



MultiMedia

August 2005

The Newsletter of the Florida Offshore Multihull Association

A Sailor's Tale

by Jeffery Hazard

This note was sent to me by Jeff Hazard, a one-time FOMA member. Many of you may know his wife, Elise better, as she was very active in the Bikini Cup races. Both Jeff and Elise are Nurse Practitioners. I thought the note was so well written that I wanted to share it with our current members.

This was a bittersweet week for us. We have had a wonderful trip to Maryland to see Jeff's family over the Mother's Day weekend and for the occasion of Jeff's Dad celebrating his 70th birthday, but also now missing the family that is so special to us and so far away. The hospitality and good times of the weekend stay with us in spirit.

Let me tell you a story.

In the fall of 2001, a few short weeks after 9/11, as many of us were just imagining what lay in wait for the world, Elise and I went to the Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) annual party at Melbourne, Florida. This idea of selling out all that would not fit on a sailboat, casting off the dock lines, and going voyaging (known as "cruising") to foreign lands seemed so daring and unconventional. That is, until we met hundreds and hundreds of people with the same idea!

Waiting to get into a seminar at the SSCA weekend, I peered about me and made eye contact

with several folks in the hallway, among them a pleasant woman with an easy manner and a quick laugh, and her husband: an old soul filled with a benevolence apparent at first meeting. And so lucky I am to have made the acquaintance. We four chatted and asked the requisite questions about boats and plans, and the timetable for retirement to the cruising life. What stopped us, and left Elise and me with slack jaws, was the revelation that these people had built their own wooden boat and were hard in the throws of the plan to depart, still some 3-5 years away. We spent much of the weekend talking about things, laughing like hyenas at a nautical auction as he bought and she scolded for the lack of space aboard the boat to put the purchased items. Mostly was born a friendship that has endured, and dare I say, is securely perpetual.

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Our Next Meeting

The August FOMA meeting will be our annual pilgrimage to Tropicana Field to see our home town devil rays take on the competition.

This will be, unquestionably, the best FOMA meeting at Tropicana Field. Why, you ask? Simple, three reasons:

First, this is the first actual Rays game that naturally occurs on a FOMA meeting date. Previous August meetings required us to have the meeting on different days, to match the Ray's schedule.

Second, the Rays are in the middle of a hot streak. They have the second-most games of any American League team since the All-Star break (early July). They have done this with better hitting, improved starting pitching, and the addition of a set-up man to pitch the eighth inning.

Lastly, and probably most important, this will be a great game, with the Trop really rocking, because the Bronx Bombers, also known as the New York Yankees, will be in town to play our Rays.

To sit with the group, you will want to get tickets in Section 312, in the first three rows if possible. These are upper-deck seats right at first base.

The game starts at **7:15 PM on Tuesday, August 16th**, but expect large crowds waiting on-line (it's

the New Yorker in me coming out...) at the box office to buy tickets, so get their early. Marie and I should be there no later than 6:15-6:30 PM or so. I like to get there early enough to eat before the game, so you can relax during the game.

The Trop has a great new spot to eat. Herman-T's Smokehouse has top-notch smoked pork and beef sandwiches, fries, and BBQ Nachos. It's to the left if you enter Gate 1. Highly recommended.

If you like a glass of suds during a game, there is a stand called "Beers of the World" which sells a wide variety of brews from the US, Canada, Europe, and the like. It's on the 100 level, just after you get off the escalator from the ground level.

See you at the ballpark!

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These are the ways of cruising friendships. Cruising friends might be episodically engaged while involved in a nomadic lifestyle, with periods of little contact, but these bonds also seem more genuine, valued, and unpretentious some how. Conversations are not idle. There is at once a respect for individuality and privacy, and a real concern for safety and wellbeing with empathy and mutual aid given freely and without question. Honesty is met without judgment. It is, I would think, the sense of community felt in places and circumstances where people must rely on a neighbor (boat neighbor) for assistance and expertise that makes these friendships so. Elise and I both treasure being part of it.

Each spring and each autumn the couple have had a party, in the namesake of their boat, aboard in the marina. We've never missed one, that I can recall, in 4 years. But the last party at the marina was in March this year.

Now, this week, the plans are complete. The kind-eyed husband and the busy-bee wife have attained their goal. It is with joy and a little loneliness that we will join scores of others tomorrow night to see

them off on the adventure of a lifetime on a boat that has taken 20 years of hard work to make their home by their own hands.

I write, of course, about Bob and Kitty Bennett. Kitty spent her last day at her job at the St. Pete Times yesterday. They will leave on Monday morning on their sailing vessel Equinox, and will listen to NPR, I fantasize, while sailing under the Sunshine Skyway for (at last word) Nova Scotia. Their bon voyage party is at 7:00 PM tomorrow night at their marina. Raucous laughter and tears in the eyes of big burly sailors are expected.

Since 9/11 our plans have firmed up, too. Elise and I plan to retire on or before 3/15/08 to leave on an as-yet un-purchased Valiant 40 cutter. We have tried to buy several boats without success, and have traveled to Newport, Annapolis, and L.A. looking for the boat to go meet Equinox in some far away anchorage. Seeing Bob and Kitty off gives me vision and hope that we, too, will be able to follow in their wake soon enough.

Wind with current abaft of beam,

Jeffery

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Tuesday, September 20th

Tuesday, October 18th

Tuesday, November 15th

Tuesday, December 13th (the Second Tuesday of December)

Note that dates are subject to change due to availability of speakers, availability of meeting rooms, at the drop of a hat, the whim of the Commodore or Program Chairman, hurricanes, the phase of the moon, Charlie's mooning someone, and if we just feel like it.

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