



Gale Tales

Manatee Sailing Association

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AHOY MATES,

It has been a month since my last Manatee Sailing Association article; but it seems a lot longer! I hoped by now our next step would be clear, but it still looks pretty murky. Our normal activities just don't work well with social distancing. This morning I asked Gina what she thought and she told me that



her crystal ball has become purely decorative. Three weeks ago we decided to keep ourselves busy during the quarantine by ripping out and remodeling our guest bathroom. As you can see by the photo of Gina scraping the old tile thin set off the floor; so far quarantine is keeping us busy. The question is; will the bathroom project or covid-19 quarantine last longer.

As for the MSA, social distancing has us on hold for the foreseeable future. With the information we have now we don't know when or how we'll be able to proceed. However knowing the MSA membership we will figure it out. I believe that it is still too early to know what the other side of the pandemic will look like. As soon as we see what our new environment looks like, your board and I will adjust and restart our meetings etc. For now all of you

be safe, stay healthy and keep in touch with one



another. An example of this is Gina was talking to Betty Burton about our situation in quarantine. The next day the Burtons helped us out by dropping off a necessity at our front gate. We really appreciated: FOUR ROLLS OF TOILET PAPER.

Take care

Mike Spellacy
Commodore
s/v Esprit de Mer

Florida Pandemic Reopening Phase 1 - Effective Monday, May 4

- Schools remain distance learning
- Visits to senior living facilities are prohibited
- Elective surgeries can resume
- Restaurants: Outdoor seating with 6 feet of space between tables and indoor seating at 25% capacity
- Retail can operate at 25% of indoor capacity
- No change for bars, gyms and personal services such as hair dressers
- Vulnerable individuals should avoid close contact with people outside the home
- Everyone should maximize physical distance from others when in public
- Avoid socializing in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for physical distancing
- Face masks are recommended for face-to-face interactions and where you can't social distance

SHOULD WE BE SAILING?

Everyone's situation with their sailboat is unique, so it's possible you can sail or work or live on your boat. Think about it in the same way you might go for a bike ride, or if working on your boat is like working in your back yard. If you live on your sailboat, as many people do, you are sheltering in.

That said, we think people should be thinking about the 'spirit' of the guidance rather than the letter of the law. Our public servants, doctors, nurses and hospitals are straining under the looming threat. They're asking us all to take a break for just a few weeks. It's sunny, it's springtime, and it's frustrating. Yet nobody wants to put more strain on those who are charged with our care or whose care we may need should we require medical attention.

On March 27, 2020, Florida Fish and Wildlife has issued the follow restrictions on recreational boats and vessels during the COVID-19 outbreak in or-



der to enforce effective social distancing provisions.

Vessels accessing the waters in Florida that do not follow the requirements outlined below can be declared a "hazard to public safety" during this public health emergency.

- The recreational vessel occupancy is now limited to no more than 10 persons per vessel.
- A minimum distance of 50 feet must be maintained between recreational vessels and any other vessel.
- Exceptions apply to the distance provision at mooring fields, public or private marinas, or any other permanently installed wet slips.
- The distance provision does not apply to vessels underway unless they are tied, rafted or moored to another vessel.

Yes, you can sail, but sail smart and safe.



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AN ADVENTURE FOR THE HEART AND SOUL

By Gail Gordon

While trying to find things to occupy my time this last month, I started typing out my journal and editing my photos of the exotic trip I took over the Christmas holidays with my step-daughter, Michelle, who happened to be a cultural portrait photographer. The purpose of the journey was to visit and photograph the tribes in Myanmar (Burma) whose traditions included unusual and painful adornments for women. These practices for the most part have thankfully been outlawed as they are now considered barbaric. But when these handful of older tribal woman die, these ancient rites of passage will be found only in the



history books. So

with camera gear packed we set off to capture the unforgettable images before they were gone. As I revisited them these past days, I thought I would share with you some of my

amazing experiences. The first tribes of women we visited were in the Chin State of Myanmar. There are only about 30 women still alive within these groups who wore facial tattoos that they had received at a very young age. They were done by mothers to their daughters



and the process was incredibly painful. There were no documents that explained why this had been an important tradition within the tribe but an old legend hinted to the story. As we were told, a foreign king once traveled through the country and found that the Burmese women were extraordinarily beautiful. Before leaving, he kidnapped a woman to take home as a concubine to his kingdom. As a result, the ancient tribes tattooed their daughter's faces to protect them from a similar fate. Each tribe had a different pattern or design which make them identifiable on sight.

