



Volume XXVIII Number 3 March 2016

Sailing Singles of South Florida

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**Up Coming
Events**

General Meeting

3 March

Circle Raft-up

5-6 March

Board Meeting

21 March

Two SSSF yachts enter the first Miami to Havana sailboat race

Two SSSF boats started the race in Miami on 10 February at 13:25. They sailed a course of 210 NM to Havana. *The Grand*, a Columbia 34 with Capt. Kelly Dobbs, James Bradford as navigator, Debi Hallmark as trimmer, and Sheila O'Neil in the pit, finished in 7th place in the PHRF division D. The *Escape*, a Catalina 350, with Capt. Jim McBrayer, Stan Dekiel as navigator, Karen Foster as trimmer and Bernard Steine in the pit, withdrew from the race and DNF. However, they did motor to Havana.



Escape Log by Karen Foster

This year there was the first organized race from Miami to Havana. With safety in numbers we jumped on the chance to sail to Cuba. Originally about 60 boats signed up. The Captains would have a lot of paperwork to complete. Cost would be \$500 per sailboat. Requirements were at least 4 persons on board, life raft, PHRF Rating (\$50) Performance Handicap Racing Fleet, the "Find My Spot" locator device and the Homeland Security Sticker. There were waivers involved, of course and initially it was thought there was an insurance company that would cover us. That insurance company backed out just prior to the start of the race. Oh well. Living on the edge most of the captains decided to go for it regardless.

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Commodore Lynette Beal's message on page 2

Sailing Singles of South Florida



From the Helm By: Lynette Beal, Commodore

Happy March SSSF!! We are reaching the first quarter of 2016. Not only have we had a fantastic New Year's Eve Party, a successful Change of Command, a fun Chinese New Year Raft-up, we were featured on the front page of the Waterfront Times!! The January and February SSSF Mainsheet Newsletters have included educational articles on such subjects as Man Overboard Techniques and our SSSF Captains have been highlighted.

We have also incorporated videos at our General Meetings on Heavy Weather Sailing, and Man Overboard etc. We have plans for excellent Speakers and additional training at future General Meetings. Your 2016 Board of Director's is working diligently to provide these activities and events.

I would like to congratulate those Captains and crew that participated in the amazing race to Cuba! We are so proud of you. A presentation by all who participated in the Cuba Race will be on the Agenda for the March 3, 2016 SSSF General Meeting at Universal Palms at 7:30pm. This will be a very interesting meeting and I encourage you all to attend. Let's pack the seats.

SSSF has been invited to participate in the Hillsboro Inlet Sailing Club (HISC) Circle Raft-up scheduled March 5th-6th. Our Fleet Captain Kelly Dobbs and Sailing Director Stan Dekiel will be available to plan for SSSF participation. All interested Captains are requested to work with these individuals and indicate if crew is requested.

A Cheeseburger in Paradise Party is planned for February 27, 2016 so look for the Flyers and e-mails! On St Patrick's Day 3/17/16 the Thursday night SSSF regularly scheduled Social will be held at Flip Flops. Free appetizers will be served compliments of your 2016 SSSF Board. Please wear Green and your St. Patrick's Hats etc!!! Also the SSSF 2016 Board has approved funding for a free Barbecue for SSSF members at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park in Ft Lauderdale, scheduled on 4/16/16!! Get ready for a great day of fun activities such as canoeing, hiking, free tram rides, and free Barbecue! Look for more information in the near future. The Sailing Orientation Sessions (SOS) is being planned for May and details will follow.

The membership is increasing. The Waterfront Times article has helped to promote SSSF. Copies of the article are available at SSSF meetings and socials.

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Escape Log continued

The evening prior to the race they held a Skipper's Meeting at the Coral Reef Yacht Club in Miami. It was a great time to connect with others we knew from various sailing clubs and sailors from across the country who had come down for the race. There was some from as far away as California, Texas, Illinois, Michigan, New York and Canada. They had great hats and t-shirts for us to purchase. Each captain was given two caps. The evening event was sponsored by Mount Gay Rum so it was flowing freely. Great rum punches!

The next day we were set to start our race at 1:25 pm. It was great fun seeing all the boats out there deploying spinnakers and jockeying for the best position to cross the starting line. Of course the winds died just as we were to approach the start line. Off like a herd of turtles at less than 3 knots! But nothing really mattered; we were just in it for the fun and adventure of going to Cuba by sailboat.

So we headed down towards the Keys down towards Summerland Key turning towards Cuba 24 hours later. It was 3-4 hours later, winds died once again; we were making 1 to 2 knots and no one else in sight. The Captain decided to turn on the engine. I was thrilled! Keeping in mind I usually hate hearing the engine and that would disqualify us from the race! It would have taken us forever. The Gulfstream started really beating us up. My only mission was to get to Cuba by Sailboat. We wanted to get there before the parties started too! There were pig roasts and other events planned. We didn't want to miss out on the fun.

