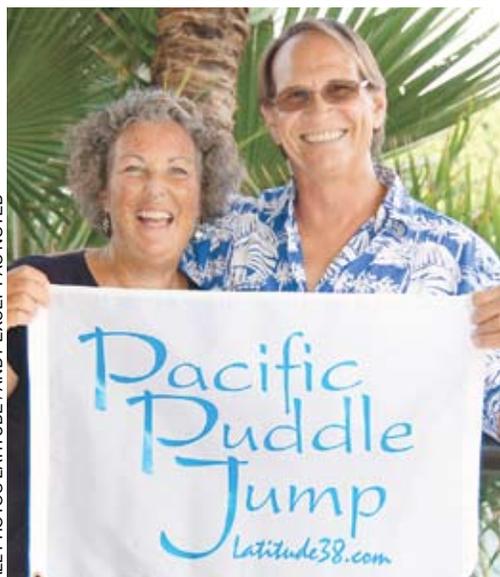


# RUNNIN' DOWN A DREAM —

"*R*unnin' down a dream,  
that never would come to me.  
Workin' on a mystery,  
goin' wherever it leads."

Tom Petty was 'cruising' in a car rather than a sailboat when he penned those lyrics. But we think the sentiment translates perfectly to bluewater voyaging, an activity that most of the sailors you'll meet in these pages have been eagerly anticipating for years. They're members of the Pacific Puddle Jump



ALL PHOTOS LATITUDE / ANDY EXCEPT AS NOTED

"Got the burgee. Now we're official!" say Gail and John of 'Music'.

Class of 2012. That is, sailors who are jumping off from various points along the West Coast of the Americas, all bound for French Polynesia.

Some people use the descriptor "dreamer" disparagingly, often aiming it at folks who refuse to be content with the here and now. But we think being a dreamer is perfectly healthy because who knows, allowing yourself to fantasize about your future might lead you to an exciting new reality someday — such as idling in a Tahitian lagoon surrounded by Eden-like gardens and lush tropical forests.

Last month, at our annual Puddle Jump Send-off Parties in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and Balboa, Panama — generously co-hosted by the Vallarta and Balboa YCs — we met dozens of Jumpers and learned a bit about both the inspirations behind their wanderlust and their future cruising plans. This month we'll introduce you to the PV contingent, and we'll follow up in May with mini-profiles on Jumpers from both Panama and La Paz — an abnormally large group has

chosen to jump from there this season.

## **Music — Nordic 44 John McCarthy & Gail Lapetina Bellingham, WA**

John and Gail might seem like an unlikely pair to be heading out across 3,000 miles of open ocean, as he is a self-described "desert rat" from Reno, and she spent much of her life in Utah. But after moving to the Bay, John got so deeply into sailing that he eventually became an instructor at Spinnaker Sailing of Redwood City. Gail became a student there, and when she signed up for a club-sponsored flotilla trip to the BVI, who do you suppose was her captain?

Their Caribbean romance led to a honeymoon in Tonga, and they've been itching to get back to the sun-kissed isles of the South Pacific ever since. Their Plan A is to cruise south of the equator for six months, then head to Hawaii, and eventually return to their new home base at Bellingham, WA.

## **Charisma — Tayana 37 Bob Johnson & Ann Adams Berkeley, CA**

"For me the inspiration to do this started when I was 15 reading about Robin Lee Graham and the *Dove*," explains Bob. "I'd treasure every month's *National Geographic* when the articles about him came in. Later I read Slocum, and all the others — practically every frickin' sailing book there was."

Ann, on the other hand, had never stepped aboard a sailboat until she met Bob three years ago. Her first offshore trip was the 2010 Baja Ha-Ha rally and she "loved it!" She explains, "Bob wanted



Having run out of excuses, Ann is eager to head west with Bob aboard 'Charisma'.

to keep going, but I had this huge list of excuses, which gradually all went away." Last fall they did the rally again: "And you know what?" asks Ann. "Every part



Other than the sailors who arrive at this time each year, there's almost no tourism to Marquesan islands such as Fatu Hiva.

of our trip so far has been more exciting than I could have imagined, so I can't even comprehend what I'll see, experience and do in the South Pacific."

