stern of *S/V Libertad* and bow of *S/V Benchmark* as we frequently checked the towing lines.



But it was still an enjoyable trip out on the water!

The Decline of Santa Barbara's Magnetic Declination

Steve Hodges, N

Santa Barbara is an especially magnetic place, but that magnetism is changing, at least nautically. Of course, that's because Earth's magnetism is changing everywhere to varying degrees. The magnetic North Pole is moving, and lately it has been moving faster than it has for centuries. Insights into this global phenomenon were recently reported by the European Space Agency (ESA). Their paper shows the position of the magnetic North Pole in the years 1840 to 2019, and, based on recent satellite measurements, tells us that "scientists are now more confident in the theory that tussling magnetic blobs deep below Earth's surface are at the root of this phenomenon." [1]

And the tussling blobs have certainly moved the poles a lot, especially recently: In just the last couple of decades the magnetic North Pole has moved over Canada, past the true, or geographic, North Pole, and is currently accelerating toward Siberia! Similarly, the South Pole is on the move. Figure 1 is a NOAA chart that shows the position of the magnetic poles for the last 430 years. [2]

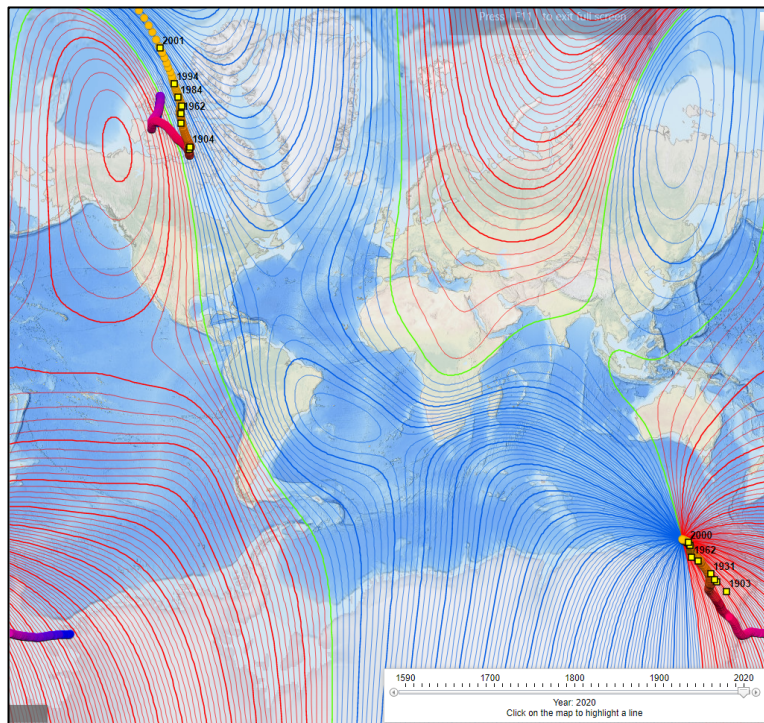


Figure 1. Historical Position of the magnetic poles [2]

Why should a sailor care? One answer is that navigation by compass is important, if only as a backup to GPS. And many autopilots steer using a magnetic heading. When dead reckoning, we steer according to the compass, which (assuming magnetic deviations due to the boat itself are corrected for) is different from the true heading by the magnetic variation (aka declination) at your position on Earth. A variation to the east (E), as it is California coast, means that the heading by compass is to the right of a true heading of the same value. True south from Santa Barbara lies Prisoner's Harbor; currently, a magnetic south course will lead to Diablo Anchorage west of Fry's. The compass rose on paper charts shows the magnetic variation (indicated by "VAR") and will need updating if it's more than a few years old. (You do have paper charts on your boat, don't you?)

