



Stephanie Boothby

By Stephanie Boothby

Bubba Sails Alone

This story—the first Bubba piece—was originally written and published in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune in 1988. It first appeared in Southwinds in January 1994. It has also been published nationally in Sailing World.

Once in a while you bump into a sailor who marches to the beat of a different drummer. While most sailors seem to prefer the company of others on their boats, some do not. Bubba Whartz is one of the latter.

Bubba Whartz sails solo all the time. Whartz, who lives aboard his twenty-eight-foot sailboat *Right Guard*, hasn't sailed with another crew member on his boat in about six years.

"I prefer sailing alone," Bubba says in his thick Alabama accent, "because other people just get in my way on the boat. The last time I had a lady on board for an afternoon sail she got all bent out of shape when several cockroaches came out of hiding to look her over. I don't know why she was so touchy about it. She didn't even consider all the trouble I went to to get rid of the rats."

Whartz's boat is one he made himself, out of concrete. Actually the process is called building with ferro-cement. What happens in construction is that a frame of wire and reinforcing rods is first formed in the shape of the boat's hull. Cement is then forced through the frame, smoothed out, and allowed to dry. The method, while cheap, hasn't quite caught on in a big way in yachting circles. However, Bubba's old and good friend, Howard, who used to drive a

cement truck when a section of Florida's Interstate 75 was under construction for the first time, had an extra load of concrete one day. It was close to quitting time and Howard offered the load to Bubba, rather than take it all the way to I-75. Bubba scared up some chicken wire he had around his place, and pretty soon he had himself a boat started.

Right Guard is distinctive in a number of ways. Because of the short time element before Howard's load of cement set up in the truck, there was no time to pay attention to the fairness of the hull. *Right Guard* is undoubtedly one of the few boats extant which has large pebbles imbedded in its hull surface. Under sail, the turbulence caused by the pebbles makes the boat gurgle. When it moves through the water, *Right Guard* sounds a bit like a toilet flushing. On the other hand, the pebbles make for an effective, if unorthodox, nonskid deck surface.

"Most things in life are a trade-off," Whartz says.

Whartz, who lives aboard, has managed to create his own marine ecosystem on the bottom of his boat. By letting marine slime, barnacles and grass grow on *Right Guard*, Whartz has attracted a number of small fish, which feed on the boat's marine growth. Larger fish are lured by the small fish. Whartz occasionally catches one of the larger fish for dinner.

"Yep, I've got life made now," Whartz bragged as he pulled a plug of chewing tobacco out of his overalls pocket and inserted it in his mouth. "Being entirely self-sufficient has always been a goal of mine. I used to get swarms of mosquitoes hatching out in my boat's bilge. Now, I just let some of the diesel fuel from the engine leak into the bilge and that keeps the mosquitoes down a bunch."

The interior of Whartz's vessel is interesting. The cabin has a gray-and-white speckled motif, as a result of great splotches of mildew which have colonized on the cabin's painted surface.

"I've kind of gotten used to the color scheme," Whartz says. "Once you realize that it doesn't do any good to fight mildew, it's easy to live with."

When Whartz sails offshore, he uses a self-steering mechanism he designed himself.

“It’s made out of PVC pipe. PVC is good because it doesn’t rust. Besides that, it’s light. I have never had to sail through a storm with it, but it worked just fine on a week-long trip I took from Big Sarasota Pass to Egmont Key (fifteen miles), up at the mouth of Tampa Bay. I carry a few sections of pipe with me on deck when I go on long trips like that one,” Whartz says. He has a several thirty-foot sections of 1½-inch schedule 40 PVC tied to the starboard rail of *Right Guard*.

Whartz says living alone on the boat isn’t difficult. “I don’t mind the solitude. I have my comic books and all. I used to have a cat, but after it had lived on board for a few months it jumped overboard, swam to shore and disappeared. And all this time I thought cats hated water and didn’t like to swim.”

