



SAUVIE ISLAND YACHT CLUB NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 2524, Portland, OR 97208-2524

Vol. 317 January 2011

SIYC OFFICERS '09-'10

Commodore
Garry Weber

Vice Commodore
George Stonecliffe

Secretary
Marianne Mallowney

Treasurer
Ed Mallowney

Rear Commodore
Ed Daugherty

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership
Ed Mulowney

Database Editor
Susan Gierga

Cruising Coordinator
Open
Contact George Stonecliffe for more information.

Newsletter
Susan Gierga

Refreshments
Sue Stonecliffe

Website
Jeff Gerritsen

General Meeting

Friday, February 4th 2011

(First Friday of each Month)

7:30 Business Meeting

8:00 Program

This Month:

The Coast Guard will be here to discuss crossing the bar.

Cruise Weekend

In February we will cruise down (or up depending on where you are coming from) the beautiful Multnomah Channel to Coon Island where we will celebrate Valentine's Day with your hosts Peter and Susan Gierga. Plan to bring food that is red and white. Join us Saturday, February 12th and 13th at the east docks. Call our Commodore, Garry Weber, 503-789-8135, if you have questions.

Commodore's Comments

The weather is getting bad but our cruises are still lot's of fun. It's often not as bad as you might think. The new Years Cruise is a great example as the weather was cold but clear and sunny and the night sky was filled with stars. Don't be a chicken, just plan to do it.

It's time to think about supporting our club by being an officer. If you would like to be nominated for the office of Commodore, Vice Commodore, Treasurer, or secretary please contact me or bring it up at the next meeting. The duties of each position are described in the back of the roster. Please give this serious consideration as without officers the club can not exist.

And don't forget, George and Sue Stonecliff will be giving a presentation and slide show of their South Pacific Cruise at the Multnomah Athletic Club on the 25th of Jan. It's free and if you would like to attend you should contact them to RSVP.

Important Announcement

In an effort to cut down costs and labor we are trying to eliminate as many printed copys of the newsletter as possible. It is costing us almost \$50 per month to print and send, that is one boats dues per month. We understand that some members have no other way of getting it and will continue to send them out to those members. If you need to get a printed copy please contact me by phone or email and we will continue to send you the printed version. If we haven't heard from you by the time the next newsletter is due to be published, you will only receive the electronic version.

Thanks every one ! Commodore, Garry Weber

Minutes of the Board Meeting

The SIYC Board gathered at the home of Sue and Vice Commodore George Stonecliffe. In attendance were the Commodore Garry Weber, Treasurer Ed Mallowney, Secretary Marianne Mallowney and Past Commodore Ed and Sarah Daugherty.

The Treasurer reported a bank balance of \$3,352.31. We are renewing our membership in CRYA.

The Portland Boat Show is Jan. 12-16. The Seattle Boat Show is Jan. 21-30. The club used to take a bus full of the people to the Seattle show.

This year the January cruise will be a land cruise scheduled to the Portland Sternwheeler docked in downtown Portland. The date is being worked out but it looks like early in the day on Jan. 22.

The programs scheduled by the Vice Commodore include the Coast Guard discussing crossing the bar at the February meeting and "Preparing for Blue Water Cruising" at the March meeting.

There were about 40 people at the Christmas dinner at Rose City Yacht Club. The White Elephant raffle was lots of fun-ask Dave Mangan.

There were 5 boats at Coon Island for the New Year's Cruise. It was cold but dry.

The Board is still working on the website and hopes to put together a brochure to actively promote SIYC.

Commodore Garry will be looking for help with the nomination committee and nominations for the May elections.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Mallowney, SIYC Secretary

Minutes of the General Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Commodore Garry Weber at 7:30 P.M.

George and Barbara Skipworth were introduced as guests. They have a 30'Islander.

New members Rowan Madix and Devon Quinn were inducted by Ed Mallowney. Their boat 'IMI LOA is moored in St. Helens. They have a 3 year plan in place and hope to go cruising in 2 years. Welcome!

The treasurer reported funds of \$3352.10. The Board is still working to collect more of the unpaid dues. The club has renewed membership in CRYA and look to add \$200 back to the general fund when the security deposit is received from Rose City.

