100 ISSUES

A LOOK BACK TO WHERE WE'RE GOING

Story By Bill Parlatore

Photography Courtesy Of *PMM*

It is said that timing is everything. I had just pulled out several large boxes containing my *PMM* collection. I was in search of some articles that I wanted to read again. *Spitfire*, our new PDQ 41 power catamaran, is ready for a project or two. And *PMM* is a great resource for finding the right boat, then learning and sharing ways to make it better, safer, more capable, and more comfortable.

I searched among the pile surrounding me, and it didn't take long before I found the January/February 2001 issue that contained an excellent article written by Chuck Worst, then our electronics editor. Chuck previously owned Northern Marine Electronics in Seattle, equipping commercial trawlers for months at sea in the harsh waters off Alaska and in the Bering Sea–unforgiving places where lives are lost when important systems stop working. The equipment on these boats must provide rugged service without compromise.

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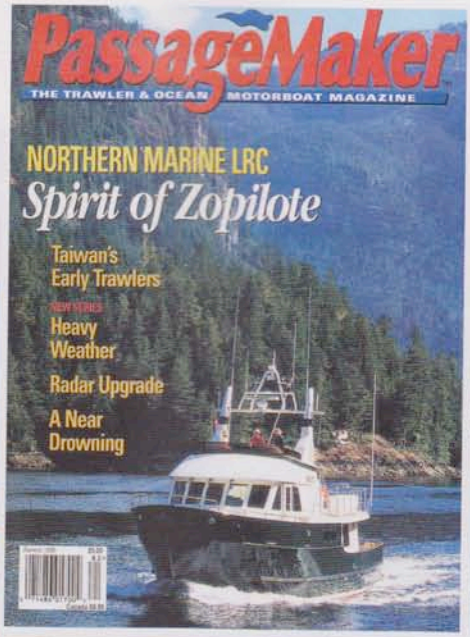
Has Come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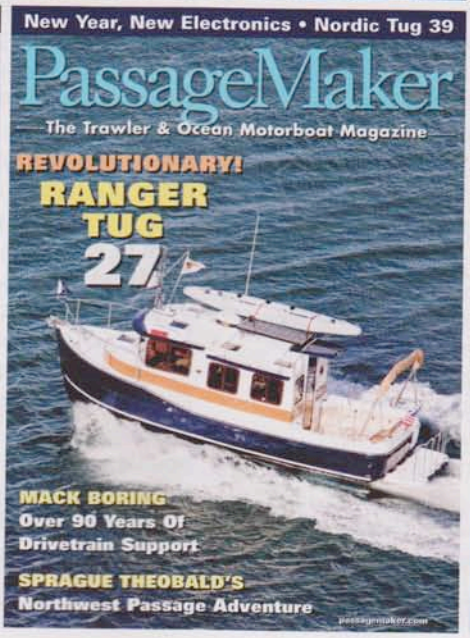
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3 INNOVATIONS
That Have Changed Cruising
THE PMM JOURNEY:
Bill P. Takes A Look Back

Our first booth at our first boat show, Annapolis, 1995. We didn't yet have any issues to sell, just a preliminary cover of *Amante*.

Chuck's article on antenna essentials had the insight I needed, as *Spitfire* will soon get some new antennas and I want to get it right. While I have no plans to visit Dutch Harbor any time soon, I may be alone someday in the Jumentos or Gulf of Maine and happen upon a situation. An outstanding VHF radio installation is near the top of my list of projects.

So when John Wooldridge and Christine Alhambra invited me to write of our history for the 100th anniversary issue, the timing was perfect. Sitting on the floor with all of the issues around me, I feasted on the years of hard work and enlightenment from this endeavor. A big part of my life sat in front of me, and reflecting back, it seemed a lifetime ago.

THE EARLY DAYS

I remember our first boat show, the 1995 Annapolis Powerboat Show, and the question posed to me by a fellow in the industry. He sold dependable diesel cruisers, yet his question stood as testimony to that place in time.

"Do you really think there is a market for a trawler magazine?"

And so began a journey to define and describe a phenomenon that was all but hidden within the realm of powerboating. *PMM* drew boundaries around the niche of trawlering, a growing community of people who chose power over sail for cruising, and economy and rugged reliability over the high-gloss sparkle and pizzazz of sleek motoryachts.

