

# HISTORY



*"I must go down to the sea again,  
to the lonely sea and sky,  
And all I ask is for a tall ship  
and a star to steer her by..."*

## Octalog

- I Execute with respect the orders of the captain as if they were those of your spiritual father or your older brother.
- II Never bear arms or attack with bad words the Brother of the same Bay or those of the Littoral.
- III Receive in your boat the Brother who visits you; offer him the food from your table and the best hammock in your cabin.
- IV As you treat your Brethren so will you be treated and the Captain will celebrate your fraternity, or will punish you.
- V Do not envy the ship of your Brother, nor his sail, nor his motor.
- VI Bring the Brother without harbor to your Bay, and should he own no other riches than his heart, take him aboard your yacht and consider him your brother.
- VII Do not be conceited or violent; if you are, you will cause your Brethren to keep away from you, and you will be quarantined with your plague.
- VIII Love of the sea must be the Cult of your days; make sacrifices for her and observe her laws.

Spanish merchant ships that plied the waters off the coast. In this all-male society, each buccaneer had his partner. Partners traveled together, protected each other in combat, and shared strong bonds of companionship. Whether in small groups or in great concentrations, the buccaneers were fiercely independent and proud of their freedom, and they bowed to no government and no laws except their own. As they grew bolder and more numerous, they came to call themselves the "brothers of the coast."

Today, in countries all over the world, there exist small bands of men who share the same adventurous spirit, the same camaraderie, the same thirst for freedom, and the same love of the sea as did the buccaneers of long ago. These Brothers of the Coast, be they Chilean, Italian, Swiss, British, Polish, Irish, or American, are linked by these common bonds, and all who wish to be a part of the Brotherhood must cherish these same basic values.



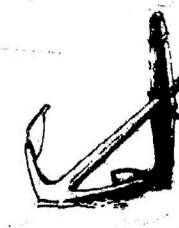
*(from correspondence with Bernard Lefevre)*

It all started on June 7, 1494, when Pope Alexander VI forced Spain and Portugal to share the world between them by

in there, then put it all back, and sail down the river and back to Belize. Those kinds of adventures happen all the time.

*Dry Rot:* My feeling about the Brotherhood is it's not a boat or yacht club. It's a philosophical organization. We look to the Octalog as a way of life we are bound to; but what we have above all is our love of the sea, our love of getting out there on the water between heaven and earth, where you have that great feeling of being part of the whole universe.

*On that positive note, Brother Cruz made sure we each had at least a shot of rum left in our glasses for a final broadside and reciting of the Octalog. Tomorrow promised to be a day of exploring Ile de la Tortue.*



## Growth of the International Brotherhood

Imagine seven seasoned sailors sitting around a table after having competed in a local sailing regatta, enjoying a meal with some liquid libations and swapping stories of the sea and navigation. This scenario played out in 1951 in Valparaiso, Chile, when Dr. Alfonso Leng suggested that such gatherings become a tradition. On April 4 of that year, the seven sailors congregated in Santiago and created a sailing fraternity. They adopted a name several months later after one member, Dr. Anselmo Hammer, compared their association to the seventeenth-century Brothers of the Coast. The Spanish name of the group, Hermandad de la Costa, took hold, and the first table of the Brotherhood was established. On November 7, they laid down eight rules by which they and future members would abide. Known as the Octalog, this document clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of the members of the Brotherhood.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of those seven original brothers, and under the direction of Dr. Anselmo Hammer, the Hermandad de la Costa grew swiftly, relying on sailing competitions to recruit new members. In a short period of time, other tables of the Hermandad formed throughout Chile and spread to the rest of the world, as detailed below.



*Jungle Jane:* I agree that the couple of days we had on the Chilean Naval Transport ship for the sail to Cape Horn was one of the great trips. We rode buses to Bariloche, Argentina, then cruised on those *Skorpios* boats to the glacier. That was a wonderful experience. Back in Santiago, there was a review at the Naval Academy and a final gala in Vina del Mar. Anyone with the opportunity should visit the home of the Brotherhood of the Coast in Chile. It's a wonderful country.

*Gumbeaux:* Bill *Cubiche* Butler had sailed to Chile, and we raced at the Zaf. That was several years after his boat, *Siboney*, was attacked and sunk by whales in the Pacific, leaving him and Simone, his captive, adrift on a raft for sixty-six days.<sup>3</sup> After the Chilean Zaf, some of us from Florida went on an overnight bus with the Chileans to a little town in the mountains and spent a few days with the Brothers in that table and had a tremendous time. That's how it is in the Brotherhood. We trust one another, have a good time, and share.

