

THE DAY SAILER IS FOR CRUISING..... From *The Day Sailer #19*, Spring 1965

Edited by Robert Milligan (#1)

The 1964 Day Sailer Cruising Cup was awarded - deservedly so - to Fleet #14 (Phoenix) in recognition of their sailing-camping trips into Mexico. The following is an account of another wonderful cruise into the same area by Fleet #14 Captain, Dave Hertz:

Just returned from a wonderful cruise on which we logged 347 nautical miles on "DEKDRAM" D/S 942 while sailing from Kino Bay, Sonora, Mexico one way to La Paz, Baja California, via San Francisquito, Santa Rosalia, Mulege and Loreto. On completion of the trip we had traveled a total of 450 nautical miles and 1000 miles on the highways and the whole trip start to finish, 42 days!

After much preparation and purchase of many dehydrated foods we traveled from Phoenix, to Kino Bay, Mexico where we launched "DEKDRAM" on Monday morning, March 1, with enough food for 30 days, water and gas for about 8 days, and a total of four grown men. Without scales to weigh the whole load we figured about 2200 pounds gross.

The first day, was a good start. We arrived at the lower tip of Tiburon Island. From here on the winds increased and the sea became rough, so rough that only after continual effort did we arrive at Esteban Island. Here again we were held by fast and rough tides and the swells cut in half by 30 knot winds. So with three reefs in the main, four men on the starboard gunwale and a tarp to keep the cockpit dry we arrived at Baja California. Low on water and fuel for our three horse power outboard and a little un-nerved we used our home made still to process sea water for drinking and just rested in the quiet cove of San Francisquito. This was March 7th. Seven days to cover sixty miles! As it turned out this had been the most difficult part of our trip as the winds subsided to 0-20 knots most of the time and the sea was calm.

Anyway, the next day, March 8, we arrived at Rancho Baril where we found a wonderful Mexican family who listened to our tale of crossing wide eyed. We were informed that this was the only small sailboat to pass this way in several years. We took on gas and water and continued on our way.

The next fifteen days or so were made up sailing from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. making ten to twenty miles with plenty time for fishing, skin diving, hunting, sightseeing, and enjoying the sun. Our only anxious moments came March 10th when we struck a submerged rock while entering a small cove for the night. We had just dropped the main and jib and were going to motor in as we had a good breeze off the starboard quarter. Our speed was about three knots and after contact we felt hopeless waiting for the water to gush in. But thanks to O'Day construction and fiberglass we found only a large portion of resin and glass missing from the prow or stem bend. No leaks! No cracks! From here on DEKDRAM somehow seemed more than a dinghy and we knew we were sailing the best.

As I do not like to beach the boat at night because of the higher AM tides, I always anchored off. My usual procedure was to spot our nights camp, anchor off about one hundred feet and send the rubber two-man raft ashore (fits under the jib while underway very nicely) and fix a stern line, which we would haul in on (after removing the rudder and kicking the outboard up) till the clearance under the stern was one third fathom. Then we would use the raft to ferry both men and gear in for the nights camp.

For those interested in anchoring, in my cruises to Mexico numbering possibly fifty anchorages, I always use the same procedure. A 9# Benson with ten feet of 5/16 inch chain and fifty foot of 3/8 inch nylon rode holding the bow directly out from shore and a 6# Benson with five feet of 1/4 inch chain and thirty feet of 5/16 inch nylon rode on the bow at 45° on the side that I expect sea or wind (the 6# mostly for safety). At the stern I have one hundred feet of 1/4 inch nylon which I use the total length to secure the anchors and hold a constant strain. Again this is secured on the stern quarter on the side I expect the surf or wind. The nylon for safety, yes, but mostly for stretch and give.

Upon arrival at towns a bath and restaurant food was enjoyed. These were few and far between. Although we had a gas stove aboard, most all food and baking was done on open fire with grille and reflector oven. Fish and all sorts of dehydrated meals were grilled, broiled, boiled and baked. Lunch was always sandwiches with fruit, prunes, cheese and summer sausage.

We were able to see all forms of sea life from a large whale which cruised across our bow a couple hundred feet ahead, to porpoise, manta rays, seals, sea turtles and down to a red sea of plankton. A lot of life can be seen when you only average fourteen nautical miles a day.

La Paz is a wonderful place for the freedom loving sailor, as after the papers are secured or cleared at the Port Captains you can anchor off fancy hotels or camp on the beach directly across from La Paz. All services are available including a ship yard (as was so well described by Mary Gidly in her article in "Sea and Pacific Motor Boat", March 1965) titled "Baja Sur". Their sloop Tia Mia was anchored in La Paz along with many other U.S. sailboats from 16 foot D/S (942) to 75 foot ketches. The

people (U.S. citizens and Mexicans alike) are very warm to strangers and made us feel very much at home everywhere we went.

April 8th we put the D/S on a 65 foot freighter and mail boat and along with ourselves proceeded to ToPlolobampo near Los Moches, Mexico. We then took a bus to Kino Bay to get the station wagon and trailer and returned to pick up the D/S which we had left anchored at ToPlolobampo. With everything secured on the trailer we headed back to Phoenix.

Note to anyone planning on cruising. The plan used by Bill Frank of Palo Alto (D/S issue 18) is an excellent one, as in the bad sea we would take much water and as we had taken out our floor boards our gear was wet on many occasions; also with all our gear forward the round bottom presented packing problems. A lever operated bilge pump would make bailing much easier as our gear covered the lower areas and we could not bail under way easily.

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We all thank you Dave for the excellent report on what must have been a fabulous cruise.

Let me remind the rest of you cruisers and would-be-cruisers that whether your trips are long and adventurous (as above) or merely a days outing to a near-by island or an over night jaunt to the other end of the lake, -----we want to hear about them. PLEASE, Please, please send me your experiences so we may all enjoy them.

Robert Milligan  
434 Maple Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15218