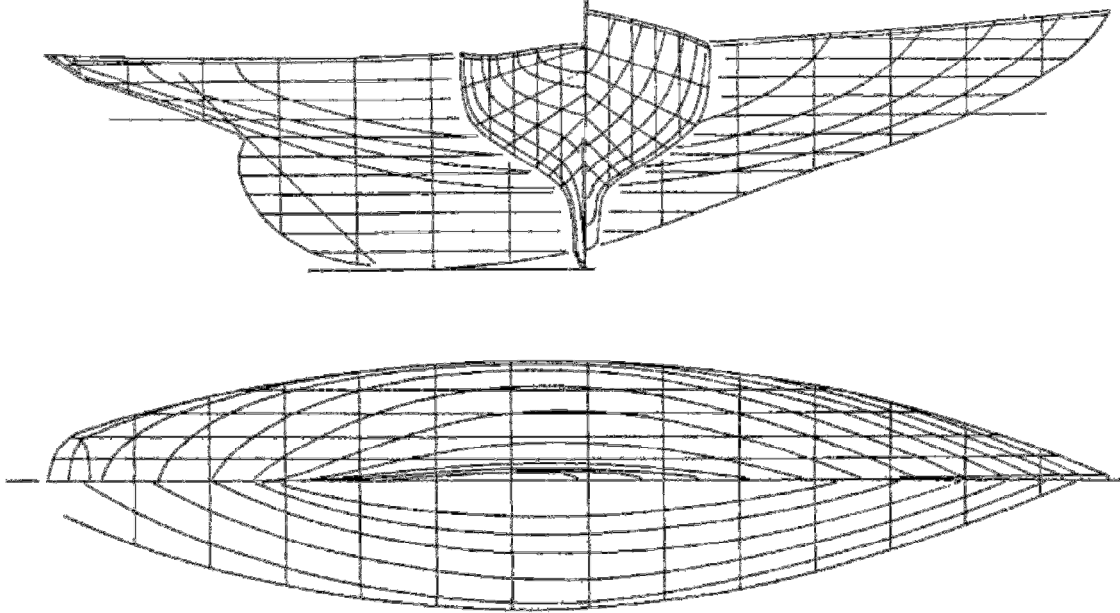


THE TRAGIC LOSS OF THE NEW YORK 32 *SIRIUS* HULL #19

A MYSTERY AND AN EPITAPH



On May 11th 2016 I reported on the Association website as follows:

‘ Distressing news has arrived today that on April 29th the NY32 *Sirius* was en route from Cannes in the S. of France to Mallorca. The day was windy as the writer can attest from a Ligurian viewpoint (at Rollo di Andora 60 miles east) but not excessively so. Nevertheless, winds reputedly up to 40/50 knots were reported and *Sirius* not having made port is presumed lost with the loss of two professional sailors forming the delivery crew. She did not apparently carry an EPIRB and no liferaft or wreckage has been found. The two crew members were Alejandro and Emilio José Lopez, 60 and 42 years old’. *Classic Boat* also carried a short report in their July issue stating that ‘both sailors, acting as a delivery crew for their British owner were experienced sailors. Alejandro had been seasonal Captain on *Enterprise*, a 60ft (18m) yawl over the last three years, and was a qualified instructor for the Spanish Military Rescue Unit. His uncle, Emilio, ex-military, had spent more than three decades at sea. The beautifully maintained sloop had refuelled on the Friday morning before leaving the French port but the Mistral strengthened over the weekend and the winds in the Gulf du Lyon were reported to reach up to 40kts with 6-8m wave heights’. I had been in Liguria and the weather had been fine the previous days. As so often happens in the Mediterranean, the weather can change very quickly indeed and a *libeccio* sprang up on the 29th and 30th which, further offshore would have been a Mistral. I witnessed from my vantage point 450 feet above sea level long breaking crests and F.7 winds so it may easily have blown F.8 in the Golfe de Lyons.

Despite searches by the French, Italian and later the Spanish authorities, no wreckage was found but the search capabilities in the Med. are not as sophisticated as in the Western Approaches or UK/French home waters in the Channel. No distress radio signal was reported to have been heard but that is not surprising as under those conditions, with a heavily heeled boat and flying spume, a VHF would be lucky to carry 10-12 miles². I have personally experienced almost identical conditions which were even more ferocious on March 21st 1964. I was sailing a 22ft East Coast shoal draft Lynette Class cutter designed in 1938 by Eric Wigful. We had set off from Alassio, Italy for Calvi, Corsica after obtaining a favourable Met. forecast by phone from the local coastguard and

radar station. For six hours we had motored in a flat calm propelled by our trusty 8hp Stuart Turner. Around 5pm a breeze arose freshening by 7pm to F.6. We set storm jib and reefed the main down to the crossrees. An hour later it was F7 and as the clock ticked so the wind rose to F.8 and eventually F.9 settling almost at F.10 with a steady wind of 50 knots as recorded on a nearby ship's anemometer. We were in trouble. We tried running trailing a 100' heavy hawser in a loop but were repeatedly pooped into our non-self-draining cockpit risking foundering with the water up to the bunks, bailing by bucket. Then, in accordance with Eric Hiscock and Adlard Coles we tried lying ahull. With no visibility at night and virtually no steerage a freak breaking wave, roaring like an express train, was heard before being seen and carried us below its crest crushing the boat under green water so that the coach roof was split from end to end under compression. Thereafter we tried lying hove-to with the engine running providing some steerage into the wind since the storm jib had been blown out shredded to the luff wire. When dawn broke it was a terrifying sight and matched the Beaufort Scale description: 'Very high waves with long over-hanging crests. The resulting foam, in great patches, is blown in dense white streaks along the direction of the wind. On the whole the surface of the sea takes on a white appearance. The 'tumbling' of the sea becomes heavy and shock-like. Visibility affected.' We were lucky to survive, not least because in those impecunious and simpler days we carried no EPIRB as they did not exist, no VHF because we could not afford one and only an Avon dinghy. I recount all this because I fear *Sirius* may have encountered similar conditions. In my case the meteorological conditions were explained by the fact that, unforeseen by the authorities, a layer of warm air had been trapped under an overlying layer of cold air and the warm air being lighter 'capsized' causing a severe Mistral to rush into the void. This was an extreme occurrence and the strength of the wind can vary massively according to the locality but it tends to be particularly severe between Mallorca and Sardinia. In 1964 we were driven far off course out into the Gulf. Two years later in 1966 my present boat, *Puffin II*, experienced a similar event. Skipped by Edward Greef, who participated in 20 Bermuda races and owned several boats of that name, she crossed the Atlantic and cruised to the Balearics. While on passage, again from Mallorca to Sardinia, she was knocked down severely, crushed, and her coach roof was all but stripped from the deck. A crewman was washed overboard but recovered. The house was literally torn from the deck by the compressive force. For the full story see both K. Adlard Coles, who dedicates a chapter in *Heavy Weather Sailing* (J. de Graff 1968) and F. Kinney in *Best of the Best* (1968) who tells the story pp. 116-123.

