

THE SCHOONER MAGGIE B: A Southern Ocean Circumnavigation – Frank Blair.  
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US\$40.00/£31.99 (considerable discounts on Amazon). 400 260mm x 210mm pages in  
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I loved this book. It's that rare combination of great adventure and writing that draws you in and makes you want to be a part of it all. Accompanying the text are many excellent photographs, some quite dramatic, and Yuta Onoto's beautiful illustrations. For those who have ventured to some of Frank Blair's destinations, the book allows one to revisit and compare notes with the author's experience, and where the passage or landfall is unfamiliar, the lively narrative offers delightful armchair exploration.

Frank Blair served in the US Navy for five years, first as a carrier-based fighter pilot, flying single-seat fighters in the Mediterranean and the Western Pacific, and later conducting low-level reconnaissance over North Vietnam. His love of sailing began in childhood and for 20 years he taught seamanship at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. In 2005 he built a 63ft wooden schooner in Nova Scotia, and in March 2006 set off on a two year voyage to circumnavigate the globe. Frank's account of his voyage begins to unfold when his 20 year old son Alden asks him to promise that 'by the time I graduate from college, I want you to buy or build a boat that you and I can sail around the world, together with friends'.

Frank set about fulfilling this promise. The Schooner Maggie B tells about the failures along the way as well as the great successes, chief among them a sailor's dream voyage accomplished. He recounts the apprehensions and joys, the breakdowns and the recoveries, landfalls at faraway ports, struggles with local bureaucracies, the sublime pleasures of a clear night watch and days with fresh gales. This book should be on every sailor's 'must read' list.

A number of acclaimed authors and adventurers have shared their enthusiasm for Maggie B:

Caroline Alexander, author of *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition* and *The Bounty: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Bounty*: wrote 'Some adventures are thrilling to read about, but the reader is glad to be safe at home; more rare are adventures you would actually want to share. The Schooner Maggie B is the latter – a sailor's story of fulfilling the old dream of circumnavigation. The highly-readable narrative unfolds not only daily events of wind and weather, but also the decisions of seamanship and sea-lore that each day brings – leaving you with the heady feeling you are now a seasoned Blue Water sailor'.

igel Irens, master boat designer and the designer of Maggie B wrote: 'As a fine violin is brought to life by the hands of a worthy violinist, Maggie B was dependent on her captain and crew to make something of her. How fortunate we were as designers and builders to see this vessel picked up where we had left off and brought to life over the coming years by such a formidable leader and his enthusiastic crew!'

Charles Doane, cruising editor at SAIL Magazine, and author of *The Modern Cruising Sailboat: A Complete Guide to Its Design, Construction, and Outfitting* and *The Sea Is Not Full: Ocean Sailing for Fools, Poets, and Other Pretenders* added: 'What a charming book! I had admired Maggie B from afar, thought her one of Nigel Irens' most intriguing designs, and was heartbroken when she was destroyed. Here her owner brings her fully back to life, shares the ups and downs of a challenging circumnavigation via the Horn, drops many valuable hints on blue-water voyaging, and puts us aboard right beside him'.

The schooner Maggie B was tragically destroyed in a fire after Frank completed his circumnavigation. 'While my grandchildren will never sail her, neither will she sit on the hard somewhere and rust and rot away unloved. We gathered up some of her ashes from the fire and will scatter bits all around the world', Frank, devastated by her loss, ends the book. He now sails *Farfarer*, like Maggie B a Nigel Irens design, built by the same boatyard as the Maggie B, Covey Island Boatworks in Nova Scotia.

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A fuller version of this review appeared in the 2019 issue of *Voyages*, the annual magazine of the Cruising Club of America.