



Gale Tales

Manatee Sailing Association

Volume 41 Number 4 www.msasailing.org April 2026

Up Coming Events

Event	Date	Time	Place
DWBH	Apr 8	5:00 PM	RJ Gators
Terra Ceia Regatta	Apr 18	12:00 PM	Terra Ceia Bay
Regatta Party	Apr 18	4:30 PM	Tropic Isles Yacht Club 1375 29th Ave W, Palmetto
Tampa Bay Rowdies	May 2	7:30 PM	Al Lang Stadium



AHOY MSA MATES

This installment will be of a pivotal trip for me and my former boat, "Wanderin' Star", a 33' Gemini 105Mc sailing catamaran. It was the passage that brought me and the boat to my new home in West Florida. As you may remember I grew up in Miami but left for Atlanta at 23 years of age to fly for Eastern Airlines and had long wanted to return to Florida. I had lusted after a Gemini for 9 years before finally biting the bullet and buying one berthed in Hobe Sound, Fl, a small town just south of Stuart on the East Coast. It was berthed at a dock behind a private home on a small canal immediately off the ICW which provided easy access to the Atlantic either to the north or south so I decided to leave it there for the time being. That "time being" turned into six years of driving back and forth from Peachtree City to Hobe Sound which



was an 11 hour grind. I finally reached the point of finality with that drive and took the boat to Panama City via the Okeechobee Waterway which is a story for another day. Panama City was “only” a 6 1/2 hour drive from Peachtree City which seemed to be a huge improvement at the time and for my circumstances. However, after I retired from flying and fueled by my desire to return to Florida, I finally had had enough of that drive too and that brings us to the crux of this story.

I had been looking for a marina where I could base my boat fairly close to my new house in Ellenton, across the Manatee River from Bradenton and I found it at Cove Sound Marina just around the corner from the now-leveled Seafood Shack in Cortez (another victim of Hurricane Milton). So I would go from a 6 1/2 hour drive to a 30 minute drive and would then live back in Florida. To accomplish this, I had to get the boat from Watson Bayou Marina in Panama City to Cortez, FL. So I recruited my long time friend, Randy, with whom together we had bought our first sailboat, a 23' Neptune lake-sailor, and another friend, Bobby, a neighbor in Peachtree City with whom I had sailed the San Juan Islands several times. Randy was a longtime boater and could handle any water conditions and Bobby had been a helicopter pilot and had never been sea or airsick in his life so I thought they would be good crew.



Wanderin' Star at Dock

They both agreed to crew for this trip, so my plan was coming together nicely (so far). We drove to Panama City on Monday, May 23, 2016, and off loaded our stuff from the car and prepped the boat for departure as soon as possible. I had rented an EPIRB from BoatUS since we were going to be so far offshore and felt good about having that aboard. We left the marina at 1600 CDT heading for Panama City Docks for fuel. After filling both tanks, we left City Docks and motored out the St. Andrew Inlet

and anchored in the hook behind the beach and inlet jetty on the west side of the Inlet. I'd been watching the weather all the previous week and it was promising with mostly clear skies and winds out of the south at 10-12 knots for all the three days of this

passage. The weather this evening is about perfect with clear skies, no wind and no bugs and a beautiful sunset over the Gulf of “**Mexico**”. After eating our supper Randy built the route in the boat's Garmin Chart Plotter (I also had it on my laptop computer so now we had it in two places in case one of them quit working). For this first night with no watches, we all slept the whole night through and were rested for the early morning departure.

My alarm went off at 0600 Tuesday morning and we grabbed a snack for breakfast and Randy and Bobby raised the anchor while I warmed up the engine and prepped the

electronics. The anchor was kind of slow coming in and when it broke the surface we saw why. It had hooked a coil of heavy cable. We used the boat hook to get the cable off the anchor and we were off our anchorage at 0700. It was a glassy seas morning and we were the only boat leaving the Inlet at the moment but soon there were many boats all headed out into the Gulf for a day of fishing. A left turn of about 30 degrees took us to our first waypoint which was the outer tip of the Cape San Blas shoals. There was still no wind, so it appeared we had a day of motoring ahead of us which turned out to be the case. We worked our way through our shifts, 4 hours on, 8 hours off with Bobby taking the first shift so I could have the midnight to 0400 shift. I've always enjoyed sailing late at night and this one promised to be an enjoyable one. The day was still beautiful with an occasional pod of dolphin, but none followed the boat for long and still very little wind, 3-4 knots. We wrote down the coordinates of our position every hour on the paper chart in case the GPS system went down and we had to navigate by dead reckoning. Our last sight of land was when the trees of Cape San Blas slipped below the horizon. We were 10.5 NM offshore now but that would increase to about 60 NM sometime Wednesday night when we

should be able to pick up the sky-glow of lights from the Tampa/Clearwater area.

