

## ONE OF THE NEW YORK THIRTIES

*nythirty*      **The Unpublished Story of *Cockatoo II* as Recounted by  
Lloyd Bergeson in 1979 (edited)**

25 Mar 97

**NY 5** - *Cockatoo II*, a New York Thirty, was designed by Nathanael Greene Herreshoff and built at Herreshoff Mfg. Co. in Bristol, RI in the winter of 1904/05 as one eighteen identical vessels on order by a syndicate of New York YC members. The yachts were 43' 6" LOA, 30' LWL, 8' 9" beam and had 1040 sq. feet of sail. They had double-planked hulls of yellow pine over cypress on oak frames. The hulls and deck were diagonally strapped with bronze. Their displacement was about 19,000 pounds of which 7,700 was in the lead keel. They were gaff-rigged with a stubby bowsprit, and the jib was club-footed, so that they were easily handled by a small crew. They were famous for never reefing their enormous mainsails when racing. They were dearly beloved by their owners and have often been described as the most successful one-design ever built. To this day their aristocratic lines, low freeboard, narrow beam and distinctive deckhouse are gracious assets to any anchorage in which they lie, and they show their grace even better under sail. Over one hundred and fifty were built.

*Cockatoo II* was first owned by August Belmont. Ogden Reid, publisher of the *New York Herald Tribune*, raced her enthusiastically for many years. During World War II Gerard Lambert, having donated the 'J' boat, *Yankee*, for scrap on his three-masted schooner, *Atlantic*, for war-time service, bought her in order to maintain his flag rank as Commodore of the New York YC. [Lloyd Bergeson] bought her in 1956 from William Winberg of the Boston YC in Marblehead. Actually one or more Thirty's raced competitively in regattas of the New York YC after WW II.

During the following winter Professor George Owen of MIT, a famous yacht designer in his own right and then eighty-six years of age, offered to lay out a new rig, provided that I, a former pupil, did the necessary engineering work. He, incidentally, had been an assistant of N.G. Herreshoff's in 1904 when the New York Thirties had been built.

The result was a 7/8ths yawl rig with 16% of the sail area in the mizzen. The total was reduced by about 15%, and *Cockatoo II* was a racing/cruising boat for the next seven years, racing successfully under the Universal, Off Soundings and CCA rules. In 1966 we restored the original rig, but the IOR rule forced us, in 1973, to go to a masthead rig. That required moving the mast two feet aft, but she continued her winning ways. Her downwind performance was markedly improved, at some sacrifice to her outstanding windward ability under the gaff rig and 7/8ths foretriangle.

By 1977 the deck and cabin house had been replaced, she had new keel bolts, and had been entirely re-fastened and extensively re-framed. No planking had ever been found in need of renewal, but in 1963 the hull was sheathed with two layers of Dynel cloth and epoxy. This sheathing remained intact over the years and allowed a smooth, burnished racing bottom. In 1977 part of her deadwood and keel were replaced using epoxy-bonded laminations.

Over the years, with her modern rig, *Cockatoo II* proved to be an outstanding performer offshore and in heavy weather. Thus, after the 1977 racing season, I started preparing her for a long-planned single-handed passage to Norway. For this purpose her mizzen was re-installed, together with an inner forestay and running backstays. For many years *Cockatoo II*, as the only remaining Thirty on the New York YC roster, had been actively raced on the annual cruises. Had she survived \* the voyage, it was planned to give her a chance to win some NYYC silver in honor of what would have been her seventy-fifth sailing season.

Lloyd Bergeson in his account describes on the single-handed eastward passage to Norway acquiring a seagull as a passenger. In good weather the gull stayed on the foredeck, but in bad weather it came after to the cockpit. Unfortunately his companion deserted ship before the passage was completed. The return trip he sailed double-handed and encountered a succession of gales south of Greenland which apparently sprung a plank at an inaccessible butt forcing them to abandon the yacht.