Our first issue had just 16 advertisers. As I sat on the floor turning pages of the early issues, I marveled at a beginner's journey into understanding the nuances of lighting and photographic composition. I struggled to get into tight corners of very small engine spaces to shoot wide-angle pictures to illustrate details of the machinery and systems. Unfortunately, the cost of my detail photography, and those wide-angle images shot from a crammed corner in the Holy Place, came in the form of countless cuts, nicks, and scrapes from sharp overhead corners, bolt ends, and razor-sharp fiberglass or sheet metal. I can't recall a boat tour that didn't draw blood. (There were spirited words when our layout designer then wanted to crop these images or use them small. And can you imagine when an image was flipped for design's sake! Once we were too late to notice the opening spread of a new trawler sporting a "ONURUF" radar atop the pilothouse.)

Laurene and I learned the publishing business together, and eventually moved the magazine and

Years ago, most passagemakers were custom boats, such as *Teka III*, a Beebe design owned by Denis and Mary Umstot.

ourselves to Annapolis to get closer to a major boating center. Talk about a humble beginning. I brought down a folding table and chair to use as an office while I undertook getting the new office systems ordered and installed, with Laurene finalizing moving arrangements in New Jersey for the week after Christmas—all while we kept working on the next issue.

We never stopped working on the magazine. Ever. I fondly remember the wedding we attended of our close friends' son in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The entire wedding party pitched in and helped us proof pages for that issue, which had to be sent to the printer the day after the wedding. It is a great memory.

THE PEOPLE AND THE BOATS

People approached us to get involved with our new venture. Most contributors weren't professional writers, but rather, fell into one of two groups: people in the industry who wanted to share their knowledge, such as Lehman guru Bob Smith, Stacey Stucki, and Alex Marcus; or veteran cruisers with tons of experience. That is how we came to know Bob and Polly Lane, who quickly became part of our team, as well as scores of others. Bruce and Joan Kessler, Denis and Mary Umstot, Tom and Judy Blandford, Bob and Barbara Dein, Bill Jacobs…the collective depth of their experience formed a rich pool of knowledge about how to do it right.

There were not many production trawlers being built in those early days, and most boat shows would only have a handful of new boats on hand. When we attended MTOA (Marine Trader Owners Association) or other rendezvous in the late '90s, we'd see mostly older Taiwan trawlers from the '70s and '80s. There are many trawler classics: Marine Trader, CHB, Albin,

Top: Not your image of extreme adventurers, Ken Murray and Helen White took on Cape Horn, cruising beyond remote. Above: *Pelagic*, a '79 DeFever trawler, shows one doesn't need a zillion-dollar yacht to go where others fear to tread.

Ocean Alexander, Californian, DeFever, Tollycraft, Uniflite, and Gulfstar. The main players in new boats were Grand Banks, DeFever, Kadey-Krogen, Nordhavn, and Nordic Tugs. Then Mainship introduced the Mainship 350 in 1996 after a brilliantly successful Mainship 34 series that created its own cult following.

What was remarkable back then was how many custom, one-of-a-kind boats were out there, quietly cruising the world without a lot of press or fanfare. With few exceptions, if you wanted a serious cruising boat, you had to build one yourself, and many did just that. We got to meet the interesting people who owned these boats, and that hasn't really changed. Bob Lane and I loved finding and doing articles on these boats because they were unique, and represented a window into creative possibility.

By 2003, there were many more builders of trawler-style yachts in all shapes, sizes, and budgets. Potential buyers lusted for all of the new equipment developed for these boats. But we still offered balance by introducing down-to-earth stories that put everything in perspective, such as the double rounding of Cape Horn by Ken Murray and Helen White in their 1979 DeFever 40 Passagemaker. *Pelagic* is a very normal vintage trawler, and obviously quite capable of serious adventure. There is a lesson in this.

Our contributors would often write about the myth of the perfect boat, and we did a series on hull design, interior decor, galley and helm design, and understanding the many important elements that one might miss in a casual inspection during a boat show. We helped build awareness in those attending boat shows.

10 minutes as he took me behind the stage platform, excited to show me pictures of the Mainship 34 he was rebuilding into his own little jewel. Such passion is so contagious.

