



VOLUME 33, NO. 2

THE HORNPIPE

February 2009

CCSC 2009 Board Members

Andy Monjan, Commodore	(amonjan@verizon.net)	410-531-3832
Hank Zerhusen, Vice Commodore	(hzerhusen2@verizon.net)	410-730-9129
Nan Shellabarger, Secretary/Membership	(nshellab@earthlink.net)	301-589-7469
Ed Sabin, Treasurer	(esabin1@comcast.net)	410-255-7362
Cynthia & Duncan MacDonald, Social	(DunMcDnld@verizon.net)	410-799-9517
Judy & Steve Foland, Hornpipe Editors	(Foland@aol.com)	301-261-6613

Commodore's Comments

Winter is half gone with this issue of The Hornpipe, and I write this on January 19, while we are having our first dusting of snow. I am composing this column early since we are heading south for a month today, and when this issue of The Hornpipe is distributed, we will have just completed a cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula, where it is now warmer than at home, and we will be tramping (depending on our funds) through the glaciers of Patagonia. I hope to have sent some pictures of Usha playing with penguins and throwing snowballs at me. I will follow up with a trip report.

I am sorry to have missed our annual membership dinner, and I am sure that it was as successful and enjoyable as usual. I am looking forward to hearing all of the ideas put forth on what we can do to enrich our activities, both cruising and land-bound. We need to extend our reach in both activities and membership.

Think spring and getting the boats back into sailing form.

Andy Monjan

**Attention – Attention - Attention
CCSC March Potluck Social**

**March 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the home of the
MacDonalds, 6427 Koffel Court, Elkridge, MD**

**Club will provide appetizers and beverages.
Bring a dish to share.**

**RSVP (just for a head count): to Zerhusens
Email: hzerhusen2@verizon.net
Home: 410-730-9129**

Reminder

This is just the usual reminder about half-price annual BoatU.S. membership fees.

I am presently renewing the CCSC's agreement with BoatU.S., providing for half-price annual membership fees (\$12.50 versus \$25.00). When you renew your BoatU.S. membership, refer to our group ID, which is GA80210S.

George Alberts

A Cruise to Remember

We spent January 9-17 on a cruise in the Windward Islands of the Caribbean. We flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico, a day early to prevent possible problems with weather and stayed in a hotel. There were 60 others on the trip, which was a fund-raiser for a children's center and raised \$11,000.

We arranged for a tour of San Juan by way of our journey from the hotel to the ship. Included was a tour of the Bacardi rum factory and old San Juan, including the ornate and quite spectacular capital building. Our ship was the Royal Caribbean *Serenade of the Seas*. It is quite new and accommodates 2,500 passengers. The ship is not big by today's standards. The boarding was quick and smooth, unlike some other cruises we have been on, and our luggage was in the stateroom fairly quickly. The one mishap was missing luggage, which for one of our couples arrived just before the ship sailed!



Our ship, Serenade of the Seas

Our first port-of-call was St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. We had pre-arranged a tour to St. John that included snorkeling at a lovely beach. We returned to St. Thomas in time for the 5:00 p.m. sailing.



Duncan on our catamaran cruise in St. Lucia



St. John

The Raven's football game had kept some of our tablemates away on the first night, but eventually they all showed up. Three of us purchased a five-bottle wine package, making 15 bottles for seven nights for the ten of us. Just the right amount, we found! Our main waiter was a young Indian fellow with a great smile and reliable recommendations. The food throughout the cruise was very good...not great, but very good. The shows were first class, with fine singing and dancing and excellent comedians.

The next port-of-call was St. Maarten. We decided not to take any tours, and stayed on the ship, relaxing around the pool. It was just the rest we needed. Next we sailed overnight to Antigua. We had not preplanned a shore trip there, but decided to take a beach trip. It was a lovely beach,

with nice, warm Caribbean water. Then we went back to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at the pool and hot tub.

Our next destination was St. Lucia — probably our favorite because of the hilly and forested terrain. We had prescheduled a catamaran trip and sailed (or rather motored) down the west side of the island to twin peaks called the Pitons. Going ashore, we rode in small buses to the volcano, a delightful waterfall in tropical gardens, a nice restaurant with local cuisine, and a good view of the Pitons, and then back to the catamaran from which we swam in a lovely cove.

Our final shore destination was Barbados. As in Antigua, we hadn't preplanned a shore excursion, but we decided to take one anyway. Several were full, but we selected a four-wheel drive safari. We toured much of the island, mostly on dirt trails through sugarcane plantations and tropical forests. The vehicles were covered pickup trucks with seats along the sides and absolutely necessary seat belts. The trails were wildly bumpy, and the driver had an aversion to using the brakes! It was lots of fun, but we weren't the least bit sorry to reach a lovely beach where we swam and sunbathed for a while.

