

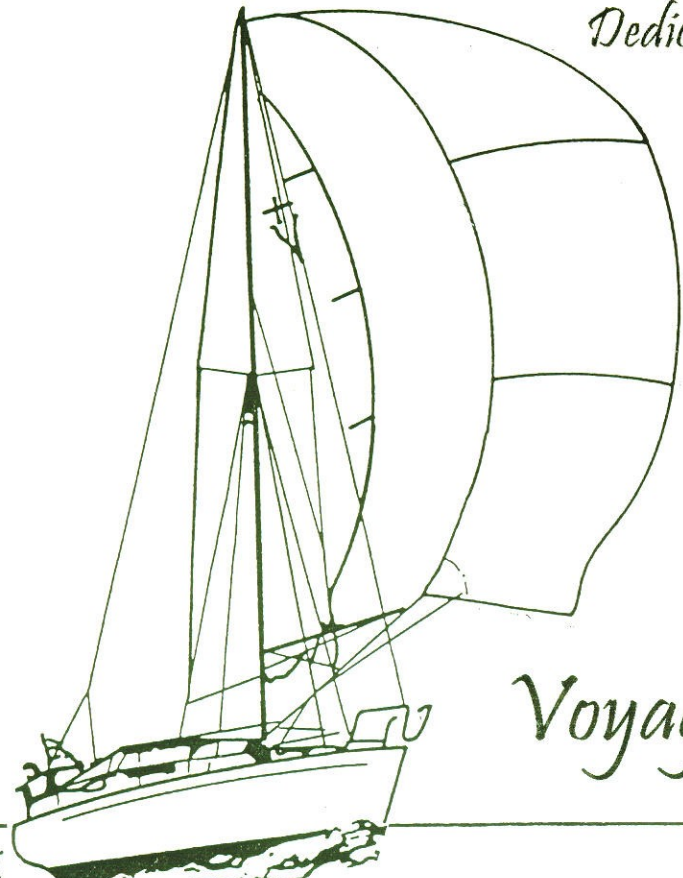
# "Fair Winds"