Tuesday went okay still with little wind so we are still motoring but getting 4.5 to 5 knots so we're on schedule. Wednesday morning around 0300 the wind got up a bit to about 8 knots off the port bow, so I let the main and jib out and put the starboard centerboard down about half way. At 0400 the wind is up to 14 knots but it has clocked around to right on the nose so I had to furl the jib and harden the main which isn't driving much anyway but isn't flogging yet so I left it up for the time being. I had to increase the engine RPM to 2400 just to hold 4.8 knots against this now 18 knot headwind and no drive from the main. We are beginning to pound from the 2-3 foot waves and some whitecaps hitting the underside of the bridge deck which is an unfortunate characteristic of catamarans. The boat motion is much more pronounced now and I must pay attention to keep my balance. If the wind would just come through the bow, we'd really have something to work with. Randy came up to relieve me at 0500 so I went to my bunk for some zzzzz's. I was barely sleeping because of the rough ride when Bobby called me to come up because there was a problem. I had just heard a thud-like sound which I didn't recognize. The wind had

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increased considerably to 20 knots or more with 4 to 5 foot seas and the pitching and rolling was so severe it had thrashed the dinghy back and forth viciously. Even though it was securely cross-lashed aft of the stern, it had broken a 3/8 inch stainless steel bolt holding the davit support to the port hull and the stern of the dinghy was hitting the water with every roll. We had to lower the dinghy into the water, release it, and retie it with two painters close to the stern between the drive leg and the port hull where it rode

decently enough. I went back to bed but was unable to sleep because of the rough seas and pounding directly into 4-5 foot seas. At times I worried that we were going to lose the mast because the pitching and rolling was so violent.

Fortunately the standing rigging held and we didn't have any further disaster. It was so rough even Bobby got seasick and afterwards was embarrassed about that. This wind was NOT forecast at all! I had checked and double checked the weather forecasts for the past week and the wind was supposed to be 10-12 knots from the SW, but instead it was 15-20+ knots from the SE, right on the nose of our course line. We reached the outer markers for Egmont Channel just before daylight, so I took the helm and turned us into the channel where there were fortunately no ships at this time. About halfway in I got so sleepy I had to ask Randy to take the helm so I could close my eyes for a few minutes before I fell asleep standing at the

wheel. He got us through the Channel and into South Tampa Bay where it was no smoother because there was about 15 miles of fetch across the Bay which was plenty of room to build more of the very waves we had been fighting for the past 8 hours. Finally, we reached the channel markers where we could turn into the ICW towards Cortez and once we got under the lee of the mainland it finally got smooth again. We were in the home stretch. About an hour later we turned into the



Wanderin' Star Under Sail

small entrance canal for Cove Sound Marina, which was totally new to me in a boat, but I had visited it several times by car to familiarize myself with the layout of the marina and the slips. I found my slip, backed into it without much trouble, and we were finally finished with this passage from hell. (245

nautical miles and 52 hours)

Looking forward; be sure to include the annual Terra Ceia Bay race and party in your plans for April 18. It's always been a great event and we have at least four boats signed up for the race and the after-race party planning is already well on its way to completion. So, don't miss this fantastic annual event for MSA. Watch for E-Blasts regarding details for this event.

Yours nautically and fraternally,

Chuck Fulton
Co-Commodore

INVITATION TO THE 2026 MSA TERRA CEIA REGATTA

If the number of MSA members in attendance at the March Sail-Away at The Bridgetender Bar and Grill last week was any indication of the excitement about MSA getting back out on the water, the upcoming Terra Ceia Regatta is guaranteed to be a huge success! So, I hope all those folks and all the rest of the MSA club members have Saturday April 18th marked on their calendars as a “not to be missed” MSA event. Let’s get excited people! I’ve heard some of the board members say that “we may be barely sailing but we are not dead yet!” I agree that the statement would make a good theme for the Terra Ceia Regatta but I had a more nostalgic thought when I took a moment to look back at all the regattas over the years that we have participated in.

