

# It's a boat; it's a plane; no, it's a called a Cosmic Muffin

## Wet Streets



**Editor's Note:** "Wet Streets" is a regular series that explores neighborhoods and landmarks along south Florida's waterfront. We welcome your ideas. Please email suggestions to h2onews@aol.com or fax (954) 524-9464; or write, Wet Streets, Waterfront News, 1523 S. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, 33316.

By JEFF HARRELL  
Waterfront News Writer

The tall sun-swept man emerged from the open door of the hot-dog shaped boat docked on Fort Lauderdale's Middle River just long enough to identify himself.

Dave Drimmer?

"The one and only," Drimmer says.

The introduction was appropriate. After all, Drimmer has owned and lived aboard the "one and only" floating oddity since he bought and began refurbishing it in 1981.

What makes Drimmer's boat, which is docked just off Sunrise Boulevard behind the La Tavernetta restaurant on Northeast 20th Avenue, so odd is that it used to be a Boeing 307 Stratoliner airplane.

And what makes the boat, now known as the *Cosmic Muffin*, infamous is that it used to be an airplane owned by the late billionaire recluse, Howard Hughes.

"When I was in high school," recalls Drimmer, 45, "Howard Hughes was already an old recluse doing weird things. When he was young, however, the man was a pure genius."



Photo/Jeff Harrell  
Dave Drimmer's *Cosmic Muffin*, a Boeing 307 turned houseboat, is an unexpected presence docked on the Middle River in Fort Lauderdale.

Hughes was also an accomplished aviator. In 1938 he set the around-the-world flight record in a twin-engine Lockheed 14. The following year, he bought the Boeing 307 Stratoliner as part of his purchase of TWA. Hughes attempt to beat his own flight record in the 307 was cancelled as a result of the breakout of World War II in Europe.

In 1948, Hughes hired industrial design expert Raymond Loewy to redesign the plane's interior. Additional decor suggestions were given by actress Rita Hayworth.

After being purchased by Houston oil millionaire Glenn McCarthy in 1949, the plane found its way to Fort Lauderdale in 1962 when McCarthy sold the plane he had named the "Shamrock" to Fort Lauderdale-based Florida Jet Research.

Two years later, the "Shamrock" suffered major wing and tail wheel damage at the vicious winds of Hurricane Cleo. After logging a relatively minuscule 500 flight hours over 25 years, the plane was relegated to being an abandoned derelict of history, its flight days over.

But the plane's floating days were just beginning, when Fort Lauderdale Realtor Ken London purchased it in 1969. Unable to get the plane back in the air, London cut off the wings and the tail section, transported the fuselage to a local marina and then spent the next four years turning the once four-engined airliner into his own unique yacht called the *Londonaire*.

Drimmer bought the long, round cruising oddity in 1981 to be used as his home, although very few homes attract the attention that the airplane-turned-boat gar-

ners.

It sure got musician Jimmy Buffet's attention in 1992. While cruising down the Middle River on his sailboat, Buffet, who besides working as a musician and a novelist, is also a licensed seaplane pilot, saw the vessel, researched its history, then wound up incorporating it into his first novel, "Where Is Joe Merchant?"

In the book, the character Desdemona is contacted by interplanetary aliens before realizing that the houseboat made from Howard Hughes' private plane will be her spaceship to the aliens' star system.

In the book, the plane-boat is called *Cosmic Muffin*.

Buffet also wrote a song about the *Cosmic Muffin* entitled "Desdemona's

SEE PLANE BOAT P. 12

## POWER CATS

**4-Stroke of Genius**

**HONDA MARINE** **GLACIER BAY**  
CATAMARANS

Cut Your Fuel Costs in Half!\*



- 2- 130hp available
- Multi-port programmed fuel injection
- 40-amp automotive-type alternator
- Meets 2006 EPA emission standards

\* Compared to similarly sized 2-stroke outboards. Always wear a personal flotation device while boating and read your owner's manual. ©1998 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

**Powered by Honda**

**Seven Seas Yacht Sales, Inc.**  
1500 W. Broward Blvd. • Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312  
(954) 463-8143

Comfort & Performance that's miles ahead

26' Center Console,  
26' Cuddy, Side Console,  
22' Center Console



**HydroCat**  
Boat Works, Inc.

The longest, widest & sleekest cats in their class

30' Center Console  
30' Cuddy Cabin



**Twin Vee**  
Affordable power cats

10', 14', 17', 20' & 22'  
Center Consoles

AUTOHELM • ALDEN • B&G • DATAMARINE • FURUNO • ICOM • MAGELLAN • HEART

## LAMPLIGHTER MARINE, INC.

### MARINE ELECTRONICS

SERVICE, SALES AND INSTALLATIONS ALL MAJOR BRANDS

### Why should you call us?

- No matter where you bought it we'll install it
- Flexible hours for your convenience
- Free estimates & reasonable rates
- Quality personal service
- Licensed and Insured
- Serving Broward, Dade & Palm Beach

Authorized Service and Installation

**heart interface**  
A Valley Forge Company

**Call 954-920-8490 / Pager 954-468-6145**

LOCATED AT ROYALE PALM YACHT BASIN Dania, FL

MICROLOGIC • NORTHSTAR • RAYTHEON • SI-TEX • STANDARD • SEA • TRIMBLE • VDO

## DOCK & DECK SERVICES



**SPECIALIZING IN:**

**Piling Restoration-**  
*Have you looked under your dock lately? Are your pilings eroded or covered with barnacles? "Sleeve" them before they have to be replaced or your dock collapses!*

**Decks  
Dock Fenders  
Ladders  
+ All Other Dock Accessories**

**Office: (954) 808-7535**

Call Today For Free Estimates & Inspections

## Many Annuity Owners Lose Money. Do You?

Many annuity owners lose over 50% of the value of their annuity when it pays off!

It's true and we show you how to avoid the loss in our booklet "Annuity Owner Mistakes". The booklet is free and shows how to get more benefits from your existing assets and help preserve your annuity value.

Call Russ Hazelcorn of Janney Montgomery Scott LLC at  
**1-800-739-4120**  
(24 hours) and leave your address for your free copy.  
Florida Agent #A114690

## ZIMAR® GALVANIC ANODES

- MADE FROM PURE ZINC
- GOOD PRICE
- LAST LONGER
- SHAFT ZINCS FROM 7/8" TO 5"
- METRIC SHAFT ZINCS FROM 25 TO 105 m/m
- ZINCS FOR EUROPEAN YACHTS
- ZINCS FOR TAIWAN BOATS

2090 S.W. 71 TRR. BLDG. G-6 DAVIE, FL. 33317  
TL. (954) 424-3844 FAX. (954) 424-9899

**The electronic edition**

**Http://waterfront-news.com**

**Anywhere, Anytime!**