

January 2022



## ***SV Avocet***

**An interview with  
Marissa Neely**

**Going  
Green in  
the Galley**

**In Mocean**

**~ a plastic pollution solution**

**BOAT SCHOOLING IN THE BAHAMAS**

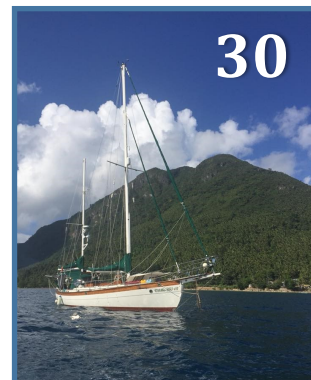
***Sailing Juliet***

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# The bowsprit

From the editor



## Navigating 2022, with intention...

Anyone who spends time on the water knows they are at the mercy of the weather and tides, and that plans are mostly written in the sand — at low tide. Add a pandemic to the mix and those plans disappear under a storm surge. There are times when no matter how well you prepare your voyage, a change of direction is needed, and really, unless you are a complete control freak, isn't that one of the joys of cruising — the unexpected places it takes you?

The 'new' *SisterShip Magazine* was launched four years ago, 30 years after it was first splashed by founder Ruth Boydell, and the

journey since then has been exhilarating and exhausting. All good vessels spend some time in drydock occasionally to scrape off the barnacles and for the crew to take shore leave, hence *SisterShip's* absence over the last few months. However, we are back on deck again and have a few new 'passage plans' in place for 2022. Keeping in mind of course, as author Janet Howle states on page 27 of this issue, "Make a plan, but remember sailing is an intention — not a plan".

In this issue we welcome Marissa Neely to the crew, and introduce a new feature, 'Food Afloat'. You'll notice that we have two '*SisterShip* Watches' and 'Flat-Bottomed Girl' segments — we do have some catching up to do after all!

As this issue goes live, one of our favourite solo sailors, Lisa Blair, is about to embark on her latest challenge — another circumnavigation of Antarctica! You can follow Lisa's progress via her web page [lisablairsailstheworld.com](http://lisablairsailstheworld.com). We'll be posting updates on *SisterShip Magazine's* social media pages too.

Wherever you are on this blue planet, stay safe and, as always, look for the dolphin!

*Shelley Wright*

SisterShip 3





# PLASTIC IN PARADISE





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# Sailors “In Mocean” Against Plastic Pollution

## By Heather Francis

We started our sailing adventures in 2008. Back then, we would find the odd plastic water bottle or two tangled in the seaweed at the high tide mark of beaches near populated areas. Just over a decade later, plastic rubbish is ubiquitous on every beach we come across. Not to mention found floating in the tide, even when sailing far offshore. To deny that plastic pollution is clogging our oceans and causing harm to both animals and humans is simply turning a blind eye. Something that no one can afford to do anymore.

Ocean plastic pollution is a huge problem, one that can often feel overwhelming. Knowing where to start and what action to take toward solving the problem can be difficult. Most of us try to decrease our consumption of single-use plastics, and many sailors regularly clean beaches and rescue floating plastic debris from the water while out in the dinghy or snorkelling. Although these are meaningful activities, they often feel like just a drop in the ocean. Many of us are

left asking, what more can I do to help?

Nike Steiger and Maria LaPointe are two sailors who have answered that question with a rallying cry. One that can now be heard across the globe. They founded **In Mocean**, a not-for-profit organization that is focused on raising global awareness about plastic pollution and is dedicated to empowering the rural coastal communities who are impacted by it most.

The idea started out small. Nike, on board her Reinke Super 10, *Karl*, and Maria, who owns *Joana*, a 72-foot gaff rigged yawl, were collecting trash from the waterways and coastlines as they sailed the Pacific coast of Central America. They started working with local communities, organizing beach clean ups, and educating children about the hazards of plastic pollution via crafting. Collected plastic bottles were transformed into whales, jellyfish, and octopus by the kids while they learned about the hazards of those same plastic items had on the creatures and the seas where they lived.



Stuck in Panama during 2020 due to pandemic travel restrictions, the women started making baskets from reclaimed polypropylene fishing ropes. Making a basket was simple, needed no extra tools, and resulted in a sturdy container that could be used in several ways. Washed up fishing gear is unfortunately plentiful in Panama, so In Mocean started teaching basket making workshops to local island communities. The basket workshops were a way to educate but the workshops also opened people to the idea that plastic trash could be turned into a commodity.

Searching for ways to unlock the potential of even more plastic waste Nike and Maria built their own plastic shredder and extruder. Their machine, inspired by the open source [Precious Plastics](#) community, allowed them to start a small but productive onboard recycling plant. By shredding, melting, and extruding the plastic trash items, they created new, useful objects, all while helping clean up plastic pollution.

However, they soon ran into a problem. Land-based creators designed the plastic shredder/extruder. The power-hungry machine demanded a lot from their off-grid boat power systems. Not only that, but the machine was also heavy and bulky, which meant transporting it ashore for community workshops and demonstrations was difficult. It was time to find a better solution for a boat-based recycling system.

Wanting to maximize the potential of the plastic shredder that no longer suited their project, In Mocean decided to team up with COPROT (Comunidad Protectora de Tortugas e Osa) a turtle conservation team in





Costa Rica. COPROT was already collaborating with the local community and collecting ocean rubbish alongside their work in turtle conservation. In Mocean donated their electric plastic shredder to the organization and arranged to spend time ashore to train the new owners on using and maintaining the machine and to help build the storing and storing facilities for the collected plastics. They also contributed ideas about product possibilities, marketing, and fundraising.

The enthusiasm for ocean plastic recycling was overwhelming. Nike and Maria realized that the problem remote, coastal communities faced was simply access to information, education, and support for small scale projects. In Mocean decided to go global and

looked to the sailing community to help make it happen.

In Mocean has teamed up with eight sailing vessels to create a global fleet of recycling ambassadors. *S/V Delos* will be working the Caribbean and Panama, *Sailing Uma* plan to sail in Iceland and Greenland this season, *RAN Sailing* will be stopping in the Canaries,





the *Cruising Kiwis* are in Western Australia, *Odd Life Crafting* is planning to sail Brazil, and *Sailing Catalpa* is heading to Indonesia. Nike will be onboard *Karl* in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and Maria and her boat *Joana* are in Mexico.

Many of these boats will be familiar names, as almost all have popular YouTube channels. The recycling ambassadors will be using social media to raise awareness about the problem and the program. Not just engaging the communities that they visit but aiming to mobilize a global community in the fight against ocean plastic pollution. Keep your eyes on upcoming episodes that feature the In Mocean project.

Each vessel will be kitted out with a small plastic recycling plant. The machines are designed and created by the Austrian company [PlasticPreneur](#), and will not only be used for onboard recycling but to demonstrate the process to communities ashore. The fleet of recycling ambassadors will be holding demonstrations and events in the remote coastal locations where they are



sailing, educating, and encouraging more people to help fight plastic pollution. By giving communities access to information and ideas about the potential to transform plastic waste into usable and sellable products they are hoping to create a network of small-scale recycling projects and workspaces that span the globe. By providing actionable steps and open-source information the goal of In Mocean is “A world where plastic is seen as a precious material that creates long term value, instead of polluting our oceans.”

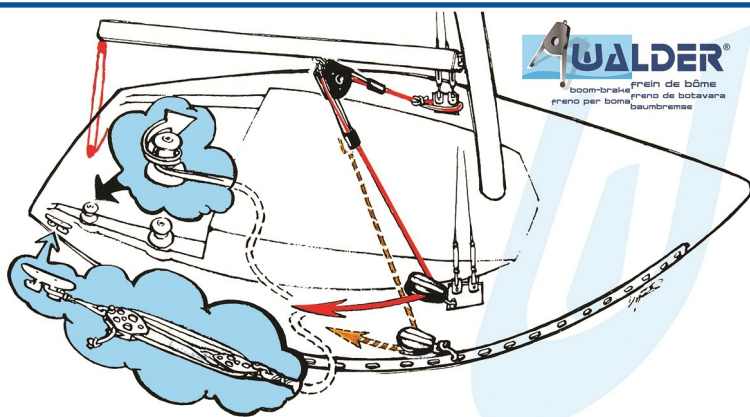
The In Mocean team is running a crowd funding campaign in November. They hope to raise enough money to cover the cost of the manual shredding machines and to launch the sailing fleet of recycling ambassadors in 2022.

If you’ve ever looked at a beach strewn with plastic waste and wondered how to help, then it’s time to get onboard with [IN MOCEAN](#). Join the in the fight against ocean plastic pollution and help launch the global sailing recycling fleet.

For more information on the project, the crowd funding campaign or to work with In Mocean check out [www.in-mocean.org](http://www.in-mocean.org)







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# SisterShip Watches ...



By Amy Alton

## Sailing Avocet

Marissa Neely balances a lot in her life. She's been with her husband, Chris, since they were 15, and immediately moved aboard *Avocet*, their Cheoy Lee 41 after graduating from college. Between boat projects in preparation for their cruising adventures, sailing trips around southern California, and operating two businesses, Marissa and Chris create sailing videos for their YouTube channel, *Sailing Avocet*.

A testament of what you can do with big passion and drive, Marissa shares some of her experiences living the cruising life.

**Amy:** You've been sailing and refitting your boat for a few years now. What are your plans going forward?

**Marissa:** We bought *Avocet* in 2018, moving aboard when we were fresh out of college and a couple days into our marriage. We knew she was a project boat going into it, but sheesh if only we knew what we were *really* in for! In addition to the planned renovations and refits we also completed a handful of

unexpected projects. It has been a long time coming but we are finally at the short end of our project list, happy to tackle the small ones that pop up knowing the brunt of the bigger ones are behind us. COVID kind of shook up our plans (just like many other cruisers) which delayed our splash from the boatyard and further pushed our cruising date. It was a humbling experience losing control like that, but we made the best of it and did what we could. Ultimately it was a good thing that our plans got pushed because had we left when intended we would have never met some of the cool people that we did this year and may have missed out on some incredible opportunities! Our tentative marina departure date is the spring of 2022 where we will be enjoying the Channel Islands before heading south to warmer waters.

**Amy:** Right now, *Avocet* is only the tip of the iceberg! You have three boats currently, Chris comes from a sailing family, and you and Chris started sailing by racing together?

**Marissa:** Chris comes from a sailing family growing up on San Francisco Bay sailing a Mason 43 (still in the family). His brother Jon



lives aboard a Hans Christian 33, [\*Prism\*](#), and has been cruising since 2014. We actually have three boats, our *Avocet*, a Victory 21 named *Geronimo* (or race boat) and a Hobie 18 Magnum named *Hobie Wan Kenobi*. Chris and I started sailing together as racers competing in the High Sierra Regatta. Regatta sailing laid the foundation for life aboard *Avocet* and our relationship, strengthening our trust in each other and our sailing abilities as well as working out kinks in our communication skills.

**Amy: How do you divide video production between you and Chris?**

**Marissa:** Chris is a professional cinematographer by trade; he has been in the industry since 16 and done pretty much every job there is to do behind the scenes, ultimately finding his comfort as a camera operator and director of photography. He has shot a handful of documentaries, a TV show pilot, and commercials, giving him the experience and ability to make our visions come to life. Although his work is extremely different from our lighthearted, less professional YouTube channel (it is for *fun* after all) we both film and he primarily edits while I offer my input over his shoulder and assist in color correcting since he is color blind. If you ever see a shot in our videos look more green or red than the rest that's because Chris was on his own editing it!

**Amy: How has creating videos enhanced your sailing experience?**

**Marissa:** Although we are not unique in our lifestyle choice, joining the many other cruisers and liveaboards, it is 100% authentic and special to us. We film these videos with the idea that we are going to look back on this someday when we are old and grey and have something to pass on to our kids. Chris's father passed away when Chris was only 13 and he cherishes every photo, tape recording, and video of his dad that we have — we wish there was more! Right now, our channel is

not really a priority, but as we shift into our roles as cruisers, we are thrilled to be getting closer to announcing a big project we have been working on which will change the course of our channel completely... stay tuned! In the words of Lin and Larry Pardey, we will continue filming for our followers and living this wonderful life afloat "as long as it's fun".

In addition to the videos, I [write quite a bit for various publications](#), discussing various projects, the unique design of our boat, as well as our experience as liveaboards. Sailing has inspired me as a writer to think outside of the box (or house) and try my hand at technical writing in addition to finding ways to bring experiences alive through written word.

**Amy: Tell us about the name *Avocet*?**

**Marissa:** Our boat came with the name! At first, we wanted to change it since it is a coastal wetland bird that neither of us are particularly fond of, but after a week living aboard it felt wrong to change it. She had been *Avocet* for over 20 years, and we came to find out the previous owner's wife, Robin, had named her. The previous owners were avid cruisers, and both unfortunately passed before we had the chance to meet them and ask questions about the boat. Despite their absence we feel their comforting presence with every gust of wind and are so happy to continue their legacy.

**Amy: Why did you buy this particular boat?**

**Marissa:** She came to us! We were looking at buying a completely different caliber of boat with no intentions of cruising but when we realized a Catalina 36 MkII was just a bit too small for our necessary belongings we continued the search. In fact, we were looking at a Catalina when *Avocet* popped up for sale across the way. We were familiar with her teak interior since Chris was raised sailing



on a Mason 43. While roomier and accommodating, her price was slightly out of our budget, but the sellers agreed to come down in price after Chris had written them a kind letter explaining our intent. Again, we had no plans of cruising... that all changed because of *Avocet*. She was a cruising boat that had cruised prior, and she inspired us to reach higher and chase our wildest dreams.

**Amy: When you bought the boat you were in university, studying hospitality and ski resort management. Has that helped you in any way on the boat?**

**Marissa:** I got my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) in Ski Business, Resort Management, and Global Business Management from Sierra Nevada College (now University) where I had a scholarship to compete collegiately on their snowboard team. Prior to sailing I was a pretty decent snowboarder riding for various teams and attending camps to hone my skills. The ski business side of things has not been necessarily helpful in the sailing world, but

the communication skills and business lessons gained from my studies has significantly helped in creating *Sailing Avocet* as a brand and all of the affiliate pages. Luckily resort management is also an applicable study that can be useful in the marina world, which is how I got a job as a marina manager in addition to founding my international digital marketing business, [Fair Winds Media](#).

**Amy: Are you or Chris currently working? If so, how do you balance everything?**

**Marissa:** As mentioned I have a digital marketing business called [Fair Winds Media](#) where I offer a range of services to various clients, specializing in organic growth. Chris is primarily a camera operator filming commercials and most recently a TV pilot, but when he has “free time” you can find him on the docks working on clients’ boats under our new business [Neely Boat Works](#). Things can be super overwhelming at times, but we try to take one day a week to “recenter” and be present with each other, reminding





ourselves of our goals and not to sweat the little stuff. We have worked harder than we ever have before in the past two years, but we finally see some smooth sailing on the horizon.

**Amy: What tips do you have for people looking to buy a boat and tackle some pretty big projects like you have?**

**Marissa:** We went into the boat buying process already pretty familiar with DIY projects since Chris grew up tinkering with boats and building cars (he built a 1963 MGB from the frame up at 15!) His older brother lives aboard a Hans Christian 33, *Prism*, and has been cruising since 2014 so we were also pretty darn prepared as per his advice and warnings. For those that don't have a "big brother Jon" I would recommend getting on as many boats as possible and learn all you can about various systems and different ways to troubleshoot. Be sure your sources are credible, not everything on YouTube is safe or smart, in fact it can sometimes do more harm than good. Use a surveyor to spot any potential hazards pre-purchase and don't be afraid to ask for help — the sailing community is vast and willing to lend a hand in any port!

