

Highland Yacht Club, Inc.

Newsletter

JULY 2002

SOUNDINGS

Commodore: Dawn Utley
Vice Commodore: Donna Cayce
Secretary/Treasurer: Kathy Hornsby
Harbor Master: Matt Crawford
Port Captain: Tom Gillard
Newsletter Editor: Andy Myrick

P.O. Box 1764
Tullahoma, TN 37388

AUGUST MEETING: August 16, 2002 at the HYC site: Theme: El Mexicano with Corona and Margaritas.

BILL RINER'S CRUISE IN THE DRY TORTUGAS: by Bill Riner

I'm just back from a seven-day charter trip in the Dry Tortugas. I went there a few years back on a trip starting in Miami, but we only had two days to explore the best part of the trip—the small group of keys that make up the Dry Tortugas. Our crew included Yasuo Noguchi (my sailing buddy from England), Marilyn Love and Sherri Huffmaster (friends from Florida), and my kids Claire and Alex. We chartered a Hunter 375 from Florida Yacht Charter and Sales.

Our first destination after leaving Key West was the Marquesas. We motored to the western side of the Marquesas where we anchored for the night and cooked out. There's not much to see or do at the Marquesas. The bottom is sand covered by grass and there are few fish but many biting flies if you anchor upwind of the land. We tried to find a wreck that was marked on the chart, but had no luck. The keys themselves are wildlife preserves and off limits to people. We realized we had forgotten ice and the generator refused to start, so we decided to head back to Key West. We motored back to Boca Grande key where we anchored at nightfall—night sailing isn't allowed by the charter company. Of course the generator worked fine back at the marina. We loaded up on ice which was fortunate considering the refrigeration didn't seem to work well on engine or generator power. The generator started only twice during the trip, so we were unable to use the air conditioning much.

Leaving Key West again, we headed to the coral reefs surround Sand Key. Sand Key, a tiny spit of land with a light tower built in the 1800's, is about ten miles south of Key West. We stopped by to go snorkeling on the coral reef. We picked up a mooring buoy with several other boats. Using mooring buoys prevents damage to the fragile coral caused by anchors and chains. This was the first time Claire and Alex had snorkeled in open water. The reef fish were very impressive and we were having a wonderful time until a shark's fin sliced through the water about a hundred feet away. Claire decided a much safer place to be would be standing on top of my head and proceeded to claw her way up. Not knowing if it was a mild-mannered nurse shark or some more ferocious type, we decided to quickly return to the yacht. Later Alex and I returned to the reef and saw a spiny lobster.

We returned back to Boca Grande for the night and started out early for the Tortugas. Luckily, the winds picked up for our trip from the Marquesas to the Tortugas. We had 15+ knots on the beam and two-foot seas. Absolutely perfect conditions. Arriving at Garden Key, we anchored in the harbor near Ft. Jefferson. There is some very nice snorkeling around Ft. Jefferson. The best is at the ruins of the old coaling docks. These docks were used to refuel coal-burning warships. The warship Maine ("Remember the Maine!") visited this dock just before it's infamous sinking in Havana's harbor. Unfortunately for Claire, we saw a five-foot nurse shark and a six-foot barracuda, so we

decided to go swimming at the beach. Each day, barracuda would come to the back of the boat and we would feed them food scraps. One even ate half a baked potato.

Bush Key is immediately next to Garden Key and is actually connected by a small spit of sand. Charts are notoriously wrong for this area and actually show a deep channel between the two keys. Bush Key is a nesting area for many different birds including the Great Frigate bird. The commotion is nonstop as a thick cloud of birds hovers above the island. The highlight of the trip was a candlelight tour of Ft. Jefferson. The ranger, Mike, met us dressed in an authentic Civil War uniform—wool, no less, in July! We learned the history of the fort and saw the cell where Dr. Mudd, the accused conspirator in the Lincoln assassination, was held.

We sailed west for Loggerhead Key the next morning to explore the island and the wreck of an old windjammer. The biggest resident of the wreck turned out to be an enormous Jewfish that weighed around 500 pounds. The ranger says that for political correctness it's name has been changed to Goliath fish. Later we anchored on the east shore of Loggerhead and took the dingy to see the lighthouse. Large schools of minnows swam near the shore and, every few minutes, schools of jacks would attack making the water boil. A few yards further offshore, six-foot tarpon swam around the government dock. The only residents of Loggerhead are folks that volunteer to live there a month at a time. There is a three-year waiting list and seeing the island you can understand why.

We left Garden Key and Ft. Jefferson at first light just before a thunderstorm moved through. We learned later via VHF that three boats in the harbor had dragged their anchors in the storm making for much excitement. Cool, refreshing rain poured down and the winds picked up to 30+ before we quickly furled the sails. At one point we were making 8 knots using only the mainsail. The storm passed and we had a tight reach with about 12 knots of wind the rest of the way back to Key West

Water had been a big concern and the 75-gallon water tank ran out after five days just after our return. That works out to 2.5 gallons per day per person not including extra drinking water that we took along which makes for very quick showers! We also used about 20 gallons of diesel fuel (out of 35 total) and would have used more with a cooperative generator. We did learn a few lessons. First, was that a 37 footer has much less storage than a 40+ footer. It's a good size for two couples. Second, relying solely on GPS can easily get you in trouble. The boat had a 3D-differential (1.5' accuracy) moving map GPS with all the bells and whistles, but the charted depths frequently didn't match the depth meter and even some land features didn't match the GPS charts. Sometime it seemed extremely accurate and sometimes very inaccurate. Electronic charts are no more accurate than paper charts. Third, you can never have too much beer!

