

## "The Rhumb Line"

### SeaMasters/PRT Sailing Class

The second "Beginning Sailing" class for 1995 was completed Sunday, August 13th. Warren Pierce, instructor, said he was very pleased because all 16 students passed. About one fourth of the class was adults and the rest between the ages of 11 and 16. Great job EVERYONE, looks like we may be on the way to a "Youth" sailing program for Matagorda County. (Next Class in October)

### MARINERS/FALL Series

The "big" boats kicked off their final series this year with a no wind and a breezy - pair of races. Once again several boats mis-read the RC signal for a "D" course and sailed a "M" course, in the first race (my self included). READ your sailing instructions and study the COURSE's. **I'm going to paste a copy of the courses in the cabin so I'll have no more excuses for going the wrong way.** If you are smart you'll follow Charles Smithey around the course, he's taught me something at every race since June. Also in the book, Advanced Racing Tactics, one of the key points is be prepared to avoid mistakes. If you do not have a copy of the PYC's SI's call me I'll mail it to you **and if you have a question do not hesitate to ask** - I might learn something. I'll post standings next month after we have had a chance to redeem ourselves. But, **lets note** that Jose Aliseda & Charles Smithey did it right two times in a row.

### DOLPHIN Races

We had a great time Sunday the 20th with 14 small boats. Instead of our normal around the buoy trip, these races were in two boat teams. Our experienced skippers were paired with a novice racer or beginning sailor and had to "instruct" them around the race course. It worked fairly well and we have some new racers we hope to see again next month. It was a little hard for our top racers to turn around and retrieve

their lost team-mate, but it was worth it. September we will run more races with some allowance for the novices or maybe a "there & back-again".

### 95' LABOR DAY REGATTA

The 5th annual Palacios Labor Day races were held in light & variable winds. Missing this weekend was Bay Fest - no crowds or Saturday night dance, it was a quiet evening. But we did have a crowd of boats, 40 total with Sunfish (11), Dolphin SR (10), 470's (12), 505's (5, a new class), Portsmouth (2). The 470's had 5 last year and committed to return, thus establishing their perpetual trophy. And return they did thirteen boats arrived, exceeding the Hofaker's estimate by four. Also trying to establish their own class the 505's promoted by Ray Seta and Logan Goar. Some conversation was made with a "Laser" so maybe that could be the new class for 96'. This event looks like it may become the Palacios Labor Day "One-design" Regatta. The Dolphin SR's also had a great turn out with three travelers from the "Valley" joining us this year. Sunfish class was about half it's normal numbers, due to the Sunfish SW Regional event to be held September 16th. The Jim Schultz & the Race Committee scored five races which was no small feat in the winds (or lack there of) we had. Lee Martin provided his big "CAT" for the race committee boat, or should I say RC ISLAND. Saturday night concluded with Chicken fried steak and all the trimmings, followed by a raffle. In Jim's ultimate wisdom he called for a 9:00am start and after two races there was no wind. The 505's & 470's were towed in by chase boats, which is a first in Palacios. We could sure use El Nino now, to stir things up a bit. And We'll work on the weekend's festivities.

**LABOR DAY RESULTS FOR 1995:**

Sunfish; Pat Manning (7.75), Francis Leal (9.75), Bill Gerloff (14.75), Dayna Mosier (15), Bruce Foster (17.75)

Dolphin SR; Pam Smithey (3), Charles Smithey (9.75), Ed DeCoux (11), Lane Hollister (13)

470's; Ralls Lee (7.5), Ron Hofacker (11.75), CL Keating (12), Ty Geiger (13), Dave Lindstrom (14.75), Steve Tacconelly (22.75), David Gentry (23)

505's; Scott MacKay (5.25), Tom Taylor (6.75), Logan Goar (8.75), Seta (13), Downes (19)

---

## THE WINDS OF CHANGE

To further enhance our club activities and standardize how & when these activities are to occur the following will be adopted by the PYC for 1996.

# 1. - The PYC will have a "meeting" and activity on the third weekend of each month. Also the sailing fleets will be known as; the "Mariners" (big boats) who race 1:00pm on Saturday and the "Dolphins" (small boats) who race 2:00pm on Sunday. The race months will be March through October. There will be a skipper's meeting each day before the races at the PYC "club house" and the race results will be posted after skippers return there.

# 2. - Since the activities will be centered around the PYC, we will have social time around the club house. There is a refrigerator in the building, with some sodas (\$0.25 each) and if you would like to keep drinks or lunch in it just place them in a bag with your name on it. As for access to the club house, during these weekends a club officer will open and close the building. If you are down by your-self and want to use the grounds (picnic tables & BBQ etc.), take your ID card to the Serendipity office and swap it for the key. (be SURE to lock up & clean up!). Also if you are coming for the 3rd weekend, dock your boat over by the club and stay Saturday night, we can fire up the grill, swim and watch a sundown (be SURE to register at office). We will gladly accept donations of items, \$, labor that may enhance the grounds around the club house.

