



Dawg Tales

Newsletter

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From the Helm

Greetings all Salty Dawg Members and subscribers,

We have just completed our 9th annual Fall Rally to the Caribbean. The last vessel just arrived on November 30th. We are providing a fair amount of material in this issue about the Fall Rally and will continue with more in the next issue.

Inside you'll find some very engaging stories, cool photos and video links you won't want to miss. Whether vessels arrived in the Bahamas or Antigua, the arrival events and camaraderie were never to be forgotten experiences. Kudos to all the volunteers and participants who made this Rally a huge success!

A New Year is just around the corner, and with our growing membership, expanding family of sponsors, and several new activities, this will be our best year ever. Stay tuned for some amazing new benefits from sponsors for Members Only, and big news about changes for the Fall Rally and other activities in the Caribbean – look for more details on these in the next issue of Dawg Tales, arriving on your doorstep late January.

For those in the Caribbean be sure to make plans for our 4th Annual Dominica Rendezvous. Details in this issue.

And, if you haven't joined yet, your Membership in this neat organization is awaiting. [JOIN](#)



Happy Holidays!
Hank George
President, SDSA



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Cruising Articles

Antigua Loves the Dawgs

by Bob Osborn, Antigua Port Captain

As I write this, most Fall Rally boats are here in Antigua with many tied up in the beautiful Nelson's Dockyard. Antigua boats have enjoyed more than a week of events, with at least one event every day to ensure that when skipper and crew arrive, there is fun awaiting.



We have had way too many events to chronicle them all here within the limited space, but it is sufficient to say that the Dawgs, many of whom are here for the first time, have been busy and loving their time in Antigua.

The Antigua National Park Service hosted a rum punch happy hour followed by a wonderful Caribbean barbecue, all totally free, for the Dawgs. With over 120 Dawgs, and nearly 40 boats represented, this was a big commitment by the National Park Service and the dockyard staff had to scramble to accommodate everyone, no simple feat given the fact that the event was fairly formal with tablecloths, china and real silverware. This was no paper plate affair.

They also had a Master of Ceremonies, DJ, photographer and the Chairman of the National Park's Authority in attendance who expressed thanks that everyone had come to their island. They even had a printed agenda to keep all presenters, including me, in line.

The government of Antigua has been tremendously supportive of our efforts to bring the fleet to Antigua and they even went so far as to send a contingent to the Annapolis Sailboat Show, took a booth and joined us at our Annapolis Rendezvous. We are very grateful for the extensive support and wonderful relationship.



Tropic of Cancer Celebration aboard Skylark

Many others here in Antigua have worked hard to make our events successful and to make the fleet welcome, including the Antigua Yacht Club and many local businesses that have hosted events to welcome our skippers and crew.

There were also a number of Dawgs that made the run north from their summer home in Trinidad to welcome the fleet, including longtime supporters, Bill and Maureen of Kalunamoo. Bill has been doing a great job as Net controller each morning on VHF 72 with the goal of keeping the fleet plugged into what's happening.

While Brenda and I will also be heading home for the holidays, we look forward to being back "on-island" in time to celebrate New Year's Eve in the Dockyard and ring in the 2020 season of cruising.

The Dawgs will surely head to Dominica in March for a Rendezvous of the Dawgs at Yachtie Appreciation Week, a week of festivities on the "Nature Island", an event that attracts over 100 cruising yachts each year.



2019 Fall Rally Fleet Stats

- 69 Participants
- Hailing from 7 different countries
- Range in size from 30-70ft
- 67% monohulls, 33% multihulls
- 42% participated in a previous Salty Dawg Rally
- 10 children aboard 6 different boats
- Crew range in age from 5 to 81 years
- 32% female, 68% male
- Boat size distribution 30-39 ft 20%, 40-49 ft 57%, 50-59 ft 13%, 60-70 ft 10%

We will also be working to put together some very special events back here in Antigua for the Classic Yacht Regatta in early April, an event that brings together dozens of beautiful sailing yachts from all over the world.



