

# VEGA Newsletter

Sidney A. Rosen, Editor (407) 352-9250

25 Aug 1995

Voice of American Vega Sailors

No. 8 - 95

## • E Mail

In the past month or so, a couple of our computer oriented members have reported contacting other "raghauers" on compuserve, or internet. Recently a new member, Mr. Dave Pomerantz of Marshfield, MA (Witchcraft, #1229) has written that he would like to contact other members via "Internet" and suggested that we keep and publish a register of members who are interested in this form of "Vega talk." As a starter, he has give the following "E- mail" address:

Compuserve: 72007, 2657  
Internet: : pomerantz @ aol, com

Jeff Cook ("Cheff", #1424) would also like to communicate . "Just drop me a note at cheff@digital, com."

If you too are interested, please send your information to the editor

*This reminds me of the necessity of shortening the time it takes to have one of your letters appear in our newsletter. (next item)*

## • About "your" newsletter!

*Note the "your"!* This is your newsletter. Without your writings, there would not be a publication! Your editor puts the paper together with whatever writings our members care to contribute. Unfortunately the literary contributions are not received on a regular basis. When the writings get scant Sid inevitably must ask our people for ..something to print! Then our members respond enthusiastically and an overabundance of writings arrive - too much to print in the following three or even four months!. Sid would prefer to shorten the time between receipt of a letter and its inclusion in the newsletter. *So, please don't wait until a request for news is published.* If you experience something worthy of being passed on to the rest of our members - do it while it is fresh in your mind. Do it soon, so it won't be just one of a flood of too many items necessitating publication three, four or even five months later! But the main thing is to write. Please share your sailing, maintenance, improvement and repair experiences with the rest of us!  
Sid.

- *Last year we purchased & resold at our cost 600 feet of 1"x 3/8" closed cell gasketing tape for sealing our cockpit soles. This was cut into 12 50 foot sections. Sid now plans to repurchase enough for 12 more sections . \$10. should cover each order. Send your order & check to Sid as soon as possible.*



To: Sid Rosen, VODCA  
From: Homer Shannon  
Date: 5/31/95  
Regarding: Solex Carburetor Parts

**\* URGENT \***

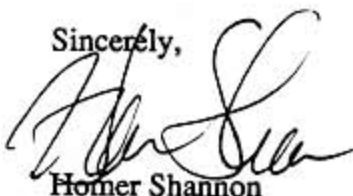
Dear Sid:

It looks like the only way I'm going to find a replacement carburetor for my Vega is to publish a request in the newsletter. I've written Albin in Sweden, Solex in France and called numerous people from the VODCA lists. If you could place a notice in the next issue I would be very grateful. What I am looking for is a Solex 26-VBN-2 carburetor with the fuel banjo and banjo bolt. I really only need the top half of the carb, what is call the "throttle housing", but I expect that I'm going to have to get a whole used unit. Anyone with information can call me at (603) 880-1783; leave a message if I am not in.

Sid, I tell you, I'm real nervous about this engine. The engine and the Combi are about the only things I haven't had to make repairs to on the boat and it appears that parts are just about impossible to get now. I hope the engine continues to run well because I'm not sure it can be repaired. Well, its a sail boat isn't it? What do I need an engine for anyway.

Once I've sailed this boat and really have a fair appraisal of it I will write you with a list of all the things I've done. I think I have a few suggestions to add to you repair manual. Launch date is 6/3/95 and I hope to have the mast stepped the next day. I may sail her by the weekend of the 10th. Wish me luck that the epoxy on the carburetor holds until I can get a replacement.

Sincerely,



Homer Shannon

P.S. I got the burgeo, it looks GREAT. THANK YOU

A Letter from our "down under" member

125 Seaforth Crescent  
Seaforth NSW 2092  
January 24 1995



Dear Sid,

Firstly a belated happy new year to you - and a thank you again for all you do for we Vega owners.