# 3. - for the Power & Cruising crowd activities which involve enjoying your boat and our local waters are planned and we will build on this program in 96'. Also we have begun talking with various clubs in our area, Port Lavaca - Freeport - Rockport etc. which allow us to keep

you posted on when their activities over lap our area so we may join them or have them join us. *How about an offshore run to one of these ports??*

# 4. - Sailboat Racing; In the Mariner fleet, if we can't get a RC boat, we will designate a different racer as RC for each race. For any race you have to sit out, you will receive points equal to an average of points for all your actual finishes. The Dolphin fleet will begin using the Pavilion Pier as RC and set a pin directly west or directly south of the west end of the "T". The racers (when no chase boat is available) can sail out the marks to set a W, T, or G course (leaves the finish at the pier). In this way those wanting to help or be the RC, but do not have a boat can be involved with the club's activities near the water.

# 5. Misc. - DECK prodject, we are planning to start this in Nov - Jan, we would appreciate help from all of you who will want to use it after it is finished. Also if you have some gravel, walkway pads, lumber, concrete, timbers, ant poison, road fill, gates???? get in touch, NOW!

---

## M26 - News!

Thanks to our member Bob Swan (Venture 21), we have a copy of an article (with permission of the publisher) about a two week cruise Mr. Martin Stevens, of North Carolina, took in his M26 from Cedar Key up to Apalachicola and back.

Also our new member Sam White of Burnet, TX took his M26 from Fort Meyers, FL across Florida through Lake Okeechobee to the east side, down to the keys, across Florida Bay to Cape Sable, and back to Fort Meyers. Hopefully Sam will grace our *Rhumb Line* with sea-tales from his adventure? Sam, please mail to 2802 Golden, Bay City, TX 77414 (Photos?)

---

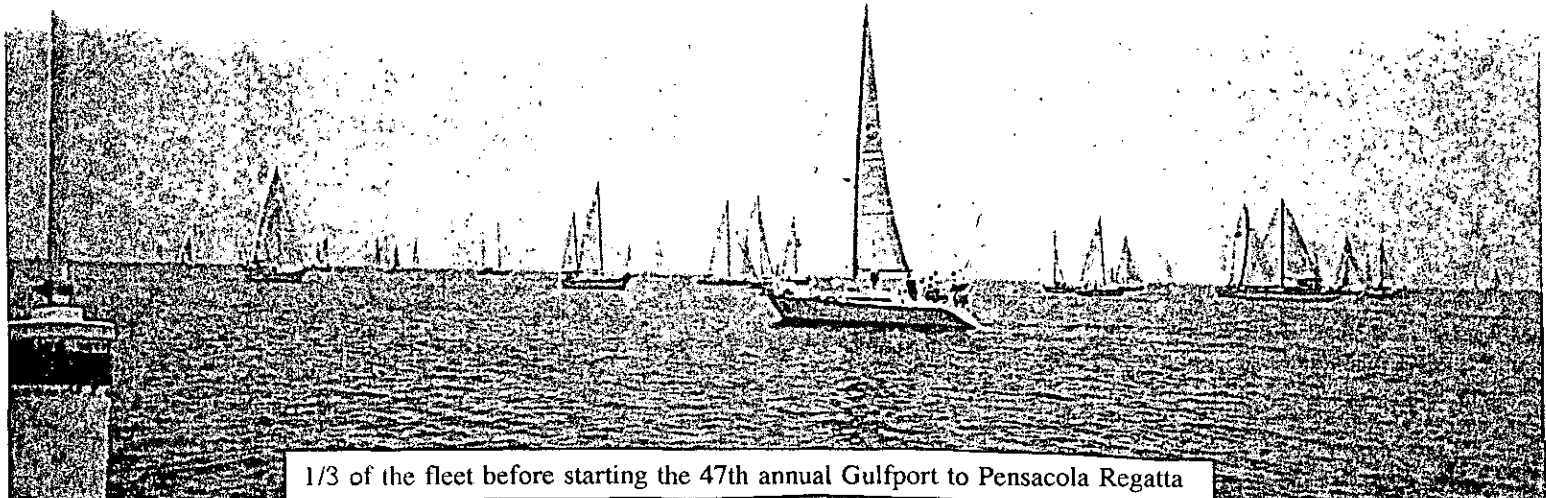
## UP COMMING !

Sept 16th/17th - Club Races; "Mariners" Sat. start at 1:00pm, "Dolphins" Sun. start at 2:00pm

