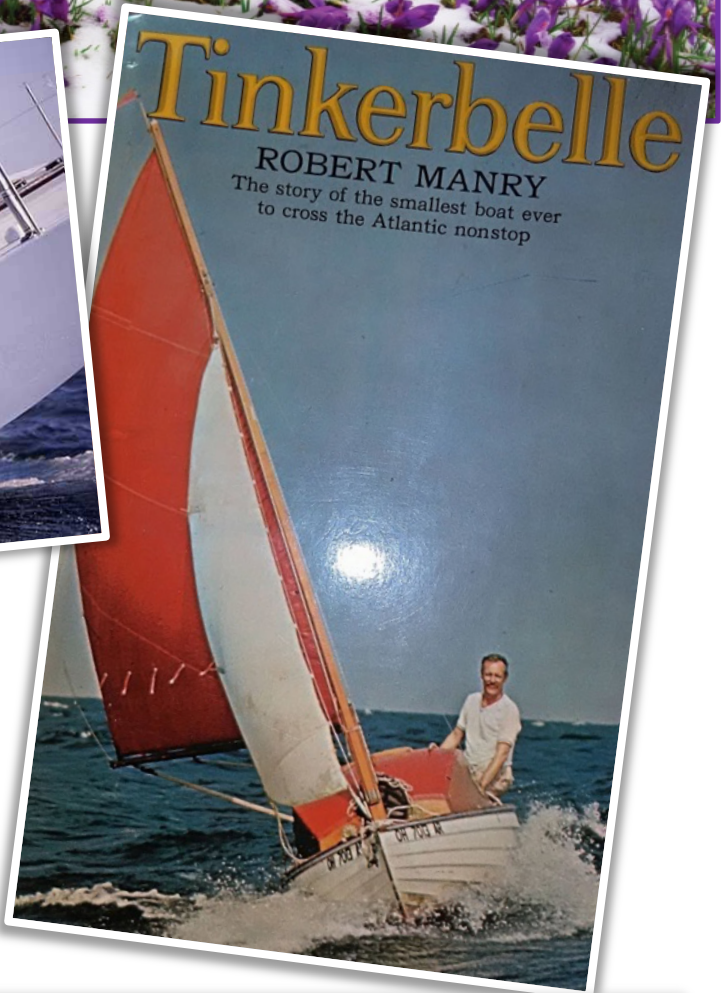


# Acton Action

The Spring Issue (honestly)!



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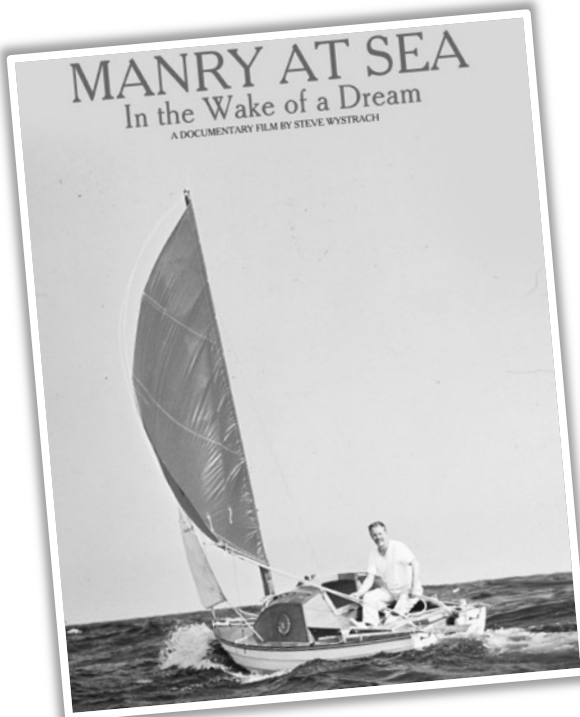
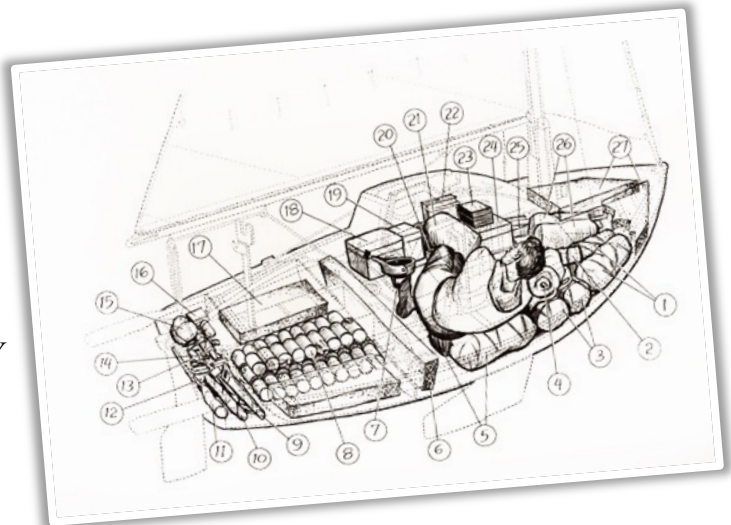
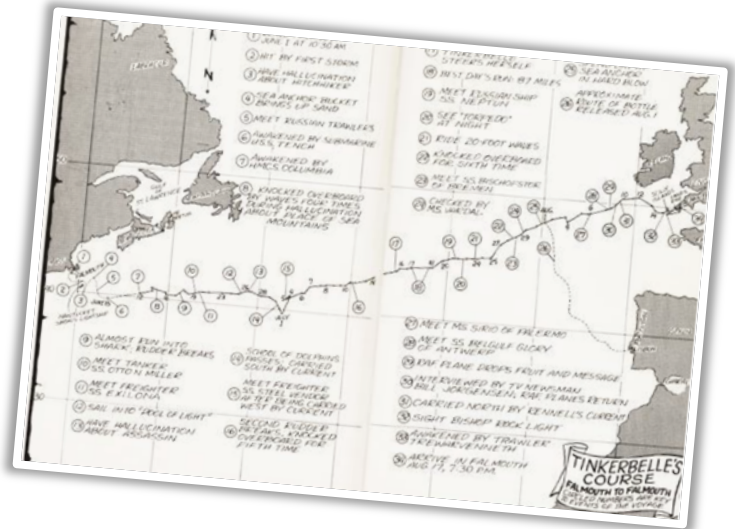