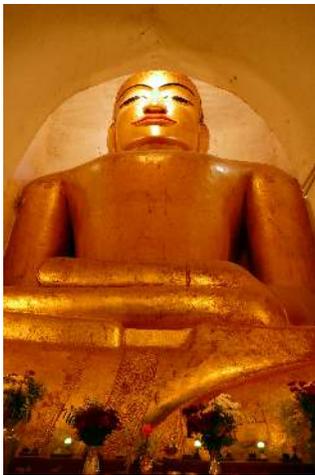
The Shan State of Myanmar brought us to a different tribe where the women wore heavy brass necklaces and calf bands. At first sight, the ladies necks looked as if they had been elongated by the numerous rings that were wrapped around and around. But in fact, the women appeared that way as a result of their clavicles being collapsed downward with the weight. Again only legends explained this strange cultural tradition. Our guide explained that at one time, these rural areas were plagued with lions. The women protected their necks and legs from the vicious attacks of these deadly beasts



with heavy metal bands on the most critical areas. The brass accessories were placed on their daughters at a very young age and were never removed afterwards. I was allowed to gently try to lift one of these neckpieces on an elder tribeswoman and I was stunned by the heaviness. I also noticed that the calves on these women were underdeveloped as a result of the tight bands on their legs.



There were many other facets of this exotic country that we discovered in our travels over the 2 weeks we were there. I have never seen more spectacular temples and ancient architecture in all my journeys. There was one stop where we wandered into a complex with over 2500 ancient spires pointing to the heavens. On the top of each were delicate chimes that created a symphony of soft, angelic music that accompanied you as you



explored the area. At another, we climbed a tall tower to watch the sunrise and sunset over 2200 ancient temples, each well over 1000 years old. As we toured a few during the day, we marveled at the interiors that were filled with intricate ancient paintings and huge

golden Buddhas.

But one of my favorite sojourns was the 3 days we spent on Inle Lake. We arrived as the sun was

setting on the water as we looked out from the front porch of the most luxurious hotel of the whole trip. Up until now our accommodations

had been simple but somewhat primitive and this change was most appreciated. We would enjoy New Years in this delightful respite. The next day we departed for a boat ride that would last until sunset. We were picked up in front of the hotel by a narrow wooden boat

with a single cylinder inboard diesel engine which sported a long stick like prop almost even with the stern, made for shallow water. There were 3 low beach chairs with blankets stuck in the middle, one in front of the other, for Michelle, our guide and me to sit in. We took off as the sun started to rise above the horizon in the wee hours of the brisk morning. The 45 square mile lake was at an elevation of 3000 feet and was between 7 and 10 feet deep throughout. At this hour it was almost impossible to discern where the lake ended and the sky began. There was little to see except for small

islands of water hyacinths floating by as we cruised at a fast speed. But in the distance we



could see lots of moving dots on the water. As we got closer, it was clear that these were local fishermen in small boats making their living in the traditional way. This was what we were here to discover. I had seen photos of this procedure

but thought it was just performed for tourists. That was not the case at all. Local fishermen were known for practicing a distinctive rowing technique which involved standing at the stern on one leg and wrapping the other leg around an oar. The unique style evolved out of necessity as the lake was covered with reeds and plants which made it



difficult to see the view while seated. When they fished, they used a cone shaped netting device

to catch fish by setting it down in the shallow water and inserting a stick through the opening to scare fish into the circular nets. This was as lovely to watch as a ballet. We spent a lot of time here enjoying the beauty of their dance in the early morning hours and before we returned to the resort at dusk.

During the day, we were treated to tours involving the local villages on the lake. When I say on the lake, I mean it. Neighborhoods of houses made out of wood paneling or bamboo latticework were situated on poles stuck in the mud on the lake. These were called floating villages! Each family had at least one wooden long boat to get around. There were even extensive farms built up on the



water. The floating beds were formed by exhausting manual labor. The farmers would gather up lake bottom weeds from the deeper part of the lake and bring them back in their boats to make them into floating beds in their garden or farms and then they would anchor them to make them stationary with bamboo poles. These gardens would rise and fall with the changes in the water level so they would not be affected by flooding. The constant availability of nutrient laden water resulted in these gardens being incredibly fertile. As we cruised around in our boat we were amazed at the ingenious work of these industrious people.



For 3 days we were transported by boat to every place we visited. We toured a cigar packing plant, a blacksmith shop, a textile and weaving facility, many elaborate temples and open air restaurants. During the day, the lake was like a highway of commerce. Even the children had to take a boat to get to school. It was an adjustment to get back into a car when we left this beautiful setting. But there was more to see and we didn't want to miss any of it. It took me 4 flights to get there and 4 flights to get back home but I must say, this experience was totally worth it. I hope you enjoyed my armchair travelogue.

Gail Gordon
MSA Social Secretary

CRUISING DURING A PANDEMIC

FROM ST JOHN, USVI, ABOARD S/V ADASTRA

As some of you know, Bob, Leo and I set sail from Bradenton in the spring of 2012. While we haven't crossed an ocean, we have cruised the Eastern Caribbean extensively, from Florida to Grenada, as well as the ICW. We've faced challenges, the toughest being Hurricane Maria, but in terms of complete uncertainty, this pandemic is starkly different.

