

DeFever Cruisers Magazine



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PEDERSEN, Ole & Jan (#792) 1986 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • EMMA JO Green Cove Springs, FL

49 RPH EMMA JO Transits the Panama Canal



Canal Crew: John, Thompson, Ole, Jan, Dale, Linda, Kim

On Wednesday November 25, 2009 at approximately 2:00 p.m., we picked up a mooring ball at the Balboa Yacht Club near Panama City, having transited the Panama Canal exactly two years, ten months and four days after leaving south Florida on our way home to the Pacific Northwest. We have a tradition on EMMA JO called an “anchor dram,” a small toast to a successful passage – and as we unwound on the aft deck, we celebrated that nobody got hurt, nothing got bent, and EMMA JO and her crew performed admirably on this once-in-a-lifetime voyage.

Our crew for the transit consisted of ourselves, Dale and Linda Bixler (#556, DF49 RPH EL CAPITAN, www.elcapitan1.com), Kim and John Pulkrabek, (backpackers from Chicago spending several months exploring Central America), Thompson (a professional line handler from Associated Steam

Ship Agency who served as “line boss” and trainer), plus our two intrepid feline sailors Barclay and Maggie, who served as observers.

The process of preparing for a transit of the Panama Canal is straightforward, though fraught with opportunities to try your patience and skill.

First, if you’re arriving in either Colon or Balboa, you’ll need officers from Immigration, Customs, and the Health Department to come aboard to inspect and issue clearances that you then need to take to the Port Captain who will issue a Cruise Permit and Zarpe (a document that spells out your next intended port of call). Each of these authorities will require a payment for their part in the process.

Second, your boat will need to be inspected and admeasured by the Panama Canal Authority (PCA). The admeasurer physically measures your vessel, and using a complex and arcane set of equations, calculates its length based on its volume and cargo capacity – making our 49ft RPH



Crew member Maggie

admeasure out to 51 feet 8 inches for purposes of the Canal, and bumping up our transit fee from \$600 to about \$800. The admeasurer also inspects the lines, cleats, heads, winches, and general transit-worthiness of the boat. He also interviews you about transit preferences – sidewall tie, center tie, nested (rafted to other boats), or tied to a Panama Canal Tug. His inspection and interview results in the issue of an official SIM Number that stays with your boat for its lifetime, and is used any time the boat is in the Canal Zone. The admeasurer’s \$50 fee is paid in cash at the Canal Authority’s Bank.

Third, you’ll need to take all of your approved paperwork and proof of payment to the Canal Authority Office to request a transit date. You’ll need to pay for the transit (in our case about \$800) plus an \$850 damage deposit in case your vessel damages the canal (hah) either with a cash deposit or wire transfer directly to the Canal Authority’s bank account.

Once all of the paperwork and payment has been completed, you wait for the Canal Authority to assign you a transit date, which could mean a wait of anywhere from hours, days, or weeks. And you need to be ready to transit when they call you, or you risk losing your deposit and paying a delay fee.

OR – you can hire a professional agency to arrange all immigration and cruising permits; collect and file the necessary forms and payments with the Canal Authorities and bank; organize the rental, delivery, and return of special 125-foot, 1-inch Panama lines; provide professional line handlers; and pretty much guarantee a requested transit date – all for a fee in addition to that charged by the Canal Authority. Agency fees depend on who you’re using: a taxi driver with “connections” might charge you \$200, whereas a bonded ship’s agent might charge \$500 or more.

In addition, your boat will require four line handlers (strong people who can follow directions and keep a boat centered against the incredible forces involved in filling and emptying locks); food, beverage, restroom, and sleeping arrangements for the line handlers and the Advisor; ample fendering against 100-year-old concrete walls and other boats; and reliable engines, steering, and generator. Some pleasure boats opt to supplement their own fenders with plastic-wrapped tires which can be borrowed or rented at either end of the Canal. With six 10 x 24 fenders and four big ball fenders, we opted against tires, figuring they might be unwieldy if we had to raft up with other boats.

Because we were getting ready to turn the boat over to Dale and Linda Bixler as our first foray into “boat sharing” (subject of another article, no doubt) for the ten weeks of Ole’s contract on *Independence of the Seas* that was to begin on December 12; and because we are less than fluent enough in Spanish to dance the “paperwork cha-cha” without added stress, we opted to use the services of Associated Steam Ship Agency who handles all of the business for several cruise lines and cargo companies in the Canal. We dealt with two wonderful men there – Alessandro, Vice President of Operations, and Reuben, an agent from Colon. They dealt with all of our questions and needs with charm, alacrity, and professionalism and we couldn’t have been happier with them. In addition, we were able to make one payment by credit card for all of the fees required.



Gatun Turbulence

We were counting on Ole to captain the boat, me to serve as cook and gopher, and Dale and Linda to handle lines, with two additional line handlers provided by the Agent. As luck would have it, the day before our scheduled transit two remarkable young backpackers from Chicago were walking the docks at Shelter Bay Marina for the second time, looking for a boat they could crew on for the transit. While Linda and I were picking up last minute supplies in Colon, Ole was busy hiring Kim and John Pulkrabek as our third and fourth line handlers. Even though they had youth, strength, and lots of determination to see the Canal firsthand, Kim and John had next to no boating experience, so we opted to have the agent provide just one professional

line handler who would be the “line boss” and provide training to all of our line handlers.

Current procedures in the Canal require southbound pleasure boats (transiting from the Atlantic to the Pacific) to schedule a two-day transit, locking up the three Gatun Locks in an afternoon or evening, spending the night on Gatun Lake in the dedicated anchorage, then locking down through Pedro Miguel and Miraflores Locks to the Pacific the next morning. Northbound boats are required to make a full transit in one day, departing Balboa early in the morning and arriving in Colon in the evening.

All vessels in the Panama Canal are assigned either a Pilot or an Advisor, responsible for the smooth transit of the vessel through the Canal, maintaining radio contact with the PCA, the locks, and other vessels, as well as directing the maneuvering of the vessel they are aboard. The difference between a Pilot and an Advisor is one of license – a Pilot is a fully qualified ship captain who has full responsibility for the vessel (the only place in the world where this is so); an Advisor is not necessarily a licensed ship captain, but is responsible for making recommendations as to the maneuvering of the vessel. This difference became clear to us in the later half of our transit!

On Tuesday, November 24, the Canal Authority directed us to be at the holding area known as “the Flats” by 2:00 p.m., as our Advisor would board at 5:30 p.m., if not earlier. Once all of our additional lines and line handlers were aboard and fed, we left the dock at Shelter Bay, dropping anchor in The Flats at 1:00 p.m. Captain Ole retired for a pre-transit nap, I monitored the radio, and our crew did a few training sessions with our line boss, Thompson. At about 3:30 p.m., the PCA contacted us to inform us that our Advisor would board at 7:00 p.m., so all of us opted for a nap, knowing it might be a long night. After an early dinner, we were on standby for our Advisor’s arrival, just a bit disappointed that the first half of our transit would take place in the dark of night. Finally, at 7:35 p.m., the Pilot Boat approached and Ivan, our Advisor, boarded, confirming an appointment at the first Gatun Lock at 9:00 p.m.



As we cruised approximately two miles toward Gatun Locks, the red and green lights marking the channel looked like an airport approach – and we could clearly see the 85-foot uphill climb through the three locks we were about to undertake. Ivan informed us we would be transiting “nested” between two sailing catamarans. Our understanding was that as the center boat, we would be the heaviest, serving as anchor and power plant for the entire raft of boats. We also understood that as the center boat, our Advisor would be making decisions for the entire raft. As we approached the first of the three Gatun Locks, two 41ft French charter sailboats on their way to Tahiti approached us and tied alongside, with fore and aft as well as spring lines. This arrangement seemed like a good idea at the time, in that our line handlers would be free to just enjoy the ride as we locked up. Ivan would advise the entire raft, and Ole would steer EMMA JO on behalf of all three boats. Just as we were about to relax, it all went sideways - literally.

For some reason, the decision was made that the two catamarans, *Monte Verde* on the port side and *Tchaikovsky* on the starboard, would do the steering, while we were to keep EMMA JO in neutral, meaning that four engines, two advisors, and two captains would try to control a raft of three boats, and our advisor and captain as well as line handlers would just be along for the ride. As our raft closed in to within 100 feet of the stern of the Indonesian freighter, *Skylark*, the whole raft veered to starboard, and the *Tchaikovsky*'s crew were in danger of becoming human fenders as they used arms, legs, and boathooks to keep from being driven into the starboard lock wall. The captain on the *Monte Verde* overcompensated, his nervousness causing

him to surge and back both his engines like a maniac. The Advisors on either side of EMMA JO were barking orders back and forth, both French captains seemed to ignore most of them, and the adrenaline level on EMMA JO increased as the giant lock gates closed and 26 million gallons of water boiled into the lock. At some point, Ivan, our Advisor, asked Ole to power up and try to stabilize the raft, but by that point, we were just two of six competing engines, as neither catamaran seemed to get the message. Luckily none of the three boats was damaged, but as the upward gate opened and we untied from the catamarans, Ivan suggested we transit alone, center tied, for the next two locks. Good decision!



Pedro Miguel

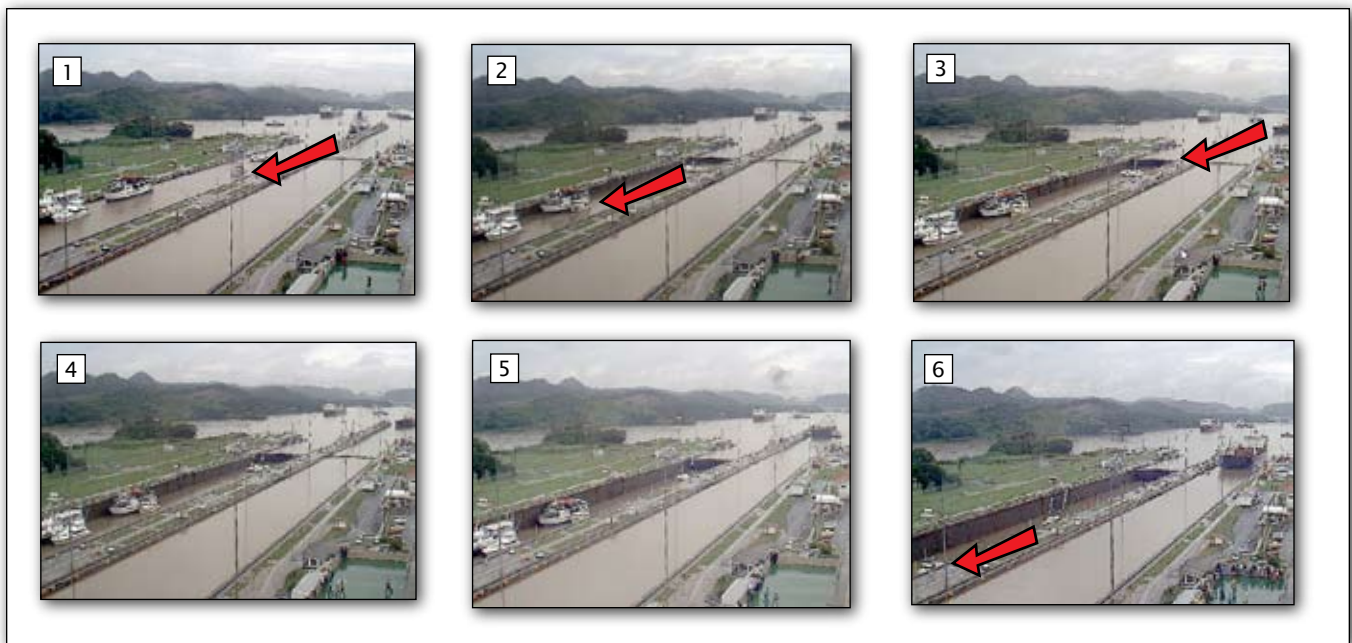
The challenge when locking up is that the Canal line handlers toss monkey fists with heaving lines down to the deck, where our line handlers needed to quickly attach them to our Panama lines so they could be hauled up and secured to the bollards above. Once secured to the bollards at the top of the lock, the lines were controlled through the cleats on the deck of EMMA JO, with each line handler responsible for pulling in the slack and keeping the boat centered as she rose in the lock. With 20 six-foot diameter valves opening simultaneously in a 110 by 1000 foot lock chamber, approximately 26 million gallons of water fill up each chamber in an average of eight minutes, creating some amazing turbulence and quite some pressure on the line handlers' physical strength. Once the gates were opened and the freighter ahead of us shifted into gear, the challenge of dealing with its turbulence added the need for quick reaction as the Canal line handlers tossed our lines back to us and our deckhands quickly hauled them aboard. The last thing anyone would want to have happen is to get a line fouled in the propellers in the middle of the lock!

