



Merry Christmas

Happy Chanukah,

and

Happy New Year!

Pay your 1998 Dues now!

All dues are payable at this time

US members	\$10.00
Canadian	\$12.00 (US\$)
Foreign	\$18.00 (US\$)

Cockpit sole gasketing tape;

We will again be ordering the 3/16" black closed cell, self adhesive tape for sealing the cockpit sole. It comes in 50 foot loot lengths and we will sell it at or near our cost of \$10. in the US and \$11. [in US\$] for Canadian members due to the extra postage cost.

If you want the tape send in your check now payable to: American Vega Association.

In retrospect -

Jim Sheldon, Privateer Chance #1879, was a very active member for 14 years. He died in 1994. Although he is no longer with us in body, his spirit lives on in the wealth of information he contributed to our membership. New Vega skippers are constantly requesting information on various subject and usually Jim's papers are constantly searched for an answer. Your editor misses Jim's many "chat-fests" via telephone, both as an editor and as his friend.



Tightening the rigging

In an article "Mast-step strengthening" - which we reprinted from the Vega Association of Great Britain's newsletter, the author said he was always tightening his rigging. Your editor added a side statement asking "when does always tightening become overtensioning?"

I learned to sail on a 15' "Albacore" sloop - a very unforgiving little boat. The first time I rigged my own Albacore I had to ask another sailor "how tight should I make my shrouds?" "*Only as little as necessary*" was his reply. "*Going upwind the windward shrouds will tighten up and the leeward ones will be limp*". I kept my Albacore for a year and then bought Vega #2225 in 1974.

For over 20 years now I've been hearing about mast compression. Shortly after we formed the Vega One Design Chesapeake Association (VODCA) we heard about John Neal's book "Log of the Mahina" and everyone bought the book. We were all concerned about "the problem". The first thing most of us did was to see if the door to the forward cabin would close. If it didn't close easily, the mast was overtensioned and the stays and shrouds were then loosened.

But over the years some skippers have experienced deck compression. Others have not. How prevalent it is, no one knows. In dealing with the "problem/potential problem" some of our skippers have used various methods to reinforce their decks to give "better mast support" (or to ease their mind). Over twenty years ago a Vega Skipper came aboard my Vega and checked the shrouds with a tension meter and threw up his hands saying "how can you sail with everything so loose?" (To me the shrouds were tight - to him they were loose.) But I did sail and the boat never was at a loss for speed. Twenty three years later the mast is still without any additional support. Its present owner, Bill Etheridge has been sailing #2225 for the past 12 years. He has never reinforced the deck. "So tell me "why does one have to be forever tightening the rigging?"

Sid Rosen

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Editor flies coop

The following is from the Tomahawk Bay yacht Club newsletter edited by our fellow member "Gene" Thompson

Well, what happened was, I got a chance to take my boat north with my friend Don Ferrell as crew (professional yacht delivery guy, 100-ton license, 30 years experience), so we departed Tomahawk Bay at 0600 August 7, crossed the Columbia bar at 1330 the next day, and arrived at the Hole in the Wall (me at the helm!) sat 1600 on the 9th. We preceded to Anacortes and Bellingham, and since then I've touched down at Anacortes (a nice stop for coffee with Clink and Kathy Parker), at various beautiful anchorages in the San Juans, and am now at Winslow/Bainbridge Island, having vacated my live aboard slip at Tomahawk Bay.

So I'm intending to cruise in Puget Sound into the indefinite future. I'm still doing some writing jobs for clients in Portland, so will be in town from time to time, and have agreed to do what I can for the TBYC newsletter for the rest of my term. But [please

note that this issue contains an introduction to newslettering, [patterned after the one Will Gallant wrote last year, and he says it's none too soon to begin recruiting a new talent for next year, in any event. Someone out there, please think about being TBYC's editor for 1997-98!

My move is the logical outcome of some years of preparation and upgrading of "Wren", my 27-foot Albin Vega sloop, and of a long-time desire to build my cruising confidence and take it into saltwater and into broader conditions.

There's no address in Puget Sound as yet, but Commodore Jon Bake has my bee[per number (and it's in the officers list on the back page).