See the Antigua Photo Album [HERE](#)

Submit your Photos [HERE](#)



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Pics & Fun

Happy Crew in Hampton



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Fall Rally Passage to the Bahamas

by George Russell, S/V TirAnOg



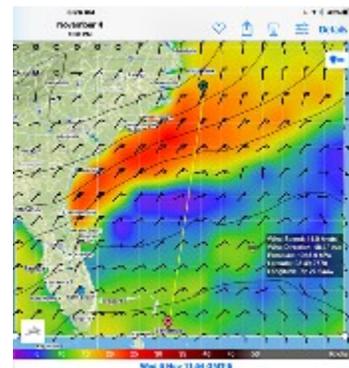
We left Hampton at 2AM on Monday morning when our last crew member arrived from Bend, Oregon. After exiting the Bay we headed southeast toward Cape Hatteras, but the northeast winds kept pushing us toward shore, so around Kitty Hawk we decided to head due east to cross the stream before heading south. In hindsight, this was a mistake because we had to travel about 150 miles just to exit the stream and begin to head southwest which probably added a day to our trip.



For the next day or so the winds were light and we typically sailed with full headsail and one reef in the mainsail with additional reefing at night. As we were checking Predict Wind twice a day for the grib predictions, we were prepared for what we thought would be about 25 knots of wind when the next front moved through and wanted to use it to speed up our progress south. We were not prepared for the 35 to 40 knots of cold dense wind that hit us like a freight train mid evening as the front arrived. After pointing up for several hours to relieve pressure on our double reefed rig, we decided to drop the mainsail entirely and sail dead

downwind with only about 5 feet of jib out to starboard and some assist from the port engine to keep it balanced as we needed to charge up the batteries anyway. At first light after the winds had dropped to a steady 25 knots we rounded up and raised the mainsail to the third reef and let out a little more jib and headed south at about 8 knots.

What did we learn? First, cold north winds are much denser than the Caribbean air that we have been used to so whatever sail plan you think you should use add an additional reef in all sails. Second, the grib wind predictions of 25 knots are accurate only after the initial 10 to 15 knot higher winds have passed and this can take up to 8 hours



or so. Third, if you like to sail in cold fronts you are well advised to have at least a third reef in your mainsail and possibly a fourth. Think of it as adding a couple of gears to your sports car to be able to better handle twisty winding roads.



A big thank you to Hank and all the Salty Dawg crew for their great communications and suggestions! A job well done! I would also like to thank my own crew Phil Gurlick and Aaron Kotzin for the fearless way they "danced with Gaia" without a complaint! We all look forward to future Salty Dawg rallies!

See the Bahamas Photo Album [HERE](#)

Send your Photos [HERE](#)



Technical Articles

Sailing the New Hylas 48 Offshore

Interview of Captain David Crafa by Hank George, President SDSA

Hylas

(Hank) David, you've just finished sailing the Hylas 48 as part of the Salty Dawg Fall Rally. In this case you sailed from Hampton, VA to Harbour Island, Eleuthera, the Bahamas. I'd like to ask you some questions about this passage and the new Hylas 48. First, for the perspective of our readers, how many offshore miles do you estimate you've sailed, and on what kinds of boats?



Education Before Departure



(David) I've been sailing between the East Coast and the Caribbean for about 15 years now, averaging about 3,000 nm per year. I first sailed offshore in a Hunter Passage 420, and crewed on a Hylas 70 on the passage to the Caribbean several times. That opened my eyes to a proper blue water boat. I then bought my own Hylas 54 in 2015, and now my wife Peggy Huang of Hylas Yachts and I are building a new Hylas 57.

(Hank) *What were the weather and sea conditions like for this passage?*



(David) The weather and sea conditions for this passage were pretty benign. There wasn't that much wind to sail fast. We motor-sailed quite a bit which can be a problem in itself for vessels that don't carry a lot of fuel. One of the critical features of the Hylas 48 is its ability to carry massive amounts of fuel and water. We never had to worry about running out of fuel. When motor sailing with the H48 or any Hylas yacht depending on your rpm, you can extend your fuel range to thousands of miles.