We transited the remaining two of the Gatun Locks without incident, and our line handlers and feline observers got a great workout, performing admirably. Ivan guided us to the anchorage, just a half hour outside of the top Gatun Lock, where we opted to drop anchor rather than compete further with the catamarans for the one remaining mooring float. At 11:45 p.m., anchor secure, we partook of our first Canal anchor dram, had a midnight snack, and got all seven of us put to bed (two in the master stateroom, two in the forward stateroom, two on the pull-out sofa in the salon, and one on the pilot berth in the pilothouse) ready for a 5:00 a.m. wakeup call, 5:30 a.m. breakfast, and 6:00 a.m. arrival of our second Advisor.



Emma Jo at Miraflores Lock

Wednesday morning, November 25, everyone was excited about the next phase of the adventure - boarding a new Advisor and cruising the 15 miles of



Following Emma Jo through the descent in the locking process at Miraflores, as she approaches Fantasia (1), then tied alongside (2). Note the lowering water in the lock (3), and finally she exits (6). These photos are screen captures from the live camera at Miraflores Lock, taken by Bob Dein.

Gatun Lake. We welcomed our second Advisor, Ray aboard at 6:30, weighed the anchor, and relaxed as we cruised through this historic Canal. Because we had over five hours until our 12:00 appointment at Pedro Miguel Locks, we were able to relax and enjoy the ride.

We had a following wind and partly cloudy skies as we wound through the various channels looking for crocodiles, toucans, and howler monkeys. Everyone who wanted to take a turn at the helm, including our Chicago backpackers Kim and John. Once we got through the Continental Divide it began to rain gently – and we could clearly see how the landslides of Culebra Cut had been such a challenge during construction. The rainwater draining off the sides of the cut was the color of chocolate milk, thick with the dark clay that covers the mountains.

Shortly after noon we entered Pedro Miguel Lock, advised to tie up alongside a large tour boat on our starboard side. The Advisor informed Ole that there was “a bit of a following current” for the “downhill” lockage, and asked that he approach the tour boat *Fantasia* by pointing EMMA JO’s nose to starboard, and aiming at the tour boat’s midsection to get the forward line across first, then kicking over the stern to attach our line. We had to make more than one attempt to toss the heavy, one-inch stern line across as the following current caught hold and swung our aft end away from *Fantasia*. There was almost no turbulence, as the lock is emptied by gravity. Once the 31-foot elevator ride ended a short ten minutes after being secured, our lines were tossed back over to us and quickly hauled in. We then cruised Miraflores Lake about one mile toward our last set of locks.

While waiting for the *Fantasia* to get secured alongside the lock wall, Ole confirmed the Advisor’s instruction to approach *Fantasia* bow-in, then requested that we approach it parallel owing to the following current. The Advisor reiterated his desire that we approach bow first, and Ole relented. Tying up in the first of the Miraflores Locks was a bit more of a struggle, with the downhill flow of water from Pedro Miguel adding to the following current coursing through the locks. Again, we struggled getting the stern line across, but were finally secured. We enjoyed the live web-cam positioned perfectly to catch us on the west side of the lock, and spent ten minutes calling everyone we could think of to see if they could capture an image of us. The tour guide on *Fantasia* actually included our antics in his commentary, entertaining the cruise ship passengers who chatted with us over the side.

Because filling and emptying all of the locks of the Panama Canal are a function of simple gravity, tying up at the last Miraflores lock was a bit like trying to tie up at the base of an 85-foot waterfall. Again, the Advisor ordered Ole to approach *Fantasia* bow-in, Ole argued for a parallel approach, but the Advisor became insistent. After three tries at getting our one-inch stern line across once the bowline was secured, our stern was swept out by the current such that we were sitting cross-wise in the lock, thoroughly entertaining the watchers on the tour boat and at the

Miraflores Visitors Center. When the Advisor ordered the bow line let go so we could right ourselves and make another approach, Captain Ole made the decision to take a parallel approach to the tour boat *Pacific Queen*, just forward of the *Fantasia*, and we were secured starboard-to in a jiffy.

The last down-lockage seemed to be the fastest. By 1:45 p.m. we were in the Pacific, by 2:15 the Pilot boat arrived to pick up Roy, and by 2:45 we were moored at Balboa Yacht Club.

We were able to modify the US Navy's "Order of the Ditch" certificates, and printed one each for all of our line handlers, then waved goodbye as the Balboa Yacht Club's launch picked up Kim, John, and Thompson from our stern.

We then had a quick anchor dram, took a much needed nap, and in the evening did a full debriefing of our experience. Some things worked very well - some things did not. But like all rich experiences, we learned a great deal. Here are the results of our debrief:

What worked:

1. Having at least one professional line handler to act as trainer/coach for the rest
2. Boating experience of two of our line handlers lent confidence to all of us
3. Steady, rested captain and crew
4. Giving people the space to freak out, get over it, and move on (each of us had our own particular "moment")
5. Having one person to act as dedicated cook/gopher allowed everyone else to focus on their job
6. Having the cats out of the way
7. Planned menu

What didn't work:

1. Lack of communication and coordination with our rafting partners and their Advisors regarding the up-locking procedure created chaos and potential damage. Having three captains and three Advisors in charge collectively of six engines and twelve deckhands, each doing what he thought best, resulted in a sense of chaos, and put everyone's nerves on high alert.
2. When locking down, approaching bow in to our rafting partner allowed the current to make it difficult to throw the one-inch lines from the stern
3. We expected a meeting or confab with both Advisors about expectations, procedures, etc., but instead, got instructions "on the fly."

Lessons Learned:

1. Flexibility. Hurry up and wait is the operative phrase when dealing with the Canal Authority.
2. The captain is the captain; the Advisor is the Advisor; the line handlers are the line handlers. As explained before, the Advisor is different than a Pilot, in that he does NOT have ultimate responsibility for the vessel. The Captain of the boat is fully within his rights to argue, and win, any conversations about maneuvering his own boat safely in the locks.
3. Rafting might have worked if all participants spoke English fluently. With French and U.S. Captains, Panamanian Advisors, U.S., French, and Panamanian crews, the potential for misunderstanding was high.
4. When rafting together for a transit, it needs to be clear that the center boat is the anchor boat, providing all powering, maneuvering, and instruction from its Advisor, with the outside boats providing line handling.
5. Center tie alone was the easiest.
6. Food needs to be plentiful, not fancy. I struggled with a fairly fancy menu, working all day on a spectacular beef bourguignon (which the Panamanians smothered in hot sauce and John picked all the mushrooms out of) and a delicate Mediterranean pasta salad (which the Panamanians smothered in hot sauce and John picked all the veggies out of). If we were to do this again, I'd have a big buffet with bread, cold cuts, fruit, salads and snacks out and available all day and into the evening, with plenty of hot sauce as well as ways for carnivores to avoid having to ingest vegetables against their will.
7. We all agreed it would have been a good idea to crew for somebody else prior to taking our own boat through, to alleviate uncertainty and gain confidence. There are usually boats at either end of the Canal

looking for line handlers, but our timing didn't allow us the luxury of waiting for a lift.

8. As long as nothing broke, nobody got hurt, the boat got safely moored, and we're all still friends, it was a successful transit!

In conclusion, we really want to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you who looked for us online, and most especially to Bob Dein (#2) and Jim Roberts (#331) for their amazing patience and skill, capturing pictures of EMMA JO in the locks, as well as the good manners for destroying any screen captures of us sitting sideways! We've posted all of Bob's pictures on the DeFever Cruisers Forum. In addition, Dale and Linda Bixler detailed their experience on their blog, <http://www.elcapitan1.com>.



LUCHETTI, Luigi M & Silvana (#944) 2009 • DeFever 45 • MAIMITI Rome, Italy

The first trip of MAIMITI

On May 4, 2009 MAIMITI, our brand new DeFever 45 after-cabin had her first salt water contact in the Victoria Harbor basin, Hong Kong. She had been shipped from Shanghai to Hong Kong and we were there waiting for her.

MAIMITI was moored for two weeks at the Hebe Haven YC in Sha Pak, Hong Kong, a quiet and safe place to get her ready before crossing the South China Sea. On May 21 we left the Hebe Haven YC, and three days and seven hours later we landed at Matalvi Island, Philippines.

We had good weather crossing the South China Sea, but from the second day we experienced a 15-18 knot SE wind with a rough sea and one knot current against us. We were late on our schedule due to the late delivery of MAIMITI so we couldn't spend too much time cruising the Philippines. Because of the possibility of a typhoon and because we wanted to arrive in Singapore before the setting of the SW monsoon, we had a fast passage through the Philippine Islands, clearing in at Subic Bay and clearing out at Puerto Princesa, Palawan region.

We cruised from Subic Bay to Kudat, Malaysia through the Sulu Sea along the east coast of Palawan in nine days, with daylight legs of 70-100 miles. We rested at anchor at night in the several sheltered anchorages in the area. On the Sulu Sea and generally on the South East Asia Sea, there are so many unlit nets and fish traps that it's not advisable to cruise this area at night. The Filipino are poor people, and fishing is widely practiced by everybody. They use a balanced pirogue and they seldom paddle on the open sea, while someone has a small sail or an outboard engine. No one asked us for anything except the immigration and customs officials.

We crossed the Balabac Strait and the Philippines to the Malaysia border with a smooth sea, and we landed in Kudat, North Borneo without any problem. We stopped at Kudat for a couple of days for provisioning, and on June 9 we made the next leg to Kota Kinabalu where we spent the night at anchor in a bay south of Gaya Island. The next day we headed to Labuan, a duty free area in front of Brunei. We anchored in the commercial harbor and got a clearance for Brunei. The next day we headed to Brunei, hoping to have a fast and inexpensive refueling, but after we cleared in we discovered that we had to make an appointment and pay at the petrol main office in the town a couple of days in advance. We decided not to refuel, and the next day we left Brunei for Bintulu. There is a striking contrast between the Philippines and Borneo, Malaysia. In the latter they are rich from oil, they have brick houses, paved roads, new marinas, and so on.

The sea on the west side of Borneo is generally smooth and cruising this area was not too straining, but we had a 190 mile night trip across a wide area of oil rigs and we had to be careful to stay away from them. When we arrived in Bintulu the next day, we discovered that it is a commercial harbor with no space or facilities for pleasure boats, so we didn't stop there and we decided to go further south.

The sea was so calm that we spent the next night at anchor at sea, about 10 miles off the Sarawak coast in 12 m (40 ft) of water. The day after, at sunset, we anchored in the mouth of the Rajang river, some 63 miles from Kuching (the southernmost city of Malaysian Borneo), where we arrived on June 15, 2009. Kuching isn't a good place to refuel and there aren't any yacht facilities. There is a marina under construction, but nothing at the present.

Three days later, after checking the weather by GRIB files, we left Pirate Bay (!!!) on the west corner of Borneo and we got under way to the Singapore area. If you don't need to land in Singapore (as we did) you can head to Sebana Cove on the Malaysian Peninsula few miles away, or to Johor Bahru, without clearing in Singapore.

Crossing from Borneo to the Singapore Strait we had very good weather - light wind, smooth sea, and a favorable current getting stronger, so we arrived at the Singapore Strait's entrance at 3 a.m, even decreasing our speed to the minimum to keep the boat's stabilizers working (there was some swell). The night was dark with no moon, and it was cloudy and there were an incredible number of ships at anchor or moving everywhere. It was an unpleasant experience even with the best radar on board, but we did it! On June 22 at 7 a.m., after one night on watch we got a rest anchoring on the Santi River, just in front of the east side of Singapore; two hours later we went up the river to Sebana Cove Marina.

Sebana Cove Marina is a nice, safe, well kept marina, as many in Malaysia are, but it was too far away from any town and any shop. Two days a week there is a minivan going to the closest village for shopping and provisioning. After one week we moved 60 mg away to Johor Bahru, always on Malaysia, but in front of the west side of Singapore, where it is easier, to go to Singapore - less than one hour by bus! From Johor Bahru's new marina (free, no charge, including water and power!!) to Langkawi we had always been cruising in daylight. It was not especially interesting and we spent no more than a couple of nights at each anchorage. The water was murky and dirty (as it was in the South China Sea) and we did not swim or fish because of too many plastic bags and logs. Approaching Langkawi (the westernmost Malaysian island, on the Malacca Strait) we saw the sea turning greenish and we hoped to find clear water around the Thailand's islands.

Actually the islands that stand outside the Phuket area are clear with blue water and some sand beaches as well, but there are so many tourist, diving, and local fishing boats going to and fro from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. that it was impossible to relax at anchor or find a secluded anchorage as we are accustomed to. We were pushed to move away from that island or anchorage.

In the Phuket area, we visited the famous Phang Nga Bay. It is impressive because of the rocky islands rising vertically out of the sea, but here again the water is brownish/greenish and there are a lot of big jellyfishes.

On her first trip, from Hong Kong to Phuket, MAIMITI covered roughly 3500 miles

Now we plan to spend a few months here and when the SW monsoon season ends, we plan to come back to the South Pacific .



HALUSKA, John & Barbara (#1002) 1986 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • EMERY EL Germantown, TN

With our home located just outside of Memphis, Tennessee, the EMERY EL is normally berthed at Aqua Yacht Harbor located at the juncture of the Tennessee River and the Tombigbee Waterway.