Like many jumpers, their game plan is to cruise to New Zealand this season, then reassess.

## **Island Bound — Peterson 44 Bill & Kat Russell, Seattle, WA**

Bill and Kat can still remember the incident that sparked their cruising dreams: "We were sitting at the Sunset Beach Hotel in Bora Bora looking out at sailboats anchored in front," Kat recalls, "and I made the mistake of saying, 'You mean they just sail up here and drop their anchor, then when they get tired of it they just move on?'" "Yup," said Bill.

Nine months later they flew to Cabo and crewed on a 23-day crossing to Honolulu aboard the lovely Christensen

# PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I



RAVEN

55 *Western Grace* to make sure that they were really up for bluewater sailing. They were. A year later they'd bought this 44-footer, and as they set sail now their plans are open-ended.

***A landside vacation inspired Bill and Kat of 'Island Bound' change their mode of transport.***



## ***Blue Rodeo — Deerfoot 50*** **Mark McClellan & Anne MacDonald** **McCall, ID**

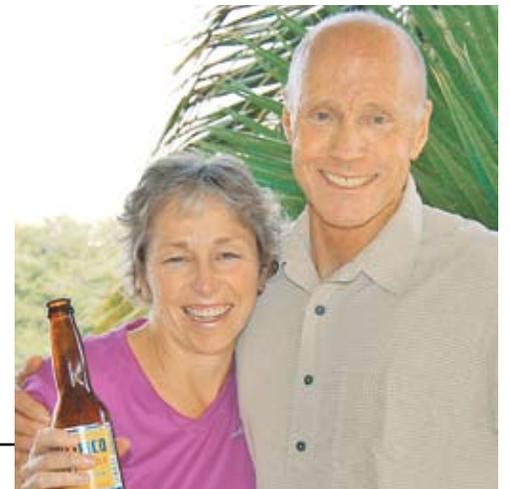
"We've happily traded our air-travel work life for a far healthier one," write Mark and Ann, both of whom are pilots. "Our boat is the new magic carpet that will take us wherever our sense of adventure leads us."

Mark, who grew up in Ventura, bought his first boat in '77, but had tucked that part of his life far away after meeting Anne and moving to Idaho. One day though, she came home from work saying a girlfriend was retiring early and going cruising. "Why can't we do that?" she asked. That was music to Mark's ears. Within months he was perusing the Internet seriously looking for a cruising boat.

Partly because they're both divers

who love remote destinations, they plan to spend multiple seasons in the South Pacific.

***Travel aboard 'Blue Rodeo' may be slower than flying, but Anne and Mark are loving it.***



# RUNNIN' DOWN A DREAM —

## **Black Dog — Formosa 41**

**Drew White & Deb Anderson, CA**

In case you're wondering — as we were — the boat is named in memory of a deceased pet.

Unlike many of the wanderers you'll



*Drew and Deb are heading down to New Zealand aboard 'Black Dog' to see family.*

meet in these pages, this couple has a specific plan as they head west: to spend time with Deb's family on the North Island of New Zealand — apparently there are lots of them. The family joke is that in five generations no one in the family has ever ventured to the South Island. Deb says that's not exactly true, but in any case she and Drew might head that way eventually to see all the spectacular sailing destinations that they've been hearing about for years.

"We've got the time, we've got the boat, it's time to go," says Drew. Their plans are open-ended.

