VEGA Newsletter

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

25 Dec 1993 | Voice of American Vega Sailors | No.12-93

We've run out of news !

There is nothing to print in next month's newsletter. Yes your eyes are not playing tricks on you. Sid has nil, nothing, zero, zilch.

If you have something to tell your fellow members, now is the time to send it in. Tell us about where you went, what happened, and how you coped - We need your adventures as well as your misadventures; your maintenance, repair and improvement tips or what have you!

This is your newsletter. contribute now!

Biting the dust !

Well, our predecessor organization, Vega One design Chesapeake Association (VODCA) is finally legally dead and buried. As VODCA we were previously organized as a Maryland non-profit association, and as such we had to file a state corporate personal property tax form each year with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. In November of 1991 we notified the state tax office that VODCA would be terminated as of December 31st of 1991. In January of 1992 an annual tax return was received, completed, and returned to the tax office. Our accompanying letter addressed our prior correspondence and again advised that VODCA was no longer in existence. In January of 1993, a current tax form was received and returned . We again advised "Organization was terminated in Dec. 1991." and included copies of our prior correspondence. In October of this year we received a notice from Maryland saying that since we failed to file a tax return for 1993, our state charter was forfeited. What does it take to have someone to listen to what you are saying? 50 years ago my generation was using the acronyms "SNAFU" and "FUBAR" to describe circumstances like this. In any event this is bureaucracy at it's worst !

Seasons Greetings

Mr. Sid Rosen
10615 Whitman Circle
Orlando, FL, U.S.A. 32821

Dear Sid,

Just a note to say how much I have enjoyed the recent Vega Newsletters. The letters you've gotten from our members recently have been particularly interesting.

Somebody asked about leaks above the main bulkhead and there are two sources possible.

1. The small opening for the mast wireing.

2. The screws that pass from the outside of the coachroof through the fibreglass and into the mahagony trim that runs along the inside of the cabin below the windows.

A small piece of paper towling placed under the mast, through the small access hole on the forward side of the main beam will soon indicate if moisture is present there, especially during wet weather. If this is not the source, then suspect the screws. If they are leaking, water will run along the inside of the mahagony moulding and, where it reaches the bulkhead, will start dripping at that point. This is a simple fix. Just remove the screws, reseal with "Boatlife" or something similar, and replace.

I think fixing mast leaks has been covered pretty well in previous correspondance and in the handbook.

Thanks again for all your efforts. I'll be looking forward to the next newsletter.

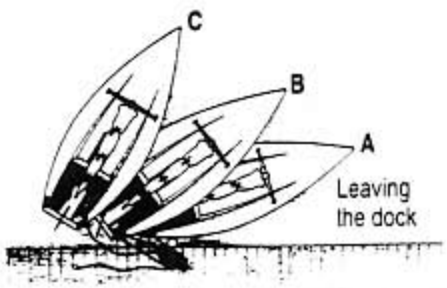
Sincerely,

Dick Chudley

Dick Chudley

Helpful Hints On Fender Use

A fender is important when warping a boat away from a dock against wind or current. Place the fender at the boat's turning point near the stern quarter. Double a spring line from a stern cleat to a piling slightly forward, reverse the engine and angle the rudder toward the dock (A). Keep a strain on the spring as the boat swings up into the wind. You may have to relocate the fender (B). Power forward and steer out; take in the spring line (C).



The Coghlans respond to Bill McCourt

PO BOX 500 (MXICO)
Station A,
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA KIN 8T7

September 6th 1993

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter enquiring about the alterations we made to Tarka for long-distance cruising. Here are a few comments, in no particular order, which you might find useful Please don't hesitate to drop me a line if you have more specific enquiries. There's a fuller account of what we did to equip Tarka for offshore in a past VEGA newsletter - unfortunately, we don't have our backnumbers here, but I'm sure that if you write to Sid Rosen, he'll be able to give you a copy.

