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POSTED:AUG 02 2016 10:44PM EDT
 UPDATED:AUG 08 2016 11:57AM EDT

For three decades they sailed in the storied regatta from St. Petersburg to Havana. It ended in 1959, but now it's coming back.

Boat [owner](#) Gary Cannon has already sailed to Havana once.

"We went to Cuba this spring with the Sarasota Yacht Club and the sail and the island and the people were great," says Cannon, who hopes to sail in the St. Petersburg Yacht Club [event](#) February 28.



following a long Cold War.

"From someone who was a military brat and went through the duck and cover under your desk drills, it's really nice to see that's faded away," says Cannon.

People are ready to set sail again to renew the regatta that became a legend.

They expect 70 vessels in four classes. It's more than 280 nautical miles from St. Pete to Havana, but it will be a journey back in time when the regatta returns.

The first St. Pete to Havana race was in 1930 and organized by George Gandy, son of the man who built the first bridge between St. Pete and Tampa.

Old black and white photos show groups of sailors celebrating after the race in Havana. Now, younger generations hope to restore those relationships

Cuba used to fall under both categories. Today, neither applies, allowing the university to engage in educational partnerships with the communist nation and join the yacht race.

Dan Whittle, who directs the New York-based Environmental Defense Fund's marine and coastal conservation projects in Cuba, said the maritime partnerships are a perfect way to begin this new engagement.

"Sharks, turtles, fish and other marine life move freely across borders," he said. "Marine science has shown clearly that the body of water between the U.S. and Cuba is what connects us, not divides us."

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