

DREAM CHASERS —

"A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams."

— John Barrymore."

The sailors you'll meet here may not be familiar with that quote, but we'd bet they are acutely aware of its message: Windows of opportunity for any endeavor in life — from getting an education to crossing oceans — eventually close, and may never reopen again.



We suspect that's why the piece of advice we hear veteran Pacific Puddle Jumpers giving to would-be voyagers most often is "Go now. Go with what you've got." The vets know that even more challenging than getting together an ocean-ready boat and a cruising kitty, is getting all the elements of your personal life in sync — kids, parents, career, health — so that you can break away and pursue your cruising dreams.

As regular readers know, the Puddle Jump is a cruising rally, but only in the loosest terms, as its members depart for French Polynesia from various locations along the west coast of the Americas, anytime between February and June. Ever since coining the phrase Pacific



The 'Octavia' crew can't afford NOT to go cruising.

Puddle Jump nearly 20 years ago, *Latitude* has been reporting on this annual migration of what we like to call 'varsity-level cruisers', and honoring them with celebrations before and after they

complete their 3,000-mile passages. 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 Puddle Jumpers and learned the origins of their cruising dreams. We'll share some of the insights of the P.V. contingent here, and

follow up with a second installment next month featuring Jumpers departing from Panama and elsewhere.

Octavia — Anacapa 40 Derek Elliot & Cissy Chase San Francisco, CA

When Derek says, "We can't afford to live in California now that we're both retired, but we live quite well out here," it might sound like he's rationalizing his cruiser lifestyle. But he's been anticipating making this trip to the South Pacific his whole life. He singlehanded this boat to Puerto Vallarta, where Cissy eventually joined him.

"We have friends and family all over the world, so we have plenty of reasons to circumnavigate," explains Cissy. "But right now, the plan is to get to Australia, where Derek has family, and reassess."

Mystic Rhythms — Catana 44 Richard Clark & Claudie Tremblay Alameda, CA

It's easy for Richard, an American, and Claudie, who hails from Quebec, to remember how they met. It was in



Divers Richard and Claudie of 'Mystic Rhythms'.

a beautiful anchorage on the French Polynesian island of Moorea, when she was swimming from boat to boat looking for a ride west. Apparently she knocked on the right hull, as they are now heading off on an open-ended circuit of the South Pacific. Richard has already been around the world once, but this time he's content to stay in the Pacific Basin. As he explains, "It's all about the diving!" which is a passion shared equally by Claudie and him. On their way west they'll stop a second time at Socorro Island, 300 miles off the Mexican mainland, where they dove recently with giant manta rays and "huge" tiger sharks.

Mazu — Outbound 46 Mel & Elaine Bryson, Rainier, OR

Talk about delaying your cruising plans, after meeting in Santa Cruz during the late '70s, Mel and Elaine bought a schooner in Maui with the intention of heading out across the horizon. But as



she says, "Life intervened."

They never lost sight of their dreams, though, and after their last child left for college in

2010 they set sail from Seattle, and they'll soon head west. We expect they'll have a fine crossing, as their (Chinese-built) boat was named after the Chinese goddess charged with the protection of mariners.



Mel and Elaine of 'Mazu' have been waiting patiently.

Peregrine — Tayana 46 Bill Chapman & Maria Gates San Diego, CA

Bill intended to make the jump last year, but ended up having to delay his departure. That appears to have been a good thing, though, as he recently found "a wonderful woman (Maria) who is adventurous and ready to go."

PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I



The PPJ Class of 2013 is rarin' to go. Since it first opened, the Vallarta YC has co-hosted our annual send-off fiesta.

As with many Puddle Jumpers, Bill says the idea of sailing to the South Pacific has been "a lifelong dream." He says, "I've always thought of it as a really exotic destination." "Yes," adds Maria, "like going to the final frontier; a region



'Peregrine's crew is all smiles when they think about what awaits them in the islands.

where you can still visit remote parts of the planet that are unspoiled. I'm *really* excited!"

