



THE SIDE BAR

Newsletter of the Martin County Bar Association

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THE SIDE BAR NEWSLETTER

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If you have an article, opinion, news or other information for publication in the *SideBar*, please call (772) 220-8018 or email information to: martincountybarassociation@msn.com

The due date for all advertisements, articles and announcements is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME - Part III St. Thomas to Florida and Central America & Back

Looking back and forward, weather is the most unpredictable and potentially dangerous challenge. We did not focus on the dangers. We focused on doing what we both always wanted to do and had faith that we together could solve any problem encountered. And we did. It helped that we were both technically knowledgeable, carefree, still had a lot of youthful testosterone and guts, and were essentially weather stupid. And, even though the boat made it through now 6 hurricanes, 4 with us on it, including Andrew in Marathon, the damage to our psyche after #4 in the Virgins is permanent. You have no idea what terror it is ... first the chatter on the VHF is all



Barbara Kreitz Cook
 2018-19 President



giddy and happy party talk, then as the winds pick up the chatter goes silent, then when the damage starts occurring and you hear the Coast Guard say their Cutter is dragging and they are going up over the seawall onto the road, and the fire station roof has blown off and they need help, and one anchored boater after another says they are dragging and swimming ashore, and our boat swings 45 degrees on its beam first one way then the other, and we donned our wet suits in case we too, had to abandon the boat, we silently wondered if this is the one we won't make it through and vowed "never again" on a boat in a 3rd world

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Voice Mail Line: (772) 220-8018 EMail: martincountybarassociation@msn.com Website: www.martincountybar.com

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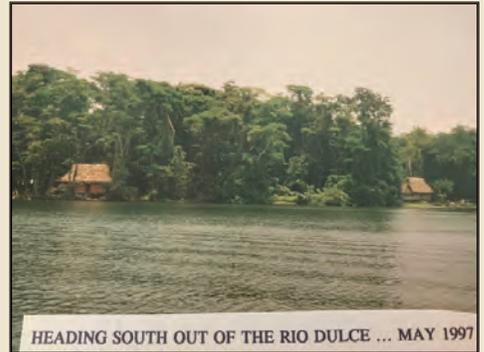
island where 60% of the roofs came off and electricity was not restored island-wide for 6 months. We wanted to be back in Florida, where we could shelter on land in a sturdy dwelling, for the 1996 hurricane season. In May 1996, when the winter winds subsided, we headed back home with one more dog, a Rottweiler puppy we named "Hurricane", borne of an illicit full moon liaison between an island female Rottweiler and our Apollo, who jumped off the boat in the middle of the night, swam ashore, scaled a 10-foot fence, and mated with her.



In October 1996, we were ready to venture out again, this time south down the Florida coast to Key West, the Dry Tortugas, and the Marquesa Islands, where we crossed the Gulf Stream to Cuba en route to Central America. Since our boat was slow, we received permission from the U.S. Coast Guard to travel west along Cuba's north coast and permission from Cuba to anchor at various ports along the way. We rounded Cabo San Antonio, the western tip of Cuba, shortly after Christmas, and crossed the Yucatan Straits to Isla Mujeres, Mexico. With a very protected anchorage at this tourist island for Mexicans, there was lots to see and do and we stayed for a month. We coasted south along the Mexican coast to Cozumel and Xcalak, the southernmost Mexican town, and then Belize, where we dove the famous outer coral reefs. We were disappointed that the coral reefs and fishing are better in the Bahamas.



We crossed into Guatemala at Livingston, the mouth of the Rio Dulce River, and headed up river to Lake Isabel. Along the river, we met children going to school in dug-out canoes and families living in depressing abject poverty. We were not anxious to venture further south in Central America and see any more of those horrible conditions, so we turned around and headed back to Mexico. In June, on a dead calm day, we and six other homeward-bound boats took a direct course to the Dry Tortugas and arrived 68 hours later, with the ocean waters still and glass-like the entire way! We planned to thereafter do all our adventuring in the 1000 islands of the Bahamas, where it truly is the best diving and fishing!



Sincerely,

Barbara A. Kreitz Cook
President

