

# PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I —

The common thread that ties together the diverse group of sailors profiled here is that they're all about to set sail for the fabled anchorages of French Polynesia — an ambitious voyage of roughly 3,000 miles that we like to call the Pacific Puddle Jump. As you 'meet' them in these pages, you may assume that they're all exceedingly lucky or exceedingly rich. But neither is true.

More accurately, they've all elevated



The 'Lorien' crew strikes a pose with their official Pacific Puddle Jump burgee. The timing couldn't be better for a their family cruise.

the dream of South Pacific voyaging to top-priority status in their lives, and have made whatever choices and sacrifices necessary to pursue that goal. Some have walked away from high-paying careers, some have sold their homes and liquidated virtually every other asset that didn't fit on their boats, and others tell us they'll simply cruise 'til they're broke and deal with 're-entry' when the time comes.

We suspect that the trickiest aspect of committing to a departure date isn't paying off the boat or building up a cruising kitty, but getting all the other elements of their lives to line up — such as kids being on their own and parents not yet needing help — so that a potential 'cruising window' opens up for them.

As in years past, the 2015 PPJ fleet is composed of sailors from all along the West Coast and beyond who have dramatically different backgrounds and sail on a wide variety of boats.

We met the folks profiled here at our annual Pacific Puddle Jump Sendoff Party at Nuevo Vallarta's Vallarta YC, located at Paradise Village Resort. Next month, we'll follow up with profiles of Jumpers from many nations whom we met at two additional parties in Panama.

## Lorien — Panda 38 The Starinchak Family Bellingham, WA

Ed and Melina are thrilled to be able to share this adventure with their sons Jake, 10, and JD, 20, who's taking a sailing break before going to college. "These guys are at unique ages right now," says Ed, "We'll probably never have an opportunity to do something like this again with them." "Hopefully," says Melinda, "it will be a great introduction to the cruising lifestyle."

Along the way, Jake is being home-schooled via the Calvert system. Naturally, the family gravitates toward other 'kid boats' that they meet along the way. Melinda notes, "Meeting other families and finding out where they're going has been incredible." Looking ahead, JD says, "I think I'm most excited about the cultural experiences of the trip; being able to visit such unique places, and seeing them by traveling aboard a sailboat instead of just flying in on a plane."

## Plan Sea — Island Packet 45 Rich & Jenny Freeman San Diego, CA

"We bought our first sailboat in 1999 and wanted to leave in '05," explains Jenny. "But Rich got a job that he couldn't refuse." The workaday world is behind them now, though, as they pursue an



Rich & Jenny of 'Plan Sea'.

ambitious schedule: west to French Polynesia, north to Hawaii, across to the Pacific Northwest, back down to Mexico, and eventually through the Panama Canal and on to the Caribbean.

## Pannikin — Bavaria 44 Steve & Angela Webb Yamba, AUS

Steve and Angela's route to Puerto Vallarta was anything but typical. After buying this boat in Turkey in 2011, they cruised the Aegean, Adriatic and Med extensively — including a trip to Morocco — before crossing the pond to the Caribbean a year ago. After lots of exploring and transiting the Canal, they thought they'd like

to see some of the West Coast before heading home to eastern Australia. So they harbor-hopped all the way up to Mexico — and loved it.



The Aussie crew of 'Pannikin'.

## Sea Note — Endeavour 43 Ray & Chicgaila Wood Fort Mohave, AZ

You may find it odd that this cruising sailboat is homeported in Fort Mohave, Arizona, especially since Ray and Chicgaila are Canadian. As they set their sights on the western horizon, their loose plan is island-hopping to New Zealand, via Tahiti, Tonga and Fiji. Their motto is



Leaving on a 'Sea Note'.



ALL PHOTOS LATITUDE / ANDY

# CHASING THE WESTERN HORIZON

perfectly suited to the cruising life: "We don't know where we are going, but we haven't gotten there yet!"

## **Priority — Beneteau 35 Eddie Martin, Mooloolaba, AUS**

Born in Africa, Cap'n Eddie now calls Australia home. He saved himself a lot of outfitting headaches by picking up this well-equipped cruiser in San Carlos (via a *YachtWorld.com* listing). He's now taking her home to 'Oz' with the help of crew Madrie Van Staden. Having made the trip years ago on a previous boat, Eddie knows the way!



