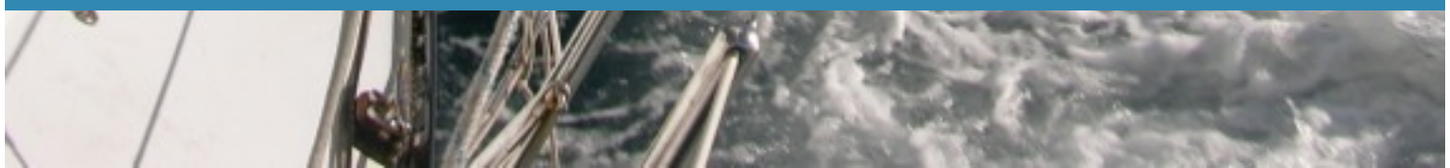
Sailing to Jessica

by Kelly Watts



SAILING TO JESSICA

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CHAPTER 1

DOUBLE MAIDEN

What would I say if my daughter told me she wanted to sail around the world? That's easy. Heck, no. I know the perils of such a journey: the relentless, formidable strength of Mother Nature; the predatory habits of sharks, sea snakes and orca whales; the lurking threat of pirates. And yet, I wouldn't have a daughter if my parents had told me no when I presented them with the same proposition.

Mind you, they tried.

My dad, a retired Commander in the US Navy, shook his head disapprovingly and said, "Kelly, you and Paul are foolishly risking your lives. Neither of you knows how to sail!"

My mom was more blunt.

She told Paul, "You will get my daughter killed."

She was nearly right.

Atlantic Ocean, off the South Carolina coastline, April 2001

A deafening, high-pitched alarm pierced the still night that had descended over the Atlantic Ocean. Startled, the three of us leapt up from our seats in the sailboat's cockpit. Bruce, our friend and the only sailor on board, poked his head into the cabin. Red bars glowed ominously on one of the **navigation station's** instrument panels.

"It's the high temperature alarm on the engine," he said. "It's overheating!" Bruce flew down the ladder into the cabin, followed closely by my husband, Paul.

Over his shoulder, Paul ordered, "Keep watch, Kel."

Gulp.

What was I supposed to do? This was my first watch. I recalled the sailing books I had read before this trip. While the boat was sailing, someone had to be on watch at all times to monitor the weather and to make sure that the boat didn't hit anything. I glanced nervously around the horizon.

The lights of Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms glittered in the distance on our left; otherwise the vast Atlantic Ocean surrounded us. I looked forward, across the deck of the 1980 42-foot Tayana cutter-rigged sailboat that Paul and I had purchased two days ago. The sails were rolled up. Without even a whisper of wind, we hadn't bothered to set the sails. We were motoring north across the glossy, flat sea. There wasn't any sign of the gale that was expected to cross our path in 2- 3 days.

Maybe the weather forecast was wrong, I thought, unaware of the truth behind the expression "the calm before the storm."

I surveyed the water. I didn't see anything that we could hit or, equally important, that might hit us. I stepped behind the wheel because it seemed like the right thing to do on watch. But it was a pointless gesture; because the autopilot was steering us, I couldn't turn the wheel. The alarm continued its shrill cry. Anxiously, I looked into the cabin.

"Turn the engine off!" Bruce shouted to me over the alarm.

The two guys looked up expectantly.

I hesitated as I looked at the controls mounted on either side of the wheel; there was a red-handled one and a black-handled one. Which was the gear shift and which was the throttle?

Paul saw my indecision and hollered, "Pull the black one toward you, then put the red one straight up."

The alarm blared relentlessly as I shifted the engine into neutral.

"Push the black button," Paul barked, pointing to a small control panel mounted on the side of the cockpit bench, next to my shin. "And flip off the engine switch."

I did.

Then there was silence.

Absolute, eerie silence.

"I bet it's the **impeller**," Bruce said, adding, "With a little bit of luck, this will be the only problem we have on our shakedown cruise."

According to him, the purpose of the ominous-sounding "shakedown cruise" was to familiarize the crew with the boat and 'shake out' any problems that needed to be fixed. Paul and I preferred to call this our maiden voyage – or double maiden voyage, as the case was. This was our first time sailing Cherokee Rose. And aside from a five-day sailing course, this was our first time sailing. Ever.

Despite the gale warning we were sailing the boat from Charleston, where we purchased her, to Philadelphia where we lived. The 600-mile passage was expected to take six days. If the storm approached, we would seek shelter in the Intracoastal Waterway, a strip of protected water that ran along the eastern seaboard.

"What makes you think it's the **impeller**?" Paul asked.

Bruce explained how, as an **impeller** ages and deteriorates, it becomes less efficient at pumping coolant through the engine.

“Then the temperature rises and you get a situation like this.” He paused and asked, “Do you have a spare impeller?”

“All of the spares are under this seat,” Paul said, as he removed the seat cover and started rummaging through the locker. Bob, the previous owner, had collected an impressive assortment of spares which we inherited with the boat. Luckily, there was another impeller.

It took them 45 minutes to change the impeller. Then they ran the engine to test it. While the temperature still registered higher than normal, it was not red-bar critical.

“Because it’s possible that some rubber pieces of the impeller might be lodged in the heat exchanger, I think we should only use the engine if absolutely necessary,” Bruce said.

Paul agreed.

“Why don’t we turn around and go back?” I suggested, thinking that this was an obvious and sensible solution. We weren’t that far from Charleston Harbor.

Paul and Bruce nixed that idea. They had both taken time off from work to sail the boat to Philadelphia. It was now or never.

“It is a sailing boat, Kel,” Paul reasoned. “We don’t need the engine,”

I shrugged, deferring to their decision. What did I know about sailing?

The next 48 hours passed very slowly. By the second morning of our trip, the skies had become overcast, the wind had freshened and the waves had steadily grown. They were three feet high and coming at us from the side. Everything was gray; the heavy low clouds, the frothing waves, and my mood. Even a school of playful dolphins flitting and jumping around our boat didn’t cheer me up.

For the first time in months, it wasn’t the emotional roller coaster ride of fertility treatments and the prospect of a childless future that made me glum. Today it was the very real roller coaster ride of Cherokee Rose’s up-and-down motion that got me. Despite the seasickness patch behind my ear, I felt queasy.

I vaguely realized that I hadn’t slept on this trip.

The combination of the see-saw motion and my fatigue was overwhelming. After I lost my battle with seasickness, Paul coaxed me into the cabin and tucked me into my sleeping bag on the salon couch. Cold and exhausted, I wished that everything – the boat, the sea, and oh, please god, the motion -- would go away.

I drifted asleep.

Hours later, Paul woke me with his excited cry, “Kelly, I see land!”

His hands were frozen popsicles and I jerked away from his touch.

“We’re approaching Cape Fear.”

Due to the declining weather, they had decided to tuck into the Intracoastal Waterway at Cape Fear, which was located at the southern end of North Carolina’s coastline. I was elated at the thought of being on calm water again. I sat up quickly, then instantly regretted it as nausea swept over me. The boat’s rocking had grown worse while I had slept.

"Come see," Paul said encouragingly before he climbed into the cockpit.

I stood up gingerly and then fell unexpectedly against the dining room table as the boat lurched. Ow! I steadied myself against the table, then grabbed for the desk, the kitchen counter and finally the handrails on the ladder to the cockpit.

Halfway up the ladder, I stopped climbing and poked my head outside. Looking forward through the mist and drizzle, I saw land.

Hallelujah!

"How quickly can we get there?" I eagerly asked Paul and Bruce, who were standing in the cockpit and analyzing the waves and wind. "Let's go!"

"I don't know," Bruce said slowly.

"What?" I demanded, not pleased with his tone.

"Look, it is almost 4 o'clock; it's going to be dark soon. We won't be able to see where we are going." He looked at the sky. "And the weather is getting worse." He glanced at Paul. "I think we need to turn around and head out to sea."

"What?" I protested, glaring at the two men, "But we are so close!"

Paul shifted his weight from one foot to the other, thinking. "Kel, Bruce is right. It's too dangerous to go in. Remember what we read? Boats can survive most storms at sea; but land can sink us. Especially if we can't see it in the dark."

I stomped my foot and threw Bruce the meanest look I could muster before another wave of nausea forced me to retreat to my bed. Helpless to change my plight, I escaped it by falling asleep again.

Bang!

Startled, I woke up and wondered what had crashed on deck. I dimly heard Paul and Bruce shouting at each other outside. It was hard to hear them over the sound of water rushing past the hull and the racket inside the cabin. With each rock of the boat, cans of food and spare parts rolled, crashed and banged inside the dozen mainly empty lockers.

I must have dozed because it was dark when Paul nudged me.

"Kel, I'm in a bad way."

It wasn't his arctic touch as much as his distressed tone of voice that jolted me out of my semi-conscious state. I looked at him. Water dripped off his hair, his jacket and his pants, creating a puddle around his soggy tennis shoes. His blood-shot eyes were sunken in his sheet-white face. His body shivered incessantly.

Then it hit me; he had hypothermia.

Alarmed, I sat upright. "Okay, strip," I ordered. "We have got to get you out of those wet clothes."

While Paul clumsily unzipped and shrugged off his coat, I climbed out of my sleeping bag. Standing, I pulled off his wet shirt before the boat's motion pitched me to the floor. I unlaced his saturated shoes. Nausea overcame me and I threw up in the bucket by my bed.

"Kel, you've gotta help Bruce." Paul struggled to speak as if even his tongue was frozen. "The staysail and the mainsail ripped. And the GPS died."

I nodded grimly.

