

It was the third day in a row that we had gone sailing with Pete in his new Nacra 5.2. Today, instead of heading for Travis we went on down to Canyon Dam, down on the Guadalupe south of San Marcos and not too far north of San Antonio as the crow flies.

Pete and Wally and I were out on the Nac munching on Hobie Cats. We were cruising up the lake gaining on a cat when the storm came over the dam. We for the most part ignored it, as we had almost beaten the Hobie out. I was out on the trapeze standing as near the rudders as I could, right over Pete, while Wally laid low on the downside pontoon. We were flying our pontoon, the hull completely out of the water and the protruding dagger board nearly so when the gust of wind hit.

It was the first puff of the storm, and it was so strong a squall that I lost my footing on the upper pontoon. I spun out and up as the boat leaned further over. The combination of the gust on the sails and my violent outward weight shift pulled the boat over on its side. I, however, was still swinging through the air.

I swung down past the upper pontoon, now sticking out of the water, and then past the cable forestay of the mainmast. Leaving some skin off my left foot on the cable, I slammed into the forward pipe connecting the twin hulls just where it entered the lower hull. I fell off into the water, and quickly disconnected myself from the trapeze line so as not to be dragged underwater. I clutched at my prescription sunglasses

as they fell into the lake. I then turned to retrieve my hat.

When I looked up again not thirty seconds after I had unhooked myself from the boat, it was already scooting across the lake a number of yards from me, the tarp between the hulls now acting like a sail. I began to swim after it but quickly realized that I could not possibly catch the catamaran. Wally saw me floundering after the boat and dove off of the hull he had climbed onto to come get me. When he reached me, the boat was at least thirty yards away. Pete remained on the hull, trying to right it by himself.

Wally and I saw a motorboat nearby and tried to attract the attention of it's crew. We were screaming 'Help' at the top of our lungs, but the rising wind of the storm kept us from being heard. They did notice us waving, however, and moved off towards us. As they approached in a small yellow outboard, a larger blue inboard came up from behind the cat, where Pete had waved them on to us. We were dragged out of the water and quickly taken over to the Nacra.

Wally and I climbed on the hull next to Pete to help him right the boat. This is done by pulling on a rope attached to the dolphin striker, which is a metal piece protruding below the tarp. As we pulled the boat over, a difficult job because the sails were half filled with water, the rain began. I wound up beneath the boat between the hulls, holding onto the dolphin striker. Pete scrambled on, and as the boat shot off

into the storm, Wally pulled himself up. I was still holding the striker, and we started to breathe waves that washed onto the tarp, putting me completely underwater, while moving at well over ten knots, perhaps twenty. Pete finally brought the boat into the wind, which stalled us long enough for Wally to help get me onto the tarp. I managed to catch my arm on the scrotum hook, a hook that holds the dagger boards' tension lines, but I was on the boat.

The winds took us off again amid both hail and lightning, the hail a major annoyance and the lightning deadly. We rode out the ten minutes or so the storm lasted, then tacked around for a while, riding the dagger boards and such like. When we did come into shore and the others, the sun was bright, our drenched bodies were drying off, and I was contemplating my spin of more than 200° through the air on the end of that damned rope.

The return trip was also a lot of fun. Cruising up IH 35 at sixty or so, a Lincoln Continental Mk IV of about '79 vintage, a mother big four door rolled up on our right. The driver was about sixty or sixty five, wearing a cowboy hat. I was riding in the suicide seat of our Mercury Grand Marquis, a two door car with a combined length with the boat trailer of over thirty feet mounting a 448 Ford block. The cowboy nodded at me and pointed up the highway ~~then~~ pulled forward. I said to Pete that I thought he was drag racing a Continental. He punched the accelerator and we roared after the Lincoln.

He, however, had a weight advantage on us and slowly pulled ahead until we were both cruising at eighty miles per hour scattering Datsuns and VW's like dry leaves in our wakes. For about twenty miles we played games with the cowboy until we got cut off by less than a foot by a sorority girl in her daddy's Pontiac Le Mans. We chased her and gave her a full moon. Eventually, without arrest or accident we made it into Austin. I'm still not sure whether I liked flying through the air like a daring young man or dragging down the highway like a mastodon race better.