

2011 Texas 200 in a Day Sailer II

The Texas 200 (<http://www.texas200.com/>) is a six day sail, with five nights of camping; approximately 200 miles up the Texas coast. The event is put on by Chuck Leinweber of Duckworks (<http://www.duckworksmagazine.com/index.com>). The event usually occurs during early to mid-June. This years' sail started in Port Isabel, Texas and ended at Seadrift, Texas. If you would like to see pictures and videos from the event, go to the Texas 200 site and select the 2011 section. Pictures from the previous three events are also posted.

I had tried to sail the Texas 200 in 2010 single handed in my 1976 Day Sailer II and only made it two days before I had to pull out. For the 2011 event I had asked my cousin Bill Meier from Green Bay, Wisconsin if he wanted to sail with me. He said yes to the adventure. Bill was a Lake Michigan sailor and had not sailed the Texas coast. Bill arrived in Austin on Friday June 10th. Originally Bill planned to get in around noon so that we could get the boat loaded with our supplies and camping equipment and get him some familiarization with the boat. However, his flight got cancelled and he had to take a later flight getting him into Austin late in the afternoon. We headed for dinner with my brother at a very good bar-b-q place not far from my house. After dinner we headed for Dripping Springs, Texas where I live. I wanted to let him see the boat he would be sailing in for the trip. We didn't have time to do the planned loading of the boat due to the fact it was getting dark and I have no lights where the boat was parked. We figured we would get an early start in the morning and have plenty of time once we got to Port Isabel. We then headed to the motel to get Bill checked in.

Saturday morning I woke with a case of the hives. Don't know what caused it, but it went away after about an hour. I headed over to get Bill and we then had breakfast. Before we could leave however we had to do some repair on the trailer. Thursday evening, while getting things ready for the trip, I decided to grease the bearings on the axle. One of the grease zerks broke. It was an odd size. While I waited for Bill's flight to come in on Friday, I had tried to find a new zerk at a couple auto parts stores in Austin. None of them had this odd size. I also looked for a bolt that might work to plug the hole, if finding a replacement zerk failed. After breakfast on Saturday Bill and I went to a store in Dripping Springs to find a zerk. This store sold zerks for tractors and other related equipment. They had the right one. We got back to my house and proceeded to put the new zerk in, only to find out that the hub threads were stripped. We worked on it for over an hour and finally decided to see if we could patch the hole. We finally put a temporary patch on the axle, hooked up the trailer and headed for the store to find a way to make a permanent patch for it. Everything else was packed up in the Jeep for the trip, so we thought after we patched it we could leave straight from the store on our trip to the coast. Bill came up with an idea for a patch and after an hour or so we had it ready to go. We drove a couple miles. We stopped to check to see if we were losing grease. The patch was holding. No grease lost. We then headed for the coast. The patch held for the whole trip.



We arrived at the White Sands motel in Port Isabel on Saturday June 11th about 7pm. After getting our room we made arrangements to get our slip and launch the boat. I thought I had remembered everything I needed to do before launching the boat, but I hadn't. After launching the boat, Bill rowed it over to the slip while I parked the Jeep and trailer. When I got to the slip he informed me that we had a leak. It was then that I realized I forgot to put the cockpit drain plugs in, oops. The one for the inner hull had been in while we drove down. I usually keep that one in while on the trailer to keep wasp from making nest inside the boat. Quickly we got the cockpit drains put in. We got the Day Sailer secured in its' slip and headed off to a late dinner and then headed to our room. We unloaded our provisions and camping equipment from the Jeep and into the room.

On Sunday morning we headed to the skipper's meeting at 8am. It was a short meeting. I then drove the Jeep and trailer up to Seadrift, Texas where the 6 days of sailing was going to end. While I was driving up there, Bill was going to get our non-perishable provisions and gear (other than personal items) aboard the boat and get it ready to leave Monday morning. I got the Jeep and trailer up to Seadrift, had lunch and boarded the bus for the return trip to Port Isabel. A bus was provided by the event for a return to the start point.

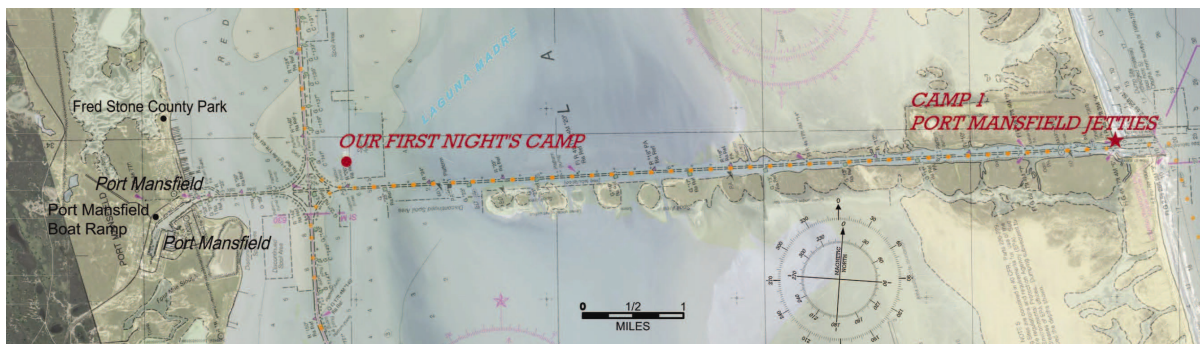
Monday morning, the first day of sailing, we got up early and finished putting our food, coolers, and clothing dry bags in the boat. The Day Sailer cuddy cabin appears to have a lot of room in there until you get it packed with water, provisions and camping gear for six days of sailing. It fills up quickly. We then got our water and energy bars for the day in the seat icebox and a small cooler in the stern. We also hooked up the solar panel and battery for recharging the handheld VHF radio, cell phones, etc. Thirty-five boats were supposed to be starting that morning from Port Isabel. We were the second to the last boat to start. Our first days' sail was about 43 miles to the first camping place. Most boats got out very early. One boat didn't start at all due to a medical problem of the skipper. It was found after he went to the hospital that he was suffering from dehydration. A gallon of water per person per day is recommended for this event. We had 14 gallons of water on board at the start. This year with temperatures near 100 at the hottest part of the day, this is very important. In previous years the temperatures were in the low 90's.



