

Brigantine

Romances

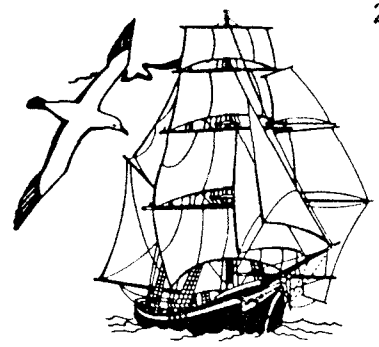
20TH ANNIVERSARY

1986 CELEBRATION YEAR!

Log



Brigantine Romance Log



On March 15th, 1986, Skipper, Romance and I, celebrated 20 years of sailing together . . . in the Virgin Islands, and around the world. We've welcomed many of you back year after year as cherished friends. Fifteen previous Logs have chronicled Romance's adventures to some of the more exotic corners of the earth. We hope someday soon to expand them into a book in tribute to this beautiful and faithful ship. She's sailed us through the South Pacific, primitive Melanesia, the mysteries of the Orient, and twice around the world. She's paraded in the proud company of the Tall Ships, . . . and carried us safely through the ultimate hurricane at sea. . . 20 years of seafaring, 125,000 deepsea miles boiling into her wake. So here's to ROMANCE, in her 50th year, and our 20th together!

How did it all begin? Skipper and I were married in the famous brigantine Yankee in Tahiti, complete with a traditional Polynesian luau; torches throwing leaping shadows among the palms, the wild beat of drums, and supple Tahitian wahines, whipping their grass skirts in a torrid Tahitian tamure. Yankee was our first love, and we dreamed of one day sailing our own brigantine in her wake. It took 5 years to find our ship. Romance had been rigged by that sage of sailing ships, Alan Villiers, for Michener's "Hawaii." It took our last cent to buy her, and sail her with a Yankee crew, from Los Angeles to Acapulco, the Galapagos and Miami, without lights, fridge or outboard--we couldn't afford such luxuries. A joyous return to the sea, and already we were hopelessly in love with Romance.

We arrived in Miami richer and poorer than we had ever been in our lives. We had a perfect little square rigger--and no money. The hurricane season was far advanced, and Skipper could not go to sea and leave me alone with the ship. He got odd jobs close by, enough to pay for dockage. At night, we rebuilt the cabins, reusing everything, even scrap lumber in the flotsam along the shore. We were busy and happy. Then the hurricane came. Romance lay at an exposed berth--we couldn't afford a tow up the narrow, winding Miami River. Under an ugly, racing sky, we padded the ship's sides with tires and timbers. It came in the dark, screaming, choking wind. Just the two of us, alone in the heart of the city. We knew there were hurricane parties in the brightly lit hotels, while our little ship pounded and shuddered against the concrete pier. We watched in horrified fascination, as the storm tide rose so high Romance came within inches of riding over the concrete and being holed. At dawn, the hurricane moved off

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across the Bahamas; then incredibly, recurved and came roaring back over Miami. The second night was a repeat of the first. At 3 AM, I was below making coffee when Skipper called down, "No emergency, but come up when you can." A big steel cargo ship was sinking across the harbor, impaled on her pier along Biscayne Boulevard. Romance came through unharmed; and with our first cruise deposits, we were on our way.

Twenty years ago, the Virgins were truly an unspoiled paradise, never more than 2 or 3 yachts in any anchorage, and "not a footprint except your own" accurately described the beaches. There were no marinas in the BVI, and bareboats and mini-liners had not yet devastated the islands like a swarm of locusts. Radio ZedBVI advertised the difference Shell Kerosene made in lighting your home; and in the Island Sun, a piano for sale, "good condition, no termitees." One of our early passenger groups were stopped on the street in Road Town one night, by a policeman who asked, were they looking for a bar? Uncertain how to answer, they finally agreed they were. "Follow me," he said, and took them to jail--where a lifer was tending a well-stocked bar. There were tables set up, and locals playing dominoes, a contact sport in the West Indies.