As shown in Table 1, in 1950, the magnetic variation in the Santa Barbara Channel was 15.7 degrees E. In 1990 it was 14.3 degrees E. Today it is 12.2 degrees E. A south compass course from Santa Barbara in 1990 would have led to Painted Cave, rather than Diablo as it would now. The variation change in the last 20 years is about twice as large as it was in the previous 40, which means the rate of change has increased fourfold. In 2025, the variation is predicted to be 11.8 degrees E, which indicates a rate of change that is a little less than the average over the last 20 years. [3]

U.S. Historic Declination	
Latitude:	34.2° N
Longitude:	119.7° W
Year	Declination
1950	15.65° E
1955	15.52° E
1960	15.42° E
1965	15.30° E
1970	15.13° E
1975	14.87° E
1980	14.55° E
1985	14.38° E
1990	14.28° E
1995	14.23° E
2000	13.93° E
2005	13.52° E
2010	13.03° E
2015	12.55° E
2020	12.17° E
2025	11.75° E

Table 1. Magnetic declination in the Santa Barbara Channel, 1950-2025 [3]

How big a deal is the change? The 1994 edition of NOAA's Santa Barbara Channel chart 18720 shows a variation of 14.25 degrees E. The approximately two degrees difference between that and today's value (12.17 degrees E) is about the difference between courses from Santa Barbara to Prisoner's and Pelican anchorages on Santa Cruz Island. Such a dead reckoning error, ending up at Prisoner's when you meant to land at Pelican's, might be embarrassing or a little inconvenient, but is not too bad. A two-degree error would be more of a concern if going from Santa Barbara to Cuyler's Harbor at San Miguel Island: There the difference is between arriving at the safe entrance and ending up on the wrong side of Prince Island, a mistake that could be painful, especially if the prevailing northwesterly winds are strong.

In the end, the dramatic changes in the Earth's magnetism probably aren't a major concern to most modern navigators, and are only yet another natural curiosity. But not that long ago it was unthinkable to go to sea without an up-to-date paper chart and a well-swung compass. Now, with wide availability of easy-to-use GPS-based electronic charting, paper charts are considered unnecessary by many boaters. Why should we worry about details like magnetic variation as long as the nav apps running on our plotter or trusty smart phone or tablet, and the constellation of satellites orbiting the Earth that they depend on, all are working as they should.... what could possibly go wrong?

References

- [1] "Magnetic north and the elongating blob," ESA, 14May2020. http://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing_the_Earth/Swarm/Magnetic_north_and_the_elongating_blob
- [2] Historical Magnetic Declination, 1590-2020, NOAA. https://maps.ngdc.noaa.gov/viewers/historical_declination/
- [3] Calculated using NOAA's Magnetic Field Calculators, <https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomag/calculators/magcalc.shtml#ushistoric>

1 IS GOOD, 5 BETTER, NEXT 3

(Part 2)

Neil Ablitt, P

When we last met we were in the middle of nowhere or a few miles south of **Catavina** on **Mexico Federal Highway 1**. From here we continue south for another hour and arrive at the turn off for **Bahia de Los Angeles**.

ESCALERA NAUTICA (NAUTICAL LADDER)

by Cielo Mar | Feb 24, 2017



This diagram shows the plan that was first conceived over 20 years ago:

Where, for more than 20 years, just the mention of that place brought hope of a better future to many **Baja** cruisers. **Bahia de Los Angeles** was to play an important role in a very ambitious government program called **"Escalera Nautica"** or **"Nautical Ladder"** in English. The major benefit for cruisers would be the opportunity to avoid the worst part of the **Baja Bash** – that dreaded trip north from **Cabo** to **San Diego** against wind, current, waves and cold. The program called for a marina on the **Sea of Cortez** at **Bahia de Los Angeles** where cruisers could haul out and place their boats

on trailers (no need to step mast) for a short two hour road trip across the peninsula. Once on the Pacific side boats would be back in the water at the new Marina **Santa Rosalillita**. And best of all already half way up the



*The proposed path of the "Land Bridge" Cortez to Pacific
72 miles in 2 hours*

outside avoiding the worst part of the bash. And this was just a small part of the **FONATUR** (Government tourism development agency) overall plan consisting of 22 marinas going down the outside and back up inside coast of **Baja** and continuing down the mainland as far as **Mazatlan**. An incredible undertaking enabling cruisers to day trip from marina to marina in a perfect

world for cruisers.