We were delighted to receive the letter in the Vega Association of Great Britain magazine - and yes, we are the same Lyric. We bought her in England in 1978, then for the next 8 years sailed her around the Mediterranean ( including a few trips through the French canals with the mast down). We used to lay her up, out of the water, in either France or Malta, (both remarkably cheap - the most we ever paid was \$10 a week) and then return to Australia to replenish the coffers before we could set off again. Being journalists, we were able to save up our holidays for a couple of years, which gave us 3 months off at a time, so we would use that to cruise the Med. Just in case anyone doesn't know already, the Vega is just the most perfect boat for cruising the Med - there was always some little shallow bay we could tuck in to, so we didn't have to worry about expensive marinas etc. We got to know the Med intimately and spent great days getting to the lesser known Italian and Greek islands, loving every minute of it. We fitted a Navik ( French) self-steering vane which worked fabulously well in the light winds in the Med - and even the gales! In fact in our trip across the Atlantic, which took us 26 days, we barely touched the tiller once. We couldn't recommend it more highly to Vega owners.

Then in 1986 we decided it was getting a bit costly to go for a sail each year!, so we decided to bring Lyric home to Sydney. We went in the first ARC race and were one of the smallest boats. There was another Vega in the race - Mirabella, which we understand is now in Bermuda. We fitted twin backstays for the Atlantic trip, and already had jib furling and roller reefing, which make things so much easier

on a bumpy deck. We came 66th on handicap and won a plaque and a bottle of rum. It was sensational fun and several of our race friends often turn up in Sydney.

From Barbados, we cruised up through the Caribbean and the Bahamas - again a Vega is so perfect for all the shallow waters - and then up to the US, where we laid her up in Stuart, Florida. By this time, the original engine had had it, and Lyric herself was in need of some TLC, so as we had run out of money and were limited for time, we shipped her home to Sydney.

And that's virtually caught us up to date, although this year we have a long last put in a new engine!! If it weren't for strict pollution laws, we would have given the Combi drive a ceremonial burial at sea!. We did manage, thanks to people like John Stanton, to overhaul it a couple of times, but we felt that unless you can fix it easily yourself in some out of the way place, we would rather be without it. It did break down once in Spain and we found it almost impossible to fix.

We have put in a Yanmar 18hp and it fitted almost exactly in the MD6a spot - we have not had to alter the stairs etc. The power it gives us is just fantastic - we can motor at about 7 knots - and Lyric's trim is in no way altered by the new engine. We have had to do away with the two bladed prop so probably get marginally more drag - but an engine that works so well more than compensates. We have put a new 80litre fuel tank in the port cockpit locker and twin batteries in the starboard side. We have also fitted a radio - having travelled 30,000 miles without one, it's now law here. For the past couple of months we have been sailing around a lovely waterway north of Sydney - known as Pittwater and the Hawkesbury River - a huge national park, with lots of tiny coves and bays, some with huge waterfalls to shower under, beautiful bird life etc - yet only 20 miles north of Sydney. We had our Christmas lunch of prawns and oysters anchored in a tiny bay all to ourselves, surrounded by gums with the sound only of the kookaburras laughing - very Australian.



We are planning to take a couple of months off - we both work in daily journalism here - and cruise up to the Barrier Reef in April and May, so are busy getting Lyric all kitted out for the tropics once again. Gus is thinking of putting in an inner forestay to carry a hanked- on storm jib.

After all these years of sailing, the only problem we have had with Lyric is the cabin lining crumbling and we are going to have to replace it. What's been the most successful thing members have found? If anyone has done it recently, we would be very grateful to hear how it was done.

Again Sid thanks for all you do - we will keep you up to date with Lyric's travels.

Chers,  
Joan Edison

Joan & Gus have been members of our association for the past five years.



#### ◆ **Beam me up Captain!**

It is very easy to forget how unintelligible nautical terms can be to a neophyte. But to do so can be at your own peril, as a cruising skipper learned while he was heading down the Red Sea with a couple of inexperienced hands he'd signed on for the passage. He'd been awake and a bit anxious most of the night, weaving his large boat between shipping lanes and reefs, when an anticipated lighthouse appeared. Feeling relief and in need of a quick nap, he told his neophyte crewmembers to hold the course and awaken him as soon as the lighthouse was abeam. When he awoke, he discovered to his horror that he had been asleep for more than four hours and that the lighthouse was rapidly receding astern. "Why didn't you wake

me?" he asked the crew. Back came the reply, "Because it never became just a beam. You can see for yourself it's still flashing." - John Campbell, 1/89

January 1995 Sail



-Immer Kurs halten, Egbert.  
wir dūr" "Hold your course, Egbert,  
we don't want to confuse him now."



