Dr. Dan Sprehe also was active and successful on the racing circuit during this period aboard his graceful 42 Morgan, *Long Gone*. On November 18, 1972, and after a bit of media hype, *The Tampa Daily Times* reported: "Sprehe Wins A Doctorly Duel." Sprehe edged out Dr. Ron Krippendorf to win the FORA sponsored St. Petersburg to Naples Race.

Mich Emmanuel, while he owned a sleek Tartan 34 in the early 1970s, was a fine navigator (with pipe always at hand), and spent much of his sailing time crewing in that capacity on the boats of friends such as Dr. Sprehe.

Dr. Dan Sprehe at the wheel of *Long Gone* in 1972 with sails trimmed to win.

Also notable at the time was John Boushall and his Morgan 24, *Tina*. Boushall began his sailing career at Camp Charlevoix in Michigan at age 12. In the late 1940s, he competed in the Snipe class; he began his serious sailing in 1970 with the purchase of *Tina*. Boushall was 1st overall in the 1974 Egmont Key Race and 1st in his division five years in a row in the Midget Ocean Racing Conference. He also is the proud owner of the 1974 Houston Wall trophy.

Mich Emmanuel enjoying lunch at the navigator's station on Dan Sprehe's *Long Gone*.

A great contributor and supporter of the boating activities at the Club during this era (and continuously so through today) is Ed Nelson. Nelson, a well-respected sailor himself, began his sailing activities in 1945 in a Fish Class craft. In 1950, he purchased the 16-foot Luders, *Rascal*, which he replaced in 1953 with *Little Lady*, a 24-foot Luders. Nelson had great success with the two Luders in the Egmont Key, Pass-a-Grille, and Sarasota races. In 1992, he purchased, and mostly cruised, *Lady*, a J-34.

The Morgan 24, *Tina*, with owner John Boushall and crew in racing form.

Ed and Bertha Nelson's sleek *Little Lady* in 1965. The Luders 24 was actually 39 feet in length overall.

Sailors Come of Age

After the demise of the Albacore fleet in the 1970s, familiar yet untested young faces appeared on the local racing circuit. Many of the individuals were mentored by the old-timers, and many fell under the tutelage of Neil "Skipper" Goble during the 1950s and 1960s. Whichever might be the case, a group of seasoned sailors picked up the gauntlet and the spirit of competition.

In the mid-1980s, David McClain began making a name for himself aboard *Rob Roy,* his 39-foot Finngulf. In the 1980s alone, *Rob Roy* took 1st in the Racing Division in 1986 and 1988 to win the Pass-a-Grille Yacht Club's Anchor trophy. She also took 1st place honors in the 1988 Bacardi Cup; Egmont Key Race; Clearwater to Key West Race; and her class in the Kahlua Cup. In the 1990s, McClain continued his winning streak, taking 1st place overall in the Davis Island Yacht Club's "A" Fleet; the Audi Yachting Race Week in Key West; Tampa Bay Race Week; and 1st Place division wins in two Kahlua Cup races; the Bacardi Cup; and, for two consecutive years, was the winner of the Capt. Morgan's Suncoast Boat of the Year honors.

David McClain's speedster *Rob Roy* in 1988 on the way to 1st place honors in the Bacardi Cup Race.

Jim Waters is another fine example. Trained in 1956 in prams by "Skipper" Goble, he purchased his first boat, a Moth Class, from Harris Mullen. After graduating from college, Waters returned to Tampa in 1969 and began crewing for John Boushall on *Tina.* He then purchased and began racing a Thistle, competing in the early 1970s until 1974, when he bought the new and "hot" 470. Jim retired from racing for a few years until 1980, when he began crewing on several offshore boats.

A Lindberg 28 followed in 1985, in which he had good success for several years, and in 1989, at the urging of friends, he purchased a Star Class boat in which he won the Club's International Star Class Commodore's Cup Regatta.