Of course everything hasn't gone exactly according to plan. So far nothing has happened at **Bahia de Los Angeles** except for the opening of two new **Pemex** stations (curiously one across the street from the other). But as for **Santa**



Note sandy beach at entrance to Marina Santa Rosalillita at right

Rosalillita that tiny town now has a road connecting it to **Mex 1** as well as a marina building and a Jetty. Unfortunately the marina basin is still sand. It looked to me as though they placed the marina too far from the ocean. Anyway cruisers will probably still be faced with the bash for a long time to come. Besides, now American surfers have organized a coalition to combat **Escalera Nautica**. They say it would have a terrible impact on many of their favorite surf spots and we wouldn't want that.

But I digress.

Back to **Mex 1** - and in another hour we pass **Villa Jesus Maria** famous for the first **Pemex** since leaving **El Rosario**, but we don't stop. It's just another 30 minutes to **Guerrero Negro** where a military complex sits on the state line between **Baja California** and **Baja California Sur**. Here we lose an hour changing from Pacific to Mountain times (depending on time of year, of course). **Guerrero Negro** is an interesting place to visit especially if you want to go whale watching or visit a salt factory. **Scammon's (or Ojo de Libre) Lagoon** has as many as 1000 whales there during peak season – more than anywhere else in the world we are told. And the salt mine, **Exportadora de Sal, S.A. de C.V.**, is one of the largest salt producers in the world. It's a surface mine where sea water floods large shallow fields and the sun does the evaporation. The result is a very environmentally friendly



Hauling salt at Guerrero Negro

and sustainable system for making salt. The sun dried layers of salt are then broken up with Caterpillar equipment, loaded on to giant Dart haulers and

via conveyor belts loaded onto barges. (If you are in the **Caterpillar** parts business it is wonderful to have clients operating your machines in salt). The barges in turn are towed 60 miles to **Cedros Island** where a deep water port awaits the transfer of salt yet again to giant cargo ships heading to the **US, Canada, Europe, Japan** and beyond. It's really quite interesting and I'd like to tell you more, but once again Peggy needs this now so will end here for now. In the meantime if you're interested in the salt operation you might click on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcD-76Y-Yr8> .

Sailing to Baha Memories

Neil Ablitt, P

Sheltering in place and cleaning out my office came across this bit of squadron history. Makes a point of the value of our classes and the reality of nervousness.

BTW we did not in fact truck the boat back home, but hired crew that braved the bash.

It was November 1993 - possibly first **SBSPS** vessel departing for Mexico - and the last year before the first Baja Haha. Squadron had a big going away party at Commander Irv Stout's house with plenty of gag gifts like insurance policies and the like. **Dick and Marcia Rowland** would accompany us on s/v **Westwind** as far as San Diego where they decided to join us the following year. Which they did and soon others followed - thanks in part to the success of the Baja Haha. Our s/v **Shearwater** was a 1969 Dutch- built **Trintella**, 29 ft full keel with a 10 HP **Albin** gas engine. Ice box and alcohol stove. And off we went.



A Last Farewell and Other Observations

If we are so well prepared then why am I so scared? And why is it that now when I hear "displacement" rather than a boat I think of my excitement being displaced by fear?

Answer? In a matter of days we will be leaving for Mexico. By boat. Our own and alone. Yes, now I really do wish we had finished Advanced Piloting. Oh well, fortunately for us, I have told the whole world we're going so there will be no turning back. We have passed Seamanship, Piloting and Sail. Sue has her Ham Radio license, and so far this year we've logged over 1000 miles around the Channel Islands. We have GPS and Radar and we are learning how to use them. Our intention is to stay in touch. We are experimenting with an on board lap top, lunch box style cellular phone and fax. The phone is registered in Mexico, so, who knows, it just might work. Our first destination is Cabo, then Puerto Vallarta, then Loreto. Actually, these are individual six week trips interrupted by flights back to Santa Barbara. Then according to plan sometime in June, Shearwater will be picked up out of the Sea of Cortez and trucked back home. We hope to be at the next Change of Watch and to see you all there. Thank you for your friendship and everything you have taught us. If I were asked for any parting words of wisdom they would be to study hard and finish AP. Because next time it could be you.

