

# Tiller Tales

Gulfstream Sailing Club

December 2020

## FROM THE HELM

*Phil Decker, Commodore*

**Happy Holidays** from the Gulfstream Sailing Club! This year has been so different from every other year due to the pandemic. As a club, we have had to reef our sails in 2020 to weather the storm. But 2021 promises to be a better year. I hope everyone can safely share the joy of the holidays with your loved ones.

Congratulations to the winners and other participants in the annual **Commodore's Cup Ocean Race**, held on December 13. First place went to **Mike and Twila Day** on *S/V Farr Away*, second place to **Cynthia Hollen** on *S/V Opportunity*, and third place to **Paul Jehlen** on *S/V Unexpected Pleasure*.



After the race, there was a party at Sailor's Point, where the Commodore awarded the permanent trophy to Mike and Twila. They also received a trophy mug to take home. The club took precautions to make sure that the gathering was as COVID-safe as possible. Everyone wore masks, stayed six feet apart, and brought all of their own food and drink.

The annual **Change of Command Ceremony** will be held virtually next month on January 30 via Zoom. We need to have the annual Change of Command because



of the by-laws. However, once it is safe to do so later in 2021, we will have a larger in-person celebration of our new leadership as we have in previous years.

It is the end of the year, so *please renew your club membership now!* We have a lot of pent-up energy to expend from holding back in 2020, so you'll want to be in on the action. Renew by January 31 to avoid a late fee. The dues are the same next year as they have been for the past several years. Please contact me or Ben Bowen if you wish to renew by credit card.

### 2020 Officers

- Commodore.....Phil Decker
- Vice Commodore.....Eric Kobrin
- Rear Commodore.....Linda Gossett
- Treasurer.....Ben Bowen
- Secretary.....Kay Harrison
- Lake Director .....Luis Oliveira

### 2020 Governing Board

- David Notman
- Mary Brown
- Paul Hinden
- Ben Bowen, Past Commodore

### 2020 Committee Chairs

- Crew Pool.....Eric Kobrin
- Cruising.....Open
- Small Boat .....Luis Oliveira
- Legislative.....Sam Walker
- Membership.....Ben Bowen
- Nominating.....Kay Harrison
- Ocean Race .....Open
- Program.....Open
- Regatta.....Linda Gossett
- Ship's Store .....Rosemary & Jim Mahon
- Social .....Mary Brown
- Tiller Tales Editor.....Kay Harrison
- Trophies.....Mike Sawzak

### REMINDER

Our calendar is published on the GSC web site, [www.gulfstreamsailingclub.org](http://www.gulfstreamsailingclub.org)

## GREETINGS FROM BEYOND THE BORDERS

### *A Letter from our Friends at Hemingway Marina in Cuba*

**Dear Commodore Decker,**

*I am pleased to greet you very kindly on behalf of the Hemingway International Nautical Club of Cuba and on my own behalf, as well as to wish you success in the celebration of the Commodore's Cup Race this December 13.*

*For my part, I congratulate you on your initiative to revive nautical activities after a long quarantine. It is our purpose to also work in favor of reviving nautical activities and closing this year with a sailing regatta with the boats of our Yacht Club members off Havana. We hope that next year the population of Havana will be able to enjoy the regattas that we traditionally carry out in front of this city, after receiving members of the American nautical community who visit Cuba or join regattas that we organize with American yacht clubs.*

*Despite the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is our greatest wish that you, your family and all members of the Gulfstream Sailing Club enjoy the end-of-the-year parties and have a prosperous new year with good health and love.*

*Best regards,*

*Commodore Escrich*



## ACROSS THE OCEAN WITH TWILA AND MIKE

*By Twila Day*

Wow, our trip was fabulous! The Amel 50 sailboat was luxurious; the owners and crew fabulous. We couldn't have asked for a better experience. The leg of the trip before we joined the boat was very rough (winds 25+, waves 20', lots of pounding as heading up into the wind most of the time & big storms in the North Atlantic). I'm so glad we missed that part!