The Vice Commodore reported on **February's meeting**. The Coast Guard will be here to discuss crossing the bar. Fred Bates, a former SIYC commodore and diesel mechanic will speak at the **March meeting** about preparing for Blue Water sailing. Marty Kirk from Roger's Marine will be here for the **April meeting**.

The Portland Boat show will be Jan. 12-16. The Seattle Boat show will be Jan. 21-30. Two hundred Free seminars are scheduled. It is always a great show.

The Christmas party was a success even though the dates were changed on short notice. There were about 40 members and guests in attendance at Rose City Yacht Club. (Bryan Robbins and his new wife Kim were there. Congratulations!) The White Elephant raffle was lots of fun-ask Dave Mangan...

The New Year's cruise to Coon Island was a cold but dry 3 day event. Cambria, Penelope, Conch, Hawksbill and 'Imi Loa were in attendance for the fun. Peter and Susan's boat was a nice gathering place for all.

The January land cruise is scheduled for January 22. An early afternoon gathering at the Portland Sternwheeler docked at the downtown Portland docks with a tour has been planned. Further information will be shared next week.

The February cruise will be February 12th and 13th to Coon Island.

The new business discussion included the reintroduction of the monthly raffle and the possibility of scheduling some summer cruises.

The Commodore will be working on the nominations for the May election.

After the break, SIYC club members Richard Sandefur and Anita Melbo shared stories and slides of their cruise from Malaysia to Malta, Turkey. They sail in a 38' Alajuela named "Moon Shadow". They have traveled 30,000 miles in 11 years. They have never seen pirates but did travel with other boats for added safety during one stretch where pirates are known to be. One of their favorite places from this part of the passage was Yemen where the people were especially friendly and spoke English. The next leg of their continuing adventure will be to set sail for Gibraltar later this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Mallowney, SIYC Secretary

*Joyeux
Anniversaire*

No one who currently belongs to the Sauvie Island Yacht Club was married in January!

"Love is what makes two people sit in the middle of a bench when there is plenty of room at both ends"



Please continue to send letters, articles, educational opportunities, recipes, ideas for programs, and other information our Newsletter Editor Susan Gierga at Or if your contact information has changed let our Database Coordinator know; again, Susan Gierga –



George Miner 1/4
Susan Gierga 1/06
Kim Taylor 1/06
Sandra Calef 1/08
Dave Mangan 1/12
Nick Wigen 1/19
Paul Strait 1/19
Craig Johnston 1/24
Ed Daugherty 1/30
Brent Forsberg 1/30

*"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."
Abraham Lincoln*

**SIYC Clothing & Accessories
For 2009/10**

Short-sleeved collared sport shirt--\$20.00
Adult - K420 Ladies cut - L420
Long sleeved-----\$28.00
Adult - K320
Sweatshirts
Pullover, hooded-----\$24.00
Adult - PC90H
Crew neck-----\$17.00
Adult - PC90
Zip front, hooded-----\$32.00
Adult - -F258
Fleece Jackets
Zip front-----\$40.00
Adult - JP77
Ladies cut - LP77 (no green)
Fleece Vests-----\$30.00
Adult - JP79 Ladies cut - LP79
Wind Shirt (v-neck nylon) \$24.00
Adult - JP72
Zip Front Nylon Jacket\$30.00
Adult - JP70
Anorak ¼ zip pullover, hooded-----\$32.00

*** All items come in green and navy except where noted.

*** A check made out to SIYC need to accompany orders.

Mail checks to: Sarah Daugherty

Note: sizes beyond L will be \$1.50 more.

2010-2011 CALENDAR

GENERAL MEETINGS		BOARD MEETINGS		CRUISES	
September 3	Sauvie Island School	August 31	TBD	September 11 – 12	Gilbert River Docks
October 1	Sauvie Island School	September 28	TBD	October 23 – 24	E. Government Island
November 5	Sauvie Island School	November 2	TBD	November 20 - 21	Thanksgiving at Hadley's Landing
December 11	TBD	At Christmas Party	TBD	December 31-1	New Year's Cruise Coon Island
January 7	Sauvie Island School	January 4	TBD	January	Land Cruise
February 4	Sauvie Island School	February 1	TBD	February 12-13	Valentine's Cruise Coon Island
March 4	Sauvie Island School	March 1	TBD	March 12-13	Anchoring Cruise
April 1	Sauvie Island School	March 29	TBD	April 16-17	Navigation Cruise
May 6	Sauvie Island School	May 3	TBD	May 14-15	Race/Drift Cruise Sand Island
June 4	Annual Picnic	At Annual Picnic	TBD		

