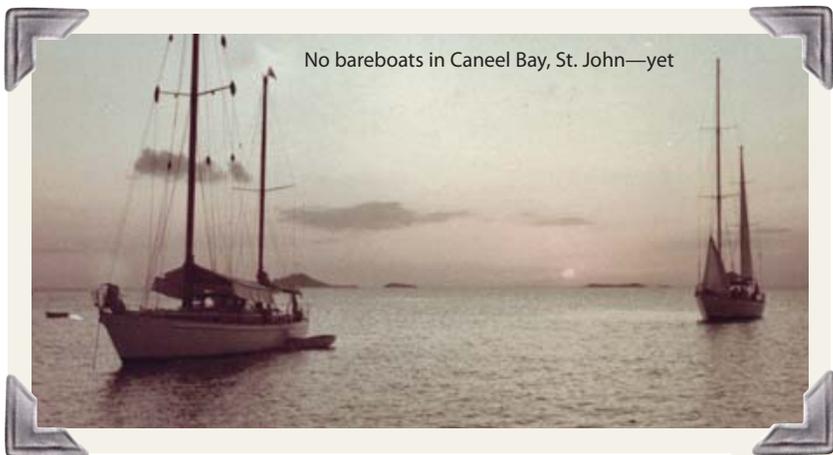


TALES FROM THE CHARTER COCKPIT BY JEANNIE KUICH COPYRIGHT 2008

VIRGIN ISLANDS BAREBOATING IN ITS INFANCY



Although maintenance crews found identical boats much easier, they had to be very good at their jobs and sometimes quite inventive, depending upon what the bareboater had done (or hadn't done). Sometimes great patience was required with their clientele. Although the bareboats were about as basic as one could make them, the bareboaters sailing them were not. Usually, quite a few things went wrong on a boat during a charter.

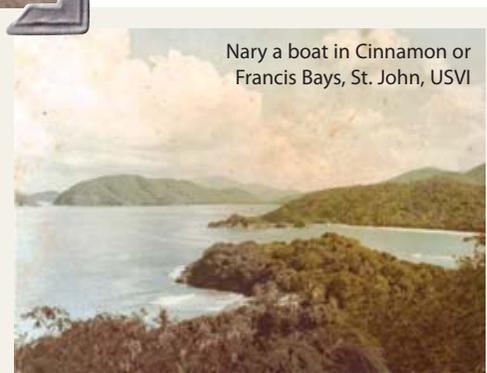
One of the most common problems was stopping up the head. The average bareboater just didn't realize that you couldn't put anything down a head except body waste and very small amounts of toilet paper—particularly not falsies, sanitary items, condoms,

panties, etc. There were so many calls, sometimes twice a day to unplug heads, that the companies finally made a mandatory charge of at least 50 bucks a repair.

Another was losing dinghies. Gosh, but it was hard to remember to tie off the dinghy with a simple half-hitch on the cleat or

The concept of mass-produced boats built for the bareboat trade quickly took hold in the Virgin Islands. By 1972 there were at least four bareboat companies: in Tortola, Caribbean Sailing Yachts with their Carib 41s, The Moorings started by Charlie and Ginny Carey, and Fleet Indigo; and on St. Thomas, Dick Avery in Frenchtown.

The idea was to have identical boats which meant that boats could be more cheaply made, all using similar equipment, making them much more cost efficient than all different boats using diverse equipment. With them all the same, you could send out any boat you wanted.



simply tie it at all. And outboard motors? They were awfully hard to start sometimes, particularly when you forgot to fill up the gas tank. And golly, sometimes those ole outboards just seemed to leap right off the back of the dinghy after it had banged against some other boat's hull anchored next to you most of the night.

Roller furling jibs seemed to fly all by themselves, too, and refuse to be furled so that they thrashed around all night long, battering the shrouds, damaging deck equipment that frayed the sheets or snagging items haphazardly left on deck such as jib poles, boathooks, bikini bottoms, etc.

Retrieving anchors was a big problem or so it seemed. The pesky things would get caught on something, like somebody else's anchor or maybe one of those real fat cables you saw in downtown anchorages. Huh! People shouldn't put things like that on the bottom. You were bound to catch one sooner or later.

Or maybe the dang anchor just wouldn't come up, no matter what. You'd pull and pull on the anchor line and still couldn't move it. So after a long time, like fifteen minutes, you'd just have to cut the line and sail away. What else could you do? After all, sooner or later, somebody would find it, right?

Listening to the conversations between the frustrated bareboater and the bareboat company on a VHF channel sometimes provided hysterical entertainment. We always perked up when we heard an angry or distressed voice calling a bareboat company.

This one takes the grand prize. Visualize the scene. The bareboater, in a very peeved voice, demands that the company bring him another anchor. Puzzled, the responder from the bareboat company asks why another anchor is needed since there are two anchors aboard. With much exasperation, the bareboater answers: "Well, this is our third day." (Duh!) ☹️

~~ PETS AT SEA ~~

Czar, a purebred Collie, hated the water yet put up with sea life in his own cool style. Everyone took note of his sensible, lion's haircut and his gentle manner, especially with children, endeared him to all. Czar lived most of his 12 years alongside owners Ken Preskitt and Andrea Jansen aboard their trawler *Ruff Life*, based in Puerto Rico.

Our thanks to artist and writer Andrea Jensen for sharing memories of the late Czar with our readers.

EMAIL PHOTOS OF YOUR SEA-GOING PETS TO: PETS@ALLATSEA.NET