Because I was thinking rather romantically, I reverted back to old familiar songs of a time past. Remember Dean Martin? Remember the late 50’s? Remember a tune called “MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS” !!! That is the MSA 2026 Terra Ceia Regatta theme!!! I hope you will enjoy a nostalgic look back over the years as we move forward to a new era of less stress and competition and more relaxation and camaraderie. Let’s enjoy a day on the water with our MSA friends. Let’s toast our companions with a welcome drink as we

gather together at the end of the day. Let’s play a few old-fashioned games while we relax. And finally, let’s treat ourselves to a meal already prepared for us in the form of a food truck parked nearby ready to serve us. Keep it simple and enjoy it more! The races will be orchestrated by our own MSA Race Captain, Sue Davidson. She has strategic information listed in this issue of the *Gale Tales* so be sure to check it out.

The regatta after party will start at 4:30 P.M. as we meet in the small

hall at the Tropic Isles

Yacht Club located at

1375 29th Ave W.,

Palmetto. A festive

drink awaits your arrival.

Games such as nautical bingo and sailing trivia

will be played to

promote fun member

activities while we

socialize. Race winners will be announced. Regatta T-shirt orders will be delivered. Food will be available for purchase about 5:30 P.M and a yummy ice cream dessert will finish the night as the sun inches its way lower in the sky.

So here’s the deal:

- Date: Saturday April 18th
- Time: 4:30 to 7:30P.M.
- Place: Tropic Isles Yacht Club, 1375 29th Ave W, Palmetto
- Purpose: Enjoyment and Camaraderie

See you there!

Gail Gordon
MSA Social Secretary





11:44 AM Tue Mar 31





SUNDAY BRUNCH AT THE POLO FIELD

I just knew things were going along far too easily! Usually, the Polo Event is one of the most stressful outings of the year. Just trying to reserve spaces online for a desired date has brought me to frustrated tears. But this year, I called with a simple generic question early in the season and a Sarasota Polo agent offered to reserve in advance exactly what I wanted, 3 side by side tailgate spaces mid field on March 15th. He booked it! I was thrilled but I had my secret suspicions that this was all going to fall through somehow. I ended up having to call the polo office 2 weeks before our scheduled date to ask if I needed to make payment. They said that was a good idea and then they sent me the tickets just like that. I felt like I won the lottery! No gnashing of teeth or crying into my pillow happened this year!



Since our polo outing was so close to March 17th and the fact that the Polo Match theme that Sunday was a St. Patrick's Day Celebration, I ran with the idea. Leprechaun hats were ordered and a festive Irish welcome drink was prepared. Almost 30 members and guests made their way to the Sarasota Polo Club in Lakewood Ranch to

watch the polo ponies and handsome polo players race down the field to score. Once the canopy tents were opened and upright and the long tables set up and covered, members started to arrive at about 11 A.M. Chairs were

set up and food was set out as charming Irish music flowed from the speakers and set the mood. No one spoke about the one thing we had absolutely no control over the weather forecast.

Lunch has always been a delight when members were left to their own devices to bring a favorite dish to share. At 11:30 A.M. we grabbed our plates and began to fill them with overflowing yummy food.

While we were enjoying our meal, we could see some polo ponies across the field starting to prepare themselves for the match. Several trotted along the perimeter of the field and gave us a thrill. But we also noticed something else rather ominous in the sky to the south. It was what I feared would happen. It was the leading edge of a threatening front.



We kept wishing the dark cloud to run east or west of us and we waited to see if the luck of the Irish would be with us that day. The wind picked up and so did we. We put food away, packed up the tables, grabbed our jackets and waited. The radar on our phones gave us the bad news. The weather was coming straight for us. At



12:55, 5 minutes before the match was to begin, rain fell on the field and onto us.

We were coralled under the tents and we huddled together. It was a gentle rain and lasted for about 15 minutes then stopped. We were hopeful as we watched the polo club technicians survey the condition of the field. It looked good. The match would start in about 10

minutes. But it was not to be! A second shower began and turned into a storm with thunder and lightning and a downpour. After about 25 minutes of that, we waited for the final decision.....the match was cancelled due to the weather conditions. I

was totally bummed. I knew what this meant! The Polo season was at its end and the final matches were completely sold out. We would have to wait until next year to try this all again.

