

NEWSLETTER FOR BIG ISLAND BOATING

Since Mauricio's account of his trip was hundreds of pages long and in Spanish, we decided to use his shipmate's version.

These are my personal notes from a voyage on the "Feathered Serpent III", a ship constructed and operated by the The Andean Explorers' Foundation & Ocean Sailing Club. The vessel was a catamaran about 70 feet long, and was built on the general design of an ancient ship discovered in South America, but with a modern sail plan. Its first voyage was from Peru to Hawaii. By Ron Theriault

We were fortunate to have aboard Mauricio Barbis-Gardella of Callao (a northern suburb of Lima) Peru. Mauricio is a very experienced sailor, who is a former Peruvian national champion, and currently teaches sailing at the Esquela Naval del Peru. He also was a member of a previous expedition (not associated with the AEF), which built a catamaran of reeds on Lake Titicaca and subsequently attempted to sail it from the coast of Peru to the Galapagos islands. (The Ecuadorian government forced that expedition to an early end.) In total the Feathered Serpent III carried 7 crew.



Thurs. Dec 18, 1997, day 1 - In the morning, Mauricio decided to fly the stay-sail, so I helped him rig it. I was still feeling a bit of queasiness but it slowly disappeared during the day. The rigging of the ship can be described as that of a gaff-rigged schooner. It has two equal sized masts, with the after one being the main, and the forward one being, of course, the foremast. Additionally, the ship carries two jib headed sails forward of the foremast. One is the jib, and the other is the 'yankee'. **Fri. Dec 19, day 2 - 10'14.6s, 82'16.5w** - I was awakened in the middle of the night when the throat halyard, one of the two halyards of the foresail, broke. I helped to get the sail down and furled. We are on more of a broad reach now, and the sails should be trimmed out to take best advantage of the wind. This cannot be done however without having the sails being pressed firmly against the aft running shrouds. On most boats I have been on before, this is not a problem. On this boat it apparently is. The Captain wants to keep the big

sails sheeted in tightly, to prevent them chafing on the shrouds. I suppose that chafing is a more serious matter on the ocean where sails can be set in the same position for days on end, and constant motion rocks the boat. I see that the ship is not configured to run before the wind well. This would seem to be a rather significant problem in a ship used for ocean cruising. **Sat. Dec 20, day 3** - 500 miles out of Callao. Cloudy morning, sunny mid-day, and a storm threatened in the late afternoon. My cabin is proving to be quite wet. It is in an aft compartment in the starboard hull. The first floor inside is about 4 feet below the topside deck. About 18 inches below that is another smaller subfloor, reachable via a removable floor panel, and below that is a small bilge, triangular in cross section, and about 12 inches deep. The main problem is that water seeps in from points where the top deck joins the sides of the hull, and runs down to the first floor. There it spreads out on the floor and soaks into whatever is there, which in this case is my bedding and duffel bags. Peter applied caulking to the biggest leak, which seemed to help. **Sunday Dec 21, day 4** - Peter and I spent much of the day today trying to fix another leak which appeared in my cabin but without much success. It is a difficult job owing to the cramped space, the heat, and lack of light (no portholes: one other thing that there was no time to do before leaving Peru.) He says that this particular part of the ship was constructed by workers who were not well informed, motivated, or supervised. Great. The watch schedule is finally established. Roger has the wheel alone, from 10:00 am, until 4:00 pm. Peter and Captain Gene have it from 4:00 pm. to midnight, Gary and Mauricio come on duty at midnight, and finally, Jim Elliot and I come on at 4:00 am. A little bit eclectic, but it seems to serve everyone best. I in particular have little interest in staying up after the sun goes down, and would rather go below. Additionally, it is nice to be able to watch night turn to day. **Tue. Dec 23, day 6** - The leaks in my cabin are apparently too big to fix, and it is decided that I should be moved into a portion of what is called the stateroom, a large centrally located compartment in the starboard hull. To me, it is the pantry, since that is where most of the food is stored. Peter didn't like the idea of re-arranging everything in there, so he managed to convince me to move instead to a portion of the galley, where a nascent dining area existed. The galley is in the corresponding compartment in the port hull. Peter removed the table, and walled off the area with a heavy wool blanket. It is just long enough for me to lay down in. Mauricio was raised up the foremast in a safety harness, (no bosun's chair), to repair the broken halyard, and after it being down for two days or so, the foresail was finally raised at sunset.

