



Seufert Law Offices, PA

We'll Get You Through It

From the Captain's Log It's an island ting 'mon



As mentioned in my past newsletter, after taking a 10-year hiatus from sailing in the islands I recently bought a new boat to head back. The recent trip was from its home port in Cape Coral, FL to the West End, Grand Bahamas. We took another rag-tagged crew and went back “over the ditch”, meaning the Okeechobee waterway, this time west to east. Upon reaching Stuart, FL we set sail east – southeast direct to the Customs and Immigration office at Old Bay Marina, West End, Bahamas. Fighting 3-5, and occasional 6-foot, seas on the nose, with 15-20 kt easterly winds, and a 2.5 kt northerly streaming gulfstream, we pointed 15° southerly of our intended course, so with the opposing forces, stayed on a somewhat course to the West End. Boats leaving the West End were coming at us from 10 o'clock all day, emphasizing how we were more “crabbing sideways” towards the Bahamas but we made it by 10:00 pm and fortunately, the entrance channel is well-marked. The next morning I went directly to the Customs & Immigration office at the marina to clear in. Now, being the islands, prominently on the Custom official's counter is a large jar marked ‘TIPS ARE APPRECIATED’, with the official peering over the jar at you. The Immigration official had his own jar. While not mandatory, the ‘tips appreciated’ was not really voluntary if you wanted to clear in with any expediency, it's just an “island ting”. After a very visual donation at each window, my documents were quickly processed with a smile, and I was on my way.

That completed, we were free to roam the island, so we rented a car from the marina by signing one mimeographed form at the front desk, handed them \$80, and given the keys to a wonderful old Chevy Impala, with most of its accessory's non-functioning, but for the air conditioning. And you drive on the left side of the road, which is quite interesting at the rotaries. We headed down to Port Lucaya in Freeport Town and had a fresh caught/cooked fisherman platter at the docks. Two platters for the (4) of us were \$50, and (4) Pain Killers another \$50, money well spent. We did some shopping and then found a well-stocked Ace Hardware Store for some needed boat provisions, albeit at 2X US prices. We spent (3) nights and (2) full days exploring the Bahamas, and then back across the gulf stream, this time with the current, winds, and waves pushing us along and shaving 2-hours on the crossing back. Once back we brought her to the “summer marina” in a protected cove along the Okeechobee waterway for hurricane season, and on a plane back to NH, planning the next trip. •



August 2025 News





What Goes Up Must Come Down

Following World War II, the Allied forces divided Germany into four zones: one each for France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Same thing for Germany's capital city of Berlin, which was located entirely in the Soviet zone.

However, cooperation between the Soviet Union and other Allied forces deteriorated quickly. Germany eventually became East Germany (Soviets) and West Germany (Western Europe). The Allied-controlled portion of Berlin became an island of democracy, with freedom and a thriving economy. As for East Berlin and East Germany as a whole — not so much.

The Soviet Union's fancy was not tickled by this stark contrast. They wanted West Berlin absorbed into the East, with Allied forces exiting. In 1948, they blockaded West Berlin. The U.S. and Britain valiantly airlifted supplies to the besieged city for a year, until the blockade was lifted in 1949. Continued threats and counterthreats, which included nuclear weapons, were commonplace.

Meanwhile, East Germans could freely enter West Berlin for employment, social events, and family visits. Between 1949 and 1961, more than 2 million East German citizens — many of them skilled laborers and professionals — fled for Western Europe via West Berlin. This population and workforce drain prompted the East to erect the Berlin Wall in the dead of night on August 13, 1961.

The wall was 96 miles long, surrounding the entirety of West Berlin — concrete posts/slabs, barbed wire, steel girders to prevent wall-scaling, watchtowers, snipers, trip-wire machine guns, guard dogs, anti-vehicle trenches, and minefields.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan implored Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall!” Following this succinct request, internal Soviet political change and external pressures brought the wall down in 1989. ●



When Decks Give Way

August 2025 Notable Dates

Aug. 1
Pinball Day

Aug. 4
Chocolate Chip
Cookie Day

Aug. 9
Smokey Bear Day

Aug. 16
Tell a Joke Day

Aug. 19
Aviation Day

Aug. 25
Banana Split Day

Aug. 30
Toasted
Marshmallow
Day

Decks are part of summer's ambience — morning coffee, parties, barbecues. On occasion, however, decks collapse, leaving injuries and fatalities in their wake.

Deck collapses might not be frequent, but they're not rare either. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, in a recent four-year span, 2,900+ injuries were associated with collapses. The North American Deck and Railing Association notes that there are approximately 60 million decks in the U.S. — residential and commercial. Over 30 million are believed to be beyond their "useful life" and need immediate repair or replacement.

The worst deck collapse occurred in Chicago in 2003. Approximately 50 people were gathered on a deck three stories up. Upon its collapse, decks on the first and second floors below were wiped out, too. All told, 57 people sustained serious injuries; 13 died. At first, the city blamed overcrowding. However, the collapse was determined to be due to poor construction and building code violations. In addition, permits had never been issued for deck construction.

Some causes of deck collapses include:

- **Improper deck design and construction.** A common collapse occurs when the deck pulls away from a house or building.
- **Lack of safety inspections.**
- **Overcrowding/too much weight.** Not just people but equipment and appliances, too.
- **Deterioration of materials.** Wood begins to rot (e.g., water exposure, termites); nails and metal fasteners begin to rust, diminishing their integrity.
- **Age.** Some decks were built prior to modern-day building codes.

Potential liable parties for a deck collapse include the property owner (**a friend or relative will not pay damages; their insurance will**); property manager; maintenance firm; designer/builder; manufacturer/seller of a defective part; and/or a municipality charged with inspecting the structure.

If you are harmed by someone's negligence, contact our firm to protect your rights. ●

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Protect Your Family, Protect Your Rights



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Cruising the Waterways

Going out on a boat is often thought of as a relaxing leisure-time activity. Most times it is ... if the boat is marine safe, and operated by a competent Captain.

Operator error is a common cause of boating accidents. Driving too fast in congested or turbulent waters makes a craft more difficult to control, decreases reaction time, and raises the risk of serious injury and drowning.

Distracted driving is problematic, too. There are fewer boats out on the water than there are cars on a highway, so it's easier for drivers to become distracted and complacent, especially with all the onboard socializing. But drivers need to be vigilant, so they don't overlook partially or completely submerged objects, sandbars, other watercraft, heavy wakes, or swimmers.

There are boating regulations to follow as well. "Right-of-way" rules, yielding to sailboats and commercial traffic (both are generally less maneuverable), paying attention to navigation buoys and channel markers, and abiding by no-wake zones are critical to safety.

Boat owners and operators bear the brunt of liability if they fail to provide safety equipment such as life jackets, fire extinguishers, navigational lights, a loud whistle, and flares. Boat rental companies have a duty to make sure their vessels are properly maintained.

A boat with a design, manufacturing, or marketing defect may spur an accident. Sometimes the defect is obvious; other times it requires an exhaustive investigation to uncover the facts.

A boat driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol who causes harm can be held liable. Alcohol may be a social component of a boating outing — it can't be for the driver.

If you are a victim of boating negligence, contact our firm. We'll fight to attain fair compensation for your injuries. ●