We had driven just to the end of the dirt road when I received an email message from the Vice President of the Sarasota Polo Club

saying how sorry she was that the weather prevented us from enjoying our event today. She gave us a full raincheck to gather our group once again at a later date. And I promise that is what we will do. I will book another Sunday in March 2027 to try to plan another exciting Polo Event, which hopefully will include spectacular weather. I have a list of everyone who purchased a ticket this year and those members will be given first dibs at attending a free polo match next spring. If they are unable to attend, I will try to sell their ticket so that they may finally have some reimbursement. That's the best I can do. Oh well, at the very least, we had a fabulous lunch and as always, we enjoyed outstanding MSA camaraderie. That alone was priceless!

Gail Gordon
MSA Social Secretary

CRUISING NEWS

Ahoy all,

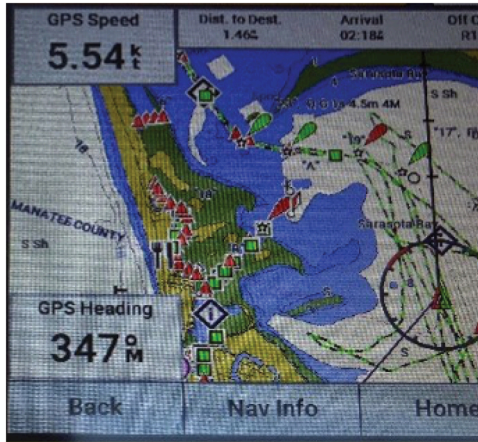
Just got home from our MSA Sail Away March 3/26 to 3/28 We shortened it by one day due to an inclement forecast of >30 knots wind on 3/29 but the 3 days we were on the water were fabulous. Both nights the wind dropped to nothing and we slumbered easily at anchor. Lynne and I sailed Sarasota Bay on Saturday down to the standout purple Van Wesel Hall on the shore. Winds piped up to 12 knots and we hit 5.5 knots under sail. We met Denny and Brigid on Aurora at ICW G17 and headed into Whale Key. We ended up anchoring just south of a large sandbar south of the key in good depth and holding. Denny and Brigid came over in their dinghy and started Happy Hour on S/V Latitudes. At 1600HRS Karen and Bob Stewart arrived in M/V Agua Therapy and rafted to



M/V Agua Therapy

Latitude. The party was on. Actually, I think more wine was spilled on Latitudes than was imbibed but that punctuated the sailing

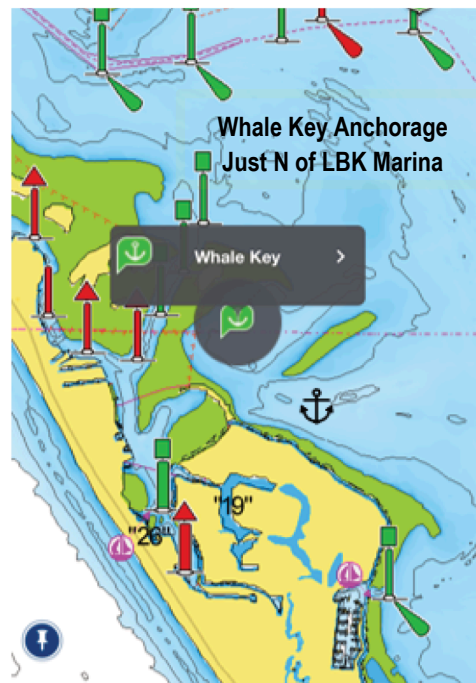
stories told. A pitch-in dinner followed (awesome) and then anchoring for M/V Aqua Therapy before sunset. Saturday was a sleepy morning, Denny and Brigid headed out early and Lynne and I returned to SaraBay Marina. Stewarts took a more leisurely path and made it home mid-afternoon.



S/V Latitudes Sailing steady at 5.5 knots

But the highlight of the trip was Thursday afternoon at Bridge Tender Restaurant. The Bradenton Pier at Anna Maria Oyster Bar has been rebuilt with maybe twenty day docks and easy access to tourist charter boats and the Bradenton Ferry. Really nice spot to tuck in in for the day. Walkable to Bridge St and the Moose