Wally

The many friends and former crew members of COCKATOO II need no introduction to this account of the last days and hours before she was committed to eternal rest in Davy Jones Locker. Others, more recently involved might appreciate a bit of her prior history.

She was designed or rather modeled and built in Bristol, R.I. in the winter of 1904/05 by Nathaniel Greene Herreshoff as one of 18 identical vessels ordered by a syndicate of NYYC members. The yachts were 43'6" on deck, 30' WL, 8'9" Beam and had 1040 Sq. Ft. of sail. They had double planked hulls of yellow pine over cypress on oak frames. The hulls and decks were diagonally strapped with bronze. Their displacement was about 19,000 pounds. 7700 pounds of this was in the lead keel. They were gaffrigged, had a short bowsprit, the jib was club footed and they were easily handled by a small crew. They were famous for never reefing their enormous mainsails when racing. The yachts proved enormously able under all conditions, were responsive and delightful to sail. They were dearly beloved by their owners and they honed the skill of many famous racing yachtsmen, including E. H. Maxwell and C. Sherman Hoyt. They have often been described as the most successful one design racing class ever built. To this day their aristocratic lines, low freeboard, narrow beam and distinctive deckhouse are gracious assets to whatever anchorage in which they choose to lie. They show their grace even better under sail.

August Belmont

COCKATOO II, NY5, was first owned by ~~Oliver Harriman~~. For many years under the name LENA, she was enthusiastically raced by Ogden Reid, publisher of the New York Herald Tribune. During World War II, Gerard Lambert having donated YANKEE for scrap and ATLANTIC for wartime service owned her in order that he might maintain his flag rank as Commodore of the NY Yacht Club. The writer bought her in 1956 from Capt. William Winberg of the Boston Yacht Club in Marblehead. Capt. Winberg, born and raised on a square rigged ship maintained her original rig in exact detail.

In the winter of 1956/57 Professor George Owen of MIT, a famous and innovative yacht designer in his own right who had been Herreshoff's assistant at Bristol at the time the 30's were built and then 86 years of age offered to layout a new rig for her if I, former pupil, did the detail engineering involved. A 7/8 yawl rig, with 16% of the total area in the mizzen evolved, the total area being reduced by at least 15%. For years COCKATOO in addition to cruising raced successfully under the Universal, Off Soundings and CCA rules. In 1966, for racing we went to a sloop rig, retaining the 7/8 fore triangle. In 1973 the IOR rule forced us to go to a masthead rig - moving the mast two feet aft in the process. With this change she continued her winning ways; her downwind performance was markedly improved at the sacrifice of some of her outstanding windward ability which she had enjoyed with both gaff rig and 7/8 fore triangle.

Prior to 1977 in addition to various rig changes the deck and cabin house had been replaced with a much stronger structure than original and bulwarks had been added. Bronze floors new keel bolt had been added, she had been thoroughly refastened and extensively reframed. No planking had ever been found in need of renewal but in 1963 when the deck had been renewed she had been sheathed with two layers of Dynel cloth in Epoxy. This sheathing had remained essentially intact over the years and allowed a smooth, burnished racing bottom of 12 meter quality. In the spring of 1977 part of her deadwood and keel was replaced using epoxy bonded laminations.

Over the years with her modern rig(s) COCKATOO II proved herself to be an outstanding performer offshore and in heavy weather. Thus after the 1977 racing season I started preparing her for a longplanned singlehanded passage to Norway. For this purpose her mizzen was reinstalled together with an inner forestay and running backstays.

For many years COCKATOO II had been the only "30" on the New York Yacht Club roster and actively raced on her annual cruise. Had she survived this episode it was planned to give her a chance to win some more New York YC silver in honor of what would have been her 75th sailing season in 1980.