I knew *Sirius* personally a number of years ago and sailed both on her and against her when she was owned by Fabio Mangione who had had very serious restoration work done both at the Cantiere Carlini in the Adriatic and again subsequently, I think, in the Argentario. Although as I forecast, the NY32s were no match for the California 32s on the Med. Circuit, Fabio drove *Sirius* hard and she was the best performing NY32 in the Panerai series. In 2006 she was third in class behind the Cal 32s in *Le Vele d'Epoca* di Imperia. In 2015 *Sirius*, now with Paolo Zannoni as owner, won silver in the *Panerai Classic Yacht Challenge*.



Sirius 2007

So what may have gone wrong? It is true to say that the Hereshoff NY 30 which preceded the NY32 was never designed as an 'offshore boat' but rather as a boat for Long Island Sound. *The Rudder*, March 1936 p.60, reported on the new S&S NY32 design 'A boat was desired that would be suitable not only for one-design class racing but also able to take parts in ocean races.' All twenty boats were launched beginning early May 1936 for the NYYC annual cruise in August. The NY32 was strongly built by Nevins and was well tested. In fact a frequent participant in the Mackinac Race on the Great Lakes and the Bermuda Race she was no stranger to foul weather. A NY32 was in fact dismasted in 1954 in winds reputed to be 100 mph and experienced storm conditions in the Gulf Stream in 1960 when she was said to sail 'like a submarine'. The design had evolved from *Dorade* and *Stormy Weather*, both proven offshore boats. Above all this was a boat closely monitored by Rod in design detail and construction and thus equipped with coamings, sealed cockpit lockers and a high bridge deck. The sliding companionway hatch is set forward of the cockpit and offset, something that was in fashion in the 1930s but frowned on by Olin who considered it more vulnerable in a knock down.. There is a butterfly hatch aft of the mast which might prove vulnerable and another small one over the aft cabin. There is a further hatch on the house roof forward of the mast and a large sail hatch forward on the foredeck which, if torn away, would leave a large vulnerable hole. That makes for a lot of structural hull openings see the photo below of *Sirius*).



Sirius

Sirius had had her garboards and frame heels replaced and her planking and fastening showed no movement. The *Sparkman & Stephens* website stated in 2015, '*Sirius* after an extensive restoration by Cantieri Navale in Argentario in 2006 has nevertheless retained almost all of her original detail; her period Merriman deck fittings and her interior fully retaining its classic 1930s ambience. Under new ownership in 2013 the boat has since been totally optimised to classic race using the services of *Sparkman & Stephens* New York to make sure she sails as she would have done in the 1930s – in every sense from sail plan to trim – and the race results say it all !'

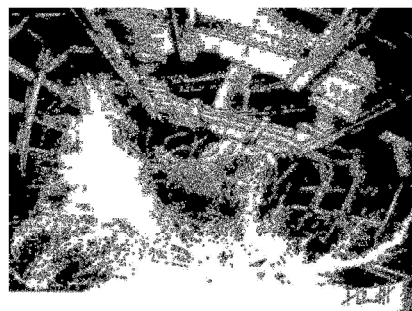
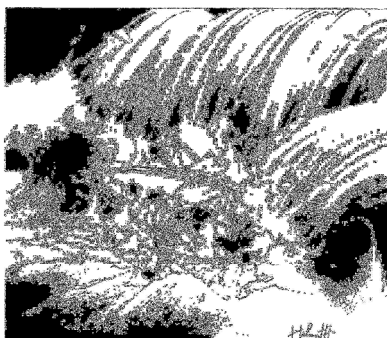
I spoke to Bob Scott, who has decades of experience with *Falcon #6* and he told me he would never consider taking a NY32 offshore with less than a crew of 3. For distance racing a crew of nine is required split into three watches. Based on Olin's observations NY32's are for ocean races of several days like Bermuda or Halifax. Indeed a crew of six is barely enough for coastal day races with 20 plus knots of wind. In a blow a NY32 better have at least three strong sailors on board. The rig is tall, relatively slender and the boom is long. In consequence the main

is large and in a blow such as that last April would be a handful if not reefed in time. in consequence under the reported conditions the Lopezs would have been extremely hard pressed.



Sirius at the Argentario Classics

My guess is that one of four things happened. 1/ She was rolled and suffered severe structural damage. 2/ She was dismasted and with a crew of only two the mast could not be secured and caused severe damage to the hull. This would account for no VHF signal due to the loss of the antenna. 3/ She was run down in the dark. And poor visibility 4/ Her foredeck hatch or house hatches were torn off and she swamped as the bows drove into the 20 ft plus waves. A similar incident, with loss of life, occurred on November 2nd 1995 east of the Balearics when the 16 metre long Sciarelli designed yacht, *Parsifal*, was swamped and sank. Six crew members lost their lives, the worst accident in Italian offshore racing. The boat had been participating in the Transat des Alizés en route to Casablanca and then Point-a-Pitre in Guadalupe. Sixteen boats withdrew because of the conditions but thirteen including *Parsifal* raced on. The wave swept the life raft away, broke the mast in three places and the weight of water falling on deck stove in the foredeck hatch as well as wrenching the steering column from its mounts. *Parsifal* sank in four minutes midway between Menorca and Ajaccio, Corsica. The survivors clung to jerry cans and fenders for 18 hours but many succumbed to exhaustion and cold. The three that survived owed their lives to an EPIRB but despite this initial rescue attempts were unsuccessful. Five bodies were never recovered. Might this have been the fate of *Sirius*?



Parsifal hit by a freak breaking wave over 30 ft (10m) high

I have experienced F.8 in the Bay of Biscay on a 35 foot Robert Clark sloop in 1968. The seas were big and broke aboard at one point almost sweeping me from the mast while reefing, but they were long and regular and the motion foreseeable. As Ed Greef reported in *You Are First* 'one of the particularities of Med. Seas is their shortness and steepness'. I have only experienced similar or worse broken waters when again caught by a storm in 1995 after a wrongly cast forecast, sailing in the Mouth of the St. Lawrence from Saint Pierre et Miqueron to Nova Scotia caught on the lee shore of Sable Island in the S&S 47 foot *Inverness*, an ex Onion Patch competitor. There the sea bottom is shallow and so uneven that the very large waves stand like triangular peaks and fall with solid green water onto the decks, shaking the boat like a terrier shakes a rat. It was a frightening experience I would never wish to relive. A lesser boat would have suffered damage.

