



Passages

s/y Nine of Cups

A Holiday Newsletter from Sea

Volume 13
Holiday 2013 Edition



Letter from the crew...

We arrived in Australia in November 2011 and we're still in Australia ... at least David and Nine of Cups are. David is back in Australia and Marcie is spending the holidays in Boston, returning to Cups in January 2014.

We left Hobart, Tasmania in January 2013 and made good progress up the island's east coast and across the Bass Strait, visiting islands and ports as we sailed north and west. Our plan was to cross the Great Australian Bight in the February/March 2013 timeframe, sail up Australia's west coast, cross the Indian Ocean and be in South Africa for Christmas. If you know us, you know that our plans seldom work out.

Instead, 2013 became a particularly challenging year for us. Marcie returned to the US to take care of her ailing mom in February. David returned in April and our life was interrupted. There was no time for travel nor Cups.



Celebrating the holidays aboard Nine of Cups

As we begin a new year, hopefully, a much better one, there's still much of Australia for us to see and a circumnavigation to complete. Those are the plans for 2014. Let's see if we can pull it off this year.

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Email us: nineofcups1@yahoo.com
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Highlights of 2013:

- ★ *Tasmania circumnavigation*
- ★ *Crossing the Bass Strait*
- ★ *Revisiting Deal Island*
- ★ *King Island: Cows, Kelp & Cheese*
- ★ *Travel in America*
- ★ *Saying Goodbye*

Detailed stories follow

Deja vu ... all over again

As we write this, Cups has been in Australia for two years and we've been away from her since last April ... far too long. We've got lots to catch up on and so much to do by the time we plan our September 2014 transit of the Indian Ocean. Yes, that's the plan du jour. If this sounds like last year's plan, it is. It's like deja vu ... all over again. We're ready to resume our sailing life and look forward to lots of new adventures in 2014.



Cups anchored in Cygnet, Tasmania

Just A Little Further celebrates 1st B-day

Our daily blog, <http://www.justalittlefurther.com/>, celebrated its first birthday on Columbus Day 2013 ... 365 blog posts. Thanks to our niece, Gentry, in Albuquerque, NM, whether on land or sea, the blog gets posted. Check it out.

Circumnavigating Tasmania



It took us two years, but we did it!

Last year we did half a circumnavigation of Tasmania and made it as far as Kettering south of Hobart before we headed back to the States for a planned visit. When we returned in late September, it was time to haul Cups and give her some TLC. We didn't get very far before year's end. There was too much to do in Hobart for the holidays. On January 1st, however, we were keen to get back on course and finish our circumnavigation.

Cups Visits Convict Sites – Fits Right In

We anchored right in the protected bay in front of Port Arthur, an Australian World Heritage site and the country's most significant historic convict ruins. Visiting Port Arthur was fascinating and gave us a real feel for Tassie's convict history and the hardships endured.



View of ruins of Port Arthur Convict Site

Maria Island – Convict Life & Wildlife

We continued up the coast to Maria Island, another World Heritage Site and a wildlife sanctuary. The island is criss-crossed with hiking trails which led us past old convict ruins. Wildlife, especially birds and wallabies, got our attention at every turn. The Painted Cliffs are well known to visitors and we couldn't leave without a hike to see them firsthand.



David admires Maria Island's Painted Cliffs

The plan was to stop at several other anchorages along the way, but the wind gods were not cooperating. We waited impatiently for weather windows that never appeared and then fell behind in our schedule. What a surprise! We missed stopping along Tassie's northern coast altogether and reluctantly headed west into the Bass Strait rather than delay. We anchored for only a night at Flinders Island, but a storm precluded us from getting ashore. Next stop ... Deal Island.

More Deja Vu ... Deal Island Revisited

We had stopped at Deal Island on our way to Tasmania in 2011 and recrossing our path here in February 2013 completed our circumnavigation of Tasmania. What magic! Wildlife and birds everywhere.



A Deal Island flame robin

King Island – Cows, Cheese & Kelp



Our dolphin escort to King Island

The trip from Deal Island to King Island was a delight, mostly because we had an escort most of the way. Dolphins accompanied us for miles each day, playing and cavorting in the crystal clear blue water.

Cows are King!

On King Island, renowned for its fine dairy products, cows are definitely king (or should that be queens?) For sure, we saw more cows than people on King Island.



