

Copies of two magazine articles follow:

1. Cruising Helmsman Magazine, Oct 2017 (1 page)
2. Fremantle Sailing Club Blue Water Bulletin magazine, Aug-Sep 2013 (3 pages)



Pachuca in Papeete.

Cruiser of the year nominee: Robert Morales

RECENTLY, Fremantle Sailing Club selected club member Robert Morales as its own 'cruiser of the year' for 2017.

It chose Robert because he took the leap of adventure from a life of academia to the wide blue sea in mid-life and undertook and completed the ultimate challenge: a circumnavigation, including the rounding of Cape Horn.

His blog is now used by hundreds of cruisers for the wealth of information he has shared. Since returning to land he continues to participate and to encourage and facilitate others to enjoy the pleasures and survive the dangers of the cruising life.

Morales was 42 years of age in 1985 when he became

serious about learning to sail. His next-door neighbour loaned a book about a complete novice who sailed his tiny boat from England to Seattle via the Panama Canal. Robert was attracted to this story's sense of freedom, anonymity, self-reliance, exploration and intimacy with the ocean in all of its moods.

Morales taught himself to sail aboard his first boat, a wooden gaff rigged sloop of 23 feet, built in about 1935. His second boat was a 27' ferro-cement Hartley Tasman sloop.

Partner Brenda Newbey and twin brother Arnold expressed interest in sharing the adventure so he purchased a bigger yacht, a neglected S&S 39 and joined the Fremantle

Sailing Club. According to Morales, selecting the S&S 39 was one of his best decisions. It lived up to its reputation of being an outstanding sea boat that kept him and the crew safe through many gales and storms.

The circumnavigation took five years almost to the day. The three set sail from Fremantle in early May 2008 and returned to home port in late April 2013. Morales was surprised to see a number of friends waiting for him at the Customs jetty.

Excluding side trips such as cruising the San Juan and Gulf Islands and cruising the Sea of Cortez during a 20 month stay in La Paz, the circumnavigation covered a distance of 30,000

nautical miles over 386 days under sail and averaged a speed of 3.2 knots. Only 21 per cent of his five years was spent on the actual sailing, the rest was at marinas or anchor, side cruises, touring or visits to family.

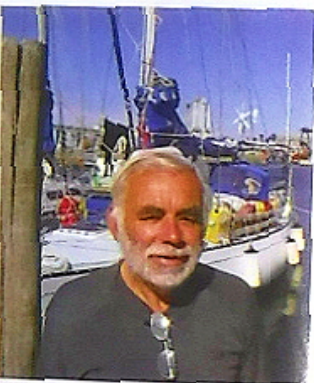
From La Paz, Mexico, round the Horn to Australia, Morales sailed solo.

Back home in Australia Morales enjoyed his 'fifteen minutes of fame', then adjusted back into 'normal' life. Now that his dream has been fulfilled Morales is curiously satisfied with life ashore: the itch has been scratched. He openly admits, however, the five years of circumnavigation were probably the best years of his life.

"I expected my circumnavigation to be all about wind, waves, weather and navigation, but it turned out to be more about people and places."

Congratulations on your Western Australian win Robert Morales and good luck with your Australian nomination.

If you think you know of someone who deserves a nomination as Cruiser of the year then include as much information as you can to bolster your nomination and send it to the CH editor, see page four for contact details. ≈



ABOVE: Robert Morales in Argentina after rounding Cape Horn solo.



By Circumnavigator and
Fremantle Sailing Club Member, Robert Morales

A World Circumnavigation

ON 29 APRIL 2013 I ARRIVED AT the Customs jetty in the Fremantle Sailing Club marina aboard my S&S 39 Pachuca after a five year circumnavigation of the world that had begun on 3 May 2008.

I had been a latecomer to sailing at the age of 42 but had quickly set a goal for myself of circumnavigating the world after retirement. I taught myself sailing in my first boat, a classic gaff-rigged wooden boat of 7m LOA named Chiquita, which had been built in Fremantle by Mews in about 1935. Several years later I purchased an 8.5m Hartley "Tasman" and spent many enjoyable years sailing her out of her mooring in Rockingham with Brenda, while preparing the boat and myself for a solo circumnavigation.

