

Carolina Currents

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The North and South Carolina Boater's Magazine

**Current
Destination:
Oriental**

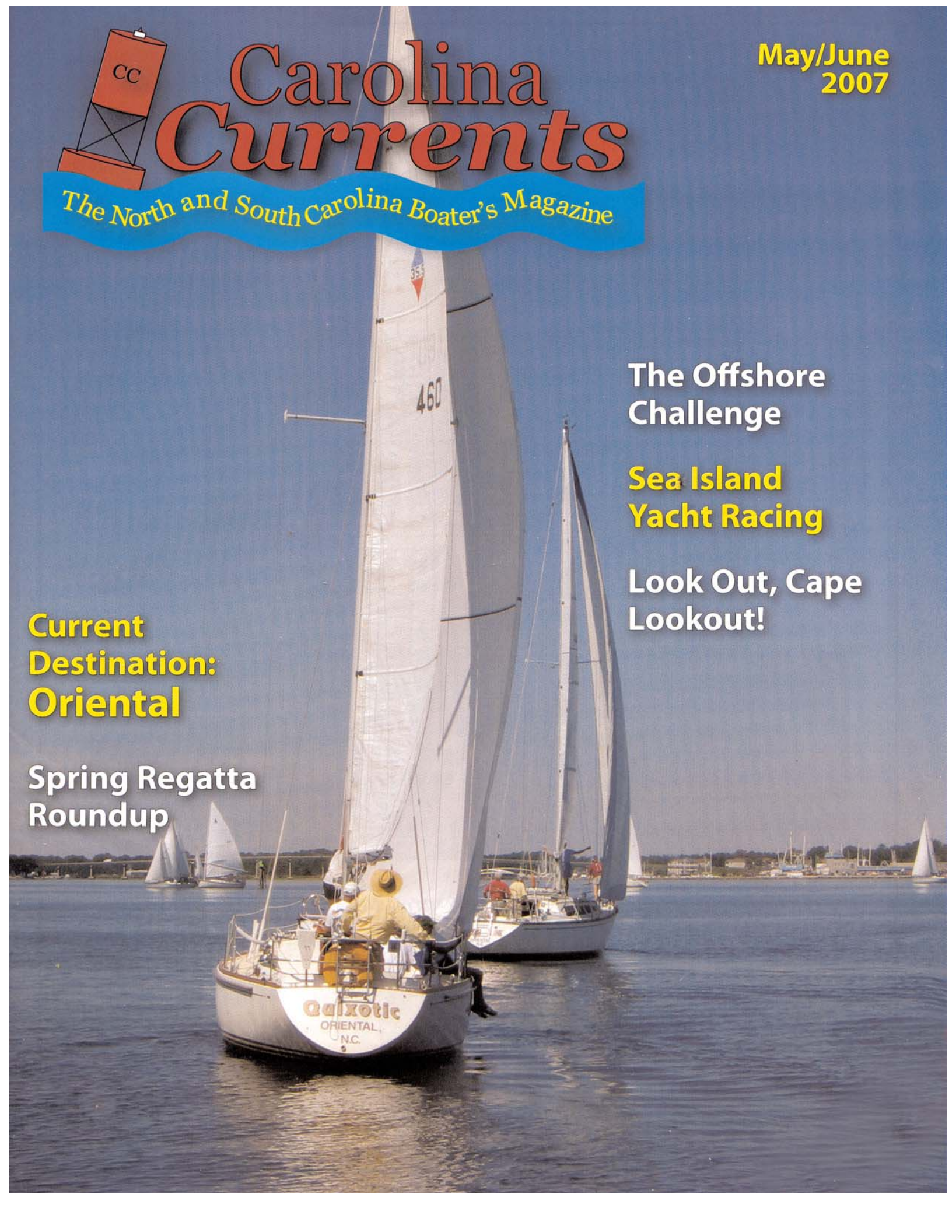
**Spring Regatta
Roundup**

**The Offshore
Challenge**

**Sea Island
Yacht Racing**

**Look Out, Cape
Lookout!**

Galzotic
ORIENTAL
N.C.



Pause For Jeremiah

We invite Carolina sailors who sail outside of our home waters to share their adventures with us via e-mail to Info@CarolinaCurrents.com.

By Ann DeMuth



BRITISH COLUMBIA, Canada - Instead of swimming in the Bahamas, we're skiing in British Columbia. The change in course for our cruise was to appease my 85-pound Airedale Jeremiah. We'd come up with great ideas for sailing with a dog, but were clueless at other times.

Before departing Oriental, N.C., I tried to entice Jeremiah to use the deck as his head, anticipating long days at sea. I bought a non-skid doormat and poked a hole in the corner to attach a line so I could heave it overboard for washing.

I then stalked Jeremiah's dog pals and threw the mat down just as they lifted their legs. I put the "scented" mat towards the bow of the boat and waited for it to work its magic. Jeremiah was unimpressed.