Issue No. 8

Dedicated to Mr. Sidney A. Rosen 1919 - 2000

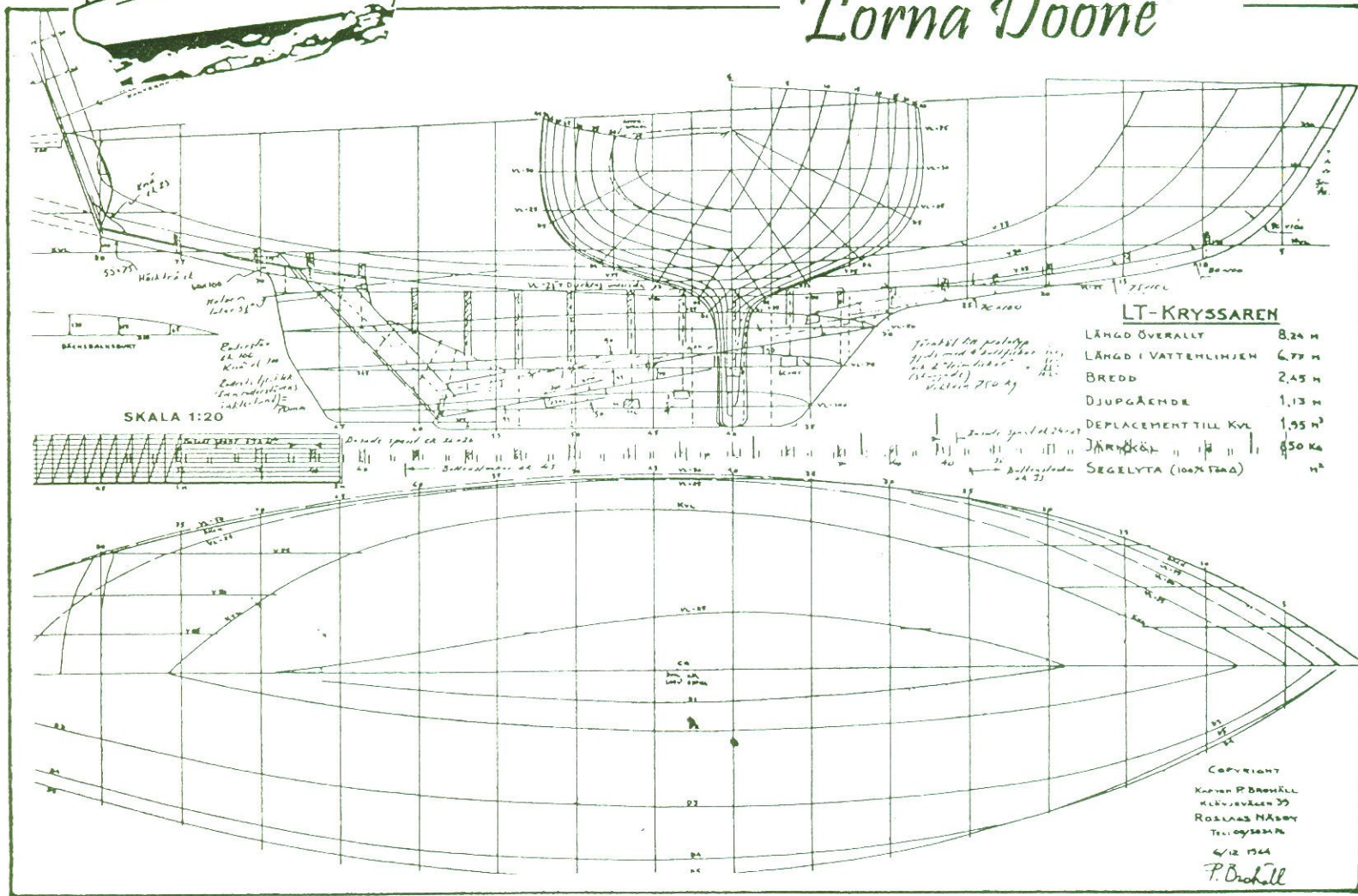
The Newsletter  
of the

American Vega Association



Voyaging With

'Lorna Doone'



'Lorna Doone' is Vega #1517, built in 1972. The East coast dealer for Albin exhibited her at the 1972 Halifax, Nova Scotia boat show where she was purchased by a Canadian Naval officer. He documented her under the name 'Solveig' as a Canadian registered vessel and, with his wife, sailed her extensively on the East coast, including a trip up into the Bras d'Or lakes. Eventually he was posted to the Esquimalt Navy base on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Being much attached to the boat and reluctant to leave her behind on the East coast, he had a custom road trailer fabricated and towed her across the continent, over the Rocky mountains to British Columbia, a distance of some 3,500 miles. He kept the boat at Sidney, on the Saanich peninsular, and sailed her locally in the Strait of Georgia, Gulf Islands and American San Juans until 1983 when he decided to purchase a larger vessel and sold Vega #1517 to me.

Since one of the conditions of the sale was that he retain the name 'Solveig' for his new boat, Vega #1517 became 'Lorna Doone' and, as part of the re-registration process the home port became Victoria, B.C. For the next three years I kept the boat at Pedder Bay Marina, on the South coast of Vancouver Island. My home was just a five minute drive from the marina and I used her for evening and weekend sailing, and unambitious summer vacation cruises. In 1986 the boat was fourteen years old and, feeling the need for a 'project', I decided to give her a major refit and general upgrade. My neighbor and good friend on the adjoining property had a large hay barn that wasn't being used and very kindly allowed me to store the boat there for the duration of the refit. In the course of a very intensive fifteen months, working evenings and weekends, the following was done:

- All the exterior hardware and trim was removed; the Volvo diesel and Combi gear were removed and sold; the interior joinery was completely stripped out.
- The underbody was stripped of all antifouling and the topsides and deck / coachroof mouldings refinished with white linear polyurethane paint.
- The original through hull fittings and shut-off valves were stripped out and replaced using bronze ball valves instead of gate valves.
- The coachroof windows were replaced using Lexan sandwiched between interior and exterior stainless steel frames.
- A more substantial stainless steel anchor roller and stainless steel fairleads were fitted; new teak grab rails, cockpit locker lids and cockpit sole grating were made.
- The topsides and underbody were stiffened with GFRP ring frames forward of the main bulkhead where the boat tends to pound when being driven hard to weather. The section modulus of the simply supported beam that carries the mast compression was increased by a factor of three.
- A Yanmar 1GM diesel with 2 : 1 reduction and a 13" X 8" two bladed propeller was installed; the original well engineered, but immensely heavy, stainless steel exhaust system was changed to a Vetus muffler and water trap; the existing plastic fuel tank was relocated from the bilge sump to give gravity feed from a glassed-in enclosure in the port cockpit locker. Stainless steel Vetus mushroom vents were installed in place of the original plastic vents aft.