But as my retirement date approached my brother Arnold who lives near Seattle in the USA expressed an interest in accompanying me, and soon Brenda expressed an interest in sailing some of the legs of the adventure. I was not willing to risk the lives of others in a small boat with no engine and soon began a search for a more suitable one, which led me to a somewhat neglected S&S 39 that had been built in 1983 in Bayswater

Western Australia of all places by long defunct Prestige Yachts. I purchased her at a cheap price but of course there is no such thing as a cheap boat and I spent considerable sums in bringing her electronics, sails, rigging, and other equipment to the required standard. However, these upgrades proved to be inadequate and I was later to completely redesign the boat's electrics in New Zealand, upgrade the communications in Hawaii, replace the engine in Mexico, and replace the rigging and headsail in Argentina, not to mention scores of smaller items such as a new boarding ladder in Port Townsend and Dynaplate and new refrigerator in La Paz.

Brenda, Arnold, and I set off on 3 May 2008 and made stops in Albany and Esperance. Brenda left the boat as planned at Lucky Bay. Arnold and I then set off across the Bight to Port Lincoln where we were joined by long-time friend Reg for a few days of sailing in Spencer Gulf. Arnold and I then proceeded to Adelaide where I caught up with old friends. On our passage to Eden we were forced by bad weather to seek shelter in American River on Kangaroo Island. We then made our way to Waterloo Bay

near Wilson's Promontory for a pleasant night at anchor and after getting a good weather report for the day set off for Bass Strait. Several hours into our passage, gale warnings were issued and Arnold and I spent a difficult night running before a gale. We made it to Eden where Brenda rejoined the boat and the three of us set off for Opuia, New Zealand. In the Tasman Sea we were forced to heave to twice for periods of 30 hours in heavy gales that rose to storm levels at times. After six weeks in Opuia our next landfall was Raivavae, a little known island at the southern edge of French Polynesia that according to one book rivals the beauty of Bora Bora. We then sailed to Tahiti where Brenda left the boat and returned to Australia. Arnold and I then made a fast passage to Hilo, Hawaii, covering the distance of 2260 nautical miles in 18 days. It was in the middle of that passage that we began to use the autopilot after hand steering the boat all of the way from Fremantle. We then sailed on to Honolulu where I spent five memorable months at Ala Wai Boat Harbor.

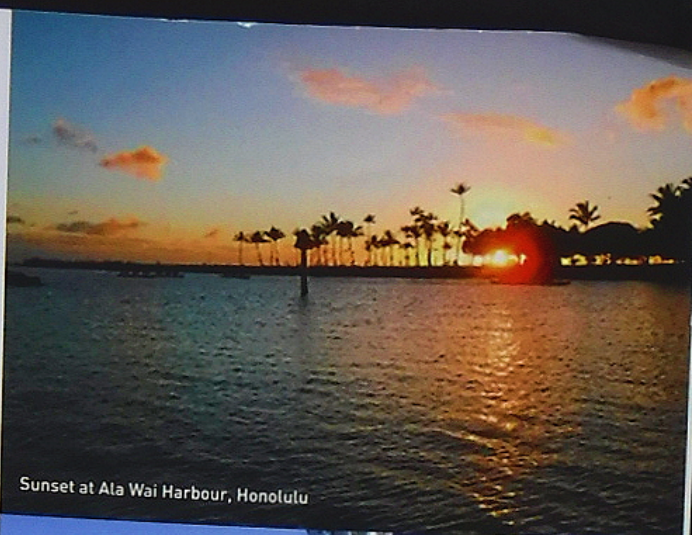
Arnold left the boat at Honolulu and I made my first solo passage of 30 days to the Strait of Juan de Fuca where I made

landfall at Neah Bay. I spent five months in the area, based in Port Townsend where I established many permanent friendships and made frequent visits to Arnold's home in nearby Kingston. Brenda flew in from Australia and we spent a wonderful four weeks in August and early September cruising the San Juan Islands to False Creek in Vancouver, BC, then down the Gulf Islands to Victoria, at the south end of Vancouver Island.

