

A week ago he said, "Oh, Mr. Billings, I'm so glad we are working together. We's like peas in a pod." The best compliment I've gotten in a long time.

In May, after four months of lessons, I tested him. There is a standard test. I was pleased but not too

surprised that he had progressed from a level of 3.3 to 4.6 grade in his reading. He was excited. So were TJ and his wife. He and I will hang together until he reaches the 6th grade reading level. Most daily newspapers are said to be printed for 6th grade readers.

WE SKIRT DISASTER IN THE BAHAMAS

Paul Campbell

Editor: Paul is truly a remarkable fellow. He left college with the rest of us in 1933, but, then, he never really left.

Over the years he has been back to audit course after course: Anthropology; Paul Volker's courses in "International Economic Policy"; Linguistics; and there may be others. Every week during the school year, he and Julie drive to Princeton from their home on the eastern shore of Maryland to spend one or two nights in Princeton and attend classes. And with it all he has written thoughtful essays and critiques on these and other subjects. He has written two books: "De Tales and Other Stories" about his naval experiences in World War II; and "Blue Water Blue Julie", about his life and cruises on the sailing yacht he had built in England in 1972.

Several years ago he published a collection of his "works", thoughts and experiences, entitled "The Possible Dream", with chapters entitled: 1. General and Philosophical; 2. The Human Condition; 3. Linguistics and the Use of Languages; 4. Economics; 5. Paul A. Volker; 6. Sailing; 7. U.S. Navy in World War II. The following story is from Chapter 6 on Sailing.

We spent the early part of 1986 cruising in the Abacos in "Julie". In our opinion, this is the best area of the Bahamas for several reasons; the sailing is almost entirely in protected waters behind the outlying islands and reefs; the local people are helpful and very friendly; the harbors and beautiful beaches are plentiful; the water is crystal clear; and we are away from the "drug run" as these islands are the northernmost of the Bahamas, well north of Miami.

Whale Cay. There are only two places where one might get a bad dusting; crossing the Gulf Stream from

Florida, and transiting the passage around Whale Cay. This is a story of Whale Cay.

"Julie" is a 51 foot yawl, extremely seaworthy, with two diesel engines and two propellers which feather to reduce resistance when we are under sail.

We left Palm Beach the night of February 4th to arrive around daylight at West End in the Abacos to clear customs and immigration. We had a reasonably rough passage but had no problems. We always cross to the Bahamas at night so as to arrive in daylight, as there are no lighthouses or buoys to help getting into harbor during darkness.

We then worked our way around the northern part of the Abacos to the eastern side, stopping at various harbors en route, ending up at Marsh Harbor. We had various children, grandchildren and friends join us at different times and had a great cruise.

Heading Back. On April 15th time was ticking away so we reluctantly headed back for the states. We spent two nights in the harbor of Man'O'War Cay, April 18 and 19, where we kept a careful check on the weather before proceeding about ten miles north to make the passage outside of Whale Cay. It is necessary to go outside of Whale Cay because the water inside is too shallow. We had been watching the weather carefully and kept a regular check on the powerful weather broadcasts from the U.S. Coast Guard at Portsmouth, Virginia.

Storm Off Hatteras. On the evening of the 19th, winds were predicted to be light to moderate from the northeast, which they had been all day, and which

A young European girl talking to a friend said she was worried that she might be pregnant. The friend asked, "Have you had a check-up?" "Well, no," she said, "I think he was a Hungarian."

continued that night and the morning of the 20th. No mention whatever was made of heavy swells, and although we had been tracking a storm off Cape Hatteras, by the 19th it was about 800 miles northeast of us and moving east. So we did not consider it any problem.

As we approached Whale Cay East Channel at 0944 we got an accurate fix from visual compass bearings, radar, Loran and fathometer, and then headed out to the ocean. There are no buoys or aids to navigation here.

The U.S. Government chart of this particular area is very good, and the instructions given in the Yachtsman's guide to the Bahamas are specific. When Chubb Rock, which lies about two miles offshore, bears 335 steer directly for it. Then, when about a mile off Whale Cay, change course to 294 until Chubb Rock bears 67. At this point turn left to 247, putting Chubb Rock directly astern, and head for the entrance at Whale Cay West Channel. When entering this channel, keep $\frac{3}{8}$ of a mile off the west end of Whale Cay. One difficulty with these instructions was that we could not actually see Chubb Rock because of the heavy sea and spray. We finally figured that where the water was shooting up vertically 50 or 100 feet marked the rock.