- The boat was re-wired; the Bosch fuse panel replaced and a proper master switch installed along with new stainless navigation and interior light fixtures; a fourteen watt solar panel was installed
- The foam-backed vinyl lining on the hull was removed and the interior glasswork painted.
- The plywood joinery was lightened by drilling multiple cut-outs with a two inch hole saw, and then overlaid with a thin (approx. 3/16" thick) facing of Brazilian mahogany 'V' joint staving, set in epoxy and coated with a satin oil finish; the companionway bulkhead was similarly overlaid with more 'V' joint mahogany, and the interior face of the coachroof sides covered with heavy vinyl; the underside of the fo'c'sle hatch and the sliding companionway hatch were covered with white plastic laminate to match the coachroof deckhead and hide the exposed weave of the glass laminate; the original foam backed vinyl on the hull interior was replaced with spaced pine battens, finished bright; the original vertical lift-out panel giving access to the engine was replaced by three narrow panels - far easier to remove and store, particularly when under way.
- New cushion covers and carpet were fitted and a new companionway spray dodger and mainsail cover made.
- The mast, boom and spinnaker pole were stripped and painted with white linear polyurethane paint; an extended spinnaker pole stowage track was fitted; Selden mast steps were fitted; the original sheet winches were replaced with stainless Anderson #12 self tailing winches; new sails were ordered; a Navik servo pendulum vane gear was installed.
- A miniature (6' 3") cold moulded pram dinghy was custom made to stow upside down on the foredeck.

Considerably poorer, but with the boat looking just magnificent, I relaunched in the fall of 1987. The original owner came on board with his wife and was somewhat nonplussed at the extent of the changes:

"I thought she looked pretty good the way she was," he said thoughtfully.

There was a period of silence following this remark; thinking, I suppose, that he might have hurt my feelings, he added:

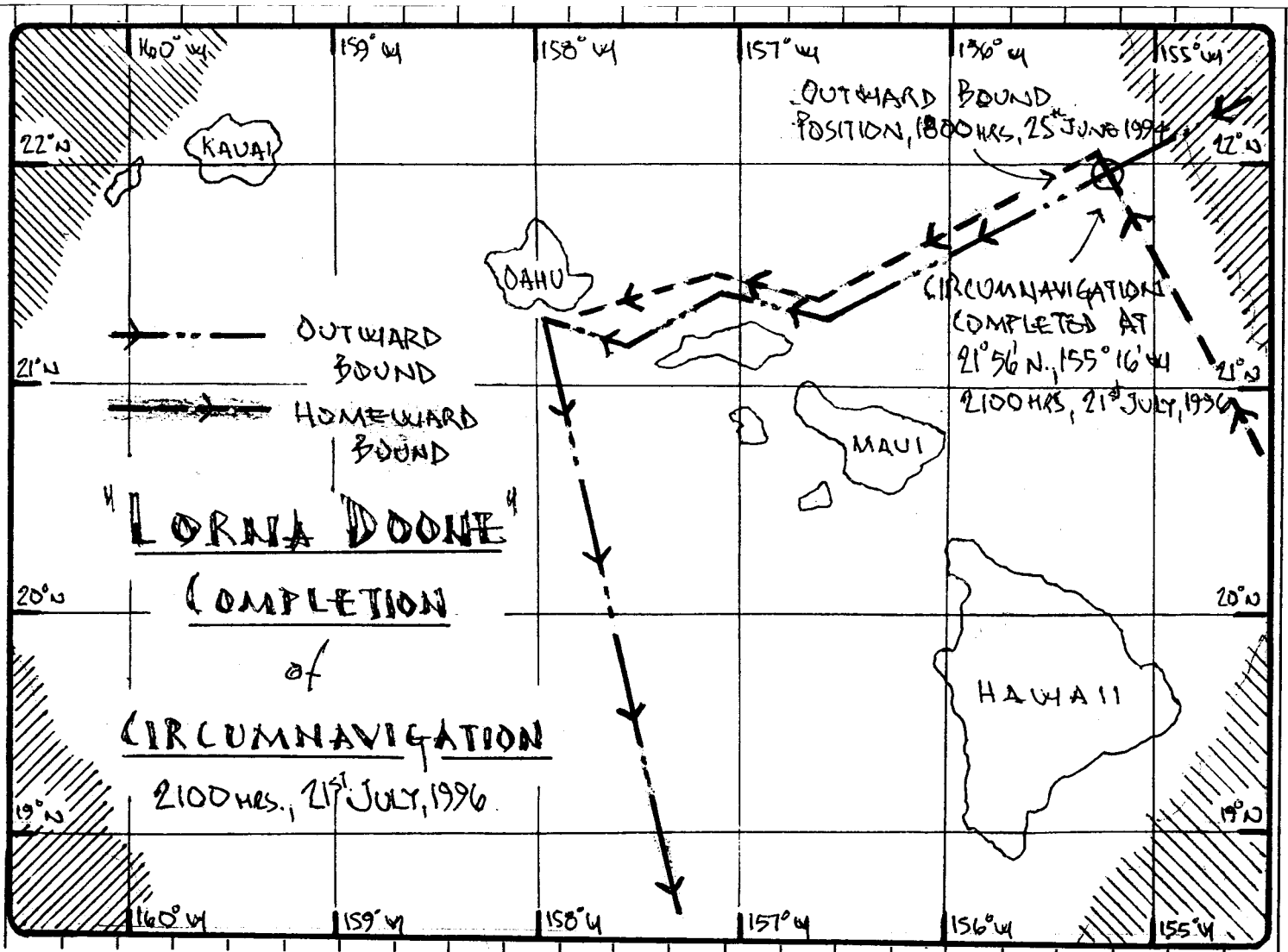
"In an 'austere' kind of way you know....."

