



SINGLES UNDER SAIL, INC.

THE MASTHEAD

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Photo Ida Lowe

HAVE AN SUS QUESTION? Contact:

President * Alison Merlo
SUSPresident@gmail.com



Vice President * Bob Frishman
SUSvicepresident1@gmail.com



Treasurer *
SUSTreasurer1@gmail.com

Secretary * Kathy Currie
SUSsecretary1@gmail.com



Commodore * Peter Luciano
sloopquest@aol.com



Vice-Commodore * Janet Steinberg
crewsails@gmail.com



Membership * Marie Taney
marie.taney@gmail.com



Newsletter * Ida Lowe
SUS_masthead@gmail.com



Public Relations Ronnie Ross
SUSpublicrelations1@gmail.com



Programs * TBD

Special Events * Ronnie Ross
SUSpublicrelations1@gmail.com



Webmaster Ida Lowe
SUSwebmaster18@gmail.com



** Board Member*

**BULLETIN BOARD
 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**



*Come be Jolly with SUS
 and toast the holiday season!*



Thurs. Dec. 15th from 5:30 PM

Sedona Taphouse
 515 West Ave, Norwalk, CT
 (Parking garage next door)

**Festive Attire would be very
 Jolly!**

*SUS members, no charge.
 Guests - \$20*

AND JUST FOR FUN...

**We'll have a grab bag. If you want
 to join in, bring a wrapped gift
 (\$10-\$15)
 You'll be given a ticket, and before
 you leave, you can pick up a gift
 from the bag.**

December Birthdays

Florie Munroe 12/1
 Roger Blaho 12/3
 Caryl Bate 12/3
 Lori Gage 12/9
 Lynne Krasnauskas 12/11
 Susan Cain 12/15
 Fred Cronin 12/23
 Susan Anderson 12/28

Welcome New Member!

NAME	Self Rate	Town
Lori Gage	Skipper	Greenwich

President's Message—Alison Merlo



Happy Holidays SUS! Hoping you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, celebrated with friends and family. As we inch closer to the end of the year, let's take some time to reflect on all that we have and are grateful for.

As a club, we had a wonderful sailing season, the Charlie Raymond Party, the club cruise, the Klondike, the end of season party at CPYC and miscellaneous happy hours and program meetings sprinkled in. Not to mention new friends and new memories made by old and new friends. We are so very fortunate to be SUSers! My gratitude runs deep and I am sure you all feel the same way.

I wish you all a joyous holiday season and hope to see you at Sedona on Thursday, December 15th to toast the new year.

Happy Holidays,

Alison

Commodore's Corner—Peter Luciano **PLAN AHEAD AND GET THERE SAFELY**



First and foremost, happy holidays to all and peace in the world for the new year! Lets look forward to a fun filled 2023 sailing season.

Safety on a boat begins before you leave the dock but does not stop there. Maintenance and proper equipment are key factors in enjoying sailing, be it a short day-sail or an ocean passage. In the Bermuda race a checklist is issued to be filled out before the race, and then another captain who is in the race comes on board to inspect your boat. This is an excellent way of ensuring ship's equipment is on board and in working order. However, this does not guarantee everything is in good condition.

The skipper is responsible for her/his boat. Just checking it out while walking around the boat, paying attention to sounds, trying to find the place where a nut you found on the deck belongs, repairing a sail that shows wear, finding the source of water found on the inside of the boat, repairing occasional malfunctioning equipment, keeping electronics updated, are just some of the routines that must be performed regularly. The bottom line is to keep your eyes and your ears open when you are on a boat. Both skipper and crew should be on the alert for potential problems. I as a skipper try my best never to leave the dock with a known problem that might put my crew or the boat in harm's way. I believe most, if not all skippers would welcome information from anyone regarding potential problems noticed on their boat. La Bella Vita is in the constant stage of repair and upgrades. To me and most boaters it is a labor of love. We all look forward to the days when we are sailing in 15 to 20 knot winds on a broad reach doing 7 to 10 knots down the sound or laying at anchor in a protected bay looking at the stars, but it requires some preparation and team effort. I believe most if not all of us in SUS are part of a team when it comes to boating and safety. Boaters in general look out for one another. Did you know that even large vessels are required to come to the aid of a boat in trouble at sea? SUS skippers have helped one another out on multiple occasions. La Bella Vita came to the aid of a sinking sailboat in 2022.