With best regards to all,
Gene Thompson,
Newsletter editor

(continued)

Bluewater Books and Charts

<http://www.bluewaterweb.com>

Brad Bachelor's Traller Sailor Page

<http://ro.com/~bachelor>

BOAT/US



<http://www.boat.us>

World Cruising

<http://www.worldcruising.com>

The Yacht Designer's Website

<http://www.naval-architects.org/>

Time Service Dept - U.S. Naval Observatory

<http://tycho.usno.navy.mil>

Coast Guard Navigation Center

<http://www.navcen.uscg.mil>

Weather Information Superhighway

<http://www.nws.fsu.edu/wxhwy.html>

Interactive Marine Observations

<http://www.nws.fsu.edu/buoy>

National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

A nicely polished new website; much the same fare as Armchair Sailor (we haven't compared prices) with a stated emphasis on cruising guides.

A great gathering place for the "Tow to the H2O" faction. Idea exchanges, access to the online "trailer Sailor Rag," links to associations and manufacturers. All in an informal, easy-going style.

Home page of the Boat Owners Association of the U.S. Click the directory to access a big list of functions, from marine insurance and boat loan quotes to gear swaps, classifieds and news from Washington, D.C.

The clearinghouse for information on the World Cruising-organized events like The Expo '98 Round the World Rally, the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) and the Millennium Odyssey.

Central resources for anyone interested in yacht design, includes contact info for over 600 designers worldwide and "hot lines" to the latest designs and projects.

A fascinating site about time, with practical links to the master clock, GPS information, etc. A must for the onboard navigator.

Information on GPS, DGPS, Loran, Omega, ordering charts, Local Notices to Mariners, boating safety and a lot more.

A link page to all the best weather resources, from local reports to real-time satellite imagery. The webmaster here, David Faciane, is very talented.

Click on a geographic area, then a weather-reporting buoy or station, and get the latest data readouts of conditions on-scene. Clever & useful.

Arriving site for inhabitants of, or those enroute to, the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Florida in the worry-some months of the year.



A CAPE BRETON CRUISE (or, Onward Through the Fog)

We departed on the evening of July 1st, Canada Day. We had struggled all day to get underway. I had been in the lazarette, trying to get the Espar diesel heater going. Sue had been attempting to deal with provisioning, stowage and our two and a half year old daughter concurrently. It blew twenty to thirty knots out of the northwest all day; a bit too lumpy for Arielle, our littlest crew. Finally, as dusk fell, the wind abated and the fog moved in. "If we wait 'till morning, we won't want to sail in this soup...let's go!" we decided.

An hour later we were loping along in ten to twelve knots of breeze, shrouded in fog and darkness in the middle of St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia. The lack of visibility was not much bother; we were on our home waters and, more importantly, we were on the first day of our vacation, a long anticipated cruise to Cape Breton. We decided that we were too exhausted by the day's preparations and anxieties to sail all night. Our goal was to make Southwest Cove at the mouth of the bay - a good starting point for the cruise up the coast the next day. Our compass and our GPS steered us to the bell buoy marking Horse Island and the snug little cove beyond. Once past the buoy we had to sniff our way in to anchor. Fortunately we knew the cove, for the visibility was now nil. By midnight we were swinging on the hook, listening to the distant sounds of Canada Day parties and toasting our country and ourselves with a nightcap.

The next morning the fog lifted enough for Arielle to see the fantasy castle "Chateau Paradis", a landmark in Southwest Cove. She spotted a white horse in the woods behind the castle and, as the fog swirled in again, it didn't take much imagination to find a unicorn in the magic scene. We weighed anchor and slipped out of the cove to set a course taking us across the mouth of the bay and northeasterly up the coast towards Cape Breton. There was no wind, but the diesel was purring contentedly and our daughter was napping. Sue was at the helm and I was punching up waypoints on the GPS. The fog lifted long enough for us to take in the sight of the Peggy's Cove lighthouse, perched on its famous rocky shore. Then the soup closed in and we were alone on the big slow swells.