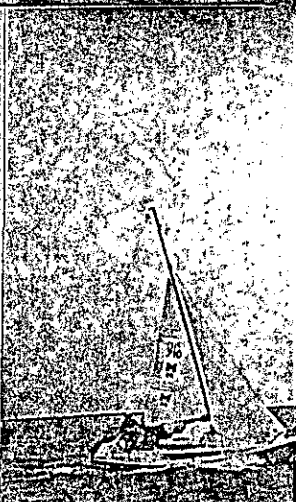
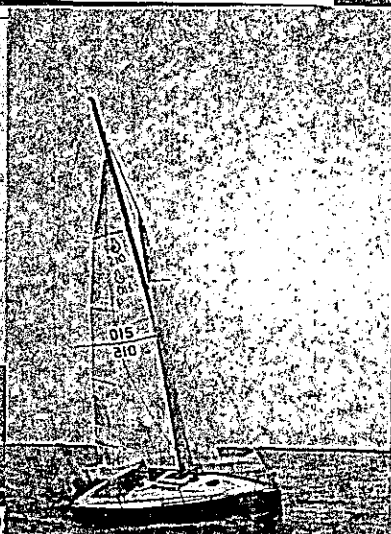
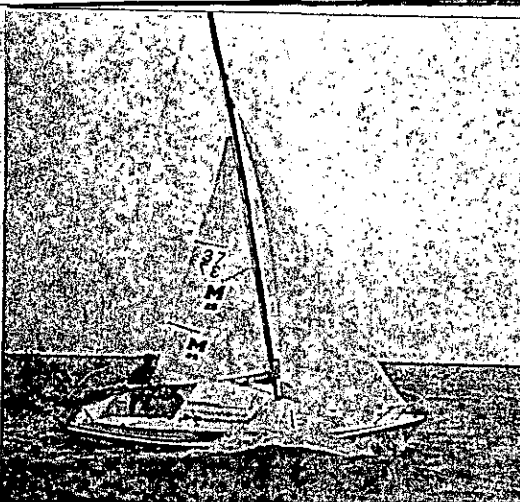
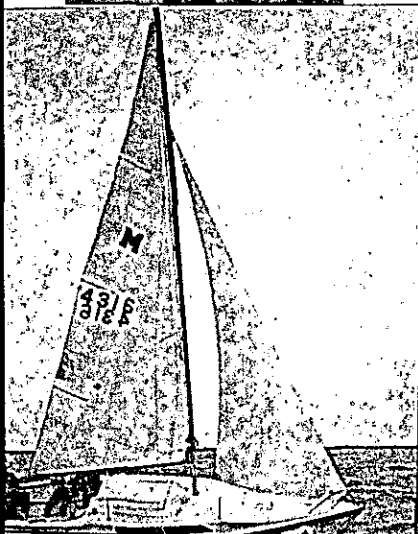
Oct 21st/22nd - Club Races; "Mariners" Sat. start at 1:00pm, "Dolphins" Sun. start at 2:00pm

(Skipper's meeting at 10:30am - Sat. and 1:00pm on Sun.)

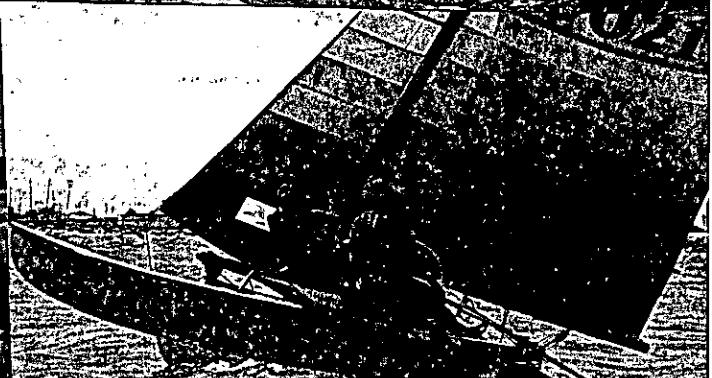
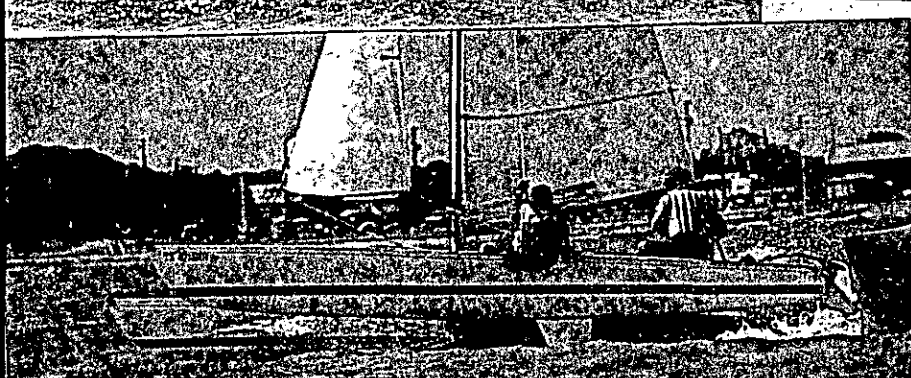
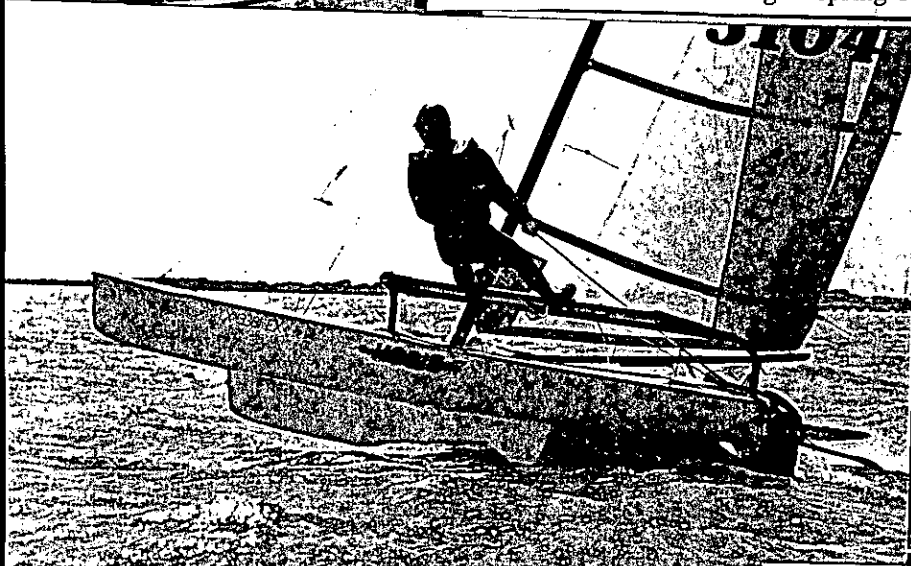
Oct 28th-29th - PYC Halloween Cruise to Prt Lavaca. Leave Sat. 9:00am, Dinner, return next day.