We joined in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, on Feb 26, 2020 so we saw a bit of the island before the boat departed on Feb. 28. Winds were less than 20 kts and seas were calm most of the way to Martinique. We saw dolphins, small pod of whales, flying fish and lots of sunshine. Only 1 or 2 small rain squalls and about 78 degrees most of the time. Night watches were 2 hours each with 1/2 hour overlap on each end and daytime the helm was shared between us. The owners very generously stocked the boat with wine so it was usually 2-3 bottles each night. Oh, and don't forget the chocolate bars! Crewmember Lydia Perez works as a private chef so food was fabulous and beautiful; she has sailed all over the world (very impressive lady). Captain Michel Santandor is French and has done 24 (?) trans-Atlantic crossings and many famous races so we felt very safe with him in charge. Dan & Debra, the owners, had just bought the boat and were learning all the systems and many tricks of handling her as well as being fabulous hosts. Hey, we'll sail with you anytime!



We had text messaging most of the trip through Iridium satellite service but it stopped working on March 16, causing concern for some family and friends that we had been communicating with. Someone called the Coast Guard, who told them that no Epirb signal had been sent so we should be ok. That's the blessing and the curse of getting dependent on electronics. We safely arrived in St. Anne's/Marin Harbor Martinique just after midnight March 19 and set anchor. The captain went ashore next day to check us in but quarantine was in effect so we didn't leave the boat on 20th. We were able to catch an Air France flight from Martinique to Miami on the 21st, which was one of the last flights being allowed to leave so we were very lucky. The only thing we saw of Martinique was the view from the boat and the ride to the airport but the trip was really about the sail so we'll see it another time. We arrived home safely and have been isolating at home since. Dan and Debra will be staying in Martinique until the quarantine is lifted to allow them to sail out and to sail into other ports. It puts a little stress on them as they have plans for their adult children to join them in April in Antigua and for other guests to join them for the trip up-island, then Bermuda and finally Newport, RI. We will keep them in our thoughts and good wishes. We are so blessed to have had this adventure and thankful to Dan and Debra for inviting us after only meeting us for a few hours.

Life is good in spite of the Corona Virus and the economic effects. Our wishes to all of you to stay safe and healthy!



## SUNFISH COMMODORE'S CUP: DEC. 5, 2020

By Lake Director Luis Oliveira—Photos by Vice Commodore Eric Kobrin



The forecast for December 5th was anywhere from 2 to 14 knots out of the west, depending on the source, with one of them calling for 6 knots also from the West... We got 2-6 from the West which made for one of the most interesting days in recent memory at the Lake.

Since the little breeze we had was straight from the west, we decided to set up the course in the dead end canal away from all the

anchored boats and because it is longer than the lake itself, we decided to do only one windward and leeward legs with the start in the middle allowing this way for an upwind start and finish. This arrangement also allowed for an easy change in the course length, which we later did.



The breeze died completely from time to time and holes with no

wind would show up randomly all over the race course, there was no one side favorite.



At the end of the downwind leg of the second race, I rounded the mark in first place sailing on a port tack toward the north margin and proceeding to get in a no-wind hole and watch everyone, except Lori that was a little further back, pass by on a nice breeze that had shifted a few degrees south, giving them a better angle toward the finish line. Somehow I managed to pass Jack and finished 5th as he had

fallen in a dead zone himself. In light wind, there's no getting distracted, or too confident as I did, one can go from first to last in no time.

As the breeze got lighter, the shifts were more frequent and wider angles, at one point Rui was on the last upwind leg going to the finish in the second race, when he noticed that Vito was catching up with him, but Vito had "magic wind" or a "magic boat" ...lol, Vito was sailing downwind with his sail all the way out, on an upwind leg and Rui... could do nothing but watch Vito peacefully going by with his magic... it was too funny.

At the end of the third race we decided to shorten the course a little, as the races were taking longer and longer to finish due to the lighter breeze, so we moved both the windward and the leeward marks a little closer together.



***Continued on page 5***

## SUNFISH COMMODORE'S CUP: DEC. 5, 2020

By Lake Director Luis Oliveira—Photos by Vice Commodore Eric Kobrin

The starting sequence (3 minutes) for the fourth race started with a nice breeze that died to about two knots 30 seconds before the start. This caused a mess with a number of boats including Bob Weinstein that got caught in the shadow of a couple of other people and couldn't move until everyone else started and moved well away... Bob never recuperated from this and I think he has checked himself in a rehab clinic for light wind sailing...lol, just kidding Bob.