We are currently on a mooring in Great Lameshur, St. John, waiting to hear what kind of charter season we will have with Boy Scouts, much like many people are waiting to hear when they can return to their jobs. The difference for us is we have to consider the uncertainty of hurricane season, as Grenada is still locked down and Puerto Rico is not accepting pleasure craft at the moment.

This past winter and early spring we cruised Culebra, Vieques, USVI, and BVI, finally stopping in St Maarten and staying there when the virus hit. Unfortunately, we were supposed to meet friends in Guadeloupe for a leisurely sail back to St. Thomas, but most of the islands locked down fairly quickly, so maybe next year!

Our last day of socializing was St Paddy's Day at The St. Maarten Yacht Club. The Guinness flowed and I don't think

anyone thought the lockdown would last long. How wrong we were!



The authorities in St. Maarten were great with the cruisers. Early on, we could grocery shop and walk Leo with no issues, and that meant we could walk the beach. The airport was closed quickly, so very few people were out and about. No TP shortage! As time progressed, however, restrictions tightened and we decided to get back to St. Thomas before the USVI enacted harsher regulations. This is why so many cruisers of many nationalities ended up in the USVI, as they have worked well with their unexpected guests. The Salty Dawg is holding staged departures for cruisers returning to the states, it's becoming a mass exodus. It's sad because many of these boats would have sailed south and extended their cruising grounds.

Our daily routing had been quite boring, walking in an attempt to stave off the quarantine, and trips to the grocery. Or course, anything we do involves walking or a dinghy trip. Calling our chil-

dren (probably to the point they screened their calls), reading and trying not to kill each other.

Have you ever lived with someone 24/7 on a 40 ft. sailboat? And of course the crucial, never ending question, "What do you want for dinner?" Fortunately, the National Park Service just opened up the trails and beaches, so we relocated to St. John from St. Thomas for a vacation.....from our va-

cation. Beautiful hikes, great snorkels, and using our kayaks with a bit of boat work thrown in. St. John is one of our favorite islands for unspoiled beauty, as 70% is National Park.



Of course keeping up on the news from the mainland and around the world has been depressing.

The Caribbean has fared well in comparison to the US and other hotspots. We feel blessed to be here in the sunshine and on the water. Cheers to all and looking forward to seeing you next spring, on the water, at a meeting, or a great MSA event!

Judy, Bob and Leo Wakelam

S/V Adastra

April 30, in the Year of Coronavirus.

The next step in mono hull sailboats In the America's Cup



Wings instead of keel!

Challenger selection series will be held in January and February 2021 with the America's Cup match against the defender in March in Auckland, New Zealand.

[Click Here for More Information](#)

West Marine

If you are in need of boat parts, Bradenton West Marine is open for business. They have imposed a maximum of 10 customers allowed in the store at any one time. Masks are not required.

Store hours are:

8 AM - 7 PM Weekdays

8 AM - 6 PM Saturday

9 AM - 5 PM Sunday

BOOK REVIEWS FOR SAILORS

The Proving Ground: The Inside Story of the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Race

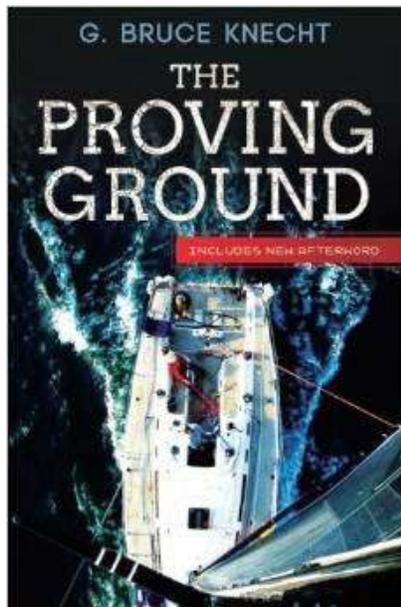
by

G. Bruce Knecht

On December 26, 1998, 115 sailboats set out on the annual race from Sydney to Hobart; only 43 would make it to the Tasmanian city, the race having turned into the worst modern sailing disaster since the 1979 Fastnet Race. Combining the best elements of *The Perfect Storm* (W.W. Norton, 1997) and *Barbarians at the Gate* (Harper/Collins, 1990), "The Proving Ground" is a gripping narrative that follows the fates of three yachts, including *Sayonara*, owned by Larry Ellison, the founder of Oracle. From the chilling explanation of how an Olympic sailor came to be catapulted from a yacht and why its crew could do nothing to save him, to the dramatic journeys of two leaky life-rafts, "The Proving Ground" is an exhilarating read.

