Sailing is hot in the desert?

No it’s not a mirage. Since 1958, sailing enthusiasts in Arizona have been members of the Arizona Yacht Club.


The China Sea

The China Sea consists of two parts, the South China Sea (Chinese: Nan Hai) and the East China Sea (Chinese: Dong Hai), which connect through the shallow Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and mainland China.

The South China Sea is bounded on the west by the Asian mainland, on the south by a rise in the seabed between Sumatra and Borneo, and on the east by Borneo, the Philippines, and Taiwan. The sea’s northern boundary extends from the northernmost point of Taiwan to the coast of Fujian province, China. As the largest marginal sea of the western Pacific, it covers an area of about 1,423,000 square miles (3,685,000 square km) and has a mean depth of 3,478 feet (1,060 m). The major topographic feature of the South China Sea is a deep, rhombus-shaped basin in the eastern portion, with reef-studded shoal areas rising up steeply within the basin to the south and northwest. The deepest section, called the China Sea Basin, has a maximum depth of 16,457 feet (5,016 m). A broad, shallow shelf extends up to 150 miles (240 km) in width between the mainland and the northwestern side of the basin and includes the Gulf of Tonkin and Taiwan Strait. To the south, off southern Vietnam, the shelf narrows and connects with the Sundra Shelf, which is one of the largest sea shelves in the world. The Sundra Shelf covers the area between Borneo, Sumatra, and Malaysia, including the southern portion of the South China Sea.

The major rivers draining into the sea are the tributaries forming the Zhu (Pearl) River delta between Hong Kong and Macau, the Xi River, which enters near Macau, and the Red and Mekong rivers, which enter in Vietnam. Weather in the region is tropical and largely controlled by monsoon winds. Annual rainfall varies from about 80 inches (2,000 mm) to as much as 160 inches around the southern basin; summer typhoons are frequent. Monsoons also control the sea-surface currents as well as the exchange of water between the South China Sea and adjacent bodies.
I arrived on an American Airlines flight from New York at 1:40 PM. I don’t know what it is about the NYC to San Juan flight. I’ve taken the flight a number of times to reach the Caribbean hub of San Juan to catch a puddle jumper to the other islands. There always seems to be about 15 screaming babies on board. And they usually all sit in the rows directly in front and in back of me. Must be a FAA regulation on this flight. I was forced to rent the outrageously expensive $5 headphones to watch the abysmal movie “Meet Joe Black”. I don’t know which was worse, the blood curdling crying or the movie. Things could only get better.

After retrieving my luggage and a huge sail bag loaded with our new spinnaker, I ambled out and caught a taxi to the Antigua Yacht Club. There, on the dock, was Bill. I hadn’t seen Bill or Out of Bounds since December 1997 when I left Australia and flew back to the states. We caught up on things over a beer at the Last Lemming and then headed out to the boat.

Grasping the lifelines, I swung myself out of the dinghy and unto the deck. A rush of emotion swelled inside and it felt like I was home. A big hug and a kiss from Suzie and Elma brushed the flight troubles away. Also on board was Mick, Elma’s boyfriend. Elma, Suzie’s sister, and Mick had flown in from Australia. Mick was looking for work as crew on a sailboat after Sailing Week ended and Elma was joining Out of Bounds all the way back to the States. And of course, there was Lucy, the small white Lhasa Apso that Bill and Suzie adopted in Australia.

I stowed my gear down below and we all sat on the deck talking about the coming week. Bill had managed to get tickets to the big Mount Gay party that evening over on Galleon Beach. This was extremely important as the tickets entitled the holder to the most sought after baseball caps in the sailing world; a red Mount Gay Antigua Sailing Week cap. About this time, Alex slid alongside in a water taxi and the group was complete. Off we went for the first of many official ASW parties.

After taking the dinghy back in, we ran across Lyster and Sheena Denny with their kids Tom and Jess in tow. We had first met them and their yacht “Truant” back in early 1997 as we crossed the South Pacific. As Out of Bounds continued West, Truant and Out of Bounds would bounce off each other in various locales. In the cruising community, this makes for lifetime friends and strong bonds. We all hopped a cab and headed off.

The night passed quickly and we called it an early night, as there was still much to do on Out of Bounds to get her ready to race.
Frigate

In modern navies, frigates are used to protect other warships and merchant-marine ships, especially as anti-submarine warfare (ASW) combatants for amphibious expeditionary forces, underway replenishment groups, and merchant convoys. But ship classes dubbed “frigates” have also more closely resembled corvettes, destroyers, cruisers and even battleships.

The term “frigate” (Italian: fregata; Spanish/Catalan/Portuguese/Sicilian: fragata; Dutch: “fregat”) originated in the Mediterranean in the late 15th century, referring to a lighter galleass type ship with oars, sails and a light armament, built for speed and maneuverability.

In 1583, during the Eighty Years’ War, Habsburg Spain recovered the Southern Netherlands from the rebellious Dutch. This soon led to the occupied ports being used as bases for privateers, the Dunkirkers, to attack the shipping of the Dutch and their allies. To achieve this they developed small, maneuverable, sail-only vessels that came to be referred to as frigates. Because most regular navies required ships of greater endurance than the Dunkirker frigates could provide, the useful term ‘frigate’ was soon applied less exclusively to any relatively fast and elegant sail-only ship, such that much later even the mighty English Sovereign of the Seas was described as ‘a delicate frigate’ after modifications in 1651.

The navy of the Dutch Republic was the first regular navy to build the larger ocean-going frigates. The Dutch navy had three principal tasks in the struggle against Spain: to protect Dutch merchant ships at sea, to blockade the ports of Spanish-held Flanders to damage trade and halt enemy privateering, and to fight the Spanish fleet and prevent troop landings. The first two tasks required speed, shallowness of draft for the shallow waters around the Netherlands, and the ability to carry sufficient supplies to maintain a blockade. The third task required heavy armament, sufficient to fight against the Spanish fleet. The first of these larger battle-capable frigates were built around 1600 at Hoorn in Holland.[2]

By the later stages of the Eighty Years War the Dutch had switched entirely from the heavier ships still used by the English and Spanish to the lighter frigates, carrying around 40 guns and weighing around 300 tons.

The effectiveness of the Dutch frigates became most visible in the Battle of the Downs in 1639, triggering most other navies, especially the English, to adopt similar innovations. The fleets built by the Commonwealth of England in the 1650s generally consisted of ships described as ‘frigates’, the largest of which were two-decker ‘great frigates’ of the third rate. Carrying 60 guns, these vessels were as big and capa-