Latitude 38

CHASING THE SETTING SUN —

PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP 2011

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Just as many species of waterfowl feel an innate urge to migrate north every spring, hundreds of adventure-hungry sailors gather in ports along the West Coast of the Americas to join the annual springtime migration to French Polynesia — a 3,000-mile blue-water passage we like to call the Pacific Puddle Jump.

We tracked down dozens of these hardy voyagers last month in Mexico and Panama in order to toast their departure and get to know them so we could share their stories with you in these pages.

As in years past, we met dozens of Jumpers at our annual PPJ Send-off Party at the Vallarta YC (February 4) in Nuevo Vallarta's well-named Paradise Village Resort (the Club was our generous co-host). We'll introduce you to them here.

Next month we'll bring you a second installment of Puddle Jumper mini-profiles, featuring the westbound cruisers we met February 12 at the Balboa YC in Panama (there again, the Club graciously co-hosted).

By the time you read this, some of these lucky vagabonds will already have set sail from Mexico, Panama or the Galapagos for the storied landfalls of Polynesia. We hope to bring you some of their crossing tales in upcoming issues. But for the moment, allow us to introduce you to the Pacific Puddle Jump Class of 2011 (part I):

**Pua'ena — Outbound 44**
Mark & Dot Hazlett, Honolulu, HI

Not long after Mark and Dorothy met 20 years ago, he found out that she'd cruised extensively during the '70s — including a double-handed return to the West Coast from French Polynesia — and he knew she was the girl for him.

Because their home is in Hawaii, they've planned a South Pacific circuit that will have them island-hopping to New Zealand, then north to Fiji and on to Hawaii. After raising four kids together, it's time for them to go out and have some big fun as a couple again.

**Buena Vista — Formosa Peterson 46**
Don & Debbie Robertson, Ventura, CA

Don and Debbie don't mind telling how they met. "She picked me up in a bar," admits Don. "And it was pretty easy to do!" Although they have different roots — he's an Aussie and she's American — they hit it off immediately and have been together ever since.

Neither of them grew up sailing, though. In fact, they found their first boat perched in a cow pasture near Chico. When Don first saw it his gut told him to buy it. "We scared ourselves silly trying to figure out how to sail it on Lake Oroville," admits Debbie. But eventually they got it together, and after moving to Ventura they honed their cruising skills in the Channel Islands.

The game plan now is to take a couple of seasons sailing Buena Vista 'home' to Australia, where they'll spend their retirement years.

**Dash — Yamaha 36**
Gary Malloy
Los Angeles, CA

Gary can pinpoint the exact beginning of his cruising dreams: when he read Robin Lee Graham's best-seller *Dove* at age 12. Now, more than four decades later, he's glad to finally be having some seagoing adventures of his own. "I don't want
His cruise plan: "Just keep doing it as long as it's fun."

**Narama — Brogra 33**  
Stephen Anstee & Heidi Krajewsky  
Sydney, AUS

Stephen, an Aussie who took his first sailboat trip when he was 3 months old, got together with Heidi, a Canadian, when they were both crewing on the charter schooner *Maple Leaf* in B.C. and Southeast Alaska.

After working and traveling together for six years, they got married and started looking for a boat of their own. They eventually found this sloop in Australia and brought her home to B.C. on her own bottom — after recovering from a humbling setback in the Tasman Sea.

"The idea this time," says Stephen, "is to sail down to Australia, work for a while, then return to B.C. via the ring of fire — that is, via Japan."

**Zephyr — Shin Fa 45.8**  
Bill & Tracy Hudson  
Denver, CO

"We've been sailing for almost 30 years, but it's all been on inland lakes throughout New Mexico and Colorado," explains Bill. Then three years ago they sold their business and bought this boat — which was a prototype for the Liberty 458. During the past 20 months, they've logged 8,000 miles.

What was their inspiration? "I think the dream started with my uncle in Seattle who took us out on his 36-ft sailboat during our honeymoon," Tracy recalls. "It was just so relaxing and so much fun."

Bill claims it's Tracy who's been driving their departure. "It was kind of my idea," she says. "I bought the boat and it was like, I'm going with or without you, and I'd kind of like to have you with me so...”