Once he was out of his wet clothes, Paul half-climbed while I half-pushed him into the bed that was adjacent, and above, my couch. Swapping my still-warm sleeping bag for his cold one, I zipped him into its snug embrace. Without a doctor to consult, getting him warm seemed like a logical remedy. I just hoped it was enough. I latched the bed's side rail into place so that Paul wouldn't accidentally fall out of bed – a real possibility in this sea – and looked for Bruce.

Where was he?

I stumbled to the companionway, hastily put on my jacket and harness and tethered myself to a U-bolt next to the door. I opened the slatted doors just to have the wind rip them from my hands and slam them against the cabin. The wind howled, startling me with its ferocity, and icy rain pelted my face.

Bruce was hunched over in the cockpit. As I stepped outside, a wave slammed against the side of the boat, causing her to heel over sharply and throwing me against the companionway. I steadied myself and warily scanned the vicious sea.

Other than the meager cone of light that shone down from our mast-head, we were engulfed in darkness, suspended in a black world without sea or sky. Behind Bruce, a ten-foot frothing wave materialized out of the black void and crashed into our boat, dousing us with frigid salt water.

With rapt horror, I watched another wave magically roll into our little arena of light.

Frightened, I tore my eyes away from menacing spectacle and looked at Bruce for reassurance. His head was tucked against his chest. Beads of water glittered on his wool cap and streams of water cascaded down the folds in his yellow foul-weather gear.

"Bruce?" I asked.

He lifted his head, revealing bloodshot eyes and blue lips on a white face. He, too, was shivering uncontrollably.

With a sinking sense of déjà vu, I said, "Bruce, go down below and get warm."

"I'm on watch," he said, slurring his words slightly and stubbornly shaking his head. Then he tucked his chin back into his coat collar and hunched his shoulders.

As the waves continued to assault our boat, I assessed our situation. We were stuck in a gale at sea, somewhere off Cape Fear, with 40-knots of wind and scary seas. We had an overheated engine, ripped sails and a broken GPS. Paul and Bruce were suffering from hypothermia.

The gravity of our situation hit me.

Our survival depended upon me.

But I'm not a sailor, a panicked voice inside of me screamed. How did I get here?

To view supplemental material about this chapter, go to:
www.sailingtojessica.com/chapter-1-double-maiden-voyage.html

CHAPTER 2

MEANING OF LIFE

Philadelphia, PA, seven months earlier, September 2000

Paul called it a rough patch. I thought it was a depressing funk. Psychologists term it a “life crisis” - except we didn’t know that. We weren’t seeing a psychologist; why would we? Neither of us screamed, smashed wine glasses or had an affair. Neither of us had the urge to buy a shiny red Porsche. Our life crisis didn’t cause us to do anything that dramatic. We just quit our jobs, sold our house and hopped on a boat.

I first realized something was wrong when Paul stopped bouncing. Paul’s buoyant personality and zest for life had earned him the nickname of “Tigger” in my family but it had been ages since I had seen a bounce.

Paul was a software engineer and a project manager for a major pharmaceutical company. Together, he and his work colleagues had designed and written a control system for the first fully-automated mail-order pharmacy in the world. That was great for his career, but not so great whenever the pharmacy went down as my husband was on call 24/7.

When the problems reached Paul, who was the final line of support, they were always critical – and urgent. Every minute of down-time cost the company thousands of dollars. To compound matters, these calls always seemed to come at inopportune times, like when Paul was carving the turkey for Thanksgiving dinner or while we were windsurfing in Aruba on vacation. Paul never had a break and after four years it showed.

While watching TV or working on the computer, he would unconsciously gulp breaths of air, as if he were drowning; and during the night, he had begun grinding his teeth so viciously that he frequently woke me up. Even the colorful shirts he typically wore looked garish against his pallid face. I blamed his job for these involuntary distress signs until our doctor diagnosed us with a bigger problem.

We apparently couldn’t get pregnant. I say apparently because our doctor couldn’t find anything wrong with us

despite the fact that we had been trying to conceive a baby for five years. We were an “unexplained” case of infertility. At his recommendation and at the age of 35, we started down the rather unpleasant path of fertility treatments, which consisted of popping pills, getting shots and removing any spontaneity and romance from our love-making. Yet Paul and I endured them willingly, because they gave us hope. This might be the month.

But it was never the month.

Instead, every month found me sobbing at another failed attempt. My stubborn “perfectly healthy” body had betrayed me again, snatching away the prospect of a baby – and my very breath, it seemed. Bitter disappointment and grief nearly suffocated me; yet whenever I gasped for air, I inhaled anger. Damn my body. Because there wasn’t anything wrong with it, there wasn’t anything concrete to fix. And damn this situation; it was so unfair. Having children was practically a human right. Why were we repeatedly denied it?

And, as if dealing with my own raging emotions wasn’t difficult enough, I still had to tell my beloved husband. Paul wanted a baby as much if not more than me. Being the bearer of bad news, I got to karate-chop his heart. Every month.

This cycle of constantly trying and constantly failing battered any positive outlook on life we could muster. And yet we weren’t ready to quit treatment. So here we were, torturing ourselves in this wretched holding pattern, waiting for good news that never seemed to come. A depressing gloom settled over us as tangibly as thick fog.

Then one evening the fog lifted. Paul smiled for the first time in months. We were at a party my friend Diane was giving. Paul was chatting with her guests of honor, Phil and Christine. From across the room, I watched his smile broaden and then he became animated as their conversation continued. What had captivated my husband?

When I joined him, Paul explained that Phil and Christine had just sailed across the Atlantic Ocean on a friend’s yacht, and that they intended to sail around the world in a couple of years. Fascinated with a lifestyle so foreign to ours, we chatted with Phil until it was time to leave. Paul continued to discuss their trip as we walked home. Well, I walked; Paul bounced.

The bouncing lasted as long as our conversation and then the fog descended. After two more nights of teeth-grinding, Paul went to work on Monday morning with slumped shoulders and a big sigh. Tomorrow he had to fly to Las Vegas for a major software installation. The mail-order pharmacy was located there, but Paul worked long hours and rarely saw the glittering sights.

I sat in my office and stared absentmindedly at my computer screen. I worked from home as a freelance food journalist and regional contributor for house-and-garden magazines. I sighed at the blank word document in front of me and tried to focus on writing. But it was futile. I was worried about Paul. How would he survive another 100-hour work week in Vegas?

That afternoon as I drove home from yet another doctor’s appointment, I passed a bookstore. With sudden inspiration, I swerved into its parking lot. Maybe I could find Paul a book about sailing that would take his mind off work and baby-making.

Thankfully, the boat section in the Philadelphia store was small, so it didn't take long to choose two books.

That night as Paul packed for his trip, I gave him the books. "They might cheer you up," I explained.

Paul smiled tiredly, examined the books and handed them back to me. "Here, you keep one. I won't have time to read two books. I doubt I'll even have time to read one."

"Okay, pick one," I said. "After all, it's your gift."

Paul's choice surprised me. He kept "Maiden Voyage," a book about an 18-year old girl, a New York City bike messenger, whose father gave her an ultimatum: either go to college or sail around the world. He handed me the book written by Peter Goss. It looked like a chest-pounding, man-against-nature book based on the cover photo, and one that I thought Paul would have jumped at. I took the book unenthusiastically and put it in my office upstairs.

The next morning, Paul left the house before dawn for his early flight.

Later that morning as I was brewing a cup of tea, the phone rang. I glanced at my watch. Paul's flight wasn't scheduled to land yet.

"Hey, Kel."

It was Paul.

"Where are you?" I asked, concerned. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. We had a tail wind and our plane arrived early in Vegas. I gotta run but, Kel, I had to call you," Paul sounded breathless. "That book was so good, so emotional. I've almost finished it.

"Oh, Paul, you should've slept. You are going to be so tired."

"I know. But I couldn't put the book down. This girl, Tania, didn't know how to sail – like us. She just loaded up the boat with sailing books and learned along the way." He rushed on, "Kel, I think we should do it. I think we should sail around the world."

I opened my mouth to respond but nothing came out. I was speechless.

"I love you," he said. "I'll try to call later."

Then there was a click and he was gone.

I stared at the phone in disbelief as I placed it back on the kitchen wall. What had I done? My gift had backfired. I wanted to cheer him up. I did not want to sail around the world.

As I trudged up the stairs to my office, I listed my reasons for not wanting this particular adventure. It was dangerous. I got seasick. And, oh yeah, we didn't know how to sail.

I picked up the Peter Goss book on my desk. If Paul was serious about this – and by the dread I felt in the pit of my stomach I knew he was – I had better read up on it so I could change his mind. I needed ammunition. Perhaps it was fortunate that I had been left with the man-against-sea book; the one whose cover showed a boat battling treacherous seas and epic waves. If there were ever a reason not to go sailing, that had to be it.

The next night, Paul phoned me from Vegas; as usual, he didn't have much time to chat.

"What do you think about sailing around the world?" he asked. He sounded weary from his 18-hour work days.

"Let's talk about it when you get home," I suggested, knowing that the topic – if he really meant it- deserved more than the five minutes he had to give it. "But I did read that other sailing book."

"Was it good?"

"Well, it was very informative. I learned that if your boat flips over, you can swim inside the cabin, breathe from the air pocket and eat canned food. You might have to dive to get the can opener," I added, "but, hey, it's possible!"

Paul laughed and we said our goodbyes.

When the week was over, Paul flew home. He hadn't had time to ponder his outlandish suggestion of sailing around the world and I didn't want to give credence to his idea by having a serious discussion about it. Instead, we chose the nonthreatening approach of reading more sailing books. As long as we were just fantasizing about it, and not actually doing it, I welcomed the distraction of remote tropical islands and sunny anchorages in our otherwise gloomy lives.

