

My life with wind in my sails.



When I quit riding my motorcycle, I had been looking for something else fun to do. I saw them sailing on Lake Ray Hubbard. I went down to the Yacht Club on south side of lake to take lessons. My first couple lessons in September, worked out nice, I passed beginners sailing test and we went out sailing. Small 22ft sailboats. We would usually have 4 students and instructor on each boat. We had to get sails out of the cabin and put them out so we could sail. I took one or two lessons, but then got busy at work and I did not get back until February of the next year. One of my classes was on a pretty winder day and our group had 5 boats out sailing for the morning for class. I was on the rudder when a big wind hit us and the boat was keeled over and it was so far, that our shirt tails were getting wet from the lake. One of the other boats not so lucky, they capsized and got to practice getting it upright and going. It was a fun day...

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Meanwhile looking thru things going on on my groups I enjoyed on Meetup.com I found a sailing trip to St Maarten for a week. I decided to sign on for that trip. The trip was fun but frustrating too. The lady that was hosting and one of the Captain's, was using older Catamarans. The boat I was on obviously had not had the sails up recently. Dave and I had to do some work on the lines for hosting the main sail, so that we could actually put the sail up. Another day there were issues with fuse panel but Dave and I worked that out too. There were 5 Catamarans in the group and one of them had issues with engine and had to have a rescue boat come out and fix that. I guess to start with the trip was planned for 4 boats, but with me a a few others wanting to go she added a 5th boat and she was going to be the Captain. As it turned out Dave and I sailed the boat. The other two guys on my boat seem to go thru 2-3 cases of beer a day. Most of the trip was really fun, but some of the others on other boats in our group started doing the Payton Place BS and one night some guy from another ship came over to spend night with our Captain, but then it was hard to get rid of him and he was not invited back. The lady that was our boat Captain was a pain and most of us did not like her. One evening as we were anchored close to shore and most of us were back on boat from fun ashore, but she had stayed later. We heard her shouting from the dock trying to get one of us to come pick her up with the dingy. We ignored her. Finally someone brought her out to the boat. But the trip had me pretty much hooked on

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sailing.

I got back and made sure I got to the Yacht Club to finish my first sailing course. The Yacht club was teaching the ASA, American Sailing Association, courses. We were told that if we came out on the weekend, we might find someone to sail with. But after trying that twice I quit going. No one was sailing or offered a chance to sail. I finished the ASA101, AS102 and was taking the map reading AS105 and during that class learned they were doing the ASA104 class in the BVI for a week on a monohull. We had 7 students and our instructor.



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After a great time around the BVI we came back to Garland and I immediately started looking for a boat. I found a 25ft Catalina that was already on Lake Ray Hubbard. I called a friend of mine I had met in sailing class and told him we needed to go sailing, that I had bought a boat. He says, he bought one to.... We started inviting people from the Meetup.com to come sail with us. That way we had enough crew for both boats. It was fun chasing each other around the lake. Then we would drop sails in middle of lake and eat and drink and swim. It was fun. Then we put sails back up and starting chasing each other around again. During this time, we were having a bit of a drought and the lake was getting lower and lower. I had Wendy, Harold and the girls come sail one day and we ended up aground trying to come back into the

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marina. We were in a marina on the south side of the lake but it got to where there was not enough water in marina hardly, to get out to the lake to sail. That marina was owned by the marina on the north side, so I sailed up there and insisted on getting a slip there for the boat.

One of the things my buddy and found fun was to get a good wind and then let the boat keel over as far as possible. ON the 25 ft Catalina, we were able to get it so far over water would be coming onto the side deck. It made some sailors a little worried, but I loved to push it so far. I did find as well, that no matter how far over I pushed it, I was not able to capsize it.