CLUB RAFFLE

SIYC will be having a raffle each month starting in February. We have suggested that members bring items to raffle with a goal of giving some special gift to Sauvie Island School. We will gather the funds until the May meeting and then decide how the funds should be used. We make a donation to the school each year for the use of the room, but, maybe this year we could do something additional. It seems that schools can always use help and our special gift could show our appreciation for the inexpensive gathering place we have enjoyed for so many years.

Please bring an item to add to the raffle. Some ideas are as follows:

Seasonal items-October-Halloween decorations or pumpkin

Fresh baked items-a batch of cookies, a pie, a batch of brownies

Clothing items-new or slightly worn-SIYC items, something to wear for the season

Something for the galley-a cookbook, a can of sardines, Spam

Something useful any time- Batteries, scotch tape, band-aids

A bottle of wine (maybe you like white wine and you have some red wine that you could re-gift)

Boat items- slightly used dishware if you replaced a set, placemats.

SIYC's December Cruise Report

New Years Cruise Report

Five boats showed up, Cambria, Hawksbill, Penelope, Conch and Roan and Devon on their Ericson. The weather was incredible ! Cold but clear and sunny all three days. We stayed all the way from Fri to Sun so we had two potluck dinners and one breakfast. Thanks to Penelope's Captain and Captain for their hospitality by having us all over for meals and good company. The hiking was great as the ground was frozen and there was very little mud. We went to the other dock as there was limited space for both scheduled Yacht Clubs and that worked very well. We got to socialize with the several other boats that shared the dock.

Most of us actually made it to midnight for the celebration with party hats and noisemakers supplied by Conch. Dave fired a few rounds from his Aqua Net powered Potato Cannon to ad to the fun.

A really nice cruise! Garry

ATTENTION ALL SIYC MEMBERS!

If you have information regarding any of our cruising boats, updates on locations, etc., PLEASE let me know! We can only keep this section current if we have the information!

Crusier Liaison: Susan Gierga

SIYC CRUISING BOATS – Locations out of the United States

Boat Name	Owners' Name	Location
Adagio	Jeff & Jane Woodward	West coast of Mexico
Ahwahnee	Tom & Kathy Edwards	Bahia del Sol, El Salvador
Glaoch Ne Mara	Rick Brady	Mazatlan, Mexico
Kailani	David & Christy Dykkesten	Bocas del Toro, Panama
Moonshadow	Richard Sandefur & Anita Melbo	Malta
Perpetua	Pat & Susan Canniff	Mazatlan, Mexico
Rolling Thunder	Bruce, Jan & Max Payne	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Sea Tern	Herman & Nancy Ford	For Sale...
Sequoia	Craig & Barbara Johnston	Mexico
Starbounc	Earl & Donna Davis	Hawaii
Wild Rover	Mike & Gail Cannady	South Carolina...

Cruising Websites/contact info:

Adagio: <http://www.svadagio.net>

Ahwahnee:

www.sailblogs.com/member/voyage_continued

Albion: www.teleport.com/~forsberg/log1.htm

Moonshadow blog: <http://voyagemoonshadow.blogspot.com/>

Perpetua blog: http://www.sailblogs.com/member/our_journeys/

Perpetua Pictures: http://imageevent.com/our_journeys/

Kailani: kailaniatsea@yahoo.com

Sequoia: k7cej@winlink.org

ATTENTION ALL CRUISERS:

Your letters are the highlight of our newsletter!!!... We really want to hear from you... Where you are... adventures... recipes... photos... cruising tips... gossip... well, you get the idea. ☺

Received From Craig and Barbara Johnston

December 24, 2010

When I last wrote, we had arrived at the little town of Chacala, after several delightful days spent at Isla Isabela. Chacala was a brief transition from the relative wildness of Isla Isabela to the tourist-centered environment of Banderas Bay (Puerto Vallarta) which was to come. At Isla Isabela, we saw courtship dances by blue-footed boobies. In Banderas Bay, we saw a television crew filming *telenovelas* (Mexican soap operas) amid plush resort surroundings. What a contrast!