The windless day wore on and we played games with Arielle: Guess the Buoy - Whistle or Bell and Spot the Fishing Nets. She gave us a running commentary on the state of each buoy. "That one's covered in bird poop, dad!" or "The whistle buoy sounds lonely." We had learned earlier that she required Gravol to combat seasickness in sloppy sea conditions (so do I until I get my sea legs) so she spent a good deal of time napping as a side effect of the medication.

Our Vega ALCYON is equipped with lee cloths on the settee berths and one of these became both her play area and bed. When on deck she wears either a life harness or jacket, the lanyard clipped on to the cockpit padeye or the jackline webbing which runs port and starboard up to the mooring cleat on the bow. As well, the lifelines are covered with netting from bow to stern. Arielle has been sailing since she was six months old so her balance is quite good and she knows the cardinal rule: "one hand for the boat, one hand for yourself".

By late afternoon on our first full day we realized we wouldn't be able to cross the approaches to Halifax harbour before dark. Halifax is a busy port, with much commercial and military shipping and a traffic separation scheme. The thought of crossing the harbour mouth in the dark and fog with only radar reflectors and a VHF for protection did not appeal to us, so we settled on Ketch Harbour, just south of Halifax, as an anchorage for the night.

The guidebooks state that southeasterly swell can be uncomfortable in Ketch Harbour, so we anchored fore and aft, facing southeast towards the mouth of the harbour and enjoyed a comfortable if damp night. The diesel heater seemed beyond redemption, so we fired up a Coleman lantern in the cabin, giving us welcome light and heat. (We always leave lots of ventilation open when using fuel appliances down below, hence we were unable to totally banish the pernicious dampness of the fog, but we were warm.) We enjoyed a hot meal and some hearty red wine as the fog lifted after dark. We turned in, silently optimistic about the next day's weather.

The next day dawned...foggy. We watched a fishing boat put out and disappear in the mists and looked at each other: "It's got to get better, lets go!". Once outside, we raised Halifax Coast Guard Radio to revise our Cape Breton ETA (we had previously filed a sail plan with them) and then contacted Halifax Traffic to inform them of our plan to cross the Traffic Separation Zone. They responded that they had us on radar - what a relief to know our two radar reflectors were doing their job - and advised that there was trawler outbound and a passenger liner inbound. We halted at one of the approach buoys and, sure enough, our trawler roared by. Then we proceeded hastily to one of the middle ground buoys where we were advised to hold. Soon the giant ocean liner appeared in the mists and slid by. It turned out the liner was the ISLAND BREEZE, which would later leave Halifax on a charter to take survivors of the TITANIC to the site of the sinking for a memorial service. We made a dash for the far side of the approaches and thanked Halifax Traffic for their help with our crossing.

We were now further up the shore than we had ever been with ALCYON. Last summer's attempt to sail to Cape Breton had ended at Halifax, when we had been driven in by unseasonable August gales. This time we were determined to press on, regardless of the fog and light winds. We had given up the idea of proceeding round the clock; between childcare and navigating in the fog, we were simply too exhausted by the end of the day to stand watches. We hadn't anticipated motoring the whole way and would require fuel stops in any case. We set our sights, or rather, the GPS on Ship Harbour.

Between Halifax and Ship Harbour is an area of shoals, breakers, sinkers and rocky islets, stretching five or six miles offshore. It looks formidable on the charts but it is positively unsettling to see it from the air, as I have on many occasions while flying to the oil rigs offshore. Accordingly, we fixed a course which would stand us about eight miles offshore, well clear of these dangers. The visibility was down to half a cable (300') and we were outside the inshore fishing grounds, so we felt truly on our own, at sea. A light breeze came up and we made a pretence of making sail, but the swell soon had the rig slatting, so we furled sail and fired up the trusty Volvo once again.

We felt as if we were trapped in some other dimension, some other world where gravity and horizon had been ousted by our log and our inclinometer. We kept popping up above the dodger, scanning for ships, imagining a big black bow cleaving the fog. In reality, all was peaceful, right down to the reassuring throb of the diesel. Eventually, it was time to make our turn to port, towards land, towards Ship Harbour. The log clicked over, the GPS chirped and the buoys hooted and rang through the fog. We had reentered the familiar world.



