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Commodore's Comments

February, and another month closer to the sailing season! And what are we doing to get ready? Shoveling snow, of course. Lots of snow. After clearing my driveway and sidewalks twice this past week, I estimate that I have lifted and tossed about sixteen tons(!) of water (in crystal form). That's before I went to the boat yesterday and more-or-less cleared the cockpit of the white stuff.

So now it's back to sailing. Has anyone noticed that the America's Cup competition is underway? I was somewhat interested in following the races (I learned a few minutes ago that BMW Oracle's trimaran beat Alinghi's catamaran in the first race, yesterday), but after looking at photos of the two boats, my interest faded fast. In my humble, old-fashioned opinion, this competition has become a rather boring big-money, high-tech ego trip.

Don't forget our rescheduled Winter (Can't Wait for Spring) Dinner, which will take place at the Hawthorn Center in Columbia, next Friday, February 19, at 7:00 p.m. Once again we ask that you let Cynthia MacDonald know that you are planning to come, so that she can keep a rough count of the turnout and advise on dishes to bring. See above for her email address and phone number.

See you there (and don't forget to bring a check to renew your membership)!

George Alberts



**Bill Durr on Hammock Island, February
Snowmageddon**

Winter Light on the Bay

I took an early morning shuttle flight out of National bound for LaGuardia. I had work to do before my meeting, so I took my seat, got out my paper and pen, and didn't look up as we pushed back and took off.

As the flight attendants began to move around, I looked out the window and immediately succumbed to the view. It was shortly after sunrise, and the sky to the west was still vaguely pink and gray. The sun was at a very low angle, out of sight on the other side of the plane, but it was making the east side of landforms and buildings shine with a

golden light. Shadows were dramatic and long. The bay was sparkling, with fringes and swathes of ice along the shores and in the bays and creek mouths.

We were north of the bridge, just crossing the Eastern Shore. I spotted the Magothy, and Eagles Nest, and saw how close it was to the Bodkin and Hammock Island. I was able to pick out the Hammock, but couldn't make out my *Mutima*, as we were too low and too far away.

Off to the west then was Poole's Island and Middle River. We passed just east of Rock Hall and Swan Creek, and by looking straight down, I could trace the shortcut across Rock Hall Harbor and each spot where we've anchored in the creek.

We followed the Chester up to Chestertown, cutting diagonally across the peninsula. Looking off, I traced each of the creeks and anchorages off the bay. I could see Turkey Point and Havre de Grace and the big shallows between them.

The wing dipped and I saw the Delaware Bay coming up, so I began to search for the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Compared to the creeks and rivers and roads, the canal was inconspicuous. Finally, I saw the nuke on the Delaware shore and the canal shooting across the land.

I looked at the smooth, less sheltering shore of western Delaware Bay and admired the mix of old and new in the Philadelphia suburbs and skyline.

By then, the golden light and dramatic shadows had turned into prosaic white daylight. The country I was looking at, I had driven through, but did not know like the places that I'd seen by sail at a walking pace. I turned away from New Jersey and got back to work, enriched by the brief interlude.

Nan Shellabarger

Flynn's Update

Hi everyone. Just a check-in to let you know that we're still rollin' along. Right now we are in southern Arizona, a little over halfway through our volunteer time. We are having a great time hiking, birding, leading boat tours, painting signs, hanging out with friends, etc.

Unfortunately, Arizona state parks are having a terrible time. The state of Arizona has cut

funding to the parks by two-thirds and is actually sweeping our gate fees and donations. It's a mess.

This year the visitor center is open two days a week instead of seven, and we work with two rangers instead of five. But the big changes are yet to come. In the next few months, two-thirds of the parks will be closing. Fortunately, Patagonia Lake State Park and Sonoita Creek State Natural Area (which we work for) are staying open. But we still don't know the status of the rangers who are here, and however it turns out, it won't be pretty. So although we are having a wonderful time, we are all very sad about what is happening to the rangers (our friends), their families, and this program.

I never thought I'd say this, but great news — WE HAD RAIN!!! — and a lot of it. Up until last week, it was the driest here since 1922. My hair was like straw, the lake was down three feet, and no water was flowing anywhere. I think we had about three inches of rain in three days and lots of wind. The lake came up the full three feet and mud was everywhere, especially on us. In northern Arizona, Flagstaff, and the Grand Canyon, they had up to five feet of snow!! We had a little snow.

Speaking of the Grand Canyon, Dave is there now and will be working there until March, when he is moving to Yosemite National Park in California. He's very excited, since both parks are beautiful and he likes the work.