Lloyd Bergeson 8/13/79

<sup>1</sup> For an account of this passage see YACHTING WORLD for June, July & August, 1979  
CRUISING

On Friday, July 13th at 2355GMT COCKATOO II was abandoned at sea in position 53°N and 27°34'W. She was in mid-Atlantic approximately 660 miles SE of Kap Farvel, Greenland and about the same distance SW of Iceland and due west of Ireland. The crew consisting of the writer, Lloyd Bergeson, 62 and son Henry Bergeson, 21, both of Norwell, Massachusetts were taken off by the cargo liner CAST OTTER of London, bound for Antwerp from Montreal with a cargo of containers and ore.

COCKATOO II had departed the island of Bjarkøy located on the Norwegian coast at approximately 69° N and 16°25'E on Friday, June 22 en route to Isle Au Haut, Maine, her home port. This was to have been the third and last leg of a voyage started in 1978. The first leg had been a successful single-handed passage of 3384 nautical miles from Isle Au Haut to Stavanger, Norway. The second, accomplished this spring had been a richly rewarding, largely single-handed cruise of approximately 1000 miles up Norway's fabulous and rugged west coast from Stavanger to Bjarkøy. Son Henry had joined me at Harstad on the 16th of June and as we cast off our lines from the dock at Bjarkoy on the 22nd we looked forward to what we hoped would be a relatively fast and uneventful passage back to Isle Au Haut some 3600 nautical miles to the SW. By 2AM on the 23d of June we had Andenes light abeam and we were clear of the coast of Norway - setting off in a fresh westerly of 35 knots and a beam reach for our next land mark - the southeast corner of Iceland. While we had the "Midnight Sun" to light us on our way we soon lost all trace of the delayed spring which we had finally enjoyed on our very last day at Bjarkøy; the sea temperature was 42°F, the air temperature was even lower and with the good breeze we risked frostbite if we failed to wear mittens when on deck. Despite the cold and boisterous seas we were able to hold to our southwesterly rhumb line with but little difficulty and but one day of strictly windward work. By July 1st we were off Ingolfshofdi on Icelan's SE coast having made good 1157 miles since departing Norway.

At this point we considered making a stop at Reykjavik but that would have meant thrashing ~~some~~ 200 miles to windward against the 40K northwesterly that by then prevailed. So, since the ship, ourselves and our stores were all in good shape it appeared reasonable and attractive to ease our sheets and reach along our/southwesterly course for Cape Race, Newfoundland. This we did.

preplanned

In planning our west-bound passage we had become cognizant of the fact that the weather and sea conditions in the NorthAtlantic areas that we were to traverse were dominated by a series of recurrent 'lows' yielding a prevailing westerly breeze to the east and south of Iceland. In other words we expected that we would be close hauled for a significant part of the passage. Nevertheless based on our experience in traversing the area south of Iceland from west to east the previous June we had reason to hope that we would be to the north of the center of at least some of the 'lows' and that this would give us southeasterlies for part of the time and thus allow us the luxury of eased sheets. The Pilot Chart for July seemed to confirm this hypothesis as had the experience of Dr. George Nichols when he came west from Norway in AIRMAIL in 1974.

Our hopes on wind direction and our expectations on wind velocity and sea state went almost completely unrealized. We no sooner had Ingolfshofdi over our counter than the wind went west and remained there for 10 of the 11 days remaining to us - backing or veering from the west but a few degrees in the course of each 24 hour period. The daily measured velocity of the wind was between 30 and 40 knots, with gusts and sometimes more sustained periods of 50 or more knots. This would have been great if we had been going east. As it was the wind driven seas built up in height to 25 feet or more, often with further confusion added by variable cross currents. We were thus forced to proceed with drastically reduced sail - either a staysail alone or a combination of staysail, storm jib and reefed mizzen. On the very rare occasions when the wind velocity dropped below 20 knots we hoisted either a storm trisail or a reefed main, but such lulls lasted but an hour or so at best. Under staysail we could point 50° to the wind but we generated no more than 2-4 knots of boat speed. With the tiny storm jib set outside the staysail a "slot" was created and the two headsails in combination with the storm or reefed mizzen increased the boat

speed to 6-7 knots; however we could point no closer than 60° to the wind.