## **Moma — Reinke 13M**

**Bruno & Yvonne Wittwer  
Basel, Switzerland**

We thought we were in the company of some pretty experienced cruisers until we



*As far as we can tell, Bruno and Yvonne of 'Momo' were born to travel.*

met Bruno and Yvonne. Having learned to sail on Swiss lakes, they bolstered their skills by chartering in the Med, then took off sailing in 2001, and have covered

an amazing amount of territory since: across the Atlantic, up along the Eastern Seaboard, into the Great Lakes, down into the Gulf of Mexico via canals and rivers, through The Ditch, then all the way north to Alaska. And they still have tremendous enthusiasm to see more. "Well, we are travelers," they explain simply. While they enjoy sailing from place to place, they say "the most important thing for us is learning about different cultures."

## **Mersoleil — Hylas 46 Robin and Bev Collins Seattle, WA**

"Unlike almost everyone else I've spoken with (at our Puddle Jump party) we don't have plans to return. We fully expect to find an expat community along



*Bev and Robin of 'Mersoleil' have cast off the shackles of mainstream living.*

the shore somewhere, buy a little beach-front bungalow and put down roots." Sounds pretty good to us.

Robin and Bev aren't what you'd call boat hippies, though. Just free-thinking adults who find themselves in a position where they can actually make such statements with a straight face.

"A week after I retired in September, we set sail from Seattle," explains Robin. "We're just so happy, that we pinch ourselves every morning."

"Yeah, and since we're from Seattle, we get up each morning and say, 'Oh my God, the sun's out again!'"

## **Convivia — Cal 43 The Bradford family, San Francisco**

"I have been wanting to sail as my life purpose since I was



18," states Tucker matter-of-factly, "I wanted to circumnavigate and just keep going." When he met Victoria (on her 18th birthday) he introduced the idea to her, and amazingly, she thought it was a great plan.

Today, they are fulfilling those dreams with their kids, Ruby, 7, and Miles, 4. "We've been brainwashing them since birth, so this is what they think is normal," jokes Tucker.

But they're completely serious about continuing on indefinitely. The plan is to end up in New England in five years or so. Then, when the kids are in junior high and high school, they'll trade seasons between Maine and the Caribbean.

They don't subscribe to the standard Calvert homeschooling system. "We're on the un-school end of things," explains Victoria. "We just provide them with lots of information and there's no end to the questions that they have, and the motivation they have to learn about many topics."

"Kids are great at setting lofty goals," adds Tucker, "so you can use that as a catalyst and tie a whole bunch of sub-  
**Homeschooling aboard 'Convivia' isn't like on other boats. But it's working beautifully.**



# PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I



*Excited Puddle Jumpers gathered at Vallarta YC last month — our generous host for 15 years.*

jects into a kid's personal motivations."

**Bright Angel — Mason 44**  
**Bob & Linda Hargreaves**  
**Olympia, WA**

We first met Bob and Linda when they attended our PPJ seminar at the Seattle Boat Show, and we were delighted to see them again, poised to actually sail west into the dream-like Polynesian beauty portrayed in our slide show.

Unlike many couples, apparently Linda was the driver who actually got



*Bob says it was Linda who drove their effort to sail west this season on 'Bright Angel'.*

them off the dock. "As we were nearing retirement," says Bob, "she told me I had to get my act together to go on this grand adventure." He complied, of course.

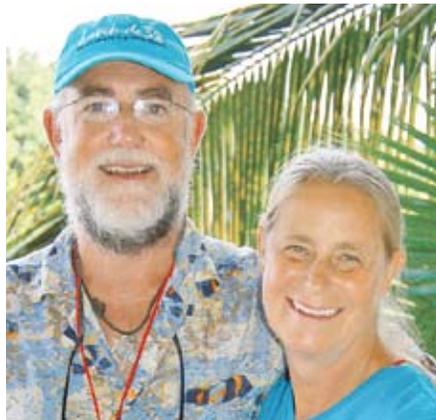
"I just wanted to have one grand adventure," adds Linda.

"We're most interested in the far-flung places," explains Bob. "It's like there's a grand smorgasboard out there, so lets start eatin!"