We had a long one-day and two-night sail back to Puerto Rico. Upon arrival on Saturday morning, our disembarkation was relatively smooth, as was the bus trip to the airport. We had a rather long wait for our flight, but were pleased to meet our waiter on his way back to India for a two-month vacation. The flight home through Orlando was uneventful, but the cold at BWI was not very pleasant after the 80s in the Caribbean. HOME FELT GOOD, BUT THE MEMORIES WERE BETTER!

Cynthia and Duncan MacDonald

A Tropical Land Cruise

At the commodore's dinner, I was reminded that I hadn't provided any feedback on the trip that John and I made to Costa Rica last August, even though there was little boating (and no sailing) involved. As some of you know, Costa Rica is a lovely, welcoming, Central American nation, possessed of spectacular beauty, gracious people

(who call themselves *Ticos*), and the most consistently bad roads ever seen in an economically stable democracy!

John and I arranged our trip through an in-country travel agency (Costa Rican Vacations www.vacationscostarica.com), and our agent, Nicole (Nicolealtman@goduesouth.com), really took our stated desires to heart and provided us with exactly what we were looking for. We highly recommend their services.

With two weeks to fill, we wanted to get a cross-section of the ecosystems, so we stayed in three different places: La Fortuna in the volcanic central highlands, Monteverde in the cloud forest, and Playa Nosara on the Pacific coast. This strategy really brought home to us the reality that climate in countries so near the equator is determined by altitude and time of year. Costa Rica, as a whole, has three seasons: dry (February – May), wet (June – September), and wetter (October – January). In La Fortuna, the temperature hovered in the high 70s, and the humidity ranged from 80-100%. Being the wet season, it rained sporadically every day, with breaks of three to five hours between downpours (as opposed to raining nearly nonstop during the wetter season). When we moved upslope into Monteverde, it was cooler (low 60s to mid 70s), frequently foggy, and even rainier — breaks of only one to two hours between drenchings. We were very glad that our general map of the country was waterproof, because the map of the Cloud Forest Reserve that was given to us when we paid our admission rapidly disintegrated into soggy illegibility (and we got lost in the forest...). At the end of our idyll, at sea level in Playa Nosara, it was in the mid 80s and rained for only an hour or two each day, but maintained better than 90% humidity at all times.



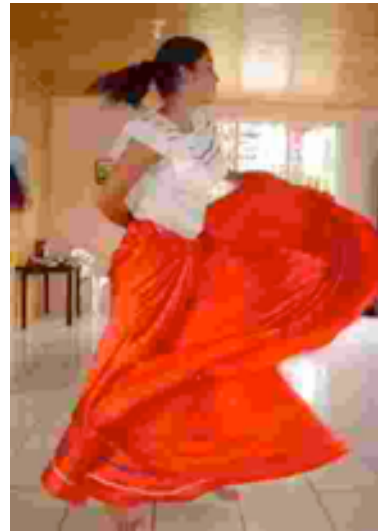
I can't possibly condense my trip journal down enough to fit in these pages, but one highlight was a wonderful culture that took us to a remote B&B on a former sugar plantation where we were taught to make tortillas, which we then consumed with our breakfast on the veranda. We then went out back to learn about growing and processing sugarcane, and were invited to imbibe freshly squeezed sugarcane juice. Delicious and refreshing!

A brief ride in a tractor-pulled trailer took us down the road to the cassava and banana plantation of Don Alguinaldo and his lovely wife, Dona Felicidad. The Don gave us a tour of his cash crops, explaining the niceties of banana-culture, but also showed us the Dona's personal garden of spices, citrus, and ornamentals. The latter was centered on a huge strangler fig, under which we all partook of samples of the fruits that burgeoned at every turn. As we did everywhere that we went, we saw wildlife, insects, and flowers galore.

After another hour of walking and talking through a pineapple field, we went back to the house where we were expected to eat (again!) fresh pineapple and drink coffee while admiring the collection of pre-Columbian artifacts regularly turned up as the plantation is worked, and to join with Don Alguinaldo as he entertained us on the guitar and sang folk songs.



But wait! There's more! Climbing back onto the trailer, we trundled on down the road to the local school, where we were entertained by a kindergarten class and, afterwards, four middle-schoolers who danced for us and practiced their English by inviting us to join the fun and teaching us the steps.



It was a good thing that we walked five to ten miles a day, minimum, because we were always being fed. Contrary to some of the guide books, there is a distinctive cuisine in Costa Rica, you just don't find it in upscale tourist restaurants. You have to go to what the *Ticos* call a "soda", what we would call a "greasy spoon". For between \$3 and \$5 (1500 – 3000 Colones), you get a *casado* platter with rice, beans, salad, chicken, beef or pork, and sometimes tortillas, cassava, sweet potato, plantain, or other fruit. We never had a bad meal, and it was always an adventure to see what the local seasoning would be. *Tico* beef tends to be free range, lean, tough, and stringy; but the chicken is fabulous, and the seafood and pork are good locally. Just look for signs that say "typical food," and you'll get a good, cheap meal.