As fate would have it, the annual Annapolis Boat Show was coming up. I called my dad who lived in Charleston, SC, to invite him to go with us. Twenty-five years ago, he had owned a small sailboat, which he had named after my sister and me. Even though he never owned another boat after KellySu, he still liked to walk around marinas and check out the yachts.

Dad was puzzled by my call; he knew I didn't like boats. I explained that Paul had gotten this crazy idea of sailing around the world, and while I didn't think we were actually going to do it, the idea of it seemed to help Paul through this tough time at work. I didn't mention our struggle to have a baby. Our repeated failures were too personal to share, even with family. Dad took this new information in stride and agreed to fly up for the show.

On the morning of the boat show, we collected Dad from the airport and drove directly to Annapolis. The day was gray, with a nippy wind and intermittent, frigid rain. Even the show's bright signal flags and colorful banners could not dispel the dreariness, but the excitement of actually seeing boats buoyed our spirits.

To board the boats, we had to take off our shoes, which made me regret the lace-up boots and worn-out socks I was wearing. But once on board, it was fun checking out the living spaces and kitchens. Thanks to my dad, and KellySu, my sister and I had learned the basic terms of a sailboat. I knew, for example, that the kitchen was called a galley. But it seemed pretentious to use these nautical terms because it might imply that I knew what I was talking about – which was far from true.

I was sitting on a comfortable couch inside a spacious sailboat. Unlike the numerous other boats we had seen, I actually liked this boat. Perhaps I could do this, I thought for the first time, perhaps I could live on a sailboat.

Dad sat down next to me.

"Wow, Dad, this is nice. I like the airiness and brightness of this boat."

"Well, this is not a boat you'd buy to sail around the world," he replied.

"What?" I asked, surprised by his comment. "Why not?"

"Because it is too big, too airy. In rough seas, things will inevitably get thrown about the boat and with so much air space

in this cabin, things will really fly. And where are the lockers?" he said, frowning and looking around the cabin. "You need a boat that has plenty of lockers to store spare parts and provisions. You want a boat that feels tight, cozy. The tighter, the better," he said, standing up to investigate some instruments.

Deflated, I got up and made my way to the dock. Maybe I couldn't do this. Did I really want to consider rough seas and flying objects?

Toward the end of the show, we finally saw a boat that earned my dad's approval. It was a 42-foot Valiant and, with all of its varnished teak, it was beautiful. Paul gave me a quick smile to show that he, too, was impressed before he and my dad sat down to discuss the engine and sail configuration with the salesman. Mere feet away, I investigated the kitchen while they chatted.

All was going well until Paul asked the cost. It was $495,000. Paul sputtered, stood up and hastily said his goodbyes, making my dad grin at his speedy exit. I tried to hide my surprise, but seriously, this boat cost more than our house!

On the ride home, we all agreed that Paul and I would be in the market for a used boat, if we were ever to buy one.

"Are you serious about sailing around the world?" Dad asked. "Because when I had KellySu, I dreamed about it. In fact, I have some cruising books that you can borrow."

"Thanks, Ron. We are thinking about it." Paul said.

I added, "We like the idea of seeing those remote tropical islands, experiencing new cultures and meeting new people. It's just the sailing part that we're not sure about."

Paul corrected me, "That's the part you're not keen about; I want the challenge of man-against-the-sea."

I groaned.

Dad stopped us. "Regardless of why you might want to go sailing, you can't do it without experience. If you are serious, you should buy a small, forgiving boat, not one of the offshore boats we just saw. And then you should spend the next couple years sailing around the Chesapeake Bay before you contemplate foreign shores."

"But Ron, we read this book about a teenage girl who didn't know how to sail; she just set off with a bunch of books on the boat and learned as she went along," Paul pointed out.

I cringed in the backseat; I knew Dad would think that the girl – and Paul for even mentioning such an idea – was foolish.

Sure enough, Dad shook his head in disapproval and dismissed the notion. A real sailor wouldn't do that.

But we weren't real sailors.

As the weeks passed, Paul and I started to question our life and its purpose. Like most couples, we had assumed that we would have children, raise them, retire and spoil our grandchildren. But what if children were taken out of the equation? Because it looked as if we weren't going to have any.

Our fertility treatments were approaching the final step: in vitro fertilization. After the doctor referred to the procedure as "surgery," that was a step I was hesitant to take. After all, if there

wasn't anything wrong with me, what exactly was surgery going to fix?

For Paul, it was a financial consideration. At over $10,000 a round, he thought IVF was like gambling on an expensive table at Vegas. The cards were still stacked against you and few people won, especially with a single hand. Any chance of success would require several rounds of IVF. That made it a very costly gamble without any guarantee that it would work. We were depressed enough without throwing away $30,000 too.

It seemed like there was never a winning hand at the high-stakes table of infertility. Losing the chance of having a baby was overwhelming. But the loss didn't stop there, as the ramifications of not having children sunk in. Our hopes and dreams of raising our baby were shattered, too. We wouldn't get to enjoy our baby's first steps, first soccer game, first love or first job. We wouldn't bake cookies, build a Lego spaceship or visit Mickey Mouse at Disneyland together. Lastly, the chaotic – but priceless – future of family get-togethers and family holidays, which would hopefully include grandchildren, was gone. We now faced a quiet, orderly and lonely future with just the two of us. And there wasn't anything we could do to change our future's course.

Powerless to control our future, we latched onto sailing like a life ring. The decision to sail around the world was one that we could make and we desperately needed to be in charge of our lives once again. Only I wanted to ditch the life ring – and climb ashore. With my seasickness, how could I possibly sail around the world?

Paul wasn't concerned as many of the books we had read dealt with this very problem. It seemed that after a couple of days at sea, most people got over their queasiness. Apparently the cure for seasickness was to stay on the boat. Silly me for thinking that getting off the boat was the solution!

With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, I thought it was time to address this issue. I needed to go sailing to see if I could manage my seasickness. If I couldn't, then sailing around the world was out.

Considering that we didn't know how to sail anything larger than our windsurfers, we couldn't charter a boat. But we could sign up for a five-day live-aboard sailing course, which had several advantages. First, we would learn the fundamentals of sailing. Second, it would placate my dad who was constantly reminding us that we didn't know how to sail. And finally, the course was held in the Florida Keys, and I figured we could use a little sunshine in our lives.

I enrolled us in the class, bought the school books online, and we studied them as instructed before the holiday weekend. Armed with scopolamine patches which were supposedly a better solution for seasickness than Dramamine, we flew down to Florida.

Besides Mark, the instructor, there were four students in the class: Paul and me and two women. Tina worked for the sailing school, as an office assistant, and needed to experience the course as part of her job. Tracy was a law student. Our days were spent scrambling on deck, learning the basics of sailing. Our evenings were spent sitting around the salon table, reviewing the course books and taking tests.

I wasn't queasy, but prolonged use of the patch made my throat scratchy and my head hurt. It felt as though I had a cold, which was bearable but less than ideal. So were our sleeping quarters.

Our cabin was at the back of the boat, and our bed had walls butting up against three of its four sides. It reminded me of a coffin and seemed every bit as claustrophobic. There was one tiny window above the bed which I kept open to remind myself that I wasn't dead and I wasn't on a boat waiting to cross the River Styx.

One day, as we were sailing along, Mark announced that we were going to practice our man-over-board skills.

"Man Overboard!" Mark yelled, pretending. "Now, what's the first thing you do?"

"Litter the water with anything that floats," I responded immediately. I had studied those course books.

"Right," said Mark, "that's what you would do. But for this exercise, we are not going to do that--"

It was too late.

Paul had already tossed two cushions and the life ring into the water.

Mark surveyed the water, glanced at Paul and said, "You get to go first. Bring the boat around."

Paul steered the boat while Mark handed me the boat hook to pull the cushions and life ring out of the water. Then the other girls took their turns practicing the man-over-board drill with imaginary floats. I was last.

As I timidly took the wheel, Paul kicked off his shoes, stripped off his shirt and, before anyone knew what was going on, jumped into the water.

"Damn it, Paul!" I shouted at him, stomping my foot. With half a mile of water between us and land, we were now facing a real man-over-board situation. But for the moment I was quite content to leave that man in the water.

"What do we do first?" asked Mark calmly.

"Throw him the life ring," I grumbled.

Tina tossed it out.

"Steer into the wind, then release the sails to slow the boat down," Mark ordered.

I turned the boat while Tina and Tracy released the main and jib **sheets**, causing the sails to flap noisily in the wind. Only our forward momentum propelled the boat.

I steered toward Paul, who was grinning in the water and casually resting on the life ring. Seconds later, I couldn't see him. The bow of the boat obstructed my view of the water's surface. That wasn't a big deal when rescuing a boat cushion; who cared if I ran it over? But run over Paul?

In my foul mood, it was tempting.

"I can't see Paul," I snapped, craning my head. "What do I do?"

Mark joined me behind the wheel. "Steer more to starboard."

"But I'll run him over," I protested. That was where I had last seen him.

“No, you won’t.” Mark leaned over the side of the boat and, looking forward, said, “Perfect.” He dropped a line into the water and said to Paul, “Grab this.”

Mark led the line to the rear swim platform and Paul climbed aboard, still grinning from ear-to-ear.

“In all of the years I have been teaching, no one has ever jumped overboard before,” Mark admitted, chuckling and tossing Paul a towel.

It was a classic Tigger stunt and I could just imagine my sister tilting her head and asking me, as she always did in these situations, “For life, Kel?”

Yes.

Lucky me.

I was married to him for life.

That is, if our marriage could survive a childless future.

Many didn’t.