Luckily it didn't take much arm twisting to get him to agree.

**Merkava — Fraser 41**  
Mark Aisbett & Yuka Morino  
Vancouver, BC

This time Stephen and Heidi are taking 'Narama' downwind instead of upwind.

Mark first met Yuka while they were hiking near Vancouver. As she got to know him, she learned that he had a burning desire to explore the world under sail — something she knew nothing about. "The dream started when I was about 7 or 8 years old," Mark recalls. "I remember reading a book about sailing, and I decided that was something I had to do someday."

Four years ago Mark announced to Yuka, "We're going!" She was a bit shocked, but said, "Okay, I'm in!" And they've been happily cruising ever since.

**La Fiesta — Catalina 42**  
The Clarke family, Brisbane, AUS

Australians David and Angelina came all the way to California just to go shopping — for a boat that is. Their prized purchase is this sweet Catalina 42 that they'll now deliver home to Brisbane, with the help of their 4-year-old daughter Natalie.

If that sounds ambitious, fear not. This family previously made a trip from Oz to South Africa when Natalie was only 8 months old.
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Sudden Stops Necessary —
Beneteau First 385
Chet Chauhan, San Francisco, CA

Chet's initial Puddle Jump goal was to be the first British, Kenyan-born sailor of East Indian descent to enter the rally. Mission accomplished. Folks from all over the world have entered previous

ITCZ (doldrums), that could be a challenge as he did last fall in the Baja Ha-Ha rally.

Chet's initial Puddle Jump goal was to

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The magic of tequila helped Chet (right) recruit his French-speaking crewmate, Cyrille.

Chet later convinced Cyrille to join his company: his friend Cyrille, who's been on an equatorial calm, he'll have good weather. The pair met on the Ha-Ha and talked about going cruising for a boat. And as I look back now, this has been the best thing we've ever done.

They both report having had a wonderful time cruising Mexico and are now looking forward to exploring the South Pacific isles and beyond.

Acous — Hans Christian 38T
Ib & Yadranka Svane, Pt Lincoln, AUS

Ib, who comes from a Danish sailing family, hooked up with Yadranka in her native Australia many years ago. "He talked about going cruising for a long time," she explains, "but I thought it was just talk. Then one day he shocked me when he started shopping for a boat. And as I look back now, this has been the best thing we've ever done.”

Yadranka didn’t realize Ib was serious about going cruising.
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Lorado — Cal 39
Dennis & MaryLee Millard, Alameda, CA

“The inspiration to do this has been there for a long time. Now’s the time to do it,” says Dennis. “The world is a beautiful place and I think part of our role on this planet is to get out and appreciate that beauty.”

MaryLee met Dennis in Alaska, where he was working as a bush pilot. When she eventually decided to lure him to San Francisco, sailing was the bait that snagged him. Their first year here, they lived in Sausalito and “literally sailed every single week.”

Dennis and MaryLee won’t miss the freezing north while sailing the tropics on ‘Lorado’.

not just a delivery. “It’s not really about rushing home to Australia. We see the islands of the South Pacific as our destination — warm clear water, trade winds, blue skies. . . things that we haven’t seen enough of. And it’s easier to get into the best places in the South Pacific from this side of the Pacific.”

What place are they looking forward to visiting most? Tonga.

Teka Nova — Blomquist Custom 62
Terry Baverstock & Christine Jarvis, Cardiff, GBR

These cheerful British cruisers are 4.5 years into what they thought would be a 10-year journey, and so far they’re following an unconventional route. After crossing the Atlantic with the 2006 ARC Rally they sailed to the Galapagos. But instead of heading west to French Polynesia, they made a beeline for Hawaii — a 4,400-mile passage — then sailed on up to Washington and Alaska. Now that they’ve gotten that out of their systems, they’re ready for warmer climates again.

They expect to make New Zealand by Christmas, visiting out-of-the-way anchorages along the way, then . . .?

Bill and Sue debate which way to steer their twin wheels aboard ‘Dilligaff’.