The bottom line is: keep your eyes and ears open at all times for any potential problems, let the skipper know, and hopefully, address any problems before leaving the dock.

Pete

Vice Commodore's Message—Janet Steinberg
CHARTERING: The Best Made Plans vs The Reality



Let me introduce myself - I'm new to SUS. I'm Salvatore, known to my friends as 'Sal' the Sailing Salami. I'm just back from a charter vacation in the Caribbean and thought you might be interested to hear my story.

Our long-awaited vacation originally planned for April 2020 and delayed by COVID, finally started November 2022. Being a vaccinated salami - no issues! Originally a crew of 7 we ended up a crew of 5 humans and me (Sal). Call me a dreamer but I've always had a dream to go to sea! I'm told that my ancestors came over on the Santa Maria in 1492. The sea is in my blood! The epic tales of the sailing salamis have been told with each generation of my family!

I come from humble beginnings, off the shelves at Costco, and knew as soon as I was put into the shopping basket of Capt. Pete, an adventure was soon to begin. Soon I was joined by a lasagna, 2 pork loins and cheeses. I could feel excitement and anticipation in the air. We were taken to Capt. Pete's refrigerator for a few days in preparation for our flight, to get our passports in order! I checked seat availability on seat guru but learned that salamis like me had to go in checked luggage - a disappointment but not the end of the world. Thankfully, we 3 (pork loin, lasagna, and me-salami) were the best of friends by the time we got to the airport and our cooler was extremely comfortable!

Thurs. Nov. 3— Arrival in Antigua in our cooler made us very conspicuous. The customs official wanted to know all about us, where we had come from and the purpose of our visit. I guess he liked the look of a smart 17" NY salami traveling in style, so he slapped a surcharge on us to enter Antigua.

Our boat was waiting for us at Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbor. She was an impressive looking 46' monohull with two steering wheels, "BLUE TIDE".

English Harbor is a picturesque, historic working boatyard from 1700's, with many original buildings and nautical structures. After doing final provisioning at local shop, we were invited by the charter company to board at 5 PM to make ourselves at home, familiarize ourselves with the boat and be ready for our official orientation the next day at 8 AM. At home, we had already viewed 2 videos of the boat - there was a lot to consider. She had all the bells and whistles - a generator, air conditioning, refrigerator/freezer, microwave, toaster and coffee maker, as well as a self-tailing jib AND electronic winches - how lucky could we get? In addition, there was the biggest computerized control panel coordinating ALL these functions, plus fuses and circuit breakers hiding in obscure places with no labels! What could go wrong? We unpacked, settled into our cabins. I got the bottom bunk in the refrigerator and my skin was saved as "they" were off to eat out at the nearby restaurant, Pillars - a picturesque restaurant and garden just 50 yds from our boat. The food and service were excellent.

We settled in for the night with 82 degrees outside and air conditioning on board. Woohoo!

Fri. Nov. 4— This morning, we found we had no coffee pot! The boat docked next to us had their own problems - they were looking for matches. We loaned them ours in exchange for a couple of cups of coffee. As we needed coffee for everyone, we boiled water, using gauze to filter coffee. Finally we were provided with an electric coffee maker.

The first aid box contents were completely wet and had to be replaced (how did that happen?).