The moisture on *Right Guard* has presented some vexing problems for Whartz. He stocked his boat with a formidable supply of canned goods about a year ago, after taking advantage of a sale at a discount grocer. However, the moisture loosened the glue holding the labels to the cans, and now Whartz does not know which food is in what can.

“They all look the same to me,” he admits. “Sometimes I get a beef stew. Other times I get cat food. It’s like Christmas every time I open a can. The only real trouble I’ve ever had was when I thought I was putting syrup on my pancakes one morning and found out that it was engine oil. I realized then that I had put Karo Syrup in the engine’s crankcase a couple of days before.”

Some people are just born to the sea; it comes natural.

Bubba Whartz Involved in Jet Ski Incident

Once in a while you run into a sailor who marches to the beat of a different drummer. Bubba Whartz is one.

Whartz, who lives aboard his twenty-eight-foot sailboat *Right Guard*, anchored out in a cove in the Sarasota area, has some unusual ideas about boating in general, but mostly he just likes to be left alone.

His ferro-cement sloop was made from some leftover concrete from Interstate 75, though Whartz has disclaimed personal responsibility for the roadway's subsequent deterioration in the Sarasota/Bradenton corridor.

Whartz recently moved *Right Guard* from its customary anchorage because of an altercation with some fellow yachtsmen. He agreed to talk about the incident only on the condition that his current whereabouts not be revealed.

We met in a waterfront bistro on the mainland. Whartz was, as usual, attired in his overalls and wearing his customary baseball cap with the red and white Peterbilt emblem on it.

Fishing a chew of Red Man out of his overalls pocket and biting off a hunk, and asking me if I'd order him a beer, Whartz said he had heard that there may be a gang of outlaw Jet Ski enthusiasts looking for him.

"I've heard that they all ride together in a pack," Whartz went on. "Their Jet Skis have high handle bars on them and are painted black. The guys who ride them all have long hair. Most of them have tattoos on their arms and backs. Some have beards they never trim. They are supposed to be a tough-looking gang, at least from what I've heard."

"Why are they looking for you?" I asked.

Whartz said he'd gotten tired of being buzzed by Jet Skiers and he had taken matters into his own hands.

"When the winds began to die out late one afternoon," Whartz related, "those Jet Skis came out about the same time the mosquitoes did. They both buzz around and are a big nuisance. One of the reasons I live on my boat is because I don't like a lot of noise. A month or so ago—it was on a Sunday morning—I was enjoying a cup of coffee and the Sunday paper in the cockpit when a Jet Skier started using my boat as a slalom pole. He'd zip by *Right Guard's* stern and then turn as tight as he could. The racket was disturbing, to say the least, and his wake rocked my boat."

Whartz said he tried to get the Jet Skier to slow down so he could tell the man that his close proximity to *Right Guard* was a big annoyance and to please take his water craft elsewhere. Using hand signals and waving his arms proved useless, Whartz said. The Jet Skier returned a universally understood hand signal of his own and continued to zoom around *Right Guard*.

About this time the waitress brought Whartz his beer. He took a huge gulp from the quart bottle, smacked his lips, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and continued his story.

"I was really steamed about this guy, but there wasn't anything I could do about it," Whartz said. "He was out of control, of course, and totally out of reach. But when he came back with four more friends, and they all buzzed me in formation, I decided it was time to get serious. So, while they were out of sight, probably back on the beach someplace drinking beer before another strafing run on *Right Guard*, I got out a couple hundred feet of extra three-eighths-inch anchor line and swam ashore with one end of it, which I tied to a big Australian pine. I left the line real slack so it was a couple of feet under the surface of the water. Then I swam back out to the boat, where I wrapped the other end on one of my primary winches."

Whartz had a grin on his face as he related what happened next.

“I just knew those guys would be back,” he said. “And they were. They had a full head of steam on when they came into view from around the corner of the cove. They were lined up five abreast, like some kind of nutso Jet Ski demonstration team, and on they came. When they got even with the bow of my boat on the port side, close in and heading aft, I pulled the line taut.