1/3 of the fleet before starting the 47th annual Gulfport to Pensacola Regatta



PYC "Mariners" fleet racing in spring 1999



Tx Cat Championship - Compliments of Mid-Gulf Sailing, by John Brown

# Cedar Key Cruising in My MacGregor 26

By Martin Stevens

(Being a true account in which our narrator attends the 11th annual Cedar Key gathering, then voyages north to explore Florida's Big Bend, together with thoughts on the MacGregor 26 sailboat used as low budget bare-bones cruiser).

I was fortunate on this, my 6th or 7th visit to Cedar Key (CK) to have two weeks of free time instead of my usual long weekend to enjoy and explore the area. It was great to have a little mental health rejuvenation break away from family and friends in the North Carolina mountains and the rigors of building a strawbale eco-house there (but that's another interesting story).

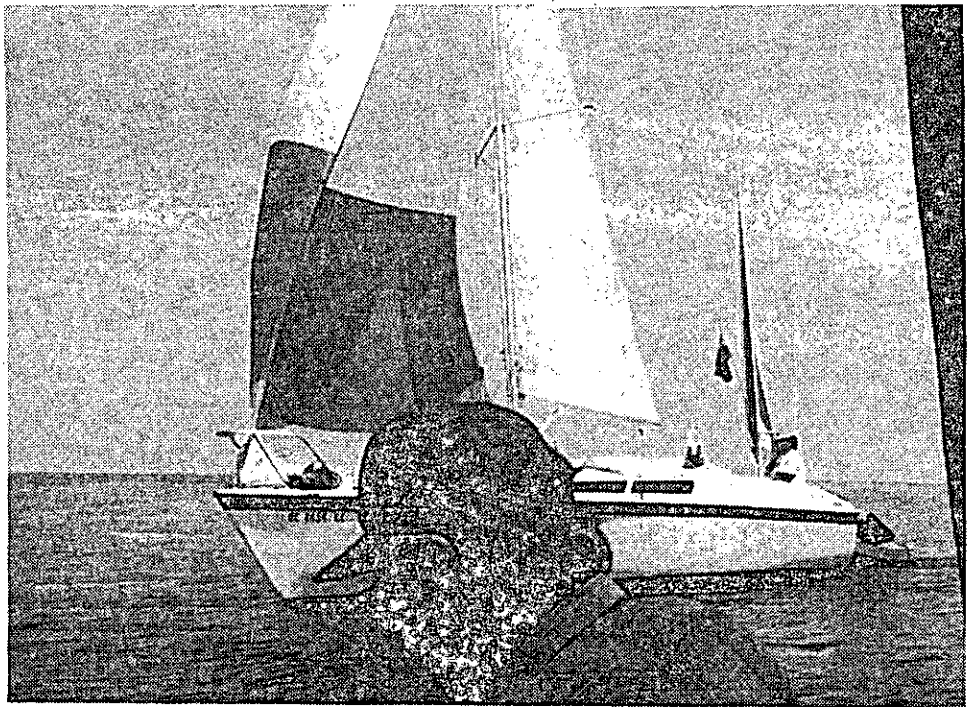
The MacGregor pulls fairly easily behind my elderly diesel GMC Suburban. Being water ballasted, the hull weighs less than 2000lbs. I reached my destination at sunrise after driving through Tuesday afternoon and night with a few hours sacked out in the V-berth at the Florida state line rest area.

Although I've done it several times now, it was a fresh and uplifting experience to emerge from seemingly endless miles of straight tree-lined road into the broad, marshy expanse of the CK back bay at sunrise with birds flying across rose-tinted clouds and hazy, indistinct islands beyond. Then across the causeway, find a place to park, and stagger bleary eyed into Cook's Cafe for a caffeine jolt and restorative salsa omelette.

After catching up with Mike and Cindy Leiner at the Island Place and doing a couple of maintenance chores on the boat, I launched into the small boat basin. I don't use the outside ramp having had bad experiences in the past with waves and boat wakes, not to mention picking up a large pressure-treated splinter under my thumbnail from one of the dock pilings. Ouch. My strategy now is to launch with the mast down, motor out under the low bridge and over to the lee of Atsena Otie key, then raise the mast afloat.

