

Pangolin, www.pangolin.co.nz, is one of several sites that enables cruisers to post their position online, allowing friends and family to follow the boat's progress.

three-day tabular and 24-hour graphic format.

www.tidesonline.com: Tides Online takes a different approach by posting tidal time differences for many non-reporting locations that can be referenced to a nearby tidal reporting station. Data includes the times of high and low for each location but not the height of the tide.

WEATHER

Weather information abounds on the Web these days. We concentrated on websites that provided the most diverse offerings in marine weather or ones that offered unique weather information.

www.opc.ncep.noaa.gov/: The Ocean Prediction Center, a NOAA-run mainstay, provides the Coast Guard with weather fax charts to broadcast and the High Seas voice broadcasts. They generate NAVTEX for the U.S. and dovetail with the National Hurricane Center on tropical status storms.

www.ndbc.noaa.gov/: Wind, wave, and local weather info updated hourly; stations located around coastal U.S. and offshore.

weather.org/marine_weather.htm: A myriad of worldwide marine weather information that includes links to everything from local notices to mariners to the Farmer's Almanac.

www.usno.navy.mil/: The U.S. Naval Oceanography portal has a vast array of worldwide meteorological and oceanographic products, including an analysis of the sky and its constellations for the current week and access to time hacks from the USNO clock.

weather.navy.mil/home1.html: Accessible through the Naval Portal, scrolling down to the miscellaneous heading and selecting Oceanographic Products on this page leads to one of the few public sources of daily Gulf Stream predictions, complete with current speed and direction for the eastern seaboard.

www.grib.us: GRIB (GRIdded Binary) is a binary data format. Forecast data generated from computerized weather models is stored in GRIB files that include atmospheric pressure, wind direction/speed, precipitation and temperature predictions for a period of several days. GRIB files are produced by several agencies, including NOAA, with the caveat that they are unchecked by human forecasters. GRIB files are freely available to the public, but require special software to display in a map format. At this site, you'll find free, downloadable software that retrieves data for a selected area from the Internet and displays

Website Roundup

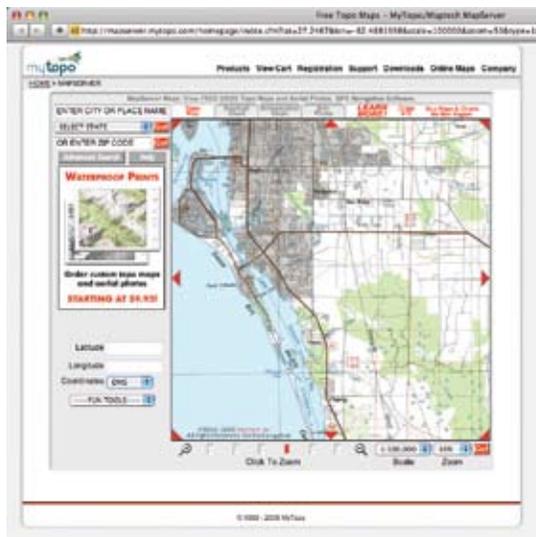
Online resources help connect sailors and provide information.

The Internet is an almost endless source of information, but finding what you need can be a frustrating task. We've tried to streamline the job a bit with some useful links tailored to the boating community. Some are unique and contain hard-to-find information, while others are commercial sites that offer technical libraries and information in their own areas of expertise, with the obvious goal of promoting products and services.

As we have in our past website roundups (November 2001 and Feb. 1, 2005), we've also included forums where an exchange of information between cruisers can help solve a problem, provide the latest information on an anchorage, or connect sailors "socially," plus a comprehensive list of boat owner's associations. However, the listings are far from complete in any category. We'll be adding these links online at www.practical-sailor.com/links/.

ONLINE TIDES

www.tidesonline.nos.noaa.gov/monitor.html: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) operates several sites with online tidal information, all of which can be accessed from this site. Coverage includes the Caribbean, the continental U.S. plus Alaska and Hawaii, and several Pacific islands. Data includes tidal heights and times, water and air temperature, atmospheric pressure, and wind data for the tidal stations displayed in both



www.mapserver.maptech.com

The www.weather.msfc.gov interactive site displays infrared and visible weather images using the GOES satellite system. NOAA's National Weather Service website (at right, below) can be found at www.weather.gov.

it graphically on a chart corresponding to the selected region. Coverage is worldwide, and there is no charge. New users are required to register with a valid e-mail address, but registration does not appear to generate any unsolicited e-mail or other forms of advertising.

www.nhc.noaa.gov: NOAA's National Hurricane Center, a relatively new hurricane tracking site that replaces NOAA Storm Tracker.