Julie S. Vargas  
519 Park Street  
Morgantown, WV 26505



Dear Sid,

January 22, 1995

I have been meaning to write for over a year. I am a 55 year old woman, owner of Vega Hull # 105, called African Queen. She is moored in Cruz Bay St. John. Unfortunately, except for summers, I am moored in West Virginia. But summers my husband and I spend on St. John. (We both teach at West Virginia University during the academic year.)

Unlike your other skippers, I am a novice. But I have to tell you how I came to be the owner of a Vega. I did everything wrong, but it all came out right.

I have always loved sailing. When I was a little girl my family spent summers on Monhegan Island, Maine. My father bought me a FOLBOT - a rubber kayak with lee boards and a lateen rig sail. My father also made a cradle for the front of the boat, so I could haul her up on the beach by myself. I spent many hours on the water. Most days there wasn't much wind, so I would take my guitar and play while moving very slowly across the water. My father also liked to sail (but not my mother or sister) so he and I went out often together.

When we bought our house on St. John, I dreamed of sailing again. Wouldn't you know, both our daughters got invited to go sailing once they reached their teens, but they naturally didn't want a mother tagging along. In ten summers, I only got invited sailing once. I must admit I didn't hang around sailors or join the yachting club, so that is understandable. My husband and I spent most of our time gardening and fixing up the house. But I kept talking about buying a boat. What I had in mind was a day sailer -- not a REAL boat. One day I mentioned to a friend, Henry, that I wanted to buy a boat. "Oh," he said. "I've been thinking of selling African Queen. I just bought a bigger boat and I can't afford two." He offered to take me sailing. Naturally, I went. My younger daughter came along and, of course, we loved the Vega. Henry had raced the boat a lot. He had also altered the original design -- taking out the motor and adding a huge ice box in its place. He stepped the mast on deck, with a big steel I-beam across under the area for bracing. That made the cabin area very roomy. He added a brace in back for an outboard. One sail and I was sold, but, of course, one has to dither and agonize over such a big decision. My husband and daughter encouraged me to buy the boat.

Knowing very little about boats and nothing about sailing anything bigger than an 18-ft. sailing kayak, I became the owner of a Vega. Not a bad adventure for a 50 year-old woman! Since I didn't feel competent to sail alone (nor do I still), I spent most of the time I was on the boat cleaning, painting, and fixing things. I would often go out after the midday meal and work until dusk, when the band at the Hyatt Hotel

nearby would start to play and the pelicans would go plunk into the water right around me, and the breezes would cool off and the sky would turn a beautiful pink. Then I'd row back home. To me that was heaven. And I know every inch of African Queen inside and out. Occasionally I'd get to go sailing when a competent friend was free -- and I have been on several overnight trips. My husband comes along on overnights, more, I'm afraid, to please me than for enjoyment.

I have no troubles handling the Vega once out of the harbor. My only trouble was with the outboard which I could not start, hanging down over the stern and pulling the cord at an awkward angle. So I got a new motor with an electric start. It worked fine the first season, but last summer began balking, always when entering an unfamiliar harbor full of expensive boats! Fortunately my sailing companions have managed to weave in and out to an anchor spot under sail. But it makes me hesitant to sail without a very experienced sailor along.

I have had the bottom painted every other year and a survey done each time. So far, the person doing the survey says the rigging & everything is fine (I have replaced small parts as needed). I did have to replace the rudder (the core was rotten). African Queen is pretty old now (1967) and has spent her life in the tropical sun. I wonder if there's anything in particular I should be on the lookout for. I plan to keep the boat, and my husband and I will be retiring within the next 10 years so I'll have more time to sail. And each summer I go out more.

I love reading your newsletters. I don't understand everything, but I read them avidly even so. That's such a good idea, gathering letters together. Still, producing and mailing is a lot of work. All of us who benefit appreciate the work you put in. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Julie S. Vargas

P.S. You asked how I heard about your association. While working on African Queen while she was at a boatyard, I heard "Ahoy Vega." The stranger who spoke was a former Vega owner and gave me the name and address of Vega Assoc. members in Maine. I called them and got your address.