**Amy: What's your biggest struggle with your videos?**

**Marissa:** Time. This is a side project for us, and with our respective businesses and boat projects it can be tough to remember to film what we are doing. Our project videos tend to be the best performing since we have weeks and months to film whereas our sailing videos are usually crammed into a weekend. With Chris traveling for shoots it can be tough to sit down and edit (especially after he returns home from a 16-hour long shoot) so we try not to put pressure on releasing videos, staying content with our average of one a month. Luckily when we do get out there for real our channel will pivot (as mentioned), and we will be able to provide

our viewers with a really cool experience. I can't say much more without giving it away!

**Amy: You've been sailing around the islands of southern California for a while. What are some of the best places you've been?**

**Marissa:** Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the eight Channel Islands and is dense with unmolested nature and history that separates it from the mainland despite it only being about three hours away by sail. Each part of the island is so unique, sometimes reflecting the Mediterranean and sometimes reflecting Mexico, all while remaining 100% California. It is truly a magical experience, and we are so beyond thankful to be alive in a time where we have the opportunities to explore this gift from nature. If you ever have the opportunity to go, I recommend Little Scorpion since it is a marine sanctuary with incredible snorkeling/diving and the shore access is riddled with artifacts from the ranch that operated in the 1800s through the mid-1900s. It is part of the national park side, so ask a ranger questions! They are incredibly helpful and a wealth of knowledge themselves.

**Amy: What's your favorite modification you have made to *Avocet*?**

**Marissa:** Structurally her bulwark upgrade, which is one of our more notable projects, copying a Lyle Hess design. The full specs of this crazy operation are found on our website, and for the sake of the *SisterShip* readers I will leave it at that. Aesthetically our galley renovation was very transformative giving our old boat new life as it is the central part of our interior.

**Amy: What's been your hardest or scariest moment on *Avocet*?**

**Marissa:** Being stuck in the boatyard during COVID was nearly apocalyptic, trying our mental and physical strength, but we pulled through two months later with a beautiful job



**Marissa, Chris, and SV Avocet.**





well done to commemorate it. Diamonds are made under pressure, and our finished projects seem to be the same. We were also at anchor in predicted winds of 30 knots that piped up to 62 knots, [snapping our snubber and dumping our chain into the sea](#). After quick thinking we rescued the boat but every sound that night had us on our toes. We really trusted *Avocet* that night, and she pulled through taking good care of us.

**Amy: What's one quality Chris has that makes him a great sailing partner? What strength do you have that you think makes you a good sailing partner?**

**Marissa:** He can fix anything and everything! There have been numerous times something has gone wrong, and he is able to think quickly to find resolution. Whether it's an engine issue or a tear in my pants he is always there to save the day. Material objects aside he is also a master at soothing my nerves and reassuring me that all is well, and we are capable of persevering. Chris is essentially a personified Swiss army knife, making him a wonderful sailing partner and life partner. We have been together since we were 15!

I like to think that I provide comedic relief in hairy situations to lighten the mood and help break the tension, allowing clear vision to return. In addition, I am a great listener and very intuitive as an empath so when something is "wrong" I am quick to offer my hand. I am eager to learn and determined to do my best. My skills are still developing when it comes to sailing (especially at Chris's level) but together we make a great team no matter the situation.

People tend to assume Chris is the captain, but we are truly co-captains taking equal responsibility for our floating home. In fact, I am actually pursuing my captain's license to reinforce my skills as a female captain. Wish me luck!

**Amy: What's been a highlight of the**

## **sailing lifestyle for you?**

**Marissa:** Sailing has unlocked a whole community that stretches quite literally beyond horizons. We are now a part of something so much bigger than ourselves, tuning into a tradition that seafarers before us paved the way for while connecting with similar minded people that live their lives afloat as well.

It is an extremely fulfilling way to live. Not only are you a little more connected with nature being more exposed to the elements, but you are also living a (mostly) simple lifestyle in comparison to land life. This lifestyle evokes new skills and quick thinking while rewarding you with sunsets and front row seats to watch dolphins jumping around the bow. It's a dream come true!

### **Links:**

<https://www.svavocet.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/svavocet/>

<https://www.instagram.com/svavocet/>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SailingAvocet/>



Amy Alton, in partnership with her husband, shares their journey on their YouTube channel, [Out Chasing Stars](#). You can also enjoy her writing and photography on their blog, [OutChasingStars.com](#).



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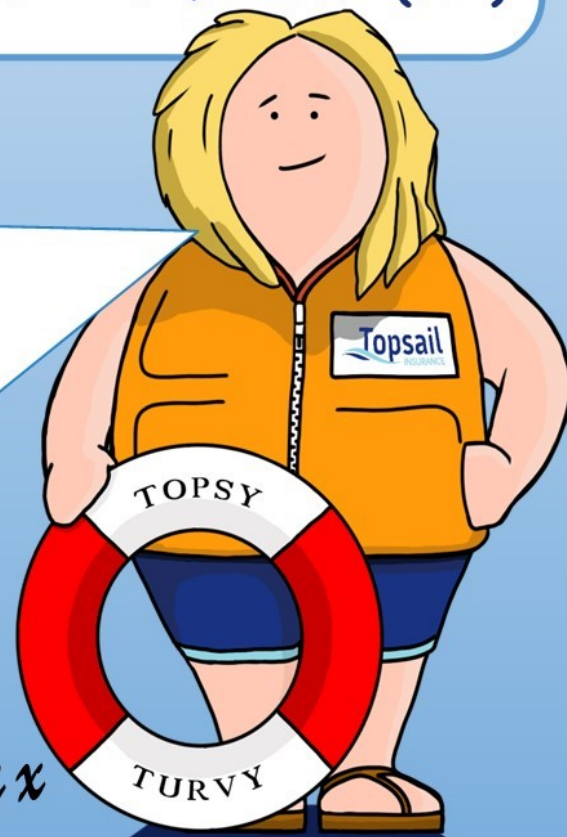
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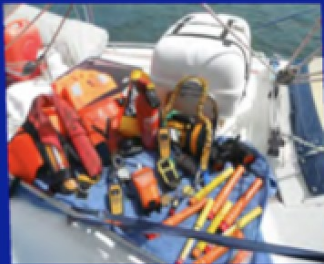
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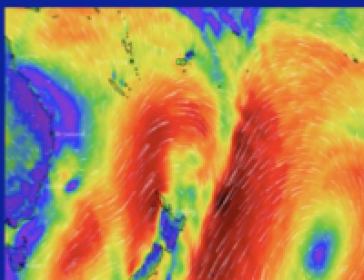
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# Boat Schooling: Lessons Learned

By Janet Howle

*There once was a lady named Jan,*

*Who sailed off to the seas with her man.*

*Ed said it'd be great,*

*They'd make no mistakes,*

*And the boys will become our first mates.*

It was with this optimism that we set off for the Bahamas with our two youngest sons, ages nine and ten, in our 1978 pilot-house Camper and Nicholson 40.

The first thing you need to know is we bought this well-seasoned boat for this very reason – to sail with family. It had three sleeping cabins and fit our budget. The second thing is, I had almost no blue water experience, and our boys had none. We had

never owned or sailed a boat this big. Well, not entirely true, Ed had crossed the Atlantic on a forty-foot wooden boat, but he was crew, not captain. Third, we owned and still ran our business in North Carolina, and fourth, while Ed and I had both been university professors, we had no experience teaching young children (unless parenting six counts).

Never let a few details stand in the way of a great idea was Ed's philosophy. (Another time, I'll tell you about moving to Paris.) I'm the cautious one. Well, I was.

I did talk Ed into hiring a mate. We interviewed several persons. The first one was a vegetarian and had other unusual dietary practices. The boys liked her, but we viewed this as an added complication. The second, or maybe third one, seemed ideal. Amanda had her captain's license and had just graduated



with a degree in early education. How perfect was that? I will return to this later.

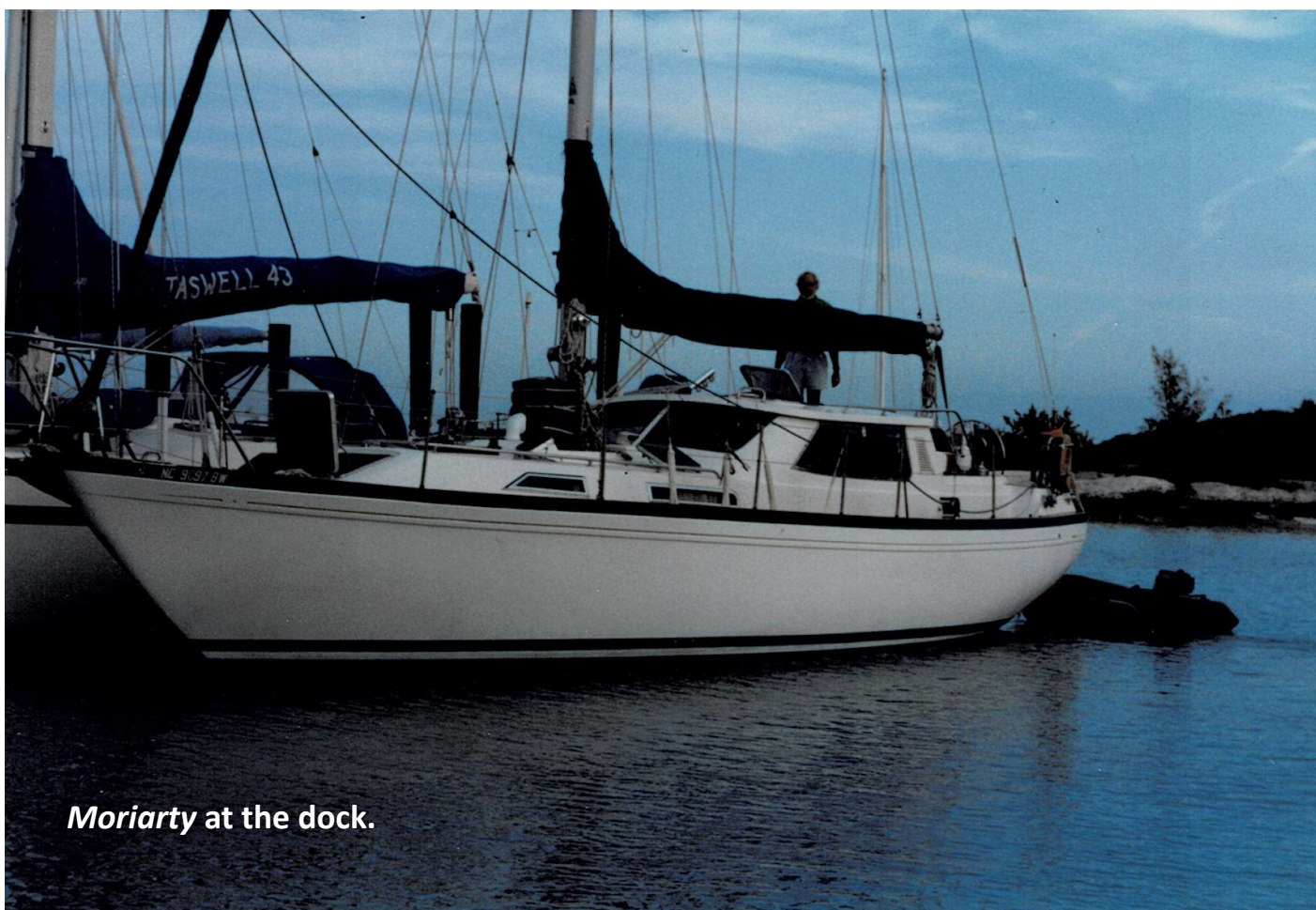
At the time we boat schooled, most families followed a curriculum from Calvert or similar guided programs. One advantage of this approach is that it takes a potential conflict off the parent/teacher. No squabbling over whether a learning objective had been met. An objective party grades the material. The negative, currently, is these programs are entirely online, which requires the boat to be in a location with reliable internet. My limited research indicates that now, most families set their own curriculum, relying on the internet for specific subject material or special interests in areas in which the parent does not feel competent.

Our public-school principal was a firm believer that education can take place equally in or out of the classroom and was willing to provide the help we needed. (It didn't hurt that she was a former girlfriend of Ed's.) So, we gathered the textbooks and lesson plans from the boys' teachers, added additional

materials we felt we needed, and cast off our lines.

Now, one more thing. In North Carolina, you must produce a high school diploma to qualify to teach your children. Neither Ed nor I could find our high school diplomas. After much searching, I finally located mine, so we had one qualified teacher onboard. (I still don't know if Ed has one, but apparently, it is not a prerequisite for a doctorate.) By our second season, we learned since that the Bahamas are not in the jurisdiction of the U.S., we didn't need to document, by any means, our abilities to school our guys.

For me, the critical lesson was keeping in mind the role of parent and teacher is different. Our situation was perhaps slightly different than many boat schooling families. Our boys would return to their public school in North Carolina for part of each year. I had to be their mother, but I didn't have to be their teacher. I had to remind our youngest son, who was not the easiest (did I say hardest?) student. He could push my buttons,



*Moriarty at the dock.*



and only by threatening to stop his schooling and let him repeat the grade when we returned to the U.S., did cooperation ensue.

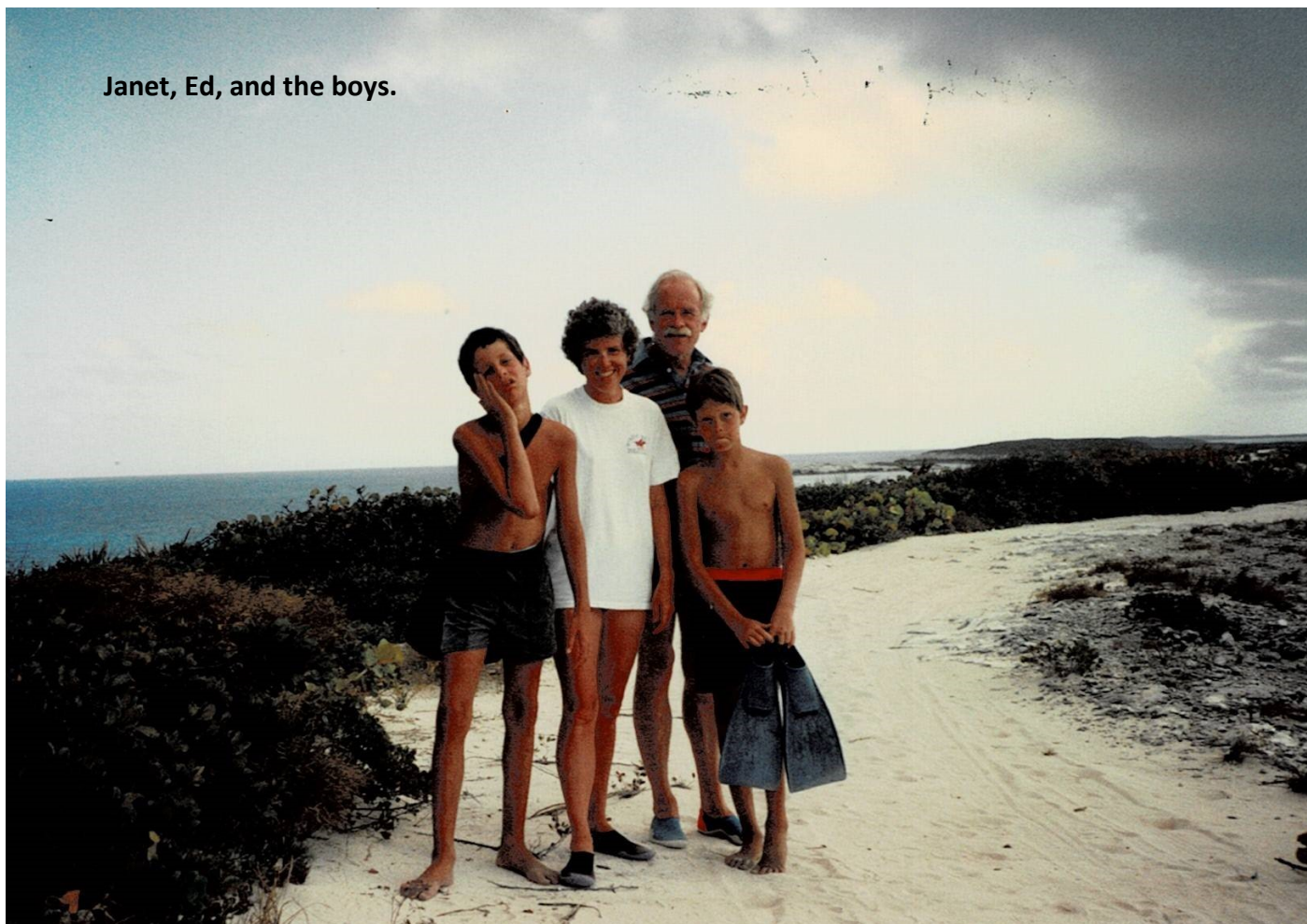
Ed and I had already decided we would stress reading, writing, and arithmetic. Like most young boys, our sons loved being active, so while living on the boat, physical education was swimming, snorkeling, or basketball. I'm not sure where fishing fits in, but they did a lot of that too. Every Bahama island has at least one basketball court and if you show up, basketball tucked under your arm, the thump of a ball on even a pack-down dirt court brings kids running. Geography and history were all about the Bahama Islands, all 700 of them. We made the long passage to San Salvador, the most eastern Bahama Island, to include a visit to the Christopher Columbus monument. Natural science was a no-brainer. We had books on sea and birdlife and the flora and fauna of the Bahamas. We recorded each time we saw a manatee, dolphin, starfish, sea anemone, sea turtle, sharks, various fish, and birds. Art included materials they found.