Wed. Dec 24, day 7 - When Jim and I came on watch, winds were gusting to 25 knots, and the ship was hard to handle. So we helped the midnight watch crew take down the main sail. It stayed down all day. Today, in an effort to fly the foresail more effectively on a reach, we rigged one of the staysail halyards on the main mast to the gaff of the foresail, for use as a gaff sheet. It seemed to help in keeping the sail off the shroud, although I think the sail must still be flown too tight for a broad reach. My suggestion to reef the sail to possibly sheet it out further, was not taken. **Thurs. Dec 25, day 8** - I got up to my 4:00 am watch to big trouble: signs that the shroud cables were fraying and breaking up near the mast head. Jim first noticed it, and mentioned it to me. After long study with the binoculars, we could come to no other conclusion. Roger was hoisted up to inspect the shrouds on the aft mast. Only two strands were left on the port aft shroud. Peter inspected the foremast and found trouble there also: only three strands remained on the port side forward shroud. After one failed attempt, Roger replaced the worst shroud on the foremast with a piece of 1" hawser (thick rope). Later, one of the shrouds on the aft mast let go and fell onto Rogers cabin roof, puncturing two small holes in it. We took down all the sails, and deployed the sea anchor, and we spent all night riding it. That evening the captain broke out some expensive cognac. **Fri. Dec 26, day 9** - In the morning two other shrouds on the aft mast were found to be perilously close to falling, and with just a little bit of wiggling, they fell to the deck. The sea anchor was laboriously pulled up, (with no engine to assist it took all available hands at least an hour), and we got underway downwind, on the two jibs. Jim came up with a plan to secure the aft mast with hawser, consisting of three stay lines which were attached to the mast half-way up, with one of the lines being led directly forward, and the two others secured to the bases on the serpent tails aft. I could see that the forward stay would be a major inconvenience in working the foresail, so I brought this up. Mauricio agreed this was a problem, and after some discussion the plan was modified to include 4 stay lines instead of three, which freed up the center deck area. We implemented this plan, and Mauricio did all the work up the mast. Gary reported that we were drifting closer to a region of breaking waves which we would like to avoid. As if we

Dec 27, day 10 - Another day of heroic high-foremast to tie reinforcing ropes to the frayed sunburn on my legs while steering a steady downshrouds which attach at the very mast head. After-wanted to continue on a dead run, wing-on-wing (the capt. included) wanted to steer a great circle we left the big foresail down for the night. Gary day, UT-7, equivalent to US. Mountain time. **Sun,** Mauricio and the crew, it was discovered that the ward of the aft running shrouds, by temporarily one more knot of speed when running before the shroud problems began. **Mon. Dec 29, day 12** - this, one makes such milestones as are available: a Today another minor milestone: we are west of



didn't have enough to think about already! **Sat.** flying repairs. Roger, then Mauricio went up the shrouds. Mauricio stayed up so long that I got a wind course for him. He even reinforced the outer wards a good-natured disagreement of sorts. Some at 300 deg., to put less stress on the vessel. Others, route (260 deg). 300 deg. eventually won out, and informed us that we entered a new time zone to- **Dec 28, day 11** - After much experimentation by foresail can be reefed, and the boom moved for-lowering it. This arrangement seemed to give us wind, which is what we have been doing since the