We all arrived safely in Cuba, all 42 boats from Miami. It was one hell of a ride. It could best be described as a being in a human washing machine. Thank goodness it was always dry below. It's the only time in my life when I believe I got battered and bruised while sleeping during our 3 hour break from our shift. Crossing the Gulf Stream is no easy feat especially when the winds are working against you.

It was cold (45 degrees) stiff winds gusting up to 35 knots. The nights were so dark you could barely distinguish the turbulent sea from the black skies except for the stars! There were millions of stars visible, helping to guide the way. So incredibly beautiful! I have never longed for sunrise to come as I did during our two nights at sea. Jim and I did the 4:00 am to 7:00 am shift. Poor Jim was at the helm 95% of the time since I'm so dyslexic and terrible at the helm. He is very patience and an incredible sailor. I am very impressed with his abilities so regardless of the conditions I am totally comfortable.



Karen and Capt. Jim



Stan at the start

Sailing Singles of South Florida

Escape Log continued

The toughest part of our crossing was when Jim decided we needed to drop our double reefed main sail. We were getting 35 knot winds and the boat was rocking side to side, alternating the water coming up to the toe rail on each side of the boat about every 6 seconds. Beam to beam. The swells were 8-10 foot. It was very dark and Jim was going to climb out of the safety of the cockpit and head to the mast to pull down the sail. We were always tethered, but Jim being so tall and awkward, made me nervous by insisting it would be him to go forward. My only thought was if he went overboard he'd be dragging for awhile before I would be able to do anything to help. I on the other hand am short and very agile. I'm like a monkey and can get around real well. It was at this point that I said no! Let's get Stan up. There was no way in hell I wanted to be left in the cockpit alone with the captain dangling over the lifelines!

We got Stan up and he took the helm. Jim latched on to the Jack lines and crawled forward. I latched on immediately behind him, preparing to, at any instance, lunge forward and grab him if need be. He did great! Only once did he loose his balance. No need for me to try to rescue this Captain.

Once the mainsail was down we continued our slow progress less than one nautical mile per hour. Although if you looked overboard it seemed like we were doing 20-30 knots as the water rushed by us. The Gulf Stream is relentless.

It was always such a welcoming feeling to know that once the sun was up we could head to our berth and bounce around from side to side, hoping not to get more battered and bruised.

Sun set while we were 6 nautical miles from Marina Hemingway but we were comfortably cruising up the coast. We had hoped to make landfall during daylight hours into our unknown (to us) harbor. Suddenly the engine quit. Total surprise to our Captain; there should have been plenty of fuel left. We added the fuel from a spare can on our deck and tried the engine again. No luck. Jim and Ben went below to check out the engine. Stan took the helm. Amid all the confusion The Grand, another sailing vessel from our club was hailing us. They were 10 nautical miles out and were trying to raise the dock master or the race committee on the radio to get an escort into the harbor. Stan let them know we were about a mile from the harbor with no engine. They understood their urgency was less than our current situation. It would have been extremely difficult given the current wind conditions trying to sail into a marina and docking without an engine; but doable.

Meanwhile below Captain Jim and Ben cleaned water out of the separator and bled the fuel line. Voila! We were back in business. Funny how suddenly the hum of the engine was enjoy-

All four of us, Captain Jim, myself, Stan and Ben were on deck watching for the sea buoy to the entrance of the harbor. We repeatedly called the Harbormaster and the race committee for assistance to no avail.

Sailing Singles of South Florida

Escape Log continued

Finally Sunset Dreams, another sailing vessel in the race, already at the dock answered our call. It was just nice to hear from somebody. We had started to wonder if somehow our radio was now out.

Some how we had all missed the sea buoy. We had to back track. Ben and I went forward with spot lights trying to determine the channel into the harbor and to customs. It was a little confusing when the dock master finally came on the radio and gave us the landmarks to look for.

We safely docked at customs around 8:30 pm almost 55 hours since the start of the race in Miami. After we got secured to our dock and plugged into to power we raised a glass to celebrate before putting the dinghy in the water to go out and assist The Grand and escort them in.

When we arrived in Marina Hemingway the customs agents helped secure our boat to the dock, one went below to inspect. Each of us was handed the standard custom forms that we typically fill out on airplanes and another form to fill in, then we were told to follow the officer to the office where we individually sat in front of a custom agent who entered our info into his computer, scanned our passports and had us look towards the camera as he snapped a photo. With that complete we were free to go to our assigned dock space at Marina Hemingway.

