

the Acton Action

Hueston Sailing Association

Merry Christmas!

There isn't a thing on my Christmas list that isn't for a boat. (Unless you count that WorkX lithium ion battery powered leaf blower.) (Gotta have it.)

I need sheets (not the bed kind); I need turnblocks; I need halyards; I need a sail! A SPINNAKER, I tell you! I don't really think I'm going to get all this for Christmas, but go-ahead family, disappoint me.

The nice thing about boat stuff is that it lasts forever, but not like plastic lasts forever. (Ok, the lines, sheets and sails might be). My motto is: stainless steel and fiberglass! That's not really a motto, I know. But those are what make sailboats so eco friendly. Motor less, sail more.

My clothing is made of the same stuff. Those stainless steel boat shoes and the fiberglass socks I bought this year are great! You can't wear them out, I'm telling you. In this issue, we let you know where to buy the earth friendly. Save the earth and you save us all.

In this issue we give you some places to go where you can begin the Herculean task of cutting as much plastic out of your life as you can. At least at home.

Have a good Christmas Holiday, HSA AND FRIENDS!

Tracy Edwards in 1989 at the helm of her boat *Maiden*. See the story on page 3



SURVIVING WINTER

It's not even the winter solstice yet. The days are still getting shorter and shorter. The lake is still two feet down from the docks. Duck blinds keep watch over the water. What are we to do? The 2020 calendar is still a distant dream.

Do Not Despair, Oh Sistren and Brethren of the Sailcloth! December is for finding all those sail related things under the tree; January is for watching sailing movies; February is Beverages and Boats; March is for Midwinters! April is Opening Day. Now, doesn't it feel closer? We are here to guide you through the Intertropical Convergence Zone, more commonly known as the doldrums, aka, the area of Acton Lake just south of the beach near Sugar Camp, aka, the off season. Shopping, movies, boat maintenance, racing tips, poetry, film reviews. We'll get you there.

In This Issue

Maiden: the movie

One of the best sailing films ever. Just ask Diane, our reviewer. She put us on to it. Page 7

Xmas is Green!

We have compiled a list of sites to shop for a plastic free Christmas. Page 5

Christmas Poem

A few lines of Christmassy doggerel. You knew it was coming. Page 2

A Christmas Story

Your Sorta Semi-Annual Seasonal Sailing Stanzas

Twas the night before Christmas and all round
the yard
Ten boats were all covered. The job's kinda
hard.
They were set two deep in the barn it was
tricky
Outside in a line, four Capris and a Vicky.

And after the tarps were all spread and tied
down
He looked at the host of them and started to
frown
For though they were stored, (straight lines
had been heeded)
He couldn't help thinking about what these
boats needed.

The Capri mast steps were unsanded and full
of neglect
Their hulls were still marked, the rigging
suspect
With missing vang shackles and bungies
stretched out
The spring would mean work, there wasn't a
doubt.

The Victoria 18 had a problem or two
Through hulls were old and might leak anew
Her starboard shroud covers, would they still
last?
The chain plates looked iffy, not up for a blast.

Inside of the barn, the situation was direr
The two axled trailer was in want of some
tires.
The cruiser's old rigging? It was a disgrace
And the motor leaked oil all over the place.

The Wingsailer sat lightest, piggyback on the
others

Its hull wanted fairing, so did the rudder
The Chautauqua had blisters all over its
bottom
His mind would not rest until he had got 'em.

The Sunfish sat weeping, its deck cracks all
twisty
The trailer would vibrate every time he
reached sixty.
He'd lost the boat's rudder, the daggerboard
too
No one would ever buy them for you!

The scow was still pretty, her colors still bright
But what is this water? Something's not right.
That new halyard still lay there, that wouldn't
be wise
He might forget it and find out by surprise.

He worried he'd left out, some important task
Would the side shrouds on the cruiser, pop out
of the mast?
The pintles give out in a moment of need?
The centerboard come loose with the line
somehow freed?

A startling conclusion flooded his brain
Could all of those people he thought were
insane
Been right all along (though they'd gotten his
goat)?
Did he finally realize, he had too many boats?