The boys collected driftwood and made a sailboat – unfortunately, it didn't last long in the water.

The boys read books we brought along, which had been suggested by the teachers who knew their reading levels. They answered questions that I wrote to test their comprehension. In addition, they kept daily journals, which I corrected for grammar and sentence and paragraph construction. From their reading, I picked spelling words for each week which they had to use in sentences. Now, all of this can be produced on a computer, but whether on paper or screen, the underlying concepts are still the same. Their formal schooling took two to three hours a day. It doesn't take long when the ratio is 2/1. The hard part was getting them started.

Initially, we let the boys decide (our effort at unschooling) when during the day they would have school. We tried to find five days of school each week. I think I needed this

Janet, Ed, and the boys.





discipline as much as they did, but it was not necessarily Monday through Friday. Passage days, we didn't have school, and on foul weather days they sometimes doubled up on the reading. However, we quickly learned most boat kids attended to their schooling in the morning. Island kids went to school until early afternoon, so they weren't available as playmates either. Finally, our routine, such as it was, included school after breakfast and morning chores. There was plenty of time for socialization after that.



Now you may be wondering, what about our hired mate? Where was she in all of this? First off, having a captain's license does not necessarily mean having much hands-on experience. After one experience, Ed learned that Amanda could not dock the boat. Our old, heavy C&N did not have rub rails and certainly not bow or stern thrusters. Docking under many conditions without damaging the teak toe rails was tricky. Amanda did take the helm underway and was competent in following a route. Ed taught her to plot a course with paper charts, a parallel ruler with

compass rose, and dividers. Did we school three?

So, if she didn't have the skills to manage the boat, what about teaching? Again, a degree does not a teacher make. Our older son usually worked independently, but kids reach this stage at different ages. In contrast, our younger son required nearly constant reinforcement. (Or so it seemed.) He stewed and fussed for at least three-quarters of an hour producing from me an all too familiar phrase, "If you'd spend as much time







LEFT: Mike swinging from halyard

BELOW LEFT: The boys with Amanda.

BELOW RIGHT: *Moriarty* under sail.



RIGHT: Mike at the helm.





RIGHT: Catching a fish.

BELOW: The boys at Christmas.



RIGHT: The boys in dinghy preparing to snorkel.

BELOW: Blessing of the fleet parade.





working as you do fussing, you'd already be done." I finally had to evoke the damning sentence: "You can just repeat the grade. I don't have to be your teacher." Sigh.

Amanda? Nope, couldn't cope with Mike's behavior and after Ed and I returned from a morning walk to the two of them screaming at each other and books and papers all over the floor, I took over as teacher. What did she offer? Date time for Ed and me, time at the helm on passages, boat maintenance, and outings with the boys when they needed supervision. She was very capable of making every excursion ashore a learning experience, pointing out wildlife, native plants, and marine life. We had contracted with Amanda for a month and at the end of that time, even though we were not yet heading back to the States, she flew home. We were ready to handle both the schooling and boat on our own.

The boys participated in route planning. The Yachtsman's Guide to the Bahamas was our bible. Ed always reviewed routes, depths, tides, weather, and harbor approaches before we set out. We didn't have electronic charts with magenta lines! The boys had boat-life chores, stowing and cleaning up before passages, (and sometimes again after a rough crossing) helping with lines when docking, and taking the helm. Was this part of schooling? I'm not sure, but I know that developing a sense of responsibility is an important life skill.

We celebrated holidays, and participated in many local activities, including a Blessing of the Fleet, Junkanoo parades, and street music. The time was not just about sailing; it was a unique cultural experience.

In addition to keeping the boys at grade level, they developed social and interactive skills well beyond most children their age. They were always excited if we pulled into a marina to find other sailing families at the dock or anchor, but if not, they related to anyone. Ed

and I didn't fish, but the boys became quite competent, learning from both islanders and sport fishermen to catch and clean fish. It was my rule, what you catch, you clean. Island children invited them home for meals and to their school. They learned about Bahamian food and culture. Age, social distinction, race, or cultural differences were non-issues, and they've carried these skills into adulthood.

Would I do this again? Most certainly. It bonded us as a family and provided the boys with experiences most children never have.

These are my take-home lessons:

- Know your child's learning style and work out ways you and your children can turn a parent-child relationship into a positive teacher-student one.
- Include your children as you problem-solve boat repairs, navigation, or financial issues.
- Be flexible but set up a general routine and expectations for school time.
- Capitalize on the world around you. Math can include adding up the cost for groceries at the store. Spelling can be making out a grocery list or repair list. Reading can be books on the history, culture, and features of locations where you are sailing.
- Include your children in planning and the decisions to stay in one location or move on.
- Take part in local activities. Junkanoo, The Blessing of the Fleet, Island Regattas, dances, and other island festivities.
- Take advantage of experts in various areas such as the park rangers on sea life parks. We found dock masters and marina personnel have vast experiences



to share on subjects we knew nothing about.

- Work out time for the two of you, without children. A boat is a small space. There will be tough times; harsh weather, lack of sleep, long passages, bored kids, stuff breaking and inconvenient times to fix it. Make a plan, but remember sailing is an intention – not a plan.



**By many standards, I have led an unconventional life. My early years are unremarkable except for surviving polio, which is kind of a big deal. Once married to my soul mate, we adopted a family of three to add to our already three, moved to Paris for a year and stayed five, home-schooled our youngest sons on our sailboat in the Bahamas, left academia to start a business, participated in vintage car rallies and tours that took us to Africa, South America, North America, Australia, India, and around the world through Siberia, Russia, Kazakhstan and Europe in our 1967 VW Beetle. I finally left careers that included business, academia, and physical therapy that required lots of non-fiction writing, or at least creative non-fiction and began writing fiction when most friends were retiring. After a short failed marriage, I have stayed married (46 years) to my partner in all things adventurous. What else do you need to know about me other than I am high energy and willing to try new things and as I have aged, I think I have become bolder. [www.janethowleauthor.com](http://www.janethowleauthor.com)**

**BELOW: The boys learning to open coconuts with other boat kids.**





“The bad news? I wasn’t able to make it to the Bahamas last weekend.  
The good news? I downloaded *Uncharted* instead!”



Amazon reader review  
September 2021

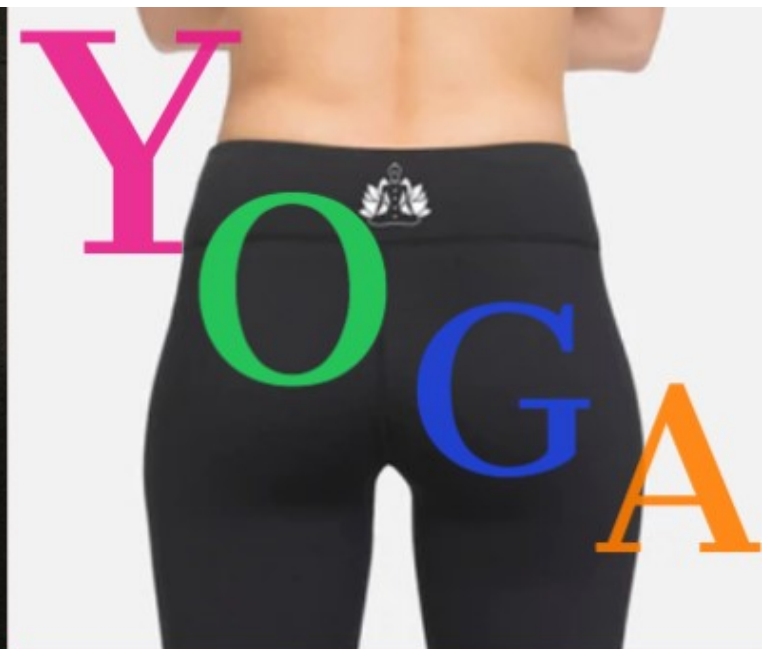
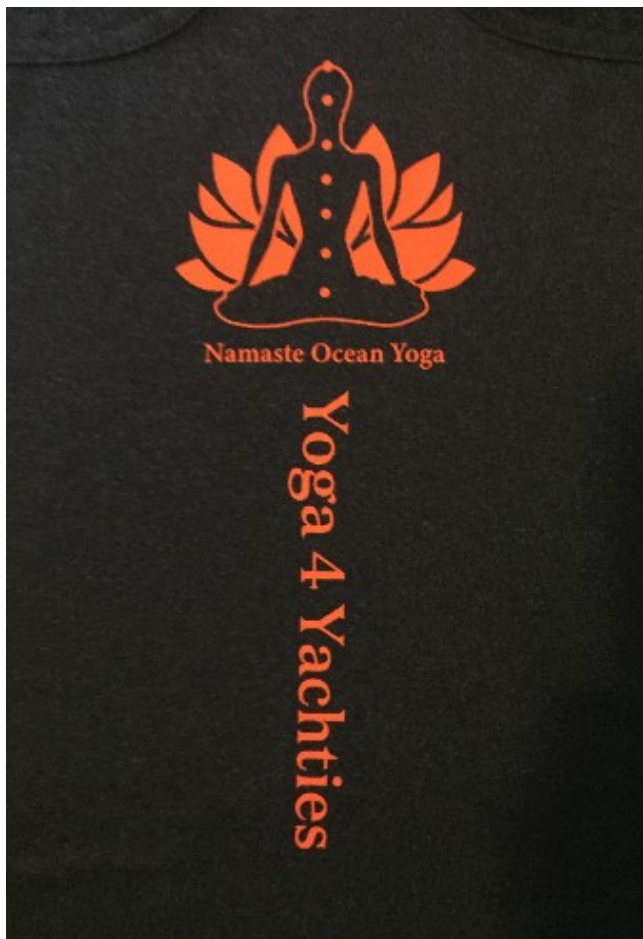


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# Missing *Velella*

## Melinda Taylor

What is it really like to be stuck 4,000 nautical miles away from your boat, unable to get to her or have her brought to you?

I suppose it comes down to just what the boat means to you personally, is she, and sailing, just one of many types of adventures you plan to experience in your lives? Or is she, and sailing, an all-consuming passion that defines the very essence of who you are?

I'm firmly in the second camp. I put 40 years into educating myself to get to the point of being fully competent to skipper my boat around the world. I saved, and worked, and hunted for the boat I believe is the best boat for me to take on this voyage — probably the last major adventure of my life. The day we left Australia to start our circumnavigation was the happiest day of my life.

No one saw COVID-19 coming though.

We'd all watched the sci-fi movies and read the books, but we didn't really believe it was going to look like this, a world stopped.

I understand the separation from loved ones is incredibly hard, heartbreakingly so, but that's your story to write, while this is mine. And you should write it, it's very cathartic.

*Velella* is never out of my thoughts. I worry about all the myriad of things that can fail on a boat. I dream of thru-hulls failing, fittings giving out, rats, corrosion, rotting sails, electric fires, gas explosions — you name a catastrophe that can happen to a boat, and it forms some part of my day or my nightmares.

Or the worst, we'll never get back and she'll just be yet another one of those sad boats you see, half sunk and beyond repair. And of course, the typhoons. Having been through



one super typhoon there, at 100 knots, I know that if we hadn't been on board, we probably wouldn't have her now.

I have her in a good place at Puerto Galera Sailing Club on one of their moorings that are lifted and checked every year. I have a dedicated boat man who does me proud every day. I realise, in this, I am incredibly lucky.

The other major torment for me is I have aggressive arthritis. I know my sailing days are numbered and this number is not high. This causes me great anguish. This pandemic could not have come at a worse time for me. Ultimately, my mental health is suffering, and I feel powerless.

Please do not accuse me of privilege or bring up the suffering of others and the terrible hardship of people everywhere, and the heartbreak of the loss of life and loved ones. I am very aware of all the horror out there. I



Veleva.

was asked to write an article about being separated from my boat and that I have done.



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# Flat-bottomed girl

## Views from the canal

### Remembering the magic of the Scheldt

Well, here we are. It's July 2020, and we're still in the Netherlands thanks to the pandemic. Previous summers have seen us travelling far and wide, although on canals far and wide is somewhat relative. The distance most people do in a car in a couple of hours can easily take a week to travel on a barge if we spin it out. But I digress. This year we're not going anywhere because COVID 19 has basically scuppered all our attempts to get the engine on our little holiday barge, *Hennie H*, up and running in time to go faring (as I call it).

So, as a result of having our wings clipped, or to put it more aptly, our propeller clamped, we can only reminisce about our former years' travels and dream of the moment when we can cast off our ropes and go cruising once again. The memories have been flooding in recently (excuse the pun), and a recent walk along the river Scheldt in Belgium reminded me of the pleasure and excitement of experiencing it by boat in 2018. It was our last long cruise before disaster struck when our engine emptied itself of oil into the sump with somewhat terminal consequences. But that's another story for another time. For



now, I'm going to a happier place by remembering our trip along the Scheldt again.

For those who don't know it, the Scheldt is a tidal river; it's fast running and has an impressive rise of around ten metres at its narrowest point. The tidal section is from Ghent to Antwerp and a trip either up or downstream has to be well planned for boats that don't have much power on board. Running with the tide is definitely a good idea if you don't have many horses in your engine room – pushing against the current tends to be a thirsty job for the poor horses. And thirsty means expensive.

Anyway, until 2018, I'd never done it, the Scheldt that is. When I heard it was going to be the first and last part of our route through Belgium, I was more than a bit nervous. The speed of the current and the risks of running aground on the silted-up banks of the river's numerous bends set my 'what if' monitor on high alert. On the morning we set out on our travels, we did the downstream run from Ghent to Dendermonde, a town about



halfway along the tidal section. That turned out to be quite enough excitement for one trip as the impeller in our water pump disintegrated, luckily just before we joined the river. But the fact that my partner had to replace it at the lock in Ghent meant a serious delay and we were late leaving. This in turn meant we lost the advantage of the ebb tide and had to race to reach the lock at Dendermonde by low water. And believe me it was very low when we arrived. It was a bit like manoeuvring our way through a country stream rather than a serious waterway, so we were pretty relieved to make it onto the river Dender before the tide turned.