I forgot to mention that during the passage from Isla Isabela to Chacala, Craig caught a 22 pound dorado. It's always pretty sad for me to watch the death of such a beautiful fish. This time we used some of the rotgut Fiji vodka (we've been carrying it around since Fiji) to put the poor fish out of his misery. It's a lot of work to get the fish fileted, chunked into pieces, vacuum sealed and frozen, not to mention cleaning the cockpit of all the blood and bits of fish. Craig and I have a routine down, though, and each of us knows what to do to expedite the process. We vacuum sealed 14 separate packets of fish, each just right for one dinner for the two of us. Or two packets if we have guests... The night of our arrival in Chacala, we had the first delicious fish dinner. The rest went into the freezer.

We anchored in the bay at Chacala, and decided to go ashore to explore. We gave some thought to landing the dinghy at the concrete pier surrounded by wall-to-wall fishing *pangas*, but it wasn't practical for a lot of reasons. Instead, we beached the dinghy at an adjacent small beach, pulling up onto fine sand. Several other cruisers had done the same. We walked up the cobblestone street, past brightly painted houses (including some for rent). We passed one building under construction, a future *lavanderia* (laundry) on the ground floor. Two workers mixed concrete, poured it out onto the street and scooped it into buckets, which were raised by pulley to workers on the top floor. It looked like very hard work in the heat. We discovered in the main part of town that Chacala is a tourist resort for Mexican tourists. Several people told us that this time of year, all the tourists come on weekends. The *palapa* restaurants on the beach were mostly empty, it being only Friday. We entered one, and made immediate friends with Lupita, who ran a little restaurant service. They had a fire going for barbecuing fish and shrimp, and we tried the shrimp – very nice, although somewhat messy.

After we dinghied back to the boat, a *banda* arrived on the beach. Three trumpets, a trombone, a drummer and several singers. They were loud. Interestingly, they aimed the bells of their instruments out to sea, as though the concert were for us. The drummer was particularly impressive, beating out complicated rhythms. This must have been the event marking the beginning of the weekend arrival of the Mexican tourists. According to the locals we talked to, the bay would be full of "personal watercraft" and water skiers on Saturday and Sunday. A good time to leave! We pulled up anchor on Saturday morning, and headed for La Cruz de Huanacastle, just south, around Punta Mita, and into Banderas Bay. During that day, we saw several humpback whales, but also increasing signs of civilization. Rows of condominiums appeared onshore, particularly as we rounded Punta Mita.

The marina at La Cruz de Huanacastle is relatively new, and we had no charts which showed it. Fortunately it's well marked, and the marina office assigned us a slip. There began the adventures in Mexican entrepreneurship and bureaucracy. The entrepreneurship began first. As Craig was washing the salt off the boat, Jose came around, and offered (for a price) to clean and wax the hull. Ernesto was not far behind, but we had already made a deal with Jose. We delivered our laundry to Sofia, and hired Luis to do some upholstery repair.

We took the local bus south to the "Mega" store in Bucerias, where we stocked up on groceries and purchased a Mexican cell phone. That cell phone launched us into the bureaucracy of Telcel, Mexico's number one phone company. The young woman assured us the phone was all set up and ready to go, but the first time we tried to make a call, there came a long message which – although I speak Spanish fairly well – was incomprehensible, and obviously blocking any attempt to use the phone. The young woman at the Mega store had told us we had to go into Puerto Vallarta to acquire the *banda ancha* modem for our computer to be able to use the cell phone network for access to the internet. So I decided to take the recalcitrant cell phone, and get it taken care of at the same time.

The Telcel "client assistance center" takes up a large space in the upper floor of a fancy shopping center. There were several lines. The first (which took 20 minutes) was for the purpose of evaluating which next line you should be in. The second took 90 minutes. When I finally reached the front of the line, I was assigned to Eduardo, who explained that I needed to have my passport in order to activate the cell phone. (I didn't have my passport). He finally said that he'd input the necessary information, using his own data. After several attempts, he finally found the correct *banda ancha* modem that would work with Windows 7, and a seven-day card for internet access. Then, he sent me to the cashier's line to pay for it. When I came back to Eduardo, it turned out he'd forgotten to write up the seven day card, so back to the cashier's line. When I finally finished all of that, I felt somewhat shell-shocked. The good news is, that now the computer had access to the internet.