To view supplemental material about this chapter, go to:
www.sailingtojessica.com/chapter-2-meaning-of-life.html

CHAPTER 3

NO REGRETS ON ROSIE

Philadelphia, PA, December 2000

As we flew back to rainy Philadelphia, we weren't thinking about our marriage. Our doctor hadn't counseled us, or even warned us, of the havoc that infertility could have on a relationship. Common problems include the fear that one partner might leave the other to have children with a different mate; the stress of agreeing or disagreeing to gamble thousands of dollars on potentially fruitless IVF; and the sexual difficulties that commonly resulted from infertility.

Not being aware of these pitfalls didn't give us immunity from them. While we hadn't encountered the first two issues yet, sex had become a prescribed chore, noted on the calendar next to paying the bills and returning the library books. On the physician-assigned dates, we had to perform - whether we wanted to or not. Since romance and intimacy refused to appear "on demand," they were absent from these clinical sessions. Trying to relax was impossible; our future was dependent on the outcome. No pressure there.

Sex lost its appeal, but that was normal, right?

We knew two couples who couldn't have children. One couple divorced after their IVF attempts failed; the financial strain and emotional guilt were too much. The other couple threw themselves into their jobs during the day and into the bottle at night. But we didn't associate our plight with theirs, or with other infertile couples. We still had the vague hope that we might get pregnant. After all, nothing was wrong with us.

We resumed our usual routine of work, reading sailing books and discussing the meaning of life. If we couldn't have children to nurture, what was our purpose in life? Should we sail around the world?

We tried to stack the pros against the cons but struggled to weigh intangibles, such as quality of life and growth experiences, against the monetary worth of stock options and bonus checks. Invariably, our conversations went around and

around, without any satisfactory conclusions. Deciding whether to sail around the world seemed as evasive as making a baby.

With Christmas upon us, Paul and I opted to enjoy a quiet holiday in Charleston. The weather was gray and rainy, but we defied it by taking long walks along the Battery and shopping on King Street. Most evenings we curled up in front of a crackling fire and chatted. On one such night, the subject of sailing came up again. Sipping red wine with our legs intertwined on the couch, we were having our usual circular conversation when it came to me: the definitive answer.

We had to do it. While we had been struggling to offset the negatives of sailing against the positives, neither of us had considered how we would feel if we didn't go – and that turned out to be the most compelling reason to go.

If we passed on this opportunity, our life would resume its usual, and still unsatisfying, course. How would we feel when we were older? I doubted that, in our golden years, we would be reminiscing over some promotion that Paul had earned, or some garden I had scouted. When we totaled up our lives' achievements, would any of these really matter?

"But what about my job?" Paul asked. "And all of my stock options?"

Yes, he had golden handcuffs, three pairs, to be exact. But they became golden in three, four and five years. Right now they were just handcuffs.

"I guess you'll have to walk away from those stock options," I said. "If we were concerned about money, or stock options, we wouldn't even be having this conversation. This is about trying to find some purpose for our lives. Who knows? Maybe a change in our lifestyle will help us conceive. Or maybe we will discover that we don't need children to feel fulfilled" -- Paul looked doubtful here, but I carried on -- "but at least we will have the time to reflect on it, and on what we want out of life."

"What will we do when we get back?" he asked. "I doubt I would get my current job back."

"Honey, we are both intelligent, hard-working people," I said. "I'm sure we could get jobs at McDonald's if we had to. Don't worry, we'll find jobs."

Then he turned the tables, and asked about my seasickness.

"If it is really bad or if we decide we don't like sailing, we'll quit, sell the boat and come back," I said. Oblivious to the underlying assumption I had just made – that Paul and I would agree when it was quitting time – I continued, "Even if we aborted the trip, we'll know that we gave it a shot. We won't have any regrets."

Thoughtfully, Paul swirled his wine. Then he looked at me, lifted his glass and toasted, "Here's to sailing around the world."

Perhaps we should have remedied our life crisis with a shiny red Porsche instead of a boat. Like infertility, a boat presents its own challenges for a couple. As the popular sailing saying goes, "Living on a boat can make or break a relationship." If we were trying to sabotage our marriage, we were on the right course.

Our plan to sail around the world started with selling our house, finding and buying a suitable boat, sailing it to Philadelphia and living on it. There were some marinas in

downtown Philadelphia, along the Delaware River, and we would moor the boat there. Then we could keep our jobs, and during our spare time, learn her systems and fix her up. When we had vacation, we'd motor the boat down the river to the Chesapeake Bay and practice sailing.

January, February and March were hectic. In an effort to get the house ready to sell, we had to finish the basement first. Paul and I had constructed a multi-angled rock climbing wall in the basement – oh, the things I did for Tigger! – and we had started putting up the studs for an adjacent sitting area. But that was as far as we had gotten. As a result, we spent our free daytime hours completing the basement. At night, we surfed the web, looking for suitable, used boats. At the end of March, we found Cherokee Rose on-line. She was docked an hour south of Charleston, SC.

I phoned Dad to tell him we would be flying down to check her out; did he want to come along?

"If you think I am going to sail with you and Paul on your maiden voyage," he exploded, "you are sorely mistaken, young lady. I have forgotten more about sailing than you and Paul know about the subject. You are foolishly risking your lives!"

This outburst came from nowhere, and I was stunned because my dad seldom lost his cool. How could he possibly think I'd want him to sail with us on our maiden voyage?!

"Relax, Dad," I said reassuringly, "I don't want you to sail with us. It was bad enough learning how to drive with you."

Sweating in the heat of South Carolina's summer, on black vinyl seats in a car without air conditioning, my sister and I had endured Dad's military-style driving lessons. The experience was best forgotten; and certainly not one I wanted to relive on the boat.

"Well, you should have a seasoned sailor on board when you sail the boat to Philadelphia." He was calmer now.

"I'll take that under advisement, Dad."

After we hung up the phone, I realized that he was really worried about us.

Dad met us at the airport and drove us to Beaufort, S.C., where Cherokee Rose was moored. The owners, Bob and Barbara, had sailed her from San Diego to Beaufort by way of the Panama Canal. Their trip had taken three years. The boat had everything we thought we would need, including a **reverse osmosis water maker**, a water-cooled fridge/freezer; **wind generator**; solar panels; **wind vane**; automatic **windlass**; **autopilot** and a 48-horsepower diesel engine. The boat had lockers galore – and she felt airy compared with every other we boat we had seen. She even had a washing machine. I loved her.

Paul liked everything except the teak-covered decks, which were shedding hunks of black rubber caulk. Cherokee Rose's decks weren't the only thing that needed some tender loving care. Her hull was powdery white, instead of shiny; the plastic windows on the canvas **dodger** were etched from sea salt; her rolled-up sails needed stitch work; and all of her stainless steel was heavily speckled with rust.

We discussed the boat with Dad and decided to make an offer, contingent upon the results of the sea trial and survey, which was similar to a pre-purchase home inspection.

"You should ask Bob to sail the boat with you to Philadelphia as part of the deal," my dad suggested. "That way you can learn about the boat's systems, and gain some sailing experience."

"What a great idea," I said.

Bob was not enthusiastic when we presented the idea to him. In the end, he agreed to sail the boat with us from Beaufort to Charleston, a 60-mile journey along the Intracoastal Waterway that would take 10 to 12 hours.

We received the results of the boat survey and engine oil test. Our surveyor said that the oil in the engine was very clean – in fact, the cleanest he had seen – and didn't reveal any problems. Given that the engine, like the boat, was 20 years old, that was good news. Via phone and fax, we finalized our offer and signed the contract to buy Cherokee Rose.

On the home front, we completed the basement and a friend offered to buy our house. We now had one check on our list. The house was as good as sold.

In April, I flew to Charleston to sail Cherokee Rose with Bob and Barb from Beaufort to Charleston, where we would close the deal. Paul was in the midst of another software installation and would join me in Charleston. Dad dropped me off at the marina in Beaufort and I walked down the dock, noting that 42-foot Cherokee Rose was the largest boat in the small marina.

I was early and surprised Bob, who was tinkering with the engine. He said Barb would join us at lunch time and if I wanted, he would show me how to do an oil change.

Yippee.

Knowing that Paul would want me to explain the process, I pulled out my notebook and took copious notes. Barb brought lunch, dinner and breakfast supplies; we were going to anchor and spend the night along the way.

This stretch of the Intracoastal Way consists of narrow channels and rivers, so sailing – **tacking** back and forth – wasn't an option. We motored most of the way. When a turn in the river gave us a favorable wind direction that didn't require tacking, Bob pulled out the gib and briefly turned off the engine.

Without the engine's loud hum, I was amazed at how quiet sailing was. It was peaceful on the water. There were puffy white clouds in the sky, and the sun's warm rays promised that summer would soon arrive. I actually enjoyed myself whenever I wasn't taking notes on how to run the refrigerator, how to read the amp meter, how to work the windlass, where to find the **sea cocks** and **bilge pumps**, how to flake the anchor chain. By the end of the day, my head was spinning.

Shortly before dusk, Bob took the wheel while Barb went forward to drop the anchor. I followed her, again taking notes. She looked back at Bob and made a hand gesture. Wordlessly, Bob signaled back.

"He just told me we are in 20 feet of water."

She dropped the anchor and let out some chain. She made a different hand signal and Bob reversed the engine.

"There. Now we've set the anchor. Let me give you some advice. When it comes to anchoring, learn how to communicate with Paul by hand signals. Everyone in the anchorage will watch you anchor and, if you don't use hand signals, they will listen to you shouting and cursing at each other. Besides, you can still curse with your hands," she added, laughing.

Anchoring the boat looked easy; I wasn't sure why anyone would have to curse – but that was just another mystery to add to a day full of mysteries.