Gigi — Island Packet 440
James & Karen Finn, Brisbane, AUS

Although they make lots of excellent custom boat owners in Australia, there aren’t nearly as many production-built brands to choose from as there are in the U.S. And with the Aussie dollar currently strong against the American greenback it’s no wonder folks like James and Karen are coming to the States to find their dream boat.

But for them this Pacific crossing is...
They’re excited about visiting many tropical isles on the way to New Zealand, and they’re convinced their 1977 cruiser is too. “She’s been waiting all her life to sail in the wonderful trades.”

Piko — Pretorien 35
Lauren Buchholz & Lauren Smith
Seattle, WA

“I had never sailed until I met Lauren three years ago,” says his boatmate of the same name. But she always knew she’d travel the world one way or another: “I always had that gypsy wanderlust in my blood, but I never imagined I would be seeing the world on a sailboat.”

Sailing holds a lot of magic for her man too. Ever since Lauren crewed on a casual beer can race, shortly after moving to Seattle in 2001, he was hooked. And his offshore fantasies built from there. “We plan to keep on going as long as we can,” he says.

Savannah — Owen Easton 40
The McKasle family, Hilo, HI

“God looks after fools and children. We have at least one of each on board,” says Andy. For a native of Oklahoma, he’s already spent a great deal of time on and under the water — he spent years as a U.S. Navy diver/photographer. Now retired, he has vocational skills that will aid his passion for the underwater world. He and his family plan to explore the myriad reefs of the South Sea islands together.

Monica, who hails from Atlanta, has only been sailing for two years but she’s now fully embraced Andy’s long-held dream: “Doing this trip was on his check list when we got married — in fact, we discussed it long before I saw the engagement ring.”

Plans are open, as they’ve worked out a system for homeschooling 5-year-old Jake wherever the trade winds take them.

Andy, Monica and their son Jake will spend lots of time exploring tropical reefs.
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Corie, Neal and Ruthie will soon be adding new images to their family album.

Rutea — Contest 48
The Schneider-Sandven family
San Diego, CA

"The dream of blue water cruising has been in me for as long as I can remember," explains Neal (who has become one of this year’s de facto group leaders). "It’s like an invisible hand was grabbing the front of my shirt and a voice was saying, ‘Come on, you gotta go!’"

His wife Ruthie jokes that her motivations aren’t as strong, but she’s game nonetheless: "Well, Neal was going and my daughter Corie was going, and I didn’t want to be left at home." Actually, she knows exactly what she’s gotten herself into, as she and Neal did a circuit out to Hawaii, then up to Alaska 15 years ago with three kids aboard. Corie, now 22, was only 7 back then.

Moondance —
Tayana Vancouver 42
Douglas & Carla Scott, Albuquerque, NM

How do folks living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, get the cruising bug? For Doug and Carla, it all started years ago during a bareboat charter in the Caribbean. "We were sitting in some little bar,” recalls Doug, “when we met some cruisers living on their boat. We said to ourselves, ‘This could be us!’"

After 15 years of planning and preparation, they’re now finally ready to shove off, and they anticipate spending a decade just exploring the South Pacific. First stop en route will be the Galapagos, which will lead them to enter French Polynesia via the southerly Gambier archipelago.

Java — Crowther 48 cat
Evan Dill & Donna Boyer
Cayucos, CA

Unfortunately we haven’t gotten to

Once they get to Australia, Evan and Donna plan to downsize.

Corie, Neal and Ruthie will soon be adding new images to their family album.
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know Donna yet, but we know from interviewing Evan a couple of years ago (see our November '07 edition) that he’s quite an interesting character.

He got into cruising later in life but has definitely been making up for lost time in recent years. This season he and Donna are headed for Australia to exchange this Aussie-built cat for a smaller version. “Java’s looking forward to a fast, downwind sail back to her homeland of Oz,” he explains.

After that, they plan to spend a few years in the Western Pacific in search of an island paradise to call home.

Architeuthis — Mariner 31
Jared & Christine Kibele, Moss Landing, CA

It’s not every day that you meet a guy with a tattoo of a giant squid creeping down his shoulder. But then you don’t often meet anyone who’s as fascinated by these seemingly mythical creatures as Jared and Christine are. They’re both marine biologists who can testify that such sea monsters certainly do exist. During their travels aboard Architeuthis — you guessed it, that’s the Latin genus name for giant squid — they hope to become involved with some bona fide research projects, and they may apply to grad school in New Zealand.

