

Making Cruising Dreams Come True the Seven Seas Cruising Association



By Barbara Theisen

What do Nigel Calder, Jimmy Cornell, and Beth Leonard have in common? They're all members of Seven Seas Cruising Association.

With nearly 10,000 members from across the globe, the Seven Seas Cruising Association is the largest non-profit organization of voyaging cruisers in the world. These members share the dream of sailing the seas as a lifestyle. Founded in 1952, SSCA is also the oldest non-profit organization of cruisers in the world and the goals of the original founders are still the goals of SSCA today: sharing cruising information, camaraderie, and leaving a clean wake.

But just because SSCA has celebrated over fifty years of launching cruising dreams doesn't mean that things haven't changed over the years. Our passion for cruising has stayed the same, but even long time members are surprised at the extensive benefits that have been added to their membership and the ease of accessing these benefits from anywhere in the world.

SSCA is probably best known for its monthly **Commodores' Bulletin**. The 48-page monthly publication is packed with information, advice and inspiration from members who are actually out there cruising the world. This means that members get the most up-to-date information on anchorages, customs and immigration, costs and "what to do and where to go." The *Bulletin* is all about cruisers sharing information with fellow cruisers. Members know that in addition to finding the best anchorage, you need to find a place to do the laundry and you want to know where the best places to snorkel, the best place to provision and the best place to enjoy a good dinner or a beer are. It's all in the *Commodores' Bulletin*.

Lin and Larry Pardey, *Talesin*, say "A month after we joined SSCA, we read in the *Bulletin* about a brand new port that had just been completed in the Madeira Islands. We were bound south and west from England. That new port was the best stop of our whole voyage that year. Great introduction to a fine organization!"

The *Bulletins* are now online at www.scca.org so that members no longer have to wait for the mail to arrive to read the latest cruising information. They can download the issue for future reference, search past issues and even purchase ten years worth of past *Bulletins* on CD, raising the waterline by not having to store printed publications on board. Forty percent of the membership now chooses the WebOption, where they read or download their *Bulletins* online in lieu of the mailed printed *Bulletin*.

"SSCA was with us all the way from our dreaming of cruising days through our circumnavigation," says Dave Abbott of the *Privilege 39* catamaran *Exit Only*, who together with his family recently finished circling the globe. "We first heard about SSCA in the 1980s. At the time, we were living and working in the desert lands of the Middle East. The ocean, sailing, and cruising seemed a long way away, literally, but the arrival of the *SSCA Bulletin* reminded us that people were out there on those oceans and someday we could go, too."

Active cruisers all over the world regularly use their *Bulletins* to plan their itineraries. "We have consistently used articles from the *Bulletin* to help us choose sights to see all across the Pacific, New Zealand, and Australia," say Dave and Kathy Blanding of the

Norseman 447, *Sunflower*. "For example, the *Bulletin* was very instrumental in our decision to join the Sail Indonesia Rally this year. We'd read an article by a previous participant, who, like us, normally tries to avoid large fleets of boats. They found that the rally gave them many opportunities to do activities on their own, while still having the safety net of a group and group activities when they wanted. We have found this to be true, plus some of the rally tours have offered us sights and situations that we could not have organized by ourselves. It has been a great experience so far, and we would have missed it if not for the article in the *Bulletin*."

It's been said that the *Commodores' Bulletin* has probably launched more voyages and kept more cruising dreams alive than any other publication.

"The camaraderie of SSCA members around the world is remarkable. We have used the *Bulletin* extensively while planning and traveling to 114 countries and always look forward to reading it each month," say Liza and Andy Copeland, *Bagheera*

Camaraderie is another cornerstone of SSCA. Wherever members gather, they organize get-togethers and exchange cruising information. SSCA sponsors an annual Gam (a gathering of sailors). Members and their guests sail, fly or drive from all over the world to join old friends and meet new ones. They attend educational seminars, roundtable discussions, hand-on demos and they share experiences and enjoy each other's company. The 33rd Annual Gam will be held in Florida in December 2008 and features SSCA Lifetime Commodore Jimmy Cornell as the keynote speaker. In addition, the three-day "islands theme" event will have live music, an island buffet, a cocktail party, a nautical flea market, dozens of vendors and a wealth of learning opportunities through seminars and hands-on demonstrations.



Members are encouraged to hold regional Gams, as well. Longtime cruiser Kathy Parsons, *Hale Kai* has been a member of SSCA for decades. She first joined SSCA years before she set sail in order to learn what cruising was all about. "Now in the nearly 20 years that I've been out cruising, SSCA is my community of cruising friends. I enjoy attending the Gams and we fly our burgee as we cruise."

