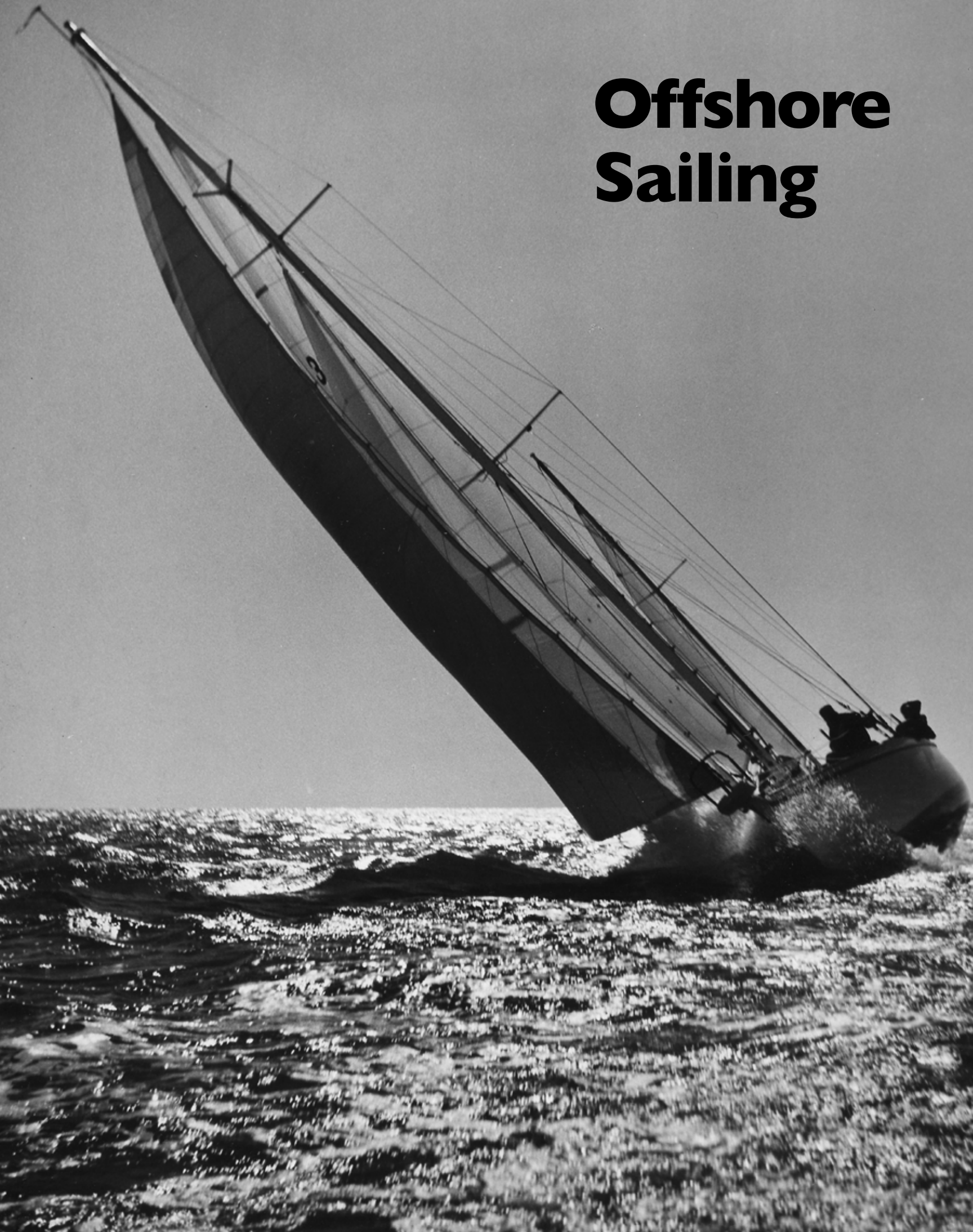


Offshore Sailing



Offshore Sailing

... Setting a world standard ...



Havana Yacht Club Commodore Raphael Posso, as sketched by Franklin David Hewitt in his book.

SPYC ARCHIVE

The first generation of SPYC offshore racing sailors, unlike their counterparts from Tampa, New Orleans, and the Eastern United States, did not possess fine yachts; to the contrary men such as Paul Reese, Gidge Gandy, Lew McMasters and Wally Bishop, and those who dared to sail with them, went offshore in small, gaff-rigged boats that resembled coastal fishing vessels. A few decades after the first Havana Race, St. Petersburg Yacht Club sailors were setting a world standard for offshore sailing yachts with innovative designs coming from the drawing boards of SPYC members such as Charley Morgan and Ted Irwin.

The Havana Race

In 1928, Paul Reese cruised his new yawl *Pieces of Eight* to Havana and thoroughly enjoyed the trip. A.B. "Babe" Fogarty was one of his crew. The trip gave Babe, born on Terra Ceia Island and son of a schooner captain lost at sea when Babe was a small child, a chance to sail in his father's wake to Havana.

At Reese's urging, George S. "Gidge" Gandy Jr. had a similarly enjoyable experience a year later on his 36-foot ketch *Cynosure*. "Gidge" Gandy was then managing the 1,200-seat LaPlaza Theatre at Central Avenue and Fifth Street which "Dad" Gandy had built in 1913 — an act of faith in a very small town.

Gidge was active in the Chamber of Commerce and a tenacious promoter. He envisioned a yacht race from St. Petersburg to Havana as a promotional event, which St. Petersburg, in the second year of a real estate "bust," sorely needed. He recruited the St. Petersburg Yacht Club and, through Commodore Rafael Posso, the Havana Yacht Club, to conduct the event. He solicited a few local yachtsmen with yachts capable of the trip and commenced a letter-writing campaign directed to wealthy yachtsmen on the East and Gulf coasts. If he did not get a flat rejection, he wrote back again.

The first five boats to answer the call were *Sunshine* from Mobile, *Windjammer* from Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans, *Haligonian* from Tampa and *Wawatam* and *Marelen II* from St. Petersburg. Six more yachts joined the chase and a fleet of 11 boats hit the starting



Lew McMasters' Marelen II at the start of the 1931 Havana Race. SPYC ARCHIVE



The Havana Race logo with the new SPYC burgee designed by Gidge Gandy.

SPYC ARCHIVE



Galocamm, a 73-foot staysail schooner owned by Alfonso Gomez Mena, Havana Yacht Club, at the start of the 1937 race. R.K.WILLIAMS / SPYC ARCHIVE

line on March 30, 1930, for that historic first race.

There were two classes: Class A for boats 50 to 85 feet overall and Class B for boats less than 50 feet. There was no restriction on sails and handicap was a simple 30 minutes per foot. *Haligonian*, owned by Houston Wall of Tampa, finished in 41 hours, 42 minutes, a record that would stand until 1935. (The longest race on record was 1936, when the lead yacht took five days and six hours to finish; slower craft were towed in a week after the start.)

The race began off the St. Petersburg Municipal Pier. The pier marked one end of the line, the outer end was usually marked by a Coast Guard cutter, which would follow the fleet with the race committee on board. A U.S. Navy cruiser, the *Trenton*, served on one occasion; her wind shadow in the starting area can only be imagined.

The Havana Race was front-page news, and the



Haligonian, winner of first Havana Race, owned by Houston Wall of Tampa.

