

BRISA's Culebra Raftup

BY TONY MIRO

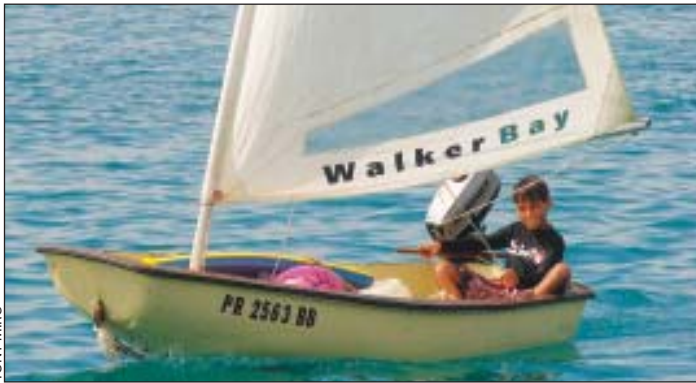
Over the Memorial Day holiday eight families from the BoRinquen Islands Sailing Association (BRISA) sailed over from various marinas in Puerto Rico to the island of Culebra in the Spanish Virgin Islands for a long weekend full of sailing, fun and family activities.

the year for its members and friends. For more information, or to join BRISA please contact Prof. Nelson Ramirez by phone at (787) 367-7083, or via email at profnramirez@gmail.com.

You can also visit their web site at www.brisaweb.net where you will find their calendar of events, photos, additional information as well as the BRISA membership application.

This was our family's first cruise with our new BRISA friends. We are already looking forward to our next gathering, maybe in Vieques or the Virgin Islands. So what are you waiting for? Join BRISA today and start making new sailing friends. We are glad we did!

Capt. Tony Miró is a life-long sailor, photographer and web developer who currently lives in Puerto Rico with his family. Whenever possible you can find him sailing aboard his Hunter 376 ¡Nada Mas! His web site is sailboatspecs.com.



TONY MIRO

The cruise was organized by José Pla, one of BRISA's active members, who did an excellent job of planning, organizing and motivating members to join the cruise.

Seven of the eight families who participated rafted their sailboats, ranging in size from 32 to 41 feet, in "Las Pelas" bay where they spent three days swimming, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing, exploring by dinghy, and just plain relaxing. Evenings were spent boat-hopping to gather and talk, sing, play dominoes and to share and enjoy some fine Puerto Rican food.

BRISA is a sailing association, founded by its present Commodore, Professor Nelson Ramirez, to promote the sailing lifestyle in a family-oriented environment. There are currently over 30 sailboats/families in the association. Members are grouped into four "flotas" or teams named Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta. Each flota has its own captain.

BRISA hosts various seminars, regattas, parties and cruises throughout

Noche de San Juan: A Puerto Rican Tradition

BY TONY MIRO

Puerto Rico is full of traditions and celebrations. One of my favorites is "La Noche de San Juan" or St. John's Night, widely celebrated throughout the world on the night of June 23, with each country and region having its own traditions and rituals.



CAPT. FERNANDO LIMA

OVER 300 BOATS GATHERED AT PALOMINOS ISLAND TO CELEBRATE LA NOCHE DE SAN JUAN.

In Puerto Rico, tradition holds that walking backwards towards the beach and then jumping backwards into the water at exactly midnight brings good luck and keeps evil away throughout the year. It has also become a joyful celebration where family and friends meet and celebrate. The rituals associated with the water date back to the ancient civilizations.

This year June 23 was a Saturday and that meant much bigger parties! All throughout Puerto Rico families and friends gathered to celebrate, enjoyed concerts, partied, danced, and gathered around bon fires. People went camping, boating or simply went to the beach until midnight then headed back home.

Being a sailing family, we decided to celebrate it by anchoring off of one of Puerto Rico's east coast outer islands called Icacos and agreed to meet there with two other sailing families. We were pleasantly surprised when two other families showed up in their boats as well. It was like a reunion out of "The Big Chill" movie. By sundown five lifelong friends and

sailors, along with their families, rafted together their boats to celebrate "La Noche de San Juan."

We have sailed and raced together and against each other for over 30 years but this time we were not racing or protesting each other for our behavior on the race course...we were just hanging out, relaxing, telling stories, reminiscing about the good old days as we waited for midnight and shared a few cold ones...It turned out that by midnight most of all were too tired or "happy" to jump in backwards 12 times, so we watched the few brave souls who jumped into the water behind the boats.

Some people say you must jump backwards seven times, while others say 12 times-but in reality, it does not really matter how many times you jump backwards into the water. What really matters is that you found yet another great excuse to go sailing, swimming, and partying with your friends and relatives...and who knows?... maybe even get some better luck for the remainder of the year along the way.

If you are planning to sail or charter nearby in the future, add a stop in Puerto Rico around June 23rd and join us in our celebration of La Noche de San Juan.