*Ed of 'Priority'.*

## **Iolani — Hughes 48 Barry & Sylvia Stompe Sausalito, CA**

After winning their class at the Banderas Bay Regatta last month, Barry and Sylvia are exiting Mexico on a high note. They were also elated to secure one-year Long Stay Visas for French Polynesia recently, but now they may have to re-

*This year's Banderas Bay Puddle Jumpers showed their spirit at our annual PPJ Sendorff party at the Vallarta YC.*

think their original game plan: to sail north to Hawaii at the end of the cruising season (October/November). We've bet them a six-pack of ice-cold Hinano beer that Tahiti's charms will seduce them into sticking around for a second season.

## **Four Choices — Islander Freeport 36 Bob Scholl, Berkeley, CA**

"I've been reading *Latitude 38* almost from the first issue," says Bob, who will be singlehandedly to the Marquesas. He 'blames' *Latitude* for fueling his unstoppable urge to experience bluewater voyaging. Bob's wife wasn't interested in coming along but to her credit she gave him a two-year window to pursue his passion. With the first year already gone, he figures he's got just about enough time to island-hop to Australia and sell *Four Choices* there.



*Mr. 'Four Choices'.*

## **Long Winded Jeanneau 42 Dan & Maria Slattery**

San Diego, CA  
Sailing off over the horizon has been a dream for Dan and his brother Mike since they were little kids. They grew up sailing around Los Alamitos Bay in Sabots, and would sometimes venture outside the breakwater for a look at the open ocean beyond. Dreams of offshore voyaging began back then for both of them. Brother Mike and his wife Di-



*Sylvia & Barry of 'Iolani'.*

ane will be along as crew, at least as far as Tahiti.

After French Polynesia, Dan and Maria's tentative plan is to continue east to perhaps New Caledonia before beginning their arc back to the West Coast.

## **Pied-a-Mer III — Seawind 1160 Eric & Pam Sellix, Clatskanie, OR**

This is round two for Eric and Pamela. Last year about this time they were all provisioned, had their additional crew on board, and were rarin' to go when a major engine problem threw the proverbial monkey wrench into their cruising plans.

These longtime cruisers know better than to make precise plans that will inevitably be broken. But Australia is high on their must-see list, especially since their Aussie-built Seawind 1160 is considered a "single-class racer" Down Under. Eric can hardly wait to race her 'round the buoys, and Pam is game also.

## **Free Spirit — Freedom 42 Chuck Miller & Lauri Jensen Long Beach, CA**

Chuck can distinctly remember what spurred his lust for voyaging: "It was a corny TV movie called the *Voyage of the Yes*, about a guy who sailed around the world. That show planted the seed, and the idea has been in the back of my mind ever since." Lauri too is totally gung-ho about offshore voyaging. "I've been sailing my whole life. In fact, my first car was a boat! I just had to find the right captain and the right boat. I feel really lucky."

Their plans are wide open, and may include a complete circumnavigation. "We want to inspire people not to wait



*The 'Long Winded' crew.*



*2nd-timers Pam and Eric.*



*... of 'Free Spirit'*



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until everything is perfect," says Lauri, "if you've got that dream, just go for it. Live that dream."

## **White Hawk — Grand Soleil 46 John & Lynette Flynn, San Diego, CA**

This will be John and Lynette's second Puddle Jump passage, having crossed in 2002 aboard the same



Round two for 'White Hawk'.

boat. On that cruise they spent three and a half years exploring various island groups, especially those lying off the beaten track. "Last time," recalls Lynette, "we visited two

villages that had never been visited by a yacht." After finally arriving in Australia, they took a flight home for a visit that resulted in John's getting a job offer he couldn't refuse — it included shipping the boat home. The three-year commitment he made stretched to nine years, but now they've finally broken away again, and couldn't be more thrilled to be getting back 'out there'.