If I'm not mistaken, it was also in the fourth race that I and Rui were sailing downwind ahead of everybody, when the wind died down... again and shifted to the east, at this point the two of us were sailing upwind, on a downwind leg and the rest of the fleet still downwind with their sails all the way out... I think we both got some of that "Magic Wind" that Vito brought in!

At the end of the fourth race the wind shifted almost 180 degrees, just to the south of east. Since this was our fifth and last race and Chris Garone (the Awesome Lake Chef) was already cooking the burgers, we decided that the logical thing to do was to just invert the course and start to the east. It sounded good until again 30 seconds before the start...the breeze died down and shifted back to the west. Now totally confused, Bob wanted to sink the race committee boat for starting a second race with no wind. We all started on what was supposed to be an upwind leg, but now going down-wind with no breeze... confused yet, some of us were...lol. After a few wind shifts, we managed to finish the race on one upwind tack.



It's hard to remember all the details of the different incidents in all five races, but there were many wind shifts and very funny situations that at the time caused pure misery to all of us. Bob wasn't the only one considering a "rehab clinic for light wind sailing" and Vito's "Magic Wind" helped all of us at one point or another, but as with everything magic, it usually disappeared when we most needed it.

A big thanks to Dennis Zimmerman for a great job at Race Committee, Chris for the after race delicious burgers and dogs, Bob Smith the Dockmaster, for the land support, moving car-

*Continued on next page*

## SUNFISH COMMODORE'S CUP—DEC. 5, 2020

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pets up and down with the tide and helping with the launching and retrieving boats and everyone that showed up to race and make this a fun racing day.

### Race Results

Luis Oliveira	1, 5, 1, 1, 2	5 Pts	1st place
Bob Weinstein	2, 1, 2, 5, 5	10	2nd
Sharon Crockett	3, 2, 4, 2, 3	10	3rd
Rui Claudio	4, 4, 5, 3, 1	12	4th
Vito Mannino	6, 3, 3, 4, 4	14	5th
Jack Loving	5, 6, 6, 6, dnf	23	6th
Lori Messer	7, dnf, dnf, 7, 6 28	7th	

*dnf (did not finish) = number of registered entrants plus one (8 points)*

Luis Oliveira

Gulfstream Sailing Club Lake Operations Director



### UNDERWATER MAINTENANCE



- ❖ Hull Cleaning/ Zincs
- ❖ Decks and Dock building and repair
  - ❖ Seawalls
- ❖ Propeller inspection/ replacement
  - ❖ Pile wrapping
- ❖ Boatlifts and Davit repair/ install
- ❖ Underwater photos/ video

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### Dates to Remember

- Next Happy Hours, via Zoom.....Jan. 5, 12, and 26
- January General Meeting .....January 19
- Virtual Change of Command, via Zoom.....January 30
- Super Bowl.....February 7
- Valentine's Day.....February 14



### *In Memoriam*

*With great sadness we report the passing of longtime Gulfstream Sailing Club Member Charles Biancardi. He had many friends in the club and will be missed.*

## GRASPING THE CONCEPT

By Bill Bowen

*Here is part four — and the end — of the saga by Bill Bowen of getting his new electric boat home.*

The learning process with my electric motor was sometimes painful. I had been told by Bob to monitor the display to make sure the batteries didn't go below 40 volts. He said if the batteries were allowed to go below 40 volts, they would not recharge. This is ominous information and causes a sort of paranoid over-vigilance, with the anxiety building as each volt ticks off the digital counter. The boat has two fallback options – the first is that sailing allows the free spinning prop to recharge the batteries. This sounded really good in the literature, but I learned from watching the digital display that the regen only occurs when my sailing speed is six knots or higher. The second is a portable generator, in my case a Honda 2200, that can recharge the batteries while underway. At a charging rate of 18 watts, theoretically, the workload and charging rate are balanced, and the speed that results from that balanced equation is about 3.5 knots. This would be enough to discourage anyone who was accustomed to motoring at 6 or 7 knots, but I had envisioned my boating experience as mostly sailing, and just using the motor for confined waters, harbors, etc. Of course I hadn't envisioned a thousand-mile trip down the ICW from Norfolk to Delray Beach. It just happened. One thing led to another.