When traveling across such a featureless place as change in local time zone, a 1000 mile point, etc. 100 degrees longitude. We are making good progress with the foresail forward of the shrouds. A very hot day. I figured out how to turn on the com port on the IBM pc. When Roger gets around to do the radio part, we might be able to receive a weather map. Late in the afternoon we spotted what looked like a fishing vessel, doing slow circles in the distance to the south. **Tue. Dec 30, day 13** - Another day of high-wire heroics. For reasons unknown to me, Mauricio and Roger decide to re-attach the broken shrouds to the main mast with chains and shackles. A piece of anchor chain was cut up, and shackles were scavenged from all over the ship. Two of the four shrouds were re-attached. Jims hawser stays were left in place. **Wed. Dec 31, day 14** - A brief rain shower in the morning allowed me a chance to rinse the salt out of my only cool, long sleeved shirt. Another, heavier squall blew in at noon and delayed lunch. **Thurs, Jan 1, 1998, day 15** - Last night was a bad night - I did not get any sleep. There were two squalls, and swells approaching from the port quarter made a great deal of noise. It seemed as if the ship were coming apart. A block which Jim had installed to prevent the forward deck cabins from slipping made a loud creaking noise all night, except I thought it was the mast making the noise because the shrouds were coming loose again. The sunrise was beautiful today, coming between two rain showers when I was at the wheel. We crossed the equator today during a rain squall. We counted down the seconds by watching two separate GPS receivers, and rang both bells at the exact moment. **Fri Jan 2, day 16** - A rather wet day, with rain squalls moving through with some regularity. **Sat Jan 3, day 17** - A pretty good day for all concerned. Sunny, pleasant, and we made good headway. After the unusual activity caused by the breaking shrouds, life on board has settled into a more regular pattern. During our watch, Jim and I tend to switch turns at the wheel every hour. After it gets light, he goes around the ship, checking on various points of its construction. One of the items of concern is the beam lashings, which seem to be coming a bit loose. The lashings are what hold all of the major components of the catamaran together, so they had better be doing the job! Jim has put pieces of plastic cut from water bottles, and small wooden shims under a couple of the foremost, and aft-most lashings to tighten them up. Peter emerges at about 6:00 am to begin breakfast. Sometimes I have to eat with one hand on the wheel. After I get off watch I like to go below for a nap until about noontime, coming up for lunch.

Sun Jan 4, day 18 - A very slow night, averaging only 3 knots, followed by a slow day. Mauricio attached the other two original shrouds to the main mast. The main sail was raised in the afternoon, for the first time since the shrouds broke. We entered time zone UT-8, (US pacific). We sailed close hauled a bit, and saw a brief squall. A school of dolphins paid a visit at sunset. Course was changed to north, due to NW winds. Rain clouds surrounded the ship at dusk, and the wind calmed down. **Mon.**

Jan 5, day 19 - Last night, as soon as I got settled for the night, an eye-bolt on one of the tillers broke, and we lost steering control. I went up to help lower the big sails. The helm was eventually restored, but little headway was made all night. At 4:00 am the wind picked up, and by 10:00 am, we were beating hard into a stiff breeze at 310 deg.

Tue. Jan 6, day 20 - Day began with us still beating hard to windward at 320 deg. Everyone seemed to take extra time to view the sunrise this morning. After breakfast the captain eased us off to 280 deg or so. I had occasion to go into my old cabin this morning, which has become the primary place where tools and other odds and ends are stored. When in there I noticed that the bilge was full of water, right up to the sub-floor floor. The bilge access panel was floating. So we pulled out the hand pump, and set to work. It took a couple of hours to empty the bilge under my old cabin. We also went around and examined all the bilge compartments, pumping as necessary. In the early afternoon we did the King Neptune ritual for sailors who cross the equator for the first time. Despite all Mauricio's sailing experience, he has never crossed the equator on a boat before, only the captain has ever done so. The captain dressed up as King Neptune, wearing a blue bandana Arab-style, dark blue sunglasses, and using a gaff hook as a trident. The ritual mainly involved drinking. Later more drinking and smoking of cigars ensued, in what turned into a half-way party. Today we are approximately half way to Oahu, although we will probably port first at Hilo, on the Big Island. The ship mainly steered itself on a 300 deg course, and the weather was beautiful all day. Late in the afternoon the halyard on the outer jib broke. (I still can't remember which is the yankee!) **Wed. Jan 7, day 21** - Mauricio repaired the halyard on the outer jib, and inspected the shrouds, which seemed to be holding up ok. We put up all our sail and made good time, but the boat is VERY wet on this heading. The roof of my cabin began to leak. We are generally on starboard tack now, ever since crossing the equator. Oddly enough, the lee side of the ship is proving to be the wettest. This seems to be because when swells slap the inboard side of the lee hull, they send spray up between the deck boards which then tends to come down on the hatch covers. It's a fine line between keeping the covers open enough for air, but closed enough to keep out water. I started the voyage out on the lee side, in my old cabin, when we were on port tack with a south wind. Now I'm back on the lee side again on starboard tack.