By 1969, you would think sailing naval battles would be pretty much a thing of the past in Sir Francis Drake Channel, yet on our 3rd Anniversary of buying Romance, we had a crewman shot out of the rigging. Romance and Thor, a handsome Swedish sloop, used to square off regularly. We both had cannons. Ours fired 12 gauge blanks, but Thor's was a real antique brass swivel gun, stuffed with black powder and wad. Per sometimes got carried away, and once shot off part of his own bulwarks. This time, we were tacking up Sir Francis Drake, and fired the challenge. Thor attacked with a vengeance, just as we came about off the Tortola shore. Per had a passenger on the wheel, and nearly collided with us, sweeping by close alongside just as our crewman started aloft. He was a couple of ratlines up when **BOOM!** Thor's brass piece spoke at point blank range. "EEYYAAHH!" our sailor cried, falling to the deck. We thought it was a great theatrical fall--until we saw the blood. He had been hit on the forehead with the paper wad, and nearly knocked senseless. We ran back into Road Town, with Thor fussing about remorsefully in our wake, and bore him off to the hospital on a makeshift stretcher. He was back aboard that night, all stitched up and claiming exemption from further military service on the grounds that he had already been wounded in battle.

For our next engagement, we took on the French Navy. In 1782, British Admiral Rodney defeated DeGrasse in the brilliant and decisive Battle of the Saintes. Nine AM, 200 years later, Romance lay at anchor in Bourg des Saintes, when a French gunboat steamed across our bow, and dropped her anchor on top of ours, backing into the dock in a typical French moor. Skipper and Dan Moreland, who spoke a little French, went in to discuss the situation with the gunboat's Captain. He had just agreed to Skipper's plan to separate the two ships, when both began to drag. The Crux del Sud bumped the dock,

and her commander panicked. He let his stern line go, and ordered 4. full ahead, straight for the Romance, Skipper chasing him in the dinghy. He shuddered to a stop amidships, with nothing but a coat of paint between us, and backed off. We nearly fainted. Then he came at us again, turning hard to starboard, trying to get clear of the Romance. But since we were effectively chained together, his stern swung into us, and impaled itself on our jibboom. We locked together, and with half a gale blowing, the two ships dragged toward the rocks, Romance sandwiched between her far larger adversary and total destruction. By this time, Skipper was back aboard, and pleading with the gunboat to go ahead on his engines, and get off us! But the Frenchies were afraid of getting our chain in their prop.

I think we eventually blasted them clear through sheer weight of verbal abuse; and we now had to get free of our own anchor. Our passengers were forgotten in the melee, until a woman who couldn't swim, appeared on deck with a life jacket. Dan, desperately hunting for something to buoy the chain, seized the jacket, tied it on the buoy rope, and dumped the chain to the bottom of the harbor. We were free! And not a moment too soon. We reanchored on the second hook, and surveyed the damage: 6 inches snapped off the jibboom, the yoke of the spritsail yard split in two, and the spare 500 pound anchor bent. On the plus side, Romance had reduced the Crux del Sud's steel stern railing to a row of broken teeth, we had captured their huge tricolour and heavy varnished pole-- and a French officer's cap. When the Frenchies sheepishly came for their flag, Skipper greeted them wearing the cap sidesaddle, the visor cocked over one ear. Rodney would have been proud of us.

In 1968, Romance was back in the Galapagos; and I think we might have been content with such short offshore voyages a little longer, had we not come so close to losing the ship in Grenada. In 1970, GYS dropped Romance on their synchrolift--the cable parted, and in seconds our world was in ruins, our lovely ship, our home, on her side, every deck stanchion to port snapped clean, and the bulwark planking splintered to matchwood, bow pinned underwater, and everything we owned tumbled into a harborwater soaked pile of wreckage. I did not know a ship--150 tons of wooden ribs, beams and planking, could crash down onto a concrete dock and survive. Our beloved ship lay like a wounded animal. Yet before sun down, she was afloat again--ALIVE again. A small miracle. We would go on together. We would voyage to the ends of the earth, the three of us, as we had dreamed.

And by the Grace of God we have. We roamed first, the loneliest reaches of the South Pacific, returning to our own Tahiti. After 3 months at sea, Romance ran the smoking reef at Papeete, & moored stern to the quay, below blue mountains and rainbows. We launched the boat, and set off inside the reef, to a small hotel we had known long ago. We toasted the past, and the present; and a man next to us at the bar, turned to a friend and said, "I had a little trouble getting out of L.A. this morning." Our jet traveler would never know he was not on the same island. Ours was a different Tahiti. The Tahiti of Captain Cook, and all the voyag-

ers who have come after. Luis Marden once said, "An island must be approached from the sea." We would add, "under sail." For Tahiti is a state of mind, and all the jets and intercontinental hotels cannot steal her magic from our hearts.