Sue and Neil Ablitt

Trip of a lifetime with no end in sight – life on small boats stuck at sea

Text by Diane Selkirk, CNN; Updated 18th May 2020

(Editor: Five stories of sailors caught in the Covid pandemic. Submitted by Steve York)

(CNN) – Sailing during a pandemic

At the best of times, long-distance sailing requires luck, grit and the ability to adapt on the spot. But during a pandemic, it turns out "sailing into the sunset" isn't the romantic back-up plan that isolating land dwellers might imagine it is.

Sue Richards, editor of Noonsite, a vital online resource for long distance sailors, explains the problem. "Small liveaboard yachts are getting treated the same as cruise ships in the majority of countries."

But unlike cruise ships, which have professional crew and the capacity to cross stormy oceans in search of a friendly port, these are small vessels run by recreational boaters. The families and individuals aboard the boats also spend ocean passages isolated for long periods -- kind of a built-in quarantine.

Richards says Noonsite has been receiving worried emails from sailors around the world as hurricane/typhoon/cyclone season looms. She explains that often the distance sailors have to travel to get home can be thousands of miles and take weeks, if not months, and "is just too large to not have refuge port options."

Working with sailing organizations such as the Seven Seas Cruising Association and the Ocean Cruising Club as well as embassies, official authorities, marine business owners and sailors, the small Noonsite team worked around the clock trying to keep up with restrictions and safe options.

In the Caribbean, they were able to pull together a list of refuge ports for boats needing to get across the Atlantic to repatriate to Europe — something they hope to do in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans as well.

(1) Sonrisa

While 38-year-olds Leslie and Andrew Godfrey enjoyed a five-day, 750-mile sailing passage from Sri Lanka to the Maldives, the whole world changed.

Without internet access, the couple had yet to learn that Covid-19 had continued to spread, becoming a pandemic.



Leslie and Andrew Godfrey have been sailing around the world for four and a half years.
Courtesy Leslie and Andrew Godfrey

From March 7 to 12, as they sailed across the Laccadive Sea toward the iridescent blue water of the northern Maldives, ports had begun slamming shut at a rate that no small sailboat could keep up with.

In a given year, an estimated 10,000 small boats, sailed by families and individuals, are out exploring the world's oceans.

They travel from country to country along traditional trade routes, which are dictated by seasonal changes. When cyclone season comes, the goal is to be one step ahead of the storms.

This year, there's a different problem. When Covid-19 brought the world to a halt, these sailors, whose boat is often their only home, became stuck.

By the time the Godfreys made landfall, the Maldives had discovered their eighth case of Covid-19.

"Our check-in procedure was interrupted when officials were called to an emergency meeting," Leslie writes in her blog. By the time the officials returned, the Maldives had declared a state of emergency.

The Las Vegas-based Godfreys started planning for their five-year sailing journey around the world back in college.

Sonrisa, their 39-year-old Valiant 40 sailboat, is tiny by house standards. But after two labor-intensive refits that saw them doing everything from

making the hull stronger with fiberglass to varnishing the table, their home is seaworthy and comfortable.

For the past four and a half years, they've anchored off tropical islands and vibrant cities -- discovering what it means to travel slowly enough to get to know people, places and yourself more deeply.

Their stay in the Maldives was to take them south along the length of an archipelago inhabited by giant manta rays, dolphins and whales, where they'd meet the seafaring population who are famed for their hospitality. From there, they would visit the other islands of the Indian Ocean as they sailed to South Africa.

Countries such as the Maldives are in a difficult position when it comes to managing voyaging sailors. Its first priority is to stop virus transmission. But the Maldives also recognizes the pandemic as a humanitarian crisis.

With the goal of protecting their own population, officials have isolated boats including Sonrisa in one area, delivering basic supplies and permitting access to a deserted atoll.

Two months on, the Godfreys are still in that same seemingly idyllic spot. In reality, they're unable to go forward or back.

Meanwhile, the Maldives have entered a season known locally as Kethi, and monsoon storms have set in. "This is a triage situation," Leslie writes.

She and Andrew are weighing their options: Do they wait things out in the relative security of the Maldives, or do they try to get closer to home by sailing onward to a yet-to-be determined country?

What they don't want is to go where borders are closed, "to be cast back out to sea to circle endlessly between closed countries picking up fuel, food and water."