The self-steering gear, once retuned, worked superbly well and with the gear operative COCKATOO handled the seas very well indeed except for a relatively infrequent but unpredictably recurrent "slamming" when she would sail off the top of a particularly high wave and fall into the trough with varying degrees of impact both visual and audible. This was of concern but in anticipation of such conditions I had before leaving the US in 1978 reinforced COCKATOO's hull structure both forward and aft of her load waterline forward with laminated oak "belt" frames fitted continuously across stem and also tied into her floors. The yacht was also reinforced with similar "belt" frames throughout her midbody in way of the ballast keel.

The skys had been overcast for practically the entire time that we were crossing the Norwegian Sea to Iceland. In fact we were forced to rely entirely on deadreckoning for our navigation until we came within the 200 mile range of Iceland's powerful RDF stations. Even then magnetic anomalies made the fixes of doubtful accuracy and it was not until July 1st that we were able to reconcile our DR and RDF positions by a good noon fix when the sun finally appeared for a few minutes. From July 1st on we were not able to get reliable sights except on two occasions, July 3d and July 13th - the latter being the day that NIMROD aircraft, RESCUE 1 vectored in on us. In summary our recording log registered 1100 miles from July 1st to July 13th at noon yet we had made good only 660 miles. 25% of our mileage had been up and down waves or negated by adverse currents. Not unexpectedly but disappointingly we were well to the east of our DR position.

We carried on board an ALDEN weathermap facsimile machine kindly loaned to us by the manufacturer for experimental purposes but improvidently, were depending on a Yazean radio to feed it its signals. The latter had proved a complete flop the year before as a short wave receiver. Instead of heaving it over the side I had invested more than its purchase price having it retuned, hooked up and tested out with the facsimile machine. Operated by an expert in Stavanger a fine weather map was made at the dock. By the time I got to Kristiansund the radio wouldnt receive any kind of signal and it took another pair of devoted experts working half the night to isolate its trauma and restore some measure of operational vigor. At sea however it was a different matter and hours per day of patient effort by Henry while crossing the Norwegian Sea produced but one partial map. In retrospect the weathermaps would not have helped us in the seas that we traversed. Had we approached Ice burdened waters it would have been invaluable of course. In any event it was our experience and is our testimony that at least between July 1st and July 12th, 1979 any and all frontal attacks that the 'weather gods' launched on the area delineated in red on the Pilot Chart as that with 10% chance of 12 foot or more seas and lying south of Iceland are automatically converted into cyclones and therefore persistent and vigorous westerlies - Pilot Chart data notwithstanding. Yes the wind would veer and back a few degrees but there was no remission in its basic direction or intensity other than for the briefest of periods. Our path was out of and to the west of the inner redlined area shown on the chart which predicts a 15% chance of 12' or higher waves. There must have been in our honor not only a westerly shift of this 'cauldron of storms' to say nothing of an increase from 15% probability to 100% greater than 12' wave heights our recorded average being more like 25' or perhaps more, 100% of the time.

Once clear of Iceland we of course had had the option of heading NW across the Denmark Strait to pick up a favorable current off the east coast of Greenland. But we never considered it seriously. By July 1st we were yearning for higher water and air temperatures and relief from frostbitten hands. Subsequent events and reports of ice conditions off Greenland appear to have substantiated this decision.

Water on the deck was a fact of life even with canvas reduced to the staysail or the storm jib alone. We had a continuous stream of water over the bow and the lee rail was often under. The forward hatch was reasonably tight and we had a nifty new breakwater for the cabin skylight as well as a high coaming on the after hatch - both fitted at the yard of my friend Halvard Hausberg on Sotra. Despite these improved impediments to water

ingress some amount of it came through other deck openings including the staysail /deck pad over my bunk and the lower after chainplates - both highly stressed areas in the deck. No water was coming through the hull proper except we had a constant 'weep' through a keel bolt that had been with us for some years. Thus with our shallow bilge we made it a habit to give a few strokes with the small hand pump at each change of the watch. Despite the "damp" as we worked to the south we were at times in patches of the Gulf Stream and the ambient temperature of the water, air and cabin increased to the point that we could strip off our multiple layers of arctic underwear.