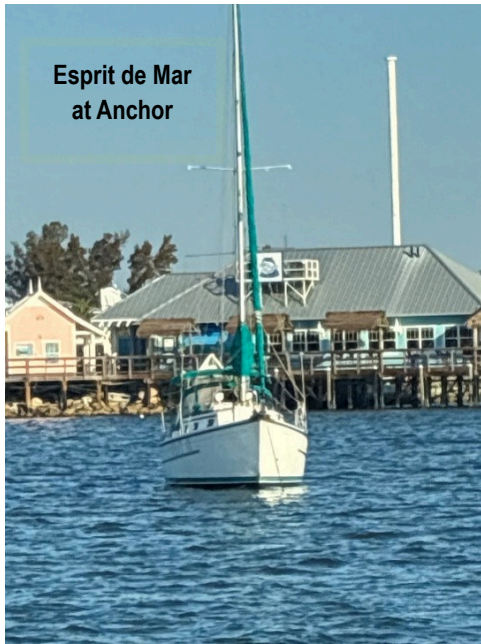
Lodge. S/V Latitude arrived with Jim and Lynne, Rick and Adelia at about 1330 HRS and we all started collecting tables for the



MSA crowd of 20+ we expected. Mike and Gina arrived on S/V Esprit de Mer. We were all about 30 yards too close to the band but in the shade! And then they came. MSA by Ferry, on foot, by sail, by power and land yacht and dinghy. Parking miraculously appeared for Linda, Tom and Thelma and also for Gary and Carla. A slip on the



Aurora at Anchor



Esprit de Mar at Anchor

Bridgetender dock was available for the “Belle of the Ball” M/V Agua Therapy who offered boat tours! Dinners and drinks were ordered, everyone sang the words to “West Virginia, take me home, country road.” with the band guy.

Thanks to all who made the trip a blast - which is everyone in attendance!

Jim McGinnis
Cruising Captain
S/V Brewster



AHOY MSA Sailors and Boaters: Save the Date: **April 18th!**

Our annual **Terra Ceia Regatta** is rapidly approaching, and we have submitted a request for perfect weather for an MSA Day on the Bay.

The tide will also be favorable for getting in and out of T.C.



Know someone with a boat who is not a racer? INVITE them to join the Fun!

This is a very low key (same way/same day) kind of event.

Enthusiasm, not racing experience, is the requirement!

Participants WILL sign the waiver in this newsletter and return it via email or snail mail to Sue (sue@starboardmedia.com) prior to the race.

- Our Start/Finish line will be in the middle of the bay– East of Bird Key.
- Sailing Instructions will be available closer to the race date.
- A chart showing the 4 buoys and their approximate lat/lons is attached - print it or take a photo.
- Sailors should arrive at the starting line PRIOR to **12 pm– the start** time of the
- First of two planned races.
- Race Committee will monitor **VHF channel 05**– make sure YOU DO TOO!

After trimming sails all around the bay it's time for Fun ashore at the **TC Party!**

Come share camaraderie, tall tales and sailing stories over drinks and dinner.