That evening we ate spaghetti with Italian sausages that had been cooked on the small BBQ grill mounted on the back of the boat. We chatted about their trip. I learned that they had never sailed out of sight of land and that they had anchored every night. Who knew you could day-hop from San Diego to South Carolina?

"What about provisioning? How did you do that?" I asked, curious to talk to a real **cruiser**.

"I never understood all the fuss," Barb replied. "The night before we left San Diego, I went grocery shopping. That was it. You know, people eat everywhere. You can buy food anywhere."

Huh. Her experience had been unlike any I had read about and it was fascinating to hear another, different approach.

Bob, Barb and I arrived in Charleston without any problems, did the paperwork and voila! Paul and I now owned Cherokee Rose. Another check on our list. Dad told me an old saying: The two happiest days in the life of a sailor were the day he bought his boat and the day he sold it. True to the saying, Bob and Barb seemed as pleased as we were.

The next day, Paul and Bruce, our friend and experienced sailor, flew to Charleston to join me and to get Rosie, as we nicknamed the boat, ready for our maiden voyage to Philadelphia. Bruce had an exhaustive pre-departure checklist, which included mundane items like filling up the diesel tanks and topping up the batteries to bigger jobs like changing the oil, which was already done, and cleaning the **bilge**. His list kept us busy.

The evening before we left, Dad and Lynn invited the three of us over for our "last hot meal." After dinner, we sat with Dad and watched the Weather Channel to get the latest forecast. That's when we heard about the gale that was expected to hit the East Coast later in the week. We modified our plan accordingly. We would sail offshore for a couple of days before tucking into the Intracoastal Way for protection from the storm.

"If the storm lasts several days, we might only get as far north as Norfolk, Virginia," said Bruce.

The problem was simple math. The trip was 600 miles. If we sailed offshore, we could cover 100 miles a day, because we would sail day and night; after all, in the ocean there was nothing to hit. In the Intracoastal Way, we could sail only during daylight hours so that we could see and avoid the **shoals**, the **land spits** and any boat traffic. Instead of a six-day offshore trip, the Intracoastal Way could take twice as long. Both Paul and Bruce had taken just one week of vacation, so wherever we were next Sunday, that was the end of this trip.

As we said goodbye on the front porch, Dad shook Bruce's hand and impulsively hugged him. "Thank you for going with

these two on their maiden voyage. I feel much better knowing that there is a real sailor on board."

Bruce looked embarrassed but chuckled at Dad's comment.

As Dad hugged me, he pressed a leather necklace with a pendant of St. Christopher – the patron saint of travelers – into my hand. "Your grandfather gave this to me when I had KellySu. Put it in the pocket of your **foul-weather jacket**," he suggested, adding, "That's where I kept it. I figured if I needed my foul-weather gear, that's probably when I needed St. Christopher's help."

Tears welled up in my eyes; despite his gruffness, my dad was a softie at heart. I hugged him. Then we headed back to Cherokee Rose for our last night of sleep before sailing to Philadelphia. As soon as we climbed aboard, I tucked the pendant in my jacket pocket for safe-keeping, unaware that I would soon need it.

To view supplemental material about this chapter, go to:
www.sailingtojessica.com/chapter-3-no-regrets-on-rosie.html

CHAPTER 4

SURVIVING CAPE FEAR

Atlantic Ocean near Cape Fear, NC, April 2001

I gasped as icy sea water, whipped off a frothy wave by 40-knot winds, blasted me in the cockpit. I jammed one of my wet hands into my jacket pocket and unexpectedly felt the St. Christopher's pendant. I clenched it briefly, hoping for divine intervention or at least some sort of rescue plan.

The boat pitched as another 10-foot wave barreled out of the impenetrable darkness that enfolded us and smacked Rosie. I fell against the cockpit bench and reflexively sat down, grabbing the nearest hand rail.

Caught in a gale off Cape Fear, we'd found Mother Nature to be merciless. In addition to the overheated engine, the wind had ripped our staysail and mainsail. Sheets of rain had short-circuited our GPS. Paul was out of action, suffering from hypothermia due to the freezing, wet conditions.

And now Bruce had it too. He was shivering across from me in the cockpit.

Repeating my earlier plea, I yelled over the howling wind, "Bruce, please come below with me and get warm."

"No, someone had to stay in the cockpit, and keep watch," he replied, slurring some of his words.

Panic seized me, but I impatiently pushed it aside. Think, Kel.

In the midst of the shrieking wind, driving spray and battering waves, a moment of calm and clarity struck me. I needed Bruce. And he needed to get warmed up.

I leaned toward him and demanded, "Why does someone have to stay out here?" I recalled a book I had read by Lin Pardey. During a gale at sea, she and her husband had stayed inside their cabin. They had only gone on deck to adjust the sails and to scan the horizon for traffic and weather changes. "Are we near land?"

"No."

I looked forward at the sails. Except for a meter of the front sail, they were rolled up. On a boat Rosie's size, the sail resembled a handkerchief.

"It doesn't look like the sail needs any tending," I said.

"No, we're hove-to."

I nodded. That was a nautical expression that meant that the sails and **rudder** were set to basically stall the boat. From what I had read, it was a technique often used in storms.

"Okay, so we are not near land and we're hove-to. Why do you need to stay in the cockpit?"

"To see if there are any boats that might hit us."

"We have radar down below. We can see any approaching boats on that," I reasoned. I looked around us; only blackness loomed beyond the faint glow of our masthead light. "Besides that, what can you really see sitting here?" I paused and then cajoled him, "Please come below, Bruce."

"I guess I should get our position and check it on the chart," he said slowly. Shivering, he pulled our back-up GPS – a handheld unit that Paul had purchased years ago for camping - out of his coat pocket and pushed a couple of buttons. Then he held it out to get a better signal.

We both waited.

"Got it," he said.

With a final search of the non-existent horizon, Bruce reluctantly followed me down, closing the hatch doors behind him.

It was amazing how much quieter, and warmer, it was in the cabin. It actually seemed cozy down here. I snapped off my harness and jacket and then saw that Bruce was struggling to unclip his harness with his numb fingers. I unclipped him and helped him take off his heavy yellow coat before the pitching motion forced me to bolt to my sea bed. Lying down helped quell my nausea.

I heard Bruce sit down heavily at the navigation station's desk just behind my couch, flip on the radar and chart our position. Then the floorboards creaked as he retreated to the bed in the quarter berth, located behind the navigation desk. I heard him shifting on the cushions, getting into his sleeping bag.

"Thanks for coming down," I said, speaking to the ceiling since he was out of sight. I fervently hoped he'd get warm.

"We need to check the horizon and chart our position every 10 minutes," Bruce said.

"There is no way I can plot our position." On this bucking boat, concentrating and writing on a piece of paper would be the end of me. I was sure of that.

"I'll chart it," Bruce said.

"Okay. Then I'll check the horizon and get our position."

With our tasks divided, I snatched the egg-timer off the desk behind me and set it for 10 minutes.

I lay back down and dozed.

Beep, beep, beep.

I awoke with a start, groped around for the egg-timer and turned it off. I grabbed the GPS off the desk, strapped on my harness, which doubled as a life-jacket, and tethered myself to the boat. I was not going to fall overboard while everyone else slept. Gripping onto the cockpit doors tightly so the wind

wouldn't catch them, I gingerly opened them. Trying not to get wet, I extended my arm as far as I could, holding out the handheld GPS and waiting for a signal. After a minute or two, it had our position. Then I sprang into the cockpit, pivoted around and scanned the horizon for any possible danger. Nothing.

Back in the cabin I woke Bruce with a nudge and laid the GPS on his sleeping bag. I glanced at the radar as I lurched past it; there weren't any green blips, an indication of boat traffic, on its screen. I crawled back into my bed, reset the alarm for 10 minutes and listened as Bruce charted our position.

"Are we safe?" I asked, referring to our location relative to land, sunken ships and other submerged dangers which were noted on the chart.

"Yep."

The floorboards creaked as Bruce returned to his bed.

We repeated our choreographed routine 71 times that night, for 12 long hours.

Paul never budged.

In the morning, Paul poked his head out of his sleeping bag and said that he felt better.

At the sound of Paul's voice, Bruce got up to make some tea. Once they had sipped a warm cupful, and eaten cold soup straight from the can, Bruce informed us that we were now off the coast of Georgetown, South Carolina. While we hadn't sailed during the night, the wind and current had pushed us south.

I groaned. After three nights and nearly three days sailing, we were only 60 miles north of where we had started! In light of the boat's condition, it was unanimously decided that we should head into port. We altered our course to Georgetown.

The excitement of approaching land, sweet immobile land, combined with the boat's gentler motion, enticed me to abandon my couch and join the guys in the cockpit.

"Well, well, well," Bruce said, "she moves."

I smiled good-naturedly at his teasing.

Even though the skies were still overcast, it was surprisingly bright in the cockpit.

"Hey, what happened to the **bimini**?" I asked, looking up. Yesterday a canvas awning had covered the cockpit, providing protection from the sun and rain. Today there was none.

"The bimini's stainless steel frame became unbolted last night and was swinging wildly in the cockpit," Paul explained. "I had to cut it down before it knocked me or Bruce overboard."

It had been quite a night.

I looked eagerly forward, toward the tree-lined shore. A mile or two ahead of us, I spotted another sailboat with one of its sails up. "Hey, we weren't the only ones caught in the storm last night," I cried out, strangely pleased to know that we hadn't been alone. As we continued east toward the coast, and the submerged breakwater that protected the entrance to the Winyah Bay, we gained on the other boat.

"Wow, they are really heeled over," I exclaimed.

Something didn't seem right. Their front sail was flapping loosely in the wind.

I gasped when I saw it. There was a huge hole in the side of the boat's hull.