*Edit*  
*break*

I returned the boat to Pedder Bay marina and continued to sail her locally until the spring of 1994 when I officially retired. Feeling that this was as good a time as any to make a clean break, I sold my home, car and various other possessions keeping only 'Lorna Doone', my hand tools, and one box of books that I couldn't quite bring myself to part with. On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994, heavily laden with fifty gallons of fresh water and six months food, I sailed from Becher Bay on Vancouver Island with the intent of fulfilling a lifelong dream and making a single handed circumnavigation of the world. The voyage was successfully completed in thirty months, following the traditional trade wind route:

- South from the Juan de Fuca strait to the latitude of San Francisco, and then West out to the Hawaiian islands.
- South from Honolulu, West of the Line islands to the latitude of Suvarov, and then West to the Vavau group in the kingdom of Tonga.
- South from Tonga to the latitude of Minerva reef and then West to the Bay of Islands, New Zealand and eventually south to Whangarei.

- North from New Zealand to New Caledonia and then across the Coral sea and through Grafton passage to Cairns, Australia.
- North inside the Great Barrier Reef to Cape York and then West across the Gulf of Carpentaria to Gove in Arnhem Land.
- West from Gove across the Indian Ocean to the Mascarene Island and Reunion.
- South from Reunion around the bottom of Madagascar and across the Mozambique channel to Durban, Natal.
- South from Durban, around the Cape of Good Hope, and North to Antigua in the lesser Antilles.
- West from Antigua to Colon and through the Panama Canal to Balboa.



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- South from Balboa to Galapagos, out along the equator to 132 degrees West, and then North West to the Hawaiian Islands, crossing our outbound track and completing the circumnavigation at 21 degrees 56 minutes North latitude, 155 degrees 16 minutes West longitude at exactly 2100 hours on 21<sup>st</sup>. July, 1996.



*Moored in the Ala Wai yacht basin  
after completing the circumnavigation*

- North from Honolulu to 42 degrees latitude, where the Westerlies were picked up for the run home to Cape Flattery and the Juan de Fuca strait.

*Some boats do not take kindly to ocean voyaging and are dragged kicking and screaming around the world - every passage a nightmare of accidents, bad luck, gear failures and defective systems. . . . . in port they sulk and drag*

their anchors. Not so the Vega! 'Lorna Doone' entered whole heartedly into the spirit of the voyage and appeared to enjoy it every bit as much as I did. The additional weight didn't seem to phase her unduly and although never aggressively sailed she managed to run 160 nautical miles noon / noon on two consecutive days in the Indian Ocean, South of Cocos Keeling, and, more recently, made 112 miles in twenty four hours, close hauled in the North East trades coming up from Hawaii to British Columbia.