ROBERT ECKWALL  
30 RUE DE LA LIBERTE  
66660 PORT VENDRES, FRANCE  
TEL: 68 82 17 55

30 November 1994

Sidney A. Rosen, Esquire  
10615 Whitman Circle  
Orlando, FL 32821 USA

Your Grace,

I am stunned at your timing. A truly great editor has his shoulder to the wheel, his finger on the pulse, and an intuitive knowledge of where and what contents of dusty old archives (squirreled away by equally dusty and old subscribers) might be suitable for publication in **\*\*\*THE VEGA NEWSLETTER\*\***.

The other day I ran across some earlier incoherent mumblings I'd written some time ago as support for a novel I was writing. It isn't exactly derring-do on board a **\*\*\*VEGA\*\*\***, but it does concern water.

My hero was to spend some time in Spanish Wells, a small but dynamic island in the Bahamas. Spanish Wells has some of the more famous skin diving sites in the islands. In between a whole lot of plain and fancy he'ing and she'ing he finds time to explore places like CURRENT CUT - a narrow ocean cut between Eleuthera and a smaller island (the name escapes me.

This natural channel is about seventy-five yards wide, consequently when the tide changes millions of gallons of water pour through at about seven to ten knots. The channel is about sixty-five feet deep in the center and has sharp vertical walls on both sides. Large potholes line the bottom. Drift-diving on an incoming tide is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Visibility is good, about eighty feet maximum and there are schools of horse-eye jack, eagle rays and barracuda in abundance.

My notes mention DEVIL'S BACKBONE which is a long shallow stretch of coral reefs running along the top of Spanish Wells. The reef is composed of large clumps of elkhorn coral. Elkhorn coral is noted for its razor sharpness. The reef is awash at low tide and thus is a real hazard to navigation. It's been the graveyard for a lot of ships. If you're into diving on wrecks DEVIL'S BACKBONE should be on your list.





Some of the shipwrecks I listed for the book were:

**TRAIN WRECK** - Lying in fifteen feet of water are the remains of a steam locomotive, smack in the middle of **DEVIL'S BACKBONE**. The train was on a wooden barge which sank during a storm in, get this, 1865. It was part of a Union train captured by the South during the war and subsequently sold to a sugar planter in Cuba. All that remains of the wreck are three sets of solid steel locomotive wheels and axles. There are some other scattered artifacts believed to be part of the same wreck, lying in the vicinity in the midst of elkhorn and brain coral.

**CIENFUEGOS WRECK** - A few hundred yards away from the **TRAIN WRECK** lies what's left of a passenger steamship which sank in 1895. This two hundred foot long ship, steel-hulled, crashed into **DEVIL'S BACKBONE** during a storm. By some miracle, all two hundred passengers were saved and the cargo of rice was eventually salvaged. This wreck lies in water up to thirty five feet deep. The most prominent features include two giant heat exchangers, the boiler, and the main drive shaft.

**POTATO AND ONION WRECK** - The Vanaheim was an eighty-six foot coastal freighter with a cargo of - you guessed it - potatoes and onions. She crashed into **DEVIL'S BACKBONE** during a storm, back in 1969. The force of the heavy seas pushed her over the barrier reef causing her to sink in fifteen feet of water. Her large rudder is barely five feet from the **CIENFUEGOS**.

In the general vicinity you can find the wreck of the **CARNARVON**, a steel freighter which sank in 1915 and is lying in thirty feet of water. IN August, 1969 a commercial shrimper went down and is in twenty feet of water.

I'm sure there are a whole lot of other victims of careless navigation and poor weather forecasting, lying on **DEVIL'S BACKBONE** waiting to be researched. It could be a real absorbing hobby for a guy down in the back due to advancing years and cheap gin.

The "hour of the aperitif" is approaching so I must take leave of you and the Fair Florence, oh puissant publisher. Until the next time when, if you like, I'll lay a few words on you about marinas here in OZ.

Best regards,

*Bob & Monique*  
Bob and Monique Eckwall



A BOW THRUSTOR for your VEGA?

The idea to have a bow thruster built in came about from my frequent single-handed trips. Making fast and casting off manoeuvres call for some more versatility. Sailing single-handed by itself is no problem.

As I just said I am alone frequently and a helping hand on shore isn't often available. To be on the foredeck and to handle the tiller all at once is just not on; hence the idea of a bow thruster.