A friend who heard about my activities procured a vial of Pee Wee. According to the label, just a couple of drops were needed for successful house training. I threw it in my duffel bag, not realizing that the top wasn't on tight. Multiple washings and bleach treatments were no match for Pee Wee saturated clothes.

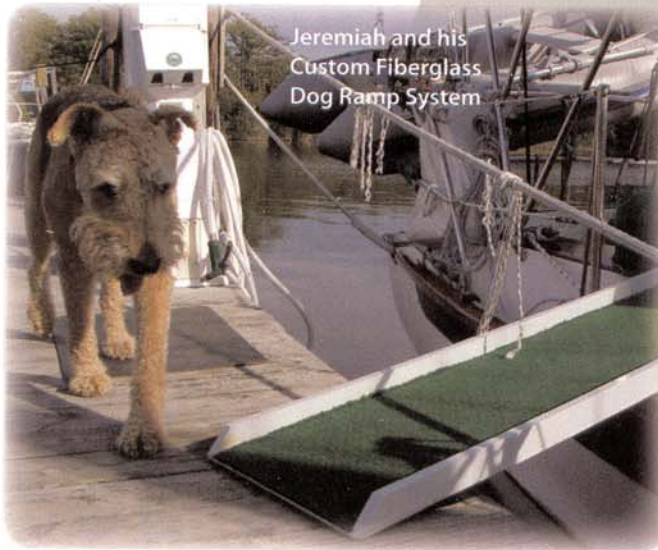
The first leg of our journey ended in Beaufort, N.C., after a half-day of motoring down the ditch. We got an early start the next morning for an offshore sail to Wrightsville Beach and roused Jeremiah out of bed. He took one look around, saw that land wasn't an option, ignored the scented mat, and took his morning constitutional in the scuppers.

We set sail at 6 a.m. and didn't end up anchoring until 10:30 p.m. Who would've thought that the windshift and storm would have come through so much earlier than forecast? I was sick most of the day with waves crashing overboard, but I made a gallant effort to let Jeremiah on deck to relieve himself with a heavy-duty harness and leash system attached to the lifelines.

By nightfall, it became too violent in the cockpit, so I brought him below, put up a lee cloth and joined him in the berth. We periodically crashed about so that he could do his business on the cabin sole and

I could find a repository for the consequences of my seasickness. It took Jeremiah a few nights out at anchor afterwards to once again understand that the deck was the place to go.

One success was my Custom Fiberglass Dog Ramp System (CFDRS). At 13 years plus (mid-90s in human years), Jeremiah has arthritis and needs help getting on and off the boat, from the cockpit to the cabin and vice versa. I built the 5-foot ramp out of quarter-inch ply and fiberglassed both sides to keep it lightweight yet strong. Cedar strips on the edges kept his paws from flailing off. I finished it with a coat of



Jeremiah and his Custom Fiberglass Dog Ramp System

epoxy yacht paint, carpet on top and neoprene from an old wetsuit on the bottom to prevent brightwork scratches. One end fit snugly into the companionway while the other wedged itself against the molding by the sink, making it quite secure as Jeremiah walked down. He then jumped to the berth below and got assistance to the cabin sole.

Despite the CFDRS's functionality, it would have been easier if Jeremiah were either smaller or younger and more agile. The ramp lost its novelty as it was a lot more labor intensive than simply opening a front door. When my sailing partner Greg's house sale fell through in British Columbia, we decided to live on land for a while.

A friend of mine who works for the airlines confirmed that flying is traumatic for a dog, so we rented a car.

On departure day Jeremiah fell off the dock during his morning constitutional. I yelled (and shrieked) for Greg. When I saw him on his way, I jumped in after Jeremiah. Greg pulled by the collar as I pushed from below. Greg then had to pull me out too. It was a chilly swim with air temperatures in the 30s. I headed to the hot showers and laundry, the swim affirming in my mind that we'd made the right decision.

Perhaps one day of flying for a dog might have been less traumatic than the wear on two humans driving 4,000 miles, being caught in an ice storm with semis flipped over, being rear-ended in line at the border crossing, and dealing with a rental agency that took cash for the car and - as a bonus - put the same charge on the credit card.

But we've reacclimated to life on land. Jeremiah is looking forward to the ice melting so he can do a little dinghy sailing. We're planning at some point to reunite with the boat we left in Charleston to carry on to the Bahamas.

Although this wasn't the right time in Jeremiah's life to embark on a long sail, I enjoyed having him with us. Unlike his human counterparts, he was never fazed by the close quarters and was

always in a good mood. I also found when in ports without him I wouldn't meet half as many people. Folks are just less inclined to strike up a conversation with me, pat me on the head, and tell me how cute I am.

Editor's Note: Ann DeMuth and Jeremiah of Oriental, N.C., and Greg Melnechuk of British Columbia set sail in December onboard Rainbeau, a Cabo Rico 34 Cutter. The boat is now docked in Charleston, S.C. awaiting their continued adventures.



It's not easy being a boat dog...