I write this short article as an epitaph to the two Spaniards who lost their lives in such a mysterious and catastrophic manner that no wreckage was found, not even a lifebelt. But I also write it as a testimony to the NY 32 Class of which I am very fond and have often admired. I therefore reproduce below a history of *Sirius*, ex *Dolphin*, that shows her many achievements and proves that she was no stranger to foul conditions. This article serves as a warning that one can never be too prepared and that the Mediterranean is 'no pond'.

Debbie Rogers was working on a book some twelve years ago chronicling all the NY32s and we liaised then on some of the details. Alas the book never saw a print run but what follows below is from her and my files.

***Dolphin* #19** LOA 45' 4" LWL 32' BEAM 10' 7" DRAFT 6' 6" DISPLACEMENT 24,550 LBS

Robert N. Bavier originally contracted for the nineteenth boat of the class which he named *Tern*. He was a member of the committee that picked the S&S design for the class and was principal in the deck construction change (see pre-launch section). Bavier became a NYYC member in 1924 and was a member of the Regatta Committee from 1931-1934. He was a member of the CCA and its commodore in 1925. He was also member of the New Rochelle and Larchmont Yacht Clubs, commodore of the former and vice commodore (1937) of the latter. Bavier was the feature of *Yachting's* 'In the world of yachting' page in October 1926 (p 65) noting his NYYC 40-footer *Memory*, converted to a yawl with a jib-headed, or marconi, rig that won the 1924 and 1926 Bermuda Races. His was the first marconi rig on an ocean racer. Parkinson (CCA history) noted that Bavier graduated from the Stevens Institute and after converting *Memory's* rig later work on the design of his next ocean racer, *Dragoon*. He skippered the yawl *Hyperion* in the first (1906) Bermuda Race. 'He won the Seawanhaka Corinthian Cup twice with the 8-meter *Mab* and in 1930 was an important member of the afterguard of the J boat Weetamoe, America's Cup candidate.' (p 30) According to his obituary (NYT Dec. 17, 1967), Bavier, 'a former blue-water yachtsman and a banking executive,' was 86 years old at his death. In 1936 he would have been among the oldest NY32 owners at 55 years old. He competed in seven Bermuda Races finishing third or better in them all. In 1934 he was the winning skipper of Schaefer's *Edlu*.

In May 1936 Bavier sold his contract for #19 to Henry S Morgan, brother of Junius, owner of #20. Harry, as he was known, was 36 years old that year and renamed his NY32 *Dolphin*. The June Yachting 1939 'In the world of yachting' featured Morgan and his 'fast' 6-meter *Djinn*. She had finished second to George Nichols' *Goose* in the Prince of Wales Cup held in Bermuda earlier that year. It said that Harry began sailing in a Glen Cove Jewel one-design. He moved on, racing in the Fish, Victory, S, six and eight meter classes. 'From 1931 to 1933, he sailed the Eight metre *Gitane*.' She was followed in 1934 by the Six-Meter *Spring*, in 1937 by the *Indian Scout* and last year by the *Djinn*, designed for him by Sparkman and Stephens.' Morgan became a NYYC member in 1921 and like his grandfather, father and brother, served as commodore from 1949-1951. He also served on the NYYC's America's Cup committee from 1962 through 1970. Morgan was a CCA and founding member of both NAYRU and USISA. He became a SCYC member in 1916 and served as commodore from 1933-1938 and vice commodore prior to that.

Some have said that the story of the Morgan family is the story of business success in the United States and that the growth of 'The House of Morgan' paralleled American growth and social change. For further reading about this family and its banking dynasty, both Hoyt (1966) and Chernow (1990) are recommended. The Banking Act of 1933 brought an end to many of the financial institutions of that time including J. P. Morgan and Company. Harry had joined the family business in 1923 upon graduating from Harvard. It was the same year he married Catherine Adams, daughter of Charles Francis Adams. But in 1935 when J P Morgan & Company chose to remain in the deposit banking, Harry chose to remain in the securities underwriting and investment banking. He resigned and with Harold Stanley and William Ewing formed Morgan, Stanley and Company. 'Also in 1935, he was elected a director of the General Electric Company, a position that he returned to after wartime service with the Navy Department in Washington.' (NYT Feb 8, 1982 obituary, p B14).

Charles Morgan, one of Harry's five sons, said (pers. com. 12/04) that his father raced every NYYC cruise in the 1930s and thought 1940 was probably the last. Charles, a brother and the paid hand 'went Downeast to Roque Island' from early July to about mid-August in three different years aboard *Dolphin*. They were wonderful cruises. They day sailed her on Long Island Sound as well as racing her. In 1938 and 1939 *Dolphin* was the tow boat, or 'floating mother ship', for the 6-meters along with George Nichols' Herreshoff launch. Charles thought his father sold her to the Lakes in the fall of 1941 as he had done earlier with one of his 6-meters. The Ratsey collection (Mystic 236) showed 'HS Morgan' ordering a genoa in June 1939 (v157) and a mainsail and working jib in 1940 (v. 138).

In the 1947 Lloyd's Register, #19 was listed owned by Harlow N Davock of Birmingham, MI. She was named *Away*. But Davock apparently bought her in 1944 or 1945. The November 1945 *Yachting* reported in the 'Detroit Jottings' pages that some Detroit sailors went to NY to sail Davock's *Away* to Miami. Skip Gmeiner said (2/05) that his family has a 1944 movie made while taking *Away* to FL. His father was one of those aboard and the film shows no lights in NY Harbour or any of the lighthouses on the way. According to the March 1946 *Yachting* *Away* was entered from the Ft. Lauderdale YC in the Miami- Nassau Race, but no results were found for that race. Results were found that showed that *Away* raced in the 1947, 1950, 1952, 1953 and 1955 SORC races. In October 1946, Davock ordered a nylon trisail, #2 nylon jib, nylon storm jib and a CC spinnaker from Ratsey (coll 236, v 121). In the fall of 1950, he had a Ratsey mainsail made (coll. 236, v 162).