Barbara and I departed on Nov 1, 2008 starting our Great Loop Adventure and cruised down the Tombigbee to Mobile, AL. Even though I had been active on the water for most of my life, mainly sailing, we were definite newbies in the cruising and trawler world. Departing Mobile, we crossed the northern Gulf of Alabama and Florida, eastbound to Carrabelle, FL. Waiting for a good weather window, we jumped across the Gulf on Thanksgiving Day, cruising directly to Clearwater and then we enjoyed a great trip down the west coast of FL, wintering in Ft Myers.

In March, 2009 we crossed the Okeechobee Waterway to Stuart. We were very excited to be able to cross the Okeechobee since it is a part of Florida that is so different from those places normally visited on either coast. We proceeded up the east coast with extra time spent in both South and North Carolina visiting friends. Then we went on through Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay.

We pulled into Barnegat Inlet, NJ hoping to spend a couple of days visiting relatives, not anticipating a three month stay for the summer. I had injured my knee while watering batteries and ended up with surgery and rehab. I must admit, Long Beach Island, NJ is not too bad a place to spend the summer. It was just a bit hard to explain to the therapist that I lived on a multi-level boat.

In September we continued on our planned route, now realizing that we would not be able to make the Loop

in one year. We went through New York City, then up the Hudson, then west on the Erie Canal. Believe me, in October the Erie Canal is not exactly crowded. It definitely looked like we were going the wrong way as all the Canadian boats passed us going south. We made it to Brewerton, NY, and were fortunate enough to be able to secure inside heated storage for the EMERY EL. We were on board almost twelve months to the day when we returned to Memphis for the winter. The most important thing was that our marriage survived the twelve months on the boat.

When I bought the DeFever, the pilothouse was high on my list of “wants”. I thought it would be dry when it rained, warm when it was cold, and would allow me to safely add additional instrumentation and toys. But on this long trip I learned the REAL value of a pilothouse. It is one more room to allow you to separate from your spouse when needed. Now we have “his” TV in the pilothouse and “her” TV in the salon and all are happy. All kidding aside, it has been a wonderful trip except for the first seven days, and that is another story for another time.

Following a scheduled knee replacement in early February, 2010, we plan to return to the boat at end of May and will continue up through Canada and the Great Lakes and back down the inner rivers to complete America’s Great Loop.

Keep your eye on us! www.emeryel.com



ROBERTS, Ron & Cheryl (#180) 1987 • DeFever 49 CPMY • LAZY DAYS Long Beach, CA

Lazy Days in Baja

Ron and I departed Long Beach, CA on October 25, 2009 - heading for warmer weather! After clearing into Mexico in Ensenada, we started a leisurely trek down Baja and across to mainland Mexico. We decided to do this trip a little differently than in years past, so we’ve taken much more time to arrive at our farthest destination. We’ve thoroughly enjoyed spending more time exploring the many coves on Baja.

Our trip down Baja was the easiest trip we’ve ever made southbound. We took three weeks to get to San Jose del Cabo, and had a wonderful time taking it slow. We did mostly day trips, and stayed several days in lots of our favorite anchorages. Our only overnight passage on Baja was calm, and although we didn’t have even a sliver of moon, the night was bright with a gazillion stars!

While in Magdalena Bay (we hadn’t been here in 35 years!), we spent some time in San Carlos - a small village of about 300 people. While in Mag Bay we explored the bay and some very cool beaches, which reportedly had tons of great shells.

There are sand dunes surrounding the estuary where San Carlos is located. You can walk over the sand dunes and you end up on the beach surrounding Bahia Santa Maria (next bay north). Way too cool... We didn’t realize how shallow the entire bay was, and unfortunately, we forgot to brush up on “Shelling 101” before we left... the part where it specifically states in the 1st paragraph, 1st page, to check the tide table before anchoring a 700lb skiff in shallow water, then walking 1/4 mile over the sand dune with skiff out of sight. We were gone less than an hour, to return to find our skiff high and dry. Ron and I were able to wedge it about 10 feet, but the tide was still going out. We had seen some people on the other side of the sand dunes, on a far beach, so I sent Ron off in search of able-bodied men to help. Well, about an hour later, Ron returned with five able-bodied ladies, and one guy. By this time the skiff was almost 1/4 mile from water close enough to float in. Ron had brought a big round stick back with him and we ended up using it to roll the skiff for the length of the skiff, and then put it in front again when it got to the end. Lots of pushing/pulling (a few knock downs!), but we finally got the skiff floating - yea! It took about an hour with all eight of us working! The kids were college students doing marine field work and were just out for the afternoon. Ron gave them \$100 for helping, so I’m sure they were able to buy a few beers with it. I did have a little water and some crackers with us (but no rum), so if we had to wait for high tide we would have survived. Also, we did not have the camera with us... Bummer... At least the beach and shelling was worth the trouble - not much in the way of variety, but the entire beach was covered with sand dollars - hundreds of them.

We spent several days in the marina in San Jose del Cabo, which we prefer over the super touristy Cabo San Lucas. SJdC is about 18 miles north of Cabo and a lovely little Mexican town (not a “Carlos & Charlie’s” in sight).

The weather continued to cooperate and we were able to cross the Sea of Cortez in mostly flat, calm seas – “Cheryl seas”, we call them. We took about 33 hours to cross from SJdC to Isla Isabella, another of our favorite spots. The anchorage at Isabella is somewhat exposed, but this visit we spent two easy nights at anchor while we explored the island. Isla Isabella is home to thousands of frigate birds and blue and brown footed boobies. It is always a delight to hike to the top of the hill and walk around nests with little baby birds peeking at you! Within a few weeks, the baby boobies are almost as big as their parents, but they are all white down and fuzzy and so cute.

We left Isla Isabella heading to Chacala. Chacala is another small anchorage with an authentic Mexican village. When we were about six miles out of the anchorage we had three humpback whales spy-hopping and breaching about a mile away from the boat. They came up at least 30 times... once we started counting! The splashes were bigger than our boat!! Amazing...

Ron’s personal agenda on this trip is to improve his surfing skills, and he worked towards this goal for months before we left the U.S. (exercising, yoga, balance). So, our next stop on our way to Puerto Vallarta was at Punta de Mita, a well known surf spot. (It is at the entrance to Banderas Bay, where Puerto Vallarta is located.) Ron had been able to surf at a few spots on Baja, but our stop at Punta de Mita was the highlight of the trip so far. We spent five days anchored here, and the surf was up every day. I lazed around the boat and read while he surfed three-four hours a day. In the past we’ve spent lots of time in this anchorage, and this is the first time we’ve seen this much surf here. There was so much surf, we actually rented a panga to take us to shore for dinner, instead of beaching our skiff - and that’s in a protected section of beach!

Lucky (for me) we had a reservation at Paradise Marina, Puerto Vallarta for Dec 1 or we would probably have stayed at Punta de Mita until the surf died, or I ran out of books. On our way into the marina we came across lots of whales just cruising around the bay - one about every 15 minutes during our two hour trip. I don’t care how often you see whales, every time you see them it’s always like you’re seeing them for the first time. We’re so lucky to be this close to marine wild life.

We spent the month of December in Paradise Marina & Resort catching up on chores, visiting friends, and exploring new beaches. (Look it up on the internet and you can see we were roughing it big time.) One of Ron’s fun projects was to pull off the prop and have it straightened. We had tangled with a trap/buoy back on Baja, and while the prop cutters did cut the line, that didn’t happen until after the HARD buoy had bounced around the prop. It was a small bend and probably would have been fine left unattended, but Ron decided better safe than sorry. Now mind you, he got in the water to pull the prop at the marina, which sits on a river and has signs posted warning of Cocodrilos (crocodiles)! I stood guard while he worked (we never saw a croc the entire month).

Ron also decided to pull the transmission to check the dampener and re-align the engine. So see, it’s not all cocktails and leisure here in Paradise!

We rented a car for the month, so we were able to get out and see lots of new places. Although we enjoyed our time in Paradise, it was too soon into our trip to appreciate being at the dock, and we were definitely ready to leave as soon as the holidays were over.

Well that catches you up to date on our lives as of January 1, 2010. We left the marina and returned to Punta de Mita where we stayed for two days before continuing south. Ron is taking care of a few chores so he can get out surfing. Not as much surf as before, but reason enough to get wet. Mind you the water is about 80 degrees.

I know I tend to go on a bit about our whale/dolphin encounters and hope it’s not boring... BUT, on the way into the anchorage this morning we had a mother whale and her calf (seemed connected at the hip) come up about 50’ in front of the boat. What a way to start off the New Year!

Well, it’s getting hot, so I need to go out and swim to cool down. (Ron just left to go surf.) The weather has been very interesting this December... we had seven days of rain (three in a row) for a total of about nine inches... and the locals say it hasn’t rained in December in 70 years. Now, I personally find that hard to believe, since we had so much rain. It seemed like every time I was ready to varnish, we woke up to rain. We even had to put on a light sweater in the mornings, but then again, we put a blanket on the bed when it gets down to 72 - ha. On an average, days are around 85 degrees with 75% humidity.

The next installment will include our travels as far south as Zihuatanejo.



Tsunami

The world is so small. The man in the article below named Dan, who was swept to his death, is undoubtedly Dan Olszewski (Oh-shef-ski). Nancy and I know Dan and his wife Joan Korodin Olszewski from our days at the University of Florida. Dan was from St. Petersburg, my home town, and Joan went to Miami High School with my wife Nancy (Nancy Sue Wilson). We heard of his death a couple of days ago thru mutual friends in Miami, but there were no details. I wondered what really happened and put myself there mentally. This article certainly describes the scene in detail. Now I understand what happened so suddenly.

We last saw Joan and Dan more than 14 years ago when we anchored LAST LAUGH off their home in Merritt Island, FL and spent some time talking about their planned adventure, sailing the Caribbean. Dan, an engineer, was still working but spent all his free time preparing their newly acquired sailboat, *Mainly*, for their departure. We chuckled in the air-conditioned salon of our comparatively more comfortable power cruiser LAST LAUGH, at his “less-is-better” attitude. That meant no air conditioning, no generator, no freezer, one engine, and sails. We wondered how long Joan would last under such spartan conditions. Clearly, they both adapted well and sailed far beyond the Caribbean.

My personal thought is that together, Joan and Dan sailed their dream and experienced adventures that only a few of us can fully appreciate and understand. I have often said that having already lived a bountiful life and cruised on our DeFever 52 for 15 years, I am ready to meet my maker when my time comes. My prayer is that Dan was of similar mind and that Joan will take comfort in this thought.

Editor’s Note: What follows is an email sent to Hank on October 6, 2009, entitled “A report from a cruiser who went through a Tsunami”. Another note from “the other editor:” These photos were grabbed from a blog on the Internet, so are extremely low resolution, hence the small size.

Doing the Tsunami Tango in American Samoa

Whew! Now THAT was a full day! As most of you will know by now I am in Pago Pago Harbor in American Samoa and yesterday (September 29, 2009) we took a direct hit from the tsunami effect caused by the undersea volcanic eruption that took place about 130 nm south of here. Reports seem to estimate it at 8.0-8.3 on the Richter scale so that counts as quite significant I think! (Lat/Lon is: 14 16.514S 170 41.554W)

I’m writing this a day later now that I have a bit more time as things have calmed down a bit, both in terms of water action and more recently all the work in dealing with the aftermath. Many of you have been able to follow this via various means thanks to the efforts of my main man ashore and overall phenomenal resource; John Alonso in Florida. Shortly after escaping from the docks where *Learnativity* was tied up, I was able to get a few satellite phone connections and both talk to John as well as text him while I did my best to deal with the constant draining and then refilling of the harbor, and dodge the endless onslaught of other ships, mostly empty, derelict hulls, containers, docks, oil drums, and every other sort of debris you can imagine. John was then able to relay these to all of you via Twitter and email and I can’t thank him enough for helping to get the word out and let everyone know what was going on here. Now that I’ve got a bit more time let me start at the beginning and take you through the day of September 29th, 2009 on the good ship *Learnativity*.



I am up as usual about 06:30, getting ready to go for my morning shower up on the deck when I became aware of a low frequency thrumming that I could both hear and feel. This continued and my first thought was that there was a large freighter or other ship nearby and I was simply feeling the effects of its large propellers churning the water. Stepping up into the cockpit to look around there was nothing in sight and it was otherwise the start of another day in paradise with the verdant hills surrounding Pago Pago Harbor rising up steeply all around me and piercing the few clouds in an otherwise brilliant blue sky. The calm harbor waters stretched out as *Learnativity* tugged gently on her dock lines securing us to the large concrete wharf where we have been docked in about 15’ of water since arriving on Friday afternoon,



joining about six other sailboats and cruisers from Australia, the USA, and Canada.