It was suggested to us that we start out with a double reef in the mainsail as winds were expected to get stronger throughout the day. As it turned out we had a double reef in the main for the whole trip. We headed out of the harbor and in to the Laguna Madre and turned north. We were sailing up the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). A few boats had decided to take the outside route in the Gulf. Our first camp at the Port Mansfield Jetties could be reached by both routes. We followed the marked channel. The channel is well marked with buoys on each side along with spoil islands and obstructions (both above and below the water). I also had my GPS loaded with our waypoints and we had a set of maps with both NOAA maps and 2010 vintage aerial photography.



I had a compass as well, but forgot to mount it. It got buried in the cuddy cabin somewhere. To the east of the channel was very shallow water (3-feet or less) with rocks and mud, a lot of mud. It was a little deeper water to the west of the channel, but not much, and of course, mud. I was at the helm the first few hours, and then Bill took over to give me a break. The boat immediately picked up speed. I'm a big man, Bill weighs half what I do. We found the boat was faster with me up near the cuddy cabin, so from that point on, Bill was at the helm, unless he needed a break. I was navigator (and sometimes bailer). I knew the charts better so it was a good fit. Most of Monday was not very eventful for us. We mainly got used to sailing together and adjusting rigging and sail trim. As the day went on we started getting more speed out of the boat. The boat that left ahead of us stayed the same distance ahead. The last boat out, a Goat Island Skiff named GIR, was a very fast boat. The boat was sailed by the man who built it and the designer, Michael Storer who came up from Australia for the Texas 200. The wind continued to build all afternoon, mostly from the south to south east. When we got near Port Mansfield, the wind was getting very strong. We started to make our turn to the east to reach Camp 1 at the Port Mansfield Jetties. The wind had also shifted to the east and increased in strength. We were having trouble staying in the channel. Due to the very strong winds we dropped the jib using the jib downhaul I had rigged for this event. The downhaul worked very well and kept us from having to get on the foredeck to bring down the jib. We were having a hard time making headway. We noticed other boats having the same problem. Some radioed that they couldn't make it to Camp 1 and were heading into Port Mansfield instead. Those with outboards were dropping their sails and motoring towards Port Mansfield. They were having trouble going into the strong east winds. Port Mansfield was to the west. We only had oars as an auxiliary. In light to moderate winds the oars work well, but in the strong wind we had they weren't an option. We noticed two catamarans beached on a small spoil island along the channel. We headed for them.



We beached the boat on the island. Spoil islands in this area typically have muddy shorelines. Our little island was no exception. Bill got out of the boat and sank over a foot in mud. When I started to get out I slipped over backwards catching my foot on a line. My head was pushed under water. I called for help and one of the catamaran guys untangled me and pulled me out. The mud was so deep I had trouble standing. I'm a heavy guy; I sank deeper than the others in the mud. We decided this was going to be our camp for the night despite the dead birds everywhere, cactus, and what looked like some prime rattlesnake areas. Yes, rattlesnakes get out to and live on the spoil islands. We pulled the boat up as much as possible and set our anchor on shore. Not having any good place to sit on shore (there were no trees) other than the small spot I found with cactus thorns (I found them the hard way), I did what ended becoming a daily habit for me, I took a nap on the boats fore deck. I found I could get comfortable up there with my legs on the cuddy cabin and the jib over my face to prevent sunburn. Bill tried to clean mud from the boat and scout out a place for his tent. When I got up from my nap, I helped Bill clean some mud off the boat. We sent out a message on the VHF radio to let others know where we were for the night. The fleet was scattered all over the area. Eventually I put up my tent and settled in for the night like the others had.

We got up early Tuesday morning, packed our gear and got ready to sail. We pushed the boat off the mud beach. We started to move off under the mainsail alone. When we got in water deep enough I started to lower the centerboard. It was stuck in the up position. We were on a downwind run, so it wasn't critical to get it down. I was more concerned than Bill. Bill was usually the calm one, so we decided to just use the main while I tried to get the centerboard working. I've had the board stick before, but it usually came loose after 15 minutes or so. This time it wouldn't budge. I thought equipment had fouled the lines, but that wasn't the case. Preparing for this event I had made a cover to protect the lines from getting gear placed on top of them. The protective cover was still in place. I figured it was either the black muddy goo from the island or the centerboard cable problem I've read about for the Day Sailer II.