(Hank) *From this passage, what are your impressions about the Hylas 48's sailing abilities?*

(David) Very fast! And comfortable too. We left 15 hours after most of the yachts on the Salty Dawg departed for the Bahamas and we ended up being one of the first boats to arrive in Spanish Wells! The cockpit is spacious yet protected with good viz. Loved the offshore gourmet galley. Makes meal prep a breeze. With 3 luxury staterooms, everybody had their own berth and private cabin which left the salon a community area for relaxing off watch and crew dinners. The yacht is cutter rigged but we never got close to using the staysail.



(Hank) *What other features about this boat impressed you on this passage?*

(David) The volume of this 48 design by Bill Dixon makes the yacht feel much larger. I feel like I'm back on my Hylas 54. Bill has done the impossible and designed a yacht that from the outside has a racy, sleek, and crisp line, and sails super-fast for its size. And, then you go down below and are blown away by the amount of space. It's like the Tardis on Dr Who.



FUN Before Departure



Threading the Needle

Why Our Fall Rally Plans an Early November Departure

by Hank George, President SDSA



The time-honored strategy by seasoned sailors leaving the mid-Atlantic for the Caribbean is to depart after tropical activity has diminished, but before the onset of the North Atlantic gale season. Jimmy Cornell's World Cruising Routes notes the optimum time for the passage from the mid-Atlantic states to the Eastern Caribbean is after mid-October when tropical systems are less frequent, and before mid-November when North Atlantic gales begin to set in. Don Street in multiple articles in Cruising World recommends leaving after November 1st from Hampton, or Beaufort NC. Timing departure between the declining tropical cyclone frequency and increasing winter gale season is what I am referring to as "threading the needle." Street also notes that with the high frequency of gales around Bermuda in November, a stop there is not recommended.

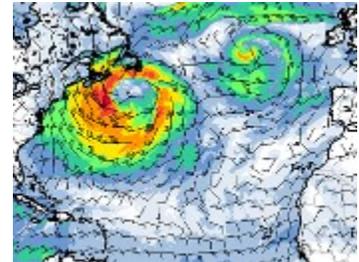
So, let's first talk about the risk of tropical storms or hurricanes. The hurricane season is officially from June 1 to November 30th. However, the frequency of these tropical cyclones is very low in the June and November time periods. Since 1851 the frequency of either a tropical storm or hurricane occurring



is almost one per year in November (0.87 actually). The vast majority occur in the July to October timeframes. In a recent discussion, I asked Dr. Christopher Landsea, Chief of the Tropical Analysis & Forecast Branch of the National Hurricane Center, if by designating November as being in the "hurricane season" that means the NWS is telling mariners they should not go to sea in November. Dr. Christopher Landsea chuckled and said "No that is not what we expect. We expect mariners to pay attention to tropical cyclone notices and other weather warnings before departing. And, when offshore to stay in frequent contact with forecasting services including NWS Notices, to be aware of any changing conditions so they can take appropriate actions."

Weather forecasting has become quite good at identifying tropical system precipitators, like a developing low or deep trough that can intensify into a named system, whether wind shear will preclude development, as well predicting near-term tracks and longer-term cones of possible travel for named tropical systems. There is no need to emphasize how dangerous these systems can be. They are concentrated with hurricane force winds in a small area 20 to 40 miles across in a typical Category 2 hurricane, with gale force winds across a range of 70 to 100 miles. You need to stay well clear of these systems. The Salty Dawg Sailing Association uses Chris Parker as its official weather forecaster and router. And, we are very conservative in recommending vessels not go to sea when precipitators are likely to build into a named system, let alone when any named system is active.

Now let's talk about that other weather feature of concern – a North Atlantic winter gale. These are big, powerful, fast moving, can have winds approaching hurricane strength, but most often cover large swatches of the North Atlantic 500 to 1,000 miles across in gale force winds. They are the result of a cold air mass sweeping SE from central Canada, colliding with warm air over the Atlantic. They regularly track NE affecting waters from Cape Hatteras to Bermuda to New England and beyond, making these waters very treacherous from mid-November on, and occasionally earlier. North Atlantic winter gales blossom into massive systems as shown in this forecast image of an Atlantic gale in November 2019.