Waters discussed his perennial boat-fever addiction and his big jump to his next, and last, sailboat:

> In 1992, I purchased the Santa Cruz 59, *Flank Speed*. This boat had the scratch rating between New Orleans and Miami, and we finished first in every race where we didn't have a mechanical failure. Between 1992 and 1997, our wins included several Egmont Key Races, Bacardi Cup in Bradenton, Michelob Cup, and the Clearwater to Key West Race. *Flank Speed* won the Club's "Boat of the Year" award three times during this period.

Jim Waters with his "human ballast" aboard *Flank Speed* in 1996.

A similar success story of another "young gun" of note is former Commodore Steve Sears. Sears also cut his teeth on prams and Blue Jays under the guidance of

"Skipper" Goble in 1955. After completing college, law school, and a stint in the Marine Corps, Steve returned to Tampa in 1975 and purchased his first serious boat, *Andale*, a 10-meter Pearson. From 1975 to 1978, Steve competed in many FORA events and four St. Petersburg to *Isla Mujeres* races, often taking home 1st place honors.

Steve happily reminisced over his next boat:

> In 1978, I acquired *No Justice*, a custom Rodgers 34. For two successive years, she was the FORA Champion and won virtually every racing event from Tampa to Naples. In 1980, she was the North American 3/4 ton Mid-Winter Champion, and a two-time winner of the St. Petersburg to Gulfport Race and the Gulfport to Pensacola Race.

The FORA champion *No Justice* pictured in 1979 with owner Steve Sears at the wheel.

Steve retired somewhat to a life of cruising in 1980 with the purchase of a Morgan 42, *Xanadu*. He noted, however, that he enjoyed some memorable times crewing as a navigator on numerous yachts:

> I had the privilege of serving as "guest navigator" on several boats, resulting in wins of the Annapolis to Newport Race (1985); the Kahlua Cup (1983); the Ft. Lauderdale to Key West Race (1989); the Lipton Cup (1992); the Miami to Nassau Race (1992); the Newport to Bermuda Race (1993); and the overall winner of the 1992 SORC aboard *Abracadabra*.

Gordon Schiff and friends during their 1st place finish in the 2000 SORC.

A co-founder of Suncoast Race Week, Steve also represented the Club as a two-time Commodore of FORA.

Quietly coming onto the sailing and racing scene at the Club, Gordon Schiff purchased the Capri 30, *Purple Passage*, in 1990 and raced competitively for many years. In 1998, he acquired *The Wall*, a Mumm 36. Schiff has brought great credit to the Club by taking 1st place in the 2000 SORC and taking home the Davis Island Yacht Club's Commodores Cup. Several other trophies of Schiff's adorn our Club trophy cases.

Cruising for the Sheer Delight of It

Many among our boating members would be classified as cruisers, that is, those who enjoy a simple commune with Mother Nature's many offerings: exploring new places and faces; hole-in-the-wall, out of the way restaurants that fillet, fry or sauté some native species in a special and delicious fashion; or seek out views of our splendid bird life; miniature forests of white, red, and black mangroves; or tiny hammocks of buttonwood and the sea life that inhabit them. Given the proximity of the Club to the emerald waters and inviting beaches along the Gulf Coast north and south of Egmont Key, and the circuitous inland waterways in and around Tampa Bay, Club sailors from the beginning often strayed from the familiar waters of Hillsborough Bay and Old Tampa Bay to enjoy the wonderful variety offered in the region. Whether sailing, fishing, shelling, exploring or just relaxing, the Club has always had its share of cruising sailors.

One of the favorite haunts, then and now: Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island, with charming neighboring islands such as Little Gasparilla, Cayo Costa, Useppa, Cabbage Key, the Captivas, and Sanibel. The venues spotted on a day trip by boat from the Club to Boca Grande yield some historically favorite spots along the way, as well: Anna Maria Island, Bradenton Beach, Lido Key, Sarasota Bay, Venice, and Longboat Key.

A fine day's work of tarpon fishing in the 1930s in Boca Grande. Standing, left to right, are George Howell, H.L. "Dusty" Crowder, and, to the right of the four victims, Lou Crowder and Mary Trice Howell.

Some members prefer taking a right at Egmont Key (or at Bunch's Pass or Pass-a-Grille Pass) to enjoy the many moorings and anchorages in St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and other locales north to Tarpon Springs.