Our return journey was much more relaxed, and I was captivated by the magic of this wild and winsome river. For a start, we joined it much further downstream at Wintam. We'd come up from Charleroi on the canal to Brussels. From there, we joined the sea canal which leads to the Scheldt, the fastest route for barges travelling from southern Belgium to Antwerp.

Wintam sea lock was a bit of a surprise after the bustle of Brussels. It lies at the end of a wide section of canal bordered not by

industry as it is for most of the stretch, but by peaceful farmland. Although I expected a large lock, I wasn't anticipating one of quite such huge proportions. It was a massive 250 metres long and 25 wide and we were the only ones using it that afternoon. Talk about feeling overwhelmed; not just about the size, but about all the water being used on our behalf too.

We'd planned our exit onto the Scheldt to coincide with what we thought would be slack tide, but once we were out on the river, we realised the tide wasn't slack at all and we'd need to wait a while. The current was still running fast downstream, so any progress we might have made towards our intended night stop back at Dendermonde would be slow, tough-going, and consequently very costly. None of these challenges appealed to us, especially not the last, and anyway, we needed to nurse the *Hennie H's* meagre sixty old horses along. So, we crossed the river and tied up to a commercial pontoon where we could wait for the tide to turn, which happened an hour or so later. We'd miscalculated somewhat, but it didn't matter.







Views of the Scheldt.



Initially we set off on the slack tide, but we made good progress and it wasn't long before the current helped us forge ahead. As we wound our way along the river, I realised how special it was. The weather was glorious and emphasised the Scheldt's untamed, rather mysterious beauty punctuated by its many sculpted mudflats and tiny inlets. I could imagine taking a small boat into them at high water and staying there to sit on the mud when the tide ran out. Alone in a watery wilderness. Bliss.

The river's course meandered sinuously through the countryside, so there were buoys to ensure the commercial barges kept to the deeper channels. In places the water was so shallow the birds (waders, of course) simply walked on the bottom, which looked both funny and worrying. But it was as good a 'don't go there' sign as you could get.

Actually, the bird life was quite different from the canalised rivers we were used to. There were none of the familiar ducks or coots; instead, there were all manner of coastal birds, as well as flocks of seagulls. We might have been forty kilometres from the estuary beyond Antwerp, but we were still very much in touch with the sea.

I forget what time it was when we reached Dendermonde, but it was early evening as the light was turning gold. The entire scene was quite bewitching in its remote, natural splendour. Although we'd passed several riverside marinas on the way, most of them were full of boaters making the most of the gorgeous weather. As a result, we were relieved to find two empty pontoons next to the bank just before the turning into the Dendermonde sea lock, the point at which we'd started our journey several weeks before.

Koos made a U-turn, so we'd be facing into the flow, and we used four hefty ropes to tie up. The current was running pretty fast upstream by this time, and we didn't want any nasty overnight surprises. Being wrenched from our mooring and carried off on the tide held no romantic notions, not for me at least.

That evening, after we'd explored the town, we sat on the back deck in the dark and watched the water flowing past us at a crazy speed. In full spate, it carried the detritus of bank life with it: logs, clumps of weed, and small branches all tore past us at a hectic pace. The following morning, we caught the incoming tide again and revelled in the glittering morning as we sped past the now familiar scenery, dodging the flotsam we'd watched the night before.

Looking back, the Scheldt was a magical experience and one I hope we'll repeat in the not-too-distant future. Being so natural and elemental, it was definitely the crowning highlight of what had been a glorious holiday. For me, it provided exactly the right bookends to our travels and images of its beauty linger on, calling to be revisited as soon as the situation allows. Let's all keep everything crossed and hope that will be sooner rather than later, engine repairs permitting!



**VALERIE POORE** was born in London, England, and grew up in both north London and the west of Dorset. She moved to South Africa in 1981 but returned to Europe in 2001, which is when she began her love affair with the lovely Dutch flat-bottomed barges (hence the page title). She has lived on a barge in Rotterdam's Oude Haven since then, but summers see her and her partner on the Belgian and French canals. Val teaches writing skills at the local uni for a living, but has written several memoirs about her waterways life. Writing is a lifelong love as well as being her work.





# *The Capricorn Bunker Group, Southern Great Barrier Reef*

## **A photo essay by Sonia Robinson**

**Sonia, her husband Miguel and their ship's cat 'Pooky' share their experiences sailing the southernmost islands and reefs of Australia's Great Barrier Reef aboard their Westerly Conway Ketch *Dream Catcher*.**

The Capricorn Bunker Group of coral cays (islands) form the southernmost portion of the Great Barrier Reef lying some 45 – 60 nm off the Capricorn Coast. Fishing areas are restricted and monitored closely by Great Barrier Marine Parks Authority (GBRMPA). There is no reliable internet or phone coverage amongst the group. VHF communications are available through Port Bundaberg on Channel 80. No domestic animals are permitted ashore amongst the Capricorn Bunker Group.

Some islands offer camping and overnight reef accommodation (North West and Lady Musgrave) for nature enthusiasts and divers. Heron Island is a privately operated coral cay and a wildlife and marine life sanctuary with a world-renowned research

station.

Finding protection from the weather can be a challenge – particularly if there is no island or shallow sandy patch off the reef in which to anchor. Marine Parks provide moorings at some locations (primarily to protect the coral) but you must be prepared to anchor at every location – sometimes in deep water.

Another element to consider is the effect of tides and currents which, depending on your location may vary in height and strength. The tidal flow can be very strong which, for a full keeled yacht like *Dream Catcher* can be quite uncomfortable, tending to sit beam on or even stern to the wind and wanting to pivot on her chain or mooring line.

However, for anyone willing, the Capricorn Bunkers are well worth a visit.



The wreck of the *Protector* lies at the entrance to Heron Island and is a popular snorkelling spot.



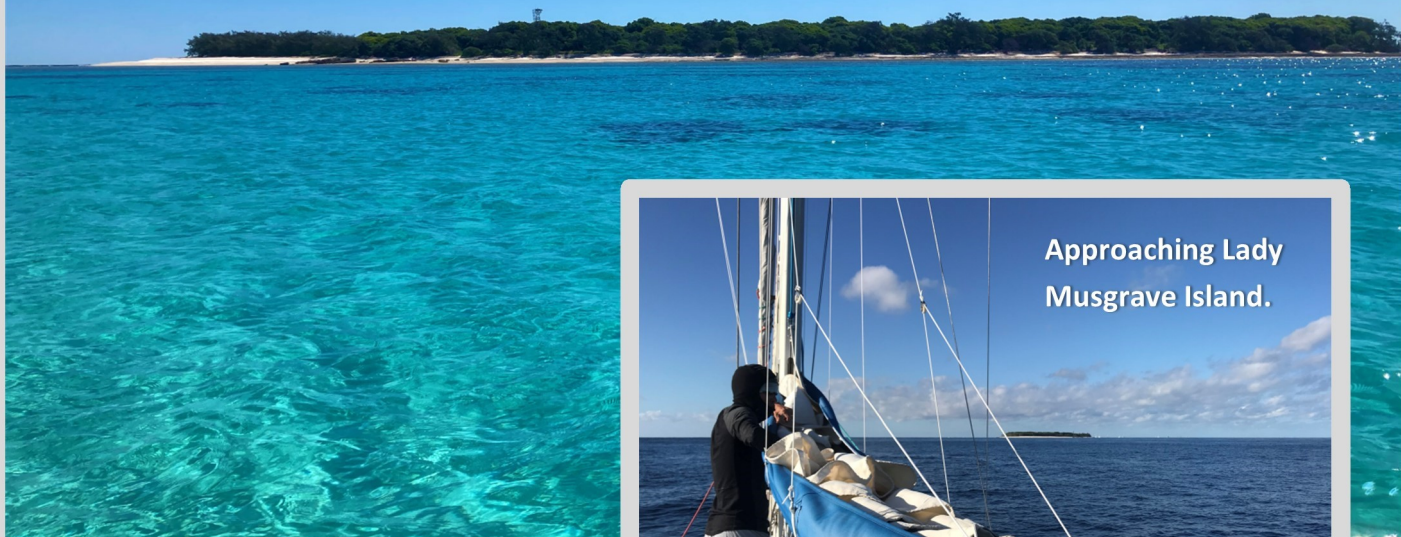
RIGHT: Miguel, Sonia, and Pooky aboard *Dream Catcher*.



Sunset in Fitzroy Reef lagoon.



Looking across the lagoon to  
beautiful Lady Musgrave Island.

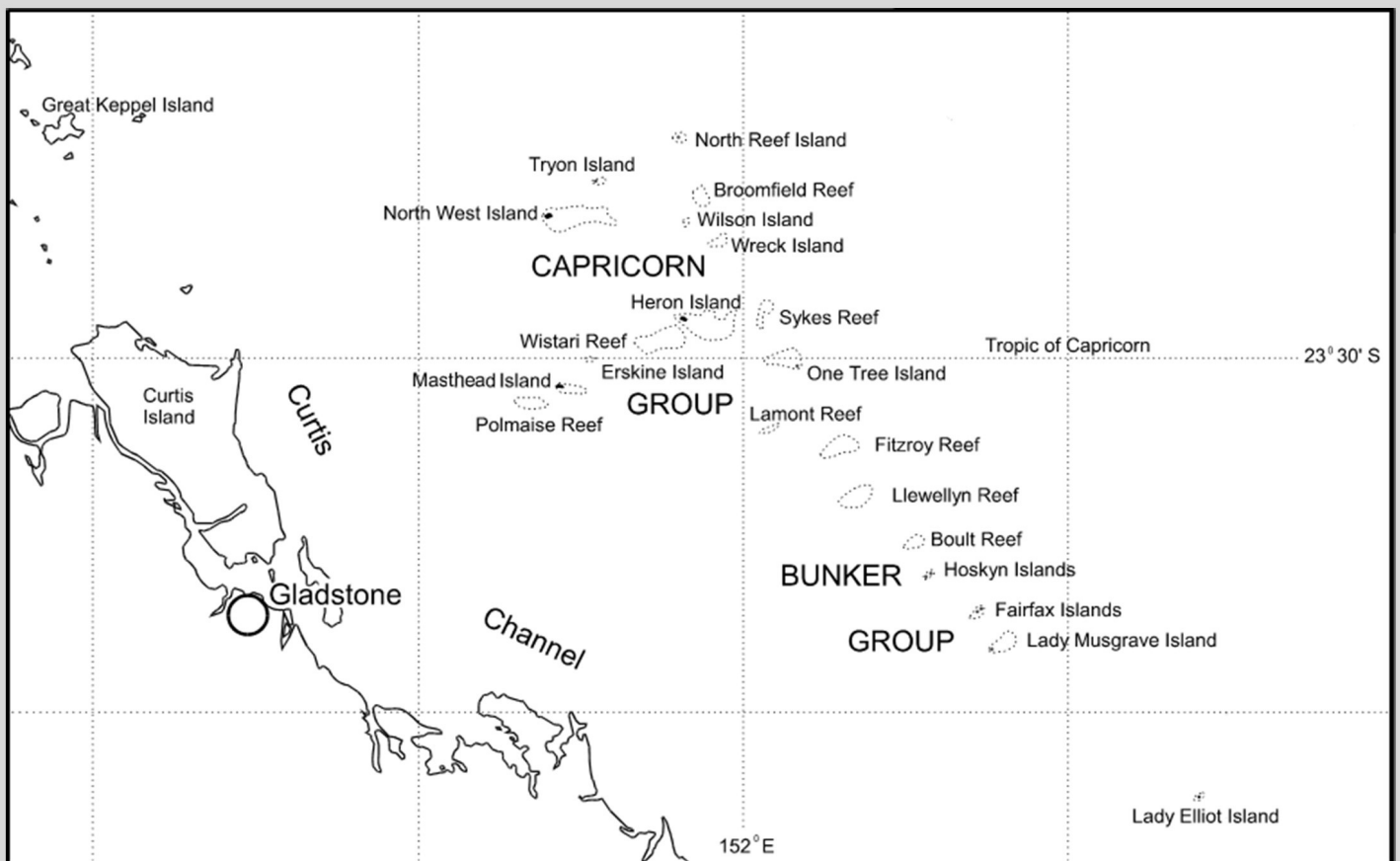


Approaching Lady  
Musgrave Island.



*Dream Catcher* off Heron Island.





Sonia Robison owns EZIYACHT, a marine brokerage that helps people to buy and sell boats. We specialise in the preparation and sale of used sailing and motor yachts and cruisers. We encourage more women to take to the water as boat owners and skippers and we enjoy educating others along the way. We take pride in working closely with our clients to ensure that their vessel is presented and marketed in the best imaginable way while finding the right vessel for each and every buyer.

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# *SisterShip* Watches ...

By Amy Alton

## ***SV Juliet***

LeeAnne, along with her partner Charlie and dog Bubba, has been sailing the coast of California and Mexico for the past few years. She shares her adventures aboard their 1990 Mason 44.

**Amy: Your plan has been to cruise Mexico for a few years and then head across the Pacific. Has the pandemic changed your plans at all?**

**LeeAnne:** Yes — HUGELY! Our first season of cruising began in late 2019, pre-pandemic. In March 2020, while cruising in some pretty remote areas in the Sea of Cortez, with no access to cell service or the internet, we started hearing rumors from other cruisers about this scary coronavirus. We were able to use our satellite phone to access some news headlines to get the basics of what was going on, but information was still pretty sketchy. So, we returned to the city of La Paz, which by then was completely locked down. We weren't allowed off our boat except for essential activities, we

couldn't walk our dog, Bubba, anywhere but the gravel parking lot of the marina. The whole situation scared me so much that we buttoned the boat up and flew back to California where we isolated for six months.

By October it seemed like the world was figuring out how to move forward with COVID, so we flew back and started cruising again... but it was all very different to what we'd envisioned cruising to be. There were far fewer boats out here and lots of areas were still shut down; beach palapas were often closed, and there wasn't much interaction between boats in an anchorage as we were all still socially distancing. As a social person, I'd been looking forward to meeting other cruisers, having sundowners in the cockpit with new friends, and experiencing the community aspects of cruising. All of that was severely curtailed. Fortunately, we connected with another boat, *Boundless*, and began buddy-boating with them, so the four of us spent a lot of time together.

Now that we're back to full-time cruising, however, we feel like we haven't been able to really enjoy the full Mexican cruising experience. So rather than spend only two



years here, we're extending our stay. For how long? We have no idea! Maybe one more season, maybe more. And by the time we feel like we've had our fill with Mexico, will we still want to cross the Pacific? We don't know! Options we're considering include heading south to Panama, possibly going through the canal to the Caribbean, or maybe heading out to Hawaii and then up to the Pacific Northwest. That's the great thing about cruising — you can go where the wind, weather and whim blows you.

**Amy: How do you divide video production between you and Charlie?**

**LeeAnne:** I do it all! This was something that I really wanted to try, and Charlie is very supportive and encouraging but he has no interest in doing it himself. At first, he wasn't even really comfortable in front of the camera, but he's become much better and will now give short monologues about what's going on, where we're sailing, the wind and ocean conditions, etc. But I do all of the video editing and narration. I don't mind at all — I find it to be a very fulfilling creative process.

**Amy: How has creating videos enhanced your sailing experience?**

**LeeAnne:** There are aspects of it that enhance it, and aspects that detract from it. It's definitely made me focus on what's unique, interesting, and special about our lifestyle, as I try to see it through our audience's eyes. It's also given me a way to share our adventure with my friends and family that I would never have been able to do without creating videos. Being the social person that I am, sometimes it feels as if something hasn't actually happened if I can't share it!

But it has also put pressure on me to film when I would rather just be experiencing. For example, a few weeks ago we had a huge whale repeatedly breaching very close to our

boat. I knew it would be great on video, so I filmed it the whole time — but viewing it through the camera meant I couldn't just stand there and watch it. And then there's the amount of time it takes to edit a video. I'm getting faster, but it can take me two to three full days per episode. This means that I can only put out about two videos a month, instead of the weekly episodes that so many other channels release. I don't know how they do it. I'm just not willing to spend that much of my time in front of my computer.