R.K.WILLIAMS / SPYC ARCHIVE

Offshore Sailing



A pre-Havana Race party at the SPYC dock in 1933. SPYC ARCHIVE



Logo for the sailing federation of Cuba. SPYC ARCHIVE

race occurred at the height of the tourist season.

As described by Franklin David Hewitt, a participant in two of the pre-war races, in his book *The Habana Race*, the old "Million Dollar" Municipal Pier would be jammed with spectators. Then, as now, most were ignorant of the sport but were thrilled by rushing boats, maneuvering in a good breeze near the pier. They would frequently break into applause when a yacht would race up to the pier and tack with sails snapping, blocks whirring and the crew jumping around.

These were simpler and possibly happier times. But change was in the wind. By 1936, the simple 30-minutes-per-foot handicap had given way to a more complex and sophisticated formula: Length overall plus the square root of the measured sail area

divided by two. Seven decades later, this rule is amusing for its simplicity when compared to the ever-more complex attempts to fairly rate sailing yachts.

The St. Petersburg-Havana race offered participants a challenging 284-mile course on three differing bodies of water. The first leg was 17 miles of tricky Tampa Bay sailing with currents and shoal water to contend with. Out in the Gulf, unless the wind was on the nose, it was 180 nautical miles south to the Gulf Stream via a passage between Rebecca Shoals Light and, to the west, the Dry Tortugas.

In those days before electronic navigation, going aground in the Florida Keys or on the coast of Cuba was a substantial risk. The final leg, 90 miles south across the east-flowing Gulf Stream, presented the fleets with everything from a rail-down reach in an

easterly trade wind with the loom of Havana's lights drawing you in from 30 miles out, to 30 hours of squalls, knockdowns, low visibility and uncertainty about their position relative to Havana and the rest of the hard north coast of Cuba.

The finish line was under the ramparts of Morro Castle — a mind-bending sight on a moonlit night after a violent Gulf Stream crossing. In the early years the fleet anchored off the old waterfront buildings. Skippers then hailed the bum boat *Matanzas* for a short trip to shore — and a wild taxi ride to a hotel or the yacht club. Many wives and sweethearts cruised down on the steamship *Cuba* each year, much to the delight — or chagrin — of the sailors. In the later years, the fleet moored stern-to at the International Yacht Club wharf and the ladies and other Havana enthusiasts arrived by air from Key West or Tampa.

Hewitt describes the hospitality in *Habana*: "From the complimentary bottle of rum after crossing the finish line to the awards banquet at the Havana Yacht Club, a fabulous time was experienced by all skippers and crew members. In addition to friendly, impeccable Commodore Posso, a number of Cuban yachtsmen made the hospitality memorable. Manuel Rasco Jr.,



In 1935, Vadim Makaroff's wishbone ketch *Vamarie* was first to Havana and first overall. *Vamarie* had won the inaugural Miami-Nassau Race in 1934. HELEN GANDY O'BRIEN COLLECTION



The start of the 1936 race off the Million-Dollar Pier drew a large crowd of spectators. The race was a popular event among locals and winter visitors.

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

Offshore Sailing



John Sausy gives Aloha's foremast a coat of varnish before the 1938 Havana Race.
SPYC ARCHIVE



Babe, a 30-foot sloop owned by Hugh Matheson of Miami, was first overall in 1936 and '37. In 1937, she averaged 6.8 knots for the 294-mile course. Matheson previously owned the 113-foot schooner Azara.
SPYC ARCHIVE



Aloha, chartered by Wally Bishop, was first in the schooner class in 1938. SPYC ARCHIVE

Mario Bustamante and Clemente Inclan were always on hand. The president of Cuba, Gen. Gerardo Machado, presented the huge silver cup for the first in Class A in 1930."

The St. Petersburg-Havana race quickly gained stature and popularity among serious yachtsmen. The 1935 race drew a fleet of 24 yachts. The overall winner was Vadim Makaroff's 72-foot staysail ketch *Vamarie*. Her career wins included the prestigious Miami-Nassau race, the Newport to Bermuda race and a trans-Atlantic race. Wally Bishop, a syndicated newspaper cartoonist as well as an enthusiastic yachtsman, had sailed in the 1931 race in his 25-foot yawl, *Little Dipper*. In 1938, he chartered a sweet sailing 50-foot schooner, *Aloha*. He won the schooner division. In 1940, Bishop's fellow SPYC member, Ted Leonard, won the same division in *Admate*. By 1941, World War II was raging in Europe and in the Atlantic. That, and the lingering Depression in the U.S. reduced the Havana Race fleet to eight vessels. There were no more races until 1946,

when Ed Spence, then a Clearwater resident but later an SPYC member, won the first post-war race in his 40-foot cutter, *Den-E-Von*.

Crew members on *Den-E-Von* included three past commodores of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club: "Babe" Fogarty, Lew McMasters and Paul V. "Skip" Reese as well as SPYC junior Fish Boat sailors Wayne Colony and Lew McMasters Jr. Talk about thrills and excitement. The boat was hurriedly outfitted with borrowed sails and an old binnacle from Lew McMasters' attic three days before the race. The numbers floated off the compass as the cutter was rounding Southwest Pass No. 1 off Egmont Key. The remainder of the race they homed in on Cuban radio stations, dead-reckoning into Havana Harbor with a handheld bearing compass, to win it all with a corrected time of 32 hours, 46 minutes, 25 seconds. *Den-E-Von* followed up in 1947 with a first in Class B, this time under the ownership of W.M. Denny.

Four years later in 1951, Class B honors went to

George Mellen on *Anchorite*. The 1951 Havana Race was memorable because of a non-entry: Le "Red" Hederman, his 43-foot schooner *Tropicair* and his all-girl crew. *Tropicair* was scratched when racing officials (undoubtedly all male) said she failed to file a "competent crew list." But sail she did, just-for-fun, albeit unofficially. The night before the start of the race, Bud Caldwell, among others, removed one of "those" dispensing machines from the wall in the men's room of the Chatterbox restaurant across the street from the yacht club and nailed it to the bulkhead of *Tropicair*. Hederman and the girls took the kidding in stride and, in spite of a false alarm by the Cuban coast guard that the *Tropicair* had been lost at sea, she not only finished the race, but also beat some "official" entries in the process.

Overshadowing the 1952 race was political and military upheaval on the island of Cuba. Fulgencio Batista was in the process of overthrowing Presidente Carlos Príos Socarras. Stray bullets struck the sails and rigging of at least one arriving yacht. The post-race party went on despite the U.S. Coast Guard's urging all the racers and their guests to immediately depart Havana.

In 1953, W.W. "Doc" Jennings on *Fortuna* led a 1-2-3 SPYC sweep of Class B, with Ed Spence on *Marbara* and Francis Wick on *Wicked Witch* finishing second and third, respectively. During this race the tough little yawl *Seagoer* and her Tampa crew were becalmed near a fishing vessel that was reeling in snapper. Somehow, the *Seagoer* crew obtained tackle and ice from the fishing boat. They motored into Key West and sold their load of snapper. As crew member Ben "Blue" Robinson told the story, they purchased airline tickets from Key West to Havana and were sitting at the bar of the International Yacht Club when John Hertz Jr., owner of the fabled yacht *Ticonderoga*, stepped ashore. For a while they had him convinced that *Seagoer* had gone west of Dry Tortugas, rode a squall line into Havana, and had been racked so badly that she was on marine ways for repairs.