The creation of the Florida Council of Yacht Clubs did much to inspire the cruising sailors to venture elsewhere, knowing that a pleasant stay and friendly faces awaited their arrival. Another natural consequence consisted of a group of members recruiting a cruising flotilla for a weekend journey.

One only need pick up a copy of Tom and Hatty Lenfestey's book, *A Gunkholer's Cruising Guide to Florida's West Coast,* for an unrivaled example of our cruising members. Published in 1981, with revised publications available through 1986, the books offer a comprehensive look at every worthwhile nook and cranny within Florida's western coastline and inland waterways, along with details of their adventures aboard their 29-foot Columbia. Tom's splendid advice on navigation, "local knowledge," and sailing techniques, coupled with Hatty's beautiful artwork on local flora and fauna, evidence a 30-plus-year love affair with just cruising!

Bill Webber, usually in the thick of things, enjoying one of the Club's "raft-in" cruises in the 1980s.

Bob Latimer fondly remembered many enjoyable Club sponsored cruises in the Spring and Fall of each year:

> The cruising era at the Club had its beginnings with the opening of the new yacht basin in January 1967. Since the improvements allowed for larger cruising sailboats and powerboats, the basin was gradually filled and led to a camaraderie among boaters for about 25 years. This was the period of many 20-boat "raft-ins," cruises to the Buccaneer with late night dips in the pool and Willie serving a.m. bloody marys. There were cruises to DeSoto Point, hence to Venice Yacht Club, and on to Boca Grande, Useppa and Pelican Bay. The chowder parties at Bruce and Jean Robbins' were memorable to say the least, as was the raw chicken and bloody marys at the Webbers' (the raw chicken being the caterer's fault, not the Webbers'!). In Venice, Clewis Howell and Bob Foster arrived on an unfamiliar

Boats stacked up at another "raft-in."

Every which way but loose during a 1980s Club cruise.

Bob Latimer holds court in Boca Grande during a Club cruise.

boat, which in the early morning developed a strange buzzing noise. An expert was called in, who determined the noise was an alarm clock in Mr. Howell's luggage!

Club Historian and past Commodore, the late Fred Martin, also was very active among the Club's cruisers. Clewis Howell recalled Fred's first boat and more:

> He got his first boat, a 12-foot sloop, at age 13, and has had several more over the years, including the 40-foot sloop, *Fair Helen*. He and wife, Helen, spent many years cruising, and some racing, along the West Coast of Florida. They were always on hand for Club cruises.

Fred and Helen Martin taking a break during a cruise to the Bahamas in the 1990s.

Dick Starns and his wife, Margery, also spent many pleasant times cruising with Fred and Helen. Dick remembers well their expeditions:

> Our first cruise together was in July 1973, aboard the 80-foot *Cygnus* from Ft. Lauderdale to Tampa. On May 11, 1983, Fred flew to Nassau to crew and cruise on my 51-foot Cutter, *Fiddlers Green*. Fred was a fine crewman during that voyage to Chub Key, North Bimini and Miami.

Starns chuckled while recalling some of their more amusing incidents:

> In 1985 after a Club cruise to Boca Grande, Fred and Helen in *Fair Helen* and Margery and I in *Fiddlers Green* decided to cross the Okeechobee Waterway. After lowering our masts, we traveled as far as Alma, when, at about 1700, Fred suggested we anchor up for the night and take a swim. H.L. and Betty Culbreath were also with us, and everyone but me jumped in for a swim. After they were in the water for a while, I began to see big eyes around the area. They were swimming with a school of alligators! I alerted the swimmers and you should have seen them fly out of the water—looked like a bunch of pelicans diving in reverse!