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/marine/rfax.pdf: Worldwide schedule of marine weather fax broadcasts including times, frequencies, and station call signs. Maintained by NOAA and updated regularly.

weather.msfc.nasa.gov/GOES/: One-stop site for infrared, visible, and moisture trail images from the GOES satellite system.

www.sailflow.com: Sailflow is a great place to get forecasts and current condition info for winds and surf, as well as general weather information. We've found it to be very accurate.

NAVIGATION & ALERTS

www.pan Canal.com/eng/index.html: Official Panama Canal site with current transit fees, regulations, and requirements. Watch other vessels transit the canal live via webcams.

my.boatus.com/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=136: Tom and Mel Neale's bi-monthly alerts for boaters along the East Coast, ICW, Chesapeake, and the Bahamas.

www.navcen.uscg.gov/lnm/: Local notices to mariners for U.S. waters. Published weekly in downloadable PDF format.

www.icw-net.com/: ICW Coastal Guide.

www.captainwiki.com/: Worldwide Online Sailing Wiki with many cruising guides.

www.mapserver.maptech.com/: View nautical, aeronautical, and topographical maps and charts online: free.

SOFTWARE

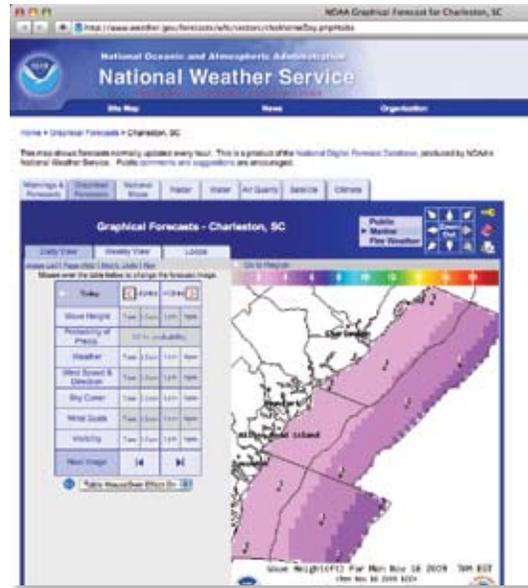
Marine software that ranks with the best and freely offered to the public, thanks to the generosity of the authors.

www.flaterco.com/xtide/: A tidal prediction program with both graphic and tabular displays that can be downloaded. XTide, originally written for Linux operating system, is still available for many flavors of Linux, as well as Windows, OS X, Pocket PC, Palm, and other versions that have been ported or derived from XTide source code by others.

www.sping.com/seaclear/: A full-featured Windows-based charting software that uses NOAA-downloadable raster charts. SeaClear has been reported to run well on Linux using Wine software. (See *Practical Sailor*, October 2007.)

CHART DOWNLOADS

Links for downloading raster and vector format nautical charts of almost all U.S. waters, free of charge courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer and NOAA.



www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/Raster/download_agreement.htm: Download free NOAA nautical charts in raster format (RNCs).

www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/enc/download_agreement.htm: Download free NOAA nautical charts in vector format (ENCs).

MEDICAL

www.seasickness.co.uk: Dedicated to causes, remedies, and medical discussion of seasickness; very informative.

www.mainsailing.com/medical.htm: Medical planning and recommendations for assembling an onboard medical kit.

www.cigua.com: Definitive guide on ciguatera poisoning.

www.cdc.gov/travel: Medical information for travelers.

TECHNICAL HELP

www.cruisingclub.org/seamanship/seamanship_offshore.htm: The Cruising Club of America site's seamanship section contains a collection of detailed articles on offshore communications and electronics.

www.glacierbay.com/support/library_docs/tech_library.html: Glacier Bay, a marine refrigeration company maintains a technical library that includes some excellent tools for calculating heat load and insulation requirements for marine refrigeration and freezer applications.

www.kollmann-marine.com/index.html: The site offers some

Owners Groups Can Be Treasure Trove of Info

Many regional owners groups exist, but where possible, we've listed the national or international organizations. Registration is usually required, and although membership is often free, some groups do impose dues as part of their membership requirements. A few of these sites have obvious commercial links but still fulfill the purpose of an owner's organization.