**Amy: What did you do before retiring to go cruising? Have your job skills translated at all into cruising?**

**LeeAnne:** Charlie and I both worked at a large biotech firm in the Research & Development group. He was in information systems; I was in the training department. While none of that has anything to do with sailing, cruising, or video production, project management was a big part of both of our jobs. Those skills have definitely helped us with organizing the various large projects involved in preparing for cruising, maintaining the boat, and managing the many tasks involved in cruising.

**Amy: What's your biggest struggle with your videos?**

**LeeAnne:** I have two of them. First is remembering to film. I guess I'm just not naturally a YouTuber — I know many sailing channels out there film almost everything, but I'm often too busy living it to remember to pull out my cameras. And when REALLY exciting stuff happens, I sometimes miss it. Last season we had a near-collision with another boat at anchor in the wee hours of the morning. I managed to remember to grab my phone and film some of it, but I was so busy trying to fend off the other boat and get us re-anchored that the footage was all very chaotic.

The second struggle is simply editing videos.



I had zero experience in this when we started, so it's been a steep learning curve. I've definitely improved significantly — I go back and look at my early videos now and cringe!

**Amy: Your first date was on a sailboat, and you had a sailboat in the 80s. How have your sailing experiences prepared you for cruising?**

**LeeAnne:** Who could have imagined that some 40 years later, our first date on a sailboat would result in us living full time on a sailboat! We could never have predicted this.

If it wasn't for those early years sailing, we probably never would have landed on this at all. We bought our first boat shortly after we were married and enjoyed coastal cruising around southern California and the Channel Islands. But once the kids came along, we sold the boat and spent many years completely away from sailing. It wasn't until they were in their early teens that we got back into it. And then we started small — a few trips out on sailing club boats, then we bought a small pocket-cruiser just to get back on the water. It took a long time before the idea of cruising seemed like something we could even dream of. But about ten years ago it struck us that we could do this, and we've been working solidly towards it ever since. And now, here we are!

**Amy: You did the Baja Ha-Ha sailing rally down to Mexico. How was that experience?**

**LeeAnne:** We loved it! But it's not for everyone. I, of course, really enjoyed all the social aspects of it — the kick-off parties, the beach parties along the way, the celebrations at the end in Cabo. We met so many wonderful people, many of whom we still keep in touch with. In fact, the couple we've been buddy-boating with for the last year, Colin and Julian on *Boundless*, we met on the Ha-Ha, and we continue to encounter boats that we met on the Ha-Ha. It's always fun to

reconnect.

But we also realize that there are things we missed by doing the Ha-Ha. They do a pretty fast trek from San Diego down to Cabo with only two stops — and you miss a lot of very interesting anchorages along the way that we will probably never get to see, as we don't plan on doing the bash back up.

The key factor that made the Ha-Ha work for us was the deadline. It's a great way to kick-start your cruising life. Once you sign up and commit to doing it, that gives you a date that you don't want to miss. It keeps you moving forward towards your goal. So many things can side-track and delay your start, but if you've committed to the Ha-Ha you find a way to blast through the obstacles.

**Amy: You've been cruising Mexico for a while. What are some of your favorite places and experiences you had there?**

**LeeAnne:** We've now spent quite a bit of time in the Sea of Cortez on the Baja Peninsula, and then earlier this year we finally got to cross the Sea of Cortez over to the mainland and experience that part of Mexican cruising, which is very different from Baja. Like everything, there are pros and cons to both... but when you weigh it all out, the Sea of Cortez wins for us.

It is truly a cruiser's paradise. There are many places to drop anchor, each one with something different. Some anchorages are sleepy fishing villages where you can buy just-caught yellowtail from the fishermen as they land their pangas on the beach and eat delicious tacos at a rustic beach palapa run by a local family. Other anchorages are remote coves with nothing there but you, the pelicans, and a few cactuses. The snorkeling is mind-blowing — like an aquarium, with huge schools of brilliant fish, eels hiding under rocks, skittering octopuses, and vibrant corals. A normal day might involve hiking or beachcombing in the morning, snorkeling in





**LeeAnne, Charlie,  
Bubba, and *SV Juliet*.**









the afternoon, cocktails in the cockpit, then a late fish dinner.

And speaking of fish, [the fishing is incredible!](#) I would usually throw a hand line out as soon as we'd set sail to the next cove, and I caught our dinner quite a few times — bonito, Pacific sierra, and our absolute favorite: mahi mahi. This last season I also started learning how to spear-fish, and I snagged a few prizes — gray bar grunts, hawkfish, and trigger fish.

In the Sea of Cortez, you spend a lot of time away from any signs of civilization, off the grid, and living very close to nature and the ocean... in fact you spend many hours in the ocean.

That's a stark contrast to cruising along the Mexican mainland. It has its charms as well, but it's an entirely different experience. After months of remote cruising, it felt a bit disconcerting just how busy it all was! Instead of remote coves and tiny fishing villages, you have Mazatlán, La Cruz, Puerto Vallarta, [Barra de Navidad](#). You are never far away from civilization, and often right in the heart of some of the most popular tourist draws in the world. There are often dozens of high-end seafood restaurants lining the beaches, mariachi bands playing loudly into the wee hours, and luxury resorts everywhere. I'm glad we got to see it, and we had a blast, but we've decided we prefer the much more remote, quiet, laid-back cruising lifestyle in the Sea of Cortez.

**Amy: Tell us about your dog, Bubba! How does he handle the liveaboard life?**

**LeeAnne:** Bubba has had his ups and downs. He had a pretty good life at our house before we left to go cruising — we had a big, fully enclosed yard with a doggy door, so he came and went as he pleased and had a lot of freedom. Obviously, his life changed a lot when we set sail. Fortunately, we'd taken him for multi-day sails many times in the years

before we left, so he was already acclimated to boat life. We have two fake turf pads on the boat, one on the foredeck and one in the cockpit, that he uses when he has to do his business. He prefers when we're in a marina so we can take him for walks whenever he wants one, but life on the hook is fun too — he gets to ride in the dinghy, which he loves! He also loves to go for long walks on the beach and root around in the sand for stinky dead fish, and chase seagulls... yeah, it's a fun life for him.

The only problem is that he's not too thrilled with long sails and he really doesn't like overnight passages. He sleeps through most of it, and he doesn't want to go down below at all - he'll spend the whole time in the cockpit, next to whomever is on watch at the helm. But he bounces back pretty quickly once we drop anchor.

He has had a couple of health issues — he developed a cough, and he got a badly infected bug bite once — but the veterinary care in Mexico is fabulous and super affordable. We found a vet in La Paz whom we love, and he's taken excellent care of Bubba.

**Amy: Any tips for cruisers wanting to bring their dogs?**

**LeeAnne:** Make sure your pup is “boat-broken” and is comfortable doing his business on board. Take him on weekend and week-long trips before you go. Be sure to bring some books about doggie health so if something develops you can get an idea what's wrong. And go to a vet before you leave to stock up on meds that he might need, and learn how and when to use them, in case you are at sea and need to treat him yourself.

**Amy: What's one piece of gear you wish you had onboard Juliet?**

**LeeAnne:** A dive compressor! As an avid diver and underwater photographer, I was



hoping to be able to do more diving in the Sea of Cortez, which has some of the best diving in the world. But without a compressor, and no room for more than a couple of tanks onboard, we haven't been able to do that. I try to see as much as I can snorkeling, but I sure wish I could do more actual diving.

**Amy: What's your favorite modification you have made to *Juliet*?**

**LeeAnne:** When we first got to La Paz after the Baja Ha-Ha, we had a local stainless guy [build custom arches on the stern](#) which hold a very large solar panel as well as dinghy davits. The additional solar panel means we have more than enough power now to meet our needs without ever having to hook up to shore power, and the dinghy davits make raising and lowering the dinghy so much easier!

**Amy: What's been your hardest or scariest moment on *Juliet*?**

**LeeAnne:** You mean other than being trapped on our boat in a foreign country at the beginning of a global pandemic?

Honestly, we've been super lucky — we really haven't had any truly scary moments (knock on wood!). The scariest was probably on one of our overnight passages when we were cruising along the mainland. We were buddy-boating with *Boundless*, sailing pretty closely behind them. Suddenly, in the middle of the night on MY watch, this huge fishing boat came barreling towards us seemingly hell-bent on colliding! Regardless of how I altered course, it would alter its course directly towards us. Eventually it barged right into the narrow space between us and *Boundless*, for no reason that we could ascertain — we were ten miles out to sea, there were no other boats around, there was zero reason for them to come so close to us! Fortunately, they continued on and left us alone after that. But I admit it freaked me out!

**Amy: What's one quality Charlie has that makes him a great sailing partner? What strength do you have that you think makes you a good sailing partner?**

**LeeAnne:** Charlie is a natural sailor. He can look at the sails and know exactly what tiny tweak might eke out a bit more speed, or a smoother ride. Part of that comes from his years as a crew member racing on a friend's boat, but I'm convinced he just feels it in his bones. It definitely does not come naturally to me!

He's also just a very calm person, not prone to panic. Any issues crop up, he will calmly and methodically seek the solution. I tend to be a bit more emotionally reactive to challenges, but his calming presence really helps center me when things go sideways, as they inevitably will.

And I have to mention his mechanical prowess! He spent years studying every system on *Juliet* before we began cruising, and he has been able to quickly diagnose and solve pretty much every maintenance issue that has cropped up. He's very handy to have around!

As for me — given that I'm not an expert sailor or mechanic — what I bring to the table is my sense of adventure, and my willingness to try new things, face challenges, and endure the inevitable hardships of this lifestyle in order to experience this incredible adventure. Oh, and I'm great at provisioning, meal planning and cooking in a tiny galley... not to mention catching fish! I even do the filleting.

I realize that our division of labor can come across as if we've fallen into very traditional gender roles, but that's simply a function of our strengths and life experiences. Hey, if I could repair a faulty autopilot I totally would! But that's not something I know how to do. Fortunately, he does. And meanwhile he gets to eat like a king. (King Neptune, anyway!)



**Amy: Is there anything else you want to share with the readers of *SisterShip Magazine*?**

**LeeAnne:** Two things. First, don't wait to go cruising. You will always be able to find reasons not to go, which can result in delaying until it's too late. We didn't want that to happen to us, so we pushed forward and just tried to obliterate every obstacle. We did end up having to delay by a year when I needed eye surgery, and we considered waiting even longer so we could keep working and add more to the cruising kitty, but we realized that there would always be something to keep us from going if we let it. So, we just set the deadline and went!

Second: Get in the best shape for you before you go. You don't need to be an athlete or super-fit, but this is undeniably a physically demanding lifestyle. For example, you can't just walk out the door, get in your car and drive to the store to pick up stuff for dinner. Nope, you've got to climb the companionway ladder, scamper down into the dinghy, fire it up and dinghy to shore, land in a rolling surf, drag the dinghy up the sand and anchor it, walk a mile to the nearest store, carry your groceries back to your dinghy, and then do it all in reverse. If you are out of shape, that gets exhausting.

Our first season of cruising (pre-COVID) I was not in very good shape, and it was hard. The physical demands almost made me reconsider doing this at all. Then, during our six-month COVID isolation in California, I took control of my fitness: I started running, strength training, and eating healthy. By the time we got back to the boat I was in the best shape I've ever been. And what a huge difference it's made! Everything is so much easier, I feel healthy and strong, and I'm truly enjoying this life.

On the whole, two years into it, even in the midst of a pandemic, cruising has been everything I ever dreamed it would be — and

more. So, get out there!

**Links:**

<https://svjulietsailing.com/>

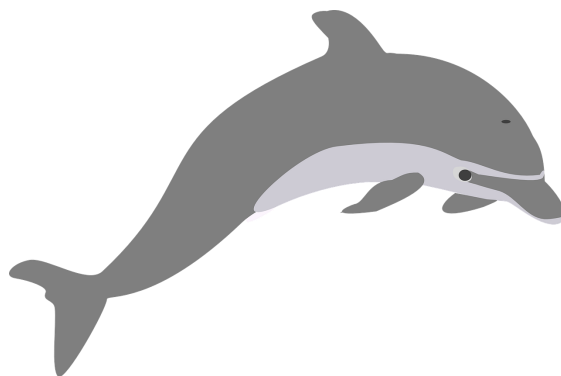
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Amy Alton, in partnership with her husband, shares their journey on their YouTube channel, [Out Chasing Stars](#). You can also enjoy her writing and photography on their blog, [OutChasingStars.com](#).







# Playing after the storm

## By Marissa Neely

Alright, don't roast me for this photo. I know, my PFD is loose which is basically the equivalent of wearing an unstrapped helmet but let me give you some context behind that huge grin I am wearing. It was the first weekend of October and Catalina Island clearly missed the memo because it was 80 degrees and feeling as "summer" as ever. My husband Chris and I had just accomplished our first night passage without crew, starting just eight hours prior in Ventura, and were thrilled to shed our foulies for bathing suits, jumping into the crystal-clear water as soon as possible. This was the stuff cruising dreams were made of, but that night we were reminded that cruising is not always sunshine and cocktails.

After the most intense sunset, our summer-but-still-fall day was foiled by a torrential downpour. The wind whistled through our rigging as it continued to build, our diesel heater earned its keep as we huddled below

to enjoy the sound of rain. We were confident in our anchor set, as our Vulcan bit into the sandy bottom with a 3:1 scope, but as the wind continued to build from the NW Chris decided to let out more scope, leaving us at a 6:1 ratio. Lightning cracked above us, illuminating the island for a brief moment before the darkness returned.

"Unplug everything and put that in the oven" Chris said as he pointed to his Pelican case full of the hard drives that contained all of his video work, our photos, and other content. I did as instructed and fit the case into the oven perfectly, with no room to spare. Basically, the oven acts as a Faraday cage (a full metal box) and when lightning hits it, it just flows over the outside without disturbing anything inside (in theory). Even though statistically, *Avocet* has a 0.4% chance of being hit by lightning we still went through the motions of preparing by unplugging electronics and keeping clear of metal. With *Avocet* secure we turned in for the night, putting our trust in our anchor to hold us - and it did. As the electrical storm kept



moving the wind continued to build into the sustained 20s and gusting well into the 30s. By 10:00pm the storm had turned cyclonic, blowing hard from the NW, then the SE, then NW again.

After our anchor had reset its direction three times, the wind finally died around 1:00 am just as predicted. Chris had finished his last anchor check before coming back to bed, cold after his exposure outside. We quickly faded back to sleep only to both be awoken at 2:10 am by the heavy booming of water crashing against rocks. Although the initial system left, another took its place from the opposite direction causing our position to flip. Our anchor didn't drag (thankfully), but we had found the end of the new scope ratio leaving us less than two boat lengths from Indian Rock, which we had spent that very afternoon snorkeling around.

I struggled to put my contacts in as the fierce swell bucked *Avocet's* bow violently up and down. Chris ran forward to pull the chain up while I remained at helm, engine rumbling and in forward gear, keeping my eyes on my shirtless, wet, life-jacket-less husband struggling on the bow. It was as if we were riding an angry bull in the middle of a monsoon. The red glow of Chris's headlamp went up and down as the chop increased.

The rock we nearly touched seemed larger than what I remembered; its rigid shape protruded like our shadow trying to swallow us. I brought our engine up to 2700 RPMs, pointing our bow into the swell as best as possible without compromising the retrieval of our hook, and Chris's safety. The wind was blowing a consistent 30 kts, gusting into the 35-38 kt range. The swell had turned violent, our bow diving under each wave showering Chris as he held on for dear life. After what felt like forever, our anchor was secured, and we were free. In minutes, the mainsail was reefed and raised as we headed out towards deeper water where we could heave-to and recollect our thoughts. Lightning struck along

the horizon in a magnificent streak of yellow, bursting into multiple stringy pathways - I silently hoped one would not find our mast.