Paul grabbed the binoculars out and we silently passed them around. Then Bruce pulled out the **VHF radio**, one of the few things that still worked on the boat, and called the Coast Guard. They were aware of the boat; last night they had responded to its **Mayday** calls and rescued the crew.

With horror, I realized that these people had tried to dash to a safe harbor when the storm had hit – as I had so badly wanted to do. In their haste, they had hit the hazardous breakwater that lurked just under the water's surface.

That could have been us.

I looked at Bruce and gratefully said, "Thank you for making us go back out to sea. I'm sorry I gave you such a dirty look."

He chuckled and said, "I'm glad looks can't kill, 'cause otherwise I'd be dead." Under his three-day old stubble, he blushed.

As we continued up the river to the marina, I was proud of myself. I had kept a clear head and pulled us through a dangerous situation. The next thought startled me as much as it excited me. If this was as bad as sailing got – and my vast experience of three days said it had to be – then I could do this.

I could sail around the world.

And that just proved how naive I was.

To view supplemental material about this chapter, go to:
www.sailingtojessica.com/chapter-4-surviving-cape-fear.html

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Before moving to India, and subsequently Australia, Kelly Watts was a regional contributor for Meredith Corporation, the American publisher of Better Homes & Gardens magazine. She also wrote freelance articles for Blue Water Sailing magazine, Creative Home magazine as well as Pet Trader magazine (NZ).

Prior to her four-year sailing trip, she wrote a weekly newspaper food column for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and St. Paul Pioneer Press for three years in addition to freelance food articles for other newspapers and Hometown Cooking magazine. She was also a food photographer for these newspapers. One of her sailing photographs appeared on the June 2006 cover of Blue Water Sailing magazine.

She has a degree in Chemistry with a double major in French from Georgetown University and received her Certificat de Cuisine Base from the Cordon Bleu in Paris.

For more photos, information and to purchase the complete book, go to www.sailingtojessica.com.

ACCIDENTAL JIBE

If a boat is turning downwind through the wind, but has forgotten to take in the slack in the mainsail sheet, the wind can catch the sail on its back side. That will cause the sail, and the boom to slam across the deck unexpectedly. The force of the swinging boom can break the rigging or hit (and possibly kill) a crew member. Accidental jibes are BAD.

Related Glossary Terms

Jibe, **Running**, **Wing-on-wing**

Index Find Term

ALTERNATOR

A cylindrical-shaped device which generates electricity from an engine.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

APPARENT WIND

The wind on a moving boat. This term can refer to the apparent wind speed or the apparent wind direction which differ from the true (land-based) wind. For example, if the true wind direction is exactly 90-degrees to the direction that the boat is sailing, the apparent wind direction will be less...because the boat is moving forward, there is now a forward component to the wind that isn't there when standing still, and that decreases the wind angle. By the way, zero degrees is on the nose of a boat and 180-degrees is directly behind the boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Apparent wind speed, **Knot**
, **True wind speed**

Index Find Term

APPARENT WIND SPEED

The wind speed on a moving boat (as opposed to true wind speed which is the wind speed when not moving). For example, if the boat is moving 5 knots into the wind and the true wind speed is 20 knots, the apparent wind speed - the wind felt on the boat - is 15 knots.

Related Glossary Terms

Apparent wind, **Knot**
, **True wind speed**

Index Find Term

ATOLL

A coral island which encloses a lagoon.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

AUTOPILOT

A handy device which steers the boat according to wind direction (the same principal of our wind vane) or according to a compass setting. We nicknamed our Robertson autopilot “Bob” and he was a valued member of our team. Imagine having to steer the boat by hand, day and night for 22 days?! No thanks...

Related Glossary Terms

Bob, **Rudder**, **Wind vane**

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

BEAM

At right angle to the boat, or off to the side of it. Usually used to refer to the wind direction. For example, sailing with the wind on our beam means that we are sailing across the wind; the wind is perpendicular to our direction. This is a good wind direction for sailing.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

BEAUFORT WIND SCALE

A means of relating observed conditions at sea or on land to wind speed. Before wind measuring instruments were available, sailors still described their conditions at sea but one man's "stiff breeze" was another man's "light breeze." This scale helped standardize these weather observations. For example, a flat sea covered with ripples but without crests is considered "light air" on the Beaufort Wind Scale with a corresponding wind speed of 1 - 3 knots. Small waves with breaking crests is a "moderate breeze" with winds of 11 - 16 knots.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

BECALMED

Occurs when there is no wind which means a sailboat won't go very far or very fast (unless someone turns on the engine!).

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

BILGE

The lowest part of a boat's interior where any water dribbles or leaks on board will collect. On Rosie, we had a six-foot deep bilge under the floor (which turned out to be very handy when Paul needed to access the bottom of the engine, which was suspended over this deep recess).

Related Glossary Terms

Bilge pumps

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

BILGE PUMPS

A pump whose purpose is to suck water out of the bilge. We had two electric pumps and two manual pumps for Rosie's bilge. Resting on the bottom of our deep bilge was one electric pump, which took care of the little everyday dribbles of water that collected there. About six-inches higher, and mounted to the bilge wall, was a second bilge pump. If the everyday bilge pump couldn't keep the water out of the bilge - for example, if we had a fair-sized leak on the boat - the second, back-up pump would activate when the water level reached it. This pump also sounded a very loud alarm, thereby alerting us to a potential problem.

Related Glossary Terms

Bilge

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

BIMINI

An awning used to shelter the cockpit from the sun and sometimes from the rain. Our bimini had a clear plastic window in it, like a car's sun roof, which enabled us to see the mainsail and mast head above us. We also had a canvas cover for the plastic window so we could fully shade the cockpit when at anchor.

Related Glossary Terms

Dodger

Index Find Term

Chapter 4 - Surviving Cape Fear

BLOCK

A pulley on a boat. We used a block-and-tackle (several pulleys and a long rope) to hoist the engine out of the boat and onto the deck.

Related Glossary Terms

Preventer

Index Find Term

BOAT DOCUMENTATION

This is similar to a car's registration...in our case, our boat was federally registered as we knew we going to sail around the world, and not just within a certain state.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

BOB

Our nickname for our Robertson autopilot.

Related Glossary Terms

Autopilot

Index

Find Term

BOOM

The spar (or metal pole) that is attached, and is perpendicular, to the mast and extends towards the back of the boat. The bottom of the mainsail is attached to the boom.

Related Glossary Terms

Gooseneck, Rigging

Index Find Term

BOW

The forward part of the boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Bow pulpit

Index Find Term

BOW PULPIT

The stainless steel guardrail at the front of the boat. While anchoring the boat or retrieving the anchor, Paul held onto this guardrail whenever Rosie pitched up and down due to the waves.

Related Glossary Terms

Bow

Index Find Term

CAPSIZE

To tip or turn a boat over.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

CHOCKED

In my book, this verb refers to a boat which is supported by metal braces while being on land for repairs. There is a similar word with a different meaning...a chock (a noun) is a deck-mounted guide though which lines are run.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

CIRCUMNAVIGATION

To sail around the world.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

CLEATS

A metal fitting on deck that is used to secure (tie off) lines. Most of the cleats I have seen are shaped like a pi symbol (as in pi equals 3.14...) and the ropes are wrapped under and around the flat top in a figure 8 shape.

Related Glossary Terms

Clutch

Index Find Term

CLOSE-HAULED

Sailing as close as possible into the wind. Obviously a boat cannot sail directly into the wind (which is considered to be at zero degrees), but if it bears off about 45-degrees or more, it can sail nearly upwind. We were close-hauled sailing to the Bahamas from Florida which is why Charbonneau dubbed us “On-the-Nose-Cherokee-Rose” - because the wind was on our nose. The motion on a boat sailing this close to upwind is uncomfortable and can get quite rough if the waves are big. Not my favorite point-of-sail.

Related Glossary Terms

Headwind

Index Find Term

CLUTCH

A device through which a line is strung and, when a lever is pressed, keeps the line from slipping.

Related Glossary Terms

Cleats

Index Find Term

COMPANIONWAY

Steps or ladder leading from the deck or cockpit of a boat to its cabin. I also use “companionway” to refer to the doorway which separates the cabin from the cockpit.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

CRUISE, CRUISER, CRUISING...

To cruise simply means to visit the islands or ports in the area by boat; a cruiser is a person who does this.

At one point in the book, I say that we had become cruisers but not sailors...there is a difference. (Disclaimer: this is my definition and/or opinion; it may be different from someone else's.) A sailor is a person who knows tons about sailing and how to tweak the performance of a boat, given the wind and sea conditions, until it is fully maximized. A sailor will sit in the cockpit and analyze slight changes in the wind and happily readjust the sails accordingly for hours. Sailing is not a means: it is the purpose of the journey.

A cruiser sets the sails, flips on the autopilot, and then leaves the boat to sail itself while he/she does something else...read a book, repair the fridge, make some water, or plot the next route. If the wind changes enough to merit an adjustment in sail configuration, then the cruiser will tend to the sails. For a cruiser, sailing is usually a means to visit exotic ports, not an end.

On our trip, most of our friends were simply cruisers like Paul and I. Surprisingly, only a couple of boats were manned by sailors who happened to be cruisers, too.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

DEPTH INDICATOR

A two-piece instrument that measures the depth of the water under the boat. It consists of an instrument panel that flashes the depth on a screen for crew to consult as well as an underwater transducer, fitted under the hull, to measure the depth.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

DODGER

A canvas (or fiberglass in the case of a hard dodger) protective covering at the front of the cockpit designed to shield the crew from ocean spray and splashes. It also provides some protection from the wind.