You can find additional owners' association links on the *Practical Sailor* website at www.practical-sailor.com/links/.

SAILBOAT OWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND GROUPS

Alberg 30: www.alberg30.org

Alberg 37: www.alberg37.org

Allied Seawind II: www.alliedseawindii.org

Amel: groups.yahoo.com/group/amelyachtowners

Baba, Panda & Tashiba Yachts: groups.yahoo.com/group/baba-l

Banjer 37: www.banjer37.net

Bavaria: www.bavariaowners.co.uk

Cape Dory: www.capedory.org

Catalac Catamarans: www.catalac.net/

Catalina: catalina.sailboatowners.com/

Cheoy Lee Yachts: www.cheoyleeassociation.com

Columbia: www.columbia-yachts.com

Corbin 39: www.corbin39.com

Downeaster: www.downeastyachts.org

Ericson: ericson.sailboatowners.com

Endeavour: www.endeavourowners.com

Hans Christian: www.hanschristian.org

Hylas: www.hyoa.org

Gulfstar: www.gulfstaroc.org

Hallberg-Rassy: www.hrowners.net

Hunter: hunter.sailboatowners.com

Island Packet: www.iphomeport.com/

Islander 36: www.islander36.org

Kettenburg: www.kettenburgboats.com

Mason: groups.yahoo.com/group/PAE_Mason_sailboat_owners/

Moody: www.moodyowners.net

Morgan: mailer.fsu.edu/~kklein

Pearson: www.pearsoncurrent.com

Nauticat: www.nauticatownersgroup.com

Pan Oceanic: www.panoceanic.net

Rival: www.panoceanic.net

Southern Cross: www.southerncross-boats.org

Swan: www.swanowners.com

Tartan: www.tartanownersweb.org

Tayana: groups.google.com/group/tognews
(e-mail discussion group)

Valiant: www.valiant-owners.org

Westerly: www.westerly-owners.co.uk

Westsail: www.westsail.org

basic information on marine refrigeration by R.L. Kollmann, author of "Do-it-Yourself Boat Refrigeration."

edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SG071: Marine Lightning Protection CEO Dr. Ewen Thomson discusses lightning and sailboats. For more, see www.marinelightning.com as well.

www.boatdiesel.com: Comprehensive site for all things diesel.

MAINTENANCE HOW-TO'S

www.yachtpaint.com: Paint-maker Interlux's website offers tips and videos on a range of coatings projects, including wood finishing and hull painting. Click on the "How To" link.

www.boatus.com/howto/howto_lib.htm: Some of maintenance guru Don Casey's articles in a free how-to library online.

www.practical-sailor.com/marine: PS offers free-access articles on boat maintenance in our Tools & Techniques section.

CRUISING FORUMS

Many of these began as forums where questions and comments could be shared and were often a good source for up-to-date cruising information and solutions. Most have grown well beyond that concept and now include a wide selection of other cruiser-related services like crew lists, member classified ads, brokerage services, weather links, and member databases.

www.cruisersforum.com: Dedicated to the cruising lifestyle with over 18,000 members, the Cruiser's Forum connects sailors who share interests and seek information. It does a good job of enforcing its own rules that call for polite participation, no spammers, and limited advertising. It also has a nice photo gallery of member-uploaded pictures.

www.7knots.com: The 7 Knots database offers a forum, classified section, logs from members around the world, and more. It has a large membership, and its database is easy to update with your own photos and logs.

www.sailnet.com/forums/cmpps_index.php: Sailnet bills itself as the world's largest online sailing community, and it may well be with news, articles, discussion groups, free e-mail, and an online chandlery.

CRUISING RESOURCES

www.noonsite.com: Jimmy Cornell's global website for cruising sailors, a first-rate resource for a wide variety of cruising information for just about any place in the world.

www.setsail.com: In part, a commercial site featuring Steve and Linda Dashew's publications, Setsail.com's tech section contains very informative articles written by cruisers, and the Cruising Central section is well worth a look.

www.yachtpiracy.org/en/index.htm: Forewarned is forearmed; this site publishes the latest information on unsafe regions and yacht piracy in the world.

www.pangolin.co.nz/yotreps/index.php: Cruisers can report their position here, and family and friends can follow your progress online. Members report weather conditions and can receive regional weather reported near their position. Pangolin also offers some useful free software utilities downloads.

The website of Kids Aboard magazine, www.kidsaboard.com, offers a host of resources for families afloat—from general articles to events calendars to activity suggestions.

