

BUBBA WHARTZ
Stories

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Morgan Stinemetz

Foreword by Claiborne S. Young



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With the exception of the cover art, the artwork for this book was courteously provided by the fine students of Leslie DeZiel's eighth-grade art class at Saint Stephens Episcopal School in Bradenton, Florida. The class totaled sixteen students, and while not all the students in the class had their work selected for this book, all submitted drawings.

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To Norm Hale and Prentiss Seymour, two friends and sailors with a keen sense of timing and language. It is through your intellect that so much of what is in this book was filtered. Thanks, guys.

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Foreword

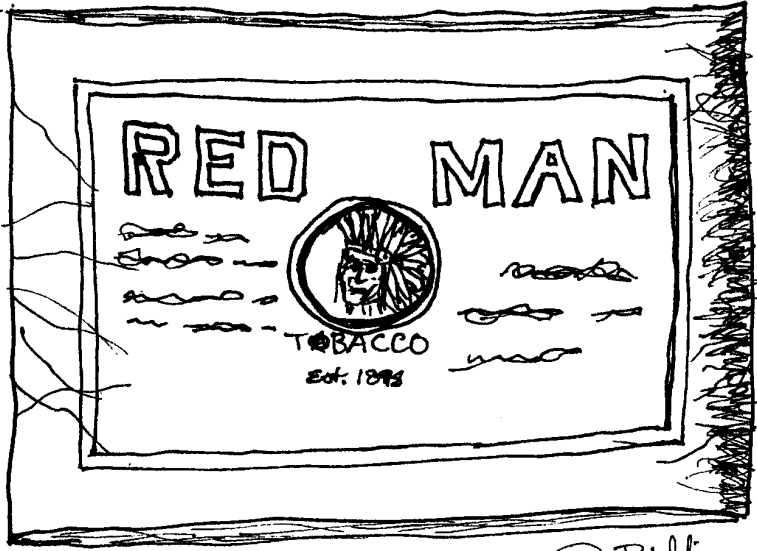
I had the good fortune to become a devoted reader of Morgan Stinemetz's weekly sailing column in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* long before we became friends. Morgan was (and is) the one who keeps me informed about changes and cruising news for the waters of Sarasota Bay, the Manatee River, Tampa Bay, Bradenton, and the surrounding region.

Morgan's extraordinary talent as a nautical writer was there for all to see in each column. However, it was not until some years later, when he began publishing his incredibly popular adventures of Bubba Whartz in *Southwinds* magazine, that Morgan's predilection for nautical humor became apparent.

More recently, Morgan has become a fast and much valued friend, as well as this writer's co-author for the soon-to-be-published *Cruising the Florida Keys*. This was the first occasion I've ever had to work with a coauthor, and Morgan has smoothed the way ever so peacefully. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with him.

I deeply commend the various Bubba Whartz columns collected for the first time in this book-length work to my fellow cruisers. Perusing these pages will, I have no doubt, make your time on the water, or even cruising in your armchair, a happier and far richer experience. All of us who participate in the cruising lifestyle can be very thankful indeed that Morgan Stinemetz somehow dreamed up the inimitable Bubba Whartz. Let's all hope that Bubba will continue to experience his unusual life on the water for many years to come.

—Claiborne S. Young



DBaillie

By Douglas Baillie

Introduction

The stories in the book are not entirely true. On the other hand, all the Bubba Whartz's episodes have parts of raw truth in them. Sailors will recognize what is fact and what is fancy, even though the line between reality and fiction is sometimes hard to determine.

Personally, I discovered sailing through Michael Winston, a friend of mine from my youthful, reckless days in Washington, D.C. In 1976, Winston and some other guys in his sailing syndicate were in St. Petersburg with a new boat they had taken delivery on that winter. It was a Heritage One Ton, built in the Tampa Bay area. I was living nearby, in Bradenton, Florida, so Winston invited me up to sail around Tampa Bay on the boat while he and the other guys discussed the new sails with the Hood Sails rep. The boat was entered in the Southern Ocean Racing Conference (SORC) that year.

They even turned the tiller over to me for a while so that they could all get together and talk. What impressed me most was the civility present on that boat. People actually *talked*. They didn't have to shout. There was no motor to drown out social interaction. I knew that this was something I wanted to do.

Within a couple of weeks I had shed myself of my motorboat and purchased a used, 1973, twenty-seven-foot Ericson sloop, *Reefer*. I still have that boat and sail it regularly.

Over the years, I have made nearly every mistake known to sailing. Fortunately, they are mostly in my past. In the time I have been skipper of my own boat I have come to understand that sailing is always a contradiction in terms. It

is lazy; it is frantic. It is short sails and long cruises. It is easy and it is amazingly complex. Best of all, sailing is never the same—day to day, hour to hour, minute to minute.

I have been the sailing columnist for the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* since about 1984, and the original Bubba half dozen episodes appeared there. The local sailing folks enjoyed Bubba a great deal. Additionally, the first Bubba story was also printed in *Sailing World* a number of years back. In 1994, I was approached by Doran Cushing, the publisher of *Southwinds*, a southeastern sailing freebie magazine. Doran wanted Bubba for his magazine. Oddly, I had been getting a bit of flak from one of the sports editors at the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* about the Bubba stories. He was a golfer; he didn't understand. So, when Cushing said he would take all the Bubba stories I could turn out and print them in *Southwinds*, I went with it.

Some of the episodes of Bubba's adventures are time sensitive, and I hope that the reader will recall the timeframe in which they were written. Topical humor can fade away like a morning mist on a sunny day when times change. It is terribly perishable.

Bubba's character—some would argue that his most obvious trait is an *absence* of character—is sort of a compilation of mannerisms I have found in sailors whom I have come across over the years. Certainly, Bubba has a devious nature ... just like the real skipper who heard about a friend who foiled a cocaine importation scheme and, when he had the story down pat, went down and claimed a \$5,000 reward from U.S. Customs for something he had nothing to do with. Bubba is also an innocent. He gets himself into predicaments that only someone with a devout sense of righteousness would approach in the first place. He is oblivious. He is vengeful. He is loyal. He is generous. He is cheap. He is a lot like the rest of us, an amalgamation of character flaws that nearly sink him time and time again. However, Bubba always seems to come back, indomitable, unbowed. You have to admire his spirit.

I've laughed a lot while creating the Bubba Whartz stories which comprise this book. It has been great fun, a labor of love. I hope that when you read this book, it makes you smile or laugh out loud.

Bubba would like that.

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