Ship Harbour is a narrow inlet about five miles long - almost fiordlike - and relatively undeveloped and unspoiled; we spotted a couple of deer along the shore as we entered. We are familiar with the waters, having motored around them with our friends John and Darlene who have a mussel farming operation here. They own a Cape Islander workboat ARIADNE and I am her mechanical benefactor, bestowing tune-ups during infrequent visits and doing trouble shooting over the phone with John. It was our plan to find the ARIADNE and tie up alongside her.

It was almost dark as we made fast to the red and white workboat at the head of Ship Harbour. It was strangely quiet at the Aquaprime Mussel Ranch: our friends were vacationing in Quebec! At the close of day three we began to wonder what sort of odyssey we had embarked on. We should have been at Cape Breton by now; instead we were less than half way there. Muttering dark blasphemies about yacht brokers, we turned in to the now familiar hissing of the Coleman.

The following morning we awoke to the low burble of an outboard as employees of the Ranch readied the runabout for a day of tending the mussel socks out on the water. "Go on up to the house and make yourselves at home. The car's there if you need it too." We didn't need a second invitation. The Avon dingy was unlashd from the foredeck and fully inflated for the first time since leaving home. We loaded on toiletries and jerry cans and made our way ashore. Revived by a hot shower, I left Arielle in the bathtub and Sue at the washing machine and drove off in John and Darlene's car in search of diesel, bread, milk, ice and Smarties candy. Ship Harbour is far enough from Halifax that an institution like Webber's General Store can flourish and after a ten minute drive I was enjoying true one stop shopping. I returned victorious with something for everyone. (The diesel was my prize.)

I spent an hour or so topping off the fuel, checking the engine and troubleshooting a voltage regulator problem with the Dynastart generator. With two independent battery and charging systems, the Vega has a certain amount of redundancy, but I wanted to check the generator out since over or under charging could be a problem with the amount of hours we had been obliged to put on the engine. I cleaned a few contacts and checked the batteries' electrolyte, but everything seemed to be OK.

We got underway again after lunch, this time motoring into a freshening breeze. When we got to the mouth of Ship Harbour an hour later, the 'breeze' was twenty-five knots on the nose and the rain and spray were conspiring to make us truly sodden. Having been recently rendered lubberly by hot showers and washing machines, we did the only thing possible: turned about and headed back to the ARIADNE. That night we dined out (Webber's has a restaurant too!) and finally embraced the true cruiser's credo: "we'll get there when we get there." I slept much better that night.

We woke to day five of the fog. By now we were no longer giving the Coast Guard updated ETA; we simply checked in daily. Our old six channel crystal set VHF was showing its limitations, but was still punching through on channel 16. The Canadian Coast Guard Radio service is superb example of what a government service should be: professional, courteous as well as friendly and helpful. It was reassuring to know that our progress was being tracked and, as we later discovered, our friends awaiting us on Cape Breton were also able to contact CCG Halifax to determine that we were delayed but alright.

This time we made good our escape from Ship Harbour, and pointed our bow northeast. We were again tantalized by light breezes, prompting us to try motorsailing for a while. The breeze shifted and died and we furled sail. I figured we might have saved a litre or two of diesel, so the exercise was deemed worthwhile. One benefit of running the diesel all day was that the house battery was well charged and we could squander power on the stereo, tiller pilot and so forth. We were in the cruising rhythm now and both Arielle and I had our sea legs (Sue always has hers). Aside from the shore connection through our VHF radio and the cellular phone (which received only sporadically) we felt on our own and self-sufficient. We no longer begrudged our nightly anchorage; we had accepted it as part of the passage. We laughed at our original estimate of forty-eight hours for the trip. Now the question was: where would we be tonight?

As darkness gathered at the close of the fifth day we were anchored in the lee of Liscomb Island. We had executed some daring GPS and depth sounder navigation to take us into Little Liscomb via a narrow channel between the island and some drying ledges. The foghorn on Liscomb Light sounded as if it was in my back pocket, but we never even saw the lighthouse as we ghosted in. As soon as we were through the channel, the fog lifted. We steered to the government wharf in search of diesel but we couldn't find a soul around. Arielle welcomed the opportunity to crawl around the lobster traps piled on the dock and began collecting the small elastics used for banding the lobsters' claws. She was content, but the strong odour of the fishing gear soon had us seeking a fresher anchorage up by the island.