## **Time Warp — Jeanneau SO 45 Carla Deykin & Ed Wilkinson Brisbane, CA**

"For me it has been a lifelong dream to do this; ever since I read *Kon Tiki* in high school — although we have much nicer accommodations aboard *Time Warp!* Ed, on the other hand, has had a head start. "Since 2003 I've been wandering around the Pacific delivering boats, as well as preparing boats in the Bay Area to do the Baja Ha-Ha and the Puddle Jump." Bruce Hutchins and Robert Tinus will be along as crew on the passage.

After a stint in Polynesia, Carla and Ed's plan is to sail north to Hawaii, then circle back to the Bay Area.

The happy crew of 'Time Warp'.



## **Althea — Westsail 32**

### **Larry Linder, Morro Bay, CA**

Having worked as a harbor patrolman and commercial fisherman, Larry's



Larry of 'Althea'.

got lots of maritime experience, but he admits the cruising life is completely new to him. After retiring in July, he headed south three months later. So far, he says, "I'm lovin' it." That is, all except having to get up and look around every 15 minutes when he's sailing offshore.

Wisely, Larry has left his cruising plans wide open.

## **Second Wind — Nordic 44 Art & Nancie Shaw, Anacortes, WA**

Art and Nancie have been sailing the Pacific Northwest for 30 years, and have often thought about a South Pacific cruise, but



The 'Second Wind' crew.

what finally inspired them to take action was when their daughter recently sailed around the world aboard the 179-ft educational tall ship *Picton Castle*. "She's kind of our hero,"

says Nancy with a smile.

"We were concerned that if we waited until we retire we wouldn't physically be able to do it. So we said let's go now and we'll figure out re-entry later. Our parents were worried, but our kids said, "Yeah!"

## **Felicita — J/120**

### **Perry Peters, Marina del Rey, CA**

"About 25 years ago I proposed the

idea of doing a trip like this to my wife," recalls Peter, "but it only took her about 40 seconds to give it the thumbs-down." He's quick to add, though, that even though his wife is not really into boating, she's always been supportive of his passion for sailing.



Perry of 'Felicita'.



AQUILA

Although Peter lives in Arizona, he has kept his boat in Southern Cal for the past decade, prior to cruising south last fall. He's well practiced at shorthanded sailing, having done the Pac Cup double-handed last summer, but he learned during that experience that rotations of three crew would allow everybody to get more sleep and have more fun. So friends Richard Schaper and Hobie Bonish will share watches on the crossing.

## **Gambol — Bruce Roberts 38 Doug & Joy Cooley, Lafayette, CO**

Neither Doug, who hails from Colorado, nor Joy, who is originally from Singa-

pore, grew up sailing, but today they're both equally committed to their imminent South Pacific adventures.

"Two years ago I didn't know anything about sailing," says Joy, "but I had a dream that the Pacific Ocean was calling!" A longtime sailor, Doug has had similar dreams for years, but after a serious medical scare last year, the idea shot



Joy and Doug of 'Gambol'.

# CHASING THE WESTERN HORIZON



**A secluded anchorage, a white sand beach, gin-clear water, and a self-sufficient boat. What else could you ask for?**

to the top of his must-do list. He bought *Gambol* recently in Mazatlan, made some upgrades, and now she's ready to carry the couple over the horizon to French Polynesia and beyond — maybe even to Singapore. Their plans are wide open.

**Astraea — Hallberg-Rassy 41  
Lee & Shelli Scifers, Olympia, WA**

Lee and Shelli are a bit more ambitious than most westbound cruisers. Rather than vowing to stay only in or near the tropics, they intend to go "clockwise around the Pacific." That is, through the South Pacific islands, up to Japan, then across the North Pacific to Alaska, and finally back down to Seattle — a circuit of at least four or five years.

"We've been married for 26 years, and we've been planning this trip for 27 years," explains Shelli, so the idea has definitely been incubating long enough.

"Since we bought the boat three and



**Shelli and Lee of 'Astraea'.**

a half years ago," explains Lee, "we've slowly been trying to get a little smarter about what we do and how we do it. So we're not really ready, but we're ready enough!" They're most interested in visiting remote anchorages.