I enquired around about the possibilities and my choice in the end was the Vetus 1.5kW "BOW-PROP" unit. Both thrust [Vendor's data: 23kg  $\approx$  51lbs] and dimensions make it suitable for the Vega. I presume V1502 is the first Vega with a bow thruster.

Now how did I get it installed in my Vega? First of all I needed to find a yard that was capable of carrying out this job. I went for De Klerk's of Enkhuizen as they had done much of this sort of work before.

The installation kit supplied by Vetus contained everything necessary. Only the plastic thruster tube, second battery [55Ah] and necessary battery cabling were not included.

The best location for the unit had to be determined now. In the bows, of course. But where? I had specified that the water tank should not be touched. My Vega 1502 still had the small water tank up forward. A larger tank is fitted in later Vegas. That could give rise to problems, since the thruster must be mounted as far forward as possible to be efficient. The best position for the tube having been found and marked off, a large drill was let loose on the bows. A weird feeling took hold of me when seeing that operation underway. Anybody will understand that. The 132mm [5.2ins] diameter polyester tube running athwartships is bonded to the glass fibre hull. The drive unit is then mounted as per the instructions. The Vetus instructions are very extensive. All drawings are fully dimensioned, in fact a solid basis to work to. To make room for the tube I had to modify the tank connections which normally come out straight; a couple of small elbows pointing downwards did the trick.

The motor unit, perpendicular to the prop shaft, can be swung round and fixed in any position. It is mounted in a horizontal position with an extra hull support to take its weight off the thruster's tube. A separate battery is required and in order to minimise the voltage drop to the drive unit it needs to be located as close as possible. I found a spot for it on the port side. A cable was led from the main switch (now a Vetus switch) through the port ventilation duct to the the battery. A second cable was put in from the -ve ship's battery terminal to the corresponding -ve terminal of the new battery. It was run through the space between cabin sole and hull. Thus the thruster had only very short cabling to its battery. All cables are 25mm<sup>2</sup> cross section [-AWG: 3].

I found a place for the watertight operating panel in the center of the bridge deck where the control switches can be easily reached with a foot when steering. The 6 metres control cabling supplied with associated connectors was run through the ventilation duct mentioned earlier. The control switches are of the push-button type with illumination.

Until now I am satisfied with the equipment. Manoeuvring in harbours and locks is so much easier. If anybody wants to have a look at what has been done, they are welcome in box P22 in Enkhuizen's Compagnieshaven on the IJsselmeer.



A brief mention of the cost (1993):-

Bow Thruster, Vetus, model 23kgf, 12VDC	NLG 1,887.--
Polyester Thruster Tube	150.--
Bonding work	1,150.--
Mounting of Thruster Unit	<u>960.--</u>
	4,147.--
VAT (value added tax) 17½%	<u>725.73</u>
<b>TOTAL NLG</b>	<b>4,872.73</b>

Extras:-

12V, 55Ah Battery, Main Switch, 25mm<sup>2</sup> Cabling and Battery Box.

From Vega Bulletin # 69, October 1994,  
Kring Van Vega Zeilers, Netherlands

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**Please welcome our newest members:**

Paul & Jackie Barr  
50 Forest Glen Drive  
Timberlea  
Nova Scotia, Canada B3t 1J4  
Tel: (902) 8760-7901  
#2515, "Sloop de Jour" 1974

Joseph & Norma O'Brien  
800 Plymouth Road  
York, Pa 17402-3850  
Tel: (717) 757-7194  
#3210, "sonata", 1977

David & Cindy Pomerantz  
56 Bartlett's Island Way  
Marshfield, MA 02050-6002  
Tel: (617)- 834-8786  
#1229, "Wishcraft" 1971

Dave & Carolyn Wilson  
26 Westgate Drive  
Halifax  
Nova Scotia, Canada B3P 1tT8  
Tel: (902) 477-1097  
#2558, "Tickle" 1975



**An apology** for last month's erroneous "new member" entry:

Jeffrey & Patti Botwinich (not Botwinick)  
8180 Shore Drive  
Norfolk, VA 23518 (not Noprfolk)  
Tel: (804) 480-3413  
#2621, "Sea Star", 1975

**Wanted: Prop Blades**  
 Taylon Algon  
 201-762-8152