During the entire passage our radar was of enormous help in measuring distances, although the seas were so high that radar would not work in the troughs. But every time we got on top of a wave the range and bearing would show very clearly. An accurate compass is also a big help.

A Warning. Incidentally, the Yachtsman's Guide states, "NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THIS PASSAGE, AS SEVERAL BOATS AND LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST HERE IN RECENT YEARS."

As we headed out into the ocean towards Chubb Cay, a moderate sea was breaking ahead of us, but the wind was very light at about 10 knots. We carried only the full mainsail strapped in to steady her. We made good progress with our diesels, but the further out we got the worse the seas became. I had thought that the worst of the seas would be in the shallow water over the bar in the channel. However, they gradually got steeper and higher until I would estimate they were 25 feet high. The "Julie" plowed steadily ahead into the seas at about 3 or 4 knots with the engines turning over at moderate speed. She would lift up and up, go over the crests, and come down again on the other side. While it was a rough ride, no green water came over the deck. I was thrilled at her performance.



Paul and Julie in a favorite spot—Cockpit of "The Julie"

When we turned on the second leg on a course of 294 the seas were abeam. Here again she would lift beautifully as the seas slid under her with a huge "swoosh".

The Anxious Part. The most anxious part of the passage was the trip back in, west of Whale Cay, toward the Sound with the seas astern of us. I was concerned that one of them might break over our stern, but her stern would lift up and let the sea slide by, with nary a drop aboard.

Julie, and our daughter Gordie, did all the steering as I was 100% occupied with navigation. They are both experienced helmsmen and the vessel steered beautifully under their guidance.

Breakers Ahead. When I told Julie on the final leg to turn to 247, she said there was nothing but breakers ahead! I said I had checked our position about ten times and was as sure as I had ever been that we were on course. So we headed in while I kept a constant check on our position, finally going through the breakers with a great rush. Once over the bar we were in absolutely smooth water.

What had caused the heavy seas was the storm off Cape Hatteras. While this was many hundred miles away, it stirred up the ocean to such an extent that it sent heavy seas for vast distances as a sort of surge arriving at Whale Cay at the time we were there. I had talked to Sunny Neff who had made the passage the day before and he found the seas to be light to moderate and no trouble.



Daughter, Gordie Campbell—Expert helmsman (helmswoman?)

Bad News. When we arrived at the dock at Green Turtle Cay later that afternoon, the dockmaster said, "That was a terrible thing about that freighter sinking in Whale Cay passage." He said it had happened a few hours ago. The 160 foot freighter "Violet Mitchell", which runs regularly back and forth to Florida, had capsized and sunk with a loss of two people out of a crew of eight.

Her stern had reportedly lifted out of the water in the huge seas while coming back into the Sound and the rudder became useless so that she broached and went over on her side, sinking almost immediately. I said we had just come through without any trouble although it was very rough. We were the only vessel of any kind to complete the passage that day. The "Violet Mitchell" was apparently about an hour and a half astern of us, though we did not see her due to the heavy spray and because we were so busy.

On looking back, I suppose it could be argued that we would have been wiser to wait rather than making the passage. But the weather was beautiful with only a light breeze, and I did not think a storm 800 miles away would cause such a sea. I know of hurricanes sending seas hundreds of miles, but this was an ordinary April storm with no shipping warnings being given.

Confidence in "Julie". The main reason I decided to proceed was that I have such confidence in the "Julie" after sailing her for fourteen years in England, Scotland, the West Indies, Bahamas and the entire east coast of the United States. After sailing on all types of vessels for over fifty years, including winters in the

north Atlantic as skipper of a Destroyer-Escort in World War II, my ideas about a sailing yacht were pretty well crystallized.

So with the genius of Bill Luders as master-mind, with Ted Hood's basic hull and Ted Brewers contributions, the "Julie" has fulfilled all our requirements. She has a full deep hull without centerboard, good freeboard and sheer, a large powerful rudder and an old-fashioned sea-going stern. Her two engines also give her a good margin of safety. I was astonished how well and easily she steered and handled in what was her most severe test yet. But much of the credit goes to my wife Julie who did most of the steering, and to our daughter, Gordie, who did part of it.

Incidentally, I would never have done it with a "modern" boat as developed by the International Offshore Racing Rule. These are flat instead of deep aft, usually with a small rudder, and a great tendency to broach. That would have been unthinkable. Broaching could have easily meant disaster, as happened to the freighter.

