



ST.SOME-BOAT-TIMES

SO...LIKE...I BOUGHT A BOAT!

After 43 years of water sports, lakes, rivers, oceans, scuba diving, sailing, and living on the Caribbean for three straight years, I finally bought my own boat.

Basically, she is a 1998 28-foot Coraline with twin 175 Evinrude motors. She was beautifully kept by my friends, the Willett family. The Willetts are leaving this year so they had to sell McCiarcia. Believe me. This was overnight. I have been mulling it over for the past three years, as I sit on my porch not three feet from a canal that opens into the Caribbean. The fact is, I have been saving money for a PhD program. But that program won't start for another year. So I put money into McCiarcia. Barring major catastrophic incidents, I should get the 20K back when I sell it. So is the nature of buying and selling here in Venezuela. Anyway, I had decided a long time ago NOT to invest in a boat. Wham! One night without power, I changed my mind and called the Willetts to see if anyone had snagged their boat.

Now I have a boat. Fully paid for and sitting in a slip just one minute walk from my apartment. I still have to work out the boat captain license paperwork so I can actually purchase the fuel without Steve's help. They check your paperwork when you purchase fuel. It takes about 20 minutes to drop 300 liters of fuel into the tank and it is hard to know how much fuel you have because the fuel gauge doesn't work. Steve had it replaced, but no luck. I simply rely on boat hours. The boat runs through 50L every hour. There is a 600L capacity. After 6 hours, I have to fill up 300L. Easy enough, and conservative.



Diving off My Own Boat

Steve Willett sold me the boat for a great price with a few strings attached. Most importantly, I promised we would dive off the boat. Steve and his family owned Mc Ciercia for four years, but he never dove. Until June 16th, 2012. What a feeling that was to dive off of my own boat! Simply priceless.

A check for the boat Slip



The "other side" - my slip



Loading up a few Feet from my apartment door



Motor Oil is exponentially more expensive than Fuel



Who Owns the Six Boat Slips Right Outside my Door?

Welcome to Venezuela. No one in the office really knows who owns the boat slips. Ughh. They have been empty for the past three years. Now I have a boat but the security guards won't let me park my boat in one of these empty slips. Why? Because somebody owns them and they might come back! Ughh. Of all the stupid, idiotic, \$#%\$*

I have to play the game. Instead of pursuing the enigma surrounding the nearby slips, I went a different route. A nice lady from my apartment complex on the other side of the pool owns a boat slip. Why? I don't know. She doesn't own a boat. Never has. Anyway, she has two cars and has to rent the other car space. Our apartments only come with one parking space (and some with boat slips obviously). She offered the boat slip for 500BsF to cover the 500BsF she pays for the parking space. It's a great deal for her, to offset the extra parking payment, and it is a fantastic deal for me. What a low cost for a boat slip! Some were asking for 1000BsF

per month. No way! I'd rather walk across the pool area.

When I go out in the boat, I warm up the motors and clean everything with fresh water at the slip. I drive the boat around the pool area and dock for a few minutes at my apartment to load



up the cushions, the coolers, and anybody that is going out in the boat. This sure beats trailering

a boat to a lake or trying to back up a boat trailer into a garage!

The Caribbean is literally five minutes from my apartment. With practice, I should get the timing from cold slip to open water within fifteen minutes. That is, unless I have to go get scuba tanks, fuel up, or wait for the women to finish "priming".

SOME OF THE COSTS FOR A BOAT IN VENEZUELA

Description of Expenditure	Local BsF	US dollars
300 Liters of Fuel at the Dock (this is no joke)	25 BsF	\$2.78
10 Liters of Mercury 2 Cycle Marine Motor Oil	600 BsF	\$67.00
1 Year Slip Rented from a Neighbor on the other side of the pool	6,000 BsF	\$670.00
Diving off of my own boat	Priceless	Priceless
per Scuba Tank with a few weights	70 BsF	\$7.75
Hauling the boat onto land for a sea sealant under-hull paint job	9,000 BsF	\$1,000

Learning to Use the Twin Motors



I have spent my entire life driving single motor boats. Sure, I watched my mom parallel park a huuuuge yacht between two other yachts, but I never tried something like that.