On July 11th because of our concern that the infrequent but recurrent 'slamming' might have opened her up in some way we made a thorough inspection of her hull bay by bay and were quite satisfied with her watertight integrity. at that time however I was reminded that I had not reinforced the structure as well as I could have forward in two particular areas - namely the scarp in the stem about 10 feet forward of the mast and two bays starting five feet forward of the mast where a misguided former owner had once installed iron angle bar reinforcements in way of the mast step. In the case of the scarp I had never renewed the bolts through it and in the latter case there were two problems; first the anglebars and their iron fastenings through planking and frames had prior to their removal promoted small areas of local rot in both the frames and planking, which while routed out and patched before the days of Epoxy remained as weak points; and second while I had at the time installed sister frames in the area they were not continuously across the keel, nor were they laminated as I had done later in other areas. Thus I had two local discontinuities in hull strength.

At 3:25 on the morning of July 12th I entered in the log that although it was blowing like "stink" and while the seas were the most mountainous that we had seen COCKATOO was taking them in stride with scarcely a slam. Nevertheless at 4:00 Henry deemed it prudent to strike the mizzen, leaving the vessel on the port tack under staysail alone. At 4:30 we were both in our bunks. We felt her rise, rise and then rise further on what seemed to be the grandfather of all waves and then she fell heavily. In addition to the standard slamming noise there were two sharp cracks, almost but not quite simultaneous. Perhaps a second later a thunder of rattling sail cloth informed us that the staysail had been rendered apart by the waves impact. Donning oil skins we hit the deck to subdue the remains of the sail. This took but a minute or two but by the time one of us looked below there was water already over the floorboards, and well over. In addition to our small piston type pump COCKATOO had two others, a large EDSON diaphragm pump operable from below and a smaller WHALE diaphragm pump operable from the cockpit. We set to work with both of these and by sustained and prodigious effort managed to stem the rise of water and then clear the bilge. Our problem was obviously forward of the mast and we could only guess at the source or sources.

No matter how we ultimately were able to deal with the damage and control it prudence indicated that we should prepare to abandon ship. I had long since jotted down a check list for such a contingency and I now proceeded to collect a survival kit of gear and food using my sea berth as a staging and packing area pending its transfer to the six man life raft we had lashed to the cabin top under the dinghy. While Henry pumped continuously with the EDSON I gathered a case of sardines, honey, hardbread, freeze dried food, Sterno cans, matches ditty bags, fishing lines, navigating gear, charts, sleeping bags, and several other items including my precious rolls of exposed film. Two five gallon jugs of water were already in the cockpit. Last but not least I brought out the NARCO EPIRB. and tested it. The little red light glowed in comforting manner. The battery in it however was overage so we changed it for a new one and rechecked to see it was in working order. However we did not activate the machine at the time.

There was no question that we had major hull damage on our hands but we were resolved to work at effecting emergency repairs and controlling the leaks if humanly possible. with Henry's 210 lb., but already heavily taxed, brawn bearing the brunt of the pumping I set to work surveying the damage as best I could hampered by a forepeak full of sails, anchors, anchor rhodes, sparelines, water tanks and ceiling all lying over the principally suspect area. Once I could remove a bit of the port ceiling it was quite apparent