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In several South Pacific expeditions, and two circumnavigations, Romance has visited over 200 ports and islands . . . and folks ask our favorite!!! Surely we loved the Galapagos, Melville's Encantadas; Darwin's Strange Lost World. "Four and twenty enchanted ash heaps" . . . active volcanoes and vast lava flows, lunar planes, cones and craters; prehistoric creatures, scaly iguanas, lava lizards and legions of wheeling, screeching birds. We remember when the few humans who invaded, were treated like one of the gang. Especially by the sea lions, who plunged in after us whenever we went swimming, peered into our masks, then streaked off doing loops and rolls around us in an underwater ballet of unforgettable grace and beauty. Our cook idly tossed a stick in the water, and a sea lion pup brought it back to him, like a trained retriever. Again and again, the youngster raced after it; man and mammal amusing each other until the sea lion tired of the game . . . and hid the stick.

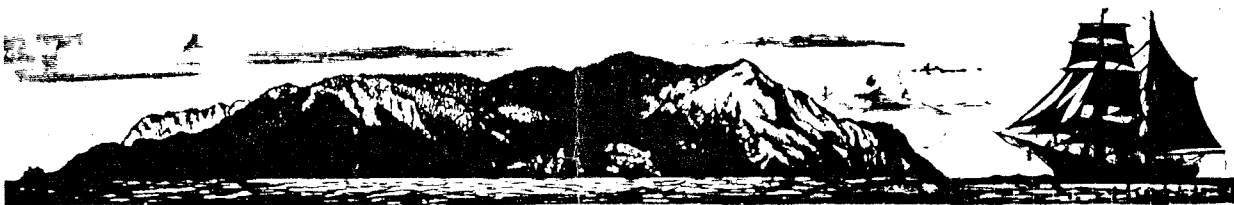
It was always necessary to row among sealions because they chased the outboard's bubbles. . . then the game was to catch the oars and hang on. Skipper would play "sea-saw" with them, lifting them gently on the oarblades. They would jostle each other to be next. When we weren't around, they played "King of the Castle" on the dinghy, jumping in and being bumped off, in a rough-house version which nearly sunk the boat.

In those long ago days, we would sit quietly on the shore among a colony of a hundred sea lions; or walk in peace among nesting boobies, frigates and lovely swallowtail gulls. But today, the Galapagos are 'protected'--and hords of tourists march over marked paths--and the gentle lost world we knew is now truly lost.



But the open sea remains timeless, unchanged yet ever changing. The serene promise of sunrise, the glory of sunset; the majesty of marching mountains of deepest, sparkling indigo..the benediction of a silver calm. Simple shipboard life; warm sun on brown backs, the lilt of a wooden deck beneath bare feet..a silent cloud of canvas awash in moonlight. It is for the sea itself we roam the world.

Anyone who has ever sailed with us knows Pitcairn Island is closest to our hearts; that lonely abode of the Bounty mutineers, rising stark and alone at the end of a 3,000 mile sea road. A beautiful island clothed in vivid, lively green, and slashed with red rock falls; surf exploding like cannon fire against black, sea-torn cliffs. Its colors speak of welcome, fruits and flowers in profusion. How fine it must have looked to Fletcher Christian and his weary band. Five times we also have made that majestic landfall; shot the surf into Bounty Bay, and climbed the Hill of Difficulty

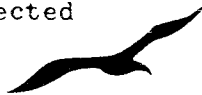


into Adamstown, and the welcoming homes of old friends, becoming for a while, Pitcairners ourselves. We've been privileged to share two joyous Pitcairn Christmases; and as the holidays again approach, our thoughts wing on the tradewinds, to our far-away families. A little bit of us will always remain on that tiny rock, lost in the Pacific Ocean.

Though hurricane Klaus in '84 was the worst 36 hours in Romance history, our roughest passage was the 33 days from Hawaii to Los Angeles in 1979. We encountered 4 successive gales; and in each one, hove to for 48 hours with oil bags out. A huge sea filled the long-boat astern, snapping the davits and dropping the boat into a maelstrom. Seas blasted the stern out of the second boat on deck amidships; and peeled off bulwark planking like banana skins, planks nearly as long as the ship whipping off and whirling away into the gale. We learned later that a modern research ship went missing without trace in the same area.