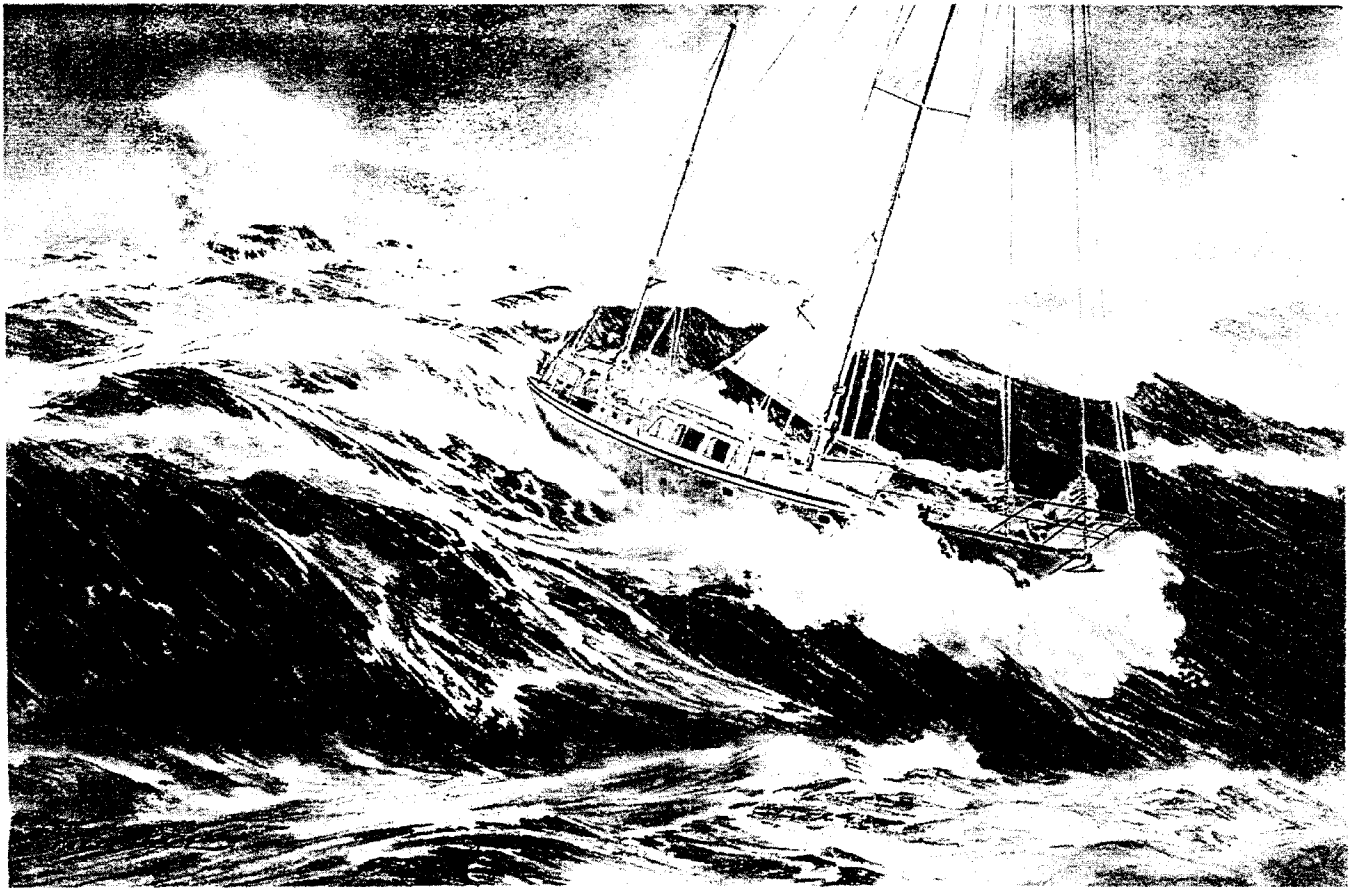


Julie—with everything drawing

Overheard on the street: "Many a dumb blond is a smart brunette!"

THE WHALE CAY SYNDROME

Death Trap Lures Veteran and Novice Alike



With Julie Campbell at the helm, "Julie" passes over the Whale Cay Bar. Chub Rocks break in the distance serving as a aid to navigation. Sketch by James E. Mitchell

One nun to another: "Sister Margaret must have gotten out of the wrong side of bed this morning." "What do you mean?" "Well, she's wearing Father Murphy's slippers."