Related Glossary Terms

Bimini

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

DORADES

An air vent that prevents water from going into the cabin but allows air to circulate in the cabin. While Rosie had hatches, similar to opening skylights in a house, there were many times that we couldn't open them, for example, on a rough passage or when it rained. In those situations, the dorades were the only means to get fresh air below.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

FORESTAY

The metal shroud (part of the boat's standing rigging) that runs from the bow of the boat to the top of the mast, to which the jib is hanked (or attached).

Related Glossary Terms

Rigging, **Roller furling**, **Shrouds**, **Turnbuckle**

Index Find Term

FOUL-WEATHER JACKET

A jacket that is designed to keep a person dry and warm on wet, cold days. Typically a foul-weather jacket is bright yellow, has velcro closures around the wrists to keep dripping water out, and flaps that cover its many pockets.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

FURLED

Refers to when a sail (usually the jib or staysail) is rolled up around its headstay. A sail can be fully furled - entirely rolled up - or partially furled. The advantage of furling a sail is that you can make the sail any size you want for the given wind conditions by rolling it up a little bit or a lot. After our maiden voyage, we installed roller furling on both our jib and staysail so that we could control the size of the sail from the safety of the cockpit. Running around on deck during a gale can be dangerous!

Related Glossary Terms

Jib, **Reduced sail**, **Reefed**, **Reef**, **Roller furling**, **Staysail**

Index Find Term

GOOSENECK

The fitting which connects the boom to the mast.

Related Glossary Terms

Boom, **Mast**

Index Find Term

GPS

Global Positioning System is a satellite navigation system which provides one's location (in longitude and latitude), provided one has a receiver and an unobstructed line-of-sight to four or more GPS satellites in space.

Related Glossary Terms

Nav station, **Sextant**

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

GULF STREAM

A swift and warm Atlantic Ocean current that originates at the southern tip of Florida and runs north and parallel with America's eastern coastline before crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

GYPSY

A toothed-wheel on the windlass that engages the anchor chain. If the toothed-wheel doesn't match the chain size closely, the chain can cause undue wear on the wheel and/or cause the chain to jump uncontrollably off the windless when the winch is operating. Paul referred to this runaway condition as freewheeling.

Related Glossary Terms

Windlass

Index Find Term

HALYARD

A line used to hoist or lower a sail.

Related Glossary Terms

Mainsail, **Rigging**

Index Find Term

HARNESS

Strong rope or webbing, sometimes with a built-in inflatable life vest, worn around the chest and tethered to the boat to prevent a crew member from being separated from the boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

HEADLINER

The drop-down ceiling inside the cabin. On Rosie, the vinyl headliner could be removed to access the deck hardware that was below deck, like the nuts to the numerous bolts which held cleats, clutches, stanchions, etc on deck.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

HEADWIND

Wind that comes from directly in front of you; on a boat that means when the bow is pointed dead into the wind.

Related Glossary Terms

Close-hauled

Index Find Term

HEAVE-TO

The act of setting the sail(s) and the rudder to counter each other, thereby “stalling” the boat so that it holds its position. This technique is used in storm conditions to make the motion on board bearable or when any speed could jeopardize the boat/crew. We also used this technique in good weather when we wanted to hold our position until daybreak, for example, before entering the pass to Minerva Reef.

Related Glossary Terms

Hove-to, Sea anchor

Index Find Term

HEAVY WEATHER

Yuck. When there is strong wind and big waves.

Related Glossary Terms

Sea anchor

Index Find Term

HOVE-TO

Past tense of heave-to.

Related Glossary Terms

Heave-to

Index

Find Term

HULL

The main body of the boat, not including its rigging, sails or its keel.

Related Glossary Terms

Keel, **Rigging**

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

IMPELLER

According to Nigel Calder, this is “a rotating fitting that imparts motion to a fluid in a rotating pump.” In our story, the impeller moves coolant around the engine to cool it. If the impeller doesn’t work, the engine overheats...

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

JIB

The forward sail which is attached to the forestay.

Related Glossary Terms

Furled, **Roller furling**, **Staysail**

Index Find Term

JIBE

The act of turning the boat through the wind while the wind is behind you.

Related Glossary Terms

Accidental jibe, **Tacking**

Index Find Term

KEEL

The heavy fin beneath the water that is attached to the boat's hull and designed to keep the boat upright as well as preventing it from slipping sideways in the water. On Rosie, our lead keel extended six-feet underwater.

Related Glossary Terms

Hull

Index Find Term

KNOT

A measure of speed. One knot equals one nautical mile per hour. A nautical mile is 6076 feet and equals one minute of the earth's latitude. For comparison, a mile on land is 5280 feet.

Related Glossary Terms

Apparent wind, **Apparent wind speed**, **Speedometer**, **True wind speed**

Index Find Term

LAND SPITS

A deposit of sediment and sand along coastal areas that eventually forms land, similar to how a sand bar is created. For a more technical definition, check out http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spit_(landform).

Related Glossary Terms

Shoals

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

LEE CLOTH

A strong piece of fabric or mesh used to keep a crew member from rolling out of bed while sailing.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

LINE

A line refers to any rope on a boat. Why isn't "rope" used? I have no idea.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

LOCK

A means of raising or lowering a boat. Here's my simple definition: A lock consists of a basin of water enclosed at opposite ends by water-tight gates. A boat enters one side of the basin, the gates close and water is either pumped into the basin, or drained out of the basin, thereby lifting or lowering the boat. Then the other gate is opened and the boat leaves the lock.

In the Panama Canal, the water in the Pacific Ocean is higher than in the Atlantic so Rosie needed to be raised. It turns out that Gatun Lake is higher than either ocean so Rosie needed to be lifted up on the Atlantic-side of Gatun Lake and then lowered slightly on the Pacific-side before entering the Pacific Ocean.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

MAINSAIL

The sail that is hoisted on the mast (and is usually attached to the boom). Our mainsail had battens sewn into it to give it better sail shape. It also had three reefing points, which enabled us to lower the sail to any of these points and thereby decrease our sail size. During storms, our mainsail was triple-reefed which meant that it was as small as it could be, just short of taking it down altogether.

Related Glossary Terms

Halyard, **Mast**, **Reduced sail**, **Reefed**, **Reef**, **Staysail**

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

MAST

The towering aluminum or wood pole in the middle of the boat from which the mainsail is hoisted. Most (if not all) of the metal shrouds on a boat and its standing rigging is attached to the mast, too.

Related Glossary Terms

Gooseneck, **Mainsail**, **Mast-head**, **Rigging**, **Shrouds**, **Spreader lights**

Index Find Term

MAST FOOT

This is the base that the bottom of the mast sits on.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

MAST-HEAD

The top of the mast. On Rosie, we had one light on top of the mast as well as a wind direction indicator, an anemometer (which measures wind speed) and an antenna for our VHF radio.

Related Glossary Terms

Mast, Spreader lights

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

MAYDAY

There are three internationally recognized distress signals that are used in certain situations:

Mayday - only for a life-threatening emergency

Pan-Pan - an urgent, but not life-threatening situation

Securite - a signal to warn others of a hazard or dangerous situation

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Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 4 - Surviving Cape Fear

MOORING BALL

In particularly deep anchorages or in anchorages where the current is strong, sometimes marinas or yacht clubs will permanently anchor balls or buoys so that boats can tie up to them. Then the boat doesn't have to set its own anchor. Mooring balls are also used where careless anchoring has ruined coral reefs to minimize further damage.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

NAV STATION

Usually referred to simply as the nav station. This is the desk area on a boat, designed so that crew can plot their position on large, bulky paper charts. With the increasing use of electronic charts, this is where the computer might be located as well as other electronics. Here is a photo of Rosie's nav station (if you don't see it, click on the "Glossary Index" button below to see it). Pictured from left to right, on wall: Fuse box, Inmarsat C Satellite E-Mail System, radio, Single Side Band radio, VHF Radio. On desk, in rear from left to right: GPS, secondary Autopilot control, Radar and CD case. Two laptops for electronic charts, satellite e-mail, etc.

Related Glossary Terms

GPS, **Ship's log**, **VHF radio**

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

OBSERVATION PORT

On board, the tanks - for diesel, drinking water, gray water, etc - have hoses which lead to small exterior holes to fill or empty them as the case may be. In order to clean the inside of the tanks or to check for leaks, the tanks also had large holes on top of them that are usually bolted shut with a tight-fitting lid.

When Rosie went aground in Charleston and subsequently laid down on her side, we discovered that one of our diesel observation ports had NOT been tightly sealed so diesel leaked out of this top access point. Talk about being heeled over!

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

OUTBOARD

A portable engine with a propeller that is mounted on the transom (the back) of a dinghy or boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

PEAK FLOW

When a tidal current reaches its maximum speed.

In the USA, there are typically two high tides and two low tides per day, with six hours between each one. As the tide ebbs (falls) or floods (rises), the movement of water creates a current. The current is approximately its strongest three hours after slack tide (when there is no current at all, at the precise moment of high or low tide); this is peak flow.

Related Glossary Terms

Slack tide

Index Find Term

PILINGS

A wood post driven into the seabed to support docks or to form a breakwater.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

POOPED

Yes, this is a sailing term. Being pooped is when a wave crashes over the stern of your boat and fills the cockpit with water. This happened to us numerous times on our passage to Panama and it is scary!

Related Glossary Terms

Stern

Index Find Term

PORT

1. The left-hand side of your boat as you face forward.
2. A window in the cabin of a boat
3. A harbor

Related Glossary Terms

Starboard

Index Find Term

PREVENTER

A block-and-tackle system used to stop the boom from swinging across the cockpit in the case of an accidental jibe. We used ours every time we were sailing downwind.