At 8 AM orientation began. It was an exceptionally long and intricate familiarization with the boat that no one without a manual could remember. We discovered later **we had no manuals!** After the detailed run-through we reviewed systems, charts, weather and our itinerary with the charter personnel and accepted advice on our itinerary - important local knowledge for our planned 40-mile sail (7 hrs) to Barbuda. The weather forecast for the whole week was cloudy with some rain, trade winds out of the East or Southeast, 14-20 knots with occasional gusts. Not an unusual forecast for the end of November in Antigua as it was 10 days before the official beginning of the sailing season.

By midday we were ready to set off. The boat was docked stern to (the boat sets an anchor and then backs into the dock) also known as Mediterranean mooring. As the company personnel took us out of the inner harbor, the windlass raised the anchor as we left the dock and it appeared to be a smooth operation. We hardly noticed that the windlass tripped the fuse and had to be reset. A foreboding omen for our trip? The Charter people then piloted the boat from the dock to outside the harbor where we took control and were on our own.

We headed to Jolly Harbor with rough seas, making some of the crew seasick. **Seasickness exists.** It does affect everybody at some time. It's not a weakness. Taking medication is important!

Next we discovered the **mainsail reefs were mislabeled!** The electric winches could be very unpredictable, and lines became a rat's nest very quickly. And even when clean **you could not see through the dodger!** It was made of a single piece of fabric rather than panels zipped together, which was a problem in a high wind situation.

(I had to say goodbye to my friend lasagna. He drew the short straw – “ they” ate him for dinner!)

Early to bed.

Sat. Nov. 5 - Air conditioning issues caused by a failing generator. Had to call the charter company, as we could not find any instructions to help us. **We are going nowhere!** We are at anchor and need to pick up mechanics at the dock to come out to the boat. Repairs were finally done, but the day was wasted for sailing. We learned that the electronics/computer system is very “sensitive.” After dinner we discussed the plan to sail to Barbuda the next day. (Dinner was sausage and peppers - phew - I survived another round with the Italian chef!) The crew are getting very good at card games.

Sun. Nov. 6 - Planned Destination Barbuda - 7 AM early coffee and oatmeal and we're all set to go - destination Barbuda 40 miles to the north, a flat island, home of the largest nesting site of frigate birds. Island badly damaged by hurricane Irma. Weather forecast unchanged except for the addition of lightning anticipated at 4 PM - No problem - we will have arrived at our destination - anchorage identified and our guide would come out to meet us as we were advised.

Windlass breaks! We started the engine and began to pull up the anchor with the windlass. We were doing fine until the windlass tripped the circuit breaker, the skipper at the wheel started shouting at the anchor operator, etc.,etc. Windlass was jammed and we couldn't get it to operate manually. Skipper moved up on deck, first mate went back at wheel - couldn't see through dodger! As they say - this is a fine mess! Maneuvers were made more difficult because we were in an anchorage with other boats. Luckily we were still securely anchored. Meanwhile the windlass casing broke apart, exposing **severely fouled mechanics** which had caused the problem. We were going nowhere! Once again we were calling the charter company for assistance and once again we had to pick them up at the dock with the dinghy. New windlass was installed, and we remained in Jolly Harbor, making the best of our day.

Dinner was on the boat - a chicken and pasta dish, but dear reader (this is Sal) I was drowning at the bottom of the **freezer which had stopped freezing.** The water level was rising! I did not think I would make it but somehow 'they' got the system to drain and I survived! This is not what 'going to sea' meant to me!