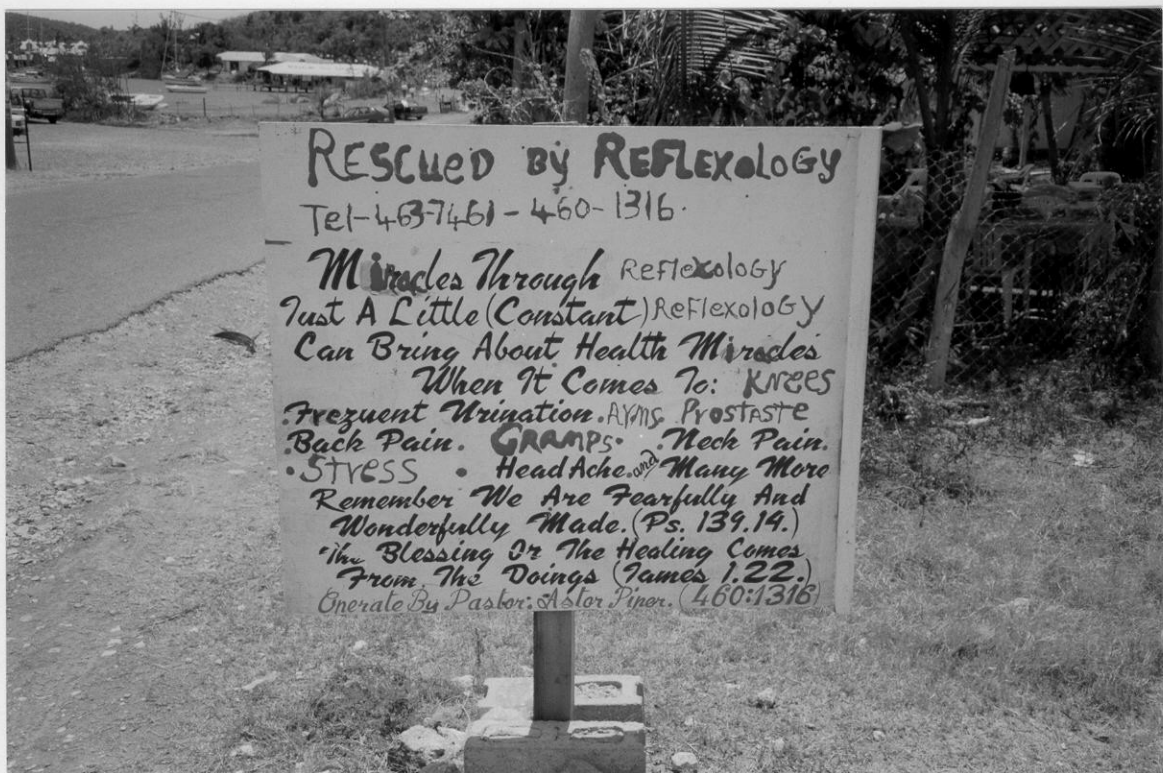
In my opinion the Vega is an excellent, undemanding and forgiving boat for 'low budget' singlehanded ocean voyaging, with an impressive ability to keep moving under adverse conditions. About 1500 miles North of Hawaii on the trip home, stress of weather forced us to lay a-hull for a short period; prior to that we had not been stopped since a blow off the Cape of Good Hope in



*Traditional thatched fale; Makave, Tonga*

January of the same year, 15,000 miles sailing away! In thirty months we experienced no gear failures and there are no significant changes that I would make to the boat if doing the same trip again. Items of equipment which proved to be outstanding were:

- Navik servo pendulum vane gear; perfectly matched to the Vega.
- Yanmar 1 Gm diesel; absolutely reliable and a great source of comfort when coastal cruising single-handed; consumes only one pint of fuel per hour at 2200 RPM.
- Anderson self tailing winches; beautifully engineered and a joy to use.
- 7.5 kg Bruce anchors - three of them - used in conjunction with 200' of BBB chain; once again, perfectly matched to the Vega and good for mud, sand, coral and rock.
- Autohelm 1000, always reliable and absolutely invaluable for the single hander working out of an anchorage, busy stowing ground tackle and making sail.



'Medicaire' Antigua style