You'd think that these tasks, the expense they
involved
Would discourage his boat lust, the problems
unsolved
But they heard him exclaim as he sailed out of
sight
"That Contessa 26 is looking so right!"



Above, the 12 women arrive in 1990 in Florida after leg four of the Whitbread Race wearing bikinis. Just because they can. Below, the SV *Maiden* being hoisted aboard a freighter in South Africa after being found rotting in the Seychelle Islands. She was headed for home in England.

Maiden

In 1989 Tracy Edwards assembled an all woman crew and sailed around the world. 12 women, 33,000 miles, the Whitbread Round-the-World Race. She was 27 years old.

by Mike Stratton

Early in 2017, the SV *Maiden* was found abandoned and rotting in a shipyard in the Seychelles, a group of islands more than 900 miles off the east

coast of Africa. Someone recognized the famous boat and contacted one of its best-known skippers (it had been through many) to ask if they wanted their boat back.

She was.

Tracy Edwards was 17 years old when she

first learned to sail. She was a high school dropout who had dozens of school suspensions in her file. She got a taste of ocean sailing in her early 20's and was smitten. But because she was a woman, she could find no one in the 1985 Whitbread Round- the-World Race who would allow her aboard as anything but a cook. She took the job.

And the rest is history (or maybe we should say herstory). Whether it was because of her intense interest in sailing sparked by her first Whitbread experience or the male dominated sailing world that rejected her as anything other than a sort of ocean

going stewardess, Edwards began a four year long odyssey in 1985 to gather an all female crew and a boat so she could race in the Whitbread Round the World (now known as the Volvo Ocean Race).

That 1989-90 Whitbread experience by Edwards and her all female crew was chronicled in the 2019 documentary film *Maiden* by British filmmaker Alex Holmes. The film was first screened in 2018 at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and is now in serious mention for an Oscar as Best Documentary.

What Edwards and her crew did was unprecedented. Few women had even participated in a round the world ocean race. None have ever skippered. As soon as the 1985 Whitbread was over, Edwards was looking for her own boat and other women who would do this with her.

She couldn't convince many in the sailing world that she and a full female crew could do what only men had done: race a sailboat around the world. So money was hard to come by. She was turned down for sponsorship by a succession of CEO's of major corporations, including some that were helmed by women. (continued on next page)



Maiden continued from previous page

Increasingly desperate as the 1989 race deadlines loomed, she got lucky. She decided to risk contacting someone she met on a sailing charter when she was a crew on a sailing charter out of Newport, RI a few years earlier. She didn't know who he was then and that made their friendship unusually warm. And he had money. Lots of it. He was the King Hussein of Jordan.

And he said yes. It wasn't enough money to buy a new boat and outfit it as the other entrants in the race did, but it was enough to find a 1979 Farr 58 - the one she would rechristen *Maiden*. She and her crew worked on the boat themselves, scraping, sanding and painting until she was fit to go to sea again.

Edwards and filmmaker Holmes met serendipitously in 2017 when Edwards spoke at his daughter's elementary school. He sat and listened to her tell about her experience to the young girls in attendance and recognized a good story.

He found out later that Edward's best friend from middle school, Jo Gooding, (and also the cook on Maiden's epic trip) had shot film of the voyage, most of which had been dispersed around the world to media outlets as the race progressed. Holmes had to track it down and all the women who were in the original 12-woman crew. The film is a careful and moving blend of the women as young crewmembers on that 1989



Edwards, now 56, sits aboard Maiden before the boat begins its second round the world tour for the Maiden Factor Foundation

voyage and their older selves thirty years later.

The Whitbread is no place for the faint hearted. The 33,000-mile race tests mind and body in five stages. The first is from Great Britain to Uruguay. They came in last due to damage to the boat but few expected them to make it that far. The next leg from Uruguay to Australia is the longest and most difficult, veering into the Southern Ocean and around the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa.

Edwards, maybe the most intrepid and fearless of all those skippering in this race, took the southernmost route of any competitor, dodging icebergs and perilously cold weather and treacherous seas (the Southern Ocean is also known as the Sea of Certain Death). But it paid off. They were the first boat in their class to make it to Freemantle. (continued on page 5)



Are we now accepting advertising?