BUILDING UP THE DREAM

After several years, we began building a staff, and *PMM* went from four issues a year to six in 2000, then eight issues in 2005. The page count reflected the keen interest in the boats, the people, the lifestyle, and the destinations. We worked hard to keep it relevant to readers on every coast, and, as aging sailors came to the dark side, we got many questions we worked hard to answer. Our boat tours remained popular because they contained a lot of good information about all sorts of boats, with lots of photos, and impressions that were both constructive and educational. Sometimes we found

Left: Suzy and Jim Sink, a delightful couple who saw the world while others dreamed, were an inspiration for many people. Right: Jane and Howard Brubaker, a special couple who proved doing more with less, and did so in fine style. We miss them all.

Boat shows were always a treat, because they were opportunities to speak with hundreds of folks who would stop by our booth to tell us about their plans, or to catch up with what we were doing. The early years were hard, as booth time competed with me looking at boats and Laurene talking with advertisers. But the two of us gave each other breaks and there was never an empty booth. At day's end we mostly collapsed, completely hoarse from talking all day long. Then we'd get up and do it over again—for as long as the show lasted—and the Seattle show lasts 10 days. (Building a staff sure helped ease that predicament.) I was unnoticed among the boating press at media events at the shows, which was fine by me. That changed one day in Miami when J.J. Marie, president of Zodiac North America, held up a major press conference for

things to criticize, but that was okay and some builders valued hearing of something they hadn't thought of, such as saloon seating not long enough to sleep on in rough weather.

Throughout the years, the staff enthusiastically encouraged submissions from those out there doing it. "Don't worry about your writing skills," we would tell them, and then work with them to edit their stories to make them sparkle. As contributors got published, they often returned with more. Many of our contributors became well known, identified while cruising, and it was always great to hear about their excitement of recognition. That is one reason why *PMM* has been so unique.

As I told everyone as the years went by, *PMM* was and is for them, by them.

Left: A leading edge of passagemaking design, Steve and Linda Dashew's *Wind Horse* goes beyond traditional thinking, and is a successful long and lean passagemaker. Right: Tiny *Pazapa* is a fine example of a midget cruising boat without all the frills. Dave Jackman's creative efforts intrigued us all, and such projects fueled the dreams of many.

Great stories appeared out of nowhere and we would scramble to get them into the next issue, because some tales are just too good. Howard and Jane Brubaker come to mind, as do Jim and Suzy Sink. The Sinks, of course, circumnavigated the world in their Nordhavn 46, a story well told. The Brubakers, on the other hand, took a different route. Aboard their 1967 wood Grand Banks 36, *Stormy Petrel*, Howard and Jane visited every state that can be reached by water, except Hawaii, from Alaska to Maine, Great Circle included. They did and saw more than most on their simple, frugal, and entirely doable grand adventure. They accomplished this by themselves, on a retired high school coach's budget, making friends along the way. Sadly, both Howard and Jim have since passed away, but their accomplishments are forever.

Paul and Linda Jauncey also tried to take the world by storm. Paul built their wood trawler in England, and we followed the voyages of *Dreamworld* over several years as the couple and their two sons voyaged south to the Mediterranean, then across the Atlantic, and all over North America. (The ongoing voyaging of Mary and Scott Flanders on *Egret*, now in New Zealand, is a contemporary equivalent. I recall the day Scott and Mary stopped by our office to say hello, thank us for inspiring them, and Scott said they would figure it out one day at a time. You might conclude they have.)

Sally Bee Brown made her place with her signature people stories, and she somehow found all sorts of fascinating things to write about. With her charming profiles of people who used boating to get through battles with cancer or loss of a spouse, or how couples bonded through boating, Sally always got it right.

We published many articles on keeping it simple, but that is surprisingly hard to do and most owners don't. Walk the docks at Trawler Fest and even the smallest

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boats are loaded, and the technology includes electronic diesel engines and controls, NMEA networks, GPS integration, thermal imaging, MOB systems, and reasonably affordable satellite TV and communications. It is a far cry from what I found aboard Robert Beebe's *Passagemaker*. (Howard Brubaker told me that cruising from Alaska to Maine, they were only out of sight of land briefly twice, so his dinghy was his liferaft. And he removed his get-home engine as he tired of maintaining something he did not use once. There is something to be said for simplicity!)

UNFORGETTABLE VESSELS

We've always enjoyed exploring the fringe edges, with boats designed to survive capsizing in extreme conditions (whatever happened to them?), or repurposed commercial or military craft, or tiny one-off trawlers that require a healthy dose of imagination to work. A friend says we call this "pleasure boating" for a reason, yet there are some who imagine adventure on a grander scale. It is so entertaining to see these boats!

