“ICOYC, what’s that?” was one of the questions my fellow NRV members asked me on occasion of the annual NRV cruising members’ get together at Hørup Hav in Denmark in September of last year. It was there when I first presented John Stork’s idea of organizing and implementing a cruise through the southern Danish Isles at our doorsteps for members of ICOYC member clubs.
“Very nice, but why the southern Danish Isles of all places? We know all the ports already and what could be the benefit of fleet sailing when we can individually enjoy the tranquility of the area on our own?” quite a few of the NRV’s cruising members remarked. This and other similar comments are not exactly encouraging – to say the least – when you want to get the message across and try to encourage participation in a new venture, new at least for NRV cruising yachtsmen.

But the idea stuck and I was able to convince my fellow Club members that this venture was going to be something new and thrilling in a sense they had never been able to experience before. So, with support from the NRV’s General Committee I began to drum up potential participants and our Rear Commodore Offshore Sailing, Alexander Prinz zu Schleswig-Holstein, was the first to get onboard and support the project.

Shortly thereafter also the NRV Admiral and former long years Commodore Mr. Gunter Persiehl began to like the idea, even though as per his own words he actually was a “convinced regatta sailor and not really overly fond of cruising in company”. So, there were two people already who wanted to join in the fun. And, finally also my friend and fellow NRV member Harald Kuhlei with his vast knowledge of the area and seafaring capability in general signaled support for the idea.

Of course, not immediately being aware of these facts when I first got started I took all my courage together and drafted the initial itinerary and route description documents that you all know by now. At the time my prime objective was to get the whole project published before Christmas 2012.

This was no problem at the NRV. I had the papers published on the Club’s website plus in one of the upcoming Newsletters which are circulated to our members on a weekly basis. And time was on my side when I was also able to present the idea which by then had already been christened “ICOYC Summer Cruise 2013 – Danish Isles” to our male members on occasion of the 2012 Traditional Gentlemen’s Christmas Dinner.
With this head start from then on everything slowly began to take off by itself. After New Year the cruise was also advertised on the ICOYC website and registrations from interested yachtsmen and women started to pour in. It was indeed rewarding to see that registrations did not only come from my own fellow club members but also from ICOYC Clubs outside Germany. The first international registrations were received from the Royal Thames Yacht Club in London and from the Royal Southern Yacht Club in Hamble.

There were more registrations from members of the Seattle Yacht Club in the United States and even from the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in Australia. And with the international connections these Clubs enjoy overseas there were more participants joining from other Clubs in Australia and Japan.

Now, nothing could go wrong any longer, I thought. But like they say: “the devil is in the detail” Harald and I were painstakingly reviewing every minute detail of our project. We made changes in the schedule here and there and finally came to the point when in our opinion everything looked pretty nice on paper. But then Harald said: “Wolfgang, don’t you think it would be a good idea to visit all these ports in advance and to organize the various dinners we are planning to have in person with the patrons of the hotels involved?” I more than readily agreed to his idea but could not join him on this tour due to other commitments at the time. So, Harald took it upon himself to single-handedly sail through the area and to personally discuss and organize all the planned dinner events on location in advance.
It was this really brilliant idea that not only in my opinion largely contributed to a flawless implementation of the cruise. It turned out that it was Harald’s personal involvement in the preparation of our cruise that was decisive in making the whole venture a total success.

Well, dear readers, I thought you might have liked to know the details behind the scene of the event you have enjoyed just a short while ago. It certainly has been our pleasure to present to you one of the nicest sailing areas with its many historic and otherwise interesting sites worthwhile seeing and visiting while largely navigating through protected waters. The so called “South Seas of Denmark” certainly are one of our most cherished and preferred destinations which we like to visit time and again. At the same time we do hope that we were able to get this message across and to also infect you with this “virus” which – who knows – might perhaps induce you to come back some other time.

All the rest of the story needs not to be told once more as all of you who have participated in the ICOYC Summer Cruise 2013 through the Danish Isles know all the details much better than could possibly ever be told in writing.
Your personal memories will allow you to reminisce about cruising in company and the various get togethers in different locations en route, the lively talks onboard of participating yachts visiting with fellow yachtsmen from around the world, sampling nice Japanese treats prepared by Hiroko Sugiyama from Seattle Yacht Club and last but not least being invited for some drinks with new found friends.

So, let’s hope that this year’s ICOYC Summer Cruise will not be forgotten for a long time and that the idea of cruising in company will be maintained to become a standing tradition of the ICOYC that will hopefully turn out to be one of the true benefits of being a member in the Council.

With this wish I would like to say good bye for now and hope to see you again on occasion of some future cruise wherever it may be. And, hopefully there will never again be a question like: “ICOYC, what’s that?”

Fair winds and happy sailing – yours truly,

Wolfgang Weber, NRV Delegate – International Affairs