“Cleaned all of them right off their Jet Skis like five crows off a farmyard fence. Three of the Jet Skis collided and were disabled. One went ashore and hit a tree. All five of those guys got rope burns from the nylon line. I know the salt water felt real good on the rope burns. They shouted and cursed at me. But they didn’t come back.

“I’ll never forget the look in their eyes when that line came out of the water. They knew what was coming, but it was too late for anyone to do something about it. It was just beautiful.”

“What about the outlaw Jet Ski guys? Where do they fit in?” I asked.

“One of the guys that I anchor-lined, I’ve heard, had a brother who is a member of a gang of Jet Skiers that are the waterborne equivalent of the Hell’s Angels. They show up on weekends at various lakes and beaches, churn peaceful waters into a froth, get drunk, and make lots of noise. Those are the ones who are supposed to be looking for me. I don’t know if they really are. However, I’m lying low for a while. I’ve moved my boat to another place. I’m not going to say where.

“Like they say in all the literature and in all the boating safety classes, you just can’t be too careful when you’re boating.”

As Whartz got up to leave he reminded me to leave a large tip for the waitress when I paid for his beer. “I might want to come back here some time,” he said.

He ambled toward the door, his left hand clenched around the quart bottle of suds. Then he stopped. He looked back at me.

“Know the difference between a Jet Ski and a vacuum cleaner?” he asked loudly.

“No,” I responded.

“The location of the dirt bag,” said Whartz, smiling to himself as he turned on his heel and strode out the door.

Bubba Whartz Recalls 1988 Olympics Expulsion

Once in a while you bump into a sailor who marches to the beat of a different drummer. Bubba Whartz is one of those types of people. Whartz, who lives aboard his twenty-eight-foot sailboat *Right Guard*, anchored out in a cove in the Sarasota area, has some novel ideas about boating in general. His ferro-cement sloop, for example, made from some leftover concrete from Interstate 75.

I met Whartz on the beach one day. We talked some about the Kerrigan/Hardy contretemps, which was so much in the news at the time. It reminded me of a mysterious problem Whartz had with the Olympics back in 1988. The summer Olympics were held in Korea (the southern one) that year, and the Olympic yachting venue was Pusan. Whartz apparently had an unfortunate time in the Far East.

Though it didn't hit the major papers, Whartz's reputation as a Corinthian yachtsman was sullied when he was expelled from the Olympics and from Korea. As a result, Whartz is quite touchy about anything having to do with the Olympics, even winter Olympics.

"Those officials take all the fun out of everything," Whartz complained, expelling a squirt of tobacco juice at a fiddler crab that had gotten too close to where we were standing.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You deaf or something?" Whartz queried.

"No, I'm not," I said. "You've never talked publicly about the 1988 Olympics and what went wrong over there."

"You got that right. And I'm not going to start now," exclaimed Whartz, stalking off along the beach with his

hands in his overalls pockets. Even if he wouldn't talk, he had succeeded in getting my curiosity up.

From what I was able to piece together from several interviews and phone calls to Korea, the story went pretty much like this: After unsuccessfully competing in an exhibition race in a *Buccaneer 27*, which Whartz and others had hoped to get classified as a one-design Olympic yachting class, Whartz was selected for random postrace drug testing.

He failed the test. The lab report showed Whartz's urine contained significant amounts of methyl ethyl ketone, ethyl alcohol, methanol, Budweiser, and navel lint.

"It was a bad deal," Whartz was quoted as shouting to the crush of yachting press as he was escorted by security personnel from the Olympic Yachting Center near Pusan and put aboard a freight-hauling C-47 for Japan.

"Some guy handed me a bottle of OB beer after I finished the last race and I drank it. It must have been some plot to discredit me and the entire *Buccaneer 27* class," he was quoted as saying before a security guard clamped a hand over Whartz's mouth.

Olympic officials in Korea are still a bit tight-lipped about the incident, saying only that it was apparent that Whartz's use of various harmful chemicals to improve performance had not been a recent occurrence.