Having grown up around her dad’s boatyard on Long Island, NY, Christine has always been around the water. But it wasn’t until she crewed on the school ship Concordia that she really got the cruising bug. Jared was first introduced to watersports through scuba diving, but they now share an equal passion for sailing — and cruising to far-flung destinations.

Evergreen — Liberty 458
The Morrison family, Seattle, WA

Dennis and Carol tell us they’ve been planning to go cruising ever since they met 20 years ago. “Now, three boats, one child and one home move later, here we are,” says Carol.

Their sailing careers began on New Mexico lakes, starting with sailboarding, then on to Hobie cats and a Catalina 22. After Dennis was transferred to California, big boat experience kicked in and the cruising dream took on new momentum.

When they first began their cruise, their 13-year-old son Josh wasn’t too
thrilled. "He thought we were the only parents in the world that tortured their child by putting him on a boat." But today, he’s as excited about the cruising life as his parents are.

_Symbiosis — Beneteau Oceanis 390_  
Andre Schwartz & Irma Urrutia  
Vancouver, BC

When we asked when his sailing career first started, Andre began by telling us that when he was a young child his parents told him they thought he’d come from another planet. Otherwise, how, at age 2, could he have drawn a realistic picture of a square-rigger while living in land-locked Hungary during WWII?

In any case, we believe him when he says he has saltwater in his veins. After the war he joined the West German Navy, probably in pursuit of a fascination he’s always had with oceans and islands.

We haven’t met Irma yet, but if she’s half as interesting as Andre, they’re a remarkable couple. He is a self-proclaimed philosopher who’s big on individual responsibility and has many thoughts on how we can work together to make the world a better place. For further insights, check out his book _Oceanborne Madness?_, which is available at Amazon.

_Tuatara — Ingrid 38_  
Kevin Sterling, Orcas Island, WA

When we met Kevin in Puerto Vallarta last month he was weighing the option of singlehanding 3,000 miles to French Polynesia. He’s done some solo sailing before and is tempted to try it here, especially after having had a succession of five different crew aboard since leaving Orcas Island, WA, last year.

At 31, he’s one of the youngest skippers this year and hopefully his youthful, idealistic attitude will serve him well: "My boat is a time machine," he says, which will hopefully lead him to some "wild places. I am living my life as though it were a dream."
**Hadar — Morgan 41**  
Dino Poulson, Palm City, FL

Not everyone is crossing the Pacific just to smell flower-scented air and swim in pristine waters. According to Dino, he and his 10-year-old daughter Sasha will be making films all along their route around the world.

If that sounds ambitious for a single parent, you should know that Dino, Sasha and her mom previously circumnavigated aboard an Ericson 32. As Dino explains, Sasha has lived aboard for more than 8 years and knows no other life. He has more than 40,000 miles under his belt, and has visited 27 countries under sail. You can find some of his short films via [www.themodernaquaticvoyager.com](http://www.themodernaquaticvoyager.com).

**A Blue Moon — Woollacott 45**  
Rob & Jo Woollacott, Devonport, NZL

We wouldn’t ever expect Rob and Jo to crow about their sailing accomplishments, but if they ever get in a mood to do so they’ll certainly have plenty to boast about. This particular trip will serve as their return run ‘back home’ to New Zealand, where they started 16 years ago. Jo is originally from Canada, but Rob is from a salty seafaring family with a proud history of boat-building. He and Jo built this wooden 45-footer themselves 15 years ago, and she has served them well throughout their travels.

They always seemed to gravitate to the quieter, less traveled places like the far-flung isles of Micronesia and the Marshalls. Their most recent circuit has taken them north to Alaska and back down to Mexico. We hope life ashore suits them as well as life on the sea has.

We’ll take a break here to let our keyboard cool off, but we’ll be back next month to introduce you to the international crews we met recently at our Panama send-off at the Balboa YC.

In the meantime, you can find more info on current and past Pacific Puddle Jump fleets at [www.pacificpuddlejump.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejump.com).

— latitude/andy