

Cruisers pack conference at Isles Yacht Club

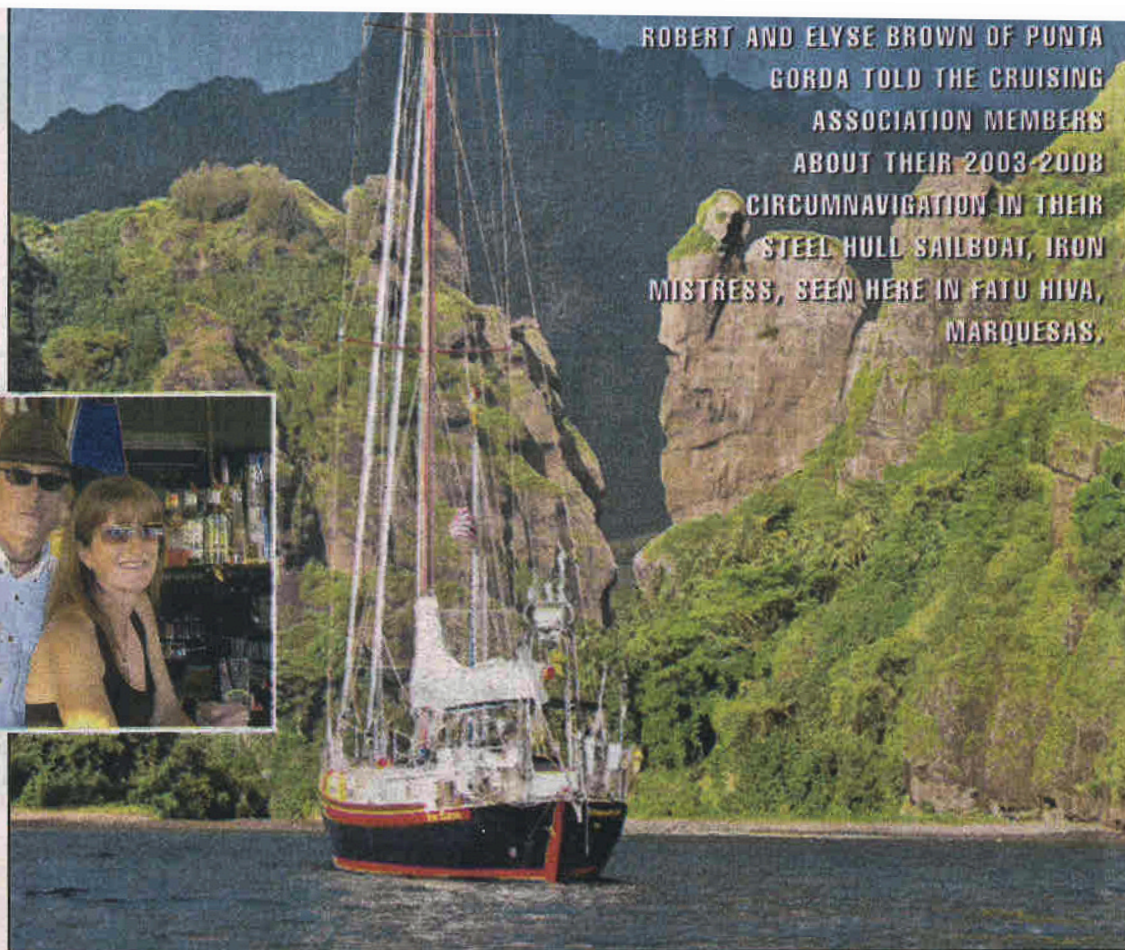
By **STEVE JOHNSON**

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Last month, 175 people attended the seventh annual Florida West Coast Rendezvous of the Seven Seas Cruising Association at the Isles Yacht Club. The 7,000-member organization is a worldwide organization that supports the live-aboard and long-distance cruising lifestyle. The Rendezvous draws people who hail from Tarpon Springs to Marco Island and beyond. All SSCA events are open to both members and nonmembers alike. Four seminars focused on topics of interest to both coastal and long-distance cruisers. Robert and Elyse Brown wowed the audience with photos and stories of their five-year circumnavigation on their steel-hull sailboat, Iron Mistress. Winslow LifeRaft Company from Lake Suzy taught Survival at Sea and used the Isles pool to demon-

strate how to deploy a life raft.

Attendees could attend a dozen roundtables to learn about alternative energy, communications, cruiser paperwork, cruising the Bahamas, cruising Mexico, diesel maintenance, breadmaking, electronic charting software, practical weather forecasting and provisioning. Twenty-five donated door prizes were raffled off to support Bruce and Marilyn Conklin's Operation Bahamas, which delivers retired textbooks from Charlotte County schools and member donated school supplies to children in the Bahamas Out Islands.



ROBERT AND ELYSE BROWN OF PUNTA GORDA TOLD THE CRUISING ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABOUT THEIR 2003-2008 CIRCUMNAVIGATION IN THEIR STEEL HULL SAILBOAT, IRON MISTRESS, SEEN HERE IN FATU HIVA, MARQUESAS.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ROB AND SUE LINEHAN



Cruisers gather to watch life raft-deployment training at the Isles Yacht Club pool during the Florida West Coast Rendezvous of the Seven Seas Cruising Association.



Marilyn and Bruce Conklin with event chairperson Steve Johnson, center. The Conklins received an award for founding and organizing the past six Rendezvous.



Inquiring cruisers at a Rendezvous roundtable discussion on Cruising the Bahamas.