# Tinkerbelle & Single-handed Dreamer, Robert Manry

Inexperienced but practical and detail-oriented Cleveland Plain Dealer editor, Robert Manry, at the age of 47, sailed single-handed from Falmouth Massachusetts to Falmouth England—a distance of 3,200 miles on a DIY-modified 13 ½ foot Whitecap dinghy named Tinkerbelle. In the summer of 1965, his voyage set the record for the smallest sailboat to cross the Atlantic, nonstop, solo!

Tinkerbelle's 78-day passage is a classic inspiring yarn guaranteed to take you from "what a lunatic dreamer" to "what a resourceful and resilient sailor" in 284 illustrated pages. You'll follow his schoolboy dream to its triumphant realization with rudder failures, high seas courtesies, dolphins, knockdowns, hallucinations, and even a submarine!

You can find this amazing story of Robert Manry and Tinkerbelle in hardback but thanks to Cleveland State University Michael Schwartz Library and MSL Academic Endeavorslink, you can also see these illustrations, in context, for free: <https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/tinkerbelle/> Alternatively, a 93-minute award-winning documentary film will give your imagination plenty to ponder regarding your own big dreams: *MANRY AT SEA ~ In the Wake of a Dream* (First shown at Cleveland's Film Fest, Dir. Steve Wystrach, 2018).



There is no dream so large, that it can't fit into a tiny boat...

## Coyote: The Mike Plant Story – Single-handed Dreamer #2

I had never heard of Mike Plant.

In 2002 he was inducted into the Single-Handed Sailor's Hall of Fame. Not bad for a former lake sailor from Lake Minnetonka in Minnesota. Not bad for a former drug smuggler and international fugitive from justice. Not bad for midwestern guy who got the money for his first ocean boat by bringing back drugs from South America.

So just what did Mike Plant do to arrive in the HOF for single-handed sailing? Plant moved to Jamestown, RI in 1985 at age 35, a date long after his drug adventure days. He somehow came up with enough money to build a boat, an Open 50 class, so that he could participate in the BOC Challenge, a round the world race in four stages but sailing solo, something he had never done.

With only a partial sponsorship from Airco Distributor (the name of his boat also), Plant proceeded to win his class. It is all the more remarkable that he did, given that a month before the race, he was arrested in the Azores on an old drug charge and imprisoned in Portugal, his boat, *Airco Distributor*, impounded.

A few years later he had built another boat, this time an Open 60 class boat, to compete in the Vendee Globe, a solo non-stop race around the world. This is where Mike Plant entered into legend. He became the fastest American to sail single-handed around the world in a time of 135 days. In the US, few knew about his accomplishments. In France, long the hothouse incubator of ocean racers, he was a hero and received a hero's welcome from the French even though he ended up in seventh place.



Why the hero's welcome? As Plant was nearing Campbell Island just north of Australia, a five-dollar part on his mast broke, preventing him from tacking onto starboard. He got blown near Campbell Island where he was forced to anchor in a dangerous spot in high wind. A group of men on the island manning a weather station saw his predicament and motored out in a dinghy to help him keep his boat from being smashed on the rocks.