Of course we theoretically had internet access in the marina at La Cruz, just as we theoretically had internet access in Mazatlan and San Jose del Cabo. But the fact is that these marinas have a puny internet connection, which they make available via wi-fi to hundreds of boats. When all the boats try to access it at once, the internet connection slows down to the extent that the most likely message you get is "server not found." The only decent time for internet access in those marinas is the middle of the night.

Well, that's about it for this trip report. We left Puerto Vallarta for a wedding in Queretaro, and then for Christmas with family in California. We'll return to the boat the first of the year, and resume our season of cruising. There are still opportunities to join us—until we leave for Hawaii at the end of the season, the longest trip we are planning is an overnight, with the rest of the time to enjoy tropical Mexican culture. Let us know if you are interested!

Best wishes for a very happy holiday season!

Craig & Barbara Johnston

S/V Sequoia

Received from Barbara Johnston

Dear friends and family:

Most of you are probably familiar with the old saw defining a boat: "A hole in the water, into which you pour money." There's another that's commonly mentioned among the cruising community: "What's the definition of cruising?" Answer: "Repairing your boat in exotic places." We're now living that definition, at least for a few days.

We left La Cruz Marina the day before yesterday, to go cruising to Punta de Mita (at the north end of Banderas Bay) and make at least one day trip to the Islas Marietas. The islands, near Punta de Mita, are known for the good snorkeling, caves and abundant wildlife. Another reason for leaving La Cruz is that our watermaker doesn't work so well (or at least it uses up filters at an unreasonable rate) in populated areas. We wanted to get out into clear water so that we could fill our water tanks. By the time we got to Punta de Mita, we had a healthy ten inches of water in one tank. We shut down the watermaker, and prepared to make an early departure the next morning for the Islas Marietas.

We headed out yesterday morning (watermaker going) and made the passage out to the islands. They're rugged and interesting, no question about it. We saw whales, dolphins, and those line dancing stingrays, as we got close. We anchored, and Craig went down to check on the watermaker's progress. Whaa?? The tank gauge shows four inches of water, instead of the 10 of the night before. Not only that, the bilge pump is cycling on and off, and there's a significant flow of water into the bilge.

We cleaned out every under-sole compartment, and they were all full of water. Hot water. Pop cans, beer cans, wine bottles, canned fruit, sitting in hot water. Vacuum sealed bags of chocolate candy, sitting in hot water. (Yikes!) Cleaning products, sitting in hot water. Everything got removed, every compartment got cleaned, and every limber hole reamed out (allowing water to flow from compartment to compartment and eventually to the bilge).

Needless to say, we concluded it was the water heater. That fabulous, compact, Swedish, stainless steel water heater, situated under the quarter berth. Now we moved everything off the quarter berth (where we store a fair amount of stuff). Off come the cushions, the boards under the cushions. Out comes all the spare hanks of rope, scuba tanks, pieces of plywood for unknown woodworking projects (hopefully never needed). I didn't get a picture at this point, but imagine all that stuff, and everything that came out of the under-sole compartments, all sitting out in the normally clean, neat public areas of the boat. And we're sitting at anchor in the middle of a wildlife refuge/snorkeling paradise.

We figured out that our little sortie from the dock was at an end, and that we needed to get ourselves to a place where we could take on water, not worried about the water impurities one worries about in Mexico. The marina that advertises itself as having clean water piped to the docks is Paradise Village Marina in Nuevo Vallarta. So here we are. This morning Craig completed the disassembly of the hot water heater (which involved lots more hot water, heated by the engine on the way here). He figured out what parts were needed (the heating element had corroded completely through, destroying its electrical connection, and making an exit channel for the hot water to escape). In the 9 years since we bought the water heater, the Swedish company has been acquired by an Italian company, but hopefully there are parts available in the United States. Then it's just a question of getting them here. That maybe is a subject to be covered in a later writing.

Paradise Village is an upscale marina. It charges more than La Cruz (although not much more), and has fabulous facilities. 4 swimming pools. Innumerable restaurants. A shopping mall steps away. Close by buses into Puerto Vallarta. And time share salesmen lurking behind every bush.