"I remember the incident well. The people at the testing lab in Seoul were astounded that Mr. Whartz was still alive," said Kim Jon Park, a member of the IOC who now lives in New York. "When they took the top off the bottle to begin the tests, some of the paint peeled off the wall in the lab. And after they completed the tests, they had to dispose of the remainder of the sample in a toxic waste dump."

Whartz and his good friend, Roscoe, had not fared well in the several races in which they had sailed in their borrowed *Buccaneer 27*. Though no one was able to confirm it, speculation abounded that both Whartz and Roscoe were racing with a couple of thousand extra pounds of American goods aboard, goods they had obtained from various American army

post exchanges (PXs) and which they were selling, after dark, on the local black market in the Pusan area.

Roscoe (last name unknown) could not be reached for comment on this story. He has been in Columbia the last six months. Attempts to reach him at his hotel in Cali failed. A room clerk said he had checked out without paying his bar or room bill. Sources at the hotel said Roscoe was last seen on a shaded side street making a large purchase of fake Rolex watches.

Contacted at his office in Sarasota recently, Whartz's personal physician, trainer, and attorney, Dr. Ivan Fealgoode, Esq., said Whartz had been a victim of discrimination in Korea.

"I'd had Bubba tested time and time again here in the States," Fealgoode affirmed. "We beat every one of them over here. So there just is no way they could have caught him over there. If you ask me, it was a bad rap."

Fealgoode said the controversy surrounding Whartz had carried over to Whartz's only post-Olympics personal appearance contract in the Sarasota area.

"We had a commitment from the Blue Moon Bar for Whartz to be at the place between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M. on a Saturday afternoon," Fealgoode said. "They had guaranteed my client \$50 and all we could drink just for showing up. But they canceled without explanation after hearing about Bubba's difficulties in Pusan. We sued the International Olympic Committee for damages, but the suit is hung up in the courts someplace.

"The IOC sure makes it hard for a guy to make big bucks out of amateur sports these days," Fealgoode muttered.

Bubba's Unusual Sailing Trip

It was back in 1988, I seem to recall, that newspapers around the country, on two successive days, published stories about two separate, unconnected events dealing with people doing unusual things. The stories fell into the “human interest” category and were meant to show us, one might assume, that people with determination and a certain amount of skill can persevere, no matter what the odds.

One story was about Tristan Jones. Back then Tristan Jones had one leg. Then he had no legs. Then he passed away.

Anyway, the story said that Tristan Jones, sixty-three years old at the time, a one-legged sailor had managed—with the help of an elephant, four Thai teenagers, and some soldiers—to get his sailboat across the Kra Isthmus of Thailand. “One-Legged Sailor First to Cross Isthmus” said the headline on the story. By voyaging up one river, dragging his boat over land for a while, and then putting it in another river, Jones skipped doing what countless other around-the-world sailors had done before him, that is, sail around the southern tip of the isthmus.

Then, the very next day, we were treated to a story about a ten-year-old boy's cross-country flight from California to Fort Lauderdale. Not old enough to hold a pilot's license and not big enough to see over the dash of the airplane without a pillow to sit on, Christopher Lee Marshall made the trip with his flight instructor, who was officially in charge of the plane all the way.

The article quoted his mother as saying she was anxious about her son's flight.

“He’s the only one I’ve got. He’s my ... top gun, and I didn’t want to lose him. It’s scary having a ten-year-old cross America like this. I haven’t slept well at all,” Christopher’s mother, Gail, was quoted as saying upon her son’s arrival in Fort Lauderdale.

The day after these two stories appeared, and after I had caught up with him on shore and offered to buy the coffee, I checked with famous solo sailor and live-aboard Bubba Whartz on his reaction to these amazing feats of daring. Whartz, who lives on his ferro-cement sailboat *Right Guard*, and anchors his boat a ways off shore, hadn’t even heard of them.