The largest boat tour we've done to date was *Spirit of Zopilote*, at over 20 pages, because Northern Marine did such a superb job of incorporating Bruce and Joan Kessler's goals of perfect utility, sophistication, and efficiency into an outstanding passagemaker. Every inch of that boat has a purpose, was thought about carefully, and makes the boat more comfortable, safer, more efficient, and nothing is wasted. The details are amazing.

Steve and Linda Dashew's *Wind Horse* is another vessel on the fringe, and it is one of the most interestingly successful designs to date. Some readers were fortunate to meet the couple at Trawler Fest and hear more about their boat and its systems.

And let's not forget Australian Dave Jackman's tiny 20-foot passagemaker, a study of "KISS" design. He built the aluminum *Pazapa* for around $34,000 in 1997–98, and it was a popular piece as it embraced simplicity along with seaworthiness. Ah, the good old days.

Yes, those days when Sally Bee Brown compiled a collection of real-world information about the true cost of cruising in the fall of 1999, diesel fuel cost less than 90 cents a gallon. The introduction to the compilation said, "There is simply no common denominator among them, except that slow, turtle-like trawler travel is a whole lot more economical (and comfortable) than running full bore with both diesels cranking." Sound like a good plan today?

In addition to the sharp increase in fuel prices, the economic problems of recent years have hurt the marine industry. Businesses closed or cut back, sales dropped, and the supply chain was seriously disrupted. It looked pretty bleak for a while. But recovery eventually happens, and those looking for a new boat now are perhaps taking more time or focusing on a smaller platform. The success of Ranger Tugs is a modern reminder of the strong popularity of the little Nordic Tug 26 when it came out. Long ago we published an article about a couple and their cat, trailering their Nordic 26 from California to the Pacific Northwest, then down to the Baja peninsula in Mexico. Perhaps more folks will choose that route and it is a viable option.

I guess you might call it a fringe adventure, but it still amazes Steve D'Antonio and me when people mention our 2002 passage to Bermuda on the little Willard 30, *Willie*. Even this spring of 2011, on our trip up north on *Spitfire*, we met a couple of charter subscribers living aboard a most unlikely cruising boat, a Sea Ray Sundancer 48. After a glass of wine, Les Shapiro pulled out his issue with that Bermuda trip. It clearly is one of the most popular adventures we've done, although anecdotally, I wonder if our piece on coffee is the one most often mentioned to me. I can't tell you how many owners have brought me into their galleys to show me their coffee grinders. It still happens today and I chuckle every time.

Bob Lane told me he was walking one day on an exercise path in Seattle when someone recognized him, rolled down their car window, and called out to him that they really enjoyed his radar article and had come to the same conclusions, buying the same radar as Bob. What a sense of community!

MEMORABLE TALES

Every *PMM* reader has their favorite story or boat tour, as they tell us at the boat shows. I have many favorites, for as many reasons. Spending time aboard *Passagemaker* was inspiring, and it was a thrill to cross the Pacific with the Maloneys on *Rover*. I positively got goosebumps aboard Steve and Linda Dashew's *Wind Horse* during sea trials in Auckland, New Zealand. As we came back into the harbor, we passed the stern of *Amante*, the trawler featured on the cover of our very first issue. What a rush to go aboard the 58-foot Delta so many years later, soon on its way to Fiji. My marine security article with retired SEAL Commander Gary Stubblefield was apparently a big hit with someone high up. It was listed as a supporting document at an international conference on piracy held in Malaysia.

Ever see the Clint Eastwood movie, *Bloodwork*? In the opening scene the actor is reading an issue of *PMM* in his hospital bed. Pretty cool.

I must admit there are stories that were not told, and never will, unless I write a book of *PMM* bloopers. Things didn't go as planned (to put it mildly) or something significant broke, or bad design elements surfaced. Sometimes we decided that nothing good would come from the story beyond the sheer entertainment of misadventure.