(2) Stuck at sea

"It's beginning to feel like the boats making the passage up the Red Sea are bit parts in a disaster B-movie," Susie Harris, 62, writes in her blog. She and her husband, 53-year-old Kevin, are trying to make their way home to Ireland aboard their 47-foot sailboat Temptress of Down.

Departing the United Kingdom in 2013, the couple sailed across the Atlantic through the Caribbean and then across the Pacific, from Panama to Singapore. This year, the plan was to head through the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and Suez Canal and then through the Mediterranean and eventually

home to their elderly parents. Instead, just as they hit the Red Sea, ports began closing.

"We always knew the Red Sea would be hard, but the virus turned it into a nightmare of uncertainty," Susie writes of the notoriously windy body of water. After leaving Djibouti on March 7, they learned that Eritrea, Sudan and then Egypt -- all countries where they planned to stop for food, fuel and exploring -- had closed their borders and some were forcibly turning away sailors. At best, they were providing expensive emergency fuel and supplies.

The Harrises had no choice but to push on, dealing with sand-laden wind, adverse currents, engine problems and, most worryingly, the breakdown of their reverse osmosis water-maker, a machine that many sailors use to make drinking water.

"Facing the possibility that we might not have enough water, fuel or food to survive has taken a huge toll," Susie emails from a temporary stop off Crete after making it through the Red Sea.

Here, farmers who couldn't ship out their crops kindly gave the boat-bound sailors tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers.

As both the Harrises and their boat, which needs urgent repairs and hard-to-source spare parts, are too exhausted to safely sail the remaining 3,000 miles to Ireland, their current hope is that Greece will let them in.

(3) Finding a port

Countries that have been willing to take in sailors are facing their own issues. In French Polynesia, the first stop of the fabled Coconut Milk Run across the South Pacific to New Zealand or Australia, an estimated 500 boats have arrived.

With a sailing season that kicks off in early March, hundreds of boats were already on their 15 to 40+ day passages from the west coast of the United States, Mexico and Panama before the Covid-19 crisis was well-understood.

More boats followed, as optimistic skippers assumed the situation would resolve itself. Instead, as countries to the west closed their borders, hundreds of sailboats bunched up in French Polynesia.

Twenty-six-year-old Australian David Fair is in Nuku Hiva, alone aboard Soma. Two months earlier his partner, Ally He left the boat and flew from Panama to Australia for a prenatal check-up. Once she had her doctor's OK, the plan was for He to meet Fair in the Galapagos.

From there, they'd complete the sailing journey that they began in France a year ago. Instead, two weeks out from Panama, Fair learned the Galapagos had closed its borders and French Polynesia would be next.



Australian David Fair is in Nuku Hiva, alone aboard the Soma.
Courtesy David Fair

"The nights were filled with magic; stars shone brightly in the sky leading the way to my destination," Fair recalls of the dreamy light-wind voyage that was punctuated by whale and dolphin sightings.

When he learned he had to skip the Galapagos and go straight to the Marquesas and then was supposed to divert again and go straight to Tahiti, he tried to keep enjoying what grew into a seven-week passage.

"I ended up being fortunate," Fair says over WhatsApp from an anchorage in the shadow of Nuku Hiva's rugged fairytale peaks. He couldn't make the additional 800 miles to Tahiti and arrived in the Marquesas as their lockdown ended.

Fair was even allowed onshore to hike through the dense and fragrant jungle. "I'm not able to formally enter the country, but can reprovision with food and fuel for the next leg of my journey."

Fair's next leg, a nonstop 4,000-nautical mile sail to his pregnant partner in Australia, is a tough one that could take up to two months.

Sailors usually spend eight months making their way through the thousands of islands scattered across the South Pacific because they're intriguing and because they offer refuge. Stormy weather rolls across the Pacific at irregular intervals; by using "weather windows," sailors can sail safely from island to island and dodge the worst of it.

(4) To stay at sea or go home?

Nathalie and Michael Neve, along with their kids Naomie, 7, Bastien, 9, and Noah, 11, were already in French Polynesia as the restrictions set in.

They got long-stay visas last year, so the Oregon-based family was going to explore French Polynesia until the end of April and then start sailing west and finish up their family sabbatical when they reached Australia at the season's end in November.