We toured Key West on the final day. Highlights were the Conch train tour, Mel Fisher's treasure museum, the Aquarium, the Flagler Station railroad museum and, of course, sunset at Mallory Square. Back in Miami we had dinner at a sidewalk café in South Beach along with the other beautiful people. ;-) A great trip, but certainly not nearly as exciting as one of Andy Myrick's!

Editors Note: This does not sound like any charter trip I've ever been involved with. Sounds like it was "fun," a word I've never been able to use to describe one of my trips. Just ask David Bergevin, Max Hailey or Chad "Runnaground" Schnarr. Where were the 15 foot seas, clouds, rain, sea sickness, bridges that are too @\$% short, and/or sleeping bridge operators? But let's not forget the tragedy they did endure: "they were not able to use the air conditioner much." Tragic indeed. Hell, we didn't even have an AC. Bill, Can I go with you next year? -Andy Myrick

Highland Yacht Club Meeting Minutes of July 12, 2002

ATTENDEES: Tom & Joan Bentley, Richard & Debi Merrill, David & Sally Ranstrom, Scott & Dori Henninger, Matt & Dixie Crawford, Don & Joy Jones, David Bergevin, Larry & Becky Thomas, Janie, Bob & Leanne Turpin, Paul, Wendy, Zeke, Jacob, Ellie Grace Stevens, Lucian & Donna Cayce, John & Angie Garibotte, Jeff & Dawn Utley, Mike Wasner & Kathy Hornsby.

1. **The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M. by Commodore Dawn Utley.**

2. **June minutes were approved.**

3. **Treasurer's Report by Kathy Hornsby:**

Building Fund	\$1863.28
Regular Spending	<u>\$2506.80</u>
Total Funds in checking and savings:	\$4370.08

4. **Harbor Master Report – Matt Crawford** thanked everyone for getting their proof of insurance to him. We are only lacking proof of insurance on two boats. A special thanks went out to Larry, Becky, Sandy and Kerry Thomas and David and Sally Ranstrom for their quick actions during the storm last Sunday night. A mooring chain broke on one of the boats and it banged into another boat. Winds up to 55 mph hour were reporting during that storm. Gravel was washed off the jetty by the high waves. It was suggested that everyone's position on the dock along with a phone number be posted for emergencies like this. Matt reported that the first six slots on the South side will get new chain immediately and the North side will follow. If you know you have a problem with the chain please let Matt know.

5. **Communications:** Nothing new to report at this

6. **AF Liaison Report:** Nothing new to report at this time.

7. **Port Captain Report:** Tom has made arrangements to have a new dumpster placed at the site. Everyone is reminded that it is the member's responsibility to pitch in and empty the trash cans.

8. **Racing Series Report: Mike Wasner** reported that the sunfish races were a success. Laurie Nations took first place in the women's division and Zack Baker took first place in the men's division. An honorable mention goes to Kim Dolan for winning her first race as a skipper during the event. After the potluck dinner, a total of 15 boats with 114 people rafted up to watch the fireworks. The Sunday Races have been cancelled for the remainder of the summer and will begin again in September since the wind has been hit or miss for the last few races. The red racing notebook with the rules, forms, etc. and the flags are in the shed if people show up on Sunday and want to race. Please remember to put the equipment back when you are done.

9. **Commodore's Report:**

Request to use site:

- 7/13 – Sail Board classes at 10am in the morning
- Catalina 22 Fleet 52 will hold a Watermelon Race on July 20th
- 7/27 – Sailing classes from 9am to 4pm by Tom Bentley open to all ages. Tom Gillard will be bringing 4 boy scouts and Kim Dolan will be bringing girl scouts. If you are willing to donate the use of a boat please contact Tom Bentley. Chef Jeff Utley will prepare Hot Dogs.
- The membership voted unanimously to extend an invitation to the C-15's to hold the C-15 Nationals at our club in 2004. The exact date has not been determined. The Nationals will be held in San Francisco next year.
- The Air Force will begin cutting down the pine trees from the parking lot to the road in the next two weeks. All trailers will need to be relocated this weekend that are parked in that area. The crews will not be working on the weekend and the Air Force has agreed to allow us access to the site while the cutting crews are working. We are asked to use common sense and caution when accessing the site during this time. By cutting these trees down now, we hope to save the remaining pine trees on the site.
- **Scholarship Report – Dawn Utley** reminded everyone that the Scholarship survey needs to be turned in to Max Hailey now.

10. **New Business:**

- The question was raised concerning the status of the flushable toilets. Dawn reports that this is still in the planning stages. The State of Tennessee has asked the Air Force to obtain permits for all septic systems. The Air Force included the septic system at the HYC site in their inventory so this will not be a problem at a later date.
- No Wake Signs – the concern was raised about powerboats coming in close to our docks creating wakes. David Bergevin will check into having No Wake signs posted in front of the club and report back at the next meeting.
- Fall Regatta – Matt Crawford volunteered to be the Race Chairman for the Fall Regatta. Some of his responsibilities will include lining up the food, refreshments, and trophies. Lucian Cayce will head up the Rae Committee.

11. Adjournment – 8:15pm.

Recorder – Kathy Hornsby