“You know, the boy who delivers my paper never can get it all the way out to the boat most days,” Whartz said. “It’s a good thing he packs in it that little baggy, because, unless he’s got a stiff following wind, the paper just splashes in close to the boat. If the tide’s running, it’s liable to float off. I think on the days you said those stories appeared in the paper the tide was running out. I missed the papers and the stories.”

I told Whartz about Jones’ isthmus crossing in Thailand. Whartz was unimpressed.

“You know, if he’d had two legs it wouldn’t have even made the papers,” Whartz scoffed. “I mean, what kind of a person would take a sailboat up one river and down another when he could be sailing free all the time by detouring around the isthmus. I mean, sailing is hard enough. Taking your boat up one river and down another in a foreign country, and getting it hauled around by an elephant in the bargain, is madness. Do you think he had insurance for that?”

I allowed as I didn’t know much about insurance, especially as it related to claims involving elephants in Thailand.

“Besides, Jones is a writer,” Whartz said, rolling his eyes, “and you know how nuts writers are. He’ll come back with a chapter or two for another book from that one.”

Whartz was equally unimpressed with the ten-year-old’s cross-country flight.

“If the kid had done it on his own, it would have been okay,” Whartz laughed. “But he had his instructor there all the time. It was just another meaningless media event. Can

you imagine his mother telling him, 'Well, Chris, it's up to you. You just go out and put the whole package together.' Of course not. She had to be involved from the very start."

I asked Whartz if he had ever been on an unusual sailing trip himself.

"I'm glad you asked that," he responded. "I was on a very unusual trip just last week. Want me to describe it for you?"

I assented.

"It was on Sarasota Bay," Whartz said. "The wind was blowing out of the east at about ten knots. I took a lady friend for a sail. We went from one end of the bay to the other in less than an hour. Then we turned around and sailed the boat back to where I keep it anchored."

"That's it?" I asked.

"That's it," Whartz responded.

I said that, to me, the trip sounded normal. Boring even.

"Not at all," Whartz said. "You know how nothing ever goes right on a sailboat? You know, there's either not enough wind or there's too much. Or something always breaks. Or the diesel won't start because there's algae in the fuel. Or the batteries are dead. Or a sheet breaks. Or an instrument won't work. Or a sail tears. Or something needs to be fixed. Nothing ever goes completely right on a sailboat."

"Well, everything went right on this trip. The wind was perfect. My lady friend was warm, exciting, and lovely. The food we had on board tasted terrific. We had enough ice. We had frosty drinks. And nothing broke down at all."

"For a sailor, friend, that's a most unusual voyage. Rarely happens. And you can take that to the bank," Whartz said. "You get the check. See you later."

He was pulling a pouch of Red Man from his overalls pocket and putting his cap with the Peterbilt emblem on it back on his head as he headed for the door of the coffee shop.

Bubba Whartz Remembers Mother's Day

Once in a while you bump into a sailor who marches to the beat of a different drummer. Bubba Whartz is one of those types of people.

Whartz, who lives aboard his twenty-eight-foot sailboat *Right Guard*, anchored out in a cove in the Sarasota area, has some novel approaches to yachting. His ferro-cement sloop was made from some leftover concrete from Interstate 75, though Whartz disclaims any responsibility for the roadway's rapid deterioration.

"Howard was the guy what dropped off the cement late on a Friday afternoon," Whartz remembered. "He didn't want to drive out to the construction site, it being so near to quitting time and also so near to happy hour at his favorite saloon. So he gave the load to me. I looked around the place where I was living back then and found some chicken wire. That's how I got my boat."

Right Guard is distinctive in a number of ways. *Right Guard* is undoubtedly one of the few boats extant that has large pebbles imbedded in its hull surface. Under sail, the turbulence caused by the pebbles makes the boat gurgle and *Right Guard* sounds a bit like a toilet flushing as it moves. On the other hand, the pebbles make for an effective, if unorthodox, nonskid deck surface. "When you get right down to it, most things in life are a trade-off," says Whartz.

Fishing a chew of Red Man out of his overalls pocket and pushing the hat with the red and white Peterbilt emblem it back on his head just a tad further, Bubba recalled for several of us gathered at a local waterfront bar the time he

treated his mother to her most memorable Mother's Day several years ago.

