



THE HORNPIPE

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Commodore's Comments

Ahoy there, and Happy New Year! A new year, new challenges. For me, a new boat to look forward to! Spring and commissioning chores seem so far off from this perspective. We all have lists, little things and big we plan to fix before next year's cruising season starts off. This is the year we're going to redo that bright work, replace that through-hull, finally stop that annoying leak. But not today, it's too grey out, we've got plenty of time, it's not even February yet. Just a moment, though, I saw the tops of the daffodils emerge today. Slowly, the days have turned the corner and are getting longer. Spring is far off, but I've got to get moving or I know it'll sneak up behind us.

I got the news that I have some responsibility for ensuring the right weather this year. I started with having great sailing weather on New Year's Day. Did anyone actually get out? I'm trying for one short, sharp, snowy interlude in February, and then clear the decks and get out on the bay before this year's taxes are done. Would that be OK with everyone?

One way to get a mid-winter dose of motivation is to immerse ourselves in sailor's talk.

It was good seeing most of you at the mid-winter all-hands at the MacDonalds. We had a chance to relive some of last year's best moments, and plan for next summer's adventures.

Nan Shellabarger

Mid-Winter Party - January 15, 2005

As always, our mid-winter party was a great success. The food was delicious and plentiful. Thank you, Usha and Andy Monjan for the work you did in supplying the main dish, beverages, plus setting up and clean-up.

Also, we are very grateful to the MacDonalds for sharing their beautiful and spacious home and for hosting the party.

We had six new prospective members join our regular group at the party. They were Karen Kenny, Frederick King, Lee and Mary Benedict, Linda Serf, and Patrick McGeehan. Patrick became a new CCSC member. Welcome Patrick.

In addition, the following attended: Jutta and George Alberts, Barbara and Dick Callis, Ilyse and Jesse Delanoy, Carol and Bill Durr, Judy and

Steve Foland, Usha and Andy Monjan, Jeanne and Ken Montgomery, Robbie and Ed Sabin, Nan Shellabarger, Pat and Ed Shippey, and Jan and Hank Zerhusen.

Past Commodore Steve Foland gave out two awards. The Messing About Award went to Jan and Hank Zerhusen and the Commodore's Award for Outstanding Member was presented to George Alberts for his accomplishments during 2004. Commodore Shellabarger also presented awards to all those who captained last year's cruises. Congratulations everyone.

Those of you who did not attend or who did not turn in your dues at the party, please send your \$35 check, made out to CCSC, to Ed Sabin as soon as possible. New members' fee is \$45 (\$10 for a burgee.)

Judy Foland

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

HI ALL! HAPPY NEW YEAR! We hope all of you had a great holiday season and are well!!! We've had an awesome vacation away from the boat. We arrived home November 17, were here for two weeks, then went to visit son Bill and Monika and family in Detroit for six days, and on to Louisville, Kentucky, to visit son Ned and Ellen and family for six days. Were in Louisville for Ned's institution as Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, which was a moving ceremony. We went back to Maryland on December 14, until the twenty-seventh when we journeyed to Williamsburg to celebrate our thirty-third anniversary in our same room at the Inn. December 30 we were off to Lynchburg, Virginia, to visit son Jud and Shawn and family until January 3. Then back to Maryland and are planning to leave Saturday, January 8 to head back to Eau Gallie, Florida, to check on the *Lauren A*. We drive to Orlando to fly to Santiago, Chile, January 12, where we'll spend three days before boarding the Norwegian Crown January 16 for a trip around Cape Horn disembarking in Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 30, where we'll stay until our journey back to Orlando, Florida, February 3. Then back to the *Lauren A* to re-provision and head to Marathon. So, as you can see, we have truly had a busy time, and it was wonderful also to spend

time with daughter Laura and Philip and family as well as daughter Cindy and Bob and family.

Also saw my sisters' families and enjoyed touching base with Maryland friends and being back at St. Johns. Our trip home in November from Florida was most enjoyable. We rented a car and traveled Rt. A1A from Eau Gallie, Florida, to Georgia, and then to Rt. 17 to Virginia. It took longer but was a lot less stressful than I-95, and we were able to see the land which borders a lot of the Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway. We haven't decided which route we'll take back to Florida yet.

Take care all. Til next time,

Fondly, Art & Sue Grotz

Saba

November 7 finally arrived, and Usha and I finally took off to spend a glorious week diving the waters of Saba, Netherlands Antilles. Our US Airways flight from Philadelphia to St. Maarten was only slightly late, but we had lots of time there to make our connection to the WinAir flight to Saba, or so we thought. We all had checked our bags through to Saba, so no problem. On our arrival in St. Maarten, we dutifully walked into the Transit "Lounge" to get our boarding passes. As time passed, and we were told that an agent would be there soon for the last flight of the day, we waited, and waited, and waited, until our agent came and started to print out our boarding passes (the boarding pass machine was not working) while she worked on getting a flight on Air Caribbean for a party that missed their charter flight to St. Eustasis. (How do you miss a charter flight?) Finally, we went to the boarding gate, and while I was waiting in the line, Usha found out that our flight was ready to taxi onto the runway. Well, a short call and a long run got us onboard the De Haviland Otter for the low altitude and exciting landing onto the world's shortest commercial runway. Our bags had come with us — they boarded before us — and we met our driver Garvis, who took us up "The Road" through Hells Gate to Windwardside and our lodgings at Juliana's. After checking in with our dive shop, SeaSaba, putting our gear away, and mentioning a few problems in the rooms, which

were corrected during the next couple of days, we had a great dinner of fresh Wahoo at the adjoining Tropics Restaurant, where we had breakfast each morning before our pickup at 8:45 a.m. Now, isn't that a sensible time for our ride down The Road to the harbor at Fort Bay and our 10- to 15-minute boat rides out to the dive sites?

