

A Looper Gets a Scare

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On May 22nd Otto Szentesi and his wife Mimi sailed their 43-foot sloop into Yeopim Creek and tied up at berth 4 on C Dock in Albemarle Plantation Marina. They had heard about the Albemarle Loop and wanted to see what it was all about. They had no idea what they were in for.

The Szentesis are veteran sailors. Before buying their own boat, they chartered ocean-going sailboats with friends and sailed the Caribbean and the Pacific, going as far as Tahiti on one venture. But when Otto retired as Senior Vice-President for Corning Cable Systems, he said to Mimi, "Let's buy our own boat." And that's how they came into possession of the Hunter 426 christened "*Best of Times*."



Figure 1 - Best of Times

Sailing out of Oriental, North Carolina, the new boat owners headed for Exuma Cays in the Bahamas, a snorkeling paradise that Mimi says is her favorite destination in the whole world because of all the sea life. In fact, the Szentesis now go there every January and stay until mid-May. Then they usually head north, sailing to

another favorite place, Newport, Rhode Island. Otto says he gets quite a kick out of passing by the Statue of Liberty before heading up New York's East River and into the Long Island Sound.

When Otto tied up at the Albemarle Plantation Marina, it happened to be tournament week at the Plantation's Sound Golf Links. Being a golfer himself, Otto might have stayed to watch 120 young professionals compete in the 2018 Biggs Classic. But something happened to take precedence.

When I stopped by the *Best of Times* to say hello, Otto wasn't there, I was told he had been taken to a local pharmacy by Steve Harris, Commodore of the Plantation's Osprey Yacht Club. I left and returned an hour later. Otto was back and welcomed me



Figure 2 - Otto

aboard. That's when I found out why he had gone to the pharmacy. I was greeted below by Mimi who held out her hand. But she couldn't see me. She was blind.



Figure 3 - Mimi

Mimi told me the story of her accident that morning. She had been preparing to do some laundry when the Tide Laundry Pod she was handling burst, splashing the strong lye liquid into her face and eyes. She rinsed her eyes out as best she could, but it wasn't enough. Hence, the trip to the pharmacy for proper medication.

When I saw Mimi later that evening at the Clubhouse restaurant, she still could only see shadows. She needed to see a doctor. Otto told me they would sail to Edenton the next morning to find an ophthalmologist, but he was unable to locate one. So, he called on Commodore Harris once more to take him to Elizabeth City where he did find one. Mimi was diagnosed with corneal abrasions and chemical burns, but the prognosis was encouraging: in time, with rest and proper medication, Mimi would regain her sight. And she would once again be able to swim among the sea life of Exuma Cays.

As for Albemarle Plantation, Otto is already planning on a return trip, this time with friends from Oregon, to do the entire Albemarle Loop. Berth 4 on C Dock will be ready for them.

Additional Notes:

Local knowledge for approach to Albemarle Plantation Marina can be found at <http://albemarleloop.com/videos.html> : and “[Albemarle Plantation Entrance Video - view the actual navigational courses and markers for entering the channel to Albemarle Plantation Marina](#)”