The lack of good dockage at CK necessitates having a tender of some kind in anything bigger than a daysailer. In the past I've had my Whip skiff, which is a wonderful pulling boat, but cumbersome to tow around. For this trip I contemplated getting a cheap inflatable, but was hesitant thinking about all those sharp oyster beds. Instead I bought a damaged 9' sit-on-top rotomolded kayak cheap that had sustained a good-sized crack by being dropped on a picnic table. I effected an ugly but watertight repair using a heatgun and now have a durable tender that can ride on the diminutive foredeck of the 26 while underway, then be easily plopped into the water for shore-visiting and exploring.

As Hugh Horton observed later in the weekend, I've gone totally "plastorama". Part of my being agrees with Herreshoff, calling fiberglass "frozen spot" and my soul is refreshed by Egyptian cotton sails



and bright finished wood, but on the practical level I've only got X-many free days a year and I'd rather be spending them with wind and spray in my face out on the water than inhaling paint and varnish fumes and sanding dust. I get enough of that in my work. So, at least for now, I'm sailing and paddling strictly functional plastic craft while enjoying other peoples' wooden boats from afar and occasionally up close.

I spent a day cruising around the various local keys; Snake, Nod, Seahorse and Atsena Otie, each with its own unique shape and features. Snake with its white sandspit beach and serpentine, hightide channel into its tranquil inner pool, perfect for kayak and canoe bird watching (take bug goop). Bigger North and Seahorse keys with their wonderful variety of birds: Osprey, ibis, pelican, frigate birds and on and on. Atsena Otie with its labyrinthine channel right through the island. Hugh manages to sail this in his "Osprey" decked canoe when wind and current are right.

After reacquainting myself with these old and pleasant haunts I decided to go further afield and sail the 20 or so miles to the Suwannee River, thereby also having a chance to try out my new Garmin 45 GPS aboard *Huracan* (the name comes from time I spent in Guatemala and is the old Quiche Maya sacred word for "Heart of the Universe", also ethnologically connected to that precolombian Caribbean word for a very strong wind that we all know and fear).

How amazing to punch chart coordinates into a little box, then watch an LCD display of a shifting road telling one to go left or right to stay on course, also compass heading, time and distance to destination and present speed over the ground, all for less than \$400. Finally a worthwhile technological system from the Pentagon that even us alternative boating types can use and afford.

It was great to have the outermost daymark of the Suwannee River entrance channel materialize on the horizon smack on the bow. Some people are calling GPS

the "next utility" and predict it will eventually be taken away from the military and put under civilian control. As of now the system can be turned off any time for national security reasons, which is not so hot if you are, say, trying to land an airliner in foul weather.

The system is not fully functional yet with not all satellites in place, and indeed several times on my two week trip the screen lost its functions for up to 30 minutes and displayed "poor GPS coverage". While out of sight of land I learned to anticipate this eventuality by keeping a running log of bearing and position should the need arise to have to go back to good old dead reckoning.

The reed lined tranquil mouth of the Suwannee is another of my favorite places to sail, anchor and hang out, but the southern entrance channel seemed more silted up than on previous visits. Not something I'd attempt in a fixed-draft vessel of 2-1/2'.

After a peaceful sleep amid the reeds and soothing night noises, back to CK to meet up with Hugh down from Michigan with friends Ron and Alan. Next day we took a trip in *Huracan* with *Osprey* and plastic kayak in tow about 5nm offshore to the "reef" off Seahorse Key. Actually what would be called in the Bahamas a "sand bore"; just shallow water over sand with a few hermit crabs and quite a swift current. Good visibility though, quite different from the tea-colored water inshore.

We snorkeled awhile then headed back in to the protected east side of Seahorse where I got to try paddling the elegant *Osprey* close in towards the restricted access shore to view its winged namesakes among a host of other birds flying low over the water, soaring high overhead or roosting in the trees.

Later, back in CK at sunset, I had a chance to sail her with lightweight carbon-reinforced spars and Dabber sail, a subtly different way to travel, facing forward right at water level, feeling each puff and changing wind direction, exquis-



Following a pleasant weekend spent greeting some new faces, reacquainting with familiar ones, enjoying the visual feast of a variety of small craft, folding and fixed kayaks, canoes, a beautiful double-ended pulling boat, a Windhorse, two Drascombe yawls, a Bay Hen, a mini Friendship sloop, a Sea Pearl 21 trimaran and Mike Leiner's Sanibel 17, all set against a background of wheeling birds and unspoiled keys, I headed out on Monday morning on a NW course for Apalachicola Bay.