As each gale roared on, it left Romance wallowing in tremendously confused seas, with no wind to steady her. We made full sail before a light, following zephyr. Romance dutifully climbed up the steep front of the old swells, which carried her along with them--we were actually sailing backwards with every stitch of canvas filled before the wind.

But storms pass; and there are always the lovely Virgin Islands to come home to . . . the most beautiful, calm and protected cruising waters in all the seven seas.



1986, our Anniversary year, was highlighted by Halley's Comet cruises Down Islands, with family and friends. An impromptu Tall Ship gathering saw Romance, two 3 masters, Activ and Bel Espoir--and the Pride of Baltimore together in Bequia--and a reunion with Dan Krachuk a Romance veteran of Hurricane Klaus--then on Pride. Less than a month later, Pride capsized and sank in the Atlantic with a loss of 4 lives, Danny and 7 others rescued, thank God, after 5 days in a raft. He's back at sea. In 20 years, Skipper's greatest pride and satisfaction is in his crews who have excelled in other ships, as masters, mates and bosuns; in the Danish Training Ship, Danmark, the beautiful barque Elissa, the Alexandria, Ernestina, Sea Cloud, Pride, Anne,

Lady Maryland, Spirit of Massachusetts, Invader, and many others. Dean Maggio, son of Capt. Joe of the Bahamian schooner, William Albury, was our first crewman born after we bought Romance--and so the traditions of the sea are carried on.

In June, Romance filmed a Danish movie, "Pieter Von Schulton," an early playboy Governor of St. Croix. The star, handsome and dashing Ole Ernst, is a Clark Gable look-alike, in scarlet uniform and gold braid. Old Fort Christian was reborn beneath the crimson Danish swallowtail banners and gas lights; with sentrys on the ramparts, and horse drawn carriages; gentlemen in ruffles and ladies in handsome gowns, bonnets and parasols, reminiscent of "Gone With the Wind." Then, Romance spent 5 months in Cumana, Venezuela, for a well earned anniversary refit--a new stem, bow frames and planking of beautiful South American hardwoods. The stem piece was cut from an enormous balk of timber 18 feet, by 4 feet, by 2 feet thick--I would like to see the tree it came from. It took 2 weeks to cut to shape, with 4 men on a 2 man saw, using ropes to drag it through that massive timber. A beautiful piece of work, thanks to Peter, Mark and Mike Plont, and their Varadero Caribe Shipyard.

The latest Romance article is a cover story in the November/December issue of Nautical Digest by John Heinz, shipmodeler and oft-Romance passenger. An anniversary project is to launch a modest exchange of historic sailing ship films on tape, mostly from private sources, for the enjoyment of ship buffs. We're grateful to David Guthrie-James for his Viking films, and to Romain Wilhelmsen for his of the Peruvian guano barque, Omega. Skipper's contribution is footage of his voyage in the Swedish 4 mast barque Abraham Rydberg, by Kenny MacArthur. Much is available, particularly in Europe, but our tape systems are not compatible, and we are seeking a low cost conversion service. Any ideas??



Once, in Cape Town, as Romance lay alongside the commercial docks, a woman sightseer accosted me with, " 'scuseme 'scuseme 'scuseme" "Yes?" I looked up from my work. "Where did you come from?" "Around the world." And she shot back, "How was the weather?" "Beautiful," I said, summing up 15 months and 30,000 miles of sailing.

Well, that one word is as good as any to describe 20 years of seagoing life, as full of joys and trials as any ashore, but spiced with more than our share of adventures--for which I am humbly grateful. Not for anything would we relinquish one moment. The unimaginable vastness of the lovely, lonely meadows of the sea, lively blue and sparkling, or leaden with menace. The southern cross ever leading us onward, shining through a thousand night watches. An island, any island rising at dawn from a silver horizon. Sunlight dappling through palms on the lonely beach of a nameless Pacific atoll.

For us, the sea will always beckon.

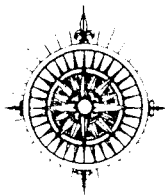




*Dear Andy, for the
thanks for the
nice note,
appreciate
having you
about my
month, look
good, take
with the
music business!*

*Wishing You
Peace, Love, and Joy
at this Holiday Season
and throughout the New Year*

Edward S. S. S.



BOX 5086 · ST. THOMAS
U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS 00801