Related Glossary Terms

Block, **Running**

Index Find Term

QUARANTINE

When a boat arrives in a new country, the boat is expected to hoist a yellow flag, sometimes called a Q flag. This lets onshore officials know that the boat has just arrived and will be coming ashore to clear in. Crew members are supposed to stay on board as part of a quarantine while the captain of the vessel goes ashore to check in with customs and immigration. If all goes well, the captain returns to the boat and the Q flag is lowered. Then the flag of that country is hoisted as a sign of respect (also called a courtesy flag) and the crew is allowed ashore. In several cases, Paul returned to Rosie with officials who wanted to check our food, cigarettes and alcohol stores before clearing us in.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

RAFT UP

When two boats tie up together, usually at anchor.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

REDUCED SAIL

When the overall sail area on a boat is decreased.

When there is too much wind for the sails (for example, the boat is steeply heeled or is going too fast for the wave conditions), smaller sails are needed. The area of most forward sails can be decreased by simply furling them, or rolling them up. Mainsails are typically lowered a notch or two, ie reefed, to reduce their sail area.

Related Glossary Terms

Furled, **Mainsail**, **Reefed**, **Reef**, **Roller furling**

Index Find Term

REEFED, REEF

A way of reducing sail area. The front sails on Rosie are furled, or rolled up, to the desired size while the mainsail is lowered to one of three different points or dropped altogether. See Mainsail for more details.

Related Glossary Terms

Furled, **Mainsail**, **Reduced sail**

Index Find Term

REVERSE OSMOSIS WATER MAKER

A machine that converts salt water into drinking water.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

RIGGING

There are two types of rigging on a sailboat: the standing rigging and the running rigging. The standing - or permanent - rigging is the mast, boom and all of the metal shrouds that support the mast. The running rigging is all of the lines (ropes) that are attached to the sails, including the halyards and sheets.

Related Glossary Terms

Boom, **Forestay**, **Halyard**, **Hull**, **Mast**, **Sheets**, **Shrouds**

Index Find Term

ROGUE WAVE

I just checked Wikipedia's definition of a rogue wave and it differs from my mine.

Here's what I mean when I refer to a rogue wave: waves typically travel in the same direction, have roughly the same size and go roughly the same speed. A rogue wave is one that comes unexpectedly from a different angle, might be larger than the rest of them and travel faster or slower than the others.

In Panama, most of the walls of waves came from behind us, but every once in a while, a rogue wave would hit us from the side.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

ROLLER FURLING

A way of rolling up the front sail around its forestay to decrease its sail area or to roll it up entirely at the end of a passage or in strong winds.

Related Glossary Terms

Forestay, **Furled**, **Jib**, **Reduced sail**, **Staysail**

Index Find Term

RUDDER

The underwater fin that is controlled by the tiller, the wheel and/or the autopilot and steers the boat by deflecting water. Water has to be moving past the rudder in order to steer the boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Autopilot

Index Find Term

Chapter 4 - Surviving Cape Fear

RUNNING

Sailing with the wind directly behind the boat. In these conditions, the sails are usually set for wing-on-wing or the spinnaker is hoisted. Because waves usually come from the same direction as the wind, running is more comfortable than pounding into the wind and waves. Running, however, can be dangerous due to the risk of an accidental jibe which is why Paul rigged preventers.

Related Glossary Terms

Accidental jibe, **Preventer**, **Spinnaker**, **Wing-on-wing**

Index Find Term

SEA ANCHOR

A parachute- or cone-shaped piece of fabric that is tossed into the water off the bow of the boat in heavy weather. Floating just under the surface of the water, the parachute slows the boat down. It also keeps the bow of the boat facing into the wind and breaking seas. If the waves are large, it is dangerous for a boat to be sideways to the breaking waves as the boat might roll over. Keeping the bow of the boat into the waves exposes less of the boat to the force of plummeting water and helps the boat ride up and down the waves instead of being tossed around.

Related Glossary Terms

Heave-to, Heavy weather

Index Find Term

SEA COCKS

A valve which opens or closes an underwater hole in the hull. Some sea cocks allow salt water to come in, such as for cooling the engine, while other sea cocks are designed to let water out, such as from the kitchen sink.

Related Glossary Terms

Through-hull fitting

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

SEXTANT

An instrument used for celestial navigation and for getting one's position before GPS became prevalent.

Related Glossary Terms

GPS

Index Find Term

SHEETS

The lines which are used to control a sail, and its shape, by taking them in or easing them out.

Related Glossary Terms

Rigging, **Winch**

Index Find Term

Chapter 2 - Meaning of Life

SHIP'S LOG

The boat's log book which contains information about one's position, time and date at sea. If all electronics failed, this log could be used to estimate one's location and to make educated course adjustments as needed. On passage, we made a new log entry every hour, including date and time, latitude, longitude, distance to go, speed over ground, compass bearing, wind direction and speed, engine hours, whose watch it was, sail configuration and any comments. As I write this, looking in our log book, I see a couple of notes: did 2 loads laundry; saw meteor(!?) within 10 feet of boat...oops, I might give away part of our story...You get the idea.

Related Glossary Terms

Nav station

Index Find Term

SHOALS

Shallow water that may be dangerous to a boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Land spits

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

SHROUDS

I refer to all of the metal wires which extend down from the mast as “shrouds.” The ones in front are also called headstays or forestays; the ones in the rear are also called backstays. The ones at the side of the mast are simply called shrouds.

Related Glossary Terms

Forestay, **Mast**, **Rigging**, **Spreader lights**, **Turnbuckle**

Index Find Term

SLACK TIDE

The moment when there is no tidal current, which occurs at exactly high and low tides.

Related Glossary Terms

Peak flow

Index Find Term

SNUBBER

A piece of rope used to reduce the strain on the anchor chain and windlass; it acts like a shock absorber.

Related Glossary Terms

Windlass

Index Find Term

SPEEDOMETER

The instrument which measures our speed through the water.

Related Glossary Terms

Knot

Index Find Term

SPINNAKER

A large billowing front sail which is used when sailing downwind.

Related Glossary Terms

Running, **Wing-on-wing**

Index Find Term

SPREADER LIGHTS

A spreader is a vertical support placed high on the mast and used to guide the shrouds from the the top of the mast to the deck. On Rosie, we had 2 flood lights attached to the underside of the spreader, one on either side of the mast, that illuminate the deck at night when switched on.

Related Glossary Terms

Mast, **Mast-head**, **Shrouds**

Index Find Term

SQUALLS

A typically short storm which starts when the wind suddenly picks up and is followed by rain, thunderstorms and/or lightening.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

STARBOARD

The right side of the boat when looking forward to the bow.

Related Glossary Terms

Port

Index Find Term

STAYSAIL

Cherokee Rose was a cutter, which meant that she had three sails: a higher- cut forward jib; a secondary smaller “jib” that was between the main jib and the mast; as well as the mainsail. This secondary front sail is the staysail.

Related Glossary Terms

Furled, **Jib**, **Mainsail**, **Roller furling**

Index Find Term

Chapter 1 - Double Maiden Voyage

STERN

The back end of a boat.

Related Glossary Terms

Pooped, **Stern pulpit**

Index Find Term

STERN PULPIT

The stainless steel guardrail at the stern of the boat. Our barbecue grill and two outboard motors were attached to this guard rail.

Related Glossary Terms

Stern

Index Find Term

TACKING

The act of turning the boat through the wind, while heading into the wind.

Related Glossary Terms

Jibe

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

THROUGH-HULL FITTING

This refers to a nylon or metal piece which is inserted into and securely fastened around an underwater hole in the hull of the boat. Sea cocks and/or hoses are then attached to these fittings.

Related Glossary Terms

Sea cocks

Index Find Term

TOE RAIL

A wooden or metal rail around the the outer edges of the boat’s deck.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

TRAVEL LIFT

A special crane fitted with slings used to hoist a boat from the water or lower a boat back into the water.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

TRUE WIND SPEED

The actual speed of the wind when standing still.

Related Glossary Terms

Apparent wind, **Apparent wind speed**, **Knot**

Index Find Term

TURNBUCKLE

A mechanical fitting attached to the bottom ends of the metal shrouds and stays. These fittings can be tightened or released to adjust the tension of the standing rigging.

Related Glossary Terms

Forestay, Shrouds

Index Find Term

VHF RADIO

Very High Frequency two-way radio typically used for boats within line-of-sight.

Related Glossary Terms

Nav station

Index Find Term

Chapter 4 - Surviving Cape Fear

WINCH

When the load on a line is too much to haul in by hand, the line is wrapped around a drum and, using the drum's handle, is turned, thereby pulling in the line. This drum, or winch, is also helpful for releasing a line under strain in a controlled manner. Winches are usually used for hoisting the sails and trimming them.

Related Glossary Terms

Sheets, Windlass

Index Find Term

WIND GENERATOR

A fan-shaped device which rotates when the wind blows and generates electricity. Unfortunately, it doesn't generate wind for the sails as a friend mistakenly, but understandably, thought...

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

WIND VANE

A device that steers the boat relative to the wind direction.

Related Glossary Terms

Autopilot

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

WINDLASS

An electric or hydraulic machine which raises or lowers the anchor and its chain on the boat. On Rosie, our windlass was at the bow, and in a locker to protect it from salt spray, waves and rain.

Related Glossary Terms

Gypsy, **Snubber**, **Winch**

Index Find Term

Chapter 3 - No Regrets on Rosie

WING-ON-WING

A sail configuration used when sailing downwind...the mainsail and boom are pushed out over the water (not quite perpendicular to the boat) on one side of the boat while the front jib is held out over the other side of the boat, usually with the help of a pole. This maximizes the sail area that is exposed to the wind.

Related Glossary Terms

Accidental jibe, **Running**, **Spinnaker**

Index Find Term