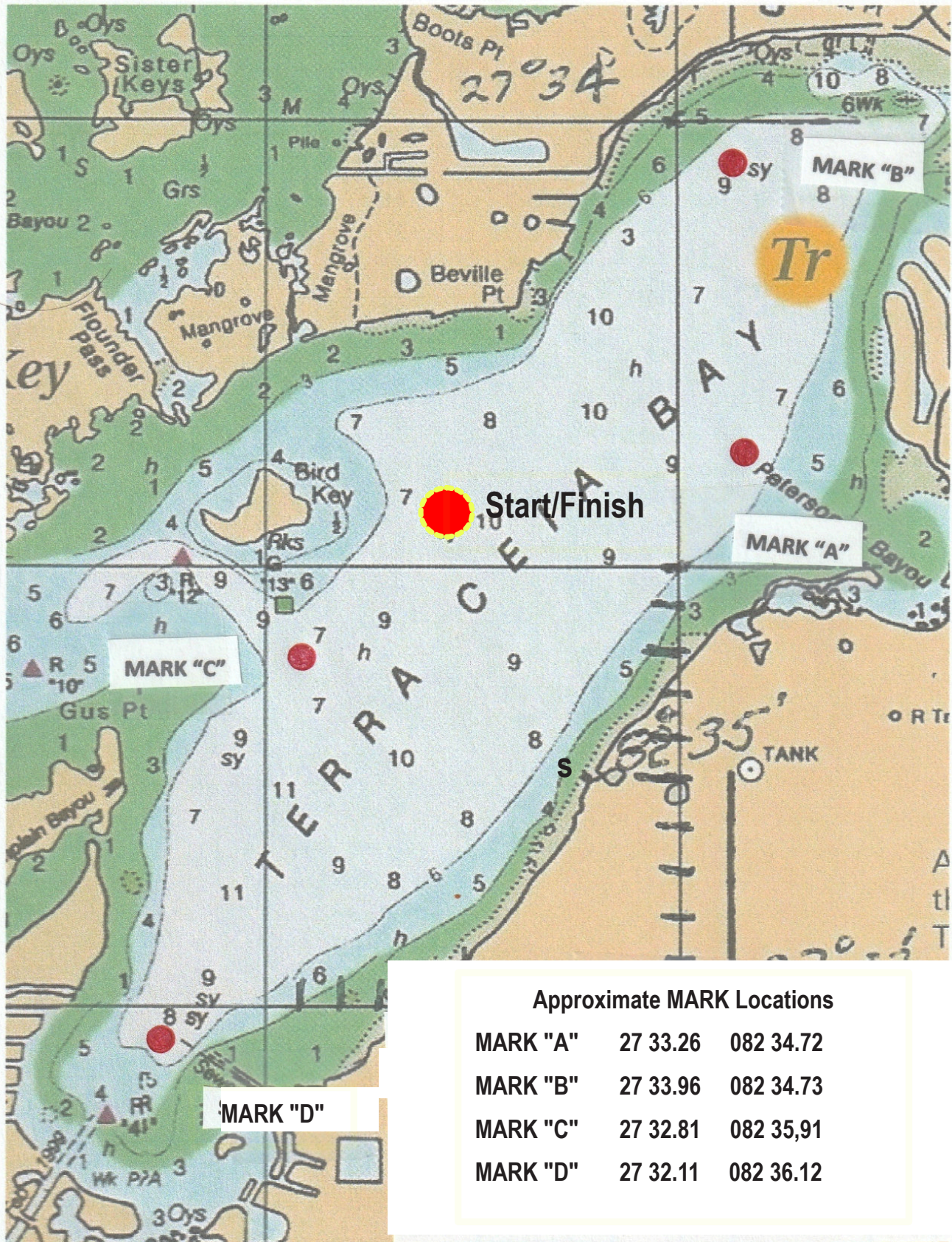
The PARTY kicks off by 4:30 pm at the Tropic , so boats should drop anchor at the West end of the bay and plan to dinghy into Tropic Isles harbor.

THANKS to John and Denny, our event will be inside the Tropic Isles Yacht Club– adjacent to the pool located at 1375 29th Ave W, Palmetto.

Launch service via dinghy should be available to help any boaters without dinghies get to/from the PARTY!

QUESTIONS?? Call Sue: 941-321-0184

TERRA CEIA REGATTA



Approximate MARK Locations

MARK "A"	27 33.26	082 34.72
MARK "B"	27 33.96	082 34.73
MARK "C"	27 32.81	082 35.91
MARK "D"	27 32.11	082 36.12

Terra Ceia Regatta Race Entry Agreement

In consideration of the acceptance of my race entry by Manatee Sailing Association (MSA), I agree as follows:

1. Representations. If I am the Skipper, I represent that I own, or have permission of the owner to skipper, the boat entered. I certify that my boat is equipped to conform with U.S. Coast Guard, US SAILING and Class/Fleet safety requirements, including a personal flotation device for each crew member. I am fully responsible for the operation and safety of my boat. I represent that I and my crew are physically fit to participate in the race. If I am crew or Skipper, I represent that my participation in this recreational activity is voluntary and for my enjoyment, that I am free to withdraw at any time I deem prudent, that I acknowledge that sailboat racing involves risks, and that I freely assume all risks, including the risks of serious personal injury, death or permanent disability from accident, drowning, exposure, overexertion, adverse sea or weather conditions, loss or damage of my boat or equipment, as well as all unforeseen risks.

2. Rules. I will comply with all US SAILING rules, the ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing and all other rules that govern these events.

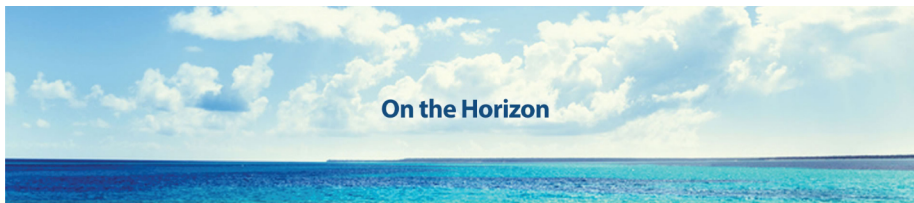
3. Insurance. MSA is not my insurer. If I am the Skipper, I maintain insurance policies sufficient to protect myself and my property, including liability, medical and property coverage, which insurance is primary and non-contributory.