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I had a lot of fun... Everyone at the marina said that I used my boat more than anyone. I was sailing 3-4 times a week. Sometimes both Sat/Sun too. We found that sailing on July 4th was great fun. Sail all afternoon, then eat and drink and bit and as the sun was going down, we would go over near Rockwall where they had music and then we could see fireworks from around town and it was fun. On those days, we overloaded the boat a bit. Usually for sailing I only allowed 3-4 crew besides me. These were not pleasure cruises, everyone did something, pull the line for a sail or hand on the rudder. Or bring up sandwiches or whatever had been brought for us to eat and drink from all the crew. We sailed a lot from that marina until the lake was so low, we could not get down the channel in marina to go out to sail. So there was one more marina on the bridge road that crossed the lake that had deep water, so I sailed over there and got a slip from them. I liked that marina the best, easy access and no issues with water level and easy to get out to the lake. But the lake was so low we would have to sail almost across it staying close to the road before we could turn south and get into the middle of the lake. With these frustrations, I decided to sell the boat. I was lucky I thought that anyone would even buy it the water so low.

In the mean time my buddy had been finishing his ASA courses in Kemah, and sailing in Galveston Bay for his classes. He liked

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them, same price as here at the Yacht Club but they completed each course in a weekend, instead of doing 3-4 Saturdays in a row. By training down there he was able to also charter boats there for sailing. We started getting some of our friends on the meetup to come down there and sail with us. The only problem with doing charters there, is that since none of us had “Captain’s Certificate” we were not supposed to go as low in bay as “Red Hook” and we were not allowed to go down the channel to Galveston. We also were required to have the boat back before dark, so our 1/2 day charter, sturned into 11am to 6pm for sailing.

I got the idea that I should buy a boat down there and since were were charging people to come sail with us, I could do it as a business. I found a very nice 34ft Hunter and made them an offer for it. I got a berth for it there in Kemah at the Watergate Marina where we had be chartering from. It was very handy, but expensive. We had several fun trips on Galveston Bay with my boat, “Stinson Sue”



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We had freinds from the Meetup.com to come join us in Kemah on a Saturday morning and we would sail and go down to Red Hook to anchor and have a bite to eat and then back up into the bay. It was so fun, there would be dolphins swimming alongside of us to sometimes. I made a point of having every help with the sailing. I stressed my being Captain and owner would oversee the sailing that they would do.

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I would keep them headed the right way. We had some really fun people sail with us and we would make a party of it each time. Sometimes I had very formal wear for the sailing.

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I tried many times to see how far over I could get Stinson Sue when sailing but she was not able to be pushed over as much as the 25 Catalina. We had a lot of fun sailing on Stinson Sue but it became evident very soon that it was more than I could really afford and I was fortunate to find a buyer that winter, so I did not lose money on the boat.

Of course the fun times we had, gave a lot of people the chance to enjoy sailing and several wanted to go to the BVI for sailing. So I chartered a 50 ft monohull from “The Moorings” and we

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enjoyed sailing around Tortola to the other smaller islands for a week at a time. Visiting Norman Island, The Dogs, The Bathes and Virgin Gorda to the Bitter End Yacht Club. I did this trip 2-3 times and had so much fun every time.

Well of course, after I had sold my boat at Lake Ray Hubbard, it starting raining again and the lake filled back up. So I was on the hunt for anther boat and my buddy and I went together to buy a 27ft Catalina and share costs.

I was asked a lot about what was the name of my boat. Actually for both the 25 ft and 27 ft Catalina's, neither had a name on the stern. I would tell people they were my "Next Ex". Partially for that they were my current love and partly because of the saying about the the 2 best days in a boat owners life. The day they buy the boat and the day they sell it. Well for me I had a LOT of very good days sailing them.

My buddy and I were trying to see if we could get this Catalina to keel over as far as our first one but it would not. Again, we found that because the ballast in the keel and that we only had available wind, not high waves and other hazards, it was impossible to capsize it. I had the 27 ft Catalina a while, I think it was after I had semi retired and sold house, that I found trying to keep up with costs was not as easy. So I was able to find a buyer on the lake and that was that.

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I think I had started the sailing in fall of 2011 and had boats of my own until fall of 2016. Now when I get a chance on cruises I take snorkeling excursions that let me be on sailboats. I am hoping to get another trip or two for the BVI to take friends for a weeks sailing fun down there.