Doc Jennings followed his 1953 class win with a near tragedy at the start of the 1954 Havana Race. Jennings' *Fortuna* lost her mast off Bahama Shores when a turnbuckle holding the bobstay on the bowsprit broke. Crewman Dick Misener was injured in the incident, but was out of the hospital inside of a week. Fred Guggenheimer, on one of his many yachts to be named *Mogu* for his wife, Molly, was first to finish in 1955 and first in Class A in 1956.

Race winners and losers are soon forgotten but



Den-E-Von, owned by Ed Spence, overall winner in 1946's Havana Race. SPYC ARCHIVE



Dick Jones Sr. at the helm of Irondequoit, 1936, watched by son Dick Jones Jr., a future SPYC commodore. RICHARD JONES JR. COLLECTION / SPYC ARCHIVE

Offshore Sailing

memories linger on. Veterans of the Havana races in the late '40s still argue about the location and perpetrators of the "Big Crash." Best recollections identified the hotel as either the Sevilla Biltmore or the Hotel Nacional and the perpetrator as Sam Bond or at least "one of the Bonds." All agree, however, that on the night in question a voice called out, "Get ready for the crash," moments before a four-drawer dresser took a swan dive from the eighth-floor balcony into the courtyard below. Observers gave the dive a perfect "10."

John Wilhelm unwittingly found himself in hot water for his colorful live account of the action in one Havana Race. Broadcasting back to radio station WSUN on the Municipal Pier in St. Petersburg, he allowed as to how, "if the wind holds we'll soon be down on Rebecca, we'll ease the sheets and really drive her home." The station was flooded with calls from irate landlubbers, their suspicions confirmed about the morality, or lack thereof, of sailors.

It was the same Johnny Wilhelm who invited a crowd of sailors to his funeral home following a Havana Race party at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. When Pepe, a young sailor from Havana, passed out in the wee hours of the morning, his considerate friends laid him to rest in an unoccupied casket, then waited to observe his return to consciousness in his unusual surroundings. They were not disappointed.

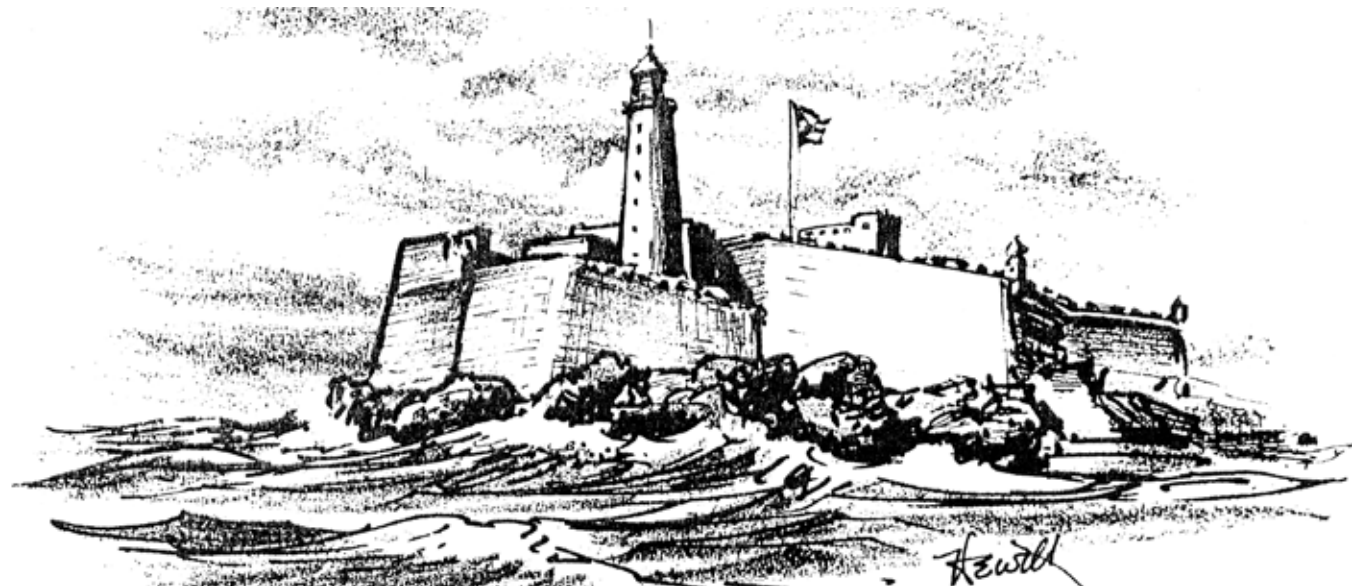
The fun-loving Cuban sailors frequently created their own entertainment. At more than one Havana Race party they'd borrow pots and pans from the SPYC kitchen, start up their own band and lead an impromptu conga line throughout the club. When the club closed at 2 or 3 in the morning, the party merely moved across Bayshore Drive to the docks.



The 29-boat fleet makes a spinnaker start of the 1957 Havana Race. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

Morro Castle: a welcome sight at the race's finish.

SKETCH BY FRANKLIN
DAVID HEWITT IN HIS
BOOK / SPYC ARCHIVE



Two days before the scheduled start of the 1958 Havana Race, Fidel Castro's revolution induced a course change: turn left on entering the Gulf Stream, leave all reefs to port and finish at Miami, a 396-mile course. Five yachts withdrew leaving 32 starters. Fred Guggenheimer's 43-foot yawl *Mogu* won Class B.

In 1959, the race returned to Havana despite the machine gun-wielding revolutionary soldiers patrolling the streets. This race produced another fishing story. George Dewar's *Stampede* at that time was a 31-foot mahogany sloop. When *Stampede* became becalmed, Dewar threw a line into a run of kingfish. And why not, he figured, they were out of contention anyway. Courtney Ross finally persuaded him to stop fishing and start sailing. In due time, they hit the

finish line at the entrance to Havana Harbor only to discover they missed first-in-class by a few seconds.

Frequently, the return trip from Havana was as memorable as the race itself. The weather in March was highly unpredictable, ranging from a fierce northwesterly on the nose one year, to a gentle southeasterly the next. Following the 1959 race aboard George Pearson's *Celia II*, Bud Caldwell recalled hailing passing shrimp boats and trading a bottle of rum for a bucket full of shrimp and later picking conch off the Tortuga flats like they were candy. And nothing, nothing tastes better than marinated conch pan fried. And nothing, nothing tastes worse than the next morning's eggs cooked in the same conch grease.

St. Petersburg Times outdoors writer Red Marston

Offshore Sailing



A Tropicana Night Club souvenir from Havana, like many brought home by returning participants in the race.

TOM ELLIS COLLECTION / SPYC ARCHIVE

sailed his inaugural, and only, Havana Race aboard Doc Jennings' *Fortuna* in 1959. The crew also included Dick Misener, Carl McEvoy, Magnus Pedersen, Pokey Wheeler, Art Anderssen and Dick Moore. Marston signed on as cook, to the amazement, and amusement, of his wife, Peggy, and the dismay of the crew. He did little to dispel their misgivings when the alcohol stove exploded on the first try to light it.