Chris returned to the cockpit where I immediately handed him his PFD and instructed him to put it on, tight. We stood side by side like drowned rats as we discussed our plan for the next hours. After reviewing our weather sources, we decided it would be best to remain hove-to and wait for the system to pass before setting our course for Avalon Harbor. With the adrenaline subsiding as *Avocet* crabbed along somewhat-comfortably (although in these conditions, "comfortable" is a relative word, isn't it?) I curled up in front of the companionway just in case Chris needed my help during his unscheduled watch and fell back asleep.

We rode out the storm for the next couple hours until the wind died from the SE. With the returned NW wind Chris shook out our reefs and set sail for Avalon Harbor. The thunder and lightning vanished as though nothing happened at all, being replaced by blue skies and sunshine that flooded our very damp cockpit. We pushed through the confused swell at a steady 6 knots, making great time in the early hours of the morning. I awoke just as the iconic Avalon Casino came into view. Once secured at our mooring we discussed the night in further detail, deciding we made the right call to heave-to and wait out the storm. We were proud of our confidence and the skills that shone through in the darkest of nights and what could have been the scariest of moments. Realistically Chris and I know this will not be our last run in with foul weather, and wholeheartedly accept that as seafarers. We have survived the latest challenge, and will be ready for the next, keeping full faith in our vessel and our ever-growing skills. After all, a smooth sea never made a strong sailor.

Now, the photo. After that harrowing experience, we had the most wonderful time at Catalina exploring Avalon, drinking



"Buffalo Milk" cocktails, relaxing on the beach, and enjoying our time away from our project list. The day we left Avalon we raised our sails in 10 knots of glorious wind under the warm sun. It was too beautiful of a day to not enjoy it on the bow so as I carefully made my way forward, I made the conscious decision to grab my PFD, still fit for over my foulies, and buckled it over my bikini top. One foot tucked under the dinghy, with a hand on the forestay I laughed as the brisk Pacific Ocean kissed my bare back and legs with every dip of the bow. In that moment, I knew that I was exactly where I was meant to be and felt like I was sailing back to port as a more capable sailor, smiling ear to ear.

*"Remember to play after every storm." - Mattie Stepanek.*

Marissa and her husband Chris are young 20-somethings living aboard a 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, **Avocet**, preparing to sail the world. You can follow the couple's journey on YouTube (Sailing Avocet) or on their website [www.svavocet.com](http://www.svavocet.com)



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# WORLD SAILING TRUST, GENDER BALANCE, AND DIVERSITY IN YACHT RACING



## BY DEBORAH WALLACE

Lockdown in Australia doesn't mean that we can't think about initiatives in our world of sailing, visualise and continue the conversation on how to build a stronger gender balance and more diversity, and how little changes could be introduced to enable future success.

Going back to December 2019, the World Sailing Trust published the results of their world survey, a comprehensive report on Women in Sailing, outlining their findings in a Strategic Review.

At the time of release, Dee Caffari was the Chair of the World Sailing and I reference her comments:

"If we want our sport to progress and move forward then we need to consider fifty percent of the population otherwise we are going to be left behind. This is for all of us to take forward into the future with a collaborative and cohesive approach to make the sport stronger."

You can use this as a foundation to start a conversation at your club. You can read the Women in Sailing Strategic Review here: <https://www.sailing.org/news/89534.php#.YRhknogzbIU>

Well before this report, conversations were

being held worldwide, at international level and club level, on how diversity and gender balance can be addressed.

Encouragingly, in 2017-2018 The Volvo Ocean Race (now The Ocean Race) led by example. This major ocean race introduced a gender crew mix for the race. This initiative clearly set the stage for change and a clear pathway for women into one of the world's most challenges races. This was a great start, although as with any new initiative it had its critics.

Jump forward to 2021, three years down the track and the Ocean Race, SailGP, and National Sailing League have clear racing rules in place embracing mixed crew competition (these may not be the only ones, but these are top of mind for me). This enables girls and women to set themselves clear goals, and shows if they work hard, focus, and develop skills, they can achieve their dreams and follow in the footsteps of some incredible women who have been an integral part of laying the foundation and are currently competing at the highest level. It's a clear indication that diversity is important to the sport.

## THE OCEAN RACE, SAILGP, AND THE NATIONAL SAILING LEAGUE

THE OCEAN RACE 2022 will start from



Spain in October 2022 you can check out the registered yachts and follow articles at [www.theoceanrace.com](http://www.theoceanrace.com)

SAILGP is currently doing the circuit. They are due in Australia in December 2021, of course COVID-19 permitting. You can check out the crews and find out more about this adrenaline-charged competition at [www.sailgp.com](http://www.sailgp.com)

THE NATIONAL SAILING LEAGUE has two Classes U22 (Youth) and Open with no age limit. Mixed crews of four, 50% mix. This is an exciting national competition, including New Zealand, which culminates in the World Finals in Europe where 24 Teams with three from the Asia Pacific region complete. For more information you can visit <https://sailing-championsleague.asia/>

## **CELEBRATING “STEERING THE COURSE” 2021**

### ***NORTHERN HEMISPHERE ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT 21-30 MAY 2021***

In the Northern Hemisphere, events were held at the end of May 2021 with on-water events including Barbados Sailing Association which held a remote-control boat race and dinghy training regatta. The RYA published articles highlighting Women in Leadership and details of an elected Youth and Junior Female Commodore. The RYA also promoted and held an Adult Learn to Sail event.

Of course, the Magenta Project Case study was a fitting example of empowering women to work towards achieving personal goal and making it happen.

World Sailing and EUROSAF a virtual Women in Sailing Panel with several high-profile women sailors including Alessandra Sensi (ITA) Four-time Olympic medallist, the most successful female Olympic sailor in history and a World Sailing Hall of fame member.

The World Sailing Trust held another panel which discussed equity and inclusion in sailing. The panel included Holly Cova (Team Director for Vendee Globe Team), Jonquil Hackenberg (chair of Magenta Project), and Vicki Lowe (Head of World Sailing Trust). It's a wonderful investment of your time if you are keen to learn more - <https://www.sailing.org/news/91008.php#.YRiko4gzbIV>

### ***SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE LINE UP***

October 2021 saw the inaugural 10-day Women's Sailing Festival in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing together sailing clubs and communities from around the country and beyond.

South Africa's "Girls in Sailing Program" produced a video which can be viewed on their Facebook page, in support of their already healthy programs for women and girls sailing.

In Australia, sailing in some states was out of the question, due to lockdowns, however there were online 'virtual' events organised.

Australian Sailing held their inaugural SheSails National Leadership Conference which coincided with World's Sailing Steering the Course Festival.

Keynote speakers included Sarah Styles, Director of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreations, and Jessica Watson OAM, SheSails Ambassador, and solo sailor.

This is a great start ...

Get involved, share your passion or experience something new, it's possible, all you have to do is reach out to your local club.

**[sailingwomensnetwork.com.au](http://sailingwomensnetwork.com.au)**





# Flat-bottomed girl

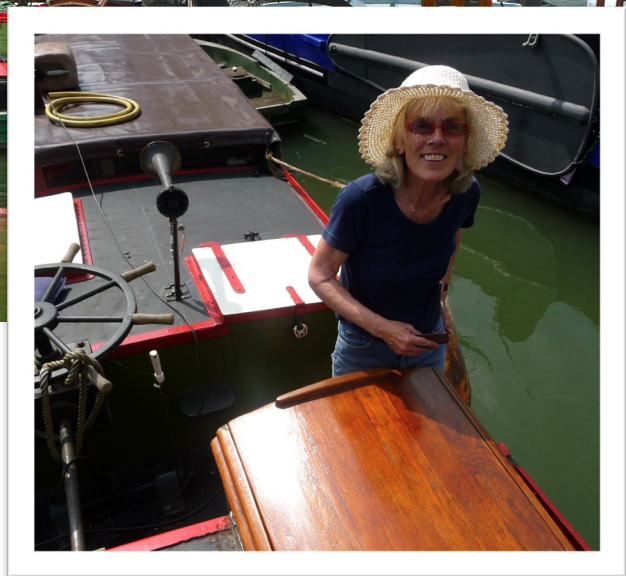
## Views from the canal

**VALERIE POORE** takes the helm of our regular barge boat column.

### The flat-bottomed girl moves on

As regular readers here will know, for the last twenty years I've been a resident of a unique outdoor museum: the Oude Haven, Rotterdam's oldest harbour. As one of the city's main tourist spots, it attracts visitors from all over the world, so you could say that all the barges are exhibits with their owners as individual curators. It's been a wonderful place to be based and I've loved living there amongst its very special community of like-minded enthusiasts.

However, staying in one place was not my intention when I bought my barge, *Vereeniging*. My idea was to restore her and then travel, preferably to France. But somehow, I got stuck; the lure of the historic craft and my affection for the harbour community were forces to be reckoned with. It was only earlier this year that I realised with a shock how long I'd been in the Oude Haven and that I'd barely been anywhere on *Vereeniging* in the last few years other than one or two local trips. That's not to say my partner and I haven't travelled; we have, but



we've done nearly all of our cruising (or 'faring', as I call it) on our holiday boat, *Hennie H*, and my poor, beautiful *Vereeniging* has remained sandwiched between the other monuments in Rotterdam; not unloved, but certainly unmoved.

It was time for a change; time to uproot ourselves from our comfort zone.

I started looking around to see where else I could take my barge that would be a base for more canal cruising and exploration. One of the problems of being in the Oude Haven has been the difficulty of simply leaving and arriving. Not only are there the tides to consider, but the way the moorings are arranged means there are no individual bollards or rings. We've always had to share them with neighbours, the result being that lines and cables become tangled and it's been a real task to extract ourselves from our berth. We've often thought of taking a trip but have all too frequently been deterred by the effort it would involve. So, my aim was to find a mooring where it would be much easier to cast off and get going.



I also wanted to be out of the city. The Oude Haven might be an open-air museum, but it's also the social centre of Rotterdam: very busy and very noisy. In the summer, the revelry on the quays goes on 24/7. It was only during lockdown that I came to appreciate how marvellous it was to have peace and quiet around me. But since the restrictions have been lifted, the harbour's been busier and noisier than ever; even more reason to seek pastures new.

It took a while before I found what I hoped would be the right place for my lovely old lady—a mooring where access was easy, and where she could lie alongside the quay, not in a box berth. I wanted to be able to see the grace of her fine lines and to be able to maintain her more effectively. No more hanging upside down over the side to clean her paintwork; no more squeezing myself and my rowing boat between the other barges to touch up scratches or repair the ravages of winter. I've had some fun with all of these challenges in the past, but that past has caught up with me now and I'm not ...

ahem ... quite as agile as I was!

Still, finding a home for a nineteen-metre barge isn't easy. Most marinas have a length limit of around ten metres, and even if they have spots for bigger boats, they are rarely available. After months of searching, I came across a website for a *jachthaven* (marina) at a small town called Oudenbosch in Brabant. It looked attractive, so I went to Google maps for the satellite and street views.

Excited by what appeared to be a tranquil tree-lined arm of the Mark River, I filled in an online form enquiring about a possible mooring. The marina's website claimed to have space for boats of up to twenty metres, so I crossed my fingers and waited with both eagerness and trepidation for a reply. A few days later, I could hardly believe my eyes when I received a message from the harbour master saying he had a place that would suit me and asking if I was interested in having a look. What a question! Well, that was it. Within a couple of weeks, we'd been, seen, and gleaned all the information we needed. A





month later, I'd signed a contract to move there at the beginning of October.

Having done so, I went through all kinds of fear, regret, and remorse (as one does). It suddenly seemed a massive wrench and a huge undertaking. We were still busy installing the new engine on our *Hennie H* and had enough to do with that. What on earth was I thinking of? The Oude Haven was my safe place; my 'village', with everyone I knew around me. Still, my partner and daughters convinced me that it really was a good move, so I gulped down my anxiety and started preparing for what would be *Vereeniging's* longest trip since I bought her back in 2001.

Finally, after several months of planning and plotting; of watching the temperature and tide tables; and of stressing about wind strength and weather fronts, we set off on Friday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of October.

I have to say I nearly cancelled it all on the day as well. Our neighbours gave us such a beautiful send-off I was sobbing by the time

we'd reached the harbour exit. I just wanted to turn around and go back to our berth. You see, I'd imagined we'd just slip out with the odd wave or two, but they had other ideas. A string of balloons spanned the entire harbour and a sign saying '*Vaarwell Valerie*' hung between them. Not only that, but all the neighbours also started hooting on their barges' horns, a sound both mournful and moving. I couldn't believe they'd done this for me, and I was deeply touched.

What made it still more poignant was the fog that hung over the water. We knew it would be a fine day later on, but the morning mist was dense and the whole scene had an ethereal, unreal quality. As things transpired, our exit onto the Nieuwe Maas river was delayed an hour until the foggy blanket lifted, but in many ways, this was a blessing; it gave me time to compose myself for our first venture onto the tidal waters with *Vereeniging* for many years.

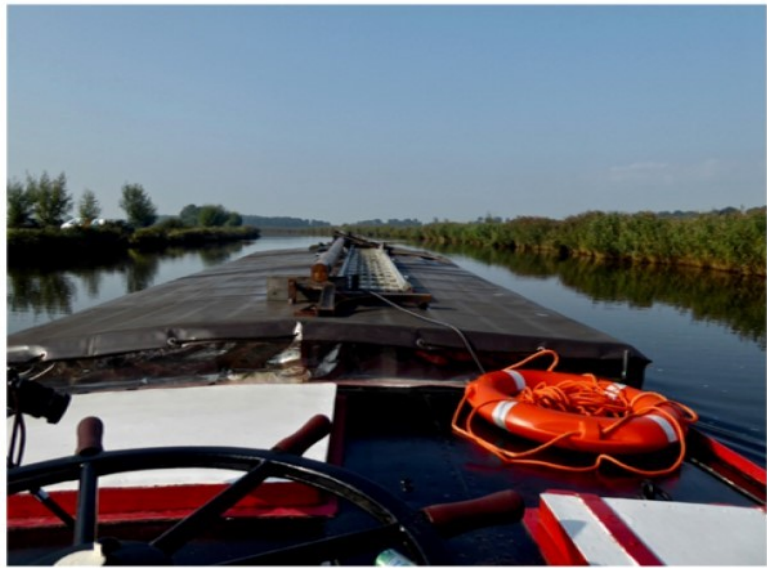
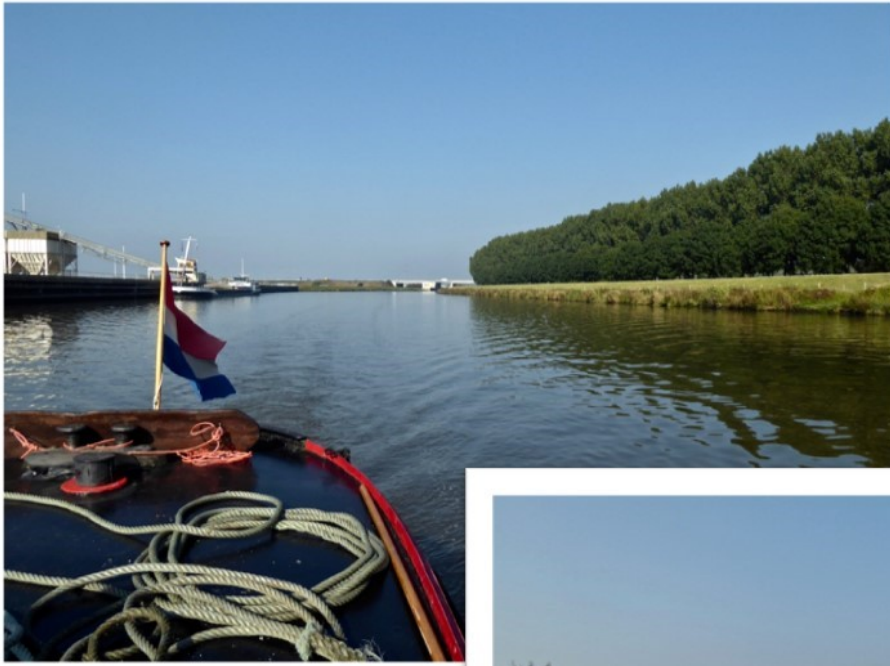
Eventually, though, we were off. In theory, we should have had the current with us as













we'd planned our departure to coincide with low tide. Leaving late should have guaranteed we'd be 'faring with the flow,' but for some reason it was heavily against us all the way to Dordrecht, a town around twenty kilometres east of Rotterdam.