When would I ever need to know how to do that? Hmm. Now.

Once you try it, you won't ever go back to a single engine. I love coming in to a dock and using just the motors, forgetting the steering column. It's all about finesse. As Paul once advised me, while we were in his boat, "don't ever come in faster than the speed you'd like to crash at".

McCiarcia Rules?

- Ratio of women to men must always be equal or more women
- Buffett music ~ of course
- everyone helps pack and unpack when boat is near my apt.
- I clean and maintain it when everyone is gone
- More Buffett music
- don't forget the canopy
- Captains Ruben and William have knowledge
- Coach's family has full-time access
- It's for diving NOT fishing!



I have one bottle of Fantastik on board in honor of mom. My boat may not be as clean as yours, mom, but it will be close!



New Opportunities for Friends

The week of my birthday was another major Football (Soccer) Game for Venezuela. The big games are played right here in PLC so my friends usually show up on the latenight bus. Sure enough, I awoke to find people all over the apartment: Jhon, William, Igles, Ruben, Ruben's cousin Ruben, Manuel (William's Brother), his girlfriend Yalisa, some other dude, and Tomas. Tomas is the Cisco systems instructor for Ruben, William, and Jhon on the weekends. Yes, this was a full apartment.

The first day, half of us went in the boat to the beach. The other half had tickets for the game. Those of us that went in the boat came back from the beach early and watched the game at a local watering hole. The second day, I packed up the boat for a "sewer tour". Basically, it is just cruising the canals. I didn't have enough time to take them out to the islands and none of them had ever gone around the canals of PLC before. That's just it. So many of my VZ friends have never been to the islands, gone around the canals, or been out on the boat for a day. This boat is opening new opportunities for my local friends.



POOL PARTY!



Maid's from School Enjoy!

Most of the maid crew made it to the party this year. Too bad the maintenance dudes didn't make it. I think everyone had a lot of fun.



Software Problems

Ruben get's a little frustrated as he experiences software problems that he cannot cope with. It's too bad, because the hardware is in top condition.



Willet's Final Year Here

We will all miss the Willetts next year. It was a good run for them.

Another Successful Piscina and Parilla Birthday!

This was the third annual end of year party. I didn't take a lot of pictures though. On June 2, 2012 there were about 40 people at my house for parilla (BBQ) and piscina (pool). There was a rich mixture of gringos and Venezuelans this year. A lot of the cleaning ladies from school made it but the maintenance guys didn't make it. I had so much beer left over because the real beer drinkers are the maintenance guys.

We started around noon and made it until around 8pm, when just a few friends were sitting around the pool in the dark chatting.

A special shout out has to go to Joel Portillo, our assistant PE teacher. He was a fantastic DJ for us at the party. There was a lot of Salsa dancing and lots of rhythm to go around.

The Caracas Crew Hits the Pool Again!

Floats, noodles, mostly non-alcoholic drinks, Spanish and English, technology discussions, laughing, UW-camera shots, more laughing, people sleeping everywhere in my apartment, video games inside: these are all aspects of the Caracas family of friends that come to visit me for weekends at a time.

Jhon, William, Ruben, Igles, and their close friends know they have an open invitation. I have such a huge apartment, a pool, and now a boat. These are things they just don't have access to. My apartment offers them a super mini-vacation any time they can get on a bus from Caracas! It's my pleasure to share what I benefit from my life here in VZ.

I always look forward to it!



SuperWill
(left) walks on water around here.

*These Pics are by
Ruben*



La Vinotinto!

The **Venezuela national football team** is the national [football](#) team of [Venezuela](#) and is controlled by the [Federación Venezolana de Fútbol](#). It is nicknamed *La Vinotinto* (The Burgundy), because of the traditional burgundy color of their shirts.