We sailed for a few hours in open water following the channel markers, and then we came to the land cut. We were one of the first boats out that morning, only a few were ahead of us. We sailed that day without the centerboard. The biggest problem we had was clearing sea grass off the rudder blade. Too much sea grass on the blade would cause it to kick up. At least once per hour all day we would clean off sea grass. This is something we did every day; some places weren't as bad though. We made good time getting into Camp 2 around 1 pm. The boats ahead of us had found an alternate camp spot as the original one had very deep mud. The new one had mud, but not as much as Monday night. We beached the boat and set the anchor on shore. We rested an hour or so including my nap on the bow. We then unloaded the boat so we could careen it and fix the centerboard. With the help of other sailors, who knew better than Bill and me how to careen a boat, we got the boat over on its' side. We had to pry the board out. The centerboard trunk was impacted with mud, oyster shell, and sea grass. The mud



was black and very thick. Someone got a water bottle and squirted it in the trunk to wash it out. Took a while but we got the board freed up. The cables and lines were all good. The boat was then righted and reloaded except for our camping gear. I set up my tent, but later had to move it due to incoming tide. It was a very flat beach, others moved as well. The tides down there only fluctuate about one to one and a half feet each day. I think I counted 24 boats at the camp. A few boats camped further down the ditch including some deeper draft boats that couldn't anchor in the channel due to barge traffic.



Camp 2 beach

Wednesday morning we tried for another early start. We got everything ready to go early. We were trying to push the boat off the muddy beach and were having trouble. Some others saw us having a problem and came to help. Trying to push the boat out the rudder got jammed in mud and the rudder head cracked. We pulled off the rudder and got the boat in deeper water. When we put the rudder back on we saw the extent of the crack. It was right below the tiller bolt. Someone had a cordless drill and offered to drill a new hole below the crack. The tiller would sit at an odd angle, but it would work. We got in deep enough water and started our sail down the ditch and the centerboard worked this time. The wind started out around 10 knots, but started to increase with the heat of the day. The Day Sailer seemed to like the strong winds and we were moving along at 6 to 7 mph according to the GPS. We passed a few boats, some other boats passed us. Some boats pulled over to spoil islands to reduce sail as the winds got stronger. We were at about the middle of the fleet I think. It was a good day sailing even with a damaged rudder. Mid afternoon, the boats ahead of us began looking for our Wednesday night camp location. The beaching area was not marked. When they found a good spot, a call went out on the radio telling the rest of the fleet what channel marker to start turning in towards shore. It was marker 149 as I recall. We started our turn in towards the shore and spotted a few boats beached already. The water became shallow quickly as we got out of the channel. Using the jib downhaul we got the jib down and secured it. We could see bottom in places. I had the centerboard ready to be pulled up in case we bumped bottom. As we approached the shore we turned into the wind and dropped the mainsail and pulled up the centerboard. Someone from one of the other boats helped us pull the boat to shore. Before we got too shallow, we pulled off the rudder before beaching to reduce the chance of anymore rudder damage. Most of our camp areas had some very shallow



water, although there was water deep enough for keel boats to anchor further off the beach. Our third camp was the best yet, Only 4 to 6 inches of mud mixed with sand. Of course I found my napping place on the bow of the boat. Bill tried to wash his clothes some and visited with the other sailors. We did get some calls on the VHF radio that some boats were having trouble. Chuck Leinweber, who is the event organizer, went back out to assist boats with problems. From what I heard some sails were blown out and there was other damage due to the high winds.

Thursday was the day we were going to cross Corpus Christi Bay. Wind forecasts were for stronger winds than the day before. We started out behind a few other boats that were more familiar with the area than we were, so we followed them until we picked up the line of marker buoys. A short while later we saw the John F. Kennedy causeway bridge we had to pass under before entering the bay. Just before the bridge are a couple of restaurants, Doc's and Snoopy's. Some of the boats were stopping at Snoopy's for breakfast or lunch. We thought about it, but decided that with the wind increasing in strength, we should press on ahead. Many of the boats behind us did stop. A couple boats ahead of us also continued on. We passed under the bridge and into a channel leading to the bay. On each side of us there were slightly submerged mud banks with birds walking along them. Bill tried to convince me that the water really was deep, and that the birds had really long legs. Dolphins were surfacing alongside the boat. Sometimes they were close enough to touch. We passed part of the fleet, a Bolger Folding Schooner, which had camped the night before closer to the bay. They were beached on a spoil island and the crew was out exploring from what we could see. The Folding Schooner is a 31-foot boat with about a 5-foot beam. When on the trailer, the boat is actually folded in half onto itself.