CLUBS AND CRUISING ORGANIZATIONS

Many of these organizations have informative areas that can be accessed by the public. All are dedicated to the promotion of cruising and sailing and frequently welcome new member inquiries.

www.spinsheet.com/directory.asp: Chesapeake Sailing Clubs: Cruising clubs and sailing organizations on the Chesapeake Bay are too numerous to include here, but this link has a comprehensive listing.

www.scca.org/: The Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) is dedicated to supporting the liveaboard cruising lifestyle. Membership isn't free, but the information is worth the fee.

www.oceancruisingclub.org: The Ocean Cruising Club (OCC), founded 55 years ago by a small group of ocean sailors, continues to be a gathering place for long-distance sailors.

www.cruisingclub.org: The Cruising Club of America (CCA), now in its 85th year with over 1,200 members, continues to promote good seamanship, the design of seaworthy yachts, and environmental awareness

www.womensailing.org: The National Women's Sailing Association (NWSA), founded by Doris Colgate, provides opportunities for women to learn and enhance sailing skills.

www.bluewatercruising.org: The Bluewater Cruising Association (BCA), based in Vancouver, B.C., is dedicated to offshore mariners and those with similar aspirations. Offshore fleet meetings and rendezvous are frequently organized to aid in preparing for extended passages.

www.cruising.org.uk: The Cruising Association (CA), based in the UK, is a worldwide cruising organization that provides its members with numerous services and facilities.

www.boatus.com: The Boat Owners Association of the U.S. (BoatUS), initially linked with marine stores of the same name, supports boating interests in government, provides a source of marine insurance, surveys, and other services.

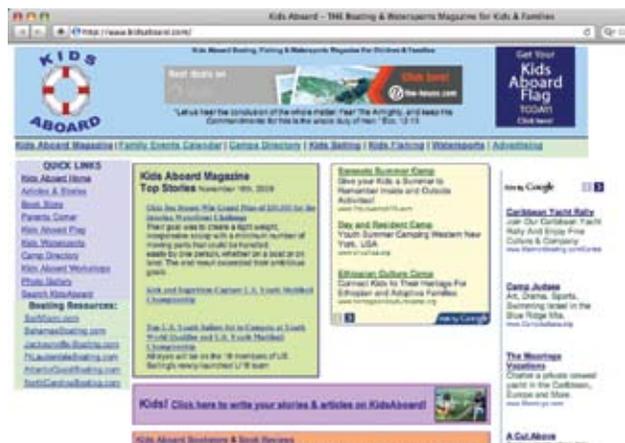
FAMILY SAILING

www.kidsaboard.com: An excellent resource for kid-friendly and family-friendly articles, activities, and more.

www.homeschoolteenscollege.net/links.htm: A compilation of links for boat-schooling resources.

COMMUNITY

In the same vein that radio nets help cruisers keep in touch with those in their area, social networking websites connect users with like-minded



ed sailors worldwide.

www.trailersailor.com: The domain says it all.

www.waboard.com: Women Aboard, a network for women in boating.

www.sailmonster.com: Up-and-coming FaceBook for sailors.

www.activeboating.com: A social networking site for all types of recreational boaters.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

Oftentimes, the best resources for sailing information are those who've been there and done that. And thankfully, many cruisers have created websites to pass on their lessons-learned.

www.landpardey.com: Well-known authors and cruisers, Lin and Larry Pardey offer some great free advice (articles and helpful videos) on everything from kedging to maintaining varnish.

www.womenandcruising.com: Information on everything from cruising with kids to keeping finances afloat.

www.morganscloud.com: The Morgan's Cloud crew has plenty of high-latitude adventures under their belts, and have lessons to teach.

www.bethandevans.com: Articles and how-to's from two-time circumnavigators, PS contributors Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger.

MORE LINKS

www.atlintracoastal.org/: Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway Association dedicated to support of the ICW.

www.sarsat.noaa.gov/beacon.html: Register your EPIRB or update existing registration information here.

www.boat-links.com/boatlink.html: The mother of all maritime links. If it's a marine topic on the Internet, it's probably here.

www.depco pump.com: Depco pump is a source for just about every type of marine pump and related parts, including water system, engine cooling, and air-conditioning applications.

www.rparts.com: R-Parts is a source for a wide range of marine refrigeration replacement parts and components plus DIY kits and box building materials. ▲



www.womenandcruising.com