Davock became a member of the NYYC in 1947. That is the year that Morris Rosenfeld took *Away's* photograph (#11550F) which was included among those in *Sleek: Classic images from the Rosenfeld Collection* (Rousmaniere text, 2004). Davock was the Lauderdale YC commodore in 1954. The LYC web site (05) credited Davock as being one of those aboard his schooner *Abenaki* in 1938 where the discussion lead to the organization of the LYC.

Skip Gmeiner said (pers com 2/05) that his father, "Toot," and Harlow were great friends. *Away* spent most of her time in FL and when Davock came back to MI in the summer, he sailed aboard *Apache* #2. In the winter "Toot" often went south to race aboard *Away*. He said his parents often cruised with the Davok's from FL and the Bahamas. Skip said he had a letter referring to one such cruise that almost ended in disaster for those aboard as well as the boat. In March 1954, the Gmeiners, Davocks and the captain aboard, Bill Law, were going from the Bahamas to Ft Lauderdale when winds over 100mph struck at night and the mast came down. Although they were able to cut the mast away, it followed them down the waves threatening to ram the boat. Between the wind and seas, the propeller was out of the water a great deal, which did not help them to out race the mast. A German banana boat over 390 feet in overall length saw them and asked if they could help. Davock asked if they could give *Away* leeway. The German ship ran along side *Away* giving her shelter from the waves and wind which allowed her to keep her propeller in the water. The speed was only about 5 knots compared to the freighter's average speed of 16 knots. All of the signaling, between the two vessels, was done by Law in Morse code with an Aldis lamp. No one knew the former Marine had those skills, but were glad he did. Both wives tried to brace themselves in the cabin as the boat rolled with the stanchions under water. Skip said that Law worked for his father in the summer and Davock in the winter.

The next owner of *Away* as reported in Lloyd's in 1956 was H. C Boschen of Larchmont, NY. She had been renamed *Sirius*. Boschen had owned another *Sirius*, an S class, prior to the NY32. Yachting (month, 1955) reported that Boschen had brought the NY32 from the Great Lakes to race on Long Island Sound. Henry C. Boschen became a NYYC member in July 1957 and in the 1958 Race Committee report *Sirius* was again listed. In 1968 she won the Navy Cup, the replacement for the US Navy Cup retired by *Valencia* (#1). He was a member of the CCA, Storm Triesail Club and Larchmont YC. Boschen was Larchmont YC rear commodore in 1955 and moved up to serve as commodore from 1959-1961.

Boschen was awarded The Mole Award for Outstanding Achievement in Construction' in January 1969. The award stated that 'he strives to advance the industry by innovation, experimentation and modern technology. He is a gentleman and an avid yachtsman.' Hank, as he was known, was the CEO of Raymond International, a major construction company. The citation, supplied by The Moles, included a short biography of Boschen. A Cornell University mechanical engineering graduate in 1928, Boschen joined the Raymond Concrete Pile Company, the predecessor of Raymond International. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Raymond Concrete Pile Co. was one of eight companies that worked with the Navy to build the Pacific Naval Air Bases (PNAB). Boschen was there as a member of the Operating Committee for Contractors. The story of this amazing building project, and Boschen's part in it, can be found in Builders for Battle by David Woodbury (1946). The cargo ship the Navy lent for the construction supply runs from Hawaii to Midway was the USS *Sirius* (AK-15). In 1946 Boschen had the responsibility for all of Raymond's operations in Latin America and became a vice president and director. In 1951 he was in charge of worldwide negotiations and foreign heavy construction operations in some two dozen countries on six continents. In 1960 he became president of Raymond International Inc. 'The Moles is the most prestigious heavy construction group in the world. It is committed to benefiting the industry, the organization and its individual members,' according to the organization's description.

Sirius raced to Bermuda in 1958, finishing fourth in class B, and in 1960, finishing fourteenth. She also raced in the Annapolis Newport Races in 1959, where she finished fourteenth in class A. There were three others of the class in that race. The crew aboard for the 1960 Bermuda Race were Cdr R.M. Hutchins Jr, J. Johnston, Arthur Boschen, Pfc. Henry Boschen, H E Hutchinson, D. MacTaggart and E Jobson, Jr in addition to the owner/skipper (CCA Mystic coll 303). Often the crew lists submitted by the owner with an application in the early spring did not always agree with who was actually on the boat for the race. In this case, Jim Sykes was aboard for his first Bermuda Race. Sykes remembered it as a very rough and unpleasant race (pers. comm 12/04). The wind came up and with it large waves. The navigator, the Navy commander, was sea sick. Sykes said they shortened sail and hove too for about twelve hours with just a storm jib. With the navigator sick, they went by dead reckoning until the sun appeared. Once they got a good sight, they found there were way east of the rhumb line. Sykes said that the NY32 in a sea was like a submarine. He raced to Bermuda next year on his father's Bermuda 40. Another crew member and yacht broker then, Doug MacTaggart, remembered *Sirius* (pers. com 4/06). He said that Boschen had a good crew, many sailed regularly on the boat. MacTaggart said 'Hank was a smart skipper' and was always 'fiddling with' or adjusting, things. He brought his engineering to the boat

Crew member Art Boschen, a nephew of the owner, remembered (pers. com 5/05) the 1960 Bermuda Race when the navigator, sailing master of the USCG *Eagle*, was sea sick and unable to get any star sites. He said he was on the foredeck with Hank, the owner's son, when the storm came on. It went from a dead calm to full gale and sails everywhere. Later he spent many hours in the cockpit with his feet pushing against the tiller as the wind blew the tops off the waves at a height of the spreaders. Art said Boschen sold the NY32 in order to get a larger boat that was built in Hong Kong. Art worked at Raymond, in Jamaica, as manager of a major highway building project and later in Brazil, and said his uncle travelled all over the world and found business was taking up more of his time when he sold *Sirius*. He called the NY32s 'very wet, ocean star boats' but thought they were 'very beautiful and very seaworthy.'

An article by Bill Wallace in the NY Herald Tribune (May 22, 1961) told of *Sirius*' winning the Larchmont YC Edlu Trophy in the 130-mile overnight race on LIS. She was also the winner of Division One of the four

classes racing in a fleet of sixty-three yachts. The article described Boschen as a self-taught sailor who had rowed at Cornell. In 1955 he won the Nall Trophy, highest season score in YRA of LIS, in his S boat. Boschen brought his engineering training to out fitting *Sirius* and relied on his equipment.