Marston really felt like excess baggage when he discovered weight-conscious Jennings had bunks only for the change of watch. He slept on the floorboards under a table, a life jacket for a pillow. But sleep was hard to come by because of an eerie, low, irregular, strumming sound, later discovered to be clothing in Pokey Wheeler's locker, rocking with the motion of the boat, and brushing across the strings of his guitar. Shortly after clearing Tampa Bay, the wood-hulled *Fortuna* sprang a leak and Marston, along with the other off-duty watchstanders, was assigned bailing duty. They manned the suction-type pump from Tampa Bay to Havana Harbor.

Asked how he felt afterward, Marston replied: "As though I've pumped the whole Gulf Stream through the bottom of *Fortuna*."

The 1959 race attracted a record fleet of 37 yachts. At the awards banquet in Havana, Gidge Gandy was presented a medal by a federation of Cuban yacht clubs for having initiated the St. Petersburg to Ha-

vana Race. The *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, in a March 27, 1959, article about Gidge stated: "In three decades no one event based here has brought so much wide publicity, or so touched the spectator interest of locals and visitors alike."

Sadly, this was the last St. Petersburg-Havana Race of the 20th century as Castro's goals and methods became apparent and history gave us the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion by U.S.-sponsored counter-revolutionaries, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the U.S. trade embargo that has continued to this day.

In 1993, SPYC announced a new race to Cuba. The event for 20 invited yachts would require compliance with the embargo. A goal of the organizers was quiet diplomacy directed at the Cuban people. Upon learning of the proposed event, the U.S. Cuban-American community protested and politicians rushed to get involved, despite the fact that other athletic events between the two nations were taking place.

The SPYC board of directors voted unanimously to postpone the event. In the late 1990s, "flotillas" sailed from east and west coast Florida ports to Cuban ports. Some of these events included yacht races; however, no substitute for the St. Petersburg-Havana Race has been established to date.

Recent geo-political events suggest that resumption of this great race may be possible, and that remains a major goal of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.



A cartoon by St. Petersburg Times cartoonist Dick Bothwell pokes fun at the preparations leading up to a 1950s race.

SPYC ARCHIVE



W.W. "Doc" Jennings at the helm of *Mare Nostrum* in 1958. Jennings' *Fortuna* won Class B in the 1953 Havana Race. Jennings inspired a generation of young sailors.

WALLACE RIFLEY COLLECTION

Southern Ocean Racing Conference (SORC)

In 1940, SPYC's Lew L. McMasters and Arthur Bosworth of the Miami Yacht Club met with yachtsmen from both coasts of Florida and organized a series of four races. A point system was worked out for the 184-mile Miami-Nassau Race, the 284-mile St. Petersburg-Havana Race, the 30-mile triangular Lipton Cup Race off Miami Beach, and a 90-mile race from Havana to Key West. The point system was based on the number of yachts and a percentage based on each race's distance. Handicapping the diverse yachts was under the Cruising Club of America rule. The Southern Ocean Racing Circuit, often dubbed "The Circuit," was born. Bosworth was elected chairman and served until McMasters succeeded him in 1948. McMasters was SORC chairman for 1962-1963 and on his death was succeeded by SPYC's Roland Becker who served through '64. In 1965, SPYC and the other five SORC clubs, Miami Yacht Club, Coral Reef YC, Biscayne Bay YC, Lauderdale YC and the Nassau YC, incorporated SORC as the Southern Ocean Racing Conference Inc. SPYC's Tom Downs served as chairman from 1971 through '78. Thereafter, until the demise of the "Old SORC" in the late 1980s, the chairmanship was rotated on two-year terms.

The first series in 1941 ended in a tie between Dudley Sharp's *Gulf Stream* and William LaBrot's *Stormy Weather*. World War II put the SORC on hold until 1947, when a day race out of Nassau, the Nassau Cup Race, was added. In 1948, the Fort Lauderdale-Cat Cay Race was added but was dropped after three years for logistical problems. A race from Fort Lauderdale to Miami was included in 1955. It was a one-time event.

In 1960, a Miami-St. Petersburg race was substituted for the Havana Race; it was not good. The course ran against the Gulf Stream for 200 miles and bucked northerly head winds up the Gulf to St. Petersburg. Not fun for man nor boat. To solve the problem, Lew McMasters called an old sailing buddy, Harlow Davock, a past commodore of the Lauderdale Yacht Club, who agreed to help. For 1961, the SORC series was re-scheduled to start at St. Petersburg with a 403-mile race to Fort Lauderdale, thereafter to finish the series with the Nassau Cup Race. The decision almost backfired. *Ticonderoga* arrived at the Lauderdale finish line before the race committee. The Lauderdale Yacht Club was closed on Monday, as was its custom. Again Dav-



Paper Tiger roars out of Tampa Bay to win 1961's SORC; she repeated in 1962.

DAN HIGHTOWER / ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE



Paper Tiger crew: Don Mason, Hank DeMaesschalck, Jack Powell, Frank Bonsey, Ted Tolson (dark shirt), Charley Morgan, Francis Seavy, Andy Hol-loway Jr.

DAN HIGHTOWER / ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

ock came to the rescue, opening the club and rustling up sandwiches and drinks for the sailors.

Despite the inauspicious beginning, the format worked well, and in 1962 a race starting in St. Petersburg, rounding Boca Grande marker No. 2 and finishing at Venice was added as the first race of the circuit. That was its essential form for the next 25 years: two west coast races out of St. Petersburg starting in

Offshore Sailing



Dick Dungan's Sabre won the 1964 St. Petersburg-Fort Lauderdale Race and the 1964 Miami-Nassau Race. ROLAND ROSE / BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF TOURISM



Bill Hough's Celerity II wins the 1972 Fort Lauderdale race with Fred Deuel and Rich Doyle aboard. Her corrected-time record lasted 10 years. WILLIAM R. HOUGH COLLECTION



Jack Powell achieved a record-breaking third SORC win aboard Salty Tiger in 1969. Powell raced her at Cowes Week (UK) and then the Sydney (Australia)-Hobart (Tasmania) Race. SPYC ARCHIVE

late January, a move to the east coast via the St. Petersburg to Lauderdale race, two overnight races and two day races on the east coast, with the concluding event the Nassau Cup Race around March 1. Yachts from the Pacific Coast and every major yachting center in the North America, together with yachts from Australia, Bermuda, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Scandinavia, the Caribbean and South America came to St. Petersburg to outfit, practice and compete. Club members having slips at the main dock had to vacate for weeks to accommodate 90 or more visiting ocean racers rafted five deep. America's Cup skippers and Olympic sailing champions like Ted Hood, Ted Turner, Dennis Conner and Lowell North returned yearly to the SORC, as did large, fast and elegant yachts such as Bill Snaith's *Figaro*, Huey Long's *Ondine*, Al Van Metre's *Running Tide* and Jim Kilroy's *Kialoa*.

In 1961, Jack Powell's *Paper Tiger*, designed by Charley Morgan and navigated by Ted Tolson, was the first SPYC yacht to win the SORC. *Paper Tiger* made it back-to-back victories in 1962. A compatriot, when advised by Morgan that the boat was built of steel, fiberglass and wood, commented; "I guess that means it will rust, shatter and rot." It did none of the above. Morgan credits John T. Hayward, a physicist

and sailing friend who suggested the application of certain laws of physics to yacht design, and Frank Bonsey, an architect and another sailing friend, who assisted with complex calculations, with having been significant contributors to *Paper Tiger's* design. Both were SPYC members. The engineering concepts incorporated into *Paper Tiger* caused a quantum change in the sailing yacht industry and led to Pinellas County becoming a yacht-building center. In 1969, Jack Powell and Wally Frank teamed up on a Derecktor-designed and built aluminum sloop, *Salty Tiger*, to win the SORC, a record-tying third win for Powell and his club.