Mon. Nov. 7 – Finally, we leave early for Barbuda. We are having a wonderful sail. Beam to broad reach with 14-18 kts winds, first reef in place, but a bit gray all around. Weather forecast is unchanged with intermittent rain. We had lunch, and after about 6 hours it became obvious that the rain was becoming persistent. And the winds picked up! With basic weather 101 it became obvious we were sailing into a 'system'. Nothing on our forecast, only Tropical Storm Nicole over the Dominican Republic, heading towards Florida. It turned out to be the back end of Nicole, not recognized by local weather stations, bad enough to make **wearing PFDs necessary!** Captain and first mate remained on deck and took us safely to anchor off Barbuda. It's hard to describe what happened next except 14 hours of torrential rain and 35-40 kts winds where we all prayed that our anchor would hold (it did). All efforts to communicate via

phone or VHF were unsuccessful. We were left to our own devices. As the gusty wind challenged the block and tackle set up for the main sheet, it blew out, leaving us to jury-rig a substitute. We spent an uncomfortably rough night at anchor, full of strange noises and thuds and torrential rain. On deck, you could not see your hand in front of your face.

Tues. Nov. 8 – Given weather conditions, we planned to up anchor at daylight and head back to Antigua - hearts in mouth. New windlass worked perfectly—off we go. Woohoo! Refrigeration doing OK. As for me (Sal) it doesn't smell too good down here! No further rain, just overcast. Winds remained constant about 23 kts. We raised our jury-rigged reefed sail and noticed a **rip on the leech beneath 2 sail patches**. This time, because of the wind speed/direction, it proved increasingly challenging getting the battens past the lazy jacks. It was very noisy and hard to hear instructions. The best part of the day was 2 hours out of Barbuda, when we were joined by a pod of dolphins for about 20 minutes. It felt like a good omen and a welcome reward! Happily, we arrived back in Antigua. Prospect of an onshore shower is looking inviting! No one had been ashore since Saturday!

Wed. Nov. 9 - Went into Falmouth Harbor. Decided to take dock space at the Antigua Yacht Club Marina. Everyone got off the boat for the day- doing their own "thing." The available shower turned out to be a major disappointment, just a tap placed high on a wall. No hot water.

Charter boat company came out again to inspect boat because of **electronic panel failure**, making it impossible to determine how much fuel, water, and battery power we had. They couldn't fix it because they needed to order parts.

Thurs. Nov. 10 - We took on extra water and fuel and checked charts for alternative anchorages. Spent night at the dock. As would be imagined, our trust in the boat has dissolved. We are getting very good at playing cards.

Fri. Nov. 11 - Anchored at beautiful Freeman Bay in English Harbor. Perfect for swimming and snorkeling. Sunny and hot (finally!) Sausage and peppers for dinner (a reprieve for me once again - we salamis are survivors!) Everyone is now in a relaxed mood. Return trip plans reviewed, followed by a calm night with clear starlit sky. Everyone slept well. Decision made to return to base a day early and check out Nelson's Boatyard showers. Excitement is palpable.

Sat. Nov. 12 - Uneventful raising of the anchor using the windlass, we motored to the inner harbor to be met by charter personnel who took control of the boat for stern to docking. All went smoothly - sigh of relief all around. We had reached home base in one piece. Packing and tidying up the boat followed by dinner out. End of cruise checkout. I heard it all from the bottom of the refrigerator. A prolonged discussion as to my future was taking place. Would I be going home?

Sun. Nov. 13 - We are all packed up and ready to leave. Once again I'm in the cooler and we are all heading to the airport for the trip home to NY. Customs and immigration at JFK was touch and go. Me, a US citizen from Costco, under scrutiny. My future was in the balance - would it be a taxi or the trash bin? Capt. Pete and I were pulled aside. He was forceful in his argument as was the customs officer, until eureka! he found the small tattoo on my skin which said "Made in the USA!" Finally, we're going home! An unforgettable adventure!! Should it be called a vacation?

Special thanks to an exceptional crew for memories shared! Capt. Pete, Janet S, Ida L, Luisa H and Maureen M and of course . . . Sal the Sailing Salami!

As told to Janet VC

And as an illustration of this adventure, here is a link to videos of the dolphins, the dinghy surfing the waves behind the boat, birds fishing, and fish swimming at night under our boat's blue-lit swimming platform.

[CLICK HERE](#)