Thurs. Jan 8, day 22 - The radar reflector was lost last night. It was on the forward port side flag halyard, and apparently the pulley on the mast head yard simply came off the yard. Whoever was on watch did not notice, and after being dragged behind the ship for some time, it apparently cut through the line and was lost. In the morning we fished in the empty line. This does not reflect so badly on the watch crew as one might think at first. When pushing through swells this ship is quite noisy, with waves almost always impacting somewhere on the vessel. And of course there are normally no lights on deck at all. Today we are equidistant between Reno and College station. Isn't it amazing what you can do with a hand held GPS? The bilge in my old cabin was full again today, and had to be pumped. It filled up in only two days. Peter and Jim have determined that it is due to a crack near the rudder well, which developed in a location which was improperly constructed, by using fiberglass instead of epoxy. Some more dolphins paid a visit at sunset.

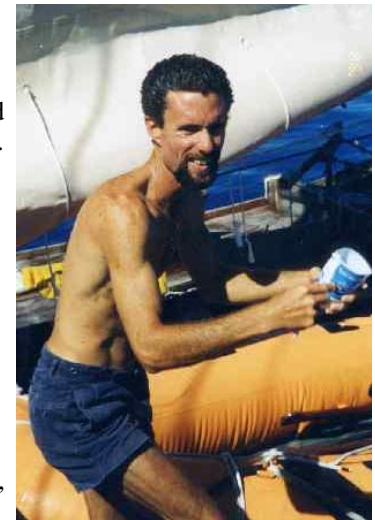
Fri. Jan 9, day 23 - A lazy day -- nobody did much of anything except Jim, who worked hard all day patching the hole near the starboard rudder well. He says that this crack, a construction flaw really, was responsible for the leaking into the bilge. We'll see. Some more dolphins showed up at noon. **Sat. Jan 10, day 24** Much more water came into my cabin today through the galley. In addition to having to worry about water coming in the hatch, I have the additional problem of water coming in through the galley. The galley hatch must of course be left open when preparing meals, and it presents a huge target for spray and deflected waves. Most of this water thankfully falls straight down to the sub floor, and then into the bilge. Some of it however, hits the blanket, eventually soaking through, and some runs aft along the first floor, right into my little space. The thought of moving back to my old cabin is out of the question. It has metamorphosed into a dank scummy hole, most suitable it seems, for encouraging the growth of rust on whatever metal objects are placed inside. I don't feel too set upon however: most of the other cabins on the vessel are now leaking to one degree or other. **Sun. Jan 11, day 25** - No milestones today, just a wet day of big swells from storms near Mexico. I heard on the shortwave that there was a big ice storm in the NE US. It is amazing how much the sound of the ocean resembles thunder down in the below-deck cabins. Waves striking the opposite hull have a muffled, distant character, while those striking ones own hull produce a sharper and louder boom. Sometimes a long-crested wave will rake the underside of the catamaran, starting softly and muffled in the aft quarter somewhere, then travel forward and across, getting louder as it approaches, and booming loudly as it impacts a nearby hull wall. Sometimes a rogue wave will even crack loudly against the hull, very close and very loud, like a firecracker.