We weighed anchor early on day six. We entertained thoughts that today we might reach Cape Breton before dark. The visibility had improved to a mile or better. By noon the sun was actually shining weakly through the low cloud cover and we unfurled the sails for the first real sailing since our first night out. Our spirits soared. As we approached the Strait of Canso, which divides Cape Breton island from the Nova Scotian mainland, we cooked and ate a hot meal and celebrated. We sailed on past Isle Madame and spied the promised shores at last. Suddenly, the cell phone rang: our friendly Coast Guard was checking in and we were finally able to close our sail plan.

It was dark as we tied up at the lock at St. Peter's, the entrance to the Bras d'Or lakes. It was too late to lock through that evening - we would wait for morning. Fittingly, the heavens opened and the rain began. We called our friends Carl and Cathy and they came to the rescue in their truck, whisking us away to hot baths, warm hospitality and cold drinks. We slept in a bed instead of a berth and it felt damn fine.

The next day, the first day at our cruise destination, was warm and sunny. We drove back to the boat where we split the crew: the girls opted for the beach and I pressed Carl into helping me lock through and sail ALCYON to the Dundee Marina, adjacent to his house. The lock at St. Peter's is a relic from the early days of this century and the only tidal lock in Canada. It admitted us to the largest salt water lakes in North America, a place of hundreds of coves, islands and pure, unabashed gunkholing. We spent the next five hours playing the breeze, which finally died when we were about a mile from our destination. The faithful Volvo rumbled to life once more. We picked up a mooring across from the marina, establishing our base of operations for the next couple of days. We rejoined the girls and went for a feed of clams that couldn't be beat. Then we took in a free open air concert in nearby Port Hawkesbury. We had arrived, at last. I was reminded of my sister-in-law's explanation of why people go sailing: "Because it feels so good when you stop!"



We spent two more days enjoying better weather at Dundee. When we determined to move on to Baddeck, the rain started. What began as drizzle and ten to fifteen knots became thirty knots of drenching cold rain by the time we were galloping downwind towards the bascule bridge at Grand Narrows. We had to negotiate this passage to St. Andrew's Channel since there was no way we wanted to beat back into that wind. We radioed the bridge keeper and he assured us he would have the span open for us. Committed, we screamed through the narrow cut with barely enough time to wave our thanks. Once in St. Andrew's Channel, the weather moderated and we made a fast passage to Baddeck, damp through but no worse for wear. By supper time we had picked up a mooring and were sufficiently recovered to venture ashore for a fine meal at the Telegraph House.

Baddeck is a charming town with a strong yachting component. It was the summer retreat of Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, and the Grosvenors of National Geographic fame. These families helped establish Baddeck as a northern annex of the Cruising Club of America and the harbour has a large contingent of fine Yankee yachts to this day. We spent the next day strolling around town taking in the galleries and shops before returning to ALCYON for a gourmet pepper steak washed down with good wine. A row ashore to the Bras d'Or Yacht Club for a coffee and nightcap (Arielle charmed the regulars) rounded off the day. This was what cruising was supposed to be!

The next day was blustery but clear and we slipped the mooring and set sail for Grand Narrows once again. This time our destination was East Bay to visit friends Fred and Arlie. They lived next to a lagoon which was almost land locked behind a barachois or gravel bar. Entering the lagoon through a narrow cut in the barachois was akin to sailing into an atoll through a barrier reef. Fred assured me that he had been in the water and there was at least five and a half feet depth in the cut. When we arrived we found the cut marked by three private buoys and a lot narrower than we expected - no more than twenty feet wide! There was a breeze of about fifteen knots on our starboard quarter as we romped towards the cut... we watched the depth sounder go from eight fathoms to one fathom and back to five fathoms in the space of five boat lengths. Fred was standing on the barachois, grinning ear to ear as we stormed by. "You're nuts," he bellowed. Very reassuring.