*El Pistolero:* I'm glad you mentioned Brother *Cubiche*. Helen and I stayed on his sailboat when we officially formed the Puerto Rico Table. I was national *vigie* at the time and sponsored that table. Bill had a steel-hull boat then that he said had been built from the metal of a German submarine. In the middle of the night I heard sounds, footsteps, like someone walking on deck, and I've kidded Bill that his boat was haunted by Germans.

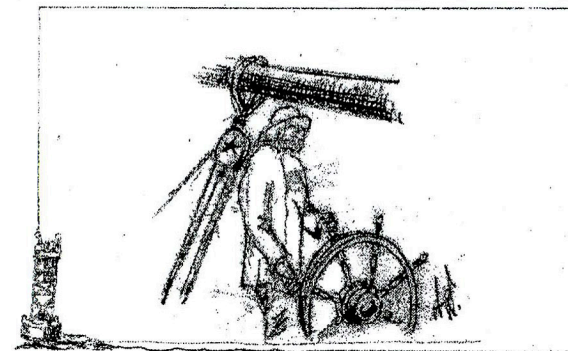
I've had Brothers from England, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Chile, and Uruguay as guests in my home. They all came with their captives and provided me with many happy memories and treasured friendships. I'll also say that you haven't boated until you experience the tides of England.

<sup>3</sup> See William Butler (*Cubiche* of the San Juan Table), *66 Days Afloat* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005).

- 2002 – Fifth World Zafarrancho, organized and hosted by the British Brothers
- 2006 – Sixth World Zafarrancho, organized and hosted by the Argentinean Brothers
- 2010 – Seventh World Zafarrancho, organized and hosted by the Australian Brothers

For more than fifty years, the Chilean Hermandad, represented by its Captain General, has been considered the leader of the World Brotherhood. The complexity of international relationships, resulting from the growth of the Brotherhood in so many countries, required a rethinking of the initial structures of the organization. The World Zafarrancho in 1994 created an international body, SECOIN (Secretaria de Coordinacion Internacional), to help coordinate activities for each national Brotherhood. SECOIN was run by Chile (Miguel Torregrosa) from 1994 to 1998 and was transferred to Switzerland (Jacques Rial) in 1998 at the Fourth World Zafarrancho. In 2006 at the Sixth World Zafarrancho, the baton returned to Chile (Jorge Sapians).

Whatever weight the new institutions within the Brotherhood may carry, Chile's Hermandad retains its historical and moral ascendancy in the eyes of Brothers the world over.





local area. We very much believe in visiting other tables and welcoming Brothers into our homes.

*Cruz:* One of my favorite experiences was when Ann and I stayed at the home of Brother *Lobster Man* and Sandy for a Lauderdale Zaf one October. *Lobster Man* could not be there and Saturday was a free day for that Zaf. Sandy greeted us in the morning with the keys to their Boston Whaler and told us that *Lobster Man* wanted us to take it out and explore the many canals of Fort Lauderdale. Then she opened the cooler on the boat to reveal it packed full of ice-cold beer. That was like throwing us into the briar patch. We drove that little boat all over Fort Lauderdale and managed to stop at every bar along the way. I'm not sure how we got back but we must have made it okay and without any appreciable damage to the boat. It was a great Brotherhood day that will never be forgotten.

*Brillo:* I think some of the tables have adopted the concept that you don't have a true sense of what the Brotherhood is about until you go to other tables and stay in other Brothers' homes, be it boat or condo or house or whatever. Only then do you get a real feel of the camaraderie that makes the Brotherhood, and that just expands when you go international.

*Gumbeaux:* I don't think many of us knew what the Brotherhood was until after the Zaf in Belgium. Before then it appeared to be an international disorganization with no redeeming social value or agenda other than fun and "What do you want to drink?"

*Gimbal:* And no dues.

We held our first Table or Zafarrancho on November 20, 1959, at which the numbered insignias were given out to Bruce Robinson, Fred Simon, Jim Munro, Jean Lacombe, Dr. Ken Brown, Hugh Byfield, John F. Higgins, Hal Reiff, Reinhold Klemm, Richard P. Doran, Edgar du Prey, Fred Schlatter, Andrew Brunn ....