**Daybreak — Nor'West 33  
Matt & Megan Martz  
Port Hadlock, WA**

Matt and Megan tell us they were working in Alaska when they stumbled across the website of two guys who sailed



**Matt and Megan of 'Daybreak'.**

around the world. "We didn't even know that was an option," recalls Matt. "We're from Indiana, so we'd never even been out on the ocean — ever." That was five years ago. Today, they've become experienced sailors, their Port Townsend-based Nor'West 33 is fitted out for the crossing, and they're rarin' to go. At ages 29 and 30 respectively, Matt and Megan are among the youngest crews in this year's fleet.

**Aussie Rules — Catalina 34 Mk II  
Dave & Rose Hayes  
Gabriola Island, BC**

Not many cruising couples are seriously into racing, but Dave and Rose are. In fact, they met at Whidbey Island Race Week seven years ago, and got married there this year — a first for the long-established event.

"We both love racing, sailing and just being on the water. So shortly after we got together we came up with the plan that A) we'd move to an island, and B) sail to Australia" — where Dave was raised. They're now on



**They say 'Aussie Rules'.**

part B of that plan, having bought this boat in Galveston, Texas as a fixer-upper and trucked her to British Columbia. They anticipate loving South Pacific cruising so much that they may sell this boat Down Under, then return to the West Coast and get a bigger one.

**Scintilla — CT-49  
Chris Harry & Chris Barnes  
Seattle, WA**

Although he's a longtime resident of Seattle, Chris grew up in Florida, where he occasionally met long-haul cruisers. "So I've had the idea that making a trip like this was possible since I was about 15 years old."

He initiated his wife Chris into the cruising scene via a trip to Alaska and lots of sailing in the Salish Sea. She's definitely excited about the crossing to French Polynesia, but explains, "I told him I'd begin a circumnavigation, but I can't guarantee I'll finish it." That seems fair — and honest. Friends Marcus and Cyndi Adkison will crew to Polynesia.

**The jolly crew of 'Scintilla'.**



# PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I —



Members of this 'Circus' come in all sizes.

## **Korbut Rose — Hans Christian 33 Bruce & Sandy Brown, Portland, OR**

"I grew up powerboating on the East Coast," explains Bruce, "but the first time I got on a sailboat I knew that I was meant to be a sailor, not a powerboater." He's had this boat for 23 years and he says, "I've always dreamed of sailing her around the world."



They sail 'Korbut Rose'.

Sandy has been sailing for a decade or so on inshore waters, but has never done an off-shore passage. As she puts it, though,

"I have God in my heart, so I'm not afraid of anything." It's hard to argue with that. If things work out, they hope to do a complete circumnavigation.

**What's at the end of the rainbow? In this case the calm, protected anchorage at Daniel's Bay, a favorite cruiser stopover in the Marquesas.**



CHARISMA

## **Family Circus — Lagoon 470 Tzortzis family San Francisco, CA**

When we met the fun-loving Tzortzis family last fall on the Ha-Ha they said if all goes well, they'll do the 2015 Puddle Jump. Well, they're still smiling, so they're now making final preparations for departure. "People are usually surprised that we have five kids aboard, but we're having a blast," says Chris (aka Dad).

"We love the quality time with the kids and discovering so many new things. We needed our kids to see a bigger world and gain a broader perspective."

In addition to Chris and his wife Heather, the crew manifest includes Mykaela, 21, Tristan, 13, Lexi, 12, Maia, 7, and Lina, 6. Needless to say, they'll be on the lookout for other 'kid boats' once they reach the islands.

## **Tramp — Bruce Roberts 55 KO Arney & Sue Drake, Haines, AK**



KO and Sue of 'Tramp'.

(Trust us, it's a long story.) Luckily for him, he met Sue during the '13 Baja Ha-Ha rally. They hit it off, and have been happily cruising the Mexico mainland ever since.

Because neither KO nor Sue has crossed an ocean before, they're happy to have recruited two very experienced sailors for the crossing: Ayn Woodruff and Lon Schofield. Sue and KO's plans are open, but if all

goes well a circumnavigation is a possibility.

## **Kookaburra — Island Packet 370 Mac & Wendy Setter, Bellingham, WA**

As Wendy tells it, "A year and a half ago Mac decided he was going to retire



'Kookaburra' is heading Down Under.

and become a 'recreational engineer'. I said, 'The day you retire, we'll pack the boat and leave.' He retired on a Friday and we left on Monday morning."