Well, no, but we would like to take this moment to point you in a direction. Given that about 15% of our planets' greenhouse gas emissions come from livestock, eating less red meat, taking a meatless Monday, or some other like-minded measure could be a good move. I never went to Burger King much before now. But after my first Impossible Whopper, I was convinced they had somehow slipped up and served me beef by mistake. It was that convincing. And being plant based, it's all good. For your heart and your planet.

Christmas Shopping with an Eye (and a heart) on the Planet

Hey Christmas shoppers! Have we got some great stocking stuffers for you! We are on our way to the virtual mall and we will take you along on a tour of some of the stores!

First stop is the Life Without Plastic store and if you have been wanting to reduce or stop using plastic and throwing it in the landfill, this is for you. In the clothing and laundry department we have soap for the washing machine in a bar that will last for 125 loads. Or Eco Nuts Organic Laundry Detergent in a cardboard box.

In the Living Essentials department there is plastic free dental floss from natural silk and wooden toothbrushes. In the Food Wrap section, sandwich bags, freezer bags, bowl covers, and food wraps - all plastic free and reusable. There are tons more items in this place with sections for Bath and Body, Kids and Babies, Food and Drink - you name it.



Since we all know that governments, businesses, and institutions will be the last ones to act, it is only the individual consumer that can and will act now. Here is a brief description of some of the places you can go on line and shop green. There are literally dozens of companies besides these offering earth friendly products. We owe it to them and to ourselves to use them. The earth and its oceans and waterways thank you.

Gaiam offers plenty of gear for your eco-conscious fitness side -- yoga mats and DVDs, strength training balls and fitness clothes -- but the company also sells a variety of green goods for every room in your home. From organic cotton sheets and sustainable wood wine racks, you can outfit your mind, body, and space with Fair Trade, environmentally responsible must-haves.

Harabu House emphasizes "global chic" when choosing which products to add to their eco line -- and the end result is an eclectic collection of unique objects from all over the world. These include graphic tea towels from France, paper-bead bracelets made by women in Northern Uganda, pretty clutch bags from Australia, and organic baby blankets handcrafted under Fair Trade guidelines in India.

At **Hipcycle**, the focus is on stuff made from other stuff -- not necessarily recycled or organic, but upcycled from material that already exists. And if you think the market for this style is limited to jars-turned-into-vases, you're not thinking big enough: The store sells candelabras made from wooden spindles, 45 RPM records turned into bookends, gin bottles rethought as lampshades, business card holders constructed from spare washers, and more.

The sustainably-crafted goods from **Viva Terra** include recycled glass plates, carved wooden baskets, soothing rock fountains, and beaded mirrors -- all of which let you give your home a simple, sleek, and natural vibe that shows off your commitment to the environment without giving up on style. (continued on page 5)

Maiden (continued from page 3)

Despite that victory, their accomplishment was greeted with skepticism - that it was luck or a one off - by the rest of the male fleet. When they won the next leg, the shortest and most tactically challenging one from Freemantle to New Zealand, they started turning heads among the other competitors and around the world.

You will have to see the film to find out how it all turned out for Tracy Edwards and her crew of young women. They are mostly in their 50's today.

Maiden, the sailing vessel, is now forty years old. It was 2014 when Edwards heard about the fate of her beloved ship, one she had to sell when the *Whitbread* was over in 1990 to pay off mortgages she took out to compete in the race.

The boat was lying in a shipyard in the Seychelles, abandoned by her last owner and rotting away. Someone in the shipyard knew what Edwards had done back in 1989 and contacted her.

It would take three years of fundraising to get enough money to have *Maiden* put into good enough condition to sail her to South Africa where she was then hoisted aboard a cargo ship and brought back to England. One of her benefactors is King Hussein's daughter, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein.

In 2018 *Maiden* began her second round the world trip as a floating ambassador for the Maiden Factor Foundation, a group dedicated to raising funds for girls' education. The boat has been skippered in each leg of its new journey by different women, many of whom are renowned in their own right. The all woman crew has several on board who will be with the boat from start to finish.