1) Water

We installed flexible water tanks, made by Plastimo, under each bunk. Before you do this, you need somehow to pad/insulate the curve of the hull and install four anchor points for the tanks. We used closed cell foam, of the type used for camping mats, as insulation/padding - you'll need to saw the bunk boards in half in order to be able to work in this area and, using a fret saw, cut circular holes to give you access to the filling hole in the tank. When you want to use the tanks, you can either pipe them to the Whale pumps under the galley or take one jug at a time, placing the jug in the bilge, below the level of the tanks.

These tanks gave us some problems - we had to return two to the manufacturers when leaks developed. An alternative is simply to carry 4 or so 5 gallon jerry jugs of the rigid kind used for diesel/gas. These are better than the flexible/collapsible kind, which wear out at the corners.

Whatever solution you decide upon, you should give a lot of thought to where you're going to stow them. I understand that for every 1000 pounds of load, the Vega sinks one inch lower. If possible, you should keep the weight away from the bows and stern and stow it as close to the centre line as possible. Also, of course, you need to stabilise your water containers so as to stop them shifting around in rough weather. When loading, track the waterline carefully and keep stepping back to check the trim. Generally, be ruthless in saving weight.

As far as water quality is concerned, take along a bottle of household bleach. One teaspoon per 5 gallons should do the trick. You should just be able to taste the chlorine.

2) Storm ports etc

We identified the windows in the main cabin as a weak point. Accordingly, using wooden strips

as spacers, we attached rectangular pieces of Lexan to the coach roof sides in such a way that they covered the existing windows. We through-bolted them.

For the companionway, we rarely found it necessary to use boards, even in the roughest of weather. Instead, we made a cover for the companionway, out of yacht acrylic, with a long zip in the shape of a reverse "L".

To increase light in the cabin, we cut a round porthole in the bulkhead to the left of the companionway, as seen from the cockpit.

Make sure your forward hatch is well sealed with good gaskets and that you can batten it down hard - a lot of water can get in here.

Similarly, if you have a hole forwrad where your anchor chain goes out, you need to devise a means of sealing it totally when at sea - a combination opf plastic bags and insulating tape should do the trick. Similarly, a lot of water can get in if your bows are constantly going under.

3) Safety lines

We rigged up permanent plastic-coated stainless steel lines that ran along the side decks in such a way that you could clip on before leaving the cockpit and, on the foredeck with a six-foot tether, tou could reach the bows for sail changing. We made it a rule never to be out of the cockpit without being secured to the boat in some way and also decided, in the end, always to use the forward hatch rather than stepping out of the cockpit - at the moment of stepping onto the side-decks from the cocpit, you are extremely vulnerable.

In the cockpit itself we installed two pad-eyes to which we could attach our tethers - one in the cockpit wall at shin level, the other at the atern end of the cockpit so as to allow for attention to the self-steering gear.

We were very strict that, at night or when the other person was asleep, a person in the cockpit was always tethered to the boat.

4) Cooking

We used a two-burner kerosene stove. This can be tedious to light, especially in rough weather, as you need to use a primer (usually methyl alcohol). However, kerosene gives a good heat, is cheap and available worldwide. It's also not flammable in a cool state, like diesel.

If you go for propane, you'll need to install some kind of fan and possible a gas detector - as you know, there's a real risk that it could leak into the bilge.

Re fuel, we simply carried two extra jerry jugs of diesel - 5 gallons each. Again, pay attention to where you stow them.

5) Bunks etc.

We installed lee cloths, but never used them. With two of us, there was always one on watch so the other simply slept in the downhill bunk all the time.

As regards stowing clothing etc, it all depends on the climate you're cruising in...We were almost exclusively in the tropics and could cram enough tee-shirts and shorts into the lockers behind the bunks to keep us going for a lifetime.

Charts and books are more difficult. You need to be quite ruthless in constantly sending home what you don't need. We kept our charts folded in four in black garbage bags under the bunk mattresses and, as we used them, sent them home.

6) Lights

To save power, take out the bulb in one of the two main cabin lights - you'll still have enough to cook buy. Also, install a kerosene lantern - I'd suggest on one of the bulkheads at the forward end of the bunks (this should be a gimballed light).