that the North Atlantic had searched out and exploited our weak spot. Two strakes of the inner planking were fractured and split not only between the frames but also at the tops of the floors. The frames no doubt were also partially fractured although nothing showed there. Water was pouring through the breaks and the adjacent seams. I thought I might be able to screw down some plywood patches with some kind of gasket material under them - if I could get the screws to take up in the outer planking. This would at least slow the leakage from this major source. Considerable water was also coming from further forward, probably from a sprung scarph in the stem but there was little I could think of at the moment to do about that. I manufactured and applied patches using cotten cloth soaked in paint for the gaskets. Alarmingly my screws in the way of the damage did not take up at all. From this I could conclude not only that I had but a slim chance of slowing the leakage but also the nature of the damage. The latter conclusion was reinforced by Henry's discovery that the Dynel/Epoxy sheathing along a forward; starboard topside plank was fractured. This meant that we had sprung a plank and butt block. When the forward, starboard topside had slammed down on the unyielding water the starboard side had failed in tension. This undoubtedly had been the first sharp cracking sound. The second had been the portside planking failing in compression at its weakest point. At least two strakes of the yellow pine outer planking had fractured and popped out while the cypress inner planking fractured and popped in even as the weakened frames yielded at the tops of the floors.

By now it was well past 10 AM. We had been lying quite comfortably ahull since the incident but the wind velocity and the height of the seas had remained of epic proportions. Further the sky had cleared and the mountainous foam streaked indigo blue seas crowned by emerald green and white breaking crests against the perfectly clear sky were in the morning sunlight of a wild beauty that would certainly have yielded a prize winning photograph or two for my Nikonos II underwater camera. Instead of undertaking such frivolity I was in the throes of deciding to activate the EPIRB. I was loath to do it for I was well aware of the intricate and expensive air-sea rescue operation that it would generate when and if our signal was picked up. On the other hand I was not sanguine about either an abatement in the furious weather we had been experiencing or my ability to stem the leak. Further we were well north of the usual shipping tracks and we were very tired. I decided to turn it on. Unsure that it would generate clear signals from below I hung the EPIRB from the main boom and lashed it to the gallows frame, extended the antenna and flipped the switch. The red light glowed reassuringly but each gust of wind knocked the antenna horizontal. I left it, hoping for the best and turned to refueling Henry and myself with bread, honey, raisens, cheese, beefbroth and beer, even as we continued to pump together and singly. Pumping was mixed with other tasks one of which was to wrap the storm mizzen around the hull as a damage control patch. It conformed beautifully but did not stem the flow of water discernably. I also continued with my gaskets and plywood gasket covers between the frames. Late in the afternoon I checked the EPIRB. The red light was out. I took it below and opened it up. It was full of water. In reassembling it with the new battery we had apparently misaligned the gasket and it had broken in way of the channel for the antenna. We could see discoloration in the power circuitry where it had shorted out. This gave us little hope that it would ever work again. Nevertheless we dried it out over the primus stove, reassembled it and set it aside with the swich off after finding that the light still would not work.

At this point we concluded that there was nothing to do but work out our own salvation - sticking with the ship just as long as we could. By this time the breeze had susided to its standard minimum of 20knots, gusting to 30 knots so we set the storm jib and reached off to the south. We then knocked off repair efforts for the night, taking turns with the pumping on two hour shifts. At midnight we set the reefed mizzen again; and at 5 AM after a hot breakfast and with Henry taking up the pumping full time I commenced an all out effort to isolate and contain the leaks in the port planking. I tore out more ceiling and in accordance with a plan I had worked out overnight I systematically laid out, manufactured and installed a whole new leak containment system. In order to develop significant counterpressure to the sea I had somehow to wedge much more tightly fitted gasket pads with better gasket material down against the planking. From some 1½x2" Norwegian pine I made longitudinals to span the area of damage and extend to sound frames on either end.