Overall race wins by SPYC members on the post-World War II circuit included: Ed Spence, 1946 Havana Race in *Den-E-Von*; Fred Gugenheimer, 1957 Lipton Cup in *Mogu*; Jack Powell, 1961 and 1962 Miami-Nassau and 1962 Lipton Cup, in *Paper Tiger*; Dick Dungan, 1964 St. Petersburg-Fort Lauderdale Race and 1964 Miami-Nassau Race in his Morgan 38 sloop, *Sabre*; Homer Denius, 1965 Venice Race in his Morgan yawl, *Maradea*, and the 1968 Nassau Cup in his big Morgan sloop, *Rage*; Jack Eckerd, 1967 Nassau Governor's Cup, 1968 Ocean Triangle and the 1971 Lipton Cup in his Morgan yawl, *Panacea*; George Dewar, Roland Becker and Lew McMasters Jr., 1969

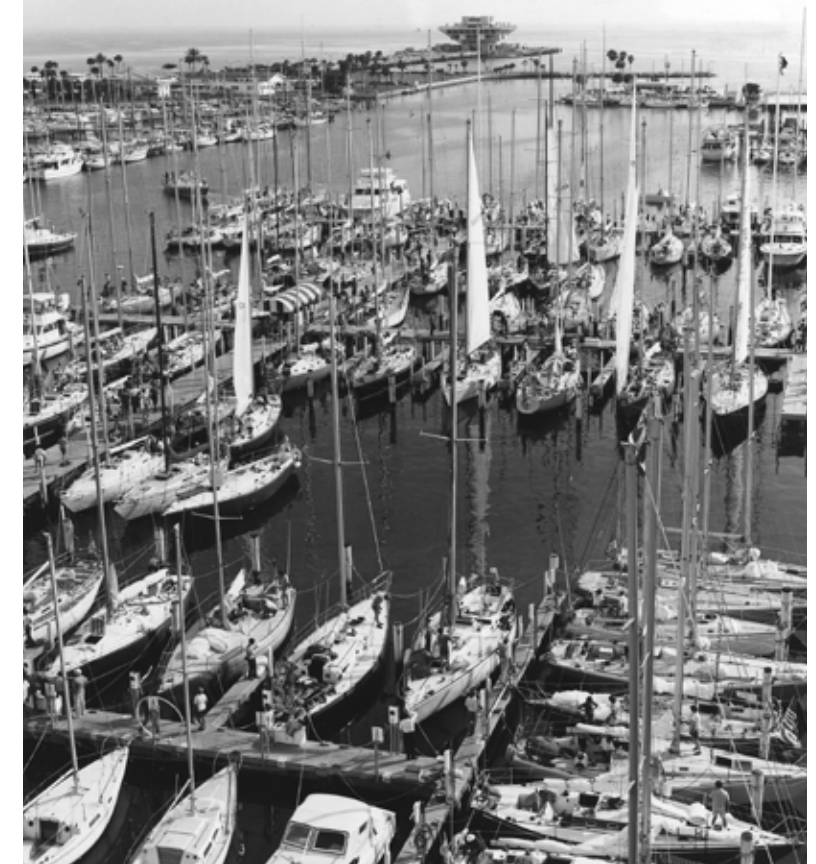
Lipton Cup in their Mercer 44 sloop, *Stampede*; Bill Hough, 1972 St. Petersburg-Fort Lauderdale Race (Corrected time record, 98-boat fleet) in his Cal 33, *Celerity II*; and Ted Irwin, 1983 Miami-Nassau Race and 1984 Boca Grande Race in his Irwin 41, *Razzle Dazzle*. Three of *Celerity II's* crew, Hough, Fred Deuel and Rich Doyle, were destined for SPYC flag rank.

In 1971, the circuit switched from the Cruising Club of America Rule to the International Offshore Rule (IOR), in recognition that the sport had become truly international. The change altered the character of the participating yachts. The IOR favored lighter, deeper draft boats carrying less ballast for stability and larger crews ("rail meat") to sit on the weather rail and provide needed stability. IOR boats were generally not structurally as sound as the CCA boats and, except for the largest of them, less suited for cruising or other family use. In 1976, the fleet was divided into Division 1 for older boats and Division 2 for the latest IOR boats, but all the glory went to Division 2. Despite attempts at age allowances for older boats, modifications to the IOR Rule, a 1981 rating controversy that resulted in disqualification of the putative winner, and the progressive displacement of owners from the helm to the weather rail (with their checkbooks in waterproof covers), participation in the SORC remained at a high level through 1985.

Dissatisfaction with the IOR in 1986 led to the introduction of a new rule, the International Measurement System, another import from Europe that did not gain the trust of U.S. sailors. Within four years, the Old SORC was dead. U.S. "Big Boat" sailors flocked to level racing, the near equivalent of one-design sailing on a grander scale. These level racing events traded nights at sea for shore-side entertainment, except for an occasional overnight race. The 1992 St. Petersburg to Fort Lauderdale Race was canceled and SPYC withdrew from the SORC.

A great series such as the SORC generates many stories of every character. Two of the worst kind come from 1979. Tom Curtis was fatally struck by the boom of *Obsession* during a broach and the resulting jibe. Tom Curnow went overboard from *Pirana* and drowned, notwithstanding prompt action by her crew.

At the other end of the spectrum is a story about a tiger. Most followers of SORC were familiar with Powell's *Tigers*, *Paper* and *Salty*, but few recall the first (and presumably last) appearance of a real live, breathing, snarling tiger at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. Powell's new boat *Salty Tiger*, was due in St. Petersburg in late 1968 for launching ceremonies



SORC fleet at the SPYC dock in the 1970s. Members vacated their slips to accommodate the fleet. CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

and a big cocktail party at the club. Unfortunately, the boat and co-owner Wally Frank were having too much fun playing around Long Island Sound and Powell was left with a dilemma: how to honor a boat without the boat? Marv Haber, Powell's foredeckman, asked: "Why don't you have a real tiger?"

Turns out Haber did a high-wire act with the circus, then winter-quartered in Sarasota. He spoke with Gunther Gebel-Williams, the famed animal trainer who saw the publicity possibilities, and, voila, the star attraction of the cocktail party was a 900-pound Bengal tiger. It took 12 men to lift the cage off the truck and set it on the patio. The tiger, teased with catnip, would let out a roar that rattled every window in the club. The unusual send-off apparently was just what *Salty Tiger* needed. She arrived in St. Petersburg in time to sail and win overall SORC honors the following year.



Warren Brown's War Baby, formerly Ted Turner's American Eagle, passes under the old Skyway Bridge, SORC 1974.

JIM ROBINSON COLLECTION



Jim Kilroy's Kialoa beats down Tampa Bay during the 1975 SORC.

