

Kirt Hine

Marigo Adventures - Christmas Letters 1972 – 1975

(Compiled by Ted Hine – April, 2003)

The following Christmas Letters, assumed to have been written by Mary, were sent by Mary and Kirt Hine to relatives and friends and contain mostly news about their adventures aboard Yacht Marigo during the previous year. If Christmas letters and/or cards were sent in years other than those presented here, I did not keep them.

Table of Contents

Christmas Card – 1968.....	2
Christmas Letter 1972 – West Indies.....	3
Christmas Letter 1973 (Page 1) – Haiti, Jamaica, Grand Cayman	4
Christmas Letter 1974 – Maine.....	6
Christmas Letter 1975 – Bahamas, Southwest Harbor Maine	7

Christmas Card – 1968



1968 Christmas Card

Photo was taken by Ted Hine during the summer of 1968 in Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island Sound, New York.

"Marigo" Adventures

1971-72

For the first time "Marigo" had a crew of two during the cruising season - Mary's nephew, Bob Cowan, just back from Vietnam, and his delightful bride, Deborah.

Never has "Marigo" had such care. Her teak rails reflected constant attention, her shroud rollers glistened with new varnish, and her forepeak was neat and orderly at all times. Bob made the baggywinkles that now adorn her rigging. No effort was spared in maintaining and improving "Marigo". She was scrubbed and pampered.

In the Bahamas our talented skin-diving crew kept "Marigo's" larder supplied with lobster from nearby coral reefs. Fish caught with the trolling rod were expertly cleaned and eaten, or frozen.

Our crew's enthusiasm for the underwater world resulted in many an excellent picture of plant and fish life beneath the surface.

In the Virgin Islands "Marigo" became for the first time "the boat with the baby aboard". Captain Kirt calmly converted "Marigo" into a nursery ship for Mary's eight months old grandson, Peter. It was to be a season for relatives and friends to enjoy "Marigo". The hundreds of harbors in the Virgin Islands made ideal cruising conditions for all. With the help of our crew, we even ventured to reef-surrounded Anegada Island, the graveyard of many a vessel.

It was in the Virgins that we spotted the Humpback Whales. We saw their gigantic bodies leaping completely out of the water and their towering white flippers flaying the air.

Our focal point in the West Indies, the French Island of St. Barthelemy, proved to be an island of enchantment. Friendly people welcomed us. Incredibly steep and narrow paved roads afforded spectacular views of the sea, beaches and bays, rocks, pasture land, and salt ponds, from the top of every rise. Adventurous boat owners in the harbor provided companionship and festivities for our crew. A farewell beach barbecue, featuring the roasting of a whole sheep (or was it a goat?) was a climactic and unforgettable experience.

Homeward bound, in the Bahamas, we encountered a school of pilot whales accompanied by two 8 ft. white-tipped sharks. Movies show our crew in the dinghy, Bob face in the water with our underwater camera, the sharks circling and then swimming directly at the camera and under the dinghy.

It was a truly outstanding cruise for us and our stalwart crew.

This year "Marigo" will take us through the Windward Passage between Haiti and Cuba to the Islands of Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Roatan in the Gulf of Honduras, and Cozumel off the Yucatan.

"Marigo" Adventures

1972 - 1973

"Blow ye Winds - Hi Ho!" typifies the 1973 voyage of our good ship "Marigo", from the Jib Club, Jupiter, through the Bahamas to Haiti, Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Cozumel, Dry Tortugas and home. The winds averaged 25 and gusted to 40 m.p.h., keeping the rigging humming and the decks awash on every major ocean crossing.

Aboard was Kirt's nephew, Bruce Darling, from Wenatchee, Washington, a college graduate blessed with a magnificent physique. Without previous cruising experience, he soon proved to be considerate, conscientious, and able in spite of shrieking winds and savage seas.

A welcome companion for the good ship "Marigo" was another Countess 44, the "No Strings", owned and skippered by Russ Kelley, accompanied by his wife Joan, and crewed by John Hurley, a Marblehead sailor. In lonely primitive harbors it was comforting to have her nested alongside, or anchored nearby.

In the Exumas, an out island chain of islands of the Bahamas, Kirt helped prevent "No Strings" from sinking by finding and plugging a hole in her hull. At Staniel Cay we experienced our first norther. Further south another hit. The anchorage being poor, we sailed all night to avoid any possible dangers. At Great Inaugua's small man-made harbor only an alert captain and the ability of our crew to secure extra lines prevented disaster to both our vessels during the sleepless night.