A newly recruited Frenchman, Francois Bonneau, will round out the crew.

Nereid — Delphia 40 Steve Raea, Auckland, New Zealand

Steve is one of only a few 2013 Jumpers who've sailed this route before. But this time it's his boat, so he'll be the skipper instead of tagging along as crew. Steve bought *Nereid* on the West Coast two years ago for a good price — thanks to New Zealand's relatively strong economy — and he's now taking a leisurely trip home to Auckland. Two Kiwi buddies will join him as crew.



Kiwi Steve already knows the way.

Osprey — Island Packet 35 Richard Brown & Brian Bournival Seattle, WA

Richard and Brian have been sailing buddies for years. They first explored their home waters in and near Puget Sound, and have been expanding the scope of their travels ever since.

"A couple of years ago we sailed to

Hawaii," explains Brian. "During the 25-day passage back to Seattle, on about day 8 or 9, we both came to the conclusion that we'd like to do a longer offshore



Brian and Richard of 'Osprey' have expanded their horizons substantially.

trip." This 3,000-mile crossing to the Marquesas ought to fill the bill. "Our plan is simply to keep going west until we get tired of it," says Richard. Nice plan!

Blackjack — Hunter 46 Jack Peebles, Australia

We don't know much about Australian financial regulations, but some Aussie regulator apparently deserves a pat on the back because the Land Down Under managed to avoid the financial catastrophe that crippled both the U.S. and European economies in recent years. So, thanks to prudent management — or perhaps dumb luck — a pile of Aussie dollars can buy you a whole lot more boat now than it used to. And that fact has put a smile on the faces of Jack and many of his countryman.

Jack couldn't be happier with the big Hunter he bought a year ago in San Diego at the Coronado YC. Since heading south he's always been lucky to find "enthusiastic young crew who wanted to go sailing" through *Latitude's Crew List* and elsewhere. "I'm looking forward to seeing the islands," he says, "although the weather at home (south of the Whitsundays) is almost as nice as in Tahiti!"



'Blackjack' is home-ward bound.

First Tracks — Island Packet 32 Jim Hiemstra & Brian Casey Lake Tahoe

"Sailing has always been a passion, but this plan just came together in the last six months," explains Jim. He and his buddy Brian — both of whom are "big time skiers," hence the boat name — have been cruising Mexico off and on since 2006 on OPBs (other people's

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boats).

Cap'n Jim apparently picked up the South Pacific cruising bug while in Banderas Bay. He already had the boat,



Jim and Brian of 'First Tracks' are partners on the sea and on the slopes.

so it was easy to succumb to the often-heard advice "Go now." This season he and Brian will make 'fresh tracks' to Fiji, then explore Papua New Guinea with Jim's dad aboard after the cyclone season ends.

Kiapa — M&M 52 cat Lionel & Irene Bass Fremantle, Australia

Having purchased this well-known cat two years ago, Australians Lionel and



Irene and Lionel will sail over the top to get home.

Irene are now on a leisurely cruise back home. Unlike the Aussie boat-buyers who return to the country's east coast, though, this couple will sail an extra 3,500 miles 'over the top' before reaching Fremantle, on Australia's southwest coast. Along the way they'll skirt many miles of undeveloped shoreline where few travelers venture.

It's anybody's guess when they'll actually arrive at their home port, as there's sooo much to see along the way.

Cariba — Bayfield 36 Gabriel Cote & Isabelle Valois Vancouver, Canada

Gabriel and Isabelle are among the younger Jumpers this season. Appropriately, they seem to have an open-minded, take-it-as-it-comes attitude toward this adventure. "We've got 18 meals ready for the crossing, so what could go wrong?" quips Gabriel with a laugh. "It's been a dream of mine for many years to do this," he explains, "and I think Isabelle has

fallen into that dream as well. "Yeah, I'm following," she says nonchalantly. "Whatever. I'm a trooper."