The Neve Family had planned to finish up their family sabbatical when they reached Australia at the season's end in November. Nathalie Neve

Instead, as the first of what became 60 cases were discovered, French Polynesia followed France's lead and locked down. The Neve family was ordered to isolate aboard 43-foot Ubi. They couldn't go to shore or even swim in the water they were anchored in.

"Locals couldn't go to the beach to swim, so we had the same rules. It was hot, but we made the best of it." Nathalie tells CNN Travel over WhatsApp.

With boats piling up, sailors on a Facebook site for French Polynesia sailors noted locals were becoming suspicious of the strangers that kept arriving.

They said some worried that a disrupted supply chain meant there won't be enough food or medical supplies for everyone. A recent news report also detailed Faa'a residents' anger over the boats. Some have requested a meeting with authorities to discuss the issue.

The Neve family is trying to sort through limited options. That includes leaving their boat in Tahiti and flying home on expensive repatriation flights (if they can find one going to their country), attempting to sail to Hawaii and then back to North America or pushing on across the Pacific and hoping a country will let them in.

(5) Isolate and wait

For now, many people on their small boats continue to isolate and wait. Grateful they have a place to be, but uncertain about what the future holds.

In an unpopulated atoll in the Bahamas, the Swedish-American Trautman family -- Brian, 43; Karin, 33; and baby Sierra -- are caught between hurricane season and a pandemic.

The plan had been for the popular YouTubers to pick up Brian's brother, Brady, and then head north aboard the 53-foot Delos to Newfoundland and Greenland and through the Northwest Passage to Seattle; completing the circumnavigation they began over 10 years ago.

Instead, they've spent the past 80 days sheltering in a remote anchorage along with eight other boats. "I feel like we've been preparing for this our entire sailing career," Brian told CNN Travel over Zoom. There's no nearby medical care, and groceries take three days to be delivered by local freighter from Nassau. But Brian explains they've learned to be self-sufficient, "We have months of food and fuel and can make our own water and alcohol." The hardest part for the nomadic couple is the emotional reality of why they can't move. But for now Brian says they're safe and well and making the most of the slower pace. "Lemonade out of lemons," he says.

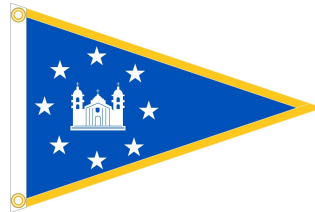


Every year, families such as the Trautmans, pictured here are out exploring the world's oceans. They travel from country to country along traditional trade routes, dictated by seasonal changes. Svdelos.com



I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe! Now that things are opening back up in the area, it's a good time to order some swag. The embroidery shop is open and able to take orders. For products and pricing, take a look at the Ship's Store on our website at SBSPS.net under the news, articles & links drop down menu in the upper left corner. To order call or text me at (805) 895-6083.

1st Lt Shelli Swaim



Learn our History and Meet Headquarters Staff

The 2020 Fall National Governing Board will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina (September 8-13). In addition to accomplishing lots of work for the organization, the national meetings committee has planned some wonderful offsite events. Tours of the headquarters building, including the library and board room, the warehouse, the shipping center and the various offices will be the highlights.

Raleigh, NC
6 Sep-13 Sep, 2020



In addition, there will be a cocktail hour at the hotel with the staff in attendance. Come meet the wonderful people who help solve your challenges! There are three opportunities for these tours on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. There are other tours and events available including a Kayaking Trip, Tour of Raleigh, Afternoon Tea, and beautiful museum.



Check out the meeting website for more details. https://www.usps.org/php/reservations_new/meetings.php?mtg_id=39 Everyone is invited to attend the meetings, meals and tours! Join us for fun, work, and fellowship! You determine how much of each.

The Signal Hoist is the official publication of the Santa Barbara Sail & Power Squadron. Articles of interest to the membership should be forwarded in writing via email to the Editor by the 20th of the month in order to be included in the next issue. We solicit the submission of your articles on safety, boating, cruising, racing, and squadron activities. Accompanying relevant photos are appreciated. We encourage articles by our members. Send us your true or tall tales. Articles, opinions, and advertisements published herein do not necessarily reflect squadron policy or endorsement unless so designated.

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