I also learned some disconcerting things about my system's ability to calculate its capacities. I found that when I motored all day, running the generator -- which, by the way, relegated me to the fumes and the noise of once again being a motor boat – the display would tell me that my store of voltage was depleting, but if I turned the key off and then back on, the voltage would magically jump back up to an acceptable range. Bob was at a loss to explain why this was happening, or to come up with a solution, but I eventually just learned to live with it. There were times when my display told me I had de-



pleted the volts to 20, which is way below the line of mortality, and I continued on, telling myself the readout was a lie. And the batteries always charged back up. And I went a thousand miles on about 30 gallons of gas. The Honda 2200 advertising says it will run eight hours on a gallon of gas, but it really runs six. Six hours at 3.5 knots is only 21 miles, but many times I could get the speed up to 6 or 7 knots by hauling out the jib sail. When the wind was right. The problem with sailing in the Intracoastal, of course, is that it twists and turns, and it seems that way too often the required heading is just slightly too high and the jib is constantly about to flap.

Many of the bridges on the route south are 65 feet. My mast requires 53 feet, but I decided to call it 55. There were very few bridges where it was a close call, most were either much taller or much short-

## GRASPING THE CONCEPT

*By Bill Bowen, Continued from Page 7*



er. There were railroad bridges that went down without notice, and I remember struggling toward one that was visible from a few miles away, barely making two miles per hour against a strong current in a driving rainstorm, staring at that bridge for an hour, willing it to remain open. It did. One railroad bridge closed as I was approaching Beaufort N.C. and the tide was running toward it. I dropped my anchor and waited, by this time confident that my anchor would hold and keep me from being swept into it. On May 27, Memorial Day, a drawbridge on a schedule in Carolina Beach was flanked by a shallow sandbar where about 50 boats were having a giant party with loud music, suspected alcohol consumption and general chaos that included a constant stream of boats coming and going, unhampered by the need to wait for the bridge. My half-hour wait in a slight current necessitated turning circles while I waited, cutting through the line of boats like stepping through a marching band. One bridge in South Georgia opened for a crowd of waiting boats on both sides and my side proceeded in a line going with the current. Among the approaching line from the other direction was a boat that seemed to be encroaching on our side of the channel. Going against the tide created the illusion of this boat going through the water, but it turned out to be an anchored boat, left in front of the bridge, almost between the fenders, causing lines of boats going in both directions to avoid it.

There were numerous abandoned sailboats the whole trip, some were on tidal flats that they had apparently tried to cross. Some were on the banks alongside anchorages. In North Carolina, there were several that had obviously been lifted to heights of six to eight feet by storm surge and remained there overlooking the waterway, probably put there by Hurricane Florence in September 2018, which hit Wrightsville Beach and dumped 34 inches of rain.

There were also dolphins all along the way, families of as many





## GRASPING THE CONCEPT

*By Bill Bowen, Continued from Page 8*

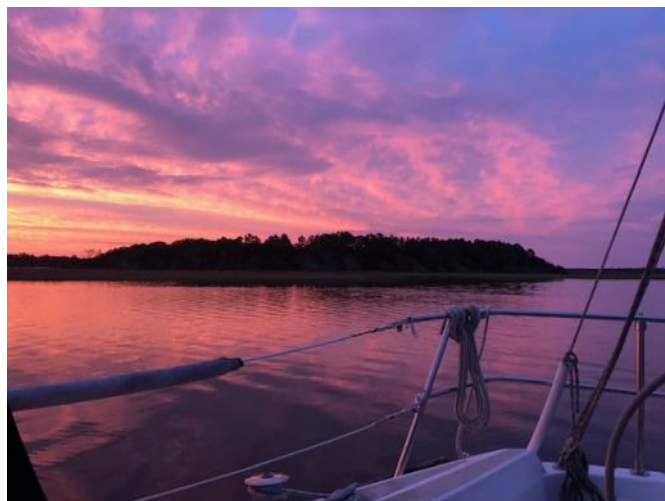
as six or eight, playing in the rivers and creeks, often far from inlets. Several times they would swim alongside and seem to check me out. I had never experienced this part of the South, and was surprised to find so many small towns along these waterways that I would call seaside villages, with a clear boat culture, marinas, city docks. I was also unprepared for the size of the rivers, which I had always defined as something you could basically throw a rock across. Sailing down the Chesapeake, the mouths of the Rappahannock and especially the Potomac are vast bodies of water. Sailing into the Patuxent as I approached Solomons I faced a field of crab traps that stretched almost beyond vision. Sailing across Albermarle Sound is essentially crossing a small inland sea. The Pamlico River, the Neuse River, wide bodies of water that can kick up rough waves in a stiff wind. Trying to reef my main in the Neuse River, I should have just hauled it down, but I tried to reef and the boat jibed and popped out one of my reefing point grommets. I limped off looking for an anchorage.