The wind was increasing as we entered the bay. We followed the markers for a while, and then made a slight turn to the east to follow the waypoints I had loaded into the GPS. The course that was in the GPS would allow us to follow a course closer to the Padre Island side of the bay and reduce the size of the waves. It was also a shorter route for us to take to our camp site. We would have to navigate thru some shallow areas, but it proved not to be a problem. We saw no other boats from the fleet. With the high winds

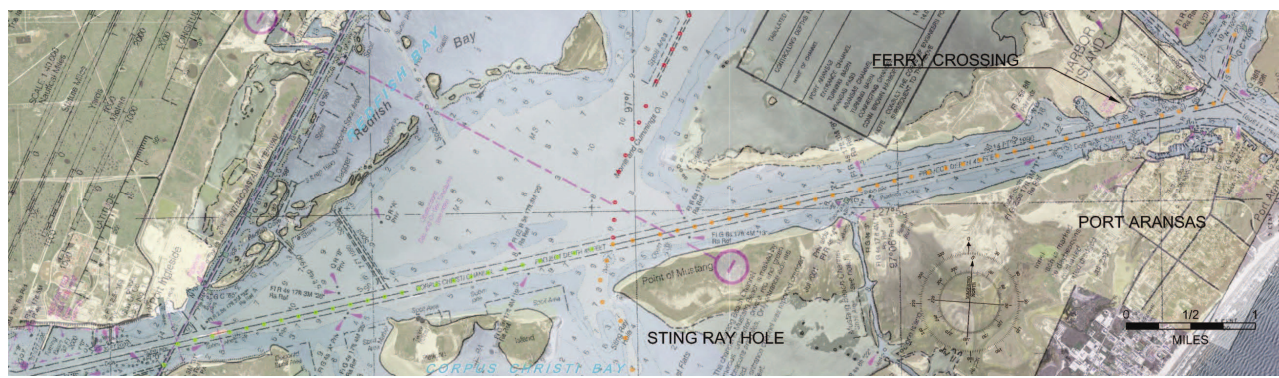


there were very few boats out on the bay. The only other vessel we saw out there was a Coast Guard cutter anchored. I assume they were out there because they knew a bunch of small sailboats would be crossing the bay.

We finally got to Sting Ray Hole and navigated the channel to reach Corpus Christi Channel which would take us pass the ferries at Port Aransas. Texas Highway 361 is cut by the channel. Ferries are provided by the state as a means of crossing the channel. The ferries are free and run 24 hours a day since this is a state highway. We had to sail east up the channel and then turn north into Lydia Ann Channel. There was another shorter way to the camp, but it was not an option for us as it required passing



under a low bridge. I believe the bridge clearance was about 8-feet. We sailed up the Corpus Christi Channel in high winds and a lot of choppy waves. The few power boats we saw were having trouble as well. As we made our approach to the ferry crossing we saw they were operating six ferries that day. We had right of way since we were under sail and we had heard that they would try not to run over us, but we wanted to get through as fast as possible. As we got near the crossing, three ferries moved out from shore, two from one side and one from the other side. We felt like it was a game and we were the ball. We got through and made our turn to the north up Lydia Ann Channel. About a mile up the channel we encountered a barge “parking” in the middle of the channel. We maneuvered around it and continued on towards camp. We got to the end of the channel and made a turn to the west and a short time later we saw two of the other boats at the camp location.

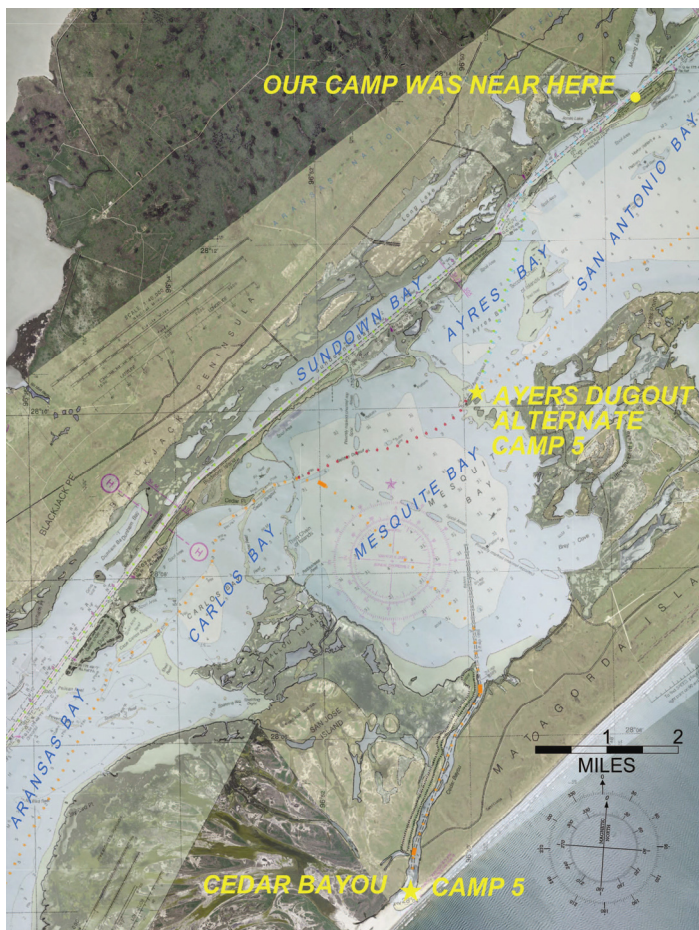


This camp was different than previous camps. It was an oyster shell beach, no mud. It was shallow like the others and had some protection from the wind along the shoreline. We brought the boat in near shore and removed the rudder. With the help from the others already there we beached the boat. Soon the rest of the fleet started showing up. At each camp there were fewer boats than the camp before. We heard some boats had gone aground near Corpus Christi Bay; others had dropped out as they felt the conditions were too rough in the bay.