When playing at home in official games they usually rotate between three stadiums: the [Polideportivo Cachamay](#), in [Puerto Ordaz](#); the [Estadio José Antonio Anzoátegui](#), in [Puerto La Cruz](#); and [Estadio Pueblo Nuevo](#), in [San Cristóbal](#). In friendly matches they tend to rotate between the rest of the stadiums in the country. - [Wikipedia](#)

When there is a game here in Estadio JAA, then I can expect an apartment full of anywhere from 4-9 fans overnight. I usually go too! It is a blast.

This game was a friendly match on the weekend against Chile. I went to sleep in an empty apartment on Friday night and woke up to a full apartment on Saturday morning. Nine people were spread out all over - wrapped in sheets and suffering from the air con 66°F/ 19°C that I keep my apartment at. (Who says I have to live in tropical heat ALL of the time?) But, this is the first visit I have NOT awoken to people playing Wii or Xbox on the wall. They usually arrive at 2am and play games all night.

Half of them hung out at the pool and later, went to the game. The other half of us went to the islands on my boat and watched the game later at a bar. VZ lost the game but we all had a great weekend.

I'm thinking about buying more blankets for the apt. I feel a little bad waking up and seeing everyone shivering in the cold.



VINOTINTO!



A Full Stadium

People here cannot fill the stadium for a 300BsF ticket to see Mana live, but they certainly pay that much for a Vinotinto game.

IF you want to get a taste of the true Venezuelan culture, just go to a game. The games are much safer than the games were in Honduras. The stadium is clean. The fans are passionate. It's easy to get to the games. Too bad they cannot win!



Already Been Hit!

So I took Ama, Coach, Maria, and Vanesa out on the boat for a Sunday beach day. Excellent. There were only two boats at the Seco Beach when we pulled up. Coach is really experienced with boats so dropping anchor off the bow and reversing back into the swim area limit rope to tie off the stern was relatively easy. We chose the far side of the semi-circle to limit any boats parking on at least one side of us. We settled in, pulled out the floats, and jumped into the Caribbean for a while.

A bit later, I was busy crafting a sandwich when Ama says "Goyo, be careful of your boat!". I look up and there is a 50+Ft yacht backing up right next to us. Problem was he came in right over my bow anchor line and he was coming in VERY close. The wind pushed him right into me as the idiot tried to get out of the situation. He just made it worse. He smashed his bow gently into my side hull and proceeded

to go forward. But forward was my anchor line. Standing on my bow, Coach and I just watched as the idiot tangled my anchor line in his prop. Four, fat, drunk guys dove in with masks to see what had happened. I was in awe. Coach went in with a mask and succeeded in releasing my line from the prop (the other guys couldn't stay under for more than 20 seconds).

The idiot driver left the fat guys swimming as he pulled the yacht away for another try. There was no "sorry" or "thank you for freeing our prop" or "oops". Nothing. What an asshole.

We watched as the same yacht did the same thing to one of the other two boats enjoying the Seco area. This guy driving the huge yacht had no idea! He hit two out of three boats that were spread out along the beach area. That's like driving a bus into an empty parking lot and hitting the only two cars while trying to park! Ugggh.

A Summer of Boating!

I'm not going home this summer. Not after buying a boat. No way. This will be a summer of Caribbean beaches and diving around PLC. Now I have to go out and buy more cabos (ropes, lines), two new cleats for tying up my boat, and a few other things.

Hopefully I will be able to buy fuel without my official captain license. I have all the papers!



One end of the Horseshoe Canal system. McCiarcia rests just behind the yellow building on the right.

Thank You!

I really don't know who reads these issues. Mostly the StSometimes are a form of diary but I know some people are out there reading these. So thank you for your interest. Questions? Email me.

July Issue - What's Next?

The only plan I have for July is diving in the Bahamas with Tiger Sharks, my father, my brother Jeff, and Scott Munroe. I should have some boat stories, and the new teachers arrive on the 24th!

StSometimes Issues

If you liked this issue, take a look at the past issues I have been writing since 2001 when I first started teaching overseas. You can find them at <http://itre.us/ssw13>