After reaching French Polynesia, their itinerary is intentionally vague. "Seriously," says Gabriel, "the game plan changes every week."



Gabriel has sold Isabelle on his cruising dreams.

"We have absolutely no idea where we'll end up."

Tahnoo — Spencer 44 Bill Burr & Brenda McNair Vancouver, BC

"I didn't do that well in school because I was always designing boats instead of doing school work," recalls Bill. "I've been dreaming about sailing since I was about two feet tall, and now it's all coming true."

His sailing partner Brenda is looking forward to cruising the islands, but ad-



No night watches for Brenda. She'll fly out to meet Bill after 'Tahnoo' arrives.

mits she doesn't like night watches, so she'll fly out and meet *Tahnoo* after her arrival.

Bill's friends Mel Storer and Ken Garfinkel will crew on the crossing.

Cherokee Rose — Alajuela 48 Michael Moyer & Anita Chapanond Newport Beach, CA

Michael explains that like many Puddle Jumpers, "doing this has been a lifelong

dream for me." But he feels he's "sort of dragging Anita into it." She's understandably a bit nervous about making such a long crossing, but she's no stranger to the liveaboard lifestyle. "I've had years of preparation, including living aboard for several years," she says. "Meeting other



Eventually, Michael and Anita plan to visit family in Thailand.

westbound cruisers at the *Latitude* send-off party has added to my confidence." The couple's game plan is to meander toward Thailand — where Anita has family — during the next three years, unless they run out of money first.

Double Diamond — Lagoon 44 Jeff & Melody Christensen Anacortes, WA

"Doing this has never been on our bucket list," explains Jeff. "But we got tired of the weather at home during the past few summers. Someone said, 'You should think about going to Mexico. After all, you own a boat.' So we did the 2011



Melody and Jeff live by the phrase 'Go big or go home.'

Ha-Ha and plans have just sort of cascaded from there." "And we have absolutely no idea where we'll end up," adds Melody. As their boat name implies, Jeff and Melody love to ski, and they've now adopted their skiing mantra to sailboat cruising: "Go big or go home."

Slowride — Downeaster 38 Michael Sturn & Julie Godd Ventura, CA

"I learned to sail in the sailing capital of the world," explains Michael, "Helena, Montana." When he was a kid he traveled the world through the pages of Tania Aebi's best-seller *Maiden Voyage*, and he's wanted to follow her lead ever since. Michael hooked up with Julie 12 years ago and has brought her around to his way of thinking. "Mike's passionate about sail-



PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I



Will and Sarah of 'Hydroquest' started talking about making this cruise on their first date six years ago.

ing," she says, "and I'm passionate about Mike. His dream has become mine."



Michael and Julie say, "Goodbye Montana, hello Tahiti."

there'.

Hydroquest — Beneteau First 40 Will & Sarah Curry, Vancouver

Will and Sarah are practicing what they preach: going cruising while they can with the assistance of a Hydrovane windvane steering system. You guessed it, their family sells them.

"We've actually been planning this trip

since our first date six years ago," explains Sarah. "We started talking about long-term cruising and I found out that Will and his family had already done it. I told him I was eager to go cruising too, and the rest is history."

At the time, the cruising bug was already festering inside Will, as he'd cruised Mexico with his family when he and his brother were teenagers. That same brother and his girlfriend — "who has never sailed before" — will be along as crew on this crossing.

Patanjali — Catalina 42 Michael Bowe Marina Del Rey

Upon arrival at French Polynesia, North Americans normally get a 90-day visa, which is a small amount of time to explore the vastness of that French Overseas Territory. Most cruisers don't realize until it's too late that they might have gotten a six-month visa if they'd jumped

through a bunch of hoops before heading west.

Michael was one of only a few in this year's fleet that went through the Long Stay Visa process, but now he's smiling because