Mon. Jan 12, day 26 - A new time zone today: UT-9 (Alaska time?). A grayish day, still with big swells. Today we are closer to Oahu than to Reno for the first time. Later today should mark the 2/3 distance point from Callao to Oahu. I wrapped my camera in a towel and took it topside to take a sequence of photos of the waves. The only relatively dry place to take the pictures from, was on top of the forward deck cabins. **Tue. Jan 13, day 27** - A gray day of heavy swells. We were put off our intended course during the night by the swells. We ran 240 deg. last night, since steering 270 deg.

causes the waves to hit broadside. After breakfast we went to 310 deg., and can make 4 knots to windward with only the jibs. This is meatball sailing, to borrow an expression from that old television series, MASH. The head of surgery, Hawkeye, would always admonish Charles when he was working too meticulously and slowly: "Come on Charles! This is meatball surgery! Stop the bleeding, patch them up, and on to the next patient!" I suppose "bedsheet and broomstick" sailing would be a better analogy, but it doesn't quite fit a 10 ton vessel. The idea is that you put up the sail, make it secure, and the catamaran moves. Not much need to fuss with sail shape or other details. **Wed. Jan 14, day 28** - Today began much like yesterday, except the swells shifted a bit to the east. I thought that the swells would allow us to travel due west today, but we fell off somewhat, to 250 deg. or so. The motion picture camera was pulled out in late morning to shoot some footage of the crew working one of the jibs. I preferred my post-watch nap to being on film. In the afternoon, Roger got his arm slapped pretty good by a line while trying to rig the outer jib to fly in a higher position on the stay. **Thurs. Jan 15, day 29** - Day 29 brings conditions much the same as the past few, except that the wind is almost east. We sailed due west all morning, uneventful afternoon. I busied myself rigging a tarp over my cabin, in an effort to keep more of the topside spray from soaking into the blanket. **Fri. Jan 16, day 30** - In the morning it seemed as if the swells were easing, then a squall around breakfast, and they picked up again. I spent most all afternoon in my cabin today. When I came up for dinner, the seas were very confused, with swells apparently coming from three different directions. The biggest were from the N.E. **Sat. Jan 17, day 31** - Began the day steering 290-300 deg. in moderate seas. We raised the foresail and ended the day on a reach. This is the roughest wettest day, of a rough wet, week. It seems to me that this ship has more sail than needed for a voyage like this. We spent far more days with one or two sails down, than with all of them up, and not simply because of breakdowns. In the first place, this vessel seems to take more pounding than is prudent above 9 knots. In a sheltered bay, away from swells she could no doubt be driven faster, but not on the open ocean. Secondly, there is only so much sail which can be effectively deployed on a run. The aft sails seem to take almost as much power out of the forward sails, as they contribute themselves. My guess is that the ancient vessels on which this ship is modeled, carried less sail than we do.

Sun. Jan 18, day 32 - We made 6-7 knots with only two sails up. A tanker crossed our path at about 11:00 am. We raised it. It was the the "Buena Ventura", bound from Corpus Christi Tx, via Panama, to Yokahama. It had a Greek crew. It seems as if every vessel we have encountered so far is either on its way to, or from, Japan. A new leak developed in my cabin, on the outside wall, which caused the lower third of the floor to get wet. This is what my old cabin did. Bummer. I found a drill and bit, which had not yet been completely oxidized, and drilled a few holes into the floor, to let the water drain to the sub-floor below. **Mon. Jan 19, day 33** The time zone changed yesterday (UT-10), but I didn't find out about it, so I got up for watch one hour early. Gary and Mauricio were singing silly songs. "Row Row Row Your Boat" kept coming up. We're making good headway on a reach: varying from close to broad. The way things are going, we should reach Hilo Friday morning. At sunset we saw a small pod of sperm whales traveling in the opposite direction. **Tue. Jan 20, day 34** Both winds and seas are much calmer today. Mauricio suggested putting up the main sail on a dead run to the west! So we did, and also rigged a flag halyard to the main sail gaff for use when we reach port. The deck dried off, and I took some pictures of the damage to the finish of the wood after 33 days of ocean. **Wed. Jan 21, day 35** - The day began too calm. The knot meter registered 0 knots most all of the day. Several sail combinations were tried. Two squalls provided the only headway, producing south winds. The foresail was moved forward of the shrouds. Today's poor performance means that we cannot reach Hilo on Friday morning as expected. **Thurs. Jan 22, day 36** - The doldrums continued today: nice weather, no wind to speak of all day. We launched the Caribe, our rubber dinghy, and paddled around in it, taking pictures of the ship. **Fri. Jan 23, day 37** - No wind all night, and very little all day. It was decided to skip Hilo, and proceed directly to Honolulu. Surely one of the cruelest tricks that the ocean can play on sailors, is to deny them access to their port, after a long and difficult voyage. We should have been in Hilo today.