But what IS that vibration?? It is about 06:50 as I step off the boat onto the concrete dock to see if it was perhaps just *Learnativity* or the water? No, it continued and was intensifying, if anything. Having experienced several other quakes including Mount St. Helens and the big quake in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the 90's, I began to suspect this as the source however it was too gentle and going on too long for my understanding of what an earthquake feels like. And I can HEAR it as much as feel it. Over a minute has gone by now and as I

look ashore in search of other points of reference - sure enough I can see that the lamp posts and telephone poles are waving back and forth like they were blades of grass in a gentle breeze. Hmmm, I've only seen poles move like that once before and that was as I looked outside my office window in Sausalito during the 1989 Loma Preita earthquake. OK, it may be different but I've solved the riddle and we got ourselves an earthquake.



A few of my fellow cruisers (people who live aboard their boats while cruising the world) have been awakened and are crawling sleepily out of their beds and joining me on the concrete wharf. The mood is typically easy and friendly as we say quietly say good morning, compare notes, and discuss just what's going on. The thrumming continues through most of this and I'd estimate at least three minutes in total. We agree it must have been an earthquake and Gary, an Australian from Fremantle on his 52' Irwin *Biscayne Bay* with wife Lisa, son Jake, and Canadian crewmember Chris, joins us and tells that he has just checked it out online and found reports filed under "latest earthquake" of an underwater eruption about 20 minutes ago, 130 nm south of us.

We continued to casually chat and discuss how unique the characteristics were. None of us had ever experienced an undersea eruption or other such disturbances on our boats and we just left it at that as we dispersed back to our boats for breakfast; one person casually joked that we should just watch for any big wave we see. No such wave ever materialized, it was much worse.

Just as I was about to step back onto my boat, it started to drop. Huh? Before I could even comprehend what was happening it then started to rapidly lean sideways as the dock lines strained and screeched, tightening more and more as they took on the full weight of my very heavy steel home. My instincts screamed GET ON THE BOAT! I jumped aboard and grabbed onto the rigging as she continues to lean more and more and more. THUD! Holy #^%& we are hard over on our side and ... WHAT the? The bottom of the bay is staring back at me as I dangle by one hand from the rigging.

My mind is cycling through every possible explanation, trying to come to terms with all the inputs among the cacophony of sights and sounds as boats smash around me, deck lines snap, rigging strains. These sounds are overlaid with an ominous and enormous rushing and sucking sound as the water all around my boat suddenly drained away!

A new noise, like fingernails across a blackboard, divert my attention to the near vertical deck and I see poor Ruby (my 2 year old cockapoo and sailing companion) trying in vain to dig her claws into the steel deck, her legs thrashing like a cartoon animation character as she gathers speed going the other way and her tail end is headed for all the fish I now see and hear flopping around on the bottom of the bay as they search of their missing watery home.

Ruby's a gone-er if she leaves the boat so I let go of the rigging, do my best imitation of a full 180 mid-air flip and lunge after her with one outstretched hand, desperately reaching out with the other in the hopes of grabbing some other hand hold. Just as Ruby is launched off the deck I get a right handful of the scruff of her neck and harness as my left hand wraps itself around the lifeline cable. No time to think, just act. Ruby in hand I scramble up to the opposite (port) high side of the deck. All hell is breaking loose around me both on my boat and all the others and I'm not going to be able to do much with one hand. I look up above me and spot Jake, Gary's son (age 14) standing on the edge of the wharf looking down at me and I yell "Jake! Catch!" and throw Ruby up to his thankfully open arms. He makes a great catch, Ruby is in good hands and I've got both of mine back.

Interesting how we all react differently. Back aboard *Biscayne Bay*, Gary and family have been below making

breakfast when they notice the concrete dock rushing up past their porthole windows as if they were in an elevator shaft. Their boat is in much deeper water around the corner from where *Learnativity* is docked, so they are going straight down, lines straining, fiberglass crunching and that ever present surreal sucking sound all around. Gary's reaction understandably is to GET OUT, and so they all dash up into the cockpit and scramble up the vertical wall of concrete and rubber tires as Gary pushes and shoves each of them up onto the top of the concrete wharf.

The sucking sound stops.

There is a moment of seeming silence that you'd think would be comforting but you'd be wrong. It's ominous. And then a new set of sounds begin: the volume of a ferocious velocity. Faster than it has left, all that water is now coming back! All the problems reverse. *Learnativity* rights itself and is now rocketing skyward. I grab my always-on-my-belt knife and dash down the port side from bow to stern slashing all the dock lines. Scramble back into the cockpit, start the engine, simultaneously shove both control levers ahead, putting the transmission into forward gear and the throttle lever on full. All six cylinders pick up speed as the revs cling, the turbine whines, the prop bites hard into the swirling water below and *Learnativity* starts to pull away from the... wharf. What wharf? It's GONE!

The water rushing back into the bay didn't stop at its previous level, it continues to go up and up and up the sides of the wharf. It floods over the top and keeps going. The speed and force of the current created by millions of gallons of water flooding into the harbor is unbelievable, and is doing its best to push *Learnativity* backwards into the dock. I put my faith into the power of diesel fuel and take a minute to look back and see if I'm going forward or backwards.

It is hard to describe what I see. Closest to me, Gary, Lisa, Jake (clutching Ruby), and Chris are running as fast and best they can through the rushing water for a stone walled garden area in the middle of the concrete wharf that happens to have a small but tall light post embedded into it. I watch helplessly as they climb up onto the base of the light pole, wrap their arms around each other and hang on as the water rushes past them, continuing to rise; up, up, up.

I glance along where I know the edge of the dock was and watch as one other boat with a great young crew of five from California have jumped aboard even quicker than I, and are motoring quickly away. No wait, on the other matching lamp post down the dock I spot one of their female crewmembers who got caught ashore now clinging to this lamp pole. Other sailboats, including *Biscayne Bay* have now ripped free of their tethers and I watch as they turn with the continuously rising current and crash into each other, taking the other boats in their path like falling dominos. On the left is the "after" picture of this infamous light pole with (from left to right) Chris, Jake, Lisa, Ruby, and Gary posing with much different expressions on their faces. Imagine them and the water level half way up this pole!



As my eyes continue to travel further down the dock, I watch in horror as one cruiser is on the dock trying to untie his lines and is swept off his feet by the torrent of water. His wife is aboard and manages to control the boat as it comes free but I can't see any sign of her husband in all the flotsam and jetsam churning in the water.

Worse than just the water though, almost everything imaginable has been picked up by this flood of water, torn lose from anything silly enough to try to hold it down, and is now looking to smash into anything and everything in its erratic path. I glance back to the lamp post where the *Biscayne Bay* crew are now climbing higher and higher up the lamp post; Gary has Ruby wrapped around his neck so he can use both his arms to hold on to his family and try to keep from being ripped off the post by the force of the water or hit by one of the boats or containers rushing toward and past them. My brain is cycling through the question of "What can I do to help them?" but it is quite literally out of my hands and I have to turn away and bring my attention back aboard and forward. Fortunately diesel power overcomes even these humbling forces of nature and *Learnativity* and I escape to the safety of the middle of the bay. Or is it?

No time to think, just act. With the chaos of other ships, some manned, most not, surrounding me and with the water swirling in every direction it was impossible to tell if I was moving forward or back. I pushed *Learnativity* as hard as I could with full throttle to overcome the unbelievable opposing force of millions of gallons of water now rushing back in to refill Pago Pago Harbor and doing its best to suck *Learnativity* backwards into the concrete dock we were fleeing. Looking back to try to gauge direction and progress I couldn't believe what I could not see. There was no dock to be seen - just boats and water everywhere. Was I that disoriented? Had we drifted that far? Searching for the dock, I finally got my bearings from the buildings on shore and confirmed that I was just where I thought I was, about 100 feet away from the dock that wasn't there. What I can see is a pencil thin vertical line that is the light post which now has Gary, Lisa, Jake, and Chris literally hanging on for dear life and Ruby wrapped around Gary's neck. I glance further west and see Emily, the stranded young lady from the California yacht *Banyan* clinging to the

other light post. Then I watch as Kirk, Catherine, and Stewart on their sailboat *Galivanter* motor across the TOP of the dock and get out behind me!

When I think about tsunamis I envision this giant wall of water, a monster wave. There was no wave here. The bay simply emptied like someone had pulled the stopper out of a really big bathtub and then equally as fast put it back in and filled it all up from a giant valve below.

My brain is struggling to process these visual inputs and try to make sense of it all as I realize the whole dock is under water! That safe, solid, secure concrete wharf which used to sit about eight feet above the water is now about five feet under water and rising. Boats which were previously tied up to the inside edge of the dock between the shore and the dock have broken free and are careening about in the swirling current, posing great threats to



Gary et al on the pole. I look west down to the end of the bay and see that it is filling up with a collection of every floating vessel known to man: pleasure boats both motor and sail of every size, 100' steel purse seiner fishing boats, trawlers, cargo ships, and rowboats. Most seem to be unmanned and are randomly dancing together, running into each other and all headed west, *Biscayne Bay* among them.

Learnativity and I escape the clutches of the incoming current and suddenly speed forward. Hmmm, where did all that ferocious current go? The water becomes eerily calm and smooth. Again, you'd think this would be a good thing and again you'd be wrong. The cycle is now reversing. All that water piled up at the end of the bay, having run up onshore and floated everything there from full buildings to cars, now wants to go back out. This is the first sign of any wave I saw through

the whole ordeal as the water rushes back from its momentary travels ashore and has now formed a low wide wave that is headed east back towards me. I've now made it out into the middle of the harbor where the water is deepest and I have the most room to run and avoid all the oncoming ships. Looking, I turn *Learnativity* to face this new rush of water, throttle at the ready to ride out the next surge of current.

Glancing ashore through all this I watch the concrete dock magically reappear as if it is rising up out of the water in some perverse magic trick. Then my brain realizes that the dock isn't moving up, the water is moving down as gazillions of water molecules all rush to join their buddies down at the west end of the bay. I watch in humbled awe as the water again drains away leaving the dock fully out of the water, pilings and all.

On the left is one of the few photos I was able to snap in the midst of all this. You can see the concrete dock with the tires on the side and the water at the level it would normally be. I was only able to take time for a photo because it is in that lull between surges in and out so the water level is between its high and low. Oh, and you might also notice the sailboat that has been deposited up on top of the wharf! Minutes earlier it had been tied up alongside the dock. Think about it and you will have a better sense of the height of the water as it flooded such that the boat could float up and over the top of the dock and then be dropped on top as the water receded.

I would estimate the sea level dropped over 15' in less than 30 seconds. Then someone hit the rewind button on the video I'm watching, and as fast as it dropped the water level starts moving up, and my friends on the light poles rush back to it and brace for another dunking - as it turned out, the worst one yet.



Due, I suspect, to the additional forces gained by the water collecting its energy up on the western shore, the speed of the water now rushing out of the bay is the highest yet. To make matters worse this was no longer "just" water; it was a giant tossed salad of debris from ships to cars to docks to scrap and crap. All headed back for us with increasing velocity. And again I am rendered helpless to watch with the disgust of not being able to do anything and the embarrassment of being so relatively safe and dry aboard strong steel *Learnativity*. Lisa, Gary, Jake, and Chris grip each other and that slender pole, their bodies now trailing off almost horizontal as the slimy soup rises and rushes past them making every effort to rip their hands from the pole and sweep them away like insignificant insects. They would later recount that this

second surge out was the worst of them all and they were within seconds of losing their grip. The torrent of water began to slack and they returned to vertical as the cycle repeats; current subsides, water goes slack and starts to drop again. The photo on the right is of this infamous life saving light pole in the middle of the dock and was taken just after I've come back in and tied *Learnativity* up just across from it. Four people and a dog are alive today because

this pole was there, and a similar one right beside me where the Emily from another boat was able to hang on and survive.

As the water dropped away and drained off the dock, I can see Lisa and Jake, with Ruby in tow, make a mad dash across the now dry concrete, hit the shore running and keep on going, climbing up the hillside to watch safely from higher ground. I spot Gary and Chris down on the dock and I speed over close enough that we can yell back and forth. I'm desperate to help them get onto *Biscayne Bay* and be able to keep it out of any further harm. I try to make a pass alongside the wharf so they can jump aboard *Learnativity*, but now there isn't enough water beside the dock to float my boat! I head back out to the middle of the bay and watch and wait for another cycle and then try another pass at the dock to pick them up, but the currents are simply changing too rapidly, there is too much debris to avoid, and it's too dangerous for them to jump. We all watch over the next 15 minutes as *Biscayne Bay* pilots itself westward down the bay, being hit and hitting other boats along the way. With one of the next big surges she is lifted up onto the mud banks and leans over onto her side to rest high and dry, covered in oil and fuels and badly beaten up.

Another cruiser, Mike from Eureka, California was having better luck and an amazing experience as his 27' sailboat motored down the main street at the far west end of the harbor, circled around the intersection and went back out into the harbor! As the surge he was riding went out it dropped him and his boat onto the ground and then just as nicely picked him right back up again on the next cycle, and he was able to get it back into the harbor. He quickly headed out to the far eastern end of the harbor for some clear water and space to inspect below, but all signs show that he only suffered some serious gouging of the keel and hull. Amazing!

