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## Living Dockside

by Ginny Jones

### CREATURE CAPER

A few of us dive instructors call Jules Lagoon "the Black Lagoon," and on those days when we can't take our students out to the reef, we are very appreciative of the lagoon. it allows us to finish certifying our students. I personally love this place; I often wake up to a manatee's noisy breathing just outside my aft cabin ports. I usually take my coffee up on deck in the morning to watch the sunrise up over the mangroves surrounding the lagoon. I was treated one morning to an adult dolphin and her calf hunting in the lagoon. This lagoon is full of interesting wrecks too; bet you didn't know that.

There is an airplane fuselage, various small fishing boats, a very large wooden cabin cruiser in the back of the lagoon, various cars, and a once-beautiful wooden sloop right under the bow of my "She Breeze."

In the winter (which consists of maybe 5 days), the water in the lagoon is so clear you can make out most of the wrecks from the deck of a boat. I cannot remember how the idea of a creature lashed to the deck of the sloop came

about, but it did. My dear friend and artistic landlubber neighbor Lonnie, found the feet, hands, and face mask complete with blue piercing eyes on some obscure internet site.

The creature's torso was concrete, his legs and arms were pool noodles, and all of this was shoved into an old wet suit. His hands and feet were attached to the wet-suit; the mask was on one of those styrofoam wig holders.

By the time we finished assembling our monster he was over six feet tall. So the question was: how do we get him over to the lagoon and not let the neighbors on the dock and in the neighborhood see what we're up to? It would just be too hard to explain if we were spotted! Oh, the insanity of us bored baby boomers!

Lonnie just happened to have a wheelbarrow; we put the creature in and covered him with a blanket. Of course his hands and feet were hanging out over the sides. (Can you hear the theme song from Mission Impossible in the background?) We sure could!

We waited till the dark of night, of course, in our black ninja costumes. I was



scoping out the road as Lonnie was rapidly wheeling the heavy load down the road towards my dock. I made sure everybody's lights were off on the dock, as we wheeled him to a good launching place. We had chain across his torso - bandolier style - figuring we needed the extra weight. Quietly, we lifted him into the water with a line tied to him so we could come back in the daytime and set him on the sloop.

This is when the trouble and the cursing began. The creature was not cooperating, he wouldn't sink, sh --, sh --, sh - -!!!! We were scrambling, looking for anything heavy. "Somebody could be missing an anchor tomorrow." (Oops, did I say that out loud?)

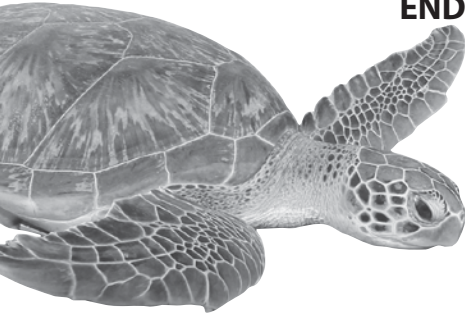
I found a couple cinder blocks in the mangroves, and once we attached all the

extras our creature slowly started to sink. We tied him off to the dock, sneaked back across the street, and mixed a stiff drink or two.

The next day we casually donned our dive gear and jumped in. It all went smoothly as we attached our creation to the deck of the sloop.

Many a person has had a giggle out of our midnight madness, conducted many years ago. When the water was clear you could see his blue eyes from the deck of my boat. Alas, in the intervening years, the sloop has disintegrated around the creature and only on close inspection can you see one of his large hands sticking up and waving!





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