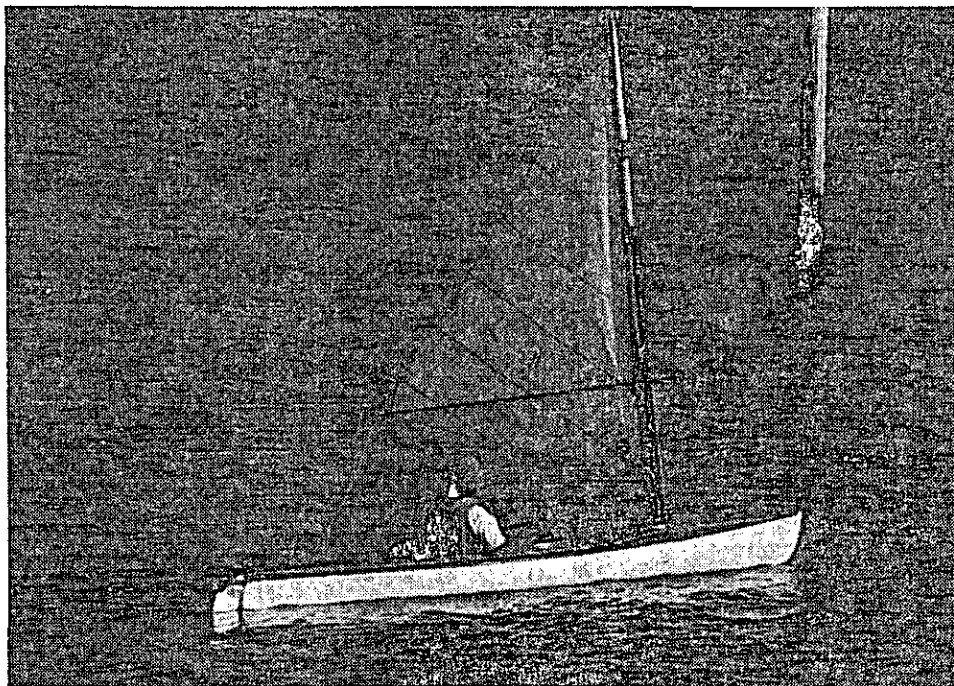
My initial idea had been to go south, maybe as far as Sanibel Island, but after talking with some knowledgeable Cedar Keyans I decided to explore the more wild and undeveloped Big Bend area to the north.

The Garmin said I had 105nm to go. I had a good day of sailing with a steady 15kt wind on the quarter, sunshine from a hazy sky and the occasional visiting porpoise, while the miles clicked off at a steady 5-6 per hour.

Being a carpenter/cabinet-maker/ex-boat chippy, I've made various wooden modifications to the MacGregor, mostly in the cabin, but on the transom I've mounted a small teak swim platform with swing-down ladder, which makes boarding from the water or when on the trailer much easier and safer. Together with a grab handle, I've built in a mast-step for a mizzen and boomkin (actually the rig from my Whip skiff), making mine probably the only MacGregor yawl in existence.

From sailing my previous boat, *Emerald*, a Bolger Micro (on the cover a couple years back), I learned to appreciate the fine qualities of a mizzen for sail raising, self-steering, anchoring and off the wind power. My setup on Hurricane is more light-duty than on the Micro and I use it only in winds up to about 15kts. Upwind it doesn't do much except look pretty and distinctive, but off the wind I can feel it helping push us along and going dead downwind I often douse the

Sailing in Hugh Horton's *Osprey*.



fussy, flapping jib in favor of the sedate mizzen.

Sunset, moonrise, dinner. I've barely touched the tiller since leaving CK. The Autohelm has taken over that chore. Ah, freedom from the tyranny of the tiller. Diminishing winds, moonlight, starlight. Flat calm, we motor for a bit juicing our batteries (I've added a second one in the lazarette mainly for the Autohelm) in the process. Tired of listening to the stinkpot I cut it off and drift with only the jib hanging limp. Stargazing, drifting, relaxing. ZZZZZ. I awake several hours later to hear water chuckling under the bow. The jib is drawing, Autohelm still has us on course. Raise the sails, we're on our way.

What follows is one of the most magical nights I've spent with only myself as company. In a building wind many porpoise, perhaps 20 or 30, are all around the boat doing their porpoise thing; cavorting, rolling, diving, playing, leaping. Meanwhile the water has turned phosphorescent in the moonlight, turning our wake into a glittering track and porpoise bodies into gleaming projectiles visible even when they dive deep in the clear water beneath us.

I'm wide awake now, not knowing which way to look, leaning over first one side then the other, talking to them like an idiot. I keep thinking they will all swim away in a moment and that I should be savoring the moment, but it all goes on and on. Gradually I'm able to identify different individuals. Some have spots and markings, others have dorsal fins damaged, in differing ways. There are several babies and half-grown ones.

One image remains etched in my mind: Four of them perfectly choreographed sliding down a wave off our port quarter, foam and bodies glistening. It's a visionary artist's ultimate aquatic fantasy. Unfortunately I'm not a painter, but the inner picture remains as treasured private mental photosequence.

Dawn arrives, the scene dissipates. Skies cloud, wind grows. I see a couple of

shrimpers and hear them talking pounds taken and domestic chat over the VHF. Wind is dead astern 15 gusting 25 as I make my landfall under mainsail only at Government Cut, the fairly narrow channel through St George's Island, the barrier that shields Apalachicola Bay. Seas build as the water depth shelves, till by the time I'm at the entrance to the cut we're bucking like a bronco, rip-rap rocks looking awfully close on either hand.