While all this is going on, Joan on *Mainly*, the boat out of South Merritt Island in Florida is letting us know on the VHF that she has still not seen her husband Dan, the one I saw being swept off the docks in the first surge. One of the big disappointments of this whole experience is the complete lack of response or rescue resources from ashore. I assumed, very incorrectly, with this being U.S. soil there would be plenty such resources; again I was wrong. I learned later that the U.S. Coast Guard is land-based only and it was over three hours later that they were able to respond with any presence on the water, nor was there any help from the port authority. There was no Navy presence, and we were left to our own devices to help each other and coordinate as best we could. There were now about six or more other sailboats motoring around in circles with me in the middle of the bay, as we turned back and forth to point into the next surge and tried to dodge the continuing barrage of unmanned ships, hulls, and garbage. Joan was doing a great job of single handing her boat, and I and others started widening our circles to come closer to shore and cover more area in search of Dan or others who were in the water. This cycle of the tsunami "tide" coming in and out continued for several hours and was like a pendulum, continuously decreasing in height and velocity.

When I was first got out in the middle of the bay, my instinct for some reason was to get the word out to both friends and family that I was safe and to let the rest of the world know what was going on. I imagined that there would be lots of news reports about the eruption but very little information on just what was happening locally, and I also desperately wanted to know if more was coming and what to expect. Fortunately I carry a satellite phone and while expensive, it certainly more than paid for itself in this situation. I couldn't take my eyes and hands off the tasks of piloting *Learnativity* and searching for people, but I was able to hit my sat phone speed dial and call John in Florida. Thankfully the time worked out - it was mid day in Florida and John picked up! I gave him a quick synopsis of the situation and asked him to send out

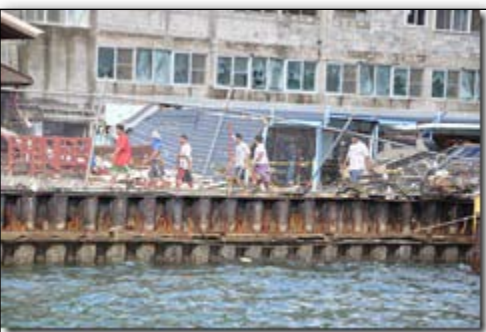
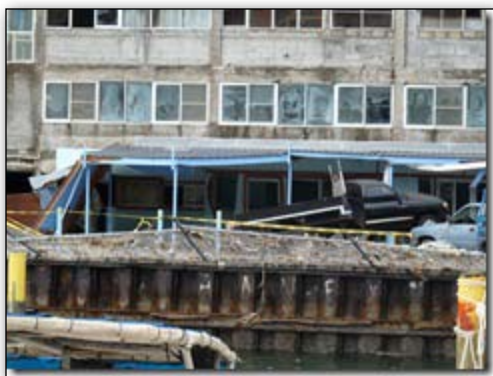


a note to the email list of “*Learnativity* Followers” (people I send my daily updates to while sailing), post a note to my blog, and log on as me on Twitter to relay the text messages I would try to send out as regularly as I could. John has been my lifeline in so many ways, so many times, and once again came through with flying colors as he acted as my ship to satellite to shore relay station. With his help and the wonders of modern communication technology I was able to let my friends and family know I was alive and get to the world at large with some first-hand news about the situation here. It seemed to work amazingly fast and I received inquiries from several individuals within the first 20 minutes, wanting to know about their friends and family and very soon thereafter started receiving calls and text messages from news centers around the world. The Twitter feed was particularly interesting and seemed to be the one which spread virally the fastest. It also allowed John and me to get a series of time-stamped updates out for people to then review and see the progression of events here. (See <http://twitter.com/#search?q=wwwwayne> for the feed of these Tweets.)

Meanwhile, back in the all too real and present situation I was still circling the center of the bay with others, trying to see if I could find a Wi-Fi signal to get on the internet to get updates, avoiding the ever present danger of other ships and debris, and be on the lookout for Dan and the growing list of other people who were now missing. I wasn't able to get on the net but was able to get updates from John and was well informed about the second eruption which fortunately didn't produce any further surge or tsunami that we detected here in Pago Pago. Whew! Maybe this part is over?

I'm not quite sure of the timing, but at about 11:00 a.m., four hours after the mayhem started on this fateful Tuesday, I decided that the surges were down enough and not coming back so I headed for the dock and tied *Learnativity* to the outside and jumped ashore to help others who were following my lead in. I was anxious to find Gary and Chris who I'd not seen in the past hour while I was circling out in the bay, and also to see what assistance I could provide to others who were looking for lost crewmembers as well as the whole situation ashore.

On American Samoa, as with most other islands, the only real road is the one which circles the coastal circumference so it is all very close to sea level. Normal sea level that is. When the tsunami hit, the water rose up to a level about five feet above the roadway, and several hundred feet inland. It cleaned out everything in its path, picking up vehicles and dropping them inside buildings and culverts. If the buildings were concrete and well built, the water neatly emptied all their contents; if not it simply washed away the entire building. Cars were strewn everywhere as if some giant hand picked up the island and gave it a good shake. As you walked up to the road there were manta rays, eels and tuna still flopping about on the dry pavement desperately searching for their watery homes. Several hardware stores along the road had been emptied and tools were strewn everywhere. Much of the edge of the water was lined with chain link fencing which had acted like a sieve and was now a colorful mosaic chockablock full of a plastic, paper, wood and weeds.



By the time I got up to the road though, people were already pitching in to help others in need and soon people started to clean up the mess that was everywhere. Traffic was at a standstill of course, with vehicles all over the road, wrapped around trees, sticking out of doorways and windows, and parked in culverts. Many had simply been washed into the bay. There were injured people everywhere and soon the sirens began and continued on through the night and the next few days as more were found amongst the wreckage and on the sides. Miraculously to me no fires had broken out, which was a good thing as there was fuel and oil everywhere. The gas station immediately behind the dock had all four of its pumps knocked clean off their foundations as cars had floated by and the water rose up over them. Now they spewed raw gasoline and diesel out of their amputated pipes. Out in the bay the smell of diesel, gas, and oil was overwhelming as most of the large fishing and commercial ships that were swept away had ruptured their tanks and the water was slick with petroleum.

I wanted so much to head for the west end of the bay to find Gary and *Biscayne Bay*, as well as see if Ruby had survived. But I dare not leave *Learnativity* alone and there was so much to do on the docks trying to help those whose boats were still there and those who were missing crew members. Gary actually showed up aboard Joan's boat *Mainly* to help her dock it and there was still no sign or word of Dan. And so the afternoon progressed as we all pitched in and drifted from one job to

the next; cleaning, consoling, assessing, and trying to comprehend what had just happened. With son Jake on board *Biscayne Bay* to keep watch as looting had already begun on ships and ashore, Chris and Gary went back and forth between *Learnativity* and *Biscayne Bay* in the dinghy, moving all their belongings and food aboard *Learnativity*, as I invited them to live with me for the next while.

As we shuttled all their belongings from one boat to the other we decided to try to get *Biscayne Bay* back into the water, and if she was not taking on water to try to bring her back to the dock. Gary and Chris went back to the boat and with the help of some others and the next big surge, miraculously we got her upright and off the mud bank and bottom into deeper water. She was taking on some water, but it was minimal and the bilge pumps would be able to keep up with it. The engine would start but something was wrapped around the prop or shaft or both and they were locked up solid. There was limited steering but with a 25HP outboard on his dinghy, Gary was able to push and shove her all the way up the bay and around the end of the concrete dock.

With Chris at the wheel and Gary using the dinghy as a mini tug boat, Jake threw me the bow line as she raced toward the dock and I was able to wrap the line around one of the large steel bollards. With a final crunch against the dock she was back home. It was hard to believe that only eight hours earlier this crunched and battered dear boat had been quietly tied up next to *Learnativity* in pristine condition.

The search continued for our missing comrade cruiser Dan, and with no sign of him by mid afternoon Joan went to the hospital. She sadly arrived just as they were bringing Dan's body to the morgue. His body had washed up at the west end of the bay. It's so difficult to comprehend all this. How is it possible that at 7 a.m. you are sipping your first morning coffee together as a happy retired couple in the cockpit of your sailboat docked in paradise on the cruise you've dreamed of and worked for your whole life, and then minutes later be washed off the dock never to be seen again? We all did our best to be with Joan as she worked her way through such questions and did what we could to be supportive and consoling. Her boat would not start now for some reason and we were all anxious to ensure that our boats were ready to go at a moment's notice should another tsunami strike, and so several of us went aboard to set it right. There was no shortage of skilled mechanics and electricians and we all provided tools and labor. Jack stayed aboard to find that it was a bad solenoid, and soon had it replaced so at least Mainly was back in working order. Hearts and minds would require different tools, techniques and time before they would be so mended.

Learnativity, Ruby and I came through it all pretty much unscathed. Just the stainless tubing bow pulpit had been ripped apart and so I set about removing it and seeing what could be done to repair it. It was beyond repair and so I salvaged the running lights and then set about using some low stretch line I had to create a makeshift set of lifelines to enclose the bow.

Fortunately none of this is structural damage will prevent me from continuing to sail to New Zealand where there will be lots of facilities to build a new one. And I was planning on building a whole new dual anchor setup and sprit on the bow which would require a new pulpit anyway. I just didn't plan on removing the old one quite so soon. Mother Nature apparently had a different schedule and I didn't get the memo.

Gary and family were back onboard *Biscayne Bay* assessing the damage for the rest of the afternoon and it didn't look good. The more you looked, the more structural damage and failed systems you found. It was floating and they decided they could sleep aboard that night but I had them over for dinner and cooked up a big feed of salad (expertly assembled by Chris) and my tummy-filling spicy spaghetti and meatballs. None of us had eaten all day and now with a chance to relax just a bit, the hunger and exhaustion set in. We spent most of the





evening quietly reflecting upon the day, dissecting it, and discussing this extraordinary and harrowing experience. I think it was very therapeutic for each of us as our minds started to deal with the reality of what all had taken place on this eventful day and what we would need to do in the aftermath of the days ahead. Sleep was both restful and fitful for most of us that night.

Writing this now, two days later, we have continued in this pattern of cleanup, helping each other, repair and restoration of ships, shore, and souls. It will be a long process for all of these. The local people have continued to astound me with their genuine kindness and generosity. In spite of great loss of life all over the island we have had a steady stream of people bringing us cases of bottled drinking water,

boxed lunches, and cooked dinners.

In the span of two days I've witnessed the full spectrum of both human and Mother nature and I've learned so many life lessons. It is nowhere near a complete list, but to finish up this posting I'll share a few of the lessons I've learned through this experience.

Some Lessons I Learned from the Tsunami in Pago Pago:

- It may sound trite but it is SO true that you never know when the last time will be for most things. Living in the moment, maximizing every opportunity, are attitude and behavior to live by rather than cute phrases and platitudes.
- When it is all said and done, people, friendship and relationships are all that really matter.
- The best place to be when trouble or disaster strikes is ON your boat and out in open water. Get there and stay there at almost any cost.
- I've renewed my conviction and love for steel boats.
- In times of great stress and disaster, human nature is on full spectrum display and is the same in all places and cultures.
- Put your faith and optimism in people. There is much more good in the world than evil, many more good people than bad.
- A big powerful working engine in a sailboat is a safety device. Make sure it is always at the ready.
- Mother Nature is a majestic and powerful force on a scale that is truly humbling. It is likely a good thing to be reminded from time to time just how small and puny we are.
- Technology, especially communication technology is vastly under-rated and under-appreciated for the profound difference it can make.
- Satellite phones are essential safety devices for world cruisers.
- If are ever in the vicinity of a large underwater seismic eruption either get on a boat and head for open water or head inland as high and as quickly as you can.

I hope that by sharing some of these experiences I've been able in some small way to help others learn lessons of their own. I'm off to bed now for a few hours to let my head sort through more of this experience and get some rest before another busy day of dealing with the aftermath of this extraordinary life and learning experience.

Wayne & Ruby the Wonderdog aboard the good ship Learnativity



KOCH, Steven & Diane (#74) 1989 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • AURORA Palm City, FL

Road Trip

The groundwork for our fall boat, plane, and car trip started when we purchased a new Hyundai Sante Fe at the end of August. Diane and I decided to take advantage of the Cash for Clunkers program and we traded in our trusty 1990 Ford van ("Mr. T-Mobile" to the people that knew him). It saddened me to see it sitting in the lot next to the dealership with "Clunker" sprayed in paint after it had served us well for over 20 years.

Now that we had a new vehicle we decided to drive up the east coast and attend my cousin's oldest son's wedding.

While we were at it, we thought about driving to Minnesota to visit with Diane's cousins in that part of the country. After checking the mileage and not wanting to spend more time driving than visiting, we decided to fly to Minneapolis. I also figured that as long as we were going to be driving for part of the trip (and I would have my tools along), why not see if any vessels along the way needed to have any projects or work done. After putting out a notice in the DeFever Forum we were contacted by a number of members who expressed interest. We were also contacted by Marty Greenberg (#1087) who had just purchased the former MARILYN K (now named QUEEN HELENE), and he wanted us to move the vessel from Charleston to Ft. Lauderdale. Since we had already purchased our plane tickets out of Newark NJ, all of a sudden we were a bit pressed for time. We planned to depart Stuart, FL around September 10 to drive to Charleston and start the delivery.