For offshore, the deckhead running lights are useless - you need a masthead tricolour light. But, unless you're running the engine a lot, be sparing with the use of running lights - put them on only when you think there's something around. Otherise you'll soon have a pair of dead batteries.

7) Electronics

The only piece of electronics we'd deem critical is a depth sounder. Loran could be useful if you're going to be in fogbound areas. VHF is handy especially for listening to Marine forecasts.

8) Provisions

It's surprising how much stowage room there is on a Vega, especially behind the stove area. We also used the forepeak - stowing vegetables individually wrapped or in nets (but watch for vegetables that bruise..) It's important that vegetables get plenty of air and light and that you immediately throw out ones that are beginning to rot. I should avoid putting anything in the bilge area - tins get rusty and everything seems to end up smelling of diesel No need to go through that old ritual of taking the wrappings off and varnishing tins - that way you never know what you're eating!

9) Rigging

We beefed up our rigging to one size above standard. Don't overtighten rigging - all you will do is put excessive strain on the beam under the mast.

Expect a fair amount of creaking and some sag in the mast beam, even to the point at which you can't open the head door - this seems to be normal. Nevertheless, every so often you should go around and tighten all the bulkhead bolts etc.

Also do periodic, careful checks on the turnbuckles and change them if there's even the hint of a hairline crack. Keep turnbuckles clean/workable with WD40.

10) Sailing

Be kind to your Vega when sailing heavily laden. We used all our small sails much more than our big ones and rarely let her go above five knots. We installed four reef points in the main and nearly always sailed with at least one reef in - you don't reallyt want to be going more than about 4,5 knots offshore fully laden.

You may want to think about installing a self-steering rig - we put in a Navik which was light but powerful enough to do everything we required of it. I could send you more details if interested.

11) Heating

We've not spent too many cold nights on Tarka, but when we did the key was circulating the heat. we have a kero heater on the port bulkhead forwrad of the bunk, which puts out a good heat. If you rig up a small fan, pointing downwards , this can do wonders - try the cheap kind they sell from cannibalised computers (e.g. radio shack) which you can power from the cigarette lighter outlet near the companionway.

It also makes a difference if you can insulate the boat: we lined the Vee berth with closed cell foam. Messy to stick on but effective.

If too hot, you could try installing a windscoop above the forward hatch. Otherwise, go for a swim... Underway, try a shoe in the forward hatch but beware when the going gets rough; also, there's an annoying tendency when going about for the sheets to get stuck on an open hatch.

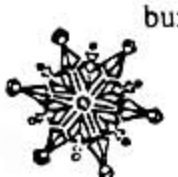
12) Anchoring

If you're going cruising, you can't overdo the quantity of chain you carry and the weight of your anchors. The heavier the gear, the more you sleep at night. Our primary anchor was a 22 pound Bruce, with 110 feet of chain. We have never dragged with this gear. This is also abou the limit you can haul up by hand in a deep anchorage - a chain hooked attached by a short lanyard to the bow cleat is very useful if you need to take a breather while hauling in in windy conditions.

Generally speaking, it's a good idea - if the anchorage is sufficiently spacious - to try periodically sailing your anchor in and out. You never know when you'll need this skill.

Also, when anchoring "wild", leave your sailcover off at night, at least one reef in the main, and a medium to small jib hanked on the forestay - you never know when you'll need to sail out in a hurry.

In all but the most remote places, leave an anchor light burning - e.g. a small kero lantern - burning at night. I'd also suggest a brief check every three hours or so at night when at anchor



- to see if the wind has shifted, anchor dragged, new boats arrived etc.

13) Head

Ah, the head. If laws and anchoring conditions permit, a bucket is far preferrable to using the head. It can't go wrong and is much more hygienic. It is also a lot less dangerous to use in rough weather. We actually took our head out and installed shelving in its place.

Miscellaneous:

- Every couple of weeks, turn seacocks fully on and off. WD40 them as well.

- For a log, I'd highly recommend the traditional Walker trailing log, but remember to take it out of the water before anchoring or coming into a Marina.

- Make sure you have a full man-overboard set, including strobe light, and practice a pick-up routine.