'Henry Morgan, the original owner of the *Sirius*, would hardly recognize her now. A year ago Boschen completely revised the yacht's old-fashioned rig. He put in a masthead rig with a short bowsprit, greatly enlarging the fore triangle, and cut down the mainmast by five feet. The only trouble was that the new powerful headsails tore the rail off the boat and generally opened her up. 'There was more pumping than sailing,' said Boschen.

As a solution he decided to rebuild and refashion the whole boat during the winter. This Boschen did, doing much of the work with his own big hands. And his crew helped..... The *Sirius* crew that won the Edlu Trophy was Tony Hutchinson, Doug Mctaggart, Dick Ronan, Pat O'Neil, Jim Johnson, Ted Jobson and Art Boschen.

The design changes mentioned in the article were drawn in December 1959 for Boschen by S&S. Ratsey (Mystic coll 236) made Boschen a drifter and #2 genoa in February 1960 (v172 ck173?). Prior to that he had Ratsey make a genoa in the fall of 1955 (v169), another genoa in 1957 (v 171) and a mainsail in 1958 (v171).

Among Skip Gmeiner's files were several letters between himself and *Sirius'* owner beginning in 1963 regarding the New York 32 Owners Club. Boschen thought it wonderful that someone was working on a listing of the owners and the locations of the boats. Gmeiner wrote back in April 1964 to say that O'Donnell Iselin, the only original owner, would be commodore and that thirteen NY32 owners had replied. He closed saying : 'I have a warm spot in my heart for your boat because when she was named *Away* my Dad would race aboard her every winter in the S.O.R.C. I have at least 750 ft. of movies aboard her, even when she lost her spar. Maybe we can talk on the subject more at a later date. Until that time may you have smooth sailing.'

Boschen wrote back later in April to congratulate Skip on the launching of the new owner's club. He wrote that *Sirius* was almost ready for the water. 'I am very much interested in learning that your dad raced aboard the *Away* for a number of years in the S.O.R.C. If you ever come to New York I would appreciate your bringing the films with you so we might sit down and see them together.' A few days later, in April, Gmeiner wrote back that *Apache* was in NY visiting the World's Fair on her return from Ft Lauderdale. He continued the letter by telling Boschen about his boat.

'When *Sirius* was called *Away* she was the first NY 32 to have a canvassed dog house on her cockpit. She also had a ladder on the front edge of the spar to the first spreader. When Harlow Davock had these items made he saved the patterns for *Apache*. A year later *Apache* had the same additions. I have heard stories told that when *Away* lost her spar, because of a defective fitting, the sea was so rough that she rolled the tops of the life lines under every time she rocked. It was so lumpy that the propeller would not stay in the water long enough to get any drive. The crew consisted of Mr. and Mrs. H. Davock, Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Gmeiner and Bill Law, the paid hand. The gals sat on the floor of the main cabin because they couldn't stay on deck. The stove and oven pulled right out of the bulkhead and crashed to the floor. After a distress flare was fired a German freighter helped them by running on the weather side of them to break up the seas. *Away* was able to make it under her own power back to Florida, a feat, in the minds of her crew, not many boats could do. In the recreation room of my parents' home there is a 24" x 24" picture of NY 19 blasting her way thru a sea in the Gulf Stream with a reef in her main and working jib. We know you have a fine boat because it brought my parents back when many would have failed.'

In March 1965, Gmeiner, secretary of the New York Owner's Club, wrote the Herbert Hayes Yacht Sales in Greenwich CT to ask which NY32 they had advertised in that month's Yachting. He enclosed a form for them to fill out and send back. The information on the form identified her as *Sirius* with a NY registration number. She was white with a light blue deck and blue waterline. She had a single headstay with a masthead rig, 18" bowsprit and no running back stays. Under 'other equipment' is listed a steel mast step. She had roller reefing and a 1962 Gray 30 hp engine with 18" propeller. *Sirius* had a Bendix radio telephone, no electric refrigeration, no dockside power, no auto pilot, no pressure water system, but she did have two fathometers. Among the Antique Boat

Museum S&S collection, there is a brokerage sheet dated December 17, 1964 for *Sirius*. This showed her engine as a 1963 Gray 30 hp. The refrigeration was described as '100 lb. ice box'. She had an awning from mast aft to cockpit. There were two anchors and rode. Sails were 1960 Ratsey and Hood. There was an aluminum sailing dinghy and an eight-man raft included. *Sirius* had sleeping accommodation for six -- two pipe berths forward, two berths in main cabin and two in aft stateroom. Under remarks it said that 'between 1958 and 1962 *Sirius* was completely overhauled, strengthened, mast head rig added, re-decked with fiberglass and in every way improved. Has an excellent racing record. Running backstays eliminated for ease in handling. Unusually well equipped for racing and cruising.' Written in was that the boat was at the Larchmont Yacht Club and the price was \$30,000.

In April 1969 Boschen wrote Gmeiner to say he had decided to put the *Sirius* on the market. 'I reach this decision reluctantly. I believe the *Sirius* is the fastest N.Y. 32 extant. Last year with a relatively green crew in the New York cruise, we made a first and two seconds in spite of the fact that our competition was almost all new gold plated racing machines.' He was wondering, that with the NY32 activity on the Lakes, if he should try to sell her there rather than listing her with a local broker. Boschen said he planned to begin the season racing her, but would make her available to a new owner about mid-summer. He wrote that he believed the boat to be worth about \$25,000 or that was what he hoped to obtain for her. Lloyd's Register listed Boschen later with an Alden ketch of 35' waterline length built in 1970 in Hong Kong named *Sirius*.

Cdr Eric Wallischeck, acting chief information officer at the USMMA at King's Point, wrote (em 3/04) that their archives contained a file on *Sirius*. She was donated to the Academy in August 1969 by Henry Boschen. The description said she was a masthead rig with a 'redesigned backbone - heavy metallic reinforced in way of mast - mast step heavy metallic and tied to shrouds.' Her CCA rating was 39.0 and later changed to 38.9. Wallischeck said they sailed the boat for two years 'with some apparent success.' There were references in some correspondence, but no results actually listed. He said the Academy sold the boat in the fall of 1971 to Daniel Glionna of Greenwich CT. From the S&S collection at the Antique Boat Museum was a NYTimes newspaper clipping -- '*Decibel* captures Vineyard Trophy' -- from October 1st with no year noted. In the article John Rendel wrote it was the 37th annual Stamford YC Vineyard Race of 238 miles. First to finish the slow race was the USMMA schooner *Nina*, fifteenth on corrected time in class A, in about fifty-one hours. *Decibel* was first in both class B and overall. *Sirius*, USMMA, finished in about fifty three hours for a second in class A on corrected time. She won the special prize, William Ziegler Memorial Trophy for best corrected time of a yacht fifteen years old or over.