The Autohelm can't keep up with our wild gyrations and I'm white-knuckling the tiller. Should have reefed the main. Too late baby now. Eck, the motor head's almost getting dunked, hang on, must be an outgoing tide; then bam, we're through into calm water. What a contrast; sun's out, fishermen sitting on the inner rocks, birds overhead. A big sport fishing boat heads out the channel, takes a look at the waves and turns around waving as he goes back by me.

Across the bay to Apalachicola by mid-afternoon. Into the municipal marina where I manage to bust my bow light coming alongside a concrete wharf. Must be a bit punchy and uncoordinated after the all-nighter and morning's excitement. How do those OSTAR racers do it day after day?

Chat with Montgomery 17 owners loading after weekend trip. Glean some local knowledge. Wander around a bit then decide to take a nap. Unfortunately this coincides with the start of little league game in adjacent ballfield, also the arrival of heavy bass music car cruisers. I'm right next door to their after work hang-out spot. I head out and find a semi-quiet anchorage in a creek beyond the commercial fishing boats.

Next day I dock at the Rainbow Marina to gas up and fix the bow light. Task accomplished I am about to head out when the captain of the neighboring Morgan 51 charter yacht *Glory Days* warns me he's picked up serious weather on radar headed our way. We retire to the bar and watch thunder-clouds and squall lines advance across the marshes while we imbibe strong ale and chow down on large, tasty local shrimp and oysters as rain lashes the windows in torrents and lightning cracks overhead. We discuss Florida's newly-enacted net ban and the fate of the local fishing fleet. So glad not to be out there on the bay.

I decide to spend the night secure in the marina which works out well as the storm passes and I'm given an evening tour of old Apalachicola with running anecdotes by the knowledgeable captain and mate of *Glory Days*, the highlight of which is a look at the 67' schooner *Governor Stone* from 1877 which the mate helped restore and build the historically correct juniper dinghy.

I have good weather the following day as I head east down the ICW graced with another perfect following wind and drop the hook mid-afternoon in the lee of Dog Island, a fine anchorage with shells on white sand beaches and protective trees. I kayak and wander the beaches exploring, reflecting and collecting shells for the minibeach we're creating next to our trout pond back in NC.

Thursday I sail for St. Marks about 40nm away. All goes well until I'm almost

in the entrance channel to the St. Marks river when I run into one of the thunder storms I've been hearing about all day over the VHF while I voyage under sunny skies. The radio reported winds of 45mph accompanying isolated storms. I'm in 15ft of water so I decide to drop the sails, anchor and wait it out. This turns out to be the right thing to do as the rain pours down so heavily that visibility is nil as I hunker down in the cabin with crashing thunder and lightning right overhead, bucking and rolling in a whipped up sea. I only open the hatch once to hold out my cheap wind indicator, sure enough, 35mph.

The storm blows over with the same suddenness as its arrival and we motor up the river under a dramatic evening sky past the "real" lighthouse (not too many of those in Florida) into the beautiful, wild estuary against a fast falling tide using lots of gas at full throttle until we reach the old Spanish fort built in 1679, then the small town of St. Marks.

We anchor at dusk in the upper navigable reaches of the river, a mile above town which is another world again, primeval and Jurassic with moss covered trees and vegetation, dark and dripping, hanging over fast flowing brown water. My anchor skips over the bottom then finally grabs, jerking the bow around. I go for a pleasantly spooky paddle further upstream. An owl flies across and big raptors sit as silhouettes high in the trees while swamp sounds begin their nocturnal pulsation.

Next morning there's a big wad of vegetation clumped around the anchor line. I finally exfiltrate it, then head back down to St. Marks for gas, a few stores and a call home, then onward to the old fort of San Marcos de Apalache which I wander around enjoying some fine old trees and trying to visualize the experience of scared young 17th century Spanish boys in such a place so far from home. At one point the whole garrison was wiped out by a hurricane. As I write this, hurricane *Allison* is approaching the coast on a high tide less than a month after I was there.

I paddle up a narrow channel in the reeds opposite the fort on my way back to *Huracan*. I hear splashing ahead, go around a tight corner and am face to face with a gator about the same size as my small kayak. We both jump and back away. Fortunately the Ocean Kayak design is very stable. It would not have been a good time for a capsize.

The tide is just beginning to fall and despite a headwind I decide to tack back down the river. It's pure sailing, quite strenuous, but a satisfying rhythm doing tack after 1/4 mile tack along the gradually widening river. It takes me back to sailing on the Norfolk Broads as a kid in big old gaff-rigged yachts. No windmills here though and *Huracan* points much higher.

Mr MacGregor got his numbers right when he designed this one. She sails very well for such an inexpensive craft. I also have two new-fangled electronic gadgets which make the exercise much easier: The Autohelm with its "tack" function that swings the bow through 90 degrees leaving my hands free to change the jib sheets and a depth sounder with beeping depth alarm that I set for 8'. The beep is quite annoying but less so than having to get out

and push. I call it tacking by beep and it enables me to take long tacks from bank to bank and not have to stay in the buoyed center channel.