Brenda and then I set off for San Francisco on 25 October 2009. It was too late in the season for the passage but we had been delayed by work on the boat's 22hp SABB engine. We paid the price for our tardiness when we were hit by a ferocious gale off the Oregon coast that sank one boat with the loss of two lives and forced the closure of one port for the first time in its history. We reached San Francisco with an unforgettable sail under the Golden Gate Bridge at 6.5 knots and soon I had to climb up the mast to straighten the VHF antenna which was at 45 degrees because the wind had bent its re-enforced bracket. Brenda left the boat at San Francisco and Arnold flew in for our passage to San Diego where we spent a few days with cousin Elsa and friends John and Priscilla. We then pushed on and made our entry into Mexico at Ensenada, only one day's sail from San Diego. We then worked our way to La Paz Mexico with the intention of exploring the Sea of Cortez and doing a lot of spear fishing. On our first venture into the Sea of Cortez one of the heads of the SABB engine cracked. I managed to start the engine by spraying WD40 into its air intake and we barely made it back to La Paz ahead of a long trail of black smoke. Arnold returned to the USA and I was to spend the next 20 months in La Paz enjoying every minute of it. I liked the climate, the food, the culture, the people, and Marina de La Paz with its colony of expatriate Americans and Canadians. Mark, who had worked on the SABB in Port Townsend, helped me with the engine selection and specification (Volvo D2-40), ordered it, put it together, then shipped it to La Paz where I imported it duty free. Under Mark's distant but watchful eye, Joel the marina's chief mechanic, did a wonderful installation that included a new propeller shaft and dripless gland. We sent the propeller to Mazatlan where it was re-pitched with an inch taken off its radius. Australian friends Ib and Yadranka then brought the propeller to La Paz aboard their Hans Christian 38, *Aeolus*. Brenda visited La Paz twice during my stay and we cruised several of the nearby islands. During this period Fremantle Sailing Club members Peter and Cheryl Ainsworth arrived aboard their *Hylas 47 Stolen Kiss* and we soon became acquainted.

On 28 October 2011 I set off alone from La Paz Mexico for Cape Town, South Africa by way of Cape Horn. It was to be a five-month passage and I had plenty of supplies, with 100 litres of extra water below and 160 litres of diesel fuel on deck.

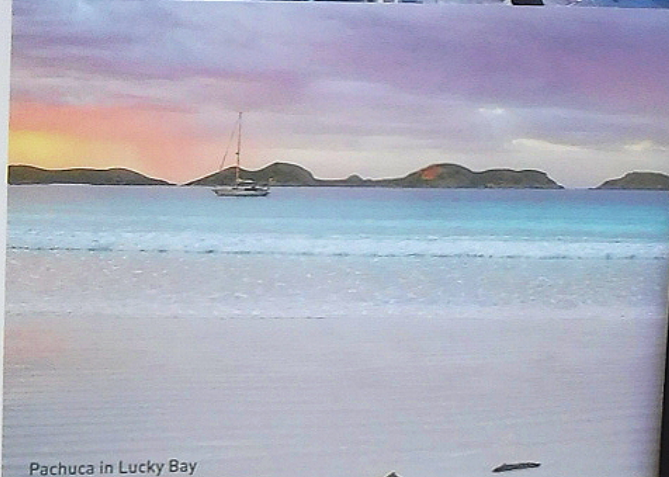
On day 21 of the passage my headsail which was less than four years old blew out and I was forced to put up an old sail that had been extensively patched in Adelaide and had a tiny slit along one of its seams. I began to use the staysail more in order to reduce the load on the headsail but two deck fittings parted within a span of three weeks. Then the port lower shroud failed at the upper swage and I managed to cobble together a jury rig using the thinner wire of a spare intermediate shroud strapped to the lower part of the original shroud with bulldog clamps. The inner forestay failed at about this time which left me



Sunset at Ala Wai Harbour, Honolulu



Approaching the Golden Gate Bridge



Pachuca in Lucky Bay



Robert (left), Brenda & Arnold

BWB FEATURE

approaching the Horn with two broken wires and a weak headsail. The patched up wires parted in the first gale and I put the clamps back on as tight as I could and reduced the load on the rigging to a minimum, greatly slowing my progress.