- Ensure cockpit lockers have good, watertight gaskets.

- Install a piece of wood across the gap where the batteries go - this will stop them falling out and probably killing someone if you capsize.

- Install gimballing, or at least good solid fiddles for the stove.

- Carry some extra heavy fenders, even car tires, for really ropey docks or for when fishing boats raft up on you.

Well, there are a few ideas for starters. The key to easy living on a small boat is mostly choosing the right place to cruise - South Pacific is distinctly more accomodating than Alaska in this regard. Please write if you have any specific enquiries. Overall, I'd say that, when offshore, you don't have to worry whether the Vega can take it - it's much more a question of whether the crew can take it!

Regards,

Nick + Jenny Coghlan

Nick and Jenny Coghlan.

Oops, I gooled !

Last month's newsletter inadvertanly carried the wrong number and date. It should have been labelled #11-93 - 25 Nov. 1993. I failed to do this and it ended up with the same date & number as last month's issue (#10-93 and Oct 25). Please excuse my error! Sid Rosen

- **For a catalogue of Nautical books and video tapes write:**
  Bennett Marine Video
  730 Washington Street
  Marina Del Ray, CA 90292

Wendell R. Lloyd
822 Hwy 90, 31W
Bay Saint Louis, MS 39520-2701
601-467-2414

October 6, 1993

Mr. Sidney A. Rosen, Editor
Vega Newsletter
10615 Whitman Circle
Orlando, FL 32821

Re: 'SERENIDAD'
1976 Hull #2925

Dear Sidney:

I am planning to return the SERENIDAD to the Texas Coastal waters this month and to relocate to the Port Aransas area within the next two months. (I bought the SERENIDAD at the Watergate Yachting Center (Houston area) in 1976. I may be seeing some sister vessels next year.)

If you have quick crewing assistance information from Biloxi or Gulfport, please call me collect at my telephone number shown above. The two Air Force officers from Keesler AFB, who were supposed to help me, had to cancel their plans. (I have found that three persons make a good crew for the boat: two to operate the boat, one checking charts, weather radio, making sandwiches, resting, etc.

Also, I need a replacement thumb screw for the traveler main sheet block stop. The starboard thumb screw got broken somehow. No sources in this area have anything that will fit. I will jury-rig the traveler for the forthcoming cruise to Port Aransas, if I cannot obtain a replacement thumb screw.

Since you and I corresponded, I have made a few changes to the SERENIDAD: I installed new solid-teak seats in the cockpit. A cabinet-maker dowled the teak boards together in such a manner that, he says, they will last a long while. Further, I installed stainless steel, vertical strips on either side of the companionway with through-bolting, four or five bolts on each side, to re-inforce the companionway boards holder. The entire coachroof structure would have to collapse for the entrance to give way.

I had trouble with a excessively leaky stuffing box and a defective Water Witch sensor for the bilge. Now I have a primary and a secondary bilge pump and a float

switch. Can't trust the Water Witch sensor after a few weeks. It reacts to the scum accumulation in the bilge.

Also, I have a Humminbird Platinum ID depthsounder on the stern rail. The Platinum ID version is quite an improvement over the previous model, which lacked a great deal. (I have had more difficulty with grounding in the Mississippi Sound area than anywhere I have sailed. In part that's why I am departing this area. Aside from the Intracoastal Waterway and the port channels, the entire Mississippi Sound area is a nest of treachery.)