Remembering his favorite tale, Dick could not resist:

> At one point Fred and I converted to powerboats. I bought a 44-foot Midnight Lace, the *Margie S*, and Fred the Alban 34, *Tiger Lilly*. One day while anchored in Pine Island Sound, I waited for Fred to arrive and raft up to my boat. Upon arriving, Fred was towing his dinghy and didn't get the tow line shortened up before he backed down to tie up with me. His tow line got sucked into his prop so he had to anchor. He called Tow Boat U.S., which arrived shortly with a pretty young lady aboard. She got her knife and gear and told Fred to look the other way. She then stripped naked and dove under the boat. In a few minutes, she had the line out and put her clothes back on. Fred was so excited, the whole incident made his day. I was afraid that whenever we came back to the area, he would try to get his lines fouled. We had some wonderful times together with the Martins and with the Culbreaths, Sahlmans and Cochrans.

Lee Culbreath out for a cruise aboard his Antiqua 53, *Island Time.*

Always ready for an excuse to cruise, even the Tampa Bay Buccaneers provided Club members with an outing in Fall of 1976, as reported in the NFL's *Tampa Bay Today:*

> Winners of last Saturday's "Buccaneer Flotilla—NFL Style" are: *Tam O Shanter* owned by Mr. and Mrs. John Shuman of St. Petersburg; *Wyndahil* owned by Mr. and Mrs. Clewis Howell; *Capricorn*, and a tiny boat with two signs, "Go Bucs" and "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet" owned by Wally Davis and Buddy Taylor.
>
> The event was co-sponsored by the Florida Council of Yacht Clubs and the Buccaneers. Mrs. Hugh Culverhouse and Mrs. John McKay were judges for the event.

Building a Solid Base: Youth Sailing Programs

Early on in the Club's history, parents recognized the importance of organized sporting programs as a vehicle to instill in their children the traits of good sportsmanship, a competitive spirit, self reliance and strong character. This ideal has remained constant through the years as kids have participated in the activities of the swim team, stables, boating, tennis and more social programs such as Cotillion.

The young men and women sailors of the 1930s and 1940s were, for the most part, self-taught and flew by the seat of their pants. As they grew older, however, they became sailing mentors for their own children and others.

In the early 1950s, the Club hired its first professional sailing instructor, Neil "Skipper" Goble. Men and women alike, such as Jim Waters, Jan Platt, Steve Sears and Steve Reynolds, have attested to the fact that "Skipper" was a stern but effective taskmaster. The fine sailors he turned out serve as a testament to this fact. Skipper remained a fixture at the Club until the mid-to-late 1960s, after which the Club's youth sailing went dormant until the early 1980s. It is at once both ironic and inspirational what one young man accomplished during this hiatus.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Phillip Nelson, Ed and Bertha's youngest, armed with what little experience he gained sailing with family members, took up sailing seriously. Father Ed recalls: "As there was no children's sailing program at the Club at the time, he practiced frequently at the Clearwater and St. Petersburg Yacht Clubs, and participated in virtually every regatta on the West Coast. He always sailed as a TYCC sailor."

During the Spring of 1972, Phillip took his pram and family to Miami to compete in the Pram National Championship Regatta out of the Key Biscayne Yacht Club. As Ed recalls: "Despite his excellent skills, experience and training, he did not do well, yet learned a great lesson: his boat was not of a quality that could be competitive in the hard winds and sizeable waves on Biscayne Bay."

Phillip Nelson rounding the first buoy and on his way to claiming the 1974 National Pram Championship. (*Tampa Times* photo)

The following year, the Nelsons returned to Miami for the National Championships with a new boat with a stronger hull, and a new sail and rigging suitable for the unfavorable conditions. A proud father remembers: "Not only did Phillip beat the whole fleet of 129 boats to win the National Optimist Pram Championship, he turned around and repeated the same feat the following year against 133 other kids! The Club received a lot of attention those two years as Phillip proudly displayed on his sail: TYC 88."

To the victor go the spoils! Phillip with his 1st place trophy in 1974. (*Tampa Times* photo)

At some point during the mid-1980s, the Club resumed its youth sailing programs and it remains as strong as ever today. Thanks to member Buck McInnes and his donation of custom trailers for the prams, the kids are now able to compete all over the state. As Ed Nelson properly noted: "Sailing in the prams teaches youngsters to think for themselves. Because they sail alone, they must make all their own decisions, which can either help or hurt them."