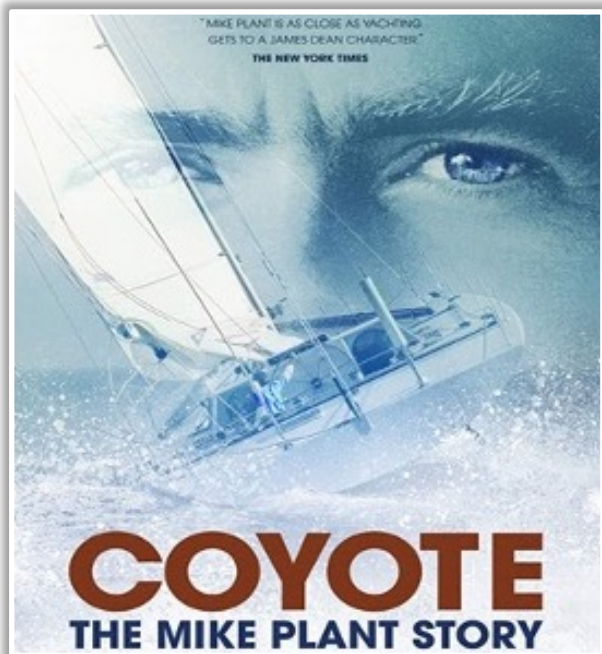
They towed him to safety, and he repaired his boat and returned to the race, but not until after he told race officials that he had to disqualify himself for receiving assistance. The men from the weather station told him they would not tell anyone about the help so no one would know. Plant told them that he would know. A French crowd of more than 25,000 greeted him in Les Sables-d'Olonne, France. He finished the race despite being disqualified and the French rewarded him for his honesty. Not bad for a former drug smuggler. A second BOC Challenge followed in 1990 where he finished 4<sup>th</sup>, setting a new American record.

Ocean racing was changing at this point and a new kind of ocean racing monohulls were being built. Plant, determined to compete again, somehow got enough barebone backing to enter and built a new boat in the Open 60 class in the Vendee Globe Race, which is essentially a solo, non-stop race around an island. But the island is Antarctica. Was this a bridge too far? Again, lacking adequate sponsorship, heavily in debt, and running out of time in Donald Crowhurst fashion, he was on the verge of not making it to France for the October 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

For what happens after that, you will have to see the documentary. It's titled *Coyote: The Mike Plant Story*, and you can see it for free on YouTube. Dream big. Here is a link to the film.


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHpl8TsVZ0s>

Many thanks to editor emeritus Mike Stratton for this article!





# Hueston Woods' "Culvert of Sighs" To Be Replaced!



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## HUESTON WOODS STATE PARK

✓

**Construction Underway (2/27/23):** Pardon our dirt as we build a new bridge in front of the Campground; it will replace the road and culverts. The road remains open to traffic. This project will be ongoing through 2023.

Alert members may have noticed the "Pardon our Dirt" proclamation on ODNR's website. Park Manager Kathryn Conner has confirmed that the occasionally overflowing roadway near the campground entrance is getting reimaged as a timber arch bridge! Some HSAers have traveled to Italy and experienced the beautiful Bridge of Sighs in Venice but many more of us have toured our local version, Hueston Woods' somewhat less remarkable "Culvert of Sighs," on the way to the marina. The new timber arch bridge will eliminate those road-closed barricades-up heavy-sigh moments when the culverts are clogged and the creek is running over the top of the roadway covering it in debris. The existing roadway will remain open until the bridge switchover phase, currently scheduled from late September to December. As always, the Park's Rangers will strive to temporarily open the back campground gate (first left past the covered bridge, when conditions allow) as a shortcut back to the marina. Commendably, Park staff also successfully obtained a substantial grant to bolster the budget for more replacement trees around the affected construction area. Well done ODNR!



## Paul Hemker: Sailor, Flying Dutchman Racer, Engineer-BUILDER, and Friend of HSA



Long time HSA member Jerry Callahan has known Paul forever and remembers Paul asking him to crew for him in a Flying Dutchman World Championship. “It would have required someone to train with him pretty hard,” he said. “I couldn’t do it and couldn’t find anyone for him.” Though he wasn’t able to do the crewing, Callahan and others at HSA relied on Paul over the years for Y-Flyer repairs and rigging. “Paul was the developer of the DP-1 mast that was used by the Y-Flyer class for a while,” Callahan told us. The Y that showed up at our lake last summer and owned by teenager Ryan Sernoffsky still has one of those tapered DP-1’s from the 1970’s.

Paul Hemker knows how to build boats. Over the course of six decades, he has built Snipes, Optimists, Flying Dutchmans, Rhodes Bantams, Contenders, Australis catamarans, Moths, DP 22s, Flying Juniors, canoes, and rowing dories.

But the list doesn’t stop there. Many at HSA have gone to Paul over the years to get new masts, to get rigging problems solved, have bottoms painted, or hulls repaired. He has also built Batmobile bodies. Yes, Batmobiles. For Gotham Cruisers in Dayton.