At this camp there seemed to be more activity along the shoreline. There was talk about the days sail and conditions in the bay. Those that stopped at Snoopy's commented on their meal. Some discussion was about the wind forecasts for the next day. The forecast was for increasing wind strength. Also discussed was who was going to try to get to the main camp at Cedar Bayou and who was going to head for the alternate camp at Ayers Dugout. The difficulty for Cedar Bayou is that it is a shallow and narrow channel that heads into the wind. Cedar Bayou ends on the Gulf side of Padre Island with sandy beaches. It is a place inaccessible by vehicles. Deep draft boats probably would be unable to make it. Both camp destinations required navigating thru several oyster reefs. In the expected high winds, running aground was a possibility. A third choice or route was also brought up. Bypass the reefs and sail straight across the bay and join up with another Texas 200 group called the "Geezer Group". This group was only planning to sail two days starting on Friday out of Rockport. We decided to sail across Aransas Bay and camp with the "Geezers". We finally set up our tents for the night, had something to eat and settled in for the night.

We woke about 5:30 am, took down our tents and packed them in the boat. The fleet started pulling out around 6:00 am. We got off between 6-6:30 am. The fleet headed off to the northeast across Aransas Bay on a route that would take them close to Padre Island which would provide some shelter from the wind and waves. On the north end of Aransas Bay, to the east of the land cut is where the oyster reefs start. Just after the first line of reefs is Carlos Bay which goes into Mesquite Bay. Mesquite Bay allows the boats to head for either Cedar Bayou to the east or Ayers Dugout to the north. We however, headed more northerly across Aransas Bay to the channel. The winds were increasing early and so were the waves.

Looking back afterwards, we could have followed the rest of the fleet thru Aransas Bay, staying closer to Padre Island, and then turned to head to the land cut before we got into the oyster reefs. Instead we headed straight across. The wind continued to pick up as did the waves. The wind that day, as I later learned, was over 20 knots, gusting to 35 knots. The waves were 6 to 8 feet high out in the channel where we were. The Day Sailer held her course well and did very good in the high winds. We were getting some water in the boat which I would bail out trying to figure out where it was coming from. I was navigating and bailing, Bill was at the helm. Bill kept saying "more wind, bigger waves", I kept telling him "shut



up Bill”. Finally figured out the water was coming in through the front of the centerboard trunk. The grommet on the cable is missing and the water would get in the cuddy cabin and drain into the cockpit thru the cabin drain holes. Very little water was coming over the sides. At some point during the crossing of the bay the boat hit 11.2 mph according to the GPS, most of the time our speed ranged from 6 to 8 mph. We encountered few boats while crossing the bay. The only large vessel we had to stay clear of was a commercial fishing boat lying net in or along the edge of the channel.

As we got closer to the land cut we came upon some of the “Geezer” group coming out of Rockport. We also started getting some chatter on the VHF radio from others in the Geezer group. When we got near the land cut, two of them were ahead of us, the rest were still closer into Rockport. There were four boats in this group, although one of them had been with the main group the night before crossing Corpus Christi Bay. The boat that had been with the main group earlier was an eighteen footer that was sailing under jib alone. On the third day at camp they were doing mainsail repairs. We passed them easily and could see another boat in the distance. We continued up the land cut and finally passed the boat that was ahead of us. The Geezer group had planned to camp on Rattlesnake Island. Now all of the Geezers were behind us. As we approached the island we started looking for the area to beach the boat. The sides of the island were rather steep and we couldn’t see a good spot to beach. Having never sailed in this area before, we were unsure of where the planned camp was going to be. I made the “poor” decision to round the north point of the island to see if there was a good place to beach on the other side. As we started to tack, we ran aground. There were reefs and shallows on the north end. We got off the area fairly easily, and headed back southwest into the land cut. About this time the boat behind us had caught up and was trying to beach on the north tip of the island. We sailed too far across the cut and ran aground on the other side. As we tried to get out of the mud on that side, we saw a barge approaching from the north. Now, the eighteen-footer, had caught up and was trying to anchor on the north end of the island close to the other boat. We made one more attempt to get over to them, but with a southeasterly wind and a barge coming down the cut, we abandoned the idea of getting over to them.



We headed north up the cut to find a campsite on one of the few islands before the start of San Antonio Bay. We found what looked like a place to get ashore. We beached the boat and went ashore to find a campsite. I was ashore a short time and felt I needed to sit down. I closed my eyes for a moment and when I opened them it felt like the world was spinning and I was feeling a little sick. I called Bill over and told him I wasn’t feeling very well. He helped me back out to the boat where I laid down on the bow. I was suspecting dehydration. I had not

had as much water as I should have had that day. With the rough bay crossing, high winds, bailing

and temperatures near 100, I wasn't drinking enough water. I laid down on the bow and Bill gave me a couple bottles of water and a bottle of Power-aid to rehydrate myself. In the meantime the rest of the Geezer fleet, four boats, came by and anchored about 100-yards beyond where we were. Bill found a trail on the island and walked down to where they were at. I slept some while he was gone. When he got back, we decided to move the boat down to where they were. Bill told me to stay where I was and he took the bow line and walked the boat down along the shoreline to the new beach. I rested and rehydrated while Bill went over and visited with the other sailors. One couple was doing some fishing. After a couple hours, Bill came back and said they offered to provide dinner if we had something to contribute to the meal. I wasn't really hungry, but I was feeling better, no dizziness. I had an energy bar earlier and was still trying to rehydrate myself. Bill took the last cans of ale we had on board and headed off to barter for some dinner. They had cooked a Mexican dinner and I guess he had his fill.