4. Liability Waiver and Release. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I waive the right to sue and I forever release MSA from any and all liability for personal injury or property damage arising from my participation in the race, and if I am the Skipper, I agree to indemnify and hold MSA harmless from any claim, damage, liability, lawsuit, cost or expense, including attorney fees, arising from my or my crew's acts or omissions and from any lawsuit brought against MSA in violation of this agreement.

Today's Date: _____

Signatures (Skipper): _____

Email signed document to **msa@msasailing.org**



**A Night with the Tampa Bay Rowdies
May 2nd at 7:30 P.M.**

It's now time to order your tickets for "A Night with the Tampa Bay Rowdies"! Mark your calendar for May 2nd at 7:30 P.M. Before it gets too hot and steamy let's rally to St. Petersburg to cheer on our home team, the Tampa Bay Rowdies at Al Lang Field. The Tampa Bay Rowdies are an American professional Soccer team based right here in St. Petersburg Florida. The club was founded in 2008 and first took the pitch in 2010. Since 2017, the Rowdies have been members of the USL Championship in the second tier of the American soccer pyramid.

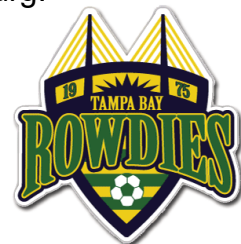
A few years ago, a few members and I went to a Rowdies Game for the first time. I

had no idea what was happening. So, I have since then done my homework. I've watched "Ted Lasso" 2 times! I decided to invest a few more dollars in better seats so this time we will be up close and personal with the field. Tickets have been ordered for the May 2nd match (see I'm learning) and cost \$34 each. There are a limited number of tickets so reserve your seat as soon as possible by emailing me at gailgordon56@gmail.com.

Prior to the match we will have a lovely meal (5 P.M.) just a block away from the stadium at Gratzzi Italian Grill located at 211 2nd Street St Petersburg.

See you there!

Gail Gordon
MSA Social Secretary



NAUTICAL FLEA MARKET TO BENEFIT MSA



It was a successful day for MSA at the Nautical Flea Market on March 14 as Jim McGinnis and I sold donated merchandise at the Florida Maritime Museum. The bulk of the maritime items for sale were donated by Gary Morgan. But with other donations from Chuck Fulton and Deb Jacobs we added \$273.27 to the treasury of MSA. Roger Capello also stopped by to view the festivities.

The museum counted 550 on the grounds for their flea market. Jim entertained the attendees with a knot tying demonstration from a station provided by the museum. There were 20 vendors selling nautical goods and seven organizations performing outreach.

Tom Briggie
Vice Commodore



Manatee Sailing Association New Membership Application

Name(s): 1. _____ 2. _____

Other members in household: _____

Address: _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell 1: _____ Cell 2: _____

Email 1 _____ Email 2 _____

Boat Make/Size _____ Boat Name _____

I voluntarily assume all risks of participating in Manatee Sailing Association events, on land or water, and agree to hold harmless against any and all losses and/or claims incident thereto, the Manatee Sailing Association (a 501(c) nonprofit, all volunteer, organization), its officers and members. If I have a vessel, I certify that my vessel complies with U.S. Coast Guard requirements and that I maintain insurance policies sufficient to protect myself and my property, including liability, medical and property coverage, which insurance is primary and non-contributory.

Signature: _____

Annual Dues: \$100 for first member of household plus \$25 for each other members of household.

Please mail or email application to:

Manatee Sailing Association or msa@msasailing.org
PO Box 14482
Bradenton, FL 34280

Contact MSA at:
msa@msasailing.org
or
www.msasailing.org



MSA 2026 Officers

Commodore - Rick Jackerson & Chuck Fulton
Vice Commodore - Tom Briggie
Cruising Captain - Jim McGinnis
Racing Captain - Sue Davidson
Secretary - Claude Solomon
Treasurer - Linda Briggie
Social Secretary - Gail Gordon
Membership - Deana Boydston
Past Commodore - Jim McGinnis