RICARDO FERRO / ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

Offshore Sailing



Joe Byars' *Doubloon* crosses George Dewar's *Stampede* in the 1967 SORC. Byars won the SORC in 1963 and later became an SPYC member. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE



Ted Irwin's *Razzle Dazzle* heading out Southwest Pass, 1984 SORC. She won the 1983 Miami-Nassau Race and the 1984 Boca Grande Race. WCB COLLECTION

George Dewar and *Stampede* were leading their class in one Miami-Nassau Race only to find a cruise ship anchored between them and the finish line at Nassau. A hasty conference with Lew McMasters Jr. and they went left; then the wind and the rest of the fleet went right. Blocked from the wind and the finish line, Dewar was left to drift and agonize as the gun went off. "There goes Pat Haggerty," he'd mutter. The gun fired again. "There goes so-and-so." Not making matters any better was a covey of over-weight, over-age female tourists hanging over the ship's rail, hailing Dewar, "Yoo hoo, oh, yoo hoo!" The combined "booms" and "yoo hoos" proved too much for Dewar who had to be ushered below, McMasters finally nudging *Stampede* across the line.

SORC veterans still talk about "The Chance Encounter" before a Lauderdale race in the mid-'70s. Ted Turner, still working on his nickname "Captain Outrageous," took exception to a remark by renowned boat designer Britton Chance, and, legend has it, decked him in the passageway by the lounge. The incident was too good to let die. That evening, someone altered nearby Bayfront Center's marquee: "Now appearing: Ted Turner vs. Britton Chance."

The 1983 SORC included a precedent-setting incident in which a TV camera decided the outcome of a race. At the start of the Boca Grande Race, *Murphy's Law* protested *Quest*, a Rogers 43 co-owned and skippered by Rick Grajerina of Clearwater, claiming that *Quest* fell off and came down on them prior to the start. The protest was upheld and *Quest* disqualified. The following morning, Grajerina and crew were in the Regatta Room watching videotape replays that Sailing Master Wilson Barnes had shot from Dick Jones' *Lagniappe*, mark boat at the heavily favored port end of the starting line.

One sequence showed both *Quest* and *Murphy's Law* well clear of each other and behind the line and a puff of smoke from the committee boat at the starboard end of the line, clearly proving that the incident happened after the start and not before it. Grajerina nearly jumped out of his foul-weather gear. Protest committee chairman Ted Tolson reluctantly agreed to reopen the hearing, reviewed the videotape and ultimately reversed the decision. Scott Allen must surely have felt that his boat, *Murphy's Law*, was appropriately named.

There are thousands of sailors who carry memories of the "Old SORC" and there will be thousands more who will take away memories of racing sailboats in and out of St. Petersburg in the decades to come.

Florida Ocean Racing Association

In the mid-'50s, SPYC's Lew McMasters and Charley Morgan, Tampa Yacht and Country Club's Francis Crowe, and Davis Island Yacht Club's Bobby Davis formed the Florida Ocean Racing Association. McMasters served as first commodore and Morgan as secretary. A series of annual races was organized with cumulative points scored for a FORA Championship. The first full season concluded in 1957 and the winner was *Winifred*, owned by John T. Hayward. Other SPYC season champions included Fred Guggenheimer with *Mogu III* (1959-1960), Jack Powell with *Paper Tiger* (1961-1962), Dick Dungan in *Sabre* (1963-1964), Jack Eckerd in *Panacea* (1966-1967) and Roland Becker and George Dewar with *Stampede* (1967-1968). Also notable in this period was the first major design success of SPYC's Ted Irwin. *Voodoo*, an Irwin 31-foot sloop sailed by William "Billy" Johnson of Sarasota, won the 1965-1966 series and again in 1968-1969.

In May 1969, the association was incorporated. By the mid-1970s, FORA had more than 80 offshore sailing yachts participating in races along the coast from Tarpon Springs to Naples. FORA competition prepared sailors from Florida's West Coast to be leaders on the world ocean racing stage. For five consecutive years, starting with the 1969-1970 season, SPYC's Ronald Krippendorf dominated FORA with a series of boats designed by Charley Morgan: *Americana*, *Americana II* and *Americana IV*. Krippen-



Lew McMasters' *Marelen III*, a veteran SORC and FORA campaigner, 1953. SPYC ARCHIVE



Jack Eckerd's *Panacea* won three SORC races and the 1966-67 FORA championship. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

Offshore Sailing

dorf began his sailing career racing Moth Class sailboats in St. Petersburg's Big Bayou where he was encouraged by SPYC's W.W. "Doc" Jennings in both his sailing and career choice as a chiropractor. Ron's brother, Donald Krippendorf and Robert Meyers were key members of Ron's crew. Donald Krippendorf was another of the young men influenced by Doc Jennings: practice chiropractic as a profession and race sailboats as an avocation.



Ron Krippendorf's Morgan 27, *Americana II*, at right, leads *Sagitta III*. *Americana II* won consecutive FORA championships in 1971-73. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

The start of 1968 St. Petersburg-Naples Race. It was delayed one week because of Hurricane Gladys.

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE



Ted Irwin returned to the season winner's circle as designer, owner and skipper of *Traveller* in 1976. SPYC's Millard L. "Rip" Ripley won the 1978-1979 season in *Chiquita*.

FORA established a Racer/Cruiser Class in 1974. The first season's winner was SPYC's Harman Wheeler in *Seneca*. Bud Ogle and Don Mastry won this class in 1980 and 1981 in *Triple Indemnity*.

The malaise that diminished offshore racing activity in the late 1980s did not spare FORA. The corporation was dissolved in 1991, but the memories remain. Among those memories was an early FORA race that Bill Cobler and Ed Sherman Sr. would just as soon forget. Working as the starting committee, they mounted a brand new, shiny brass starting cannon on the bow of the committee boat but failed to lash it to the deck. As the red flag went up, the cannon roared, the yachts went in one direction and the cannon in the opposite, the recoil pitching it over the side. SPYC was out one cannon but as Sherman commented: "It was a clean start."

Veterans of early FORA competition still talk of the "Big Freeze" race in December 1962 from Bradenton to Tarpon Springs. J.G. "Bud" Caldwell, sailing George Pearson's *Celia*, sprang a plank and started taking on water about 10 miles north of the Egmont Channel sea buoy.

With the water coming in faster than the bilge pumps could handle, with a bucket brigade bailing as though their lives depended on it, with the boat pitching and tossing, shuddering and shaking with every wave, Caldwell asked guest Lou Heim how he was enjoying the trip. Heim, a powerboater by choice, cold, wet, tired and sick to his stomach, replied: "Only rich men can afford to be this goddamn miserable."

Ted Tolson finally tore up some floorboards, found the leak, stuffed it with rags to stem the flow and the *Celia* limped into Tarpon Springs at 4 in the morning. Heim reportedly never set foot on a sailboat again.

In addition to Lew McMasters, SPYC members Leslie "Jack" Robson (1967-1968), William R. "Bill" Hough (1974-1975) and J. Wells Coggeshall (1977-1978) served as commodores of FORA.

After the death of McMasters in 1963, his friends established a memorial fund. The fund's trustees provided memorial trophies for the FORA Championship and the St. Petersburg-Fort Lauderdale Yacht Race. (A model of McMasters' yacht *Marelen III*, in which he sailed scores of offshore races, is on display in the SPYC clubhouse.)