**Diamond Girl — Beneteau 393**  
**Larry & Nelda Read**  
**Bellingham, WA**

"I want to leave a legacy to my children and my grandchildren not to be afraid to aspire to their dreams," says Nelda in reference to their imminent ocean-crossing. "I think in our society they want you to be afraid — to limit you. But the sailing lifestyle doesn't limit you."

Although formerly based in Idaho, they've been working toward the goal of long-term cruising for years. In fact, according to Nelda, world cruising has been Larry's lifelong dream, but up until about five years ago they'd only sailed on lakes. "We really hadn't been offshore until we did the 2010 Ha-Ha, and we learned a lot. We were so far



*Larry and Nelda of 'Diamond Girl' are demonstrating to their kids how to live their dreams.*

off on a flyer one night that we saw the international dateline," he says with a laugh. "The hardest part of cruising is not to get caught up, because you meet great people wherever you go."

**Le Letty Boat — Roberts 43**  
**Jean Lachaud & Stéphanie Eonet**  
**France**

Prior to heading south with the Ha-Ha rally last fall, this bright young French couple lived in the Bay Area for three years. They'd both had hopes of exploring the world under sail for years previously, but living in such a hotbed of sailing certainly

reinforced their cruising plans.

At this point they're taking it one step at a time. "In the months before the Ha-Ha we didn't know if we would make the event because the boat wasn't ready. But we made it to the starting line, then made it to Cabo. Now, here we are in PV about to sail to Tahiti." Sounds like the right approach to us. And due to their



*Stéphanie and Jean of 'Le Letty Boat' are thrilled that they're ready to jump west.*

nationality, this is one couple that won't have to worry about extending their visas. Being French, they can stay forever if they want!

**Cheers — Morgan 382**  
**Mark & Michelle Graves, Plano, TX**

Mark and Michelle are used to being at sea, as they've been earning their living aboard small-capacity passenger vessels for years, running trips to Southeast Alaska, Baja, Central America and the Med. Now however, they're thoroughly enjoying their "expedition for two."

They've lived in several spots along the West Coast, including Friday Harbor, WA, where they met, and Sausalito, where she pursued a degree in marine biology. With that knowledge, she says,



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# RUNNIN' DOWN A DREAM —

"Heading toward the center of marine biodiversity is pretty exciting!" Now, after being based in Baja for four years they'll cruise to New Zealand this season, then head north into Micronesia, and on to Indonesia.



**Michelle and Mark are finally leading their own expedition aboard 'Cheers'.**

**Morning Star — Roberts 43  
John Peterson & Janet Ryder  
Seattle, WA**

John and Janet were already living



**John and Janet of 'Morning Star' already have their French Polynesian courtesy flag ready.**

the cruiser lifestyle in Mexico when they learned that his former racing crewman Lauren Buchholz had sailed to Tahiti with his partner Lauren Smith. (Their photo currently graces the header of the Puddle Jump website: [www.pacificpuddlejumps.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejumps.com))

"They inspired me," recalls John. "I thought, 'Wow! We could really do this?' But it wasn't until about two months ago that they actually committed.

Janet has decided to opt out of the crossing, though. She'll ride the trade winds aboard a 747 instead and rendezvous in the Marquesas. Sailing buddies Marc Hawley and Ian Gillespie-Smith will crew on the passage.

**Segue — Atlantic 55 cat  
Colin Dykstra & Mercedes Lopez  
Toronto, Canada**

Believe it or not, this worldly, dynamic couple were first 'introduced' on the *findacrew.com* website. When they met in person they seemed to be ideally matched, as both are longtime travelers with a burning wanderlust.

A former commercial pilot, Colin says he's already traveled to every corner of the earth. "But now I want to retrace at sea level some of the routes I made at 39,000 feet. "I'm half Dutch, so sailing is in my blood," he says. "My father was actually born on a boat."

Yet he's quick to point out that Mercedes actually has more sea miles than he does. Raised in Spain, she's sailed since age 10, has crossed the Atlantic, and cruised extensively in the Baltic

# PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I

and Med. They hope to complete a slow circumnavigation aboard the big Chris White-designed cat.