Inside the barachois was calm and deep; we could have nudged the bow up against the bank and still had water under the keel. We anchored and rowed in to bring Fred aboard for some cold, sudsy hospitality. We later went ashore and enjoyed Fred and Arlie's hospitality, which was more in the black rum and BBQ flavour. We also managed an obligatory trip to Rita MacNeil's Teahouse and picked up a few souvenirs. Arielle adopted Fred and the two of them disappeared out by the pheasant pen, later to be sighted bouncing around on the all terrain vehicle and the ride-on lawnmower. We all turned in early and slept soundly on solid ground.

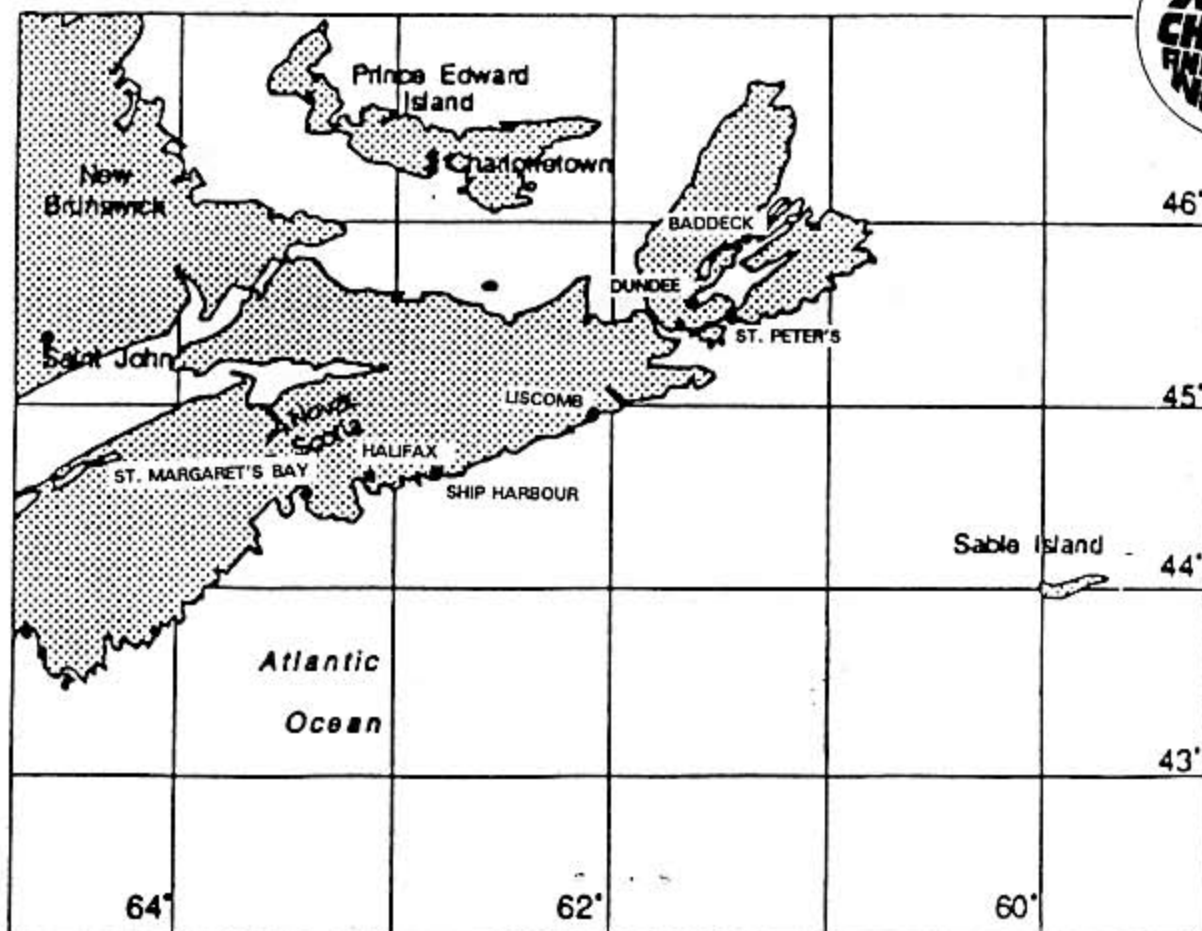
We left our fantastic lagoon the next morning and sailed for Dundee once again. This was our best sail of the trip: a twenty five mile close reach cross lake from East Bay to West Bay in sunny force four conditions. We rejoined Carl at Dundee; he was a temporary bachelor while his wife was visiting family in Ontario. We felt obliged to take him under our wing and arranged for a big lobster boil that night. Sated, we slept ashore yet another night.