Fred Bickley's Irwin 68, *Mango Latitudes*, won this event in 2005 and 2008. FRED BICKLEY COLLECTION

Regata del Sol al Sol

The St. Petersburg Yacht Club, in cooperation with the federal government of Mexico, the state of Quintana Roo, the municipality of Isla Mujeres, the Club de Yates de Isla Mujeres, and the prominent Jose de Jesus Lima family, have conducted a sailing race from St. Petersburg to Isla Mujeres (Island of Women) each year since 1969.

In 1966, Quintana Roo was a territory of Mexico, not a state, and Cancun was a barrier island with a single visible structure, a home of Jose de Jesus Lima, together with some then-undiscovered Mayan ruins. Former President Miguel Aleman Valdez, then minister of National Tourism and Sr. Lima, then minister Tourism Social, organized a meeting in Mexico City to promote yacht races between U.S. Gulf Coast yacht clubs and ports on the Yucatan peninsula. Bruce Watters, Tom Downs and Bill Spicklemire represented SPYC at that meeting. The first race was from Gulfport, Miss., to Isla Mujeres, the northernmost island on the Yucatan with a harbor and tourist amenities. Pierre Trouchaud of Sarasota, an active member of FORA, participated in that race. His enthusiastic report of that event to Tom Downs, SPYC's ocean racing chairman, and to Red Marston, the outdoors writer for the *St. Petersburg Times*, moved them to organize and publicize the first race to Isla Mu-

jeros from St. Petersburg.

The Isla Mujeres Race is an event with many facets. Representatives from the Mexican government are feted in St. Petersburg before the race. A gift to the people of Isla Mujeres (population approximately 10,000) is often arranged. Upon leaving Tampa Bay, there is more than 430 nautical miles of blue-water sailing. The weather can be fierce, the currents strong and difficult to predict, and the coast of Cuba must be kept at a prescribed distance. Rig-destroying squall lines can be followed by a calm, and a calm when you are in the Yucatan Current between the west end of Cuba and Isla Mujeres can literally send you back to where you came from.

One week after the start in St. Petersburg, the Regata Amigos is sailed at Isla Mujeres. The yachts load up with island children and their families for a boisterous sail (motors have been known to be used) around the island. Street dances, musical presentations, hard-fought basketball games between the visiting sailors and the locals, fishing, snorkeling, convivial dining in tiny storefront restaurants serving fresh seafood, impromptu gatherings and an elegant awards banquet under the stars are all part of the Regata del Sol al Sol experience. Many SPYC members and their families join the fleet in Isla Mujeres to enjoy the island and to visit the fascinating Mayan sites on the Yucatan peninsula.



The first program from the Regata del Sol al Sol. SPYC ARCHIVE



Señor Jose de Jesus Lima (1912-2009), integral to the founding of the race, photographed here at Casa de Rocas. GEORGE AND BETH PENNINGTON FROM THE MEXICORACE.COM ARCHIVE

Offshore Sailing

Island children pack Fred Deuel's *Madonna* for the Regata Amigos around Isla Mujeres.
GAIL FALKINGHAM



The fleet has always included hard-core racers and novice cruising sailors. Two of SPYC's outstanding veterans of SORC wars, Homer Denius's 53-foot Morgan sloop, *Rage*, and George Dewar's and Roland Becker's Mercer 44, *Stampede*, were, respectively, first to finish and first overall in the 15-boat fleet competing in the inaugural event.

SPYC's Pokey Wheeler sailed his 33-foot Brewer-designed schooner, *Ingenue*, to a surprise win of Class B. In 1971, Charley Morgan's own yawl, *Encore Cherie*, skippered by Peter Bowker, saved her time on S.A. "Huey" Long's 73-foot ketch, *Ondine II*, to win fleet honors. Jack Eckerd's *Panacea* took line honors in 1972.

The Regata del Sol al Sol has a loyal following. SPYC member George Dryden sailed his 53-foot schooner, *Lita*, in 17 races, but his record was topped



Ocean Angel races around the island with a happy crew in the 2007 Regata Amigos. OCEAN ANGEL FROM MEXICORACE.COM ARCHIVE



Commodore Bruce Watters Jr., left, presents a burgee to Sr. Lima watched by Vicente Eroza, center, president of the Isla Mujeres race committee, in 1970.
BRUCE WATTERS JR. COLLECTION

by SPYC's Fred Deuel, who sailed his 31-foot sloop, *Madonna*, in 22 races to Isla Mujeres. In recent years, SPYC members have performed with distinction. Fred Bickley took fleet honors in 2005 and 2008 (a record 45 starters) and division honors in 2004 and 2006 in his 68-foot Irwin ketch, *Mango Latitudes*. Mike Noble took fleet honors in 2006 and won his division in 2005, 2007 and 2008 in his Morgan Out Island 41, *Nobility*.

In 2009, Charles Evans won his division in his Cherubini 48, *Munequita*. In 2008, SPYC members Tom Glew in *XTC*, John Christman in *Hallelujah*, and Hall Palmer in *Relativity*, won their respective divisions. Mike Boom enjoyed a division win in 2007 in his Beneteau 40, *Mi Vida Loca*. Boom also was awarded numerous "friendship" trophies by the Mexican hosts for his efforts in the conduct of the Regata del Sol al Sol.

The story of *Enigma* and her owner, Robert Parker, epitomizes this race. In 2007, Robert Parker's 72-foot sloop won the Regata del Sol trophy for being first yacht to finish. In 2009, Parker, now age 70, as-

sembled a crew, which included two of his daughters, their spouses and a grandson, and set out to reclaim his trophy. *Enigma* was blasting along on a fast reach when Parker died of a heart attack. The family held a council and concluded Dad would have wanted them to press on. *Enigma* took line honors and it is reported that Dad, in his new urn, attended the awards banquet.

This international event requires much care and feeding. Tom Downs, followed by Bruce Watters Jr., Nick Stan, Mike Boom and Larry Wissing, and currently, Dan Driscoll, have headed up the effort, but scores of dedicated and talented club members have provided the good will, knowledge and effort that it takes to keep this event as popular, memorable and enjoyable as it has been.

Our gratitude extends to the Lima family, and in particular to Esteban and Enrique Lima, sons of Jose de Jesus Lima, for their decades of commitment to the Regata del Sol al Sol, known familiarly around SPYC as "the Mexico race" or "the Isla Mujeres race."



If you're a Salty Sister, and you go to Isla, you get a henna tattoo of the Salty logo. GAIL FALKINGHAM

Offshore Sailing

Midget Ocean Racing Club

The final sailing gap to be filled was that between the small one-design classes and the larger ocean racing yachts. In response to this need for distance racing events for yachts in the 20- to 30-foot range, the St. Petersburg Yacht Club assisted in the develop-

ment of the Midget Ocean Racing Club Station No. 10 on Tampa Bay. SPYC's Richard LaGrua, D.C., another one of Doc Jennings' Big Bayou boys, was an enthusiastic promoter of MORC (usually referred to as "MORE-see").

By the late 1960s, Station No. 10 had more than 30 boats regularly competing. The first race of the

MORC racing season was the Davis Islands to Sarasota Race, which started on the Friday evening of Labor Day weekend and was sailed in conjunction with a FORA race over the same course.

Family members came to Sarasota to join their sailors for a weekend at the beach. A night race in the Gulf and a weekend at the beach was a winning combination. SPYC members distinguished themselves in the local races and went on to compete at the national level.