Cows eat kelp on King Island.

Good Old Boat's Newest Contributing Editor

David's technical writing has earned him a Contributing Editor position on the staff of Good Old Boat (the magazine for the rest of us). You'll see his articles in about every Good Old Boat issue you read now. www.goodoldboat.com. Check it out!

Crew Cuts Some Cheese on King Island



The cheese tasting room at King Island Dairy.

Where there are cows, there's milk and cheese. Not just any cheese though. King Island's cheeses are known throughout Australia for their quality and richness. We tried every sample available ... oooh, la, la. Then, in order to help the local economy, bought some of each.

Portland's Discovery Coast



Whaler's Bluff Lighthouse, Portland, Victoria, Australia

After a week visiting King Island, we caught a good weather window and headed to Portland, Victoria and the Australia mainland once again. We rented a car and drove along the Portland Discovery Coast. Beyond the terrific coastal views, we observed a colony of gannets, lots of birds and wildlife and some rugged natural terrain. We were looking forward to lots more travel in Australia, but word came via e-mail that Bea, Marcie's mom, was very ill. We hightailed it to Adelaide, South Australia where a berth at Crown Marina was waiting for us.

Farewell Casey, Evie, & Marlys



Casey Erin Lynn

It was a year of challenges and a year of great loss. While we were in Boston taking care of Marcie's ailing mom, our daughter Casey, 36, died suddenly in Denver. She left behind four children and a devastated, heart-broken family. May she find peace and comfort. May we remember only the happy times.



Evie Nemeth

We first met Evie in Annapolis in 2001. We helped her climb the mast on her sloop, Wonderland, for the very first time. We kept in touch sporadically through the years, never crossing paths again until she arrived in New Zealand in 2010. It was easy to renew the friendship. We helped her tie up when she arrived and she and her crew spent Christmas with us aboard Nine of Cups. She was aboard the American schooner "Nina" which was lost in a storm with all crew off the coast of New Zealand in June 2013.

We learned this year more than ever that life is so very fragile. Friends and family leave without warning. We need to make the most of our time with them when and while we can. Carpe diem.



Marlys Brinkman (right) and our goddaughter, Amy

Marlys has been a friend for decades. Marcie was present at the birth of her daughter, Amy. She fought cancer most bravely for over eight years and in January 2013, she was finally too tired to fight any more. We said our goodbyes the prior summer knowing the end was near, but we always hoped there'd be just one more time to see her. Farewell, old friend. Hoping the pain is gone and you're enjoying heavenly music in a better place.

Toting up the Miles

Since we spent several months back in the States this year for family reasons, we didn't do much sailing.

Total Nautical Miles Sailed 2013: **1,319 nm**
(November 2012-Dec 2013)

Total Nautical Miles since 2000: **71,502 nm**



Travels in America – 2013

Our trip home this year had nothing to do with travel or fun, but once the drama subsided, we were able to take some short trips which proved to be pleasant and welcome respites. Though Marcie was born and brought up in Massachusetts, she had never walked the 2.5 mile Freedom Trail. For a combination anniversary/David's birthday weekend, we spent the weekend in Boston and made up for lost time. We saw the Bunker Hill Monument, climbed aboard the USS Constitution, peeked into the old North Church and generally acted like tourists in our own backyard.



David admires the USS Constitution

Leaf Peepers and Covered Bridges

What better time to visit Vermont and search out covered bridges than at the height of foliage season in October? It was knock-your-socks-off beautiful. We spent four days taking in the colors, photographing covered bridges and sampling maple syrup. Life is good.



Taft Covered Bridge, Dummerston, VT

A Singing Family – Off Key, But in Sync



Lin, Bea & Marcie belt out a tune.

Despite all odds, Bea has recuperated and is all situated in her new digs. She can still belt out a tune with the best of 'em.

Back Home to Cups



Nine of Cups at the Crown Marina, Adelaide, SA

David returned to Australia in mid-December. It was time. Marcie returns in early January. We've been lonesome for Cups and she looked despondent and neglected after such a long time alone and abandoned. We'll fix all that very soon.

As always, we wish you health, wealth and love ... and the time to enjoy them all.

**Merry Christmas and
Happy 2014!**

Marcie and David