The time had come to decide our next move. My leave was running out and a hurricane was loitering off Cape Hatteras down south. We opted to leave ALCYON on a mooring at Dundee Marina and catch a ride back to Halifax with Sue's brother. We would return in two weeks and bring the boat home over a long weekend. Carl offered to keep an eye on her.

When we returned to Dundee, our Vega was waiting faithfully. We fuelled up and departed quickly as we had to make the lock at St. Peter before it closed for the night. We were the last boat to lock through and we tied up for the night on the far end of the canal. While in the lock, we met Sue's boss Ray and his wife Charlene and spent a serendipitous evening in St. Peter's with them. The next morning we awoke to the sight and sound of over sixty power boats locking through on a fun-run treasure hunt for charity. In the wake of this flotilla we motored out across the Strait of Canso, our course homebound. The wind filled in and the sun gently warmed us. Sue and I revelled in the set of the sails, the peace of the ocean. (Arielle was revelling in her sleep-over at the cousins' house this time around.)

This time there was no fog and the wind was favourable, if light. The diesel was only pressed into motorsailing service when our speed fell below four knots - after all, we were on a tight schedule. We arranged watches for the night and, just before I turned in for my first nap, our old nemesis the fog rolled in. I fell into a sleep with the blackest of dreams. When Sue woke me at midnight a magnificent transformation was taking place: the fog was breaking and lifting. Before our eyes a corridor of brilliant stars on an inky black sky opened up. A lone fishing boat winked its running lights at us, a couple of miles off. With a thermos of hot coffee at my side, I snuggled under the dodger, sheltered from the clear, cold night. By dawn, we were off Ship Harbour, two thirds of the way home. We rollicked along all day and were, by late afternoon, off Peggy's Cove at the entrance to St. Margaret's Bay, our home waters. We toasted our return and ate a hot meal underway. As evening fell the breeze died and the faithful Volvo took us the last couple of miles home. When ALCYON was tied once more to her own mooring, thirty-four hours out of St. Peter's, she had logged over four hundred miles beneath her keel, more than half of them in the fog.

Jim Legere and Sue Whitehouse, along with daughter Arielle, sail the 1973 Albin Vega ALCYON (#2002) from Indian Point on St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia. They hope to take ALCYON bluewater sailing one day.



Advance notice:
Vega International Friendship Regatta



17th International Friendly Regatta

(13th - 19th July 1998)

The Vega One Design Association has invited the Vega Association of Great Britain to be the hosts for the 17th International Friendly Regatta 1998.

VAGB is honored to be the host for the 17th IFR which will start on the River Medway. We cordially extend this Invitation to all members of VAGB and International Vega Clubs. We hope to be able to welcome you to our shores and extend the hand of friendship and hospitality to you all.

Please return this form if you think you would like to come. This is a preliminary form only and will be used to estimate possible numbers. **IT IS NOT BINDING.**

I would like to attend the 17th IFR YES or NO

I will bring my Vega YES or NO

Skipper's Name: _____

Vega Name: _____

Sail Number: V _____

No. of crew: _____ No. of children: _____ Country: _____

I would like VAGB to arrange Hotel accommodation YES or NO

I would like to be put on another Vega YES or NO

I would like to race on another Vega YES or NO

I am bringing a Tent YES or NO

I am bringing a Caravan YES or NO

The IFR will start on The Medway and probably finish in London at Limehouse Dock. A final and BINDING FORM will be sent out early in 1998 and it is possible that the proposed agenda could change. This is a Statement of Interest only.

Please return this form to:
Diana Webb
76 Burdon Lane
Cheam
Surrey SM2 7BZ
Tel. 0181 642 9521

By the 30th November 1997 PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

* You don't need your boat to attend - you can crew aboard an attending Vega