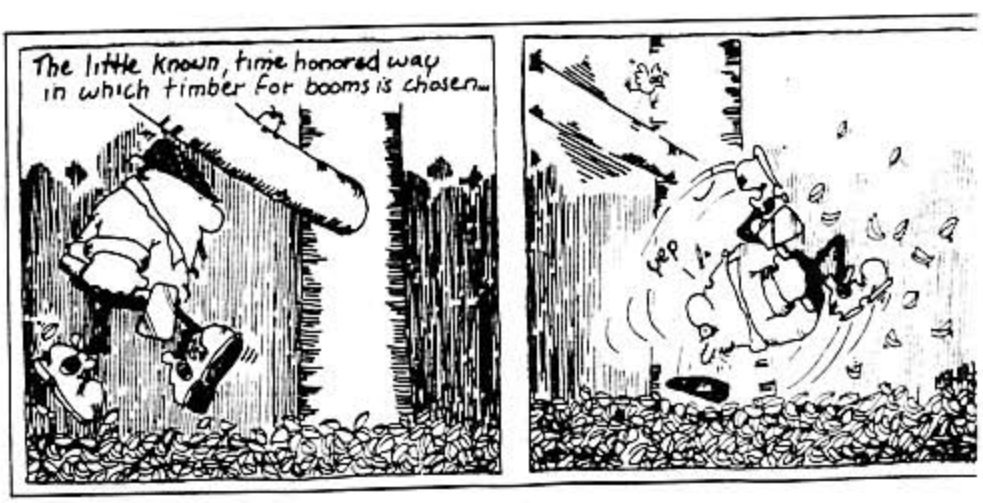
Continuing, I have one large solar panel and several small ones that I plan to install. I cannot determine where to put the large solar panel so that it will not obstruct passage or sail control. I have been using the smaller ones separately to power radios and other gadgets that I have on the boat.

Even though my Impulse Loran-C/microprocessor functions fine, I will probably upgrade to GPS next year. GPS prices are dropping rapidly. The GPS manufacturers won't enjoy the long period of high prices that the Loran-C folks had through the late '70s and early '80s.

My only complaint about the Impulse Loran-C is its sensitivity to moisture. The damn thing should be waterproof! I am reluctant to bundle it too tightly with the see-through bonnet provided because it gets warm and could cause some semiconductors to fail.

Sincerely,
Wendell R. Lloyd
Wendell R. Lloyd

● Boats that signal for a drawbridge opening and then do not pass through could be in big trouble if a Coast Guard proposal becomes final. Apparently in many communities, bridge openings are not only tying up roadway traffic but causing unnecessary wear and tear on the drawbridge machinery. The agency has floated a notice of proposed rulemaking to drawbridge regulations that makes it a violation to signal for a drawbridge opening "for any purpose other than to pass through." In addition, it has always been a violation for boats to signal for a bridge opening rather than lower removable radio antennae, outriggers and other nonstructural items. If the rule becomes final, the penalties for violations could be as high as $500 per incident.



Beginnings:

I bought my Vega at the Annapolis On the Water Sailboat Show in October 1974. I had a summer's sailing experience on a 15 Foot sailing dinghy. Armed with that extensive knowledge and a desire not to get "dunked" as often as I did in my 15 footer, I decided to get a larger boat. I went to Annapolis and was awed by the profusion of boats. Not knowing very much about them, I eventually ended up making dates to "test sail" an O'Day '25 and an American '25. My wife and daughters were wandering about the show but knew where I could be found. My eldest daughter found me and said "Mom wants you to see a boat that she likes." I went to the specified boat and fell in love with it too. It was a good thing too - The American '25 I later found out was a good "clunker" and the O'day was only "so-so". The Vega cost more than what I wanted to pay, but "what the heck" - it had a diesel engine and the best interior I had seen. I made a date to test sail the boat at Little Creek, Va. where the dealer was located. The day of our sail was cold and it was raining. With my family ensconced "below" we got out into the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. With the wind blowing about 20 knots in our faces and the incoming tide at our stern, we had wind and a chop the likes of which I had never experienced. I was holding on "for my life" I was awed by the boats performance and certain that "this was the boat"for me. After a long hour "a sea" We returned to the dock and I bought the boat - #2225.

In 1973 if someone would have asked me to go sailing I probably would have answered "are you crazy". At that time I was a civil service employee of the U.S. Army. One of my fellow employees was a former naval Commander - a graduate of the US Naval academy, a pilot and a real sailing "nut". His name was Robert Woodside ("Woody"). Woody was the "kook" of our floor. He lived and breathed sailing, was connected with the Naval Academy's sailing activities, was on the Boards of Directors of the Sailing Club of Washington (SCOW) and the Dangerfield Island Cruising Association. One day he came to me and asked if I knew of anyone who could help him run the Saturday races at the Washington Sailing Marina. I told him I would ask my 14 year old son. Richard said "OK" and every weekend my wife and I would take him to the marina where he would go out on the "committee boat", setting out buoys, firing the cannon, etc. We would bring folding chairs, books, a picnic lunch and and watch the sailboats flitting about. We got to like the serenity and would often came back on Sundays. Many times my wife would bring her bicycle and ride the bike path which ran all the way to Mount. Vernon.