That was two years ago, and now, having secured one-year Long Stay Visas, they're thrilled to be heading west across the Pacific. The game plan is to take two years to reach Australia, if not longer.

Crewing on the crossing will be long-time friend Ciro Paolillo, a US Marine who's just spent 14 months in Afghanistan. He doesn't know too much about sailing, but figures, "After getting shot at by rockets, how bad could it be? I'm not the least bit worried about getting a little spray in the face."

## **Wind Rover — Whitby 42 David Dowling, Port Townsend, WA**

"I'm 29 years behind schedule," explains David. "When I was young I thought I'd sail around the world when I was 40. But corporate life and family have a way of changing plans." Today, however, he seems quite happy to have left the corporate life behind. In fact, he jokingly describes himself as a boat bum. Having achieved that somewhat enviable status, his immediate plan is sail to New Zealand by Christmas, then reassess his options.

When we met David last month he was looking for crew, but he's also willing and able to singlehand. During the past year

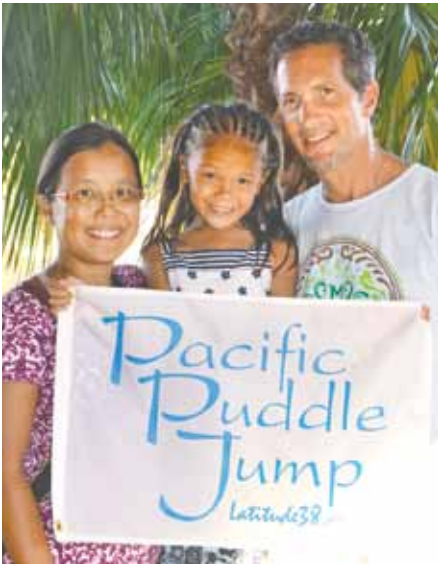


'Wind Rover' David.

# CHASING THE WESTERN HORIZON

he's put roughly 10,000 miles on *Wind Rover*, including a trip to Alaska.

**Meet the crew of 'Apropos'.**

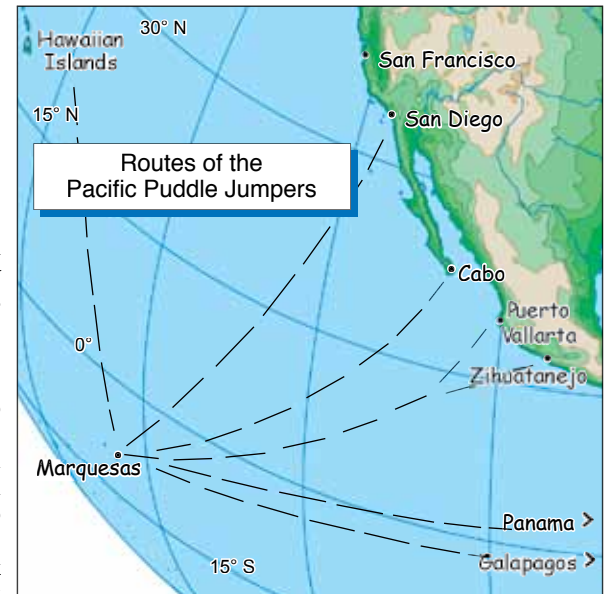


## **Apropos — Hans Christian 43 The Shutt-Wong family Seattle, WA**

Having been raised in Australia, Karen is no stranger to boating. In fact, she recalls, "Ever since I saw the movie *South Pacific* many years ago, I've always wanted to see the South Pacific islands — somehow."

After Jim and some friends delivered the boat down the coast to San Diego, Karen and eight-year-old daughter Jacintha, moved aboard for what they imagine will be a year-and-a-half cruise to Australia. Eventually, Jim and his buddies will bring the boat back to Seattle via the North Pacific. At least that's 'Plan A'.

**F**or nearly 20 years we've been interviewing Puddle Jumpers, and we never tire of it. Not only are they fascinating people, but it's great to see the excitement in their eyes as they are about to



**The sailors you've met here are setting sail from Banderas Bay. But many others will jump off from Panama, the Galapagos and elsewhere.**

embark on what will be, for many, the greatest adventure of their lives.

Tune in again next month and meet the Panama contingent.

— andy