One of the newest ways that SSCA is sharing camaraderie is through local Metro Coordinators. These volunteers coordinate local social events for members. We would like to actively engage even more of our members to build camaraderie worldwide and would love to find some willing volunteers from Down Under. Start-up kits are available to give you lots of hints to help you launch a new local group and SSCA Home Base will provide administrative support. Send an email to [Jeff at metromanager@scca.org](mailto:Jeff@metromanager@scca.org) for more information.

SSCA members fly our burgees with pride. All members join as Associates, which allows them to fly the blue burgee. Members can apply to become Commodores after fulfilling certain requirements: they must be members for at least one year, be fulltime cruisers, have met the cruising distance requirement, and be sponsored by two Commodores. Commodores fly the red swallowtail burgee.

By flying our burgees we can find other members throughout the world, enjoying their friendship and company. But we can also see who's in the anchorage before we get there! We can find members we've lost touch with or who can give us insight into what we can expect when we arrive at our destination by using the online **Member Locator Map**.

With the aid of Microsoft's Virtual Earth®, you can visualize the whole world and then zoom in for a closer look. Search for fellow SSCA members by continent, country, state or city and see it appear before your eyes. Tiny sailboats appear (Red for Commodores, Blue for Associates and Yellow for Cruisers traveling with kids) marking the location of registered SSCA members. Move the mouse over a particular sailboat and see that SSCA member's lat/long location and contact information (contact information is shared *only* with other SSCA members and *only* if desired).

Cruisers Ty and Suzanne Giesemann, *Liberty*, believe that "There's no greater feeling than sailing into an unknown port and seeing the familiar SSCA burgee flying from a cruising boat's flag halyard. The excellent upgrades to the website help us keep track of our friends even better than before."

Want to receive a warm welcome in over 100 ports around the world? Just visit an SSCA Cruising Station (CS). It's a big, big world out there but SSCA is making it a bit smaller. Members can go online to www.scca.org and download a list of CS. The list and map are updated monthly. CS Hosts offer not just a warm welcome, but often can help with transportation needs and can provide local maps and information and can assist in finding needed services. They may organize potlucks or other get-togethers and provide you with social and cultural information and exchanges with local people. You can contact them in advance for information about a port and its facilities, knowing that any information you receive comes from a knowledgeable local with your best interest at heart. Imagine sailing into an unfamiliar port ... in the South Pacific, on the U.S. Coast, in Turkey, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand, and more. Think of the advantages of having a host there to provide information in advance and welcome you when you arrive. That's an SSCA Cruising Station Host.

Whether you're on the move or making plans, interactive Port Guides for worldwide ports provide information you need. Sharing information is one of SSCA's key traditions. It's great to be able to refer to *Bulletin* letters about a port while you're planning a passage. We buy and share costly cruising guides, and yet, as we all know, much of the information in print becomes obsolete as soon as they are printed. People move, regulations change. Plus you don't always get the nitty-gritty information you want. Where's the nearest laundry? Can you buy varnish? Where do you buy diesel or get your propane tanks filled? My dog needs shots; is there a vet around?

SSCA's new online interactive Port Guides allow you to search available Port Guides by region, country, port, author or boat name and start reading the chosen Port Guide immediately. Or browse all of the Port Guides to see what's available. Sitting in a port or know it well? Members can and should add their local knowledge and experience to the ever-expanding library of online Port Guides. Not going anywhere right now? Take a look and start dreaming!

Oh, sure, you say! Great if you have Internet access, but what about those at sea and in need of current information about a port they're hoping to visit? Aha! We've thought of that, too! You can even access Port Guides via SailMail or Winlink. You can access help files, do queries, choose the Port Guides you want and download them as text files to your boat email just like any Saildoc.

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SSCA CRUISING STATIONS

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Map Locations []

- Argentina, Ushuaia
- Australia, Queensland, Bundaberg
- Bahamas, Abaco, Treasure Cay
- Bahamas, Exuma, Black Point
- Bahamas, Exuma, George Town
- Bahamas, New Providence, Coral Harbour
- Belgium, Gosport/Bergen
- Belize, Placencia Harbour
- Bermuda, St. George's
- Bolivia, Valenzuela
- Brazil, Paratia, Cabedelo
- Canada, Nova Scotia, Chester/Deep Cove
- Canada, Ontario, Kingston
- Chile, Torre, Castilla
- Colombia, Cartagena
- Dominica, Portsmouth
- Ecuador, Bahía de Caraquez
- Ecuador, Galapagos Islands, Santa Cruz
- El Salvador, Costa del Sol
- Fiji Islands, Vavua Loma, Suva/City
- Finland, Helsinki
- France, Les Salles D'Oloron, Port Bourgenay, L'Eschelle
- Germany, Söleweg at the Schlie (Baltic Sea)
- Guam, Piti
- Guatemala, Rio Dulce
- India, Bombay (Mumbai)
- Italy, Cagliari
- Italy, Genoa (Liguria)
- Marshall Islands, Majuro

SSCA continues...