It was decided to hold our Tables regularly every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month during the off-sailing season, admit the ladies (slaves), and omit some of the formalities and incantations which are a tradition at the Zafarranchos held in most other countries. They usually only have Brethren present, except at the last Table of the season, during the equinox, when the slaves are admitted and new members initiated. Some tables have gone as far as chartering large boats for several days' run and capturing islands.

Joining the Brotherhood requires the following: 1) Being accepted by the others. 2) Payment of \$1.50 for the numbered insignia. 3) Paying another \$1.50 for ABORDAJES each year, the dues for the Brotherhood paper published in Chile. 4) Letting us have a thumbsketch history of yourself, nautical activities, etc.

John Pflieger served as captain until 1966, when he was lost at sea during a voyage from New York to Saint Martin in his twenty-six-foot gaff-rigged sloop. Jean Lacombe, a French single-hander whose first transatlantic voyage was on an eighteen-foot home-built sloop, succeeded him as captain. He eventually took residence on the island of Martinique, where he died in 1996.



was ready to leave. He had just been uprooted and threatened with death, and he feared that his job was in jeopardy. This show of hospitality and solidarity touched him greatly.

For a reciprocal of those experiences, *Brise Galets* received a phone call at his home in Miami in June of 1993 from a Philippe de Pradier d'Agrain, a Brother from the table in Provence, whom he did not know at all. Philippe had developed a fever while cruising in the Bahamas and was then in a North Miami Beach hospital. *Brise Galets* drove to North Miami Beach, picked him and his sister up, and brought them to his home. They stayed for three weeks before Philippe was able to fly back to France.

Right now *Brise Galet* is in New Zealand, but he e-mailed these tales to me from Tahiti. He's sailing to the World Zaf in Sydney, Australia come March, and from there on around the globe. He left Fort Lauderdale last June and has met Brothers at ports I never heard of across the Pacific. That's what's great about the Brotherhood, finding Brothers at ports all around the world.

*Dokwaes*: That's how I found the Brotherhood long before I knew there was a brotherhood of the Coast. While "*Barba Negra*", the 110 foot barkentine Gerhard Schwisow and I owned, was in Portsmouth, England, I got curious about the black flags flown by some of the welcoming yachts. Finding nothing like them in the flag dictionary, I hoisted Rackham's Jolly Roger that the British liked quite well. That drew one of the hospitality chaps to "*Barba Negra*". He invited us to his house and helped us with many things essential to provisioning a tall ship.

Turned out that the man was "*Gonefleur*" a.k.a. John Eberhardt. We also met his daughter, Erika, but we still knew nothing about those strange black flags. Then the following summer, 1974, anchored at South Street Seaport in lower Manhattan, we saw on some of the yachts outside the museum

1991 - Gold Coast Table floated in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, under the direction of Jerry Jones (Sun Coast), with Mark Brown as captain.

1993 - Florida Keys Table floated in Marathon, under the direction of Rene Fichter (national captain), Tom Collier (Houston), and Bernard Lefevre (Haiti), with Larry Jones as captain.

1994 - Savannah Table floated under the direction of John Eberhardt (Great Britain) and Paul Anderson (Gold Coast), with Albert Seidl as captain.

1998 - Chesapeake Bay Table floated in Norfolk, Virginia, under the direction of Les Thompson (Houston) and Bernard Lefevre (Haiti and Florida Keys), with Stew Kauffman as captain.

2000 - Corpus Christi Table floated under the direction of Sam Britton (national captain), Larry Jones (Florida Keys) and David May (San Antonio), with John Gibson as captain.

2003 - Potomac Table floated off Nomini Creek and Potomac River in northern Virginia, under the direction of Tom Collier (national captain), Sam Britton (Sun Coast), Joe Horvath and Albert Seidl (Savannah), with Ron Reifstock as captain.

2004 - San Juan Table floated in Puerto Rico under the direction of Tom Collier (national captain) and Mike Cantu-Withoff (National Vigie, San Antonio), with Bill Butler as captain.



*El Rubio:* I remember the raft-up in '92 at Elliott Key. We had to pick up Paul and Erika Anderson, who had flown in from England, and we didn't realize how far it was from Elliott Key to Miami, where they flew in late. We took a fifteen-foot run-about which we had tied to my boat to get them and ran onto a shoal on the way, which delayed us a bit. By the time we got them and were racing on the way back, it was dark and chilly and everybody was getting wet, and we wondered if we could find the raft-up. But we lucked out and became close friends and nobody died. That was also the year the New York Brothers hosted the Zaf around the tall ships parade in New York harbor. The Brotherhood has been the focus of my social life.