One guest skipper is Dee Caffari, the first woman to sail solo around the world the "wrong way", that is, from west to east against the prevailing winds which she accomplished in 2006 at the age of 33.

Edwards, now 56 and retired from sailing due to back injuries, has a daughter of her own and still lives in England.

Maiden will end her round the world trip in January of 2020 in India. You can track her progress on line if you like. She is currently in Panama. The film is available on Netflix. You might want to know how it all turned out back in 1990.

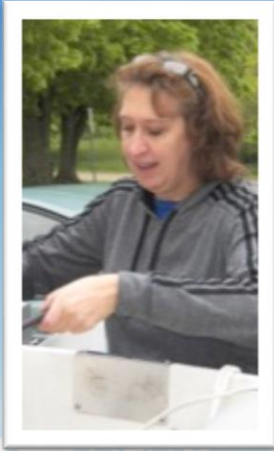
Christmas Shopping (continued from page 4)

Don't let the name fool you: Not everything at [Bambeco](#) is made from bamboo (although you can find dry erase boards, towels, bar trays, plant pots, and more than 500 other items from the sustainable fiber). But from natural earthenware cheese markers to benches from reclaimed railroad ties, Bambeco makes it easy to find high-style, low-impact goods for every part of your home.

Gardening sounds like a pretty eco-friendly pursuit to begin with, but plastic pots, chemicals or pesticides, and mass-produced decorations can give your plot a surprisingly high carbon footprint. Make sure you aren't undoing all the low-output goodness of your local eating by outfitting your garden with supplies from [Olive Barn](#): organic seeds for growing herbs, greens, vegetables, and flowers; Moo Poo compost tea; rice hull pots, and more.

[World of Good](#) offers more than 20,000 products -- each one with a positive impact that goes beyond your buyer's high. They're animal friendly, they support local economies, they use eco-friendly materials, and they benefit charities around the world. Choose to shop by item or impact and choose from clothes, accessories, jewelry, home decor, and more.

Maiden: A Review



HSA's Diane Pierok first brought the film Maiden to our attention. Diane is one of several women in the club who own and skipper their own boats, in this case, a Capri 14.2. Here is her take on the 2019 documentary about the 1989 Whitbread Round the World Race that catapulted 27-year-old Tracy Edwards into history as captain of the first all-female crew.

I was amazed at Tracy's age and level of experience when she undertook this plan. She was not a life long sailor and only had a few years of experience at sea. Obviously she learned a great deal about sailing on previous charter trips, including navigation.

The logistics of a voyage like the Whitbread Round-the-World were just as interesting as the actual trip. For example, they calculated the number of calories to be expended and the amount of food required. Resupply had to be planned for each port.

It was interesting how difficult it was to find financial support for a women's team at that time. I would imagine that it would still be difficult now. I loved that it was Jordanian King Hussein that made the big financial pledge. It was gutsy that she wrote to him to ask for funding. But she was financially invested herself having mortgaged her own house, putting it all on the line. I can't imagine today's cost, but it cost about three million back then.

I wasn't surprised that they won two legs of the race. She had certainly assembled an experienced team. I got the feeling from the interviews of the women today, though, that they were just as emotionally overwhelmed with the experience today as they were when they did it in 1989-90.

To keep costs down, the women did most of the rehabbing on their used boat themselves. Ultimately this paid off when they had to solve a problem with the hull leaking during the voyage. They also helped another boat that had problems during the race, so it wasn't just something they experienced.

I was awed by the risk they took to navigate so far south in the Southern Ocean. The footage of the frozen deck and seas was enlightening. They could only be on deck a half hour at a time. These were all scrappy ladies. When Tracy fired her experienced French Crew Chief over missing medical equipment during the trial run, I thought she was nuts. Ultimately safety and cohesion on the team was more important and made for a successful voyage.

Through the film I thought about how many female pioneers like Tracy it has taken to get where we are today. My daughter has so many opportunities. It may also be a lesson in how far we have to go.

Michelle (Elsasser) and I walked out of the theater still feeling the ocean and wanting more.

The film is still showing in theaters in some places around the world but you can see it on Netflix. There are also two books about the voyage written by Tracy Edwards herself. - [Living Every Second](#) and [Maiden](#).