So: Shall we go cruising with no hot water? Shall we hang here until the parts arrive? Is this the time for a land trip? Stay tuned. Barbara

Update from Wild Rover
December 2010

It's a long story, but the boat is currently in Fort Pierce, Florida, and we're at home in Vancouver, Washington. We had looked forward to a six month cruise, but family health issues intervened. We'll get things straightened out here, and then get back on the boat for a few months after the first of the year.

When we went back to the boat in October 2010, preparing it for cruising wasn't that hard. After several seasons of doing this, we can "strip" the boat or "re-fit" it in about four days. No major problems had surfaced last summer, so we were ready to go after our stint as relief dockmasters at Lady's Island Marina (Beaufort, SC). An interesting economic note: Cruising boat traffic on the IntraCoastal Waterway (ICW) is double what it was in 2008 and 2009. We got this from the local newspaper reporting on bridge openings, and from the constantly full slips at the marina. We were also newly reminded that newbies really need to bone up on docking procedures. After the third boat in a row only had one docking line prepared, Mike was at his wits' end. Lady's Island has up to 2.5 knots of current at times, and you can't presume an easy tie up even on a face dock.

We left Lady's Island mid-November, and spent two days cruising around Port Royal Sound, just to be sure all systems were working. We then did one overnight passage down to the mouth of the St. Johns River (which leads inland to Jacksonville, FL). The forecast was benign, but the seas were confused, and it wasn't a pleasant trip. Not enough wind to steady the boat. We were ready to go in. Strangely, friends of ours from North Carolina (and previously San Diego), overheard us on the radio as they were coming in from three nights at sea. We joined up in St. Augustine, FL and celebrated Thanksgiving together. St. Augustine is an interesting example of how mooring fields can greatly improve a town's desirability to cruisers. There has always been a large municipal marina, where we've stayed a couple of times. The town itself is historic and picturesque. The Castillo de San Marcos is a well preserved National Historic Site, and there are blocks of historic buildings in Old Town. The fort itself reminded us of the castillos in Acapulco and Portobello. Flagler College has massive brick castles of its own from the early 1900s. The last few years were hard on the town because of the disruption caused by replacing the historic Bridge of Lions. (Sound familiar?) Very controversial, but eventually they decided to build a temporary bridge while they restored the old bridge. There is a lot of current there, and we had never tried the anchorage. There were a lot of derelict boats, poor holding, and it seemed very shallow. This year, with the completion of the bridge restoration, the municipal marina put in over 150 mooring balls, in three separate fields. The derelicts are gone, and the mooring balls are a big hit. \$20/night and you get a dinghy dock, garbage, laundry and shower privileges, and a pump out boat. It was great. We stayed longer than we initially thought because we were having so much fun.

St. Augustine is about 20 nautical miles south on the ICW from where we came in off the ocean. Because of the weather forecasts, we decided to stay on the ICW. There are helpful websites where you can monitor ICW trouble spots, but this year they mostly seemed to have been dredged. As each year goes by, we don't freak out as much in shallow water. 7-8 feet is okay, and 9-10 feet is more than enough. We joke about being in the ICW trench when we see over 12 ft. Anyway, after three long days we made it down to Vero Beach (which is about half way down Florida's peninsula). Most of our anchorages on the ICW this year were in 6-8 ft. of water. (We used to draw 5 3/4 ft.--now we draw 5 1/2 ft. because we're less fully loaded.) The bottoms are soft mud/sand/shells, and the holding is usually excellent. These days, the depths don't cause us to lose sleep; only the presence of an occasional boat too close.

Vero Beach is another municipal marina with mooring balls. It is located in a backwater off the ICW where there are no wakes. The expectation is they will raft boats of similar size up to three across. We rafted up next to our same friends, and had a great week in Vero. There a free bus takes cruisers all over town, and everything is so convenient you have a hard time leaving. But there, we received news of Mike's dad's failing health, and we had to make plans to get home. There were no slips available in Vero, so we needed to travel 20 nautical miles further to a marina in Ft. Pierce. We've stayed in that marina before and know it to be a good place. They have 4-way tie ups, so once you get your boat strung up between all the pilings, you know it's not going anywhere. A

few days before we left, a front came through with steady 25-30 knot winds, and gusts to 45! Plus it was COLD. We put the Antarctic diesel heater to good use the last week in Florida. Most cruising boats on the East Coast have no heaters, so everyone else was pretty miserable. Once again we were opening hatches to keep from sweating overnight.