We could only assume we were meeting a backflow from the Oude Maas, the river that runs parallel to the Nieuwe Maas. These two waterways happen to merge at Dordrecht. I won't go into all complexities of the river systems here as it would take an entire page to explain them but suffice to say the whole area is best described as the Rhine delta. Consequently, there are several estuaries with cross connections and branches which make it incredibly difficult to judge what the currents are going to do.

Nevertheless, we ploughed on in increasingly beautiful weather until we came to the Hollandsch Diep estuary, my nemesis of old. For me, traversing this almost two-kilometre-wide stretch of water was the biggest hurdle of the whole journey. We not only had to cross it that first evening to spend the night in a quiet harbour on the south side, but the following morning, we needed to follow it east for about thirteen kilometres before we could duck into the canal system that would take us to our new mooring in Oudenbosch.

My stomach was doing summersaults and my 'what if' meter was going through the roof during the crossing that evening. The last time I'd been on the Hollandsch Diep on *Vereeniging*, her engine broke down and we'd had a nerve-wracking time using the wind and current to steer her to a north-shore marina. On an earlier occasion, a ferocious

storm blew up and nearly drove us onto the rocks lining the shore on the south side. I was not a Hollandsch Diep fan.

But thankfully, we made it without mishap and the next day, I prised open my crossed fingers and unlocked my clenched teeth when we turned onto the Wilhelmina Canal at Drimmelen in North Brabant.

The rest of the journey was complete bliss: tree-lined canals, loading quays, cranes dipping into the holds of the big commercial barges; all accompanied by the warm sunshine, a gentle breeze, and the comfort of knowing we were on the last stretch.

On Saturday night, we spent a magical evening on the tranquil waters of the Mark River, soothed into slumber by the chattering of the bird life in the reeds alongside our mooring. Then at last, on Sunday, we arrived at our new home: three days' faring and 85 kilometres from the Oude Haven.

Do we have any regrets? We will miss our lovely neighbours in Rotterdam for sure, but otherwise, who could regret leaving the drunks shouting at all hours of the night? Who would hanker for the constant noise from the terraces, or the screeching of brakes as testosterone-fuelled cars roar to a halt on the quay above the barge? No, we don't regret or yearn for any of that; not at all.

What's more, we can look forward to exploring the numerous canals and waterways of this delightful part of the country. It's a whole new era for us and a whole new adventure. We can't wait!

**VALERIE POORE** was born in London, England, and grew up in both north London and the west of Dorset. She moved to South Africa in 1981 but returned to Europe in 2001, which is when she began her love affair with the lovely Dutch flat-bottomed barges (hence the page title). She has lived on a barge in Rotterdam's Oude Haven since then, but summers see her and her partner on the Belgian and French canals. Val teaches writing skills at the local uni for a living, but has written several memoirs about her waterways life. Writing is a lifelong love as well as being her work.



A photograph of a sailboat deck. In the foreground, there are several large, blue solar panels mounted on the deck. To the left, a white wind generator is visible. In the background, a small green boat is docked in a harbor, and a larger white boat is partially visible on the right. The scene is set against a backdrop of a blue sea and a hilly coastline under a clear sky.

# SUSTAINABLE SAILING

## HEATHER FRANCIS

### Going green in the galley

We try to live low impact on board *Kate* not because it is trendy, but because every day we see firsthand how humans are impacting the Earth; beaches littered with trash, plastic floating in the ocean miles away from shore, declining fish populations, extreme weather. You can't see these things firsthand and not act; at least we can't.

We are all familiar with the old slogan; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. For decades it seems like this mantra was practiced backwards; the emphasis always put on the end action, recycling packaging. Consumers could feel good buying whatever they wanted if the plastic packaging could be recycled. Not anymore. In recent years, the focus has shifted to reducing waste. The old slogan has been updated: REFUSE, reduce, reuse, and recycle.

“Refuse” and “Reduce” are a great way to start greening up your galley, especially since many of the places we visit don't have the infrastructure to support recycling programs. I am not suggesting that you must live without all the pleasures that cooking and eating can bring. On the contrary. Making mindful decisions in the galley and when provisioning can make life taste a little sweeter.

### Choose cloth

To cut down on garbage and save storage space use cloth napkins and dish cloths instead of disposable serviettes and paper towels. Recent studies have shown that micro-particles are released when synthetic fabrics are washed, so choose natural fabrics like cotton, linen, hemp, and bamboo over manmade polyesters and microfibres. To keep things hygienic, sew a small piece of coloured thread to each napkin and assign everyone onboard a colour. To sanitize and to remove stubborn grease stains boil napkins and dish cloths in clean water with a squirt of dish soap every few months.



## Go Au Naturale

Instead of using single use plastic wrap to protect leftovers in the fridge try natural beeswax food wraps. These handy, reusable wraps use the natural properties of beeswax coated on fabric to create a strong but pliable wrap that can be shaped, sealed, and washed. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and prices; you can even DIY your own! If you are worried about how they will perform on a boat in the tropics, don't be. I've been using three different brands of beeswax food wraps on board *Kate* for nearly three years and am still happy with their performance. When they need a little refreshing, I simply iron them between two pieces of parchment paper to smooth and revitalize the wax coating.

## Say NO to paper plates and cups

Paper plates and cups may seem like a quick and easy way to save on water, and dishes, but very few brands are biodegradable. The reason food doesn't make the paper soggy is because the plate or cup is coated to prevent leaks. This coating is often plastic. To further



Ready for takeout: reusable box, glass jar, and bamboo cutlery, and straw.

make things difficult, paper products stained with food cannot be recycled. Although the paper may eventually break down if composted, the plastic coating will simply break into micro particles. Instead buy stainless steel, durable plastic, or melamine bowls and plates; a small investment will last years.

## Upcycle items

Before spending big on fancy storage containers try reusing things like glass peanut butter jars, coffee cans, and plastic ice cream tubs. You'll be saving the environment and money too. If you find that you cannot meet your needs by reusing then invest in durable, BPA free containers when buying new.

## Use what you have

A great way to start reducing food waste is simply to use what you have on board before re-provisioning. Make it a habit to check the condition of fresh goods every few days and use what is in worse condition. Keep eye on perishable dry goods like flour, pasta, and rice that are also favourite foods of weevils.



Don't forget your reusable coffee cup and water bottle.



A few bay leaves in your containers is also an easy way to deter critters. If you store your cans in the bilge, then rotate stock often. Sometimes using what you have means getting a little creative in the galley, but that can be a good thing too.

## Make your own

There is nothing more satisfying than sharing a good meal with friends and family, especially when it is boat-made. Making something from scratch doesn't have to be complicated or stressful, but it will cut down on packaging and costs. For the more adept cook why not try your hand at some basic preserving techniques like fermenting yogurt or making a small batch of refrigerator jam? Not only will you feel more self-sufficient, but the end product will be healthier for your body and the planet.

## ASHORE

Maintaining a greener galley starts with the choices that we make when ashore provisioning. Being mindful about what you put in your trolley ensures that only the items that you need and will use repeatedly will make it back to the boat.

## Refuse single use plastics

Sadly, these days it's common to find plastic of all shapes and sizes floating in our



Reusable shopping and produce bag.

anchorage. Straws, plastic bags, water bottles, take out containers and utensils are the big culprits. Simply by packing your own reusable shopping bags and saying no to straws and single use cups you can drastically reduce your trash. If you're getting takeout bring your own container and utensils. And don't forget your reusable water bottle and coffee mug. If you do bring plastic bags home on occasions, then reuse them as trash bags or take them back to the next big supermarket and recycle them. Don't just toss them in the bin.

## Shop second-hand

Galley equipment doesn't need to be new. In fact, some of my most used and best pots and pans are pre-loved items I found at the Op Shop. Check out your local swap meet, charity shop or online forums like Gumtree and Facebook Marketplace, especially for those big ticket, brand name items like pressure cookers and cast-iron pots.

## Invest in environmental conscious products

Everything that goes down the drain ends up



Beeswax food wraps and hand knit cotton dish clothes replace disposable galley items.



in the ocean, and on many boats that happens directly. Avoid anything that advertises microbeads as those are tiny plastic particles. Choose plant-based, biodegradable detergents, soaps, and cleaning products. Look for items that are free of parabens, phosphates, phthalates, harsh chemicals, dyes, and fragrances. Or think like Grandma and clean with vinegar and baking soda; it gets rid of salt and stains without damaging surfaces or the environment.

### Can you do without?

Many items, especially foodie gadgets, are impulse buys. Before you hand over your credit card ask yourself if it is a need or a want purchase? Do you have something that already does the job? Remember, you can't buy happiness, and mindless consumerism is bad for both you and the planet.

### Buy local

Supporting local makers and growers is an easy way to shop sustainably. These small businesses often use less packaging and preservatives. Buying local cuts down on transporting goods, reducing their carbon footprint and the impact on the environment. Most cruisers shop at local markets for fresh produce but might not stop to think where canned, dried goods and meat come from. Buying locally sourced and produced food stuffs not only supports the local economy, but it also cuts down on emissions produced when items are shipped internationally. Reading the label and choosing local products might cost you a few extra pennies but it is a wise investment in our planet.

The galley is a place where I usually seek refuge, and it's a place where we all find nourishment. Choosing to be proactive about



your impact on the environment on a daily basis can start by taking a few small steps toward greening up your galley. I admit that sometimes it is a struggle. I cave to convenience and disposability, no one is perfect. But I remind myself that each small, positive action I make, in conjunction with the small, positive actions of others, does make a difference. Being good to your body and the planet can start in your galley today.



**Heather Francis is from Nova Scotia, Canada and has lived and worked on boats throughout the world. Since 2008 she has been living and sailing onboard *Kate*, a Newport 41 sloop, with her Aussie partner, Steve. She is a writer, photographer and cook who tries to live mindfully. Follow at [www.yachtkate.com](http://www.yachtkate.com) or [@sustainablesailing41](https://www.instagram.com/sustainablesailing41)**



# Boat-made Ice Cream

Minimal dishes for a maximum YUM!

By Marissa Neely, *SV Avocet*



One of the great luxuries of sailing in warmer latitudes with a boat equipped with refrigeration is a celebratory cold drink or perhaps an ice cream sundae after a hot afternoon at sea. Thanks to modern advancements, these days many cruisers have refrigeration onboard, whether it be an ice chest or an electric refrigeration unit, making it easier to enjoy some of the previously excluded frozen treats.

However, as a sailor begins to provision, it may be difficult to justify storing a tub of their favorite ice cream, which is definitely a luxury rather than a necessity. Don't fret! I have the perfect recipe if you can't kick the craving and want to help yourself to a boat-sized serving of ice cream. All you need to make it is an ol' glass jar, strong forearms, and a dash of patience

**Yield: 3 servings. Time: 10 minutes active, 3 hours chill. Difficulty: Beginner**

## INGREDIENTS

1 cup heavy whipping cream, 36%MF

1 1/2 tbsp. sugar or sweetener

1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

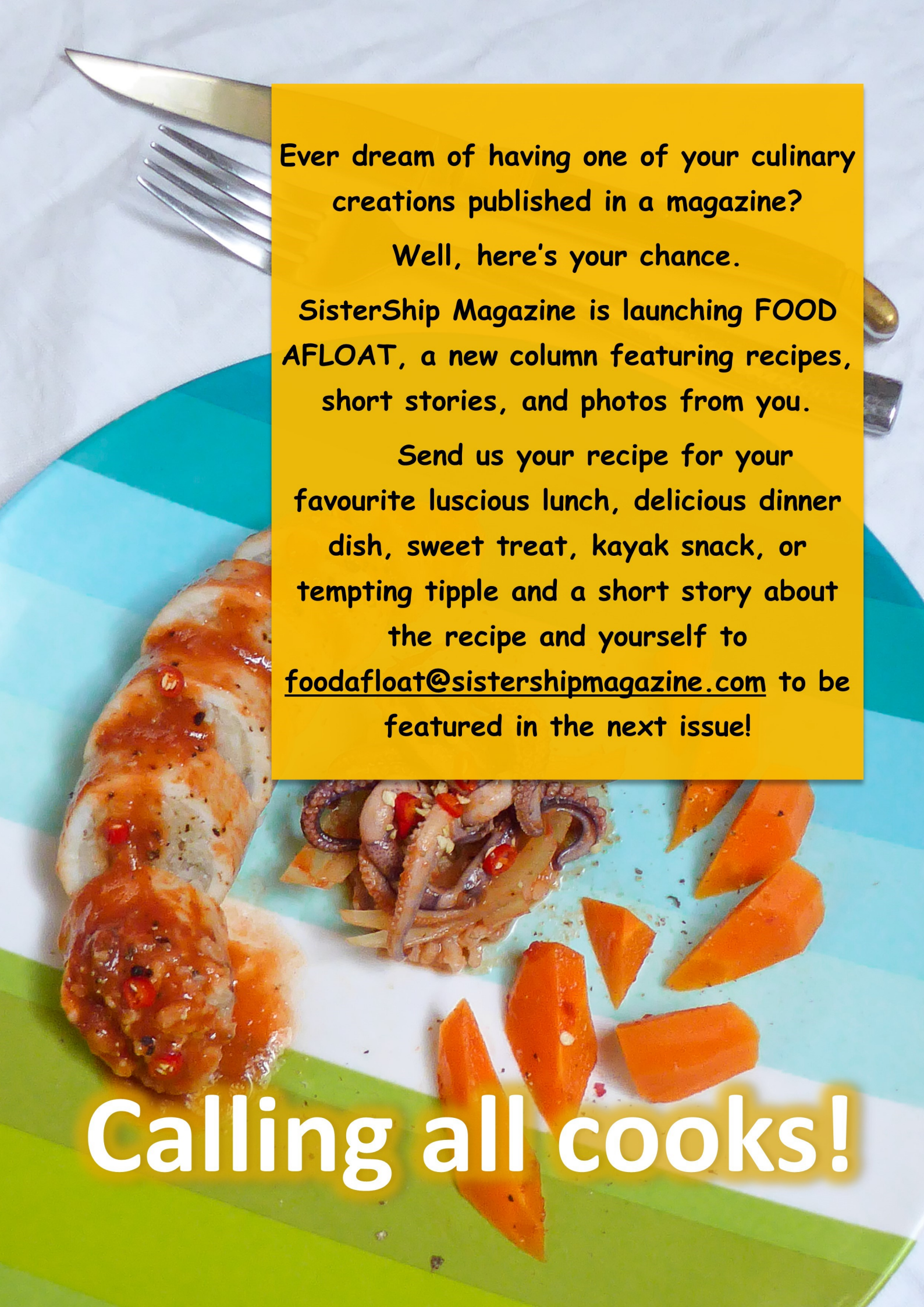
Toppings of your choice: Crushed cookies, candy, fruit, nuts, chocolate chips

500 ml glass jar with lid

## METHOD

Chill the heavy whipping cream and the jar. Pour the heavy whipping cream, vanilla, sugar, and salt into the glass jar. Seal well. Shake the jar until the mixture nearly doubles in size and forms peaks, about 5 - 10 minutes. It should be thick, opaque, and easily coat the back of a spoon. Too little shaking and the ice cream will only set to a soft serve consistency. When desired thickness is reached place in fridge/freezer until set, which can take about 3 hours, depending on your refrigerator set-up. When the ice cream has hardened, grab your favorite toppings and spoon and ENJOY!