Carter Timmel waiting for the next puff of breeze on Memorial Day.

Jack Timmel looking confident in the Laser class race during the 2003 Memorial Day Regatta.

Kids learning the ropes at the 2003 Memorial Day Regatta off Davis Islands.

The Sun Sets on the First 100

One hundred years of sailing victories, fishing and cruising the environs of Tampa Bay and our beautiful Gulf Coast. One hundred years and so many fond memories, friendships and family fun. Wouldn't Houston Wall stand in awe today if he watched a modern yachtsman set his GPS and autopilot in synch, or witness the self-furling jib or main? And, wouldn't he be proud of the members who have built upon his winning legacy?

The sailing seeds were well sown, well nurtured, and they have blossomed and have borne much sweet fruit.

—George B. Howell, III

Fun, Friendship and Full Sails—
The Mainsheet Mamas

In the past 31 years, the Mainsheet Mamas have established themselves not only as the longest continuous women's sailing organization in the history of the Tampa Yacht & Country Club, but also as tough competitors among our local women's sailing organizations. Little did the charter members—Jan Platt, Bertha Nelson, Jan Chadwick, Jayne Jensen, Isabelle Bregler, Vevie Dimmitt, Mattie Vega, Karen Urette, Nancy Hopkins, and Susan Curtis—ever dream their love for sailing would form a lasting cornerstone for women's sailing at the Club.

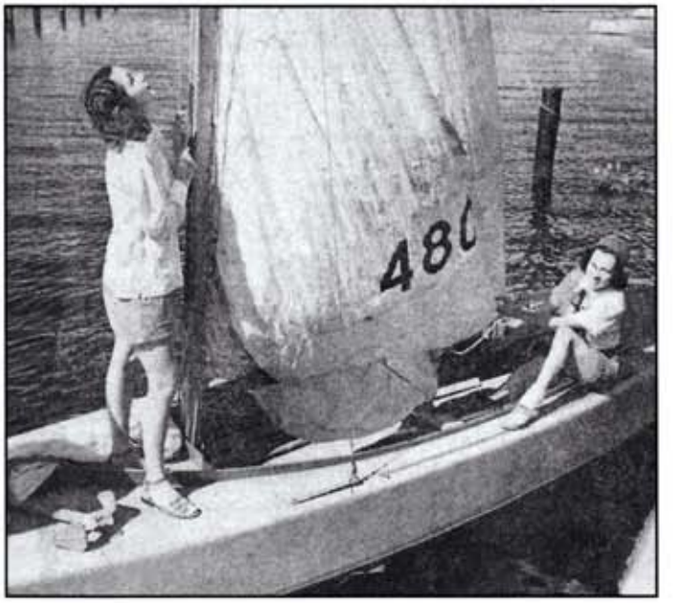
Skipperettes, circa 1940. Back row, left to right: Frances Thomas (Mrs. J.C. Toole), Mary Elizabeth Webb (Mrs. Stanley Hassler), Jane Lea (Mrs. Robert W. Titus), Sue Whitaker (Mrs. Williams McNevin), Priscilla Hunt (Mrs. Jack W. Williams), Patsy Wall (Mrs. Allen Benz), Katherine Houlihan (Mrs. George Skok), Lucille Corral (Mrs. A.J. Cannon), and Mary Jo Corral (Mrs. Matt O'Brien). Seated, left to right: Grace Corral (Mrs. Robert Everingham), Billie Webb (Mrs. William North), the late Mary Trice Howell (Mrs. A.C. Duncan), Madeline Harlan, Rhea Holmes (Mrs. Parke Wright), Bert Towne (Mrs. Neil Smith), Joanne Zewadski (Mrs. Graham O. Harrison), Kit Berriman (Mrs. Norman Bie), Kitty Washington (Mrs. Mac Towne), Marianna Kinchley, and Nan Berriman (Mrs. Mark German). (*Tampa Tribune* photo)

It all started in the 1970s when Jan Platt saw 13 idle prams in the boathouse. She enlisted the unwavering support of Marina Committee Chair Ed Nelson and re-recruited Neil "Skipper" Goble to train the "team."

