

at the official government exchange rate at the end of our two-week visit than at the beginning. If we had cashed enough in the beginning to last for two weeks, our buying power would have diminished by 10%. Further, you don't want any left over to keep for the next trip, because by the time you return the money will be worthless. Yugoslavia has since cured her inflation problems, but keep it in mind where the situation exists in other countries.

DRUGS

If you dabble with drugs at home, don't even think of taking them on any cruise. Our instructors are directed to kick off the boat any person taking drugs. The reason is simple. All bareboat charter contracts have clauses to the effect that if the boat is used for illegal purposes, the charterer is totally responsible for whatever happens to the boat. Insurance is voided, so the deductible is not applicable. If the authorities come on the boat and impound it under the U.S.'s "Zero Tolerance" policies, the charter company will go after the person that caused the impounding for the full price of the boat which could be over \$200,000. Even if the authorities give the boat back, the person is responsible for: 1) legal fees 2) repair of the boat (the search for additional drugs may cause the interior to be demolished) 3) storage fees when impounded and 4) loss of charter revenues to the charter company. All this could result from the smoking of one joint of marijuana or even having the residue of some marijuana in your toilet kit, for instance. And don't think it's any better in other countries. You've all heard what Turkish jails are like for the possessors of drugs, and the Indonesian death penalty. Even in the beautiful, civilized British Virgin Islands, drugs are a quick way to a long jail term.

CHECKOUTS

Every charter company in the world will have a checkout, but they vary in emphasis. In Europe, the emphasis is on the actual operation of the equipment on the boat. In the Caribbean, the emphasis has changed over the years to be very heavy on navigation and anchoring. By navigation we mean which areas on the chart to avoid and the best approach into harbors. They believe that if you can find a harbor each day and stay there all night

after you've found it, your cruise will be a success. The Europeans assume that you have all that basic knowledge and are more concerned that you don't mess up the boat because of unfamiliarity with its operation.

The licensing factor is going to become a big problem for Americans bareboat chartering in Europe after unification but Offshore Sailing School is addressing it. Probably a cruising licence will be mandatory for the skipper and the stringent requirements will be uniform throughout Europe and with all charter agencies whether they like it or not. At present the charter companies in Europe issue a license in those countries that require one, so don't be concerned.

PROVISIONING AND STOWING GEAR

After a chart checkout and a boat checkout, you will need to stow your gear and provisions. In the Caribbean, you are now apt to cook aboard. In the Med., we dined ashore almost every night. The charter company will usually provision for you if you request their service, but will not stow the food. You need to stow it yourselves, so you'll know what you have and where it can be found. Fresh eggs don't have to be refrigerated, though they shouldn't be kept in a warm place. We raced from Marblehead, Massachusetts to Cork, Ireland one year and had perfectly good eggs after the finish, 15 days old, which we had kept in a locker. But fresh baked bread usually doesn't have preservatives in countries where we cruise and needs to be kept in the refrigerator. Mayonnaise, even opened, can be kept in a locker. Fruit can be in plastic bags in the refrigerator, but not outside in the cabin. The plastic bags accelerate rotting. Wrap heads of wet lettuce in aluminum foil and keep them in the refrigerator. The foil will keep the lettuce from spoiling for weeks. Don't let lettuce, fruit or tomatoes come in direct contact with the cold plates or ice because they will "burn" where they touch.

As mentioned earlier, you will be given a checklist of items the charter company has put on the boat. Besides making sure you have everything, by checking off the items you learn where they are when needed as in an emergency. Always have every crew member learn where the fire extinguishers are so they can be found in a hurry. Figure 3 is a photo Doris and I took of a 33 foot fiberglass chartered sailboat in the British Virgin Islands. The boat burned down to the waterline. Fire is the most frightening

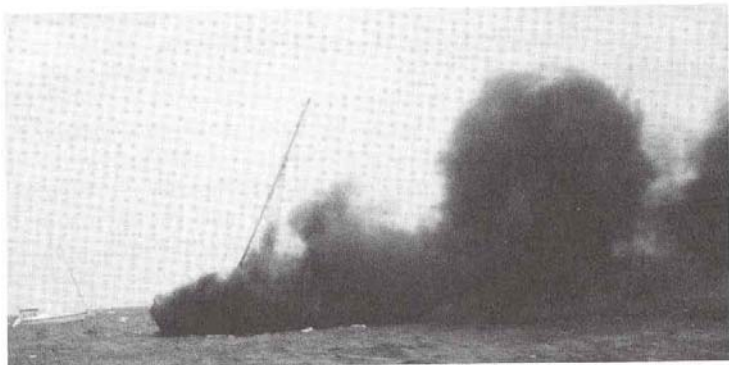


FIGURE 3

FIRE ON A CHARTER SAILBOAT IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS OFF TORTOLA. A SICKENING SIGHT.

thing one can think of on a sailboat (except possibly an explosion). Once the flashpoint of fiberglass is reached, it burns as easily as wood. Fire can come from unexpected sources. We had a diesel engine fire on a chartered boat once because the starter motor's bendix drive didn't disengage after the engine started. We put it out immediately by stopping the engine and spraying it with a dry chemical fire extinguisher, but not before some very anxious moments.

Other things you should note on your checklist are the location of the various thru-hull fittings, so you can quickly close the valve if a hose clamp or a hose breaks. Note the location of life vests, flares, the emergency tiller and the first aid kit.