
Voyaging with Kids is a beautifully designed and very comprehensive reference on cruising with children aboard. It covers everything from picking your boat to what to bring along, how to stay safe and healthy, provisioning in faraway places, and activities to pass the time or expose young crew members to new experiences. There is a full chapter on boat schooling which includes some very interesting suggestions, such as attending local schools while voyaging, and dealing with rules and regulations of the home country.

It also covers the transient nature of voyaging by boat, and how it influences relationships both aboard and ashore. It provides detailed advice on passagemaking, and even covers how to deal with the challenges unique to babies and teenagers aboard. Finally, it deals with the challenges faced when ending the voyage and transitioning back to a life ashore. Perhaps most important, however, are the insights from other contributors, placed in sidebars throughout, which provide varied first-hand perspectives from many experienced parents – and kids – and offer a truly balanced view of the experience. A lot of work went into this book, and I applaud the authors and editors who pulled it all together so expertly.

Voyaging with Kids ends with interviews with, and letters from, former cruising kids. They talk about their lives aboard and ashore, what they learned from both, and how they dealt with the transitions. It’s really inspiring to read about the great experiences these former kids remember, and how those experiences shaped their future lives. Bottom line, you get the sense that they became better human beings as a result.

The book is rich with photographs of kids doing interesting things in exotic places. It also focuses attention on the ability of children aboard to take responsibility and contribute to the tasks at hand. They learn independence and self-reliance from an early age, very valuable traits in this passive world. They also learn what’s important in life in general and what’s important to them specifically, unlike many kids in routine lives ashore who just follow along with what everyone else is doing.

The appendices are particularly comprehensive – a six-page contributors’ list, three pages of bibliography, and 13 pages of additional resources and references used in researching material. Finally, the index is very handy for looking up specific topics.

Voyaging with Kids is a really important addition to the cruising armamentarium for anyone contemplating life afloat with children. What these authors have achieved is extraordinarily valuable. They’ve done enormous research to provide access to the information every parent needs before taking off, and they share real-life assessment of how everything actually translates into practice. This is destined to be a best-seller in the sailing books category ... the parenting bible for the cruising family. I believe it’s the first book of its kind, and that is an accomplishment in itself.

DOB

(OCC member and publisher Lin Pardey is offering a 30% discount to OCC members who order directly through www.landlpardey.com (run by Paradise Cay) before 31 May 2016. Co-author Behan Gifford is also an OCC member.)

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