When he got back, we discussed whether we wanted to set up the tents for the night. We both decided that there were no good camping spots on the beach and so we decided that we would spend the night on the boat. Without tents to pack up in the morning we felt we could get an early start for our last days sail in the morning. Bill decided to take my sleeping spot on the bow. I unstrapped the bed boards I had made from the stern of the boat. The boards when set up provide a sleeping platform between the centerboard trunk and cockpit seats. Between the seats and the boards a suitable area was available for me to sleep on.

It proved to be a cooler night than we had the previous nights. Previous nights we hadn't used any blankets as it was warm. Since we weren't using blankets at previous camp sites, we had buried them inside the cuddy cabin. Between the cool night and our damp clothing (our clothing never seemed to dry out the whole trip) we were a little chilled during the night. The Friday night traffic also seemed to be a little heavier than other nights. It seemed like a barge came by about once an hour. Always shining their search lights on us and waking us up. Their wakes also tossed the boat around a little bit. Then, about four in the morning I heard what I thought was Bill snoring very loud. When I sat up, Bill was sitting up too and was wondering if I was snoring. I looked at the shore about that time to see a wild pig running down the shoreline. I heard others in the brush. We both agreed that it had been a good decision to stay on the boat that night. I would not have wanted to be a tent with wild hogs running around. They can be nasty.

We got up Saturday morning, put up the bed boards, and put anything we needed out of the way into the cuddy cabin with less care than previous days and got the boat ready for our final day of sailing. This would be the shortest leg of the trip. As we started to push off from shore, we found that the wakes from the barges had pushed us a little further into the mud. We finally got the boat pushed out deep enough to attach the rudder. With the mainsail up, we headed north down the cut toward San Antonio Bay. We passed the Geezers and waved to them. They were just starting to stir. The wind was picking up already. Forecasts were for stronger winds than the day before. As we entered the bay we looked to the southeast, we could see boats coming out from Ayers Dugout (alternate camp). Cedar Bayou (main camp) where part of the fleet had camped was 7 to 10 miles to

the southeast from Ayers Dugout. We were sailing northeast up the channel. The first boat to pass us was a Sea Pearl. Most of the others we saw coming out did not pass us except for a Core Sound. We weren't going slowly however. We were doing 6 to 7 mph under a double reefed main as we had most days. The wind was already close to 20 knots. As we headed down the channel, we started looking for our channel markers. Bill spotted a couple markers to our west. I looked at the GPS and charts and told him that they appeared to be in the wrong place. In fact they appeared to be right next to submerged spoil islands. I made the decision to follow the GPS course and my plotted waypoints. Bill said that I was navigator and we should follow what I thought was correct. Bill was a better helmsman than I was and he would hold the course that I directed him on. We sailed on for about a mile and finally picked up the main line of marker buoys that matched the GPS. Ahead of us we spotted a channel dredging operation going on. Later, we found out that a couple boats followed the suspect markers and gone aground. Those markers had been moved out of the channel and needed to be reset.

We maneuvered around the dredgers and continued down along the line of channel markers until we reached the place where we needed to turn toward Seadrift and the end of our trip. There was another set of markers at the turn that would put us in a new channel heading north. We followed the turn channel and finally jibed to bring us on our new channel heading. Bill looked for the green markers and to get to the port side of them as we had the whole trip. We quickly realized though that the markers in this channel were on opposite sides of where they had been in the channels we had been following. Now, the green markers were to port and the red were to starboard. We set our course straight down the center. A Core Sound was closing on us from behind. We saw another familiar boat to us anchored in the shallows just off the channel to our starboard. We waved at them and wondered why they had stopped to anchor. We thought that maybe they were reducing sail. After the finish, we found out that they had capsized and were recovering items that had gone over the side before they got the boat righted. They asked why we didn't stop to assist. We told them we weren't aware there was a problem at the time.

We proceeded up the channel knowing the end of the journey was near and that we were going to complete it. As we got within site of the town of Seadrift, we got a call on the radio from one of the boats ahead of us asking where the marina was at. We scanned the horizon looking for the sail of



the boat talking to us and upon seeing them we tried to send them in the right direction. He found it. We finally made our last turn and headed for the marina. Four or five boats were in already, more than had passed us. We thought we had left early in the morning, other than the boats that had passed us; there were obviously some that had left their campsites much earlier than we did. As we approached the shore we saw what from a distance looked like a good beaching spot. As we were coming in someone yelled "rocks". We slowed our speed some and didn't hit too hard. No damage, they weren't big rocks fortunately. We anchored the boat out about 30 feet from shore. We then waded to shore where the local yacht club was there to greet us and provide us with refreshments.

Bill and I were expecting two more of our cousins, Clair from Plano, Texas and her brother Noel from Austin, to meet us when we came in. I had told Clair that we would be in around noon. It was 10 am when we got in. I got on my cell phone and gave her a call to see if they were still coming. She said they made a wrong turn trying to get to Seadrift and were running late. I told her the fleet had already begun to arrive. In the next hour the rest of the fleet had come in. Our cousins arrived just after the last of the boats.