At the same time I was busy making arrangements with the cruisers who wanted projects done and I started ordering the parts to take with us. As it turned out, QUEEN HELENE was delayed in the yard for 10 days, further delaying our departure. Since I had some extra time I was able to drive over to Cape Coral, meet John Strathman (#370), the new owner of DOWN THE ROAD (a 49' DeFever Pilothouse), and install a new Magnum inverter and batteries with him.

The yard manager at Ross Marine promised that QUEEN HELENE would be in the water and ready to depart on September 28, so we decided to pack up and hit the road. We loaded up our rental car (to be left in Charleston) and departed on September 25 with our first stop in St. Augustine.

We met Glen and Jill Moore (#314) at their 41' DeFever, LAST DANCE and I installed a new Magnum Energy inverter, controller, and battery monitor kit, and we redid some wiring for the charging system. Installing the inverter in a small area behind the steering station was quite a challenge as the mounting bolts were not very accessible. With Glen's help I was able to mount the unit and connect all the cables that afternoon. We spent the night at Glen and Jill's home and enjoyed a great shrimp dinner. Back aboard LAST DANCE early in the morning we completed the wiring for the inverter, removed an old LectraSan system, and installed two overboard vents. Glen deployed his kayak and began drilling holes in the hull for the new Vacuflush system that he was installing. I gathered up my tools, said a hasty good-bye, and were on the road again, heading for Charleston.

Since Ross Marine would not give us access to QUEEN HELENE when we were going to arrive, we contacted our friend Bart Franey (#871) in Charleston. Bart immediately offered to let us to stay aboard DEWLAP at the Charleston Harbor Marina. We were very familiar with DEWLAP since we delivered her with Bart from Stuart, FL to Charleston the year before.

Bart suggested that we attend a concert that night at the local college, and we thought that would be a great idea. Our original plan was to arrive at DEWLAP, clean up, and meet Bart at the college. Since we were running late we ended up stopping at a rest area along the way to clean up and change our clothes, and we arrived at the concert right on time. After a long day we went back to DEWLAP and crashed.

The next day we headed to QUEEN HELENE to unpack our supplies, tools, and provisions. We boarded the vessel and we were pretty disappointed to find both engines and both generators with parts missing, and no way to leave the next morning. We returned to DEWLAP and joined Bart for dinner that night, then packed our stuff in order to head back to the marina early in the morning. The next morning we headed over to the port and picked up the cruising permit and necessary papers we needed to depart from Charleston. Because the vessel is foreign flagged, a permit is required to cruise U.S. waters. Monday afternoon we arrived back at QUEEN HELENE and found a mechanic aboard, reassembling the engines and generators. Diane and I unpacked and became familiar with the systems aboard. At 1400 we departed the dock for a sea trial with the mechanic and electronics installer aboard. There were a few glitches but by the end of the day almost everything was ready to go. We were promised that a new part for the autopilot would be exchanged in the morning. We stayed aboard and the next day we got underway at 1045, heading south.

We stayed on the ICW that afternoon getting used to the vessel and making sure it was running properly. We spent the night at Port Royal, SC and the next morning headed offshore from Port Royal sound. The winds were 15-20 and we had 3-5' seas behind us as we traveled to St. Simons, GA. We arrived at the marina at 1800 and tied

up, checked the engine room, and relaxed. The next day we were out in the ocean again with similar conditions. We pulled into Fernandina Beach for fuel at the Florida Petroleum dock. We were able to take on 650 gallons of fuel, and we headed south on the ICW for a bit longer. The next day we arrived in Palm Coast where we were met by Dan and Carol Rohr (#665) who came aboard for a quick visit. We tried to get a part for one of the engines but were unable to find it so late in the day. After another day running in the ICW we contacted friends who lived near our next stop (Melbourne). They were able to pick up the parts that we needed, so I installed the new stop solenoid and then had a bite with them.

The next day was a beautiful day but it was too far for us to go offshore, so we just stayed on the ICW. We arrived in Hobe Sound in the evening and stayed at our friend (former DFC member) Jill Grandy's dock, putting us in a good position to arrive in Ft. Lauderdale and get up the New River during slack tide the next day. So on our final day we headed out of Jupiter inlet and proceeded to Port Everglades. Our timing was great and we arrived at the slip right at slack tide. Unfortunately the dock master who had promised to meet us did not show up so Di and I had to dock a 57' DeFever by ourselves. Everything worked out fine and we shut down after a great six day trip, arriving a day ahead of schedule.

The next day we unloaded our gear, secured everything aboard, and headed back to Stuart. We spent a quick 20 hours aboard AURORA repacking and organizing all the tools and parts that we needed to take on our trip. Di and I hit the road the next day with all my tools, two Magnum inverters, four high-output alternators, regulators, cables, wedding clothes, and winter clothes all tightly packed in our new car. We made a quick stop in Brunswick, GA late that night and then Diane drove most of the next day putting us in Morehead City, NC at 1700.



We had planned to meet Rick and Linnie Tierney (#822) aboard DeFever 44 RICKSHAW, but they both had the flu. After speaking with Rick he said to just stay aboard RICKSHAW anyway, so we moved aboard. I worked late that night, installing two Balmar alternators, regulators, and a battery combiner. After some final checks the next morning we were on the road headed for Ocean Grove, NJ where one of my cousins lives. After arriving at their home (built in 1850) we relaxed a bit and then headed out for dinner nearby. The next day we headed for Staten Island, NY where we stayed with some old business friends of ours and then attended the wedding the next day. The time passed very quickly and before we knew it we were heading to the airport in Newark, NJ. I should mention that my cousins Paul and Helen Koch live aboard a DeFever 44, *LUCKY DOGS* in NJ. I guess

it must run in the family. (Ed. – *Then why aren't they DFC members??*)

I still had two inverters, tools, and more clothing that we had to leave in the car at the long-term parking lot for a week. After living in NY for more than 40 years, I knew that anything that is visible becomes a target. Even though the parking lot had barbed wire fences and security lighting we covered everything in the car with a blackout cloth which made it all invisible from the outside.



We arrived in Minneapolis, MN and were met by none other than our good friends, Mike and Allison Mooney (#735), owners of the DeFever 48 POKEY. They were renting a house up north and delayed their departure south for another week so we could visit with them. We had a great time, although our boating plans evaporated because of temperatures in the 30's.

Then it was on to Di's cousin's home where we spent five days getting together with family and catching up. One of the highlights was attending a Vikings vs. Ravens football game and watching the home town Vikings win in the last two seconds. We arrived back at the parking lot in Newark happy to see our new car just the way we left it. Driving through New York City at rush hour brought back



memories of why I left NY over 10 years ago.

Our first stop was Windham, CT where we were greeted by Dave and Pat Masopust (#986). Dave and I were going to install a Magnum inverter, controls, and repair some wiring aboard the DeFever 43 SCEPTRE. The installation presented some challenges because the vessel had never had an inverter, and I had to modify the electrical panel and do some rewiring in order to accommodate the new inverter. Staying with Dave and Pat was a real treat since they live in an 1820's home in the country. It was like staying in a fantastic bed and breakfast. A unique feature of the home was a huge barn that had been converted to a work space and an air raid shelter built in the 1940's!

We completed the project, said our goodbyes, and had a fantastic drive through Connecticut with the splendor of the fall colors. Later that day we arrived at Summit North Marina on the C and D canal in Delaware. We boarded the DeFever 53 BRIANNA (the former *CASSANDRA JADE*), another vessel we were very familiar with since we had delivered her from Ft. Lauderdale to Summit North in April. During that trip we had lots of time to get to know BRIANNA's new owners John and Pat Teer (#1113),

and their sister and her husband on our 16 day journey. We looked forward to seeing them again. BRIANNA's project was the biggest one of our trip since we would be installing a new Magnum inverter and converting the existing 48 volt system to a 12 volt system for the new inverter. At the same time I would be installing new Balmar high-output alternators, regulators, and a Center Fielder in order for both alternators to properly charge the new battery bank.

We modified the battery system and joined the house and inverter bank together for one large bank to operate all the systems. Needless to say there were cables and wiring everywhere but in the end it all worked the way it should. We enjoyed some great dinners with John and Pat and went to one of our favorites, the Tap Room in Chesapeake City where we enjoyed a table full of Maryland crabs.

Back on the road we had a great drive thru Maryland, and found out that our good friends, Ray and Susan Cope (#124) aboard *COPEING* were having electrical work done in Cambridge, MD. They invited us to spend a night and break up some travel for us. We couldn't pass up an evening on board with a home cooked meal, warm bed, and good conversation so we did just that!

The next day we drove through the Eastern Shore of Virginia, crossing over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel. The foliage along that route was fabulous and the colors were peaking at that time. Since Di did the driving, I could relax a bit and catch up on paperwork. With our Verizon wireless internet service, I could send and receive emails, order parts, and stay in contact with friends and family. It worked great the whole trip.

Later that night we arrived back in Morehead City, NC and spent another night aboard

RICKSHAW - thank you so much, Rick and Linnie! The next day we arrived in New Bern, NC where we had been in touch with the owners of the DeFever 49 FINE ROMANCE. Frank and Sal Bulkley (#1012) wanted us to come out to their boat and look over their electrical system. They were anchored out so they picked us up in their dinghy from the marina dock. After looking over





their system, I made some suggestions and we decided to change out the inverter and redo the charging system later in the year. At the same time Norm and Vicki Naughton (#772) aboard DeFever 49 TIDE HIKER arrived at the marina and tied up.

We spent two nights with them and worked on a few projects, such as repairing his windlass, installing a new pump, and hooking up a new digital TV antenna. We always have a blast with Norm and Vicki and also enjoyed a great Thai dinner with them at a local restaurant.

From New Bern we traveled to Myrtle Beach, SC and caught up with the DeFever 44 MAYA. I had to cancel our original trip to MAYA when QUEEN HELENE was delayed in the yard, and we were really glad to finally catch up with Steve and Kim Silver (#1079).

We had spent time aboard MAYA with her previous owners (former DFC members) Roger and Kathy Tatum, and I was very familiar with MAYA's systems. Steve and I reviewed the systems and installed manual engine gauges for voltage, oil pressure, and water temperature. I also removed the fuel injectors in order to clean and check them, at the same time setting all the valve clearances. Some other maintenance items were addressed at the time.



Steve was also having problems with battery voltage and we found that the battery bank was in pretty bad shape. Since they were looking to leave Myrtle Beach and wanted to head south we decided to order new batteries and install them in Charleston.

We got back in touch with Bart, who helped us arrange dockage for MAYA at his marina and organized the battery pickup and delivery. Once again we stayed aboard DEWLAP and while we were aboard I installed a new digital TV antenna and did some minor repairs. The following day MAYA arrived and Steve and I worked on removing the old batteries. I fabricated some new cables and we installed the new batteries that afternoon. That night Bart and Ellie, Steve and Kim, Di and I, and Ron

Walton (#804, DeFever 49 RPH RIVER GIRL) all got together for a nice dinner at a local restaurant.

We helped MAYA get underway in the morning and we departed Charleston later in the day, heading for Georgia. We met up with Bob and Stephanie Vandegejuchte (#734) aboard *SEPTEMBER SONG*, their custom built 55' Signature trawler. I knew this vessel very well as Ron Owens (#401) and I installed the complete navigation system two years ago. Bob and I discussed a few minor electrical problems, but mostly we enjoyed our time visiting with them and Cassie and Godiva, their Labrador retrievers. We went out for another crab dinner at a nearby restaurant and then it was back to their boat. After spending the night we were back on the road for the final leg of our journey.

Diane and I arrived back at 1600 to our DeFever 49 RPH AURORA, our home for the last 10 years. We unpacked and crashed. It was great to meet new and old friends and we thank everyone for their hospitality and friendship. It sure feels good to sleep in our own bed after 42 days away: sleeping in 16 different beds, traveling through 10 states, and being aboard 10 different DeFever!!



Jellyfish!

I think that Forrest Gump had it right when he said that “life was like a box of chocolates; you never know what you are going to get.” In many ways our last voyage was like a box of chocolates. Despite the planning and preparation we did prior to our departure, we just didn’t know what “we were going to get.”

We were planning a trip from New Bern down toward Little River, South Carolina. The first night out, our anchorage was in a little inlet off the South River just across the way from Oriental. The books and websites all gave it high marks for scenery and tranquility and we couldn’t have agreed more. The weather was perfect, the fuel tanks full and the water was like glass. What could go wrong?