"I was flat broke at the time," Whartz said. "The Saturday before Mother's Day, my mom dropped in on me from where she and my dad were living at the time, up in Alabama. I didn't expect her. I hadn't even sent her a card. But there she was, standing on the beach, waving at me with a scarf. Of course I had to go pick her up."

Whartz said he picked her up in his inflatable dinghy. The dinghy had a bad air leak in one tube and Whartz rowed it with both hands while pumping with the bellows inflation pump one foot. It was pump twice and stroke once, a regular tattoo of locomotion and preservation Whartz had down to a science. By the time the two of them got back to the *Right Guard*, Whartz's mother was so tired from pumping air into the leaky tube she said she needed to rest.

"She fell asleep almost immediately," Whartz said. "That gave me time to think of something to do for her the next day. I knew she would be disappointed if I didn't take her out to eat on Mother's Day, but I also knew I didn't have the money to do it."

Whartz came up with a plan. While his mother was still resting, he went back to shore and made a free telephone call to 1-800-BE-ALERT, the number that U.S. Customs requests concerned citizens use when turning in drug smugglers.

"When I got back to the boat, my mother was awake and we made dinner from the last can of beans I had on the boat," Whartz continued. "Mother had brought a half gallon of wine with her as a present. We finished that, too. I must have gotten overserved because at some time during the evening I told her of the lavish brunch I had planned to take her to the next day. I laid it on pretty thick about the champagne, the Nova Scotia salmon sliced thin, the eggs Benedict, and the mimosas. She was really looking forward to it and she told me before she fell asleep that I was her most favorite person in the whole world."

The Whartzes, mother and son, slept well that night. They

got up late the next morning. It was while they were having their second cup of coffee and discussing brunch that a boatload of U.S. Customs officials pulled up beside *Right Guard* and announced that they were going to search the boat for drugs.

“They were very nice,” Whartz said. “But they were also very efficient. They looked in every nook and cranny of my boat and it took them hours. They found a screwdriver I’d lost in the bilge several months earlier. They saw a lot of cockroaches. And they irritated my mom. She was astounded at the very thought of being aboard a vessel which was suspected of running drugs. She was also quite vocal about having to miss the brunch which she said her son, me, had planned for that very morning, Mother’s Day, of all days. The inspectors finished their search about 1:30 P.M., just a short time after the restaurant where we were going to have brunch closed. Mother was heartbroken, and she let the Customs guys know about it in no uncertain terms. She wasn’t so much angry as she was sad. I think I even saw a few tears.

“Well, they were regular guys and they could see we weren’t criminals. So they all chipped in and bought us lunch that day at another restaurant, even nicer than the one we had expected to go to. Mother and I had a super time. We ate hearty. We had mimosas, and eggs Benedict, and Bloody Marys. My mother still remembers it as the most exciting Mother’s Day she ever had.”

Whartz said that the Customs guys even dropped them off at the restaurant and apologized for the unnecessary invasion of the Whartz’s day.

“They said they were just doing their job,” Whartz concluded. “You know, acting on an anonymous tip that proved to be groundless.”

Bubba Has Legal Problems

It was a hot June afternoon with a chance of rain when I ran into Bubba Whartz recently, outside the Sarasota County Courthouse. Bubba was in a highly agitated state. He chewed vigorously on a plug of Red Man and had his red hat, the one with the Peterbilt emblem on it, pulled down tight over his head.

Whartz, hands deep in the side pockets of his overalls, greeted me with a cursory nod and launched a squirt of tobacco juice toward the gutter.

“What’s the problem?” I asked, not entirely sure whether or not I was venturing onto thin emotional ice.

“Trixie LaMonte is the problem,” growled Whartz. “I should have never taken her sailing.”

“Trixie LaMonte, the exotic dancer?” I queried.

“That’s the one,” Whartz shot back darkly.

“You took her sailing?”