Sat. Jan 24, day 38 - Another day of doldrums. At least most of my stuff is dry after three days of this. The ship is a bit quieter, but not a lot. The sounds are much different however. Everywhere on the ship, both topside and below, you can hear the creaking of the gaffs and the flopping of the sails as they move uselessly back and forth with every swell. It's easy to tell whether we're making headway or not, even in the pitch darkness of the cabins below. I miss the old thunder.

Sun. Jan 25, day 39 - More doldrums, and nothing but discouraging weather news on the radio. We have decided to try for Hilo again, as the winds do not seem to be blowing very consistently anywhere in the Hawaiian islands. Peter kept remarking about how good the swells would be to surf on. He has mixed feelings about returning to his old home town of Hilo, and these doldrum days have given him plenty of opportunity to express them. I've learned a lot about Hawaii from him in the last few days however. We have been in contact with people in Hilo. A nice reception is being planned for us -- whenever we get there. They keep asking when we will arrive. The unusually calm winds around the islands are apparently associated with the El Nino phenomenon. Around 6:00 pm a WNW breeze picked up, and we trimmed all the sails in close.

Mon. Jan 26, day 40 - We sailed close hauled all night long, and made decent progress. Thank goodness that the current has been in our favor during the past few days. The wind shifted to ESE in the early morning, then gradually died out in the afternoon.



Tues. Jan 27, day 41 - Another night sitting on the rocking ocean, listening to the creaking of the gaffs, and flopping of the sails. The day began with no wind, and was quite hot by noon. In the early afternoon a WNW breeze picked up. North winds of 5 to 15 knots are forecast for tonight. If we get at least 5 knots from the north during the night, we'll be in port tomorrow.

Wed. Jan 28, day 42 - The forecast was right! A auspicious wind prevailed all night. When I got up for my 4:00 am watch the lights of the east coast of the Big Island of Hawaii loomed in the western sky like an alien presence. Everyone was up at this time, transfixed by the spectacle, scrutinizing the lights, and watching the outline of the island slowly become defined by dawn. There were lots of things to do: preparing tow and docking lines, digging the anchors out of the aft compartments in which they had been stowed for 41 days, and policing up the vessel. A Coast Guard Auxiliary escort boat met us a few miles out of Hilo harbor and followed us in. Quite close to the harbor breakwater, two whales swam very close and almost

rammed the ship -- so they say. I was below changing out of my foul weather gear at the time, in which I been since 4:00 am. We sailed well into Hilo harbor, and only needed assistance for the last few hundred yards. The breeze was against us at that point. We were secured shortly after noon, and cleared customs about an hour later. The Naniloa Hotel, a big resort hotel on the bay, was generous enough to offer us free rooms for a few days, which all of us immediately checked into.

Mauricio and Paola Barbis now live in Hilo with their two children, Stefano and Brunella and are members of Na Hoa Holomoku



Next Meeting : Monday, August 13th, Wailoa Park Pavilion #3. Board of Directors meeting at 5:45, begin potluck at 6pm, General meeting begins at 6:30.

Barry Bolln and two others have been at sea for 3 1/2 weeks delivering a Hans Christian 43 from Saipan to Honolulu. They should return sometime later this week or early the next.

Kurt Schumaker needs crew for his Herreshoff designed Marco Polo 55 to sail to Palmira. Contact him at 885-4242.

Please submit articles, etc. for the newsletter to Pat at 961-4474 or holokai@hawaii.rr.com

**Na Hoa Holomoku of Hawaii
Yacht Club**

**PO Box 1661
Keaau, HI 96749
holokai@hawaii.rr.com
961-4474**



July 7, 2001 Independence Race Results

Dinghy Class: John Gapp

Ivo Hanza

Multihull Class: Jim Lambeth

Mike Thomas

Wayne Mort

Monohull Class: Jim Lucas

Pat Bolln

Performance Class: Nick Rees

Jacques Peysson