Glionna sold #19 to E. Kenneth Hiller from Greenwich sometime in the late 1970s [or 1980 ?] according to John Ruzicka (em 2/04). Ruzicka owned her later and wrote that Hiller kept *Sirius* at the Stamford YC but also may have had her in the Chesapeake. In 1982, *Sirius* was donated to Full Sea Inc. in NY by the Hiller estate. David Kiremidjian, director at that time, described the disaster that brought the boat to Full Sea (pers comm 4/05). Hiller was from Greenwich and his son lived on the NJ shore and planned to work on her on the Toms River. *Sirius* was at a dock in Atlantic City during the winter of 1980-81 with plan to pick a weekend in late April or early May to take her up the river. Father and son with a few novice friends met heavy waves going out through the inlet. Hiller's son, Ken Jr., went forward to fix some lines and was knocked overboard! No one in the cockpit could see him. They turned back through the inlet to the dock. Once there they found Ken had drowned, tangled in the lines under the bow. Kiremidjian said Rod Stephens had called him to ask if Full Sea would take the donation of *Sirius*. Rod had been called by Hiller, who wanted to 'get rid of the boat.' Full Sea agreed and in early 1982 they took her by water to the Northport (NY) Marine Center where they sistered some frames and generally 'tightened' her up before moving her to Sea Cliff. Later that year *Sirius* was sold to John Ruzicka and she moved to City Island YC. An article in Soundings (January 1981, Gmeiner's files) entitled 'Wooden boats will return to the sea' told of Full Sea's restoration plans for wooden boats. At that time the organization had two NY30s, a 1938 Gil Smith catboat, a Herrshoff Buzzards Bay 30 yawl and a Stone Horse cutter. The goal was to 'restore the boats and use them as an ecological workshop for children and adults. To accomplish that, the boats first must be operational...' Full Sea primarily had people who like wooden boats and working on them volunteering to do the restorations, in return for which they would get to sail or race the boats. They planned to

have the NY30 in the water that spring and racing on LIS that summer. Kenneth Hiller said (pers com 4/07) that *Sirius* belonged to his son. He had never been aboard her until that fateful day. He described the boat as both a 'dream' and a 'hobby' of his son's, a craftsman living in MD.

Michael Kortchmer (Southhold Studios) worked on *Sirius* for Full Sea and later for Ruzicka. He said (per comm 5/05) that they dropped the keel and refastened her at Full Sea and then moved her to the east end of LI where he did some interior work and deck chocks for the next owner. Later he put in bronze floors in the aft end of the saloon where the bilge is deepest. He designed and built a gimbaled table which could be stowed, which he wrote up for *WoodenBoat* (1992, # 105: 63-67). Kortchmar said it was a real puzzle but a fun project. He sailed on *Sirius* once with Ruzicka when they moved her from Greenport to City Island. He made a new boom for *Sirius* after hers had washed away during a storm. *Salty's* owner remembered that storm, a 1991 or '93 fall northeaster. He said (per com 3/04) that the both of the two NY32s were stored in a large shed along with other sail and power boats. The tide rose about four feet under the doors and floated many of the power boats off their cradles, threatening the other boats. *Sirius'* boom floated away and was never found despite a reward for its return. Skip said it was strange wading in cold water trying to tie down the boats so they would land on their cradles as the tide receded.

John Ruzicka had *Sirius* documented as a pleasure vessel in September 1985. In addition to custom raised and fielded panel interior work and the new table, he said (ems 2 & 3/04) that the rig was returned to the original one and the bowsprit removed. He had the metal mast step replaced as it had deteriorated. It was replaced with a laminated wood and stainless steel one tied to the chainplates. In 1985 he got the plans for the S&S NY32 dinghy and had *White Dwarf* built in mahogany with Sitka spars. Ruzicka did not race *Sirius*. On occasion he lived aboard her. Skip (#9) said (pers com 11/05) he has photographs of *Sirius'* deck replacements -- once in one-quarter inch teak and then in cedar and plywood. He said he met the Fabio Mangione who bought *Sirius*. Skip was painting *Salty* #9 and was apparently taken for a yard worker by the Italian, who was quite knowledgeable about wooden boats. Mangione remains the owner of the splendid and highly successful S&S ocean racer, *Al Na'ir III*, LOA 47' 4" design 1741. He seemed to be looking for 'the inside scoop' on the NY32s and *Sirius*. In 2004 Ruzicka moved to Colorado and, although he had been able to keep *Sirius* while he commuted from London to NYC for six years, he reluctantly put her up for sale.

The undated brokerage information from S&S showed *Sirius* was located in New Rochelle with a price of \$150,000 and 'sale pending.' Her engine was a 35 hp BMW with 350 hours and a monel 23 gallon fuel tank. The engine was accessed through the bridge deck hatch and inboard panels in each aft berth. The bureau in the aft stateroom had a hand carved frame for the mirror. The interior was in varnished mahogany raised panels. The galley was in the original lay-out with two burner alcohol stove. There was a diesel heater for the main cabin. *Sirius'* deck was described as epoxied canvas over planking. The mast was hollow Sitka spruce with a round boom and spinnaker pole. She had a removable inner forestay.



The new owner, Fabio Mangione, wrote (em 1/05) that he sailed *Sirius* for a brief time on the Sound when he decided to buy her. She was shipped to Civitavecchia, Italy and then trucked to Cantiere Navale Carlini in Rimini. Mangione said he hoped to race her in 'the next racing season in the Med' which was the reason he bought her. He did not plan to change her name as he felt it is a 'beautiful name for a beautiful vessel.' He said he did not particularly like either of her prior names. Her rig was going to be modified to match the 1947 'Mustang' plan. Mangione was also looking forward to racing against his friend Alessandro Degano and *Ice Fire* (#3). Her rudder was being rebuilt because a fiberglass repair at some time had broken down. Her cracked frames, especially on the starboard mid-ship area, were to be sistered.