The island of Saba is the top of a dormant volcano located about 28 nm SW of St. Maarten. It is largely off the usual Caribbean tourist circuit, since it has no sustained beaches and hence no resort hotels. However, more and more divers are finding that it has healthy marine life and underwater lava flows. Nearby to the harbor are spectacular deep-water seamounts with large pelagic fish common, even sharks. The Saba National Marine Park, which surrounds the island, was established in the late 80s; and now there are schools of fish, healthy coral, and massive sponges of all sorts.



Since there is no shore diving — there is no shore — all diving is by boat from one of the three dive centers. All dive sites are moored, and most are in close vicinity to the harbor. Most of the sites are on the western side (usually the lee side) of the island. However, due to the sea conditions and winds from the NW at times, we were able to dive the less commonly accessed sites on the southern side of the island. Wherever we dove, the temps were around 83 F and visibility around 60-80 feet. Because of the "crowds" of divers around mid-

week, SeaSaba ran both of their boats with about six divers and two dive masters on each.

We started our dives at a site called Custom's House Reef in Ladder Bay on the west side of the island. These names come from The Ladder, a nearly vertical set of more than one thousand steps cut into the stone that led up to the Custom's House, where all cargo was hand carried before the building of Fort Bay harbor. Water temperature was 84 F, visibility was around 60 feet, and maximum depth was 82 feet seawater (fsw). The terrain consisted of large volcanic rocks overgrown with a variety of soft corals and sponges.



The next dive was just north of there at Man O'War Shoal, an extension of the headland consisting of twin peaks around 70 fsw. One could circle around each peak and see how healthy and vibrant the life was. No, we couldn't take the lobsters back with us. The next day we went out to one of the deeper seamounts, Third Encounter, at around 107 fsw, which is one of the pinnacles that Saba is known for. We saw a couple of large spotted eels housed at the mooring site, but no sharks. The sharks were north of here, at Shark Shoal, which we dove three days later. Shark Shoal is an isolated seamount that tops off around 90 fsw. You can descend further, and then circle the pinnacle as you come back to the mooring line.



steps hewn into the trail. We were led by a friendly dog that preceded us and waited for us to catch up with him.



Unfortunately, we were not fast enough for him, so he led another couple of climbers after being frustrated with our pace. We stopped a short way up and visited with a young couple reconstructing a typical Saban cottage.



After a short distance further, we decided that it was time to go back and get lunch.

We circled, as did the Grey Reef sharks. Other sites were walls; lava swim-throughs; coral outcroppings; and thermal vents, with lots of chromas, groupers, snappers, and the usual cast of suspects. We attempted a night dive. However, when we got out to the site, the rain started, and it looked as if the current was picking up. Rather than perform a sequel to "Open Water", we went back to the harbor and where our van was waiting; it had just brought back people from the live-aboard *Caribbean Explorer*, who were soaked. Our drive back up The Road was an adventure itself, as the rainwater was streaming down in waves and surf. In Los Angeles, this would have been called a river.

What about food? After all, isn't that what it is all about? The restaurants all are small and often unique, such as the EcoLodge, where we had to walk in from the road. All the power is from solar cells and candles, and propane is used for cooking. We had a delightful Indonesian *rijsttafel*. Then there is the restaurant at Hell's Gate, where the owner and chef is French, as is the cuisine. And, of course, we had the best pizza south of Chicago at a new pub in Windward Side. But most unusual was the banquet that our van driver, Mani, put together for a dozen of us. It was supposed to be by the beach but it rained, as it did most evenings. He then used a rental cottage that he was managing, and prepared a scrumptious feast of Saban lobster, grouper, ribs, chicken, rice, noodles, salad, beer, soda, ice cream, etc.

Saturday was our last full day in Saba. We slept later, and then took a hike up the trail to Mt. Scenery, the towering volcano above us with 1,020

turned out that our flight was selected by the US Airways baggage handlers to be the one that they would not unload. As our continuation flights departed, we were told that we could not leave the Customs Hall until we cleared our bags. But we didn't have our bags! Finally, by 11:00 p.m., our bags came up, and we exited without even opening a bag for the customs agents. We over-nighted at a nearby Ramada Inn, and got back Monday in time for a full day in the office.

Andy Monjan

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS AND PAST ISSUES OF THE HORNPIPE. WE HAVE FOUND THESE STORIES MOST ENTERTAINING. WITHOUT YOUR STORIES AND INFORMATIVE ARTICLES, HOWEVER, WE WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE TO REPORT IN OUR UPCOMING NEWSLETTERS; SO PLEASE KEEP SENDING IN YOUR ARTICLES.

Judy Foland



Our trip home on Sunday was uneventful, until we got back to the U.S. and Philadelphia. It