After we had set the hook, I wanted to tackle one of those nagging projects that just never seems to get done. Some crud had accumulated along the water line and I wanted to get in and take a scrub brush to it. Since it was pretty hot out and the water looked very cool and inviting it decided to go for it. I had gotten in the water from the swim platform and had just made it around to the bow when I had the very painful sensation that I was being stung... in several places. At first it felt like electricity but the pain quickly increased. I looked around to see what could be causing this but I couldn’t see anything. My first thought was that “the mayor” (Kim) was running that blow dryer again and somehow some current was making its way outside the boat. (I know what you are thinking, but one’s mind doesn’t think clearly when under attack.) Suddenly there was another round of shocks and that was enough for me. I would trouble-shoot later.

Michael Phelps couldn’t have beaten me back to the stern of the boat and onto the swim platform.

I literally sprang out of the water and onto the aft deck. Kim came running out to see what was going on. All up and down my arm were these little welts (soon to be big welts) that were red and white. There were also a few on my leg, and boy did they hurt. Kim took a look over the side of the boat and with a tone of shock and horror exclaimed, “Oh my gosh!” Swimming all around the boat were hundreds of jellyfish. These weren’t the little guys I was used to seeing at the beach. These were the big boys. And they were everywhere.

Okay, so I am an unflappable guy. I flew airliners across the Atlantic for a living and was used to handling “abnormals”, so there would be no panicking. Let’s assess the situation: I was in big time pain; there were welts growing up and down my arm and leg and I was starting to lose sensation there; we were at least an hour away from any help; our cell phone wasn’t showing any signal; and the perfect weather we had been experiencing was starting to turn ugly. Dark clouds were forming off to the west.

My first thought was allergic reaction, which could be bad. We had very limited medical supplies... mostly Neosporin and tequila. I had developed some minor allergic reactions in the past few years to things that would make me swell up and want to vomit. Things like bee stings, kiwi, and songs by Celine Dion were on my list of things to avoid. Jellyfish have a neurotoxin in their stingers that cause intense pain. I was hoping that I wasn’t going to have an allergic reaction to it as my options were very limited. So for the next fifteen minutes or so we stood around waiting to see if my tongue was going to swell up and I was going to expire right there on the South River. I kept checking my pulse and Kim kept asking me about life insurance. “Where was that policy again?”

The pain was inspiring to say the least. In my fleeting moments of lucidity, I seemed to remember that the home remedy for a jellyfish sting was to apply human urine to the wound site - something about the acid in it or whatever, but it was supposed to counteract the toxins in the barbs left by those monsters.

I mentioned this to Kim who didn’t take long to see where this was headed. I needed a human donor and she was the only one onboard. Now Kim, like most women, is fairly modest and this was an unusual request for anyone to help out with. I told her that it might work best if she would find a pot or pan and use that to secure a sample. With that, I could use a paper towel to apply as necessary. What happened next was a bit of a blur. I am not sure what was in that bowl. It may have been warmed over tequila or possibly the urine, but upon application to the burgeoning welts, the relief was almost immediate. Wow. I didn’t think it would work, but it did. I was going to live!

The rest of the evening was pretty quiet. We decided to forego margaritas that



night and we had several cold beers instead. The storm that came departed just as quickly, and it turned out to be a nice evening. It took several more hours but the welts started to subside and the pain gradually tapered off. The lesson here was to take a minute or two before jumping in the water to make sure you know what is going to be out there swimming around with you. Had I looked before I leaped, I would have seen the hundreds of jellyfish that were in the water all around the boat and probably not gone in. Yep, when you don't look before you leap, you never know what you are going to get.



DeFever TECH

**ROBERTS, Jim & Robin (#331) 1988 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse
• ADVENTURES Big Pine Key, FL**

COMPASS REPAIR

Our two Ritchie compasses are original to the boat. The flying bridge compass is faded, the dome is slightly crazed, and it has developed a slow leak, probably due to dried out o-rings. I refilled it with compass fluid, but the bubble reappeared. The model is a SuperSport 2200, and a new one from Defender would cost about \$300. I called Ritchie's repair department to get an opinion from them – whether this 20+ year old compass was worth repairing, or should I just get a new one.

They couldn't have been nicer, and told me that they could restore the compass to like-new condition for \$121, which includes the return shipping. Their normal refurbishing service includes new o-rings, dome, card, bearing, light, bezel, and sun shade! It's all brand new except for the lower part of the case. Just thought I would mention this service – I don't know if all of the compass manufacturers offer the same kind of rebuild for such a reasonable price, but it is well worth a phone call to ask.



**ROBERTS, Jim & Robin (#331) 1988 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • ADVENTURES
Big Pine Key, FL**

FAVORITE THINGS

I'd like to see a quarterly column where members send in their favorite, interesting, handy tools or pieces of equipment. My contribution this quarter is for two things: Abranet abrasives and fisherman's rubber gloves.

We discovered the Abranet brand of abrasives when we were getting our boat re-painted. The crew found the material at an auto parts store, and adopted it for almost all of their sanding applications. Abranet is a strong mesh material, available in typical sandpaper grits ranging from 80-1000. It's very strong and long-lasting, but the real advantage is that it doesn't clog and it can be used wet or dry. I often sand by hand, and the back side of the material has a soft loop that is easy on the hands. The loop will also attach to a Velcro sanding disk, or they sell a hand sanding block with a vacuum port on it for minimizing dust. It can be ordered online from several sources, and can be found at Woodcraft stores and occasionally at an auto parts store.

The second of my favorite things is a pair of heavy-duty rubber fisherman's gloves. They are great when refilling





water tanks or handling ground tackle on chilly days, running the tender on windy, chilly days, and best of all they are perfect for protecting your hands underwater, cleaning running gear. They are cheap, long-lasting, and hard-wearing. They do not float, so order two pair (don't ask me how I know this). They have a nice long gauntlet cuff that keeps the underwater critters out, and they are grippy enough for me to turn a shaft by hand. Barnacles won't tear them, and they're excellent protection if you get too close to your shaft cutters by accident. They are very flexible and don't tire your hands. They're made by Atlas, and are available from Hamilton Marine, listed as: Super Flex Rubber Gloves – Blue 12" at \$2.79/pair. If you go up on the Hamilton web site, the default quantity is for a dozen, but you can select just a pair. The medium size fits my (Robin) hands, and the large size fits Jim's big hands nicely. If you happen to boat in very cold waters or live aboard in freezing temperatures, you might also try the lined version of these gloves – the guides in Antarctica used them when running the tenders, and I found them handy when we lived aboard for three winters in Annapolis a few years ago. They are: Super Flex Lined Cold Resistant Gloves – Blue 12" at \$11.99/pair.



Discounts. . . we get DISCOUNTS!

- **Discount From *MANAGING THE WATERWAY***

Below is the 2010 web voucher code for DeFever Cruisers members, good for 20% off any of our products. This code is good through December 31, 2010 for any purchases (included already discounted "bundles") on our website, www.managingthewaterway.com. It will also be valid on our forthcoming title, *Managing the Waterway: Chicago, IL to Mobile, AL*, scheduled for publication later this spring.

Simply cut-and-paste the following 20% off voucher code on the order page when prompted:
17DEFEVER122240

- **West Marine New Member Discount**

Just a reminder that West Marine as well as some other marine stores offer a discount program for new boat owners. You don't necessarily have to purchase a brand new boat – just a boat that is "new to you". Proof of purchase is usually required to take advantage of the program, but do inquire at West (they offer a discount for 30 days) and at other marine retailers in your area. Thanks to Barbara and Bob Dein (#2) for this tip!

- **Boat/US Membership Discount**

Our Chief Pilot Hank Haeseker (#22) recently tried to renew his membership in Boat/US on line. He entered our DeFever Cruisers "Group number," GA84456B but the online system did not show a discount from the regular annual dues of \$15 (up from \$12.50). So Hank called in to talk to a representative, and she said they would honor a rate of \$12.50 but he would need to mail in the renewal form rather than do it online. Bottom line: You can save a whole \$2.50 by writing in \$12.50 on the form and mailing it in for renewal.

DeFever Cruisers Embroidered Items

A variety of clothing and other items are available with the DeFever Cruisers Burgee logo from www.mediasource.net. To go to the custom embroidery shop click on the bottom right icon: "Stylesource." Then enter the password, "defever" in all lower case. There are no minimums. For promotional items, click on the bottom left icon and search for a product that you like (there are minimum quantities for promo items).



DEIN, Bob & Barbara (#2)

1999 • DeFever 44 • GONDOLA

Venice, FL

It Takes Just A Few DEFEVERS To Make A Rendezvous

We stopped in Ft. Myers and had dinner with Bob and Andy Utter (#221) and former DFC members Bob and Barb Fordyce. (Ed. – Party on!)



OWENS, Ron & Charma (#401)

2008 • Mainship 34 Pilot • WAYPOINT

Apollo Beach, FL

DeFever Boat Name History Project

Barbara Dein (#2) and I are working on collecting the current and past boat names for all the member's DeFever boats. Please support this project by emailing the following information to Charma Owens (ronandco@verizon.net):

- Current boat name
- Current boat owner name
- Hull ID #
- Previous boat name(s)
- Previous boat owner(s)



COOPER, Jim & Cheri (#413)

1982 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • JIM - N - I

Palmer, AK

Interesting Boat History Story

We purchased our 1982 49' RPH in 2004, Hull number SK50354M82F. The current name is JIM-N-I owned by Jim and Cheri Cooper, Palmer, Alaska (currently living aboard and presently moored near Bellingham, WA).

Previous names and owners: NATALIE MARIE, owned by ??, kept in Alameda, California
CHARLIE XRAY, owned by Jim Rogers, kept in Puerto Vallarta
OCEAN DANCER, owned by ??

Interesting story: When we were in Puerto Vallarta vacationing in 1998 with friends, we saw a 49' DeFever that was For Sale in the marina there. The owner was onboard so we talked a while and he asked if we wanted a ride. "Sure!" So he took us for an evening ride around the bay for about three hours and we enjoyed the cocktails and conversation but weren't in any position to purchase a boat at that time. In 2004, we traveled to Alameda to look at a 49' DeFever again as we were serious lookers at that time. The son of the deceased owner had inherited the boat, couldn't get his family to enjoy the boat with him so he was selling it. We took a surveyor out for a sea trial and discovered this was the same boat we toured Puerto Vallarta bay aboard six years earlier! She didn't look the same at all - we just found out by asking about the previous owner. We bought the boat and here we are.



HAESEKER, Hank and Nancy 1988 • DeFever 52 • LAST LAUGH North Palm Beach, FL

DeFever Cruisers Rendezvous, Stuart, Florida

The DeFever Cruisers Rendezvous, held Thursday-Sunday, January 13 - 17, 2010, attracted 25 boats and 123 DFC members, plus several guests and wannabees. Boats began arriving from all directions at The Harborage Yacht Club and Marina in December and some were staying up to five months, taking advantage of the super member price of \$1 per foot inclusive, or \$11 per foot for a month. Chuck Berry (#895), GOT THE FEVER, and Bob Vandegejuchte (#734), *SEPTEMBER SONG*, met boats as they arrived at the marina and welcomed the cruisers.



Members flew in from the Exumas, San Francisco, Kansas, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, St. Thomas, the Chesapeake area, the Gulf Coast, and some drove from Texas and Mississippi and all around the South. What a diverse, interesting and congenial group we have!

The rendezvous was held in conjunction with the Stuart Boat Show and Cruiser Expo, both just a short walk from the marina. Those who flew or drove stayed nearby at the Hampton Inn and Suites, also within walking distance. Members attended three days of seminars arranged by Cruiser Expo. The special Cruiser Expo registration fee for DFC members of \$100 (half price) included three continental breakfasts sponsored by DFC member and yacht broker Curtis Stokes, three lunches, two cocktail parties, tee shirts and assorted surprises in very substantial canvas tote bags, and lots of very nice door prizes - won almost entirely by DFC members.

Thursday night found over 100 members at our DFC cocktail party at the Harborage Yacht Club Grill Room, overlooking the 300 slip marina. Carol Rohr (#665), *LUCKY STARS*, and Vicki Naughton (#772), *TIDE HIKER*, helped Nancy welcome all guests. It is always fun to greet old friends and get acquainted with new ones. There were the usual 30% first-timers, including Nancy and Eddie Hamilton (#1222), who drove from Texas and arrived Thursday to join DFC and search for a new boat! The group, never shy around tasty treats, feasted on an abundant array of hors d'oeuvres, hosted by DFC.

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were filled with shopping at the boat show and attending daytime seminars on varied subjects, held in the Expo tent and on the water. A summary of the seminars follows in a separate article. Lunchtime in the Expo tent provided an opportunity for members to meet, greet, and share tall tales and a vast wealth of experience and knowledge. Many formed circles with their chairs and visited - elementary school style! Friday evening after the Cruiser Expo cocktail party and keynote speaker from The Waterway Guide, everyone was free to dine on their own, or even relax!