Once tied up, we had more officials come aboard. The dock master went below, sat down at the salon table and started going through our paperwork. An agricultural inspector and his assistant started asking questions about our food as he checked out the fridge, freezer and cabinets. We had been told no fresh eggs, meat or fruits. We managed to eat all our eggs but lemons, limes and apples were swinging in the veggie hammock in front of his nose. There was no denying that, and no obvious plans to conceal. He didn't seem to mind. There was a slight communication gap since none of us really understood Spanish and their English was very limited. We were instructed that all garbage from the boat would be collected by one of their personnel. It was classified as "International Garbage." No problem. That sounded great.

Then a health official took out an instrument to check our body temperature by holding it close to our foreheads. We all passed. No one was sick or running a temperature. After the crossing I was glad he wasn't taking anyone's blood pressure. Those might have been a little high.

The dock master and several officials said gratuities would be appreciated but were not required. We had already given them beverages and cookies but decided that a little baksheesh to grease the wheels would not hurt.

On leaving the marina to return to the US, we had to stop at customs again where they scanned the passports again, examined the cabin below to insure only four of us were leaving and sent us on our way.

Sailing Singles of South Florida

Escape Log continued

US customs had required an incredible amount of paperwork and information before we left. We started over a month in advance. This included a form with all the names of crew and potential crew members. The Captain also had to get a vessel reporting system sticker from Homeland Security. We had to justify the reason for travel into Cuba. The Miami to Havana Race coordinator had received prior approval so it was much easier for us.



The Finish Line in Havana

We were classified as an athletic event. (Although we had another mission for our boat. Captain Jim had agreed to transport more than 200 pounds of toys, art supplies and books for children in Cuba.)

Photos of Havana by Karen Foster and Stan Dekiel



Sailing Singles of South Florida



A Heartwarming Mission by Karen Foster

Nothing is better than seeing a child's eyes light up with delight! In third world and communist countries it is a simple task of providing crayons, chalk, pencils, art supplies and toys! No need for iPads, X-Boxes, nor Nintendos! It's back to the basics. Simple pleasures! It is so very simple to provide so much joy.

Sailing Singles of South Florida (SSSF) Members and JM Lexus stepped up to the plate and brought donations for us to bring over to the children in Cuba on the Miami to Havana Race. Captain Jim McBrayer agreed to cart over 200 pounds of toys, books and art supplies on S/V Escape for the kids in Cuba. My true mission! The race wasn't as important to us as getting there and getting the toys to the kids was my focus.



Once there I talked with the guard who watched the boats, asking him if he knew of anyone who could help me bring the donations to a school. I don't speak Spanish so he was my translator. I flagged down a car and told our guard to ask if this guy had time to help me get the toys to a school and get me back to the boat. He agreed he could. So we piled all the bags into his vehicle and off we went to find a school.

When we arrived at this preschool, a derelict building, with a wall and fence all around it and chains on the gate, he called through the gate and explained I had brought donations from America. They went back into the school and came back out, discussing the situation and opened the gate. As we brought everything in it seemed that it wasn't going to be possible to get any photos, especially not of any of the children, then as we brought in the bags everyone warmed up to the idea and within minutes I was being given a tour of the school. It was amazing to see the things they had made for the kids with cardboard boxes. Furniture, kitchen counters, ovens, couches and love seats, like so many of our toddlers get, but in the USA we have Little Tikes and Fisher Price. There it's all made from hand out of boxes.

I got to hand out some of the donations from our SSSF members and JM Lexus while the driver took a video of this amazing interaction with the children. Truly a heartwarming experience. I've posted the videos on my and SSSF Facebook Pages for all to enjoy

Special thanks to: Captain Jim McBrayer S/V Escape, JM Lexus, Captain Mike Sawsak, Andrea Keyser Lynette Beal, Capt. Stan Deikiel, Captain Debi Hallmark. Sandra Fernandez

Sailing Singles of South Florida

March Birthdays

Pam Angel	3/1
Tom Crawford	3/29
Stan Dekiel	3/1
Vincent Giudice	3/12
John Konheim	3/16
Andrea Malow	3/4
Molie Meyers	3/20
Ben Nahabedian	3/09
Sheila O'Neil	3/10
Ron Perea	3/6



Jim Price	3/9
Zalman Segal	3/9
Eugene Sullivan	3/2
Prince Wm. Taylor	3/25

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History of Starboard and Port

“starboard” is referencing the old practice of having a steering oar on one side of the ship, rather than a centrally placed rudder. This was basically just a modified oar generally attached in a vertical attitude to the right side of the ship near the back (with the right side thought to have been chosen simply because most people are right handed).

As to the name itself, “starboard”, this comes from the Anglo-Saxon name for this side steering oar, “steorbord”, which literally means “the side on which a vessel is steered”.

“Port” also popped up in the 16th century with the origin similar to why the left side of the ship was called “larboard”, when you docked or moored a ship with the rudder affixed to the right side, it was always done with the left side of the boat facing the dock or port.



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