Wall Street Journal correspondent Knecht recounts the Australian 1998 Sydney to Hobart Race, one of the worst disasters in recent ocean-

racing history. He presents in detail the heroic exploits—as well as the misadventures, failures and tragic miscalculations—of three world-class yachts in the race, which he makes clear is one of the world's "most treacherous." Some believe it's under a curse, but rationalists will be content with another explanation: the Hobart crosses the 140-mile-wide Bass Strait, located between Australia's mainland and Tasmania, is "one of the world's most turbulent bodies of water."



Knecht emphasizes that this danger is perhaps the race's main attraction for sailors. In 1998, only 43 of the 115 yachts completed the race; others turned back or were destroyed after a cyclone hit the race's path. Sailors included Larry Ellison, owner of the Oracle software company and the world's second richest man; Lachlan Murdoch, son of the Australian media magnate; and businessman Richard Winning, owner of the *Winston Churchill*, whose heroics after his ship was sunk saved some of his crew members—but not all. "The sea had torn them

apart and tried its best to erase them in a thunder of wave and foam," Knecht concludes. "And still they loved her. Still." This is one of the most exciting sea stories of the last few years.



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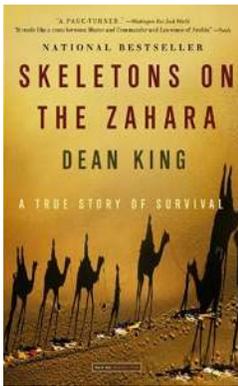
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Skeletons on the Zahara

A True Story of Survival
by Dean King

A masterpiece of historical adventure, *Skeletons on the Zahara* chronicles the true story of twelve American sailors who were shipwrecked off the coast of Africa in 1815, captured by desert nomads, sold into slavery, and subjected to a hellish two-month journey through the perilous heart of the Sahara.



The Western Sahara is a baking hot and desolate place, home only to nomads and their camels, and to locusts, snails and thorny scrub — and its barren and ever-changing coastline has baffled sailors for centuries. In August 1815, the US brig *Commerce* was dashed against Cape Bojador and lost, although through bravery and quick thinking the ship's

captain, James Riley, managed to lead all of his crew to safety. What followed was an extraordinary and desperate battle for survival in the face of human hostility, starvation, dehydration, death and despair.

Captured, robbed and enslaved, the sailors were dragged and driven through the desert by their new owners, who neither spoke their language nor cared for their plight. Reduced to drinking urine, flayed by the sun, crippled by walking miles across burning stones and sand and losing over half of their body weights, the sailors struggled to hold onto both their humanity and their sanity. To reach safety, they would have to overcome not only the desert but also the greed and anger of those who would keep them in captivity.

From the cold waters of the Atlantic to the searing Saharan sands, from the heart of the desert to the heart of man, *Skeletons on the Zahara* is a spectacular odyssey through the extremes and a gripping account of courage, brotherhood, and survival.

The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue

By Michael J. Tougias and
Casey Sherman



In the winter of 1952, New England was battered by the most brutal nor'easter in years. As the weather wreaked havoc on land, the freezing Atlantic became a wind-whipped zone of peril.

In the early hours of Monday, February 18, while the storm raged, two oil tankers, the *Pendleton* and the *Fort Mercer*, found themselves in the same horrifying predicament. Built with "dirty steel," and not prepared to withstand such ferocious seas, both tankers split in two, leaving the dozens of men on board utterly at the Atlantic's mercy.

The Finest Hours is the gripping, true story of the valiant attempt to rescue the souls huddling inside the broken halves of the two ships. Coast Guard cutters raced to the aid of those on the *Fort Mercer*, and when it became apparent that the halves of the *Pendleton* were in danger of capsizing, the Guard sent out two thirty-six-foot lifeboats as well. These wooden boats, manned by only four seamen, were dwarfed by the enormous seventy-foot seas. As the tiny rescue vessels set out from the coast of Cape Cod, the men aboard were all fully aware that they were embarking on what could easily become a suicide mission.

The spellbinding tale is overflowing with breathtaking scenes that sear themselves into the mind's eye, as boats capsize, bows and sterns crash into one another, and men hurl themselves into the raging sea in their terrifying battle for survival.

Not all of the eighty-four men caught at sea in the midst of that brutal storm survived, but considering the odds, it's a miracle--and a testament to their bravery--that any came home to tell their tales at all.



Manatee Sailing Association New Membership Application

Date: _____

Name(s): 1. _____ 2. _____

Other members in household: _____

Address: _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell 1: _____ Cell 2 _____

Email 1 _____ Email 2 _____

Boat Make/Size _____ Boat Name _____

Sail # _____ PHRF _____

Signature: _____

Questions?

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Website: www.msasailing.org

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or Mail to:

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