The nighttime dowsing of the Genoa jib in gale force winds during the ocean crossing from Great Inaugua to the northeast tip of Haiti was a formidable task for Kirt and Bruce, but the safe anchorage at St. Nicholas Mole, Haiti, coupled with the incredibly primitive and picturesque scenery soon restored morale.

Haiti is a land of magnificent mountains, some almost denuded of trees to provide charcoal for cooking. It's masses of people exist on inadequate food, consider an empty can a priceless treasure, and search garbage for a tasty tid-bit. Their medical needs depend on dedicated missionaries. Their escape from reality came from Voo Doo rites, the beat of Voo Doo drums intensifying until the early hours.

Port-au-Prince is the crowded capital city, spread in a half-moon at the water's edge, and surrounded by brooding mountains, where castles and charming homes could be found. Bargaining for services and goods was a way of life. Here the Holy Trinity School Gift shop provided an outlet for the arts and crafts of talented natives and parents of children attending the school, the children themselves participating in creating small gifts, under the guidance and inspiration of a remarkable woman, Barbara Wallace.

Christmas Letter 1973 (Page 2)

Heading east from Port-au-Prince we discovered a deep green Amazon-like river. At the Cayemites, a small fishing village, we delighted the natives by handing out polaroid pictures, but Mary was badly frightened when a mob of natives became too friendly.

In Jamaica thievery and an unfriendly attitude was evident. At Montego Bay, Kirt looked up an English couple, Eve and Lloyd Foster, owners of a 1,000 acres of pasture land in the mountains. Finding their home involved a long ride by taxi into the bush, but Kirt was rewarded when Eve, a talented and attractive woman, welcomed him by saying, "Mr. Hine, I presume. We are expecting you." We were saddened to hear that they were being forced to sell their land and return to England.

Another boisterous ocean crossing brought us to Grand Cayman Island, an investors paradise, offering scuba diving, fishing, sailing, and a 7 mile beach. We were joined by son, Jerry and his friend Robin, and by daughter Abigail. "Romance" became the watchword, and spinnaker riding the favorite sport. The redoubtable Bruce amazed us by swimming our 35 lb. anchor with 12 ft. of chain a considerable distance, and by lifting and lowering two 150 lb. batteries aboard Marigo.

In conclusion we experienced another windy crossing to Cozumel, followed by a four day and four night fight against wind and sea to the Dry Tortugas, the most difficult crossing of the winter.

This year we plan to winter in Florida. There will be some racing for "Marigo" and some jaunts to the Bahamas. So let the winds blow - Hi! Ho!

"Marigo's" Summer Cruise

1974

This year, the lure of the unknown, of Carribean Paradises, of Enchanted Islands in the Pacific, of Haitian Voodoo drums and mountain grandeur succumbed to the desire to renew old friendships, to revisit familiar surroundings, and to see for ourselves the much vaunted cruising waters of Maine. Four months and 4,000 miles after our departure in June, we returned to Florida, having accomplished our mission.

Inevitably there were many friends that we were unable to contact, but almost every port-o-call provided the warmth and hospitality of new and old friends from near and far.

In spite of grim predictions of cold and fog, Maine produced for our benefit sailing breezes, sunshine, sparkling waters, unending vistas of beauty, snug anchorages surrounded by rocks against a back-drop of evergreens and enhanced by incredibly stimulating and pollution-free air.

At Newport we learned that perfection can be achieved, provided there is enough money to hire the skilled talents of the world's best Naval Architects and enough inspiration to obtain the determined and unceasing efforts of the right skipper and crew. Either "Courageous" or "Intrepid" could have successfully defended the America's Cup. The races between these two spectacular boats produced more than photo finishes. They exhibited skills in handling that we shall not have the opportunity of observing again. Unless, of course, we attend some more America Cup trials.

To all who contributed to our happiness and the success of this year's cruise we give heart-felt thanks. Memories of your companionship and all your kindnesses will make Christmas very special for us this year. We salute you.

“Marigo” Adventures - 1975

The winter of '75 found “Marigo” often in the Bahamas exploring the crystal clear waters of the Little Bahama Bank. In May, new rub rails were added at Man-O-War Cay, while all aboard sojourned at the James Hudson Cottage.

But the summer of '75 was not for cruising. Instead Marigo headed for the Hinckley Boat Yard in Southwest Harbor, Maine. There to remain for a complete overhaul. Her new decking and paint make her a gorgeous creature.

Capt. Hine supervised the entire job, adding much of his own labor, while the mate indulged a long suppressed desire to learn to play tennis again.

Hence, the Hine Xmas tree is decorated with boats and tennis balls.

This year “Marigo” commences a new career. She has been advertised for charter in Sail Magazine and Yachting with, or without Captain Hine, as pilot.

Merry Christmas to all.