Now we're shivering here with the rest of you!

Happy Holidays,
Gail and Mike Cannady Good Morning,

We hope your Christmas was wonderful. Ours was. We started the day with a dinghy ride out the harbor and around the little islands just outside. This was the first time we've done that. Really look at the rocks and take in the view. Usually when we pass the islands we are either on our way to cross the Sea at the beginning of the cruising season, or returning to put the boat to bed. When we leave it's usually late afternoon or night. Coming back is generally early morning after an all night trip across the Sea. (80 miles, 14 hours.) Yesterday it was a calm morning, and we were able to cruise around and explore the shallows between the rock islands and the main shoreline. The islands are mostly huge rocks (150 - 200 feet tall) that have broken off the headlands of the mainland. They are mostly volcanic with hues of red, orange, purple and black. They have lots of caves and interesting shapes made by the effects of wind and rain. Lots of bird droppings paint large white-wash areas. There are huge cactus growing in the sheltered areas, but mostly the islands are bare rock with lots of birds nesting or roosting on them. There are lots of pelicans, a wide variety of gulls, osprey scold from high perches. The magnificent frigates are mostly circling way up high in the sky - almost invisible little specs of black in the clear blue. There are also a good number of vultures; circling overhead, and also perched on rocks or cactus. I'm often reminded of childhood cartoon versions of vultures in the desert.

When we got back to the marina, it was time to get over to the San Carlos Yate (Yate = Yacht in Spanish. Yachtay) Club for Christmas dinner. Actually getting into the Yate Club was also a first for us. It is a private club and we are not members. The view from their balcony is really nice! It was a perfect day. Bright sun, temps in the mid-70's, a nice gentle breeze from the Sea. The food was good and we met some new people. Two couples shared our table. One couple buying the boat from the other. The boat is still in the work yard and hopes to launch around the first of the year. The new owners are about to burst with anticipation of the coming season. The previous owners are a little nostalgic, but glad the boat is going to continue providing happy adventures.

We talked to Sergio, the welder in La Paz. He's done with the construction of our new water tank and sent it off via PaquetExpress on Friday. We expect it to arrive here by Wednesday. We figure it will take two or three days to fully install, providing we don't run into major difficulties. Keep fingers crossed! We are so ready to be done with all the work and get cruising. Our little dinghy exploration was just the teaser we needed to get the lets-go-cruising juices flowing.

Christmas is a big deal here. Most of the stores close from noon on the 24th to after New Year's. Lots of Santa Clause pictures. Lots of Christmas decorations. We had a lighted boat parade on the night of the 24th. Partiers on the beach whooped and cheered as they passed, and let off some industrial size fireworks too. All day yesterday the marina was full of Mexican families (sometimes three and four generations all together). They were all dressed in their finest, strolling the docks enjoying the view and looking at the beautiful boats in the harbor. Every now and then they stopped to take photos of each family member with an especially nice boat in the background.

Music is huge here in Mexico. Everyday the dock boys sing full throated as they work polishing boats. Boat loudspeakers blare competing music. Latin Rap, American classic rock, contemporary Latin rock, traditional Spanish ballads. For Christmas the gamit runs from the ridiculous to the sublime. Goofy Chipmunk Feliz Navidad to gorgeous classical choruses backed by full orchastras.

Today we will do a little more to be ready to go to sea by the time the tank arrives. We'll wait for the sun to dry the dew from the dink, then put it in it's cover and stow it aboard. We bought some plastic storage bins a few days ago. They are just the right size to fit the space behind the battery box under the cockpit. Today we plan

to sort through all the tool boxes and do some organizing. All the wrenches in one 6" x 12" box; all the screw drivers in another, etc. Then put the little boxes into the big boxes and hopefully make living aboard easier and less chaotic. It seems that everytine we need a tool we end up tearing the boat apart finding the tool we need for whatever project we are doing at the time. Let's hope this will make things a little easier.

That's enough for now, Happy New Year!

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