I only have to turn the motor on once when I see an unbelievably huge push tug and barge approaching, presumably fuel for the power station above St. Marks. No question of steam yielding to sail here. I pull into the shallows, sails flapping.

By evening I'm out in Apalachee Bay again, deciding whether to head for Steinhatchie or back down south to the Suwannee. I want to visit Steinhatchie, but the weather report of more stonig stuff on the way clinches it. We'll head over to Suwannee while the weather holds. Not much magic in this all night crossing, just light wind close-hauled with the motor running half throttle. I dodge one fishing boat in the wee hours, but don't see another craft until we make another miraculous electronic landfall around noon.

I enter through the north channel this time, which, though narrow, seems to have heter depth than the south one used previously. I find an anchorage between Bradford Island and West Pass and doze away the afternoon, although being Sunday there are some recreational power boats and nasty jetskis about to spoil the tranquility. I'm sorry, I just can't find it in my heart to say one good thing about jetskis.

From a previous visit I know of a good seafood restaurant on the Salt Creek side of the town of Suwannee and head over to their dock in late afternoon to gorge on their massive fisherman's platter; about one of everything that swims around here, all Southern fried. Stuffed, I head back to my anchorage and read Patrick O'Brian while enchanting marsh night noises drift in through the mosquito netting and I sip a little red wine. I've gone without the hassle of ice and bulky cooler for this trip, drinking my cold ones ashore. One less thing to deal with.

Cruising by myself I've installed the table in the "main salon". It's totally in the way when sailing with others, but now functions as navigation station with shock cord holding down the current chart. In three years owning the boat I've toned down the antiseptic interior expanses of white gelcoat and remedied the somewhat skimpy, inaccessible and often damp storage section with the addition of mahogany shelving, following Tristan Jones' advice to have a lot of small storage spaces at eye level.

The boat comes with molded in sink and adjacent space that I've used to install a Scandinavian nonpressurized alcohol stove. Over the sink I've built a cabinet around a plastic dishrack that holds all cooking and eating utensils as well as navigation tools. Holes drain to the sink below. Next to this, over the stove, is a high-lipped shelf for food storage. Aft on the interior starboard cockpit/cabin bulkhead is a library/chart shelf, with a small, deep catchall on the inboard end next to the companionway ladder for sunscreen etc., on which is mounted the GPS, swivelable for both cockpit and cabin viewing. The VHF is mounted to the cabin roof on the port side of the companionway, again for interior/exterior access.

Three canvas zipper bulkhead bags

have been attached high on the "walls"; one each side of the V-berths and one to port in the main cabin for foul weather gear, flags, clothing etc. I've added four more interior lights to the original one, making reading available in all comfortable places, including the enclosed head which is minimal, but a step up from the usual wide open trailer boat arrangement.

I put a radio/cassette unit in the flotation chamber access panel over the sink with cassette storage rack on the side of the dish cabinet. Essentially my aim has been to adapt the boat from its intended function as a weekender into a semi-spartan cruiser capable of making some extended future voyages.

With its unsinkable, foam-filled, 2' draft, beachable hull, light trailering weight, easy rigging (around 30 min), good sailing speed from smallish sails (236 sq ft main+jib), accommodations (we've slept four adults aboard, a squeeze), modest amenities and comforts and low initial price (around \$11,000), I'm reasonably pleased with the boat.

The wind increases in the night so that by the time I'm ready to hoist reefed main and jib for the final leg back to CK it's gusting 25 knots. It's a hairy beam reach out of the south channel. There's a sideways current going with the north wind so I have to keep glancing back and forwards to the nearest markers to make sure I'm not being blown against the lee oyster beds. I have to point the bow way upwind of my track to maintain course and several times we are grinding through mud with the depth sounder showing 2.5'. I'm grateful for the swing-up rudder and centerboard.

Finally out in deeper water we turn south for a quick, glorious downhill run peaking at 7.5kts on the GPS speed readout. Anchor in the lee of the "Island Place", down with the mast, under the bridge, into the boat basin. More good seafood for lunch at Cook's then over to Mike and Cindy's for a chat, shower and to pick up my vehicle and trailer which they've kindly kept out of the public eye in their driveway. Back to the ramp, load up, then hit the trail back to the cool, green Smokies.

A word on safety: In deference to my wife's wishes and my small commonsense quotient, I wear a safety harness when off-shore, also a life preserver when the wind picks up.

This has been my longest voyage so far aboard *Huracan* and its overall success has me dreaming of the Bahamas and Mexico/Belize/Guatemala in the future. If anyone out there is contemplating similar voyages and would like company or you want to talk about my MacGregor modifications call me at (704) 669-8863.

Martin Stevens, 325 Stone Mountain Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711.

messing  
about in

BOATS

Published twice a month, 24 times a year. Subscription price is \$24 for 24 issues.

Address is 29 Burley St., Wenham, MA 01984-1943.

Telephone is (508) 774-0906, 8-5 weekdays, no machine.

Editor & Publisher is Bob Hicks