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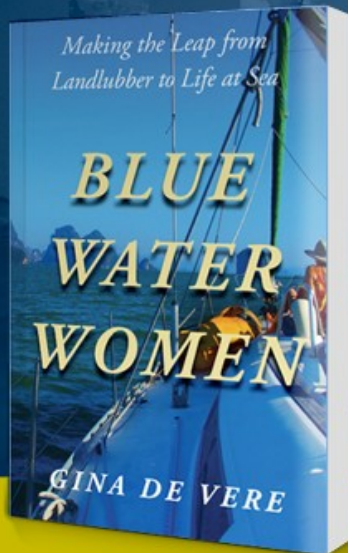


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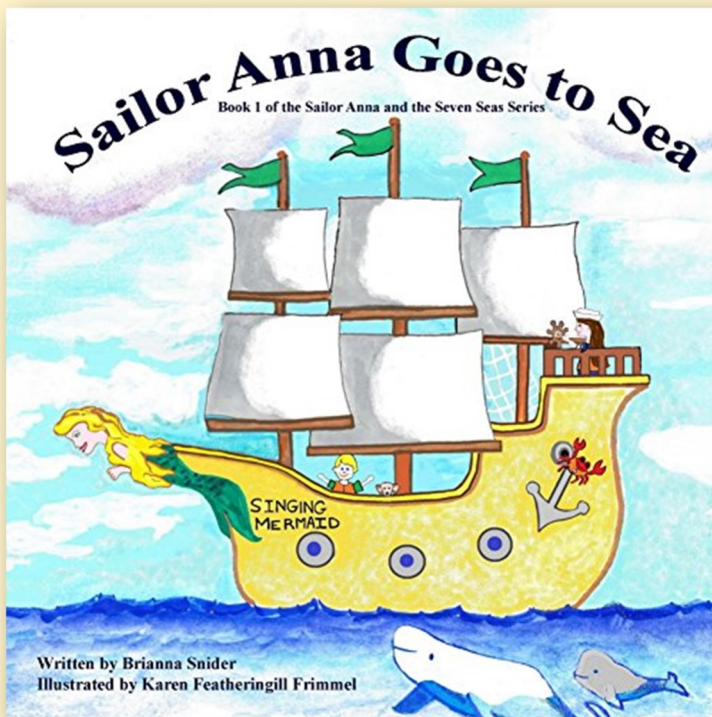
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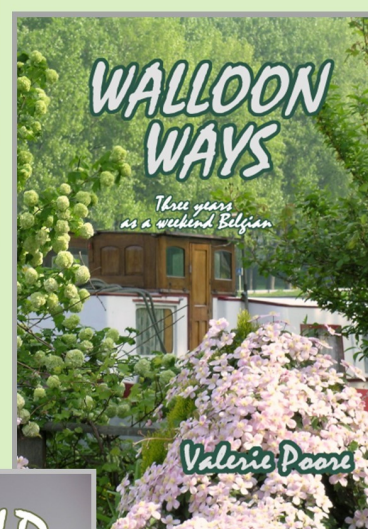
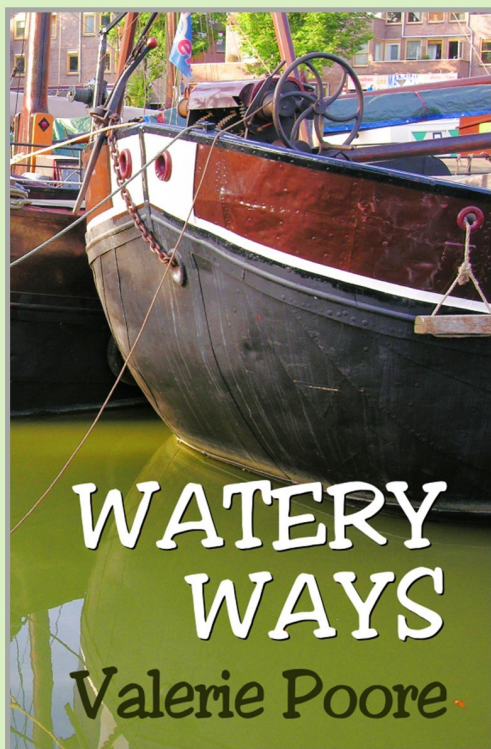
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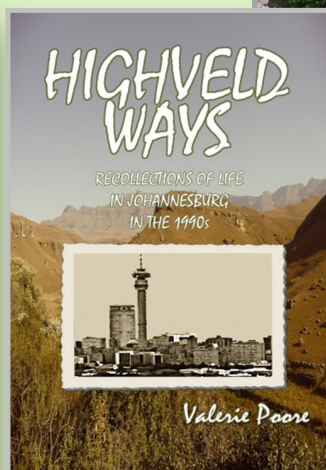
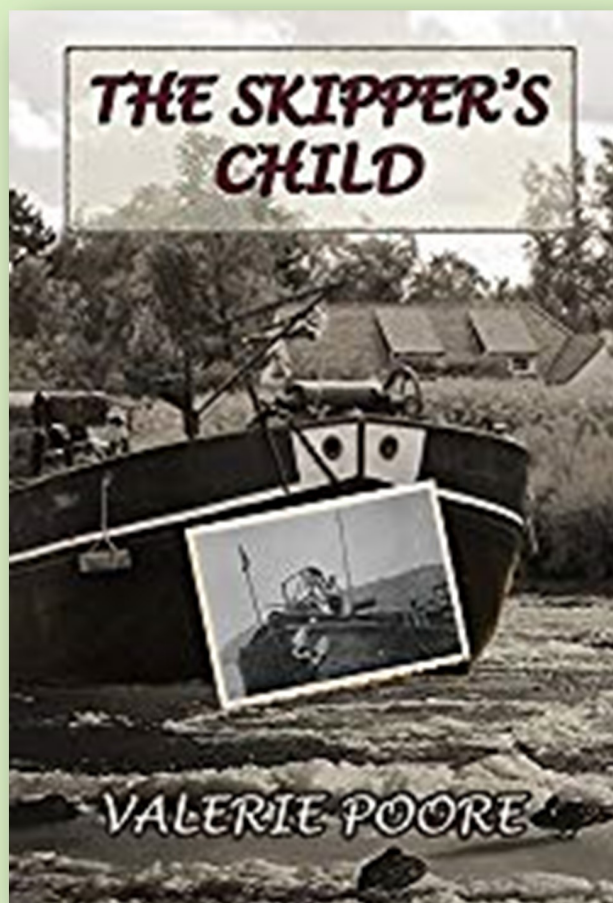
Watch out for Captain Catfish as he will try to steal their dad's ship, the *Singing Mermaid*, at every turn.

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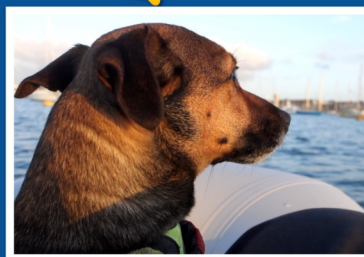
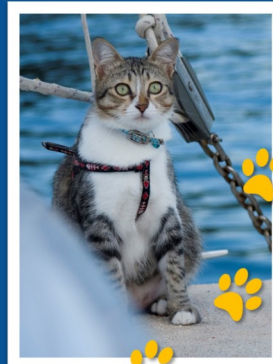
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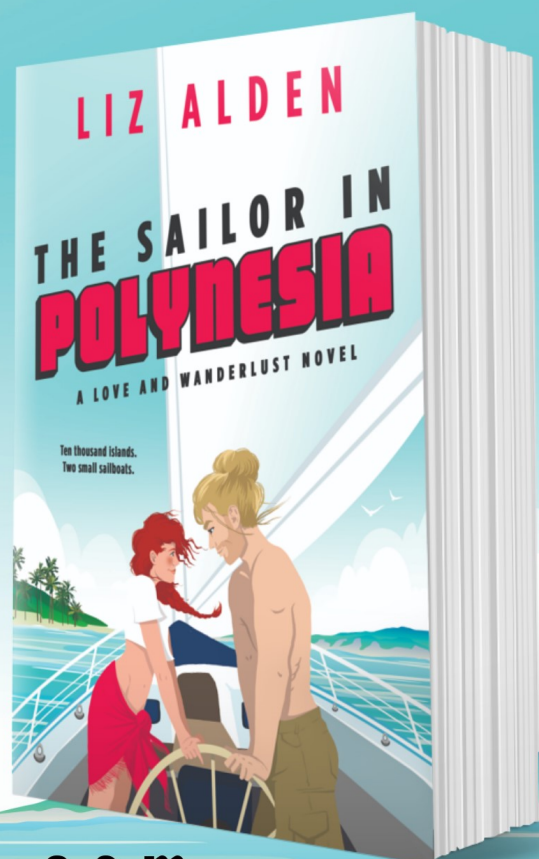
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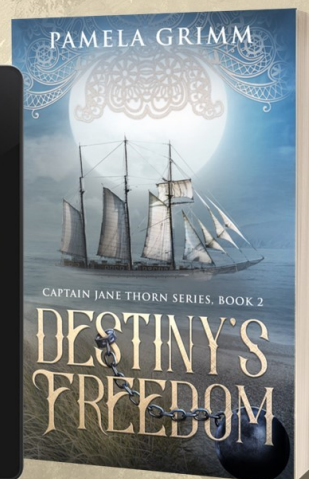


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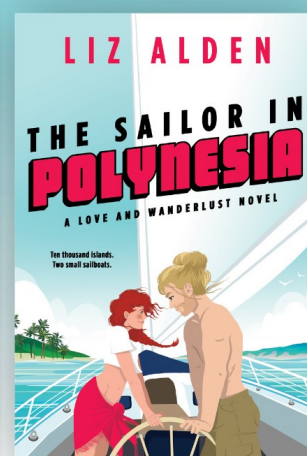
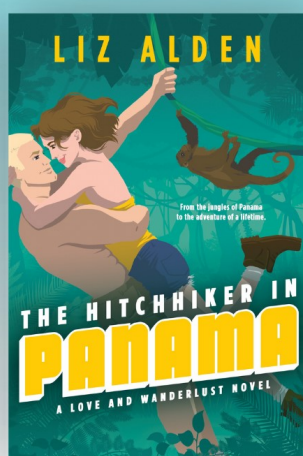
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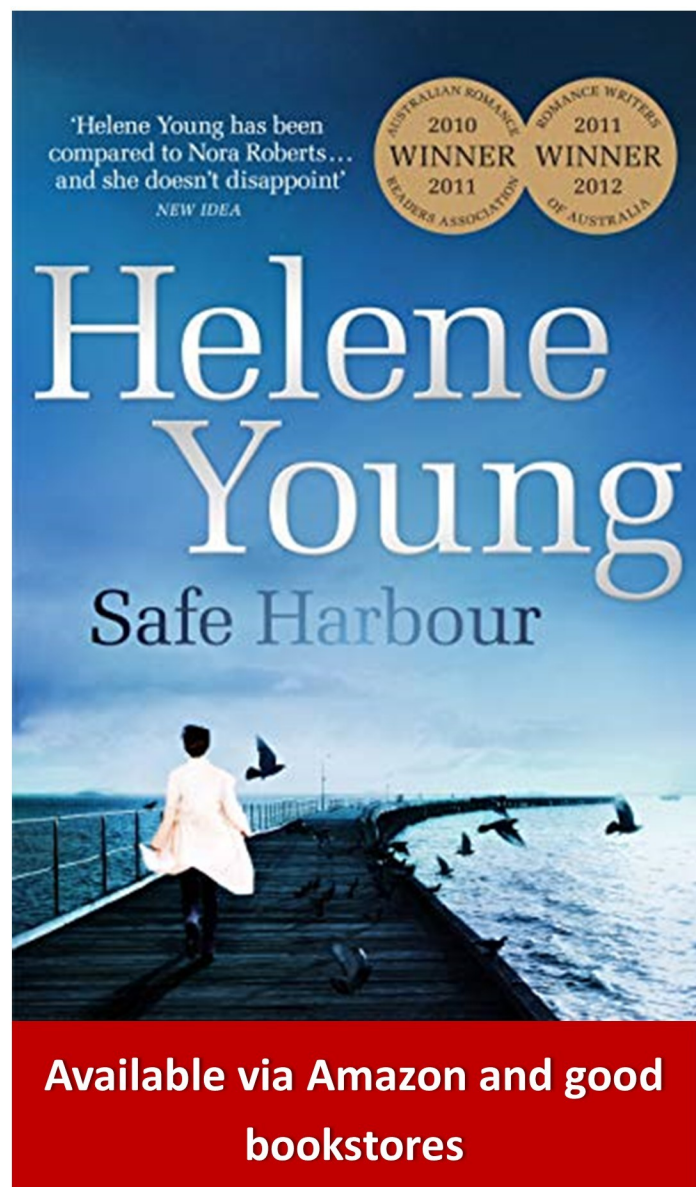
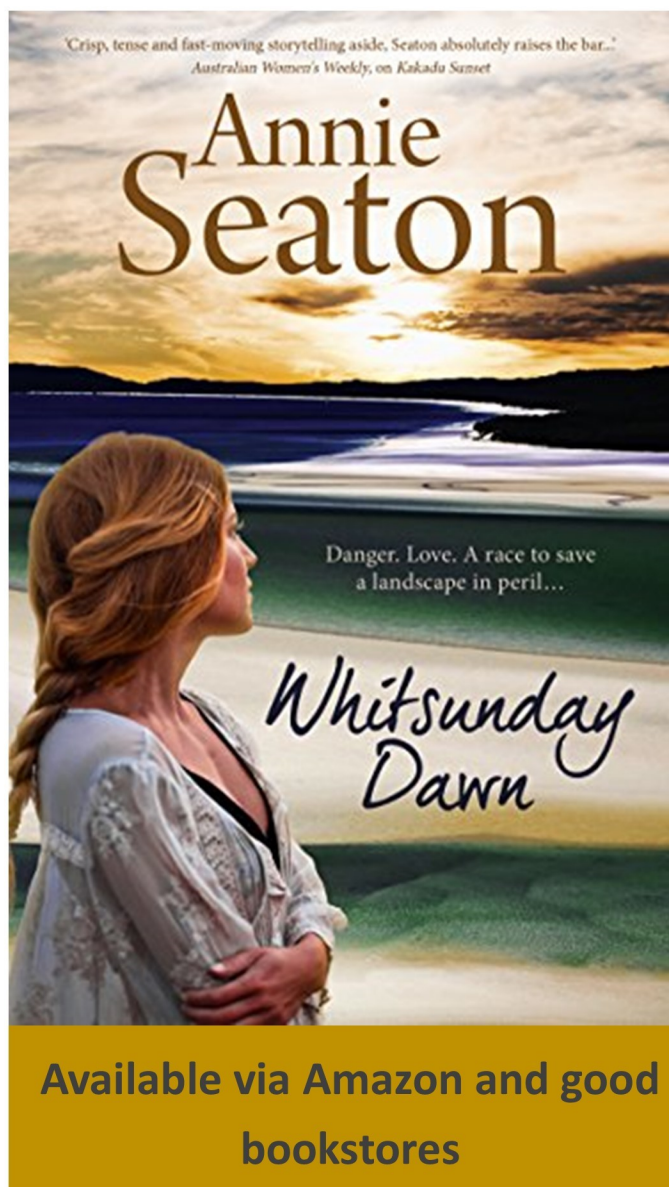
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