Need to buy new equipment or replace what you have? Let nearly 10,000 SSCA members help you make informed buying decisions! Every year, cruisers spend meaningful sums of money on maintaining, replacing and adding marine equipment to their boats. Because many SSCA members espouse a fulltime active cruising lifestyle, we tend to rely on this equipment more than most. In the past, the SSCA has conducted a paper-based Equipment Survey every four years to collect and publish member opinions on marine equipment. The process was cumbersome and the data limited in scope, but folks eagerly sought the results.

Our newest online Equipment Survey was introduced early in 2008. Categories include virtually everything from stem to stern that you might want to research -- from the boat itself, to anchors, electronics and communications. It is open-ended and will remain available to members (and new members) for the indefinite future. The database of ratings and comments will be allowed to grow indefinitely over time, and all participants are able to return to their own surveys as they add gear to their boats and/or their experience as existing gear matures. To our knowledge, this is the first time an open-ended, inclusive marine equipment survey has ever been attempted, and best of all, the ratings and comments are coming primarily from the most demanding of test beds: cruising sailors who live aboard their boats.

The benefits of membership in SSCA continue with a free online subscription to *Ocean Navigator* magazine and **Special Offers** on supplies, equipment and services available to members from over fifty vendors! All of this can be found on the SSCA website at www.scca.org along with much more. Find out how cruisers can volunteer around the world, learn where help is needed and what to bring when cruising to remote areas of the world or find out how you can volunteer to serve your SSCA family. It's fun and it can take as much or as little time as you have to offer.

From the sharing tradition of our founders, SSCA has become the key tool and resource for information in the world of cruising. "No other organization in the world has anywhere near the collective long-distance cruising experience and wisdom that is embodied in SSCA," says Nigel and Terri Calder, *Nada*.

SSCA is a caring, supportive family of kindred spirits, ready to assist fellow cruisers when needed. We are individuals who share a unique way of life and celebrate international fellowship and goodwill. We aspire to the fulltime cruising lifestyle. We are independent and responsible people who pride ourselves on our self-reliance and conduct ourselves with integrity. We treat all people and our environment respectfully. We are ambassadors of a cruising fraternity and want to ensure that those following in our wake will be warmly welcomed.

It's this now famous "**SSCA Clean Wake**" policy, which has helped raise the reputation of today's seagypsies around the world, ensuring that the welcome mat will be out for all cruisers who following in the wake of a fellow SSCA member.

Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger, *Hawk*, are true ambassadors of the SSCA Clean Wake policy. They add, "SSCA provided us with invaluable information and an instant support network when we were new to cruising and most in need of both - and SSCA allows us to do the same for others who are following in our wake."

For as long as mankind has memory, man has been entranced by the sea. The need to know what lies beyond the next wave and over the far horizon is pervasive. Ask any group about their fantasies and someone will tell you of a vision of tropical blue skies, balmy breezes, ever-gentle waves and sailing to exotic ports. Those who are living the dream, as well as those who are planning for the day that they can release the ties to the workaday world and sail off to seek paradise, and those who only dream of such adventure, all join together in an organization called the Seven Seas Cruising Association.

Become an SSCA member and participate in the fellowship of worldwide cruisers. You'll be rewarded with lasting friendships of like-minded, caring people who are there for one another when help is needed; who are eager to share their experiences and knowledge with you.

For more information, go to www.scca.org and take our Virtual Tour.

Bob's note: It is my opinion that Australian sailors have much to gain by association with this respected international organisation. Besides the obvious social delights, Aussie's in particular could use an organisation that really is representative of who we are and what we do. Kay and I are members.







BUNDABERG PORT
Marina

WELCOME

Bundaberg Port Marina is situated 1 nautical mile from the entrance of the Burnett River and offers all weather, all tides, deep water access to visitors to the Coral Coast.

We are the official Port of Entry for Bundaberg and offer our visitors many facilities to choose from, to make their stay that little bit more enjoyable.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE

- Floating Berths up to 130ft
- Shiplift to 70 tonnes
- Fuel Dock & Sewage Pump out Available
- Shipwright & Marine Engineer
- Marine Electrical & Ships Chandlery
- Water & Power to all Berths
- Major Hull & Insurance Repairs
- Diesel Engine Repairs/Services
- Marine Trimmer & Upholster
- Painting, Detailing & Antifouling
- Timber & Deck Specialists
- Marine Surveyor & Brokerage
- Stainless Steel Fabrications
- Hire Cars
- Wireless Internet Access
- Phone lines available to selected Berth
- Cafe, Restaurant & Seafood Shop
- Bait, Ice & LPG Refills
- Courtesy Bus into Bundaberg City
- Free BBQ on Fridays for Marina Guests

VHF 81

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