I got a ride from one of the yacht club people to where the Jeep and trailer were parked for the week. It was about two miles from the boat. In the meantime Bill started to try to move the boat to a place where we could get it on the trailer. It was difficult to get the boat to the regular ramp. We attempted to put the trailer in the water along the shoreline, but couldn't get the trailer deep enough to get the boat on. While I tried to move the trailer over to the ramp, Bill tried to move the boat to the area of the ramp. One problem was that it required moving the boat around the brake water for the ramp and harbor area. When Bill had moved the boat around the brake water, Clair and Noel arrived and began to help him get it to the ramp. After a while we finally got the boat on the trailer. We were one of the first boats to arrive at Seadrift and one of the last to get it on the trailer. After the boat was on the trailer, Clair took Bill to the motel for a shower. Noel started to help me to unpack the boat, de-rig, and get the mast down. While we were working on the boat, Clair returned. I asked Clair and Noel to use a hose at the marina to hose me down with freshwater and get the salt off me. The water spray felt very good. Washing off some salt felt great. We then finished getting things on the boat done. After the boat was secured, I drove over to the motel as well for my shower. Clair and Noel were a great help for two weary sailors.

The shrimp boil for the end of the sail had been rescheduled from 3pm to 6pm. After my shower Bill and I headed back over to the park next to the marina for the shrimp boil. We met Clair and Noel over there. Many of the sailors were there already eating shrimp. We were provided a big plate of shrimp, corn, potatoes and something to drink. The food tasted great. More than I could eat. After eating, we talked for a little while, then headed back to the motel for a good night's sleep.

Sunday morning, Bill and I met with Clair and Noel for breakfast before we headed back to Dripping Springs where I live. Bill's flight home to Green Bay wasn't until Monday morning. Sunday afternoon we were back at my house. We dropped the trailer off and got Bill a room at the motel. We went out to dinner at a local restaurant to celebrate finishing our voyage. The next day Bill headed home. Time to plan for next year.

Modifications

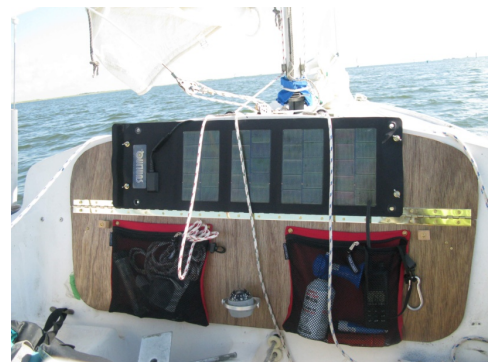
I had done a few things to get the boat ready for the trip. Some I did for last years' unsuccessful sail. Having learned from my mistakes in 2010, I added to and refined some of my preparations for the 2011 attempt. My approach to my preparations on the boat were to not do any major modifications to the boat as I wanted to keep the boat class legal for some planned light racing against some other Day Sailers as well as camp cruising the boat.

In 2010 I had added two sets of reefing points to the main sail. Those that had sailed the Texas 200 before recommended at least two sets of reef points for the normally high winds that can be expected. In 2010 I did not have a jiffy reefing system in place, so putting in and taking out reefs was difficult especially since I was single handing the event that year. For 2011 I added hardware to the boom for both sets of reef points. As it turned out, with the high winds we started with the sail reefed on the second set of points and remained that way for the whole trip.

To make handling the jib easier I added a downhaul. In 2010 I did not have a downhaul for the jib and had difficulty when trying to bring down the jib in a narrow channel. One of the hanks jammed on the forestay and I was unable to go forward to fix the problem. My downhaul for this year was rigged by attaching a small block on the bow and running a 3/32" line thru two small fairleads to the cockpit. The end of the line I attached to the hank near the head of the sail and ran the line through the other hanks. This system worked very well when we needed to get the jib down, especially in the high winds we had. It kept us from having to get on the fore deck. Pulling the jib sheets tight kept the sail on the deck until we could get it secured.



In 2010 I built new hatch covers. In the spring while getting ready for the event I capsized my boat. I wish I could say it was a "test" capsize, but unfortunately it wasn't. The boat stayed on its' side and I eventually got it righted after swimming the boat into shallow water. I had the covers off the cuddy cabin and none of my gear came out, but it made me think about what would happen with a fully loaded cabin. I wanted to be able to keep the hatch covers in place, but still have access to things I needed. I decided to make new covers with a hinge. I placed the hinge across the length of the cover. This would allow the cabin to be sealed and still provide access without having to remove the hatch covers. On the back I placed latches to secure the hatch to the boat. On the hinged upper part of the cover I put attachment points for a solar panel.



On the lower part I attached two bags to hold lines, VHF radio, sunscreen, etc. I also put a compass mount on the lower part. In 2011 I also added drink holders on each side of the bags.

It was after capsizing that I found out that the previous owner of the boat had removed about 90% of my flotation. I filled the flotation tanks with “pool noodles”. I also added foam inside the upper 2-feet of the mast and attached a small water bottle to the top of the mast. The water bottle my not prevent the mast going under, but might slow things down until better flotation can get there. I also sealed holes in the mast where old hardware had once been attached. My mast is not original to the boat. The previous owner said it was a Day Sailer I mast, so it is probably older than the boat.