“Yeah, in March. Now she is suing me for interfering with an advantageous business relationship, restraint of trade, gross negligence, simple assault, battery, malfeasance, misfeasance, and nonfeasance.”

“Tell me what happened,” I asked, because now I really wanted to know.

“Like I said,” Bubba began, “we went sailing. And sometimes women and sailboats just don’t mix. Anyway, I met her one night where she works, and I thought any woman who has moves like she does would do just fine on a sailboat. So, while she was dancing right in front of me, and I was stuffing five-dollar bills into her britches, I asked her if she would

like to go yachting the next day. She agreed. I told her I'd pick her up on the beach at 10 A.M. the next morning and I told her where to be.

"I got up kind of early the next day to see if I couldn't shoo some of the cockroaches off the boat before I went in to pick her up, but it wasn't any use. They just looked at me like I was nuts. They have gotten used to living with me for so long that nothing scares them much.

"Anyway, Trixie was there on the beach just like she said she would be, so I launched my inflatable dinghy and went in after her. I think you know that I've had a problem for some time with keeping that dinghy of mine inflated because of an air leak. I have to pump the foot pump while I row it. Anyhow, I made it to shore okay, and when I got a good close look at Trixie my heart almost stopped. She had on a light-blue spandex one-piece bodysuit. It was lovely. She was lovely. I was dumbstruck.

"Well, I got her into the inflatable and started back for the boat. We were about halfway there—me rowing with both arms and pumping with one foot—when Trixie put her arms around my neck, snuggled up against my back, and told me she always thought that sailing was real sexy.

"I guess that I must have stopped rowing and pumping at the same time, because the next thing I knew we were sinking and there was no way, me being distracted and all, that I could stop it. The inflatable pretty much deflated and we had to swim for the boat.

"When Trixie got out of that cold water and up onto the boat in that one-piece bodysuit, it was better than all the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issues I'd ever seen. And she wasn't even mad."

Whartz said he went below, got a couple of towels, and came back on deck with the intention of devoting serious personal attention to drying Trixie off, but she demurred. She'd take care of it herself, she said. Would down in the cabin be okay?

"You know," Whartz went on, "I never even thought about

those cockroaches. Trixie, she primped her way down the companionway ladder and into the cabin, but I guess her eyes were not used to the gloom. So, she didn't see the cockroaches until she had slithered out of her bodysuit and was toweling off. From what I can gather, one of the roaches landed on her foot while she was in a state of undress. I immediately knew what the problem was when she let out her first scream. She hollered a couple of times more before she appeared on deck in her birthday suit, dancing around like she's just stepped on a nest of fire ants, and screaming all the time.

"I tried to grab her but she was still wet and slippery. All I succeeded in doing was throwing her off balance. She fell and landed, bottom first, on the port primary two-speed self-tailing winch. That must have hurt, because she let out another yell, jumped up and raced forward along the port side.

"You know how I always tell people to wear shoes on *Right Guard*? Trixie wasn't wearing anything, much less shoes. Anyway, she'd gone about five feet when she stubbed her toe on a chain plate. She was reaching down to grab her foot when she fell backwards over the lifeline and into the water. I tried to get her to come back aboard, but she wasn't having anything to do with sailboats anymore. She screamed a few phrases in my direction and swam to shore, where she found a discarded plastic garbage bag, covered most of herself up, and disappeared down the street."

"That's an amazing story," I said. "But how did it end up in court?"

"Well, Trixie was hitchhiking when she was offered a ride by some lawyer. He asked her why she was dressed in a plastic bag and, on the way home, she told him her story. He took her case, for no fee. *Pro bono*, it's called. He had pictures taken of the bruise she got on her bottom. He told her that she couldn't work with a bruise like that. And she had a sore foot, so she couldn't dance. And they sued me."

"What are you going to do about it?" I asked.

“I’m going to stay out of lounges where they have exotic dancers who have never been on sailboats before,” Whartz said, looking at me like I was slightly cracked before he turned and walked away, hands in his pockets, shaking his head.