*Brillo:* Les Thompson talked a lot about the need for Brothers to jump in to help each other. I remember numerous occasions when Brothers would run aground, have breakdowns, or whatever. I recall occasions when Nancy and I pulled people off a sandbar or came to the rescue in some other way. It sort of sets a path for people to say that these are our folks.

When I moved my sailboat from Houston to Tampa, several Brothers of the Houston Table stepped up to crew with me. Among the chaps were Howell *Sleeper* Ponton, Mike *Pookey* Kneale, Jim *Ernest* Vick, and Don *Big Dog* Peterson, and Bob *Stogie* Wills. We left Galveston on Halloween day in 1998 for the 750-nautical-mile voyage to Tampa Bay. One of the wives, Peggy Peterson I think, cooked an incredible chicken gumbo for all these hungry lads, and she had frozen it into a huge block. Of course, on the sailboat I had nothing close to a freezer big enough to contain it. I did have an Igloo, and we put this frozen block of chicken gumbo in the cooler surrounded by ice, and we lashed all that to the aft deck and set off on our way. In the night, we hit some rough seas and all night long the gumbo in its sea of melting ice cubes was gyrating back and forth. The ice cubes proved to be a bit abrasive, so when ultimately someone went to check the Igloo we

# TALES





Fridays we'd gather, get smashed, and have a lot of fun discussing "safety" matters. Steve and Lili Wolfson were among the live-aboards, and Sunday mornings Steve would cook up a huge bucket of bloody Marys, bang on everybody's boat, and feed us bloody Marys. There were always adventures. Several weekends a bunch of us would go down to Offat's Bayou, a marvelous, calm, land-locked area, where we would anchor and have dinghy races. Port Aransas was a popular place to go to down the coast. And of course we did a lot of sailing in Galveston Bay.

*Ursa Major*: Les and I sailed primarily in Galveston Bay, but every chance we got we'd get outside and sail down to Mata-gorda and other places. In the early days of the Houston Table, we took at least one or two trips offshore a year. We'd go to Port O'Connor, and for a couple of years we went down to Brownsville. One year, that was in '93, we took fourteen boats and sailed four hundred miles down to what was called La Pesca, about a hundred miles south of Brownsville. We must have had twenty Brothers in the table by then. La Pesca was a little bitty village, but we made arrangements with a guy who runs a hunting and fishing lodge there. His dad owned a ranch and was prominent politically. We told them a party on the beach would be nice. They had a big tent and a bar set up by a beer company, and the cultural society from that state in Mexico came with a bus load of native dancers to entertain us – damndest thing you ever saw. They had an open charcoal grill and grilled snapper. Les and Steve Pruitt and someone else had driven down there to check the place out and to check the inlet, which was not charted. It had been dredged some years before but wasn't maintained. We had all planned to leave for there on Saturday morning, but I looked at the weather and thought, hell, I'm not going to sleep anyway tonight, so Sue and I left twelve hours ahead of everybody. We had perfect weather and got there well ahead of the others.

## CAST OF TALE TELLERS

*Blue Stache*, Stew Kauffman, #700, Chesapeake Bay

*Brillo*, Ed Loke, #201, Florida Keys

*Brise-Galets*,<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lefevre, #HT01, Chesapeake Bay

*Cruz*, Scott Ripley, #703, Chesapeake Bay

*Dokwaes*, Albert Seidl, #300, Savannah

*Dry Rot*, Art Steiner, #24, New York

*Gimbal*, Dan Sagan, #159, Sun Coast

*Great Blue*, Sam Britton, #164, Sun Coast

*Gumbeaux*, Jerry Jones, #111, Savannah

*Jungle Jane*, Jane Protzman, #28, New York

*Listo*, R. K. Ready, #169, Sun Coast

*Oso*, Charles Hankins, #89, San Antonio

*El Pistolero*, Mike Cantu-Withoff, #118, San Antonio

*Rascal*, Tony Olmer, #99, New York

*El Rubio*, Mark Brown, #153, Gold Coast

*Ursa Major*, Tom Collier, #119, Houston

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<sup>2</sup> In absentia while circumnavigating the globe. His tales are reported by *Listo*.



enough Brothers for more than one table. I don't think even Les or I realized that Houston-Galveston is the second or third largest concentration of private yachts in the world. So when it started, San Antonio and Houston were one table with Les Thompson as captain, and that went on for a few years, when Houston expanded incredibly.