For the 2010 event I installed oarlocks so that I could use oars as auxiliary power instead of an outboard motor. I placed the oarlocks on line with the mainsheet. To install the oarlocks I put a 4-inch inspection port on the inside of the cockpit rail. If I did it over, I would have used 5 or 6-inch inspection ports instead of the 4-inch ones that I used. I made a rowing seat that would sit on the centerboard trunk and span across the seats. I used a 1-inch thick board, 12-inches wide. Each end of the board had small legs to make the seat sit level. I also placed wood on the board near the center to keep it in place on the centerboard trunk. The Day Sailer rows well. When rowing, I raise the boom using my topping lift enough to clear my head. I put the centerboard down a little to prevent side slippage. I have 7-foot oars, but 8 to 8-1/2-foot are preferable. When the rowing seat is not in use, I found that I could store it near the stern by jamming it in the drainage groove at the base of the cockpit seat.



Oar Storage



Rowing Seat in Place



Rowing Seat Stored

I had planned for the 2011 event to store some tools and my old set of stays inside the space in the cockpit rails accessed by the 4-inch inspection ports. This didn't happen, but we found the space a good place to put empty water bottles.

For additional storage this year I put two 6-inch inspection ports inside the cuddy cabin. My plan was to store some of the 14 gallons of water we were carrying below the cuddy cabin deck centered on the keel. I anchored a bag below the deck to keep the weight from shifting and to make it easier to access the extra water when it was needed. I also thought we could store some water in bags along the centerboard trunk. Because we were unable to load the boat as originally planned, these two storage areas did not get used. I plan to try to use them in the future however. I was hoping that storing some of the water along the keel would provide additional ballast.

For the 2010 event I had planned to sleep on the boat. The Day Sailer II cockpit does not have any good way to sleep in it. The cuddy cabin was packed full, not an option. Looking at the problem I decided to make “bed boards” as a sleeping platform to be set up in the cockpit. I developed several different designs on my computer that I thought might work. The simplest solution I came up with was to use two 3-foot x 12-inch boards, hinged together in the middle with folding legs. The 2x4 legs that I made were set up to fold inward to store better. In use however, with legs that folded inward I had problems with them folding up while in use even though I tried locking them in place. For the 2011 event I modified the bed boards to have the legs fold to the outside. I also replaced the 2x4’s with 1x4’s to reduce weight. With the legs folding to the outside I could tie a line between the legs to lock them in place. For this years’ event I had planned to use a tent and sleep on shore, but wanted to carry the boards just in case I wanted to sleep on the boat. Last year the boards were stored in the cockpit while under sail. This year I decided to store the boards in the stern with straps. I added strap attachment points in the stern on each seat. I placed the boards across the seats in the stern creating a rear deck area similar to a Day Sailer I. On one of the boards I place four screws with wing nuts to the underside. These screws would face up when the boards were folded. I attached a 5W solar panel to the boards. This panel went to a rechargeable battery pack (secured below the boards), which was connected to a small electric cooler. The panel itself could not power the cooler, but running through the battery it ran very well. We did not use the cooler much as planned however. The panel was used for recharging the VHF radio. As a further refinement of the bed boards, I plan to make two separate boards, the length of which will be equal to the width (about 4-feet) of the cockpit in the stern. The legs will fold the same as current modification. With two separate boards I can have sleeping surfaces on each side of the centerboard trunk. I can get enough extra length by using the rowing seat up against the cuddy cabin.



Bed Boards in Place



Bed Boards Stored



Bed Boards with Solar Panel

To get the fenders out of the way and free up storage space I planned to tie them along the sides of the boat. They would act as additional flotation and as rescue lines in case of capsize. I also added a lock down strap to the ice box in the seat. Early in 2010 while practicing for the Texas 200 I capsized the boat. My ice box cover tore off the latch I had put on it and the contents spread out over the water. I added a strap that I could undo easily for the 2011 event. It worked well.





On the inside of the cuddy cabin I added some harness staples to use as attachment points for straps to secure some items that I didn't want to bounce around. The last item I made was a cover to protect the centerboard control lines from everything being stored in the cuddy



cabin. The last thing I wanted to occur while on the trip was for equipment or provisions to cause the control lines to jam. A cover also allowed us to not lose much needed storage room in the cuddy cabin. To make the cover I bought a small plastic foot stool from Home Depot. I cut the legs down enough to cover the control lines. I drilled a couple holes in it to tie lines to hold it in place.

For meals, I brought a small propane stove to cook with. I had planned meals that we could make easily. I wanted to bring food that wouldn't need a constant supply of ice as we might not always have a source of ice. I brought beef jerky (that I made) and some vegetables to make a quick hot meal with in the evenings. I had made meals like this while living off horseback for several days to a week (historic re-enacting) before, except I used a campfire instead of a stove. Unfortunately the winds were so strong and without a way to protect the stove, it wouldn't stay lit. What work for horses, didn't work for sailing. I also packed energy bars for use when under sail. I brought fresh fruit, oranges and apples. We also had some smoked sausage, cheese, corn tortillas, and some packaged meals. Next year more thought needs to go into the food.

Conclusions

My thoughts on the capabilities of using the Day Sailer for camp cruising and events like the Texas 200 are that it is very suitable. It is a tough little boat and handles and sails well in the conditions we encountered. The boat never let us down. Personally I prefer a two person crew sailing the boat as an extra pair of hands in an emergency is always good to have, but a skilled sailor can single hand the event. There were several boats on the Texas 200 that were single handed. I know I may have missed some things to improve the boats capabilities, but I feel that I found several of them.