As to our future schedule, we leave here on February 16 and will spend a month camping in parts of Arizona and New Mexico. We'll work our way to Dallas, and on March 15, we will fly from there to Belize. We return on March 25 and will stay in a state park north of Dallas and visit with our friends from Baltimore, Ilyse, Jesse, and Erika Delanoy, and their family for Passover. We love meeting friends in new places. Then on to Alabama the first weekend in April to visit Brandy, Rob, Rusty, and Tyler.

I've attached four photos: One is of the Santa Cruz River just north of Nogales. It was a dry river on Thursday, and this photo was taken on Friday — pretty incredible.



Another is of the Santa Rita Mountains, just to our west, covered with snow on Friday morning.



Then two photos we took at the Desert Museum in Tucson — one of me and Dave and one of Tom.



That's it for now. Please keep in touch.
Love to all.
Tom and Adrian

News from Octavia, 2/3/10

Our original plan was to stay home for three weeks and then drive back to Florida and continue our travels. When the weather turned cold here at home and in Florida, we decided we would rather stay here than on a mooring or at anchor. After six weeks, Hank came down with a dental problem that couldn't wait until spring to fix. So we took a week between dentist's visits to drive down to Titusville and visit *Octavia*.

The good news was that she was fine. No chafe on the lines, no water inside. It having rained, she was very clean topsides. The bad news was that Florida had had a rough winter. In the Keys, some coral was dying. There had been massive fish kills due to cold. There were also some manatee kills and dying birds. The palm trees and low shrubs looked pretty sad.

We met our slip mate — a local with a boat called *Spray*. She is a 7/8 replica of Joshua Slocum's boat, *Spray* — all steel, sturdy welded stanchions, and loaded with gear. Looked like she was ready to cruise the world.

We had breakfast, a fund raiser, at the Titusville Yacht Club's clubhouse. They rent the building for one dollar per year and take care of the upkeep. It is very nice, located next to a highway (with a drawbridge) and has a boat ramp.

We found the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Park. All this was right next to the space center, with acres and acres of land for protecting wildlife north of the launch area and between the Indian River and the ocean.

Our trip home was between snow storms, so the roads were clear. North Carolina had been blasted the day before.

We seem to have gone to a lot of trouble to avoid winterizing *Octavia*. Hopefully we'll be able to use her soon and have some fun. Maybe even do some sailing.

Hank and Jan Zerhusen

Marine Electronics: Fighting Planned Obsolescence with Help from eBay

I have a love/hate relationship with marine electronics. Those of you who have been on board *Breezing Up* are well aware of the love side of the relationship. Those of you who have heard about my battles to replace the VHF RAM microphone are well aware of the hate side. Simply put, the manufacturers of marine electronics make it nearly impossible to maintain or enhance hardware without moving with great difficulty and expense to the newest generation.

I am in the middle of my biggest battle on this front. I decided last fall to try to replace the two-color radar/chart plotter display at the helm with a daylight-viewable color display.

Problem number one surfaced immediately: I had to stay with Raymarine (proprietary cabling and radars). But the new Raymarine displays have different dimensions — they are horizontal while my display is vertical. That meant I'd need to recut the NavPod, at the very least, and more likely I'd have to replace the NavPod.

Problem number two involved the connections to the display. I'd need to run new, separate NMEA and power cables to replace the existing combined cable.

Problem number three involved the radar, which I was told was probably not compatible with the new display.

Problem number four involved the navigation data cartridges. The new Raymarine displays require Navionics cartridges, while my current display uses C-MAP.

I considered an easy and relatively cheap option: install one of the new integrated GPS displays. But then I'd lose the radar capability. I also briefly considered a very expensive option: Let Tidewater Yachting Center in Baltimore, my boat's winter home, do the whole job, with all new equipment — display, NavPod, cables, radar (probably), chart cartridges. I'd guess the total could run as high as five or six boat bucks (\$1000s).

I'm taking a chance on a middle option, thanks to eBay. I purchased a new-in-the-box, no-longer-produced, obsolete Raymarine RL70C daylight-viewable color display for just under one

boat buck. It **should** be a direct drop-in replacement, with the same dimensions, cables, and cartridges, and it **should** work with my existing radar and radar cable.

I only made one small mistake, so far, in checking all this out. The unit is a good bit deeper than the existing display. There is room (enough depth) in the NavPod to allow me to install it, but the manual recommends more clearance around the cooling fins than I'll be able to provide. However, the NavPod catalogue claims that my NavPod should handle this unit.

Once the weather improves and I have the nerve, I will install it and try it out.

George Alberts