*Gumbeaux:* I don't remember a lot about the induction in San Antonio, but I was inducted then along with John Montgomery, Morris Hilton, and Joseph Scherm. We had the book from New York and the Octalog, and we followed whatever rites of passage they had. I do remember Kathy made up some vile mixture and we slept under the pool table that night. Maybe all this was September of 1986.

*Oso:* In San Antonio, we got to about fourteen. We're an inland lake and don't have a huge base to draw from. The first people were ones we'd known for years and years. We got turned down by some people. They couldn't grasp the concept of trusting just anybody in the organization. The Brotherhood's not for everybody.

*Ursa Major:* I had my sailboat in Waterford Harbor, and when Les Thompson moved his boat from Canyon Lake to be on the Gulf, he came to Waterford. That must have been shortly after he started the Brotherhood. Bill James developed that harbor and he introduced Sue and me to Les and Kathy. Bill became a Brother. Les and I and Kathy and Sue got to be friends and started sailing together on weekends. During those weekends, Les told me about the Brotherhood, how he got involved, and he wanted to make me an *engagé*. Actually, I got more information about the Brotherhood from Kathy than from Les or anybody else. She really did a good job of researching. Having been around the water and sailing for a lot of years, I understood the kind of free spirit, self-reliant, very capable people

his best doing stuff like that, with the purpose of bettering relations between North and South America. The little things, on the other hand, like organizing daily activities, were something else.

*Jungle Jane:* Bless his heart. He was clearly in charge and the Zaf was a great one. Something like 170 of us from a dozen countries, maybe 45 from the U.S. We'd sailed around Hispaniola from Saint Martin, dropping anchor not far from where we are right now.

*Rascal:* The *Star Flyer*, a great barkentine, four masts, 360 feet, as I recall.

*Ursa Major:* I remember a monk, a Brother I believe, who took us around the island. We happened to be there on a religious holiday for both Christians and whatever they call the voodoo religion. The monk took a bunch of us in a pickup truck to see ruins up the hill, part of an old fort, and we passed a voodoo ceremony. The truck slowed down, the monk trying to be respectful, and Daniela Farioli, who was Italian, saw this witch doctor all dressed up and dancing and shaking rattles, and she jumped out of the truck and started dancing with them. Looking back, it was very funny, but we were afraid at the time that we might be offending the people. Anyway, Tortuga was very interesting. We went ashore to a little fishing village. The only electricity was from generators. The fishing boats were tied to cannons half buried in the bottom, barrels sticking up out of the water. Damnedest thing you ever saw. There were ruins around the village and more up the hill. On top of the island we had a great view and you could see why the buccaneers used that island. The harbor was protected. We also went to the Citadel on the Haitian mainland and took a tour of that fort. It was an amazing trip.



Mercedes. We were still wondering about the Mafia. He sent the girls to bed, that's how he was, and we talked about this organization until about four in the morning. We had arrived on a Friday, and he said that on Saturday night they would have a little thing called a Zafarrancho. We messed around New York that day, and that evening met with ten or twelve other Brothers. We hadn't a clue what was going on. We talked some more, and they explained they had heard about us from Brothers in Europe. We were made Brothers of the New York Table and were told we had a year to go back to Texas and start a table. We were given a history of the Brotherhood and told we could call any of them for directions as needed. So we said "Okay" and went back to René's house.

Sunday morning early he gets up and we have breakfast, and he says there are some people coming by to pick you up. They want to get to know you and take you to lunch, and they'll take you to the airport. He said Jeanine, his wife, and he were going to church, but for us to make sure the dog was out and the cat was in, and when you leave lock the door. That just totally got me. This guy didn't know us from Adam and was leaving us in his house. He's got beautiful stuff there, and it just amazed me how this guy brought us to New York and introduced us to people and entertained us and treated us extremely well, and how other people were going to meet us and take us to their house for lunch and take us to the airport. That impressed me. From the get-go, this guy takes on a huge responsibility: not only am I vouching for these guys in my house but I'm vouching for them in yours, and all this based on a letter from a guy in Rome so that they fully trusted us to go into anybody's house.