In 1971, Ron Krippendorf with two SPYC crewmembers, brother Don and Robert Meyers, won the National MORC Championship. In 1973, Tony Johnson became the second SPYC skipper to claim the National MORC title; Ed Sherman Jr. was first in Division II and third in fleet. Sherman won the Florida MORC Championships in 1973 and 1978 and the International MORC Championship hosted by the SPYC in 1979. The first MORC Match Racing Championship for the Commodore's Challenge Cup was won by Gene Mueller in 1974.

In the 1980s, as interest in offshore racing began to lag, the J24, a new, high-performance sloop that offered level (no handicap system) racing through strict



Jerry Hammill and crew race Serendipity, his Morgan 24, in a 1960s MORC race.

JERRY HAMMILL COLLECTION

class rules was introduced. The J24 was suitable for limited offshore sailing, but round-the-buoys level racing gained preference over offshore point-to-point racing. SPYC member interest in MORC racing largely shifted into the J24 Class.



MORC boats maneuver for the start of a 1975 race off the Pier. MORC boats could be cruised and raced. CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG



Teamwork:

ESP, Essman, Stone and Zent's Lindenberg 26, races during the 1978 MORC National Championships in Annapolis, Md. The crew, clockwise: Don Krippendorf, helmsman; Brad Essman; tailing; Dan Stone, grinding the winch; Peter Zent clearing weather jib sheet, and Justice Essman trimming the jib from the clew. They had won the Station 10 (Tampa Bay) championship to qualify for this event.

DON KRIPPENDORF COLLECTION

Offshore Sailing



Anything goes: Francis Seavy and Frank Levinson capsize their Flying Dutchman to get under the West Ringling Causeway in Sarasota during the 1959 Royal Gaboon race. They got the idea from Phil Kinsey, who tipped over his E Scow to get under the bridge. Kinsey won the race, Seavy and Levinson were second.
ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE



The Royal Gaboon trophy.
ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE

On the Bay

Tampa Bay is a superb body of water on which to race sailboats and there is always demand for events in which sailors can test their skills against others in boats that have different performance potential. In 1972, a small group of sailors seeking to fill this need in an organized, but low-key manner, formed a new sailing group called St. Petersburg Sailing Association. SPYC members Pat Talbot and his wife, Gwyneth, and fellow member Don Sorenson were leaders in this SPSA effort. The Talbots posted a schedule, punctually started races, and managed to have the results posted in a local newspaper immediately after each event. Sorenson devised a simple rating rule that served the purpose. By the early 1980s, membership had grown to more than 200. Pat, Gwyneth and Don have all left us,

but SPSA has continued to provide weekend sailing off the St. Petersburg Municipal Pier. SPSA provided many non-members of SPYC the opportunity to try sailboat racing and SPYC has gained many members from those who were exposed to sailing and to our club through their SPSA experience.

The polar opposite of a well-run event was the Royal Gaboon Race.

Doc Jennings, in the late 1940s, claimed to have liberated a spittoon from a house of ill repute in New Orleans. Gidge Gandy decreed that an event should be established wherein this "trophy" would go to the first boat to arrive at the Sarasota Yacht Club from SPYC after a "Le Mans" start — skippers sprinting to their waiting craft and crew. This steeplechase event was open to all comers in all manner of sailing vessels, with propulsion to be by any means other than



Bill Shakespeare, Sandy Schoenberg and Dan Rugg tend Shinola's chute on the way to winning Suncoast Race Week in 1989. Shinola won the 1985 Florida West Coast PHRF championship. SPYC ARCHIVE

mechanical or electrical power. Course of race was optional. Capsizing a boat to drag it under a bridge was good tactics.

The first recorded winners were Morgan Powell and Bill Cobler in 1948 in a Lightning. In the following 36 years, SPYC members Bill Mangold, King Krippendorf, Ed Landt, Halsey Ford, Tony Johnson, Roy Sherman, Ed Baird, David LaCamera, Steve Lippincott and Gene Hinkel claimed wins.

In one of the late '50s events, Jerry Hammill and Tom Pierce were presented small replicas of the Gaboon itself in recognition of their completion of the race in a Fish Class boat, thought to be a first. Their innovative tactic, possibly within the liberal rules, was to avoid the LeMans start on Saturday morning, and depart SPYC late the night before.

The 1980s brought an increase of SPYC sponsor-

ship and co-sponsorship of day races and round-the-buoys races on Tampa Bay. Some of these events drew in excess of 150 entrants. West Florida PHRF (PHRF = performance handicap rating formula) provided the handicap rule that gained widest acceptance; however, throughout much of the 1980s, events were sailed under three handicap system classes: IOR, PHRF and SPSA, with the larger classes broken into divisions. Starting in 1986, a Boat of the Year (BOTY) award was established and the PHRF handicap system became ascendant. The Michelob Cup, hosted by SPYC and sponsored by Michelob, is an important BOTY event. A comprehensive set of records for all of the BOTY series for the past two decades has not been located, but available records disclose many winning performances by SPYC members.

One or the other of Ted Irwin's matched pair of



Dick Ware's Moonraker flies her blooper and spinnaker during the 1990 Tampa Bay Raceweek. Moonraker won first in fleet in the 1993 Suncoast Race Week.

TONY LOPEZ / ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ARCHIVE



Cruising class boats return from a Friday night race in July 2009, as seen from the SPYC Tiki Hut deck. G. BOWDEN-PIERCE



Post-race tally: Diane Fowler, left, checks race results of a Friday night race in July 2009 with Gloria Davis and Maridell Weaver. Behind them are Commodore Bob Johnson and wife Carol, who ran the committee boat, *Coast Pilot*. G. BOWDEN-PIERCE

ocean racers, *Razzle Dazzle* and *R2D2*, won the IOR class of Suncoast Race Week in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1986 with either Irwin or Don Krippendorf at the helm.

Chuck Mesloh was a frequent PHRF class winner in his Cal 2-30, *30 Caliber*, as was Ed Shephard in his Moore 24, *Blind Date*. Rich Doyle in *Limelight* and John Jennings in *Dark Star* had Suncoast Race Week J24 class wins. Bill Shakespeare in *Shinola*, a modified Kirby 23, won the 1985 Florida West Coast PHRF Championship, the 1988 Tampa Bay Race Week, the 1989 Suncoast Race Week and the 1989 Michelob Cup. Richard LaGrua, in his Irwin 30, *Right Now*, topped an 80-boat PHRF class in the 1987 Michelob Cup. Dick Ware, in his vintage (1965) Cal 25, *Moonraker*, brought home many major trophies, including 1978 SPSA Fleet Champion, 1993 Suncoast Race Week First in Fleet and Outstanding Yacht awards, 1994 and 1995 non-spinnaker class BOTY awards and first in the non-spinnaker class of the Michelob Cup in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The SPYC team of Mike Robertson in *Kelly* and Jopie Helsen in *Jade* won team honors in the 1990 Clearwater to Key West Race. At the 2004 Key West Race Week, *Kelly*, steered by Andy Cheney, was honored as PHRF Boat of the Week.

SPYC conducts a Friday twilight series on the bay, open to members and non-members, during the late spring and summer months. These well-attended informal races take advantage of the late afternoon sea breeze from the Gulf and provide an opportunity for newcomers to experience sailboat racing. After each evening's race, sailors gather at the club's Tiki Hut to post-mortem the race, swap stories and to plan for the new cycle of racing that begins each fall.