Recommendations: First, go to Costa Rica. Support a nation that has committed to becoming the first carbon-neutral modern nation. Everywhere you go, there is reliable electricity and potable water, due to the fact that they disbanded their

military in 1950 and spend that portion of their gross domestic product on public infrastructure.

Second, do not rent a car. Either arrange for your transfers via van or use the bus and taxi services. Driving in Costa Rica is always an adventure, and you will be much happier and calmer if all you have to do is hang on for dear life. Unlike other dire warnings you might hear about not drinking tap water, blood-thirsty insects, or high crime (All of which were nonstarters from what we saw.), the roads are worse than advertized. This is on purpose: *Ticos* do not want foreigners speeding through their peaceful countryside and running down animals and people, so they ensure that speeding is not so much of an option. And there ARE animals on the roads — we dodged random dogs, cats, chickens, horses, cattle, pigs, and goats, as well as coatis-mundi, iguanas, and frogs. Another advantage: The drivers are all well-trained and can spot wildlife for you. At one point, we were whizzing down one of the few paved roads when our driver suddenly pulled off and backed up 100 yards to point out a three-toed sloth high in a tree.

We saw so much more because we had someone who knew what he was looking at. That held true everywhere; on walking tours and on a boat trip up the Rio Negro to the Nicaraguan border — our guides and drivers were astoundingly sharp-eyed and were able to show us many amazing sights, like a family of bats resting on a tree (Each is less than three inches long.).



Third, do the tourist stuff, like zip-lining through the canopy, because it is fun; but don't spend all your free time cocooned in an air-conditioned resort, get out and walk in the countryside, explore, and talk to *Ticos*. Most can speak enough English to get by, and you can get quite a new outlook on how our country is viewed in the world. Take several pairs of good walking shoes (they WILL get wet), an umbrella, good foul-weather gear, and a sense of humor. Keep your eyes open, and wonders will abound.

Jenny Poniske

Vice Commodore's Report

We held the annual party/awards night on January 24 at our home. Out of 47 members, 21 attended. Once again the weather gods smiled on us, and it was just cold enough for a fire in the fireplace. We had ample food — lots of ham, delicious side dishes, plenty of dessert. No one left hungry.

It is unfortunate that attendance was not better for the club's traditional annual awards party held on this same weekend every year. (HINT: Plan ahead for next year.)

Matt Coyle, outgoing vice-commodore and cruising chair, presented the cruise captains' awards. Many were purchased very proudly at the West Marine sale table.

Some of the awards were:

Zerhusens (two-week cruise) received as an award the Waterway Cruising Guide.

Flynns' (international potluck cruise) award was a bottle of Happy Campers wine.

Monjans (for the best-wine cruise) (Which turned into a very well attended land cruise at Hammock Island, thanks to the Durrs.) award was a bottle of Herding Cats wine.

The Commodore Award went to **Bob Lowenstein and Suzanne Bucher** for their Long Island Sound trip with Suzanne's very enjoyable Most Excellent Adventure writeup.

Hank asked for suggestions to plan this year's cruising schedule: Places to visit, days out, distances to travel. So far, a request for the shakedown cruise for mid-May, maybe a ladies' cruise, and some moonlight cruises.

Next up is the potluck supper on March 21.

Hank Zerhusen

Do I like Sailing??

A curse of us older, middle-class men is that sometimes we don't know what's going on inside our brains very well.

If someone asks me how I am, I say, okay. or pretty good. Often I experience things as being kind of bland. To answer a question of how I am, I prefer to reserve judgment, or to wait and see. Give me some time, and I'll give you a thoughtful (not spontaneous) answer.

Scholars attribute this to our upbringing — big boys don't cry, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. This means I'm not used to feeling my feelings or naming them.

The downside of all this is that sometimes I ask myself if I really like sailing. It's not easy to answer that question.

magazines, or another member, who can't wait to get out on the water. Sometimes after a day or two or three on the water, I'm ready to call it quits and go back to the comforts of home.

On the other hand, when I'm doing a tedious and repetitious task at my part-time job (especially during this time of the year), I catch myself thinking about moments on the water. Usually I recall a scene when I was at anchor in some pretty, isolated spot. At the time, the scene did not seem to be that special, but something about it hooked into my soul and is stuck there.

Does that mean I like sailing?

Ed Sabin

I don't think I'm a boat nut — unlike one of our new members, who subscribes to three boating