## **ShantiAna — Columbia 39**

### **The Bartlett family, San Francisco**

Bill has been skippering commercial vessels all over the world during the past 25 years. But he only started sailing two years ago, with his wife, ShantiAna as his mentor. She's owned five sailboats, since

*The Bartlett family is heading west on 'ShantiAna' after less than six months in Mexico.*



getting hooked on sailing in the '80s.

Having done the Ha-Ha last fall with all their kids on board, they're now headed to the South Pacific on an open-ended time table. The way we understand it, they'll have one child along as crew, Keene, who is 20. If you're standing night watch sometime and hear sweet jazz guitar drifting across the wavetops, *ShantiAna* might be upwind of you. Although barely out of his teens, Keene is an accomplished jazzman who's picked up gigs as the family the family traveled south.

## **Lightspeed — Atlantic 42 cat**

### **Dave & Kathy Kane, "Earth"**

"On a trip to Costa Rica right after college I met a guy on the plane who lived on his boat and sailed from place to place," recalls Dave vividly. "A light bulb went off in my head and I knew that's what I wanted to do." Since then, he says, "living this lifestyle has been a very bright, clear goal for ten years."

He found the perfect partner in Kathy. She grew up waterskiing



*On this trip, Kathy and Dave of 'Lightspeed' plan to sail fast, but linger longer.*

and houseboating, but when she moved to San Diego she had a revelation. "I learned you could actually sail around the world on sailboats. I immediately thought, 'That's what I want to do.'"

This will be their second trip to the South Pacific, but this time they plan to linger longer in the places they visit. They've had three boats in six years. The first they sailed to Australia and sold. The second they bought in New York, sailed around the Caribbean, and sold. Then they bought *Lightspeed* in Honduras. Fast, sleek and sexy, she seems like a keeper — at least for a while.

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# RUNNIN' DOWN A DREAM

## **Upon the Wind — IP 40**

### **Jim & Gloria Mead, Tucson, AZ**

"Our plan was always to go to Panama, then into the Caribbean," says Jim. But one weekend we were sitting in a bar in San Carlos with some friends who were preparing to go to Tahiti and my wife became convinced that she wanted to do that too. So the next morning I asked, "Was that the margaritas talking, or are we really going?" They are. Jim found out that Gloria has wanted to go there since watching *Adventures in Paradise* on TV as a kid.

## **La Loupoite — Custom 40**

### **The Lechiffart-Rabilier family Brittany, France**

We've saved the most talented PV Puddle Jumpers for last. In all our years of reporting on cruising sailors, we've never met a family quite like this one. Having been professionally trained in circus arts, French sailors Delphine Lechiffart and Franck Rabilier replenish their cruising kitty wherever they go by performing 'high-wire' actobatic acts from the rigging of their 40-ft sloop *La*



**To make their boat stand out, 'La Loupoite's talented crew painted her school-bus yellow.**

*Loupiote.*

We first met them in Mexico last year, then saw their act in San Francisco months later — they sailed all the way up to Vancouver last year, via Hawaii. Last

month, we caught their act again in PV, where they were preparing to make the jump to Polynesia.

Although their two lovely daughters, Loeva, 12 and Ondja, 3, are not yet part of the act, we're sure they will be eventually. And we have no doubt that they will also become accomplished sailors.

Having set out from Brittany, France, in '04, the family has logged thousands of miles, and Franck and Delphine have performed in dozens of harbors in France, Portugal, Morocco, the French West Indies, New England, both eastern and western Canada, Panama, Mexico and the U.S. We have no doubt that their shows will be greatly enjoyed wherever they go in the South Pacific.

**W**e'll give our fingers and keyboard a rest here, but there are a lot more Puddle Jumpers to meet next month, so stay tuned. And if you think a cruise across the Pacific might be in the cards for you someday, check out the resources at [www.pacificpuddlejump.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejump.com).

— **latitude/andy**