

# The Loss of the "PERKEE II"

The loss of the "PERKEE II" certainly qualifies as a tragedy but the lives of owners Don and Jan Perkins were spared in an onboard fire and explosion that could have ended far more tragically than the loss of their vessel.

The Perkins were sailing their 43 ft. Pearson Ketch near the island of Espiritu Santos, near La Paz, when the accident happened. Don recalled the events to me as we sat on the patio of the Los Arcos Hotel in the State Capital.

"It was around 11:15 Friday morning," recalled Don. "We had a line out trolling for dorado while we sailed around the east side of the island. I remember asking Mother (Jan) for some cookies and hot coffee. She went below to make a fresh pot. As the coffee brewed, we were enjoying the calm seas and just sort of taking it easy. All of the sudden we heard a

'whoshing' sound coming from the galley. When I looked inside, the whole inside of the boat was on fire."

Don recalled how he attempted to reach the fire extinguisher but it was simply too hot below decks to reach it. Desperately, he withstood the heat long enough to get one MayDay off on the boats VHF radio. Realizing that the vessel was in danger of exploding, he called for Jan to pull the dinghey alongside.

As the fire began to rage on board "PERKEE II", the Perkins boarded their dinghey after grabbing their hand held VHF. After the second MayDay was put out, this time from the dinghey, they were answered by "NUGGET", who was sailing southbound from Puerto Escondido. The distress call was also answered by "GREYHOUND" in distant Puerto San

Carlos. "NUGGET" reported she was about an hour away from the scene but was proceeding directly. The Perkins had no choice but to watch their lovely, 130,000 dollar boat/home go up in flames.

Meanwhile, "KINGCO" saw the flames from a distance and reacted immediately. Dropping off it's fishermen on Isla Partida, she proceeded to the scene of the accident. While both "KINCO" and "NUGGET" were in route, "PERKEE II" continued to burn. When the fire had reached almost to the waterline, an explosion ripped the vessel apart and she went down, bow first.

"KINGCO" found the Perkins and successfully picked them up from where, only an hour before, they had been peacefully awaiting a fresh pot of coffee and possibly, a strike by



The "Perkee II" was a beautiful vessel. She was lost in an accident at sea off the coast of La Paz.

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