### STORMY WEATHER

The challenge of solo sailing is exponentially magnified in rough weather. Everything that's difficult for two people is many times harder for one. For the most part I was able to avoid trouble by watching the weather and hiding when things got rough, but ... things happen. When I got to Georgia, I seemed to be hitting more midday squalls. There are many places in the ICW where, even with a chartplotter, you can't tell whether or not you can leave

the channel. A few times, I watched with horror as a giant black storm the height of a satellite came bearing down on me and there was nothing I could do but motor straight into it and hold my course while it beat me up. The leading edge is the worst, slapping your boat with a strong sideways wind that lasts maybe a minute or two. After that, the wind is not as strong, but you can be pounded with a torrential rain for another 15 or 20 minutes. It will seem like longer. I vowed to get myself a Bimini top, but I'm not sure how much good it would have done in that horizontal rain.

On May 27, near the Shallotte Inlet in North Carolina, I passed Bowen Point and duly noted that momentous occasion in my log on the way to a nice slip in North Myrtle Beach where I charged my batteries at an RV Park with a small marina, gas dock, restaurant and bar, laundry room, and swimming pool with a giant sliding board that twisted around on a breathless descent of about 50 feet. Most marina laundry rooms have a shelf of free paperback books, for those afternoons when you find a good anchorage at 4 p.m. and have nothing to do but wait for dark. So you take a book and eventually leave it in a laundry room 100 miles farther along.



## GRASPING THE CONCEPT

*By Bill Bowen, Continued from Page 9*

The storms of Georgia and North Florida would continue and reach their apex when my son, Ben, joined me in Cape Canaveral. Our idea was to go out the barge canal and sail down to Fort Pierce, a nice wide inlet I was familiar with from having worked at the Fort Pierce News-Tribune in the 80s. It was a distance of 65 miles, doable in daylight with a good steady wind. It went well until about halfway when the wind swung around to southeast, with lagging intensity. To make matters worse, we were learning that the generator is balky without a steady platform, and a boat at sea is anything but a steady platform. Already on a tight schedule, we were faced with trying to tack the final 30 miles. I opted for a nice sail back to Port Canaveral, which was fine until we got within five miles and noticed the storm building in the west. It became a race to see whether we could reach the barge canal before the storm hit us. We got within about a mile, but that last 5,280 feet, taking 30 mph winds on the nose in five foot seas, was a challenge. We just got beat up the last 30 minutes. We made our way back to Bluepoints Marina and were headed back to our slip from the night before when another little squall hit, causing us to careen into the slip much too fast and then stand on reverse gear to keep from hitting the pier.



The next morning we headed west, crossed the Banana River, and turned south on the ICW for the trip down to an anchorage on the Indian River. The next day to Jupiter, where we found a very comfortable marina to charge the batteries again, swim in the pool and take complimentary bicycles to a pizza joint. My boat is not a fine dining experience. The first few days of my trip from Annapolis, I was heating water

for coffee on the alcohol stove, but I soon got in the habit of just making instant coffee cold and letting it heat up in the sun. My meals are all from cans, along with crackers, fresh fruit, nuts and protein bars. It's easier to get underway in the morning when you can bring your breakfast to the cockpit in one hand and, after hauling up the anchor, eat while you steer.

From Jupiter it was an easy run to downtown West Palm Beach and Mari drove up to join us for a beer and take Ben back to work the next day.

I took the boat to Delray and its home slip the next morning. Then I spent about a week in bed watching television.