Another major factor to be considered in planning an offshore voyage with these potential risks is the quality of weather forecasts. Modern forecasting helps considerably in identifying tropical system precipitators of concern, as well as the potential for a developing low that could become a winter gale. This is of immense benefit in having the information captains need to make a departure decision.

So with all of these considerations, our advice to boats departing in the Fall Rally to the Caribbean is: (1) be prepared to leave November 2nd; (2) be prepared and willing to wait if there are any risk factors; and (3) be prepared for lumpy and stormy conditions that can be uncomfortable at times – that is just the nature of sailing these waters at this time of year. Often vessels wisely wait several days to a week or more to depart Hampton. We don't send the fleet out to fend for themselves on a scheduled date.

One other caution – we highly recommend staying in touch with good, human meteorological services like Chris Parker. Downloads of forecast models like GRIB files or from Predict Wind are helpful tools, but please don't work with only these. Get validation. Some meteorological elements (like with high levels of convective conditions or when models are varying widely) are best understood by trained and experienced forecasting and routing experts.



Coming Events

Rendezvous

The Dominica Rendezvous

March 15th—22nd

Join us for our 5th Annual Salty Dawg Dominica Rendezvous in Portsmouth, Dominica!

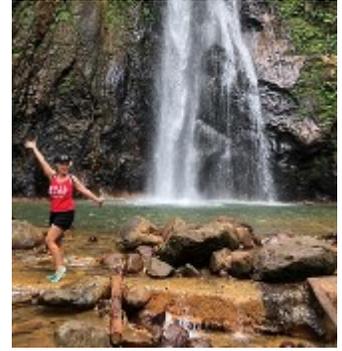
Catch up with your cruising friends in Dominica and enjoy the natural beauty of the island while having lots of fun! Participate in hiking, island tours, BBQs, impromptu beach gatherings, a volunteer project or two to help the local community, and much more.

You won't want to miss the fantastic scenery, delicious food and most of all... the camaraderie of your fellow cruisers and warm-hearted friendly Dominicans.

The Dominica Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services (PAYS) will be awaiting your arrival to welcome you to paradise. PAYS will ensure your safe and secure entry to the mooring field and serve as hosts along with Salty Dawg Members Brian and Shelly Stork. Please contact [Brian and Shelly](#) with inquiries.

Mark your calendar now for this wonderful rendezvous. More detail will be provided soon.

More detail concerning all of our 2020 Coming Events will be provided soon!



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Thank You Food Lion!

Recipe

Cheese Ball Bites

by Lindsay Funston

INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices bacon
- 1 -1/2 oz. (8-oz.) blocks cream cheese, softened
- 1 c. shredded cheddar
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. paprika
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 c. freshly chopped chives
- 1/3 c. finely chopped pecans
- 18 pretzels sticks



DIRECTIONS

- 1) In a large nonstick skillet, cook bacon until crispy, 8 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate, then finely chop. Set aside.
- 2) Meanwhile, in a large bowl, stir together cream cheese, cheddar cheese, garlic powder, and paprika and season with salt and pepper. Use a cookie scoop to form mixture into 18 small balls and transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Refrigerate until firm, 1 hour.
- 3) In a shallow bowl, stir together bacon, chives, and pecans.
- 4) Roll balls in bacon-chive-pecan mixture, insert a pretzel stick into each, and let come to room temperature 15 minutes before serving. (If not serving right away, loosely cover with plastic wrap and return to fridge.)





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The Tale End

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Share Your Favorite Sailing Story & Photos

We want to hear about your favorite sailing experiences so we can share them with other members. Got a favorite anchorage, island, restaurant or other memorable sailing experience? Please send your story to newsletter@saltydawgsailing.org and we will publish your story so we can share with other Members and subscribers.

Got some great photos to share? Please send them to us at photos@saltydawgsailing.org.

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