In the S&S Association members' yearbook, 75th anniversary edition for winter 2004- spring 2005, Patrick Matthiesen wrote "The forthcoming duel -- a meeting of rivals" (p 7-32). The rivals were the NY32 and the California 32 (C32) and the article compared the lines of each and included photographs of members of both classes. The C32 was designed by Nick Potter (for more see Skahill, *WoodenBoat*, 1988, #83) and built by Fellows and Stewart, Terminal Island, in 1937, with an overall length of 46' and sail area of 857 square feet. Five were originally built with two more built later. (see *Yachting*, December 1937 article by H B Warren, p47+) Matthiesen wrote that a sense of rivalry grew between these east and west coast racer/cruiser classes, each believing they would 'trash the rival class if they met in open competition.' He believed that the rivals *Andale* (C32) and *Ragamuffin* (NY7) met in San Diego and the C32 won. A restored *Cholita*, #1 of the C32 class, in 2003 challenged a NY32 to a match race. 'At first it seemed that *Ice Fire* or *Falcon* might respond, but now it is hoped that the challenge will instead be picked up by *Sirius*.' The series was set for 2005. Matthiesen described Mangione as 'one of our most prominent racing members' and the 'highly successful amateur campaigner of *Al Na'ir III*,' a S&S RORC rule design built in 1964 at the Cantiere Navale Carlini. Mangione decided he wanted 'to campaign a vintage class boat ... and hankered for a gaff rig design -- maybe even a Herreshoff.' Matthiesen wrote that he and Mangione searched for nine months for a suitable yacht that possessed a 'winning streak.' When *Sirius* came on the market at a 'quite equitable price, I was at first sorely tempted to buy her myself since I knew the boat and her most interesting owner John Ruzicka who was intending to retire to a monastery near Aspen in Colorado, but reason prevailed and I strongly urged Fabio to buy her instead.' Mangione was apparently finally persuaded by Mitch Neff, president of S&S, that *Sirius* was for him, rather than a Herreshoff Bar Harbor 31 in need of a total rebuild that he was also considering and which Patrick had pointed out to him as it was undercovers for many years at the boatyard in Maine where he had first found his previous boat, the S & S design, *Inverness*. 'Matthiesen did not predict a winner of the match between rivals, but felt the much would depend on the sails, crew and sea conditions. Actually if you read between the lines I had not the slightest doubt that the Cal 32 was the faster boat, and Olin now agrees, but I did not want to offend *Falcon's* susceptibilities!!!! *Cholita* races with a professional crew, something I disapprove of as it runs counter to the Corinthian spirit of things and which I think should be banned in such competitions -- owners only at the helm at least please! *Sirius* will race with the amateur crew that has proved so successful on *Al Na'ir III*. In order to tune up, once refurbished *Sirius* will compete in the Adriatic against Alessandro Degano's *Ice Fire*. As I can personally attest once again, Alex is no slouch either so the trials will be fascinating.'

In answer to an email about the results of the racing between the NY32s and C32, Matthiesen replied (em 3/06) that *Ice Fire* had been laid up in the Adriatic. *Sirius* went to the Tyrrhenian and the classic series where she was 'badly beaten' by the Cal32. Further, when pushed hard in the races *Sirius* leaked badly. She was to return to the Cantiere dell'Argentario yard for work on her floors and frame heels as Matthiesen had strongly urged when she was earlier at Carlini's.

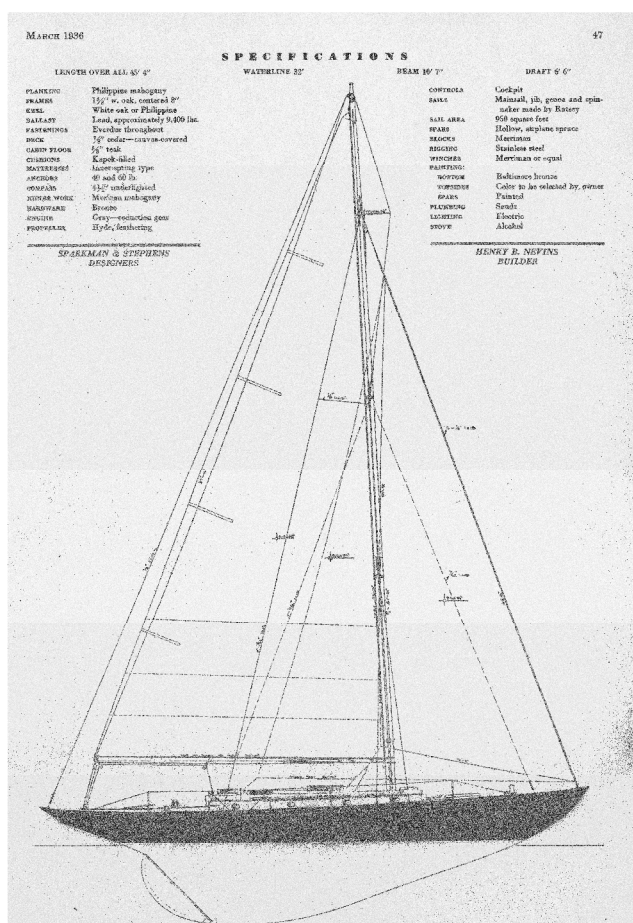
Sirius sailing was featured in *Classic Boat* as the background for the magazine renewal ad in the March 2007 issue. Mangione wrote (em 3/07) that the picture was taken during the Cannes Regates Royales regatta during the summer of 2006. Since the second refit on her garboards, frame heels and the removal of doubling strapping and sistered frames which were replaced *Sirius* is stronger and faster and has closed the gap with *Cholita*

which is shortly to be joined by her sistership the Cal 32 *Amorita* sold in California in 2005 after more than 24 years ownership by Ernest Li.[Patrick in consultation with Mitch, Bob and Olin feel that direct input and tuning on *Sirius* by Skip Gemeiner or Peter Cassidy might have hustled *Sirius* along even a little bit faster]

Fabio Mangione sold *Sirius* to Paolo Zannoni in 2013 and he raced her successfully in the Classic series in Cannes and the Argentario selling her in 2016 to a Spaniard who arranged for the two Lopez to deliver her to Mallorca or Barcelona in April 2016.

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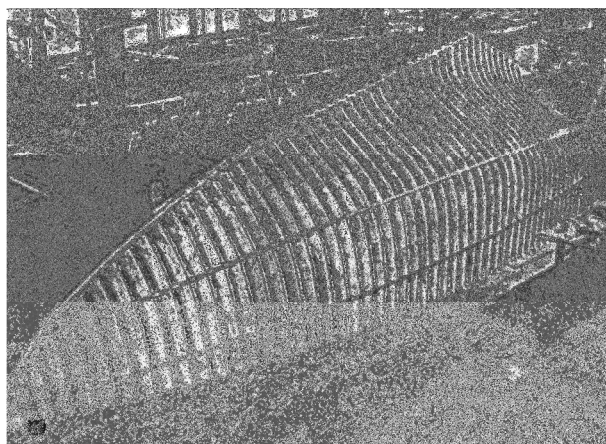
A NOTE ON THE NY 32 S & S DESIGN NO. 125



Designed in 1936 as a one design cruiser racer class to replace the old Herreshoff New York 30s (designed in 1905), the design was commissioned by the New York Yacht Club and was selected against competing designs by Alden, Ford & Payne, Luders & B_ W_ & Paine and maybe also Nicholas Potter (the CAL 32).