Ed Nelson convinced the Board of the merits of having an established program, and by 1973, a charter was approved and Jan Platt became the first captain. Racing lessons for women novices and lessons for the Club's youth became and continue to be the Mamas' mission.

Women's sailing at the Club did not begin with the Mainsheet Mamas. The first known group, according to Frannie Toole, was the Skipperettes. They sailed Snipes in the 1940s but, unfortunately, World War II put an end to the fledgling group as well as to the Snipe fleet.

For a brief period following World War II, 110s were the "ship of choice," with Grace Corral Everingham as the lead sailor.



Speed Demons—When Miss Grace Corral (Everingham), right, and Alma Florez hoist the sails of their 110, other contestants in the sailing races at the Tampa Yacht and Country Club better look to their laurels! (*Tampa Tribune* photo, 1948)

Jan Platt and "Skipper" Goble.

Following the 110s, according to an article from Mary Sue Frank, in the 1950s the Club purchased a fleet of Optimist prams and, along with the City of Tampa, hired Neil Goble to train young sailors. Skipper became a favorite among the youth and he trained them well, as evidenced by a 1955 photo with then Commodore W.H. Reynolds.

Winners in Pram Sail Races. Junior sailors completed a summer training program yesterday with a series of pram races at Tampa Yacht Club, and Commodore W.H. Reynolds is shown presenting medals to winners. The winners, left to right, are Virginia Starrett, Wade Hough, Tom Hyatt, and Ricky Bourkard. (*Tampa Tribune* photo, 1955)

In the 1960s, then Commodore Jim Gray arranged for Skipper Goble to provide pram lessons to wives of owners of a newly established Albacore fleet. Among the wives participating were Cleona Allen, Betty Coney, Deedee Gray, Marge Richards, Allison Sahlman, Connie Walter, and Mary Sue Frank.

And so through the years, the Club had acquired a fleet of Optimist prams and trained numerous women sailors, but they could only sail and race among themselves—thus the need for a structured organization so they could compete against other clubs—The Mainsheet Mamas!

The Mainsheet Mamas have sailed continuously since that time and have more than 100 social and sailing members. Their first boats were old fiberglass, clear-water Optimist prams, which began to break apart. In 1982, a request was made to then Fleet Captain John Dinkel, asking the Club for new wooden prams. Over the next two years the Club purchased 10 prams and the sailing program became more vibrant. Sailing days were (and continue to be) Thursdays, and consisted of lessons and races with charms and trophies given to the winners. Many other activities have included "raft-ins" at Pearce's Paradise, canoe trips, luncheons, Mama and Papa dinners, treasure hunts, sailing trips to Davis Island for lunch, and the first children's pram camp. Various instructors over the years have included Sheila Savage; Betty Garcia; Lynda Vawter; Vladimer Kuline; Chenko (Kuli), first mate on the *Odessa 2000* (a Whitbred contender); Pete Conway, an Olympic Coach; Andrew Sumpton, youth coach from Davis Island Yacht Club; and Aubry Eich. The Mainsheet Mamas have supported Club sailing activities, including the National Championship Regatta.

In 1973, Tampa Yacht & Country Club's Mainsheet Mamas, St. Petersburg's Salty Sisters, and Clearwater Yacht Club sailors met at Ardeth Rutland's St. Petersburg home and formed a West Coast women's sailing group. The new group was called the Florida Women's Sailing Association and consisted of nine member clubs from Venice to Dunedin. Throughout the year, the Mainsheet Mamas participate in inter-club races and one large regatta is held yearly. Approximately 50 prams compete, plus 15 to 20 Sunfish. Since acquiring their new prams in 1982, the Mainsheet Mamas have consistently finished in the top three.

It is fitting that a regatta has been named in honor of Bertha Nelson. She and her husband Ed have been dedicated supporters of women's sailing at the Club over the years.

Sailing for women has come a long way at Tampa Yacht & Country Club and will go even further in years to come. Fun, friendship and full sails...

—Jan Platt, Bertha Nelson and Fred R. Martin, III