I manufactured and carefully fitted new plywood gasket covers, predrilling and counterinking for the screws. I invented some gasket cement out of left over contact cement and cotton fibers that I happened to have aboard (a good invention, by the way!). I removed my prior work, made up the gasket cement, applied the latter to the pads and screwed them down. I put my longitudinals, three in all, in place, bracketed to the frames with plywood U-clips so they would firmly back up the wedges. I then manufactured and rammed home the wedges. All of this is easier to describe than it was to do in the cramped space and by 4PM I was only just well started with the final installation. Henry had not left his pumping station and we had both reached a new level of exhaustion. We paused for a quick intake of rations and what did we hear overhead but a plane. I looked at the EPIRB lying in the bunk. The switch was on! Henry allowed as how he had checked to see if the light would work the afternoon before with negative results and had casually tossed it back in the bunk with the switch on. And to judge from the plane overhead it had worked, bless its soul. A moment later the plane flew over and waggled its wings. It was a sleek looking plane, something like a large executive jet but it had British Airforce markings. With hands somewhat atremble we turned on our VHF radio. This apparatus lit up allright but we got no response to our transmissions. We also displayed International code flags (We are in sinking condition). Henry had the presence of mind to disassemble a coaxial connector to the antenna that had been exposed to salt water at the foot of the mast, dry it and grease it and by God we could hear them calling us. It was a NIMROD aircraft called RESCUE 51. They were calm and cheerful. After an hour or so the aircraft reported that a rescue vessel was enroute and about 2½ hours off.

The breeze had by now dropped out almost entirely and the seas were abating. The water ingress was in no way abating. Henry kept on with the pumping and I kept on with my damage control efforts. I had at least forced the leaks to the frame boundaries and I was trying to devise a way to caulk them when about 7:30PM we were contacted by the master of the rescue vessel, CAST OTTER by name. He stated that he would be with us at 8PM or so and that he would make a lee for us with his starboard side. He wanted me to come alongside from his stern taking cognizance of the fact that his variable pitch propeller would still be turning. He enquired of our length and warned that although wind and sea had both markedly subsided my rigging would be in some jeopardy from his topside projections as the vessels rolled. I enquired as to his length - having in mind a 200 - 250' rescue tug with a nice big crane on it. He reported that his overall length was over 650'. I then did not know what to expect but allowed as how I could find his parallel middle body. At 8:15 we saw a large vessel rounding up to windward of us. It was a cargo liner loaded with containers. There was not a trace of a cargo boom or derrick unless one considered the stores crane tucked aft behind the deckhouse. Forty minutes later we were alongside, messengerlines were descending on our heads and down a Jacob's ladder were descending two burly figures - First Officer Ken Hunter and Seaman Fernando Varuzuay. Luckily the rolling was minimal but the pitching of COCKATOO along the wall-sided CAST OTTER was not only impressive but potentially fatal to anyone or anything that got in between. Hunter a thorough seaman with an ocean yacht racing background had a plan based on my previously transmitted description of the damage - fill the damaged bays with quick drying cement. To this end Fernando had already assumed my place in the forepeak - bailing like mad. The cement was already being mixed aboard ship. Henry was dispatched aboard CAST OTTER for a hot meal. I remained. On Henry's return I was treated to the same. On my return Hunter reported that he could not contain the leaks sufficiently for the cement to be effective and further Fernando had discovered a substantial flow from forward, the scarp in the stem no doubt. The nearest thing to a damage control pad was a rubber sheet from the hospital and that was too small. There was oakum, but calking there-with was not the answer. They did not have a portable, power driven pump that could be put aboard. Water was well over the floorboards again despite all of Fernando's vigorous bailing forward. First Officer Hunter suggested that I consult with Capt. Eric Williams, CAST OTTER's master and up the Jacob's ladder I went again enroute to the bridge. I knew in my heart what decision I was about to reach. I had had to consider and act in anticipation of that possibility before I first flicked the switch of the EPIRB the previous day. CAST OTTER could not lie there indefinitely. COCKATOO II could scarcely be towed by such a large vessel as CAST OTTER. We were out of the shipping lanes and ready access to other vessels. At that point in my thoughts I reached the bridge.



