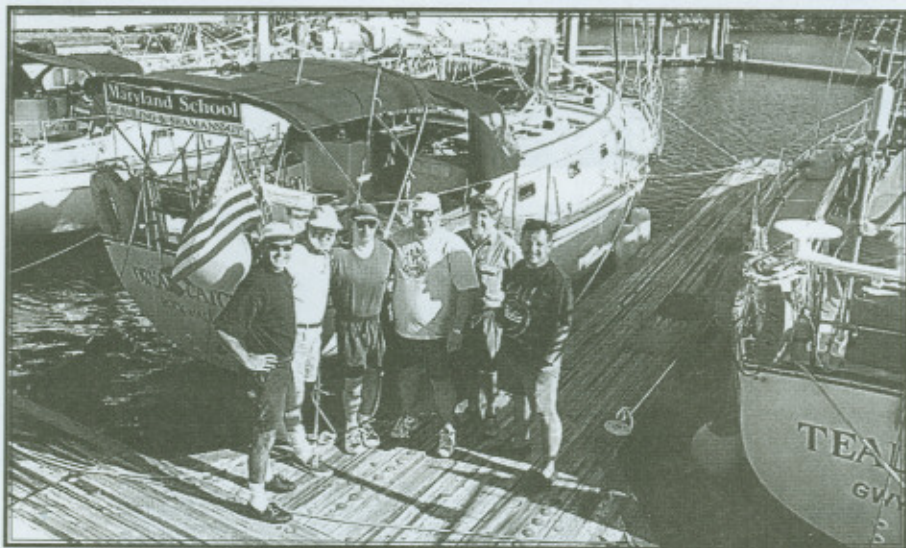


Featured Training Facility

The Maryland School of Sailing & Seamanship



The crew of the "Dream Catcher" gather in Norfolk, VA before departing in June 1999 on a 650 mile ASA 108 ocean training cruise to Bermuda. Pictured (L to R) Joe Mele, Ken Price, Jim Larkey, Mike Holt, Jack Morton and Mike McGovern.

The Maryland School of Sailing & Seamanship, noted for its extensive ocean training program in sailing yachts of 40 to 50 feet, has expanded its course offerings to several additional areas including the Azores/Canary Islands, the Caribbean, Mystic and the Pacific Northwest. The school conducts the full range of ASA keelboat certification courses in areas of the Chesapeake Bay and western Atlantic Ocean using Island Packet cruising yachts. Their program covers all levels of instruction for the serious cruiser, starting with basic sailing on large cruising boats and progresses through all levels to ocean sailing, coastal and celestial navigation and offshore passage preparation from which they've graduated over 3000 students during the past ten years. Their web site at www.mdschool.com lists their complete sailing program through 2002 and reports on many of their cruises.

The Maryland School emphasizes learning to sail large cruising yachts in comfort and safety. Nancy Suloman, who manages the school, said that "Our training cruises are focused on people who want to charter or do extended cruising in their own boats, but

first want the formalized training and guidance from experts who have done a lot of it themselves." She went on to say that "Thorough preparation is the way to avoid trouble and to increase enjoyment when sailing sophisticated yachts in remote areas away from the distractions and support of modern society".

The Basic level sailing courses (ASA 101 & 103) are each conducted as four-day live aboard courses on cruising yachts of 30 to 35 feet in the Chesapeake Bay and the Caribbean. ASA 104 is a five-day cruising course to various ports in Chesapeake Bay or eight days in the Caribbean. ASA 106 is an eight-day extended cruising course conducted in several locations including a 400 mile circumnavigation of the DELMARVA peninsula, cruises between Norfolk, Mystic and Nantucket, cruises through the San Juan Islands and British Columbia and the Virgin Islands. In 2002 this advanced coastal program will be extended to the Azores and Canary islands in the Eastern Atlantic.

In addition, the school has conducted over 80 ocean training cruises since 1991 including the 1500 mile blue water cruise between Norfolk and the

USVI and numerous 700 mile cruises between Norfolk and Bermuda and Norfolk and the Bahamas all of which include Gulf Stream crossings and rounding Cape Hatteras. Last year's first Bermuda cruise aboard *HALIMEDA*, an Island Packet 45, is typical of these cruises as told by Captain Tom Tursi who has sailed across all of the world's major oceans:

"It's a brilliant, sunny day with typical puffy white clouds and bright blue skies. My two shipmates are swimming around in the emerald green water, splashing and chattering like a couple of kids. Now and then they dive for the bottom and come up with some mystery of the deep. I've just finished my swim and, cool and refreshed, begin to jot these notes about the very enjoyable cruise that we've just completed from Norfolk to this beautiful island of Bermuda.

Actually, we started back in Rock Hall, MD our home base when I boarded *HALIMEDA*, an Island Packet 45 sailing yacht on May 20th to finalize preparations and loading for this cruise. *HALIMEDA* had just completed an intense, ten day yard period where she was hauled for bottom inspection and painting, engine and shaft maintenance, electronics survey and repairs, sails and rigging repairs and adjustments and a host of other precautionary work needed to prepare her for the next 2-1/2 months during which she would complete two round trip ocean cruises to Bermuda plus a cruise to Mystic, Nantucket and back to the Chesapeake by early August."

