

The Hurricane Happy Sheet

October 2017



I started writing this prior to Maria coming through so it may appear even more disjointed than my normal stuff. If you just want to find out what we are doing at the Happy Sails Club in the near future please jump to the end. Many of you have a knowledge of my past travels prior to settling in the USA, apologies if I am repeating myself.

In 1988 I fell into a Junior Site Engineer working on a hotel project on New Providence(Nassau), in the Bahamas. I worked on the following islands over the next 6 or 7 years: St. Maarten, St. Croix(USVI), Antigua, twice on Provo(Turks and Caicos Islands), and Montserrat. During that time I vacationed on many other islands, including the British Virgin Islands, and travelled through Florida a lot. I got married on St. John(USVI), and honeymooned at the West end of Puerto Rico.

I now sometimes feel like I was scouting a route for Irma, Jose, and Maria. I realise that they are not the first or last hurricanes that will hit these islands. In fact my work on St. Croix and Montserrat was for rebuilding projects after Hurricane Hugo. After those jobs I will never wish to ride out a hurricane “for the life experience”!

The exceptional thing about Irma was not just it’s power but the way it followed the chain of islands instead of crossing it, and Maria seemed to hit the ones she missed. So many individual islands are effected it is hard to imagine enough power poles available to quickly get power back on everywhere. It will take years for some areas to recover if they ever do. Hurricane Hugo was in 1989 and, due to beauracacy, and we were working to rebuild the temporary hospital on Montserrat in 1994!

This seems like a lot of doom and gloom and in many ways it's justified; just look at the stories of Barbuda, with most of it's buildings being damaged, and the charter fleets in the BVI's being battered about like toy boats in a four year old's bath tub. Puerto Rico is not a small place and now about 3 million people are without power!

After the hurricanes pass and the immediate aid is gone the rebuilding process will begin and take years. The biggest challenge for the islands is their remoteness and size. Everything they need must be shipped or flown in, many individual islands have a foot print no bigger than Lake Murray. (St. Croix, home to 55,000 people, is approximately 28 miles long by 7 miles wide). Nothing happens quickly. It is hard to know what to do to help. Sending money for immediate help is all well and good and hopefully it will be well used getting ports, power, and other essentials going. After that it will be upto the people of the islands to rebuild for themselves. Relatively speaking that is easy for off island property holders who have somewhere to go and likely have some sort of insurance to help pay for it all. What about the local boat maintenance guy, or restaurant line cook, maid, childrens home workers, wait staff etc whose only home and total family is on an individual island?

Here are a couple of suggestions; in the short term try and give to an island based charity that helps local low income residents, such as <https://lssvi.org/disaster-relief/> or directly to the Childrens home, <https://lssvi.org/what-we-do/care-for-children/queen-louise-cottage-a-b/>. In the long term go to the places that reopen for your vacation! The caribbean water will still be clear and beautiful, the sailing will be great, the people will be freindly and happy to see you! If the islands that were hit directly are not accessible may be go to another Island as those displaced or their relatives may be working there.

With that in mind the plan is to still charter a couple of boats in the Islands next July. This is part of the last I heard from CYOA, "Thanks to the careful planning and preparations undertaken by John Jacob and the CYOA team, the CYOA charter business will be up and running within a few short months. However, because of the needed repairs for some of the boats in the fleet it will be some time before CYOA is running again at full strength and full employment." Since then I have called and sent an email but have not received a response. I will try and start the whole process again in December. If you wish to join in and need to plan I hope to do a July 5 to July 15 trip.

Club Events

Fall into Sun(day)set October 8, 5:15-8:36

A pleasant way to end or start your week depending on your outlook. The sunset is early so we should be back at the dock by 9:00! This is a member and guest sail.

Sail and Ale: Lexington Craft Beer Fest, October 14

Rather than try and invent something that others do better how about this for a club gathering point after a day sailing, and just for clarity I already have my ticket!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-lexington-craft-beerfest-tickets-36607319478>

Fullmoon-shine sail, Saturday, November 4, 2017. 5:00-6:00-9:00

This is a very casual approach to an event. The Hollow Creek

Distillery(<https://www.facebook.com/hollowcreekdistillery/>) has a tasting room! We will meet there and you can have a taste of the “moonshine” and then we’ll go and see the full moon rise over Lake Murray! Member and Guest event!

Tip of the Month: Take Your 2018 Vacation somewhere recovering from a Hurricane.



RIP Steve Rose

Steve Rose died in September way before his time. He was never a student of ours or a member of the Happy Sails club but he has helped sailing on Lake Murray no end. Whenever I ran into him he was encouraging and positive. He remembered I had once owned a U20, he had 2 plus a Catalina 270. When the fledgling Gamecock sailing club had to rent, beg, borrow any boat they could Steve let them use his (3 boats). He used college students as crew and (mis)guided and encouraged them endlessly. He also made sure they had perspective as this quote from one of my former college students demonstrates:



“but Steve I think we're going to miss the starting line up....”

Steve: "And that's okay, because it's a nice day out and I'm getting to sail with you, now help me open this beer!"

Remember to sail with joy, be it racing, cruising, learning, or instructing!