It has all mostly taken place in tiny New Paris, Ohio, population 1,629, which resides right on the Indiana border in the far northwestern corner of Preble County. After high school Paul went to Midland, Michigan and got a job at Dow Chemical there where he learned all about thermoplastics. He was a plastics technical service engineer with that company.

In Midland he was assigned to a group involved in new products. One of his bosses had a Melges 16 that he wanted to go even faster in, so Paul worked on a foam product and built a Melges prototype that would accommodate the foam. The Melges brass weren’t interested so it was just “a fun project with no financial reward,” according to Paul. The experience would, however, be helpful as he turned toward owning his own plastics business right in our own backyard.



I just want to say one word to you. Just one word. Plastics.





After five years in Midland where he and a few buddies started building fiberglass Flying Dutchman on the side, they decided to move to a more commercial area near New Paris for its location near interstate commerce. Two businesses sprouted up there, Dynamic Plastics and Boats-A-Sail.

In their free time, Paul and his wife Heide sailed a Flying Dutchman at Middle Fork Reservoir in Richmond until Brookville Lake was dammed. "We launched off a drowned highway there," he says. Their love of this Dutch planing one-design dinghy grew as Paul got involved with the FD class.

The couple and their two sons sailed together, sometimes at Brookville and sometimes at Cowan Lake where Paul believes the first Flying Dutchman fleet in the country was based. He also crewed with a couple of HSA Y-Flyers back in the day – Dan Horrigan and Fuller Moore--at Hueston Woods.

These days Paul is active in the USA and International Flying Dutchman class leadership and is an International Measurer for World Sailing events. Now in his early 80's Paul has quit bottom painting. "The least pleasant job over the years has always been the prep work for bottom painting, so I have decided to retire from being 'Poppa Smurf.'" In the meantime, repairs and refitting is still fun so those jobs will still be welcome," he said. He recently restored a Flying Dutchman from Long Island, NY and is working on a 1989 and 1966 Batmobile. Holy Flying Dutchman, Batman!

Many thanks to editor emeritus Mike Stratton for this article!



Paul has seen it all and like all good sailors knows that Springtime is the time to check your rig! Standing and running rigging need a good going over at least once a year. Mastheads are down near eyeball level so pause a few minutes and check your sheaves, clevis pins and cotters, cable ends, and spreaders for corrosion/wear. Don't forget deck hardware, sheets, and shroud/stays!

## Brett Hart and Joe Fulford Get Their Dreamer Mojo On

The offseason winter months were busy for Brett and Joe as they got a step closer to their dreams of bareboat yacht chartering.

Brett and his daughter Maggie ventured down to Hilton Head Island SC and Port Royal Sound in late December to get valuable training experience with Anchors Away Sailing Charters aboard a 38 ft Catalina masthead sloop, Knot the Office. The owner, a USCG Master Captain, put them through their paces on cruiser systems, rigging, navigation, weather, docking, safety, and sailing in all kinds of conditions including fog, tidal currents, and significant wind and waves.

Brett's dream is to charter boats for pleasure sailing and he is on a two-track training path with interests in ASA certification courses and USCG licensure. He is capturing the required days of sailing experience and necessary classroom theory with NauticED's online logbook. Bareboat charter companies around the world look not only for certifications but *also experience* and NauticED captures both as Brett moves forward.

Brett made quick use of his new-found knowledge and experience just a month later as he and his family enjoyed sailing in Tortola, BVI—an experience that did not require foul weather gear.



Joe's dream is similar—get enough experience and training to safely and confidently bareboat charter yachts with Leigh Ann.

Working with Offshore Sailing School, he attended their 103/104 live-aboard course in Tampa Bay FL for a week in February. The boat was a four cabin, four head, Jeanneau 479, Breaking Away, that he shared with the instructor, a couple from Iowa, and a Brit living in Boston.

Steve and Doris Colgate, the owners of Offshore Sailing have been training sailors for over 50 years in partnership with US Sailing. They use the Colgate 26, a boat Steve designed for their basic keelboat students but now also sailed by US Naval and Coast Guard Academy plebes/cadets.

The training was similar to Brett's in that Joe skippered Breaking Away in very strong and light winds, navigated shallow waters, moored & anchored, overcame tidal currents with the "Iron Sail," docked at seaside restaurants, and interacted with drawbridge operators while beating, running, and reaching in and around St Petersburg. The foul weather gear remained in the lockers but in the mornings, it did get down into the low 70's.

Joe has not made it to the BVI yet but will sail this summer in the UK. Lake Windemere has Hanse Varianta 18s available where he "*...shall break out the jib and the foresail, the white houses on the harbour side will glide slowly past as she gathers steering-way, and the voyage will have begun!*" Kenneth Grahame, *Wind in the Willows*