Members had a chance to see all the DFC boats during “open boat” time on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons. DeFever 43, 44, 49 RPH, 49 CPMY, 52 Offshore, 53 RPH, and 57 POC were all on display. The highlight was the DF 50 CPMY, FINALLY FUN (Stepniewski #880), which is the brand new 50 foot version of the popular 49 CPMY. The new version is longer and a foot wider, so the deck space and bridge are awesome! Room for two dozen people! Also, ten members took advantage of having a Vessel Safety Check conducted by local Coast Guard Auxiliary members Steffie and Mike Danforth (#462, DF 52 STEFFIE ANN). The Danforths were very proud



that almost all vessels passed these inspections, which is a rare occurrence. Out-of-date flares are frequently the reason boats don’t pass.

On Saturday and Sunday nights, guests enjoyed delightful hors d’oeuvres and steak or sea bass dinners at HYC, with wine provided by DFC members Curtis and Gill Stokes (#1143) of Curtis Stokes and Associates. Thanks, Curtis, for your hospitality! And thanks to Ruth Keeler (#69), WINDRIFT; Penny Stormont (#683), STORMY; Steffie Danforth (#462), STEFFIE ANN; and Diane Koch (#74), AURORA, for greeting diners as they arrived.

As all enjoyed their deserts, Chief Pilot Hank spoke about the earthquake tragedy in Haiti and the stark contrast with our good fortunes. Rather than giving away door prizes as previously planned, he asked for bids on six cruising guides donated by Jack Dozier of Waterway Guides and two three-night marina certificates, adding that the bids would be matched by DeFever Cruisers and the proceeds sent to Doctors Without Borders for their work in Haiti. Through the enthusiastic generosity of our members, and with DFC matching dollars, our organization was able to send \$3,000 to assist with this compelling humanitarian effort.

Many of the members who arrived by boat stayed in the marina to extend the formal rendezvous, and as of Tuesday January 26, six boats were still there, enjoying the usual daily/nightly get-togethers. Others are continuing the party as they cross the Okeechobee Waterway and cruise the Florida West Coast together.

For those who weren’t able to join us, we missed you! And since many inquired about the 2011 rendezvous, the Chief Pilot is eagerly awaiting a volunteer, or group of volunteers, to chair the rendezvous, and they can choose the location! Promise, we’ll all happily attend!

Now, it’s on to the Panama Canal Cruise Rendezvous, March 5-19, 2010, for more DeFever Cruisers adventures. Fifty-six cruisers have signed on, including Art and Ruth DeFever. If you would like to be included, contact our Group Agent, Angela, at The Travel Agency, 904-261-5914; or Angela@thetvagency.com.

Lots more photos on the last page!



BRUMMETT, Chester & Linda (#444) 2003 • DeFever 49 CPMY • CYGNET Orlando, FL

Stuart Boat Show and Cruiser’s Expo

A sign of a well-planned Exposition is one that delivers what it promises. The Cruiser’s Expo major sponsor, Captain Chris Yacht Services did just that. Registration and check-in were easy and the “goodie bags” each attendee

was given were nicely done. In fact, the nautical bag was probably the nicest I have seen for an event of this type.

Each day started at 8 a.m. with a continental breakfast and an opportunity to socialize with fellow boaters as we readied ourselves for the day's activities. At 9 a.m. sharp, Captain Chris and Alyse Caldwell announced the locations of the first seminars. Throughout the day they kept the program moving, making sure that the seminars kept to the established schedule, questions were quickly answered, and lunches were ready and waiting at the appropriate time.

The seminars offered a diversified selection of topics for all levels of boaters. To build interest and generate a little competition, each morning two types of surveys were given to the attendees. The first had a series of obscure questions to spark your interest in attending that day's topics. The participant tries to answer as many as he or she could with hopes of winning a prize for the most correct answers. At the end of the day, everyone that turned in this survey plus a seminar evaluation form was given tickets for a prize drawing. The daily evaluations gave the participants a forum to express their opinion on each program they attended while giving the sponsors useful feedback for planning future events.

Chris and Alyse conducted five of the twenty-four different seminars offered. Of the three I was able to attend, they showed themselves to be energetic, polished speakers who demonstrated a strong working knowledge of the subject matter, be it important advice on what the "second in command" should, or needs to know, to the inner workings of your head. And by head, I don't mean the one between your shoulder blades!

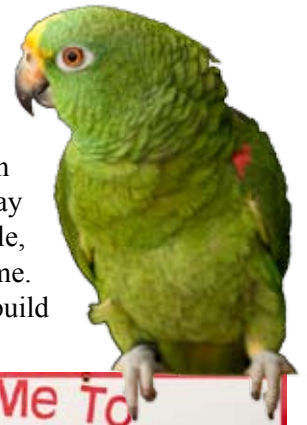


navigation. After all, even the Naval Academy at Annapolis no longer issues them. Then someone reminded me that if Loran C is decommissioned we just might need that sextant for backup. Celestial Navigation 101 anyone?

The "It's Five O'clock Somewhere" parties at the close of the day provided the attendees snacks, music, beer, wine, and were a fun way to close out the day's activities.

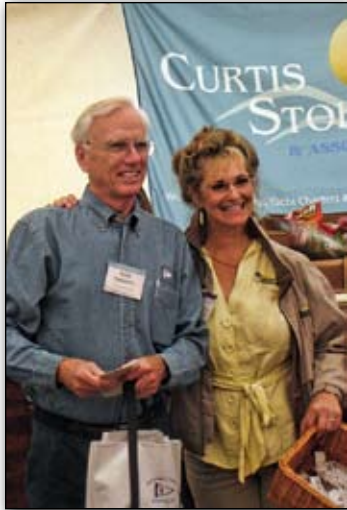
There is not enough space, or reader interest, to comment on all twenty-four of the seminars, so I have selected several more that I feel are worth mentioning.

If I were restricted to one word to describe Betty Robinson's (#1236) "How I Did It!" it would be the word "phenomenal". She told us about her decision to buy and live on a boat rather than own a house. Being an experienced boater but inexperienced in owning one, she walked us through how she learned to outfit the boat, how she learned to operate and maintain the engines, how to do emergency repairs, and on and on. Her organization skills are remarkable and her bold "I want to know everything you know" approach to everyone that worked on her boat is worth emulating. Her six-page handout of her presentation included space for notes, and I made quite a few. She is Kadey-Krogen's first and only woman owner! I think a better title for this presentation would have been "An Adventure into Self-Reliance". You Go Girl!



Although I did not attend Advance Marine Tech's "Pit Pass", the feedback I got was that it was short and sweet. It took only 15 minutes to change the oil on a live engine. Real time demonstrations are always more effective than classroom presentations, and to make this better, the X-Change-R was given to the Expo folks to use as one of the Grand Prizes.

My Toastmasters background calls on me to comment on Peter Stark of Pettit Paint. He is an experienced presenter who demonstrated how to successfully break the rules of public speaking by starting his presentation with a Question and Answer session! Quickly there was meaningful dialog about all aspects of boat painting from detailed areas



Haeseker Award



The Berry Prize

topsides to coatings to use on your running gear to prevent barnacles. For those that don't know, Pettit makes West Marine's paints (the old Woolsey products). Only at the end did he talk about his product line, using the glossy handouts as a guide. This business presentation would have received high marks from the Toastmasters Organization!

I have to smile when I think of Maureen and Dave Rousseau's "Cruising with Pets" seminar. I enjoyed it immensely even though I don't own a pet! A tremendous amount of work went into this presentation; it is obvious that they have a real passion for the safety and well being of animals. Their six-page color handout was chocked full of useful information and their slide show and equipment discussions were well done. The handout on hurricane preparedness and pet safety tips is important for anyone who has a pet in Florida - boater or not. This would be good material for an article in the DFC Magazine.

As there were always two seminars going at the same time, I was unable to attend all of them. Topics such as Marine Generators, Electronics 101, 201, 301, and maintaining our outboard engine did not seem to make my must-go-to list. Although I am sure they were worthwhile presentations, I don't feel qualified to comment on them.

At the "Cruisers Awards Ceremony" on Sunday, awards were handed out to the top scorers of the obscure question survey, and a drawing was held using the tickets people earned for filling out the surveys. To the delight of the crowd, a fair number of prizes were awarded. It was a fun way to conclude the event. One comment however, ceremonies of this type should be at the end of the program as attendees such as myself, tend to disappear right afterward, leaving the later presenters with empty classrooms.

In evaluating this Expo, I had to remind myself that this was not Miami or Fort Lauderdale, but a small-town boat show geared more to the local boater. When the DFC Rendezvous was folded in, it unbalanced the normal percentage between new or inexperienced boaters, to very seasoned, blue water cruisers. There were several seminars that were

very elementary to a DFC person, that wouldn't be for the many local people that were also attending. With that in mind, judging from watching and listening to the participants both in the classroom and during the free time between events, I would say this Expo was well received. The \$100 discounted price to DFC was very reasonable, the facilities were well planned, and the program well managed. It would certainly be worth a repeat. One last thing, with all the experienced boaters in the DFC membership, if we do decide to hold a future rendezvous in conjunction with the Stuart Boat Show and Expo, maybe one or two of our own would consider conducting a seminar. Just a thought!



From the Editor...

I don't write to the membership often, but I need to write to you today. If you're patient and read to the end, you'll be rewarded with a funny little story of my own.

One of the joys of this volunteer Editor's job is to receive the wonderful stories and submissions from the membership. The thing I hate the most is to find an empty inbox on DFCMagazine@gmail.com. I don't have any extra stories lying around – everything that I receive is used each quarter, and each time I finish one Magazine issue, I start with an empty inbox for the next issue. By the time you have the Magazine in your hands, I'm worried about whether I'll have anything to publish for the next quarter – so all of you need to dust off your keyboards and send something in!

We're all busy, but it doesn't take long to put together a little story, something about your cruising plans, a profile about yourselves or other DFC friends, a technical tip, a big cruising story, or a description of a project or renovation you've done to your boat. The Magazine is for you, about you, BY YOU!

I'm quite happy to fix your spelling errors or grammar if need be, so you don't need to be a "good writer" to send something in. Don't worry about length – long or short.

The DeFever Cruisers organization is run entirely by volunteers – busy people who are willing and interested in giving a bit of their time to help all of us share information and to get to know one another better – that is the way of boaters and cruisers because we are a community and everyone must contribute in his/her own way. My commitment of time pales in comparison to our Chief Pilot Hank and the Fabulous Nancy Haeseker. It's a drop in the bucket compared to the years that Bob and Barbara Dein did EVERYTHING to create and run this organization. We're lucky to have the hard-working Carol Rohr as our outgoing News Editor and Ron Owens to moderate the Forum. Andy Utter takes care of the burgees for all of us, and Charma Owens and Barbara Dein are busy collecting the history of our boat's names to help make our database more complete. A number of members have stepped up and organized Rendezvous – national, regional, or local... large or small. Too many to name, but often it's the same people.

The most un-sung DFC volunteer, working quietly in the background, is my Magazine partner Peggy Bjarno. She takes my collection of edited articles and transforms them into the stunning Magazine you see every quarter. She adjusts photographs as necessary and she arranges everything in the visually impactful way that you see. Peggy is the artist who created all the neat "waves" that separate articles. You've probably never met her since she and her husband Hans live in the Baltimore/DC area, still working full-time jobs and cruising their Albin trawler with their Labrador Retriever Dory in the limited free time that they have. (That will hopefully change when they retire.) She is an incredible photographer and artist, among her many talents. Peggy runs her own business – a Sir Speedy printing shop, and Hans is a Chief Mechanic for United Airlines. I don't know many people as talented, kind, and generous of their time than Peggy and Hans. If you look up the word "busy" in the dictionary, you'll often find a picture of Peggy... yet she makes time to take your words and stories and transform them into something unique every quarter. I "nag", but Peggy "creates"!

So here's your funny little story to wrap up this plea for articles. You may have noticed the black DeFever 49 RPH in the masthead of the Magazine. It's a photo of my boat, and it embarrasses me every quarter! Peggy took the photo several years ago on the Chesapeake Bay, and since she is the last person to touch the Magazine before it's published, she gets to create the masthead. So that's why the black boat is there!

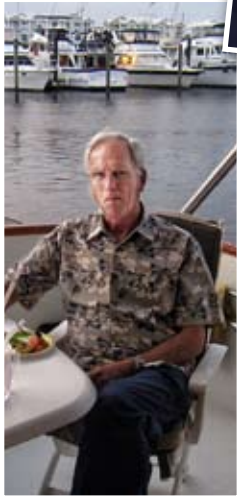
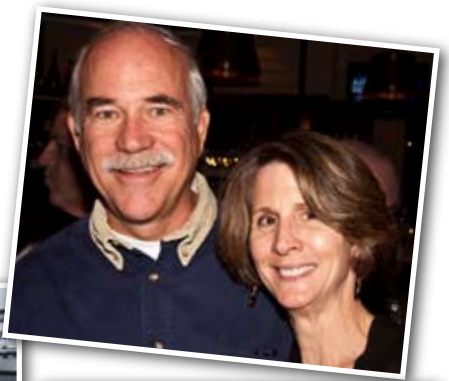
DEADLINES FOR ARTICLES:

Spring: 15 April

Summer: 15 July

Fall: 15 October

Winter: 15 January



Stuart
Rendezvous
2010