In January of 1974 I decided to get a small boat and went to the boat show at the National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C. Woody had recommended that I buy an "El Toro". This was a 7' pram and when I saw that I would have to lay down across the boat to tack, I decided it was not for me. The same dealer also showed a 15' sailing dinghy which looked like a "real boat" - not a toy and I ended up buying it. It was an international class of boat called an "Albacore" - designed by Uffa Fox. There was a big fleet of them locally and they raced as a class.

Before leaving the armory I signed up for classes. On Mondays nights I would study for my Tuesday night sailing class being given by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary on Tuesday nights. Wednesday nights were spent studying for my U.S. Power Squadron Basic Boating course on Thursday nights.

Early in April I was invited to a "beginners" on-the-water indoctrination given by the local Albacore Association.I was assigned to an Albacore with a young woman as skipper. We pulled away from the dock and I was shown how to tend the jib. I did this for about 45 minutes - tacking back and forth across the Potomac River; hiking out as necessary. We then changed positions and I handled the tiller and mainsail. We did this for another 45 minutes. The boat started heeling and my instructress started shouting. We were then sailing just off the end of the Washington National Airport runways. An airplane was taking off and I couldn't hear the instructions over the roar of the jet engine. Suddenly we were in the water. In nothing flat my mentor had the boat upright and we climbed in. The boat sailed very slow with all the water in it, but she opened the "bailers" and the water was soon sucked out of the boat. The instructions that I couldn't hear were to uncleat the mainsheet. That ended my first on-the-water sailing session. My instructor worked for the U.S. State Department was later one of the hostages taken by the Iranians when they seized the U.S. Embassy in Teheran.

My boat arrived about a week after my "baptism" and I"trailed" it to the marina where I had rented a "dry slip". I unhitched the trailer, parked the car, and with my son, pushed the trailer and boat to the crane area. We watched other Albacore sailors set their mast, rig their boat, attach their sling and use the electric crane. "Hallelujah"- everything worked as it was supposed to. But where was I to go now that the boat was in the water. The docks were crammed, but only on one side. Great! Plenty of room on the other side. With my son we put up the sails and set forth. What's wrong? Lesson #1 for the day. You can't pull away from the dock on the windward side! Well, somehow we sailed in the shallow area near the docks the rest of that morning without mishap, came in and had a picnic lunch. My oldest daughter had arrived and she wanted her turn in the boat. Again the "blind was leading the blind". Woody arrived and gave me instructions from the dock using a bullhorn. Again we survived. So ended my first day. Several times during the next two weeks Woody would sail in another albacore just behind my boat - giving me guidance and assurance but making me do all the work myself

On Memorial Day, about a month later, I participated in a race from the marina to Mount Vernon & back. I took last place, but learned a lot about river currents, grounding,capsizing, going under bridges, etc. From then on I wanted to go places in the boat.

In July I trailored the boat to Deep Creek Lake, Md, where we were staying with friends. This is "Flying Scot" country - the nineteen foot boats being manufactured nearby. Tremendous numbers of them raced each weekend at the lake.

After many mishaps during that summer, including breaking my centerboard, I decided I wanted a larger cruising type of sailboat. With the most prestigious sailboat show in the country at nearby Annapolis, I became a devotee of the annual Annapolis On the Water Sailboat Show. I hope that someday I will once again have this pleasure. Considering how little I knew about boats,I have always considered myself lucky to have bought a Vega. In fact when I found a slip for the Vega at Mear's Marina in Annapolis, the manager asked what make of boat I had bought. When I said an Albin Vega he responded "That's a Cadillac of a boat"!