I rounded Cape Horn on day 84, 19 January 2012 with the FSC burgee flying below the Australian flag. I was still intent on proceeding to Cape Town. However, at the last moment, well east of the Falklands, I decided that continuing to Cape Town was too risky and altered course for Argentina, 900 miles to windward. It was a difficult passage and at one night I was forced to sail into a gale coming from the strong side of the rig. On Day 113, Feb 16 2012, I entered the marina at Mar del Plata. Against the odds I had made it without losing the mast which I attribute mostly to the heavy construction of the mast: keel-stepped with a large section and very thick walls. That worn and patched up spare headsail had seen me through without failing.

It took more than four months to get a rigging team from San Fernando near Buenos Aires and I had the boat completely re-rigged, including new rails, spectra running backstays, and topping lift. North Sails made a heavy 9.55 oz headsail at their facility in San Fernando. During this time Brenda flew in from Australia and we made two great bus tours, one to the spectacular waterfalls at Iguazu and the other to Bariloche and San Martin in the Andes.

To escape the cold winter and high costs of Argentina I then sailed to Brazil to the wonderful marina at Bracui, in the spectacular cruising ground of the Angra region, with its more than 200 islands.

At the end of November I set sail for Cape Town by way of the island of Tristan da Cunha. The island has no harbour and I was not able to land due to adverse winds so proceeded to Cape Town, making landfall on 6 January 2013. I liked the Cape Town area very much

with its spectacular scenery, wonderful variety of fresh foods, and good wines. During my two-month stay I had more work done by North Sails which included a new spray dodger and a third reef on the mainsail, and Brenda visited for a month during which we did some touring which included a memorable three-day visit to a game reserve. Table Mountain deserves its place with Iguazu among the ten most favoured touring destinations in the world.

I set sail for Australia on 6 March 2013 with twice daily contact with the SAMMNet HF radio assistance to mariners. The traditional sailing route to Australia is along latitudes 39S and 40S, but I was forced to reach 43S before finding the westerly winds. Graham commented that in more than a decade in his role at SAMMNet he has noticed a steady drift to the south of high pressure anticyclones, which would force the westerlies to the south. On March 24, day 18 of the passage, I sighted an iceberg that I estimated to be 50-60 ft in height but after later analysis of the photographs we now believe to have been considerably higher. I advised Graham at the next SAMMNet session and he issued a security. Graham told me that in the more than ten years that he had been volunteering at SAMMNet he had not had one report of icebergs in that region. The next day I encountered a second iceberg, this one low and flat and smooth, so I decided to turn north. The wind was favourable and I reached latitude 40S in two days. The remainder of the passage to Fremantle along 40S was brisk and uneventful.

The run up the Western Australia coast was fast with very favourable winds and on the night of 28 April I sailed through South Passage picking up a cray pot along the way. I was up all night drifting and dodging ships in the light wind and in the morning I went over the side and cut away the tangled rope while a Cockburn Sea Rescue boat stood by, and was soon on my way. I was escorted to the

FSC marina by fellow sailors in four boats and was greeted at the Customs jetty by various friends and Bob Kucera, the Commodore of our club.

It was good to be home.

The circumnavigation is summarised spreadsheet. Data on "local" sails such as in the San Juans and Sea of Cortez has not been included. Note that I spent only 21% of the time circumnavigating under sail and 79% of the time either on land or cruising locally. This represents one of the surprises of the experience. I had expected the circumnavigation to be mostly about wind and sea and weather and it turned out to be overwhelmingly about people and places.

There are two basic approaches to cruising. For the young, energetic, indestructible, and financially challenged, sailing on a shoestring in a small and simply equipped boat may be the option of choice and probably necessity. For the older, wiser, and more cashed up, "doing it right" is the only way to go, and my advice is to not set sail without the backing of ample financial resources.

According to the spreadsheet that I maintain of Pachuca's expenses I paid \$105,000 for the boat in 2005 and have spent another \$225,000 in maintenance, repairs, and upgrades. The spreadsheet does not include monies spent at chandlers, which could add up to another \$10,000. This represents another surprise of the circumnavigation. I had expected to return to Fremantle with a run down and tired boat badly in need of a refit but in fact I returned to Fremantle with a much different and greatly improved boat. Having said that, the experience of the last five years is beyond money and priceless in every sense.

A detailed account of the circumnavigation (1868 entries) can be found in my blog at <http://pachucaroundtheworld.blogspot.com/>

Iceberg Ten Miles Away



Setting off from Brazil for Cape Town



Welcome Home from the Commodore