"On May 20th Dan Smith, one of our Bermuda cruise students, boarded in Rock Hall to assist me in preparations and the delivery trip down bay to Norfolk. Dan is a computer programming specialist and he eagerly dove into the myriad of electronics and other technical equipment onboard *HALIMEDA* including GPS, auto pilot, radar, SSB and VHF radios, chart plotter, a completely integrated wind and

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position tracking system, air conditioning, an enormous bank of batteries and a diesel driven generator to keep the amps flowing to all of this gear. We departed Spring Cove Marina in Rock Hall at 0915 on May 22nd, made the 50 mile trip to Solomons Island on the Patuxent River by mid afternoon, and tied up for a relaxing evening. Next morning, we departed at 0600 and pressed on to Norfolk arriving in Little Creek Harbor by 2200 on May 23rd where we tied up at Taylor's Landing Marina, our favorite stopping place".

"On May 25th, the remainder of *HALIMEDA's* crew arrived consisting of first mate **Jerry Nigro**, who has sailed with us on several ocean passages and has sailed his own boat from New England to Bermuda and back. Jerry is a very competent ocean sailor who is a real asset to any offshore cruise; he also holds a USCG Near Coastal License and plans to begin teaching some of our basic sailing courses next year. Student crew members **Craig Distelhorst**, **Bill Hamilton** and **Hayden Cochran** joined us to round out our crew of six. Craig is a reserve crew member for the BT Global Challenge around the world sailing race aboard specially designed 67 foot boats; he's using our training cruise to beef up his ocean sailing and seamanship skills in preparation for that challenge. Hayden is a J- Boat racing sailor and sails his own Island Packet 27 foot *CINNAMON* in the Chesapeake Bay. Bill is an enthusiastic celestial navigator who intensely studied this subject in preparation for this cruise and made great strides in applying these skills during the cruise."

"After interviewing all crew members and reviewing their resumes, I made the following assignments for inspection and preparatory work: Dan Smith as Engineer responsible for all machinery, electrical and electronic systems and damage control equipment, Craig Distelhorst as Emergency Coordinator responsible for abandon ship and man overboard equipment, procedures and training, Bill Hamilton and Hayden Cochran as Boatswains responsible for all deck equipment, sails, spars and rigging, Jerry Nigro as First Mate worked with the Bosn's and I worked with the Engineer and Emergency Coordinator

plus performed the Navigator preparatory duties. We thoroughly inspected the entire yacht from stem to stern and to the masthead (I had previously inspected the underwater condition during the recent haulout) including below decks; we went over every piece of equipment, all tools and spare parts; all procedures, both routine and emergency. We rigged the storm trisail, boom crutch, sea anchor, whisker pole, cruising chute, mainsail, genoa and staysail. We did a complete walk through of abandon ship and man overboard procedures and, by the end of the second day, found that we thoroughly knew the boat, equipment, procedures and, importantly, each other."

"During all of these preparations, strong weather storm systems were brewing and heading our way. Two times per day we recorded the weather forecasts from NMN, the US Coast Guard's Master Station which relays weather analyses and forecasts from the National Weather Service offices near Boston, Washington, Miami and New Orleans for different parts of the western Atlantic. Our primary interests were in reports from the Washington, DC office which covers the ocean sector that we will be sailing in to Bermuda. Several strong low pressure systems were galloping across the US and aiming to intersect our course line on departure day set for Sunday, May 28th. Winds to 70 knots occurred along the Virginia Capes and 50 knots blew through our area. Needless to say, we elected to delay our start. On Monday with an improved forecast we departed only to be turned back after a very short distance when unforecast winds to 50 knots hit us on leaving harbor. Eventually, after a three day delay, we left on Wednesday morning and were favored with 10 to 20 knots reaching winds all the way to Bermuda. We had a fantastically good sail and reached Bermuda after 4-1/4 days of pure sailing enjoyment."

"The Gulf Stream forecasts, <http://weather.noaa.gov/fax/marine.html> showed a large cold eddy located south-east of the Gulf Stream at 35N/72W and laying astride our rhumbline to Bermuda. Such eddies are spin offs from the main Gulf Stream and are reported to have currents in excess of three knots. If we detoured south of our rhumbline and hit

the southern edge of this eddy, we could get a sling-shot boost in our speed. We modified our route and found the sweet spot of the eddy and registered speeds of ten plus knots over ground. Using the marvels of modern electronics that we had onboard, we were able to measure the current velocity of the eddy itself which peaked at 4-1/4 knots."

"The remainder of the trip was uneventful and thoroughly enjoyable charging along at seven knots under sail, day and night. Crew spirits were high and everyone was in good health. Fantastic menus were turned out of the galley. Evening stars were bright since there was no moon, but there were no planets available at twilight times. Everyone participated in keeping a good logbook, a good dead reckoning plot, and sun lines. Star LOPs were regularly added, thus navigating us into Bermuda using these tried and true classical methods of ocean navigation."

"We sighted Bermuda (Land Ho!!) at 0930 on June 4th and by 1110 the water depth came up to register on our depth sounder... we were on soundings and began preparations for arrival and port entry. Radioed Bermuda Harbour Radio on VHF to advise of our position and equipment and to request entry permission. Unlashed one anchor from its sea gaskets. Ran up the yellow Q-flag. Took welcomed showers. Cleaned up the boat and stowed gear. Broke out ship's papers and passports. Rigged dock lines and fenders. Slapped each other on the back in congratulations of a great cruise and a job well done. At 1300 we entered Town Cut Channel, motored the short distance to Ordinance Island, tied up at the Customs Dock and were cheerfully greeted by a cordial Customs official who cleared us through in a few short minutes. Welcome to Bermuda!"

For additional information on the Maryland School of Sailing and Seamanship visit their web site at www.mdschool.com or call the school at 410/639-7030.