Since then I've traveled extensively; I've been to every international Zaf since the first one in 1986, when I didn't have a clue what was going on, but I met the international people and got to realize that, until you travel to other tables out of your area, you really don't have a grasp of what this thing is

Sailed all over the world, not necessarily single-handed, but serious sailing that I held in awe. Somewhere in my archives there's a reference to Richard Gordon McCloskey as Perpetual Honorary Captain of the Brotherhood. He was founder of the Slocum Society. Those were the days of wooden boats. Many Brothers transited the Atlantic back and forth on home-made boats. John Pfleiger, our original captain and official founder of the New York Table, was an organizer, and the Table came close to seventy members by the mid-1960s.

*Jungle Jane:* John Pfleiger sailed off on his twenty-five-foot gaff-cutter, *Stella Maris*, and was lost at sea in 1966. Prior to his departure, New York Brothers made substantial repairs, as they were concerned about the seaworthiness of the boat. When he set forth in his little boat, everyone told him not to go, but he went anyway. Frankly, he didn't seem like he was very seaworthy, nor was *Stella Maris*, but he had a great love of the sea and its sailors. He always found interesting guests for the monthly Zafs.

*Dry Rot:* The Coast Guard found his boat aground off of Antigua and figured he got up in the night to pee and fell overboard.

*Dokwaes:* That means he didn't even get a Brotherhood send-off. I don't know about those early days, but I want to tell you about how we, thirty years later in Savannah, said goodbye to the naval architect, Brother Ernie Brierley, who lost his life due to a tragic boating accident. We discharged his ashes from "Barba Negra's" starboard canon during outgoing tide at sunset while flying one of Ernie's specially-designed kites high above our masts. Then through the black, powder smoke, a screeching seagull ascended just as a large freighter named "Bon Voyage", Liverpool, passed toward the sea. That last



Belgium. The Belgians complained about the way we handled the Zaf. We didn't know what we were doing, just doing the best we could. When the captains decided to have a World Zafarrancho every four years, they chose Belgium for the next one.

*Rascal:* The '86 World Zaf internationalized the U.S. Brotherhood. That has always interested me. From 1959 to '86, the New York Table was pretty much in a world of its own, but the international reach is really what the Brotherhood is all about.

*Jungle Jane:* Some of us had made our own Brotherhood friends across the ocean. Scott and I attended a Zaf on the Isle of Wight in 1985 and met John and Brenda Eberhardt in England and Toni Mattarucco from Venice and several Belgium Brothers. But you're right that the New York Zaf of '86 was the first truly international gathering of the Brotherhood of which we were aware.

*Oso:* That Zaf also came at the start of the Brotherhood in Texas.

*Cruz:* Which calls for another orza.

*The bottle passes around and we have a broadside for the Brotherhood in New York and Texas, our shouts of "Oorrrrrzzzzaa" rumbling over the heavily-wooded Tortuga hills.*



*Dry Rot:* A major reason we chose René was that he had contacts with Brothers in Europe. We in New York were isolated. We didn't know anything about anybody else, but René traveled back and forth to Europe all the time and he knew the Brotherhood tables there. Before René we really had no idea what we were doing.

*Jungle Jane:* John Pfeiger was Belgian, but I have no idea what connection he had with the Belgium Brothers. His correspondence was with Chile. We got flags and notices we couldn't read because they were in Spanish, and we sent money to Chile, dues of three dollars a member. I don't know how we collected that money because we didn't have dues in the New York Table, but I think it was for flags, pins, and their newsletter. I remember a letter from René to Richard McClosky in which he mentioned imposing dues on any Brother who didn't sail 300 miles a year, but nothing came of it. Letters went back and forth with Chile until 1973, after which their government was undergoing revolutions, so that was the end of contact with Chile. From then on, we really were on our own.

*Dry Rot:* We read the Octalog at the start of the meetings but had no other formalities. Prior to becoming a member, you had to get up and give a little talk about your experience at sea. They didn't want Hudson River or Long Island Sound sailors. They wanted people who had been out to sea. I attended meetings for maybe three months, gave the little speech, and I was a member. We often had a topic for the meetings, blue-water topics, like what was the biggest wave you ever saw, or how far you had sailed without stopping.

*Jungle Jane:* I remember Edgard du Prey's interest in the use of sea anchors.