The Captain was most polite. What, he asked, was my plan? He noted that further gale force winds were predicted for that sector - scarcely a surprise to me. He confirmed my position which I had already plotted and suggested that the only possible course that I could take would be to run for Ireland. But even with calm weather that would require continuous pumping. What would happen to the ship in another gale even when running before it? He obviously wanted a decision out of me and was due one. What, I thought were my resources? Henry was practically out on his feet - even after a hot meal he appeared on the verge of total exhaustion. I was in no better shape. If we cast off from CAST OTTER we would continue to be in an emergency mode. Even with calm seas we would have no time to rest and recuperate. I was satisfied that acceptable repairs could only be made out of water. If we got in another gale and without rest our judgement would no doubt be impaired. If we tried to invoke another EPIRB crisis we might not come out of it so well and further it would be gratuitously insulting to the splendid system and tradition which we had taxed for us to do it again! The sea had inexorably found COCKATOO's weak point and would not hesitate to exploit it further even as it searched for Henry's and mine. Perhaps after 75 years of splendid sailing COCKATOO II deserved to rest with honor in somewhere between 1500 and 2000 fathoms of water of the Atlantic Abyss as opposed to further indignities of a roughly foreseeable nature. This mental review may have taken all of 30 seconds. I was her sole underwriter. There was nobody else to consult. So I asked Captain Williams a question. "In the event I decided to abandon ship would they help me strip her of her gear insofar as possible?" 'Yes indeed' he replied. "Alright" said I "we will strip her as best we can and abandon her". Never in my wildest dreams had I ever imagined that I could do this to my marvelous yacht but the decision was taken and there was no turning back.

When I returned to COCKATOO from the bridge a group of volunteers were already swarming aboard her. ENESTANDE, my precious cedar pram built by me in honor of my previous year's passage to Norway was already on CAST OTTER's deck. Off came spinnaker poles, mainsail, mizzen, storm jib, all the bagged sails, blankets, clothes (except for my duffel of very best, which went by the board), charts, sextants, instruments, radios, radio telephone, clocks, chronometer, books and weather facsimile machine. Off came my three speed winches and some of the Herreshoff cleats, The original Herreshoff Mainsheet winch was chopped out of the deck and up that went. We were going after rigging screws, freeze dried foods and much more when without warning the bow line parted. COCKATOO swung around with lightning speed - the after spring line catching the cap shroud of the aluminum mizzen mast with such impact that the mast was instantly shattered into three pieces as cleanly as if cut by giant knives. This I happened to see as I was kneeling in the cockpit removing the tiller. We now had a dangerous emergency on our hands. COCKATOO, held only by the stern line and at far too sharp a lead was plunging wildly aft of the ship's parallel midbody and in addition to eight men going adrift on a sinking derelict our main rigging was in vigorous contact with the ship's rail and hardware thereon with each surge. The Jacob's ladder was now 100 feet forward and there was no possibility of hauling 8 tons of waterlogged yacht forward to it. All thoughts of further salvage vanished and while the mate and I held the stern line with a tenuous turn around the one winch remaining on the after deck another Jacob's ladder was hastily lowered and the salvage crew ordered off. Henry grabbed a maul and went below to put a hole through her but I ordered him off. Ken Hunter then went up and this left only Fernando and myself aboard. She was now held by but the slenderest degree of security - two half hitches around the swivel of the main sheet block which was still on its horse. I mentioned for Fernando to go for the ladder. Instead he grabbed me and literally threw me against it, yelling "climb for you life old man". I did and he did. A moment later, 2356GMT to be exact, COCKATOO swung away at right angles to CAST OTTER. The latter's propeller was already turning ahead. Illuminated by the ship's flood lights and with her own cabin lights blazing and rolling as gracefully as a ballet dancer COCKATOO II had never looked more lovely. But it was a snapshot picture at best. By midnight the last pinprick of light from her had vanished into the dark night. She was but a memory - another midsummer night's dream.

A few minutes later the ship's radio officer kindly put me through to my dumfounded wife, Carol, in Norwell. There was a long silence from her as she absorbed the situation and then the single statement "there has been a death in the family".