Letters to the editor were always a source of entertainment and discourse, and a chance for readers

Above: The *PMM* staff grew over the years, forming a tight-knit team who accomplished great things with lots of energy. Above right: Putting on big events takes a lot of work by the *PMM* staff, but we enjoyed every event as a celebration. Right: Our routinely packed TrawlerPort seminars provided information that future cruisers wanted to know on so many subjects. Here I moderate a panel discussion on design.

to speak their minds or make things right. It seemed like we received a hundred letters and emails about my incorrect association of an aircraft carrier with Jimmy Doolittle's daring raid over Tokyo in the desperate early months of WWII. A whole bunch of veterans flew into action, clarifying the facts or using my reference to WWII to share their own wartime experiences. Or the time I made the exquisite mistake of naming a city in Germany based on a sign I'd seen. It was "Exit" in German. Hah!

We hired our first full-time employee in 1998, and over time, our Annapolis team expanded tenfold, mostly young, talented men and women, all eager to do their best and learn. Our golden retriever, Boomer, was always in the office, as was Banker, then Murphy, and other dogs came to visit. We had our first office wedding, then the first baby, and the family grew. The team continues to work hard.

BOAT SHOW PRESENCE

Our leap into the event business came with TrawlerPort in 1999, a show within an existing boat show. In addition to grouping trawlers closer together among a sea of white fiberglass, we filled meeting rooms and ballrooms to capacity for comprehensive seminars on boat design, technical systems, weather, communications, cruising destinations, and moderated panel discussions with industry folks or experienced cruisers. Even our insurance seminar was interesting with standing room only. For a time we followed up system seminars with hands-on engine room inspections on boats in the show. In all, TrawlerPort added value and substance to the traditional walk-the-docks event experience, and it is a great model for future boat shows. Our staff really hustled to put these events on while still working on the next issue, but it was great fun. I can still see Kieran, Bradley, Will, Natalie, Geoff, and others running around the docks setting up flags or on some last-minute errand. And when we acquired Trawler Fest in 2005, it raised the bar of opportunity to new heights, as there is no limit to how great an event can become, creating a total immersion of the trawler lifestyle.

And speaking of immersion, the *PMM* staff underwent total immersion in 2003 by staging a cruising event. The Bahamas Pokie Run brought some 70 inexperienced people and their boats across the Gulf Stream to cruise the Bahamas for the first time. We were blessed by wonderful weather, and everyone had a fantastic time. It was magical to see skittish couples, uneasy as they motored into the Gulf Stream, become confident cruisers after two weeks among new friends. It was a wonderful success.

It remains important to understand the mission statement for your boat. Buying a trawler that can make

A convoy of trawlers follows the leader entering a narrow channel in the 2003 Pokie Run in the Bahamas. What fun we all had!

a passage to Tahiti may still romance the imagination, but perhaps a more honest evaluation of one's plans is a healthier and more-likely-to-succeed scenario. It is a classic argument, as there are now so many choices.

It is the number and diversity of these choices that is so compelling today, even to the debate as to what constitutes a "trawler." I maintain it is a metaphor for the lifestyle. And I recall a TrawlerPort panel discussion series I moderated years back where I posed the question: Given a specific budget, is it better to buy a large, older boat and update/replace its systems and electronics, or is it a better decision to buy a smaller, newer boat with more current equipment and gear? On the East Coast, the unanimous answer among the panel members and group discussion turned out to be the exact opposite of those participating on the West Coast panel. Everyone got a big kick out of that. There is no right answer, is there?

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Gazing through the pages of these 100 issues, it seems most everything has come a long way. Look at modern diesel engines: less smoke, more power, and cleaner emissions. Look at anchor design. Look at communications equipment. LED lighting is here. Better fabrics and coatings, less exterior varnish, improved waste management systems—all are steps forward, all improve the boating experience with greater reliability, less maintenance, and more fun.

I expect the future will produce advances in hull design, hopefully translating into greater efficiency. New alternative propulsion systems should allow us to leave a smaller carbon footprint. A Prius trawler? Maybe one day. I envision a more sustainable, environmentally responsible attitude toward cruising, with future plans including strategies to do more with less.

Yes, we've seen change. Some of our waterways are at risk, and the world is not as safe as it might have been perceived back then. But the joy of being on the water still attracts us, and our ability to enjoy this lifestyle is only limited by the choices we make.

I congratulate everyone at *PMM*, past and present, and wish everybody in the trawler community a Happy 100th Issue Anniversary. Together we created something very special on many levels, and I trust it will continue on to another milestone into the future.

It continues to be quite an adventure.