The boat has a two cabin layout, forward galley and foc'sle with pipe berth for a crew member. They were built by Nevins and cost \$11,000 each. They were the first S&S production boat series design. All 20 boats were constructed upside down in pairs using the same moulds for economy. The boat turned out to be a superb racer yet with sufficient cruising comfort to be an able and sea kindly cruising vessel. The NY 32s were built out of Philippine mahogany on white oak frame, lead keel and Everdur fastenings, strapping and numerous small

refinements for the period such as bronze fairing trim to the rudder edges and bronze chain for clearing the limber holes etc.

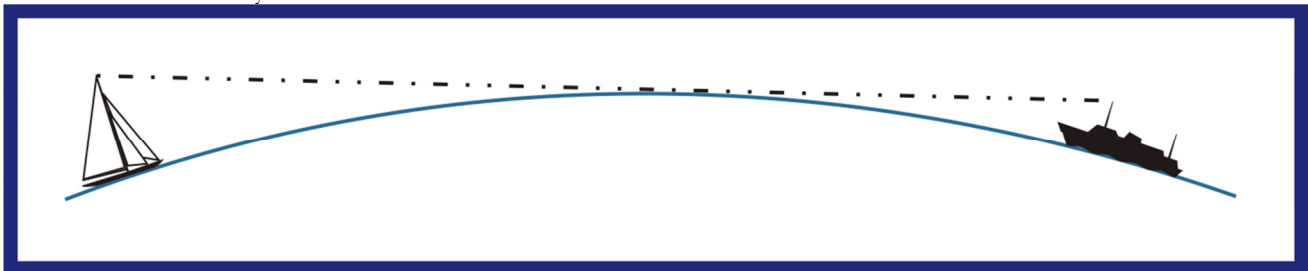


A NY32 under construction at Nevins

This design and its immediate forerunners, *Starlight* and the much smaller *Kretzer* 30s were refinements of the design of the classic S&S ocean racer design, *Stormy weather* which had won every major race she had entered in 1935. In comparison, NY 32 has a slightly greater beam, less tumble home and a slightly shallower dead rise to the forefoot and drag to the ballast keel with a slight hollow to the shape of the forefoot underneath the mast step – a trait which was to become a hallmark of all succeeding S&S boats for almost the next 30 years. The rudder stock is extremely raked at almost 45° to cut down on surface area, free board is low and reminiscent of a meter class boat, the bilge sections are slack with a very flat run aft under the counter. All this made for an extremely fast boat for the era. The NY 32s were considered unbeatable at that time, although Nick Potter's CAL 32s had the reputation of being slightly faster (and a close study of the comparative drawings show why this fabled and rare boat has a legendary reputation). Rod Stephens for many years owned *Mustang* (ex-*Revonoc*) and raced her with vigour. He is stated to have said, "No New York 32 ever lost a race to another boat", implying that if she did it was due to bad handling! The sail plan shows a very classic seven eighths rig with large main and much smaller foretriangle. At the time, Olin Stephens maintained that sloops designed with equal sized foretriangle and main sail did not seem to perform as well as sloops with the two sails of unequal size. Although more recently the fashion has been for small, narrow, high-profile main sails and huge overlapping jibs, it is undeniable that there have been many very fast boats with small jibs and big mains. The exhibited drawings show the extremely fine V-shape of her midship section indicating a very easily driven vessel and details of her jib stay adjuster, the sophisticated welded mast step which was designed to replace the original mast step which proved weak when the vessel was driven hard leading to leaks through the forefoot and the revised 1947 sail plan which shows the vessel in profile with its long lean looks. This later sail plan has less mast rake than was originally shown in order to cure a tendency towards weather helm.

ⁱ Since writing this essay I have on April 8th 2017 uncovered perplexing new information. During email correspondence with Carlo Musu of the Italian Classic Yacht Association [AIVE] regarding the Association's *Olin Stephens Cup* for 2017, I sent him a draft only to learn that an unreported distress message had indeed been received in an unexpected quarter. I promptly telephoned the recipient, Pasquale Setola, who at the time in question was skippering the sail training vessel *Rigel* en route from the renowned Centro Velico Caprera [Caprera Sailing School] to Bonifacio in southern Corsica. Pasquale confirmed to me that as recorded in his log close to midnight on May 2nd he received a VHF PAN PAN PAN message from *Sirius*. He tried to respond but could not make contact. A full fifteen hours later he heard a second PAN PAN PAN message feint and distorted but from *Sirius* - thereafter silence. Clearly this now rules out a dismasting or the antenna could not transmit.

Under normal circumstances and assuming mast heights of 55ft each one would calculate a maximum range of 20 miles for direct line of sight VHF transmission (<http://www.hamuniverse.com/lineofsightcalculator.html>). Atmospheric bounce or what is termed 'skip' might extend this to 40 miles but the power from a yacht's VHF would not extend further as transmission is limited by the earth's curvature.



Sometimes you'll hear a radio transmission quite clearly which is many, many miles beyond normal transmission capabilities of your normal VHF radio. This can be caused by skip, or in the case of Coast Guard, possibly repeater stations. Don't bother trying to talk back. Such transmissions are anomalous and usually only in one direction. This appears to be what happened in the case of *Sirius*. But one thing is clear. The first transmission was received at least 70 to 82 hours after departure from Cannes. Beating towards Menorca they would have faced westerly winds gusting up to 50 knots and would have made slow progress but even at 3 knots should have covered 200-240 miles which would have placed them close to Port Mahon in Menorca. Searches were restricted to the Franco-Spanish segment. However from personal experience wind and drift would have placed them well east of the rhumb line. Taking into account the radio signals I would deduce that *Sirius* had drifted to a position SW of Ajaccio or close to Asinara, that is some 40 miles or so west of the position *Rigel* received the PAN messages. The search and rescue operation was operating in the wrong but logical sector. The fact that skilled sailors issued a PAN urgency signal would indicate that at that point they were not sinking or they would have issued a MAYDAY which might have triggered a ship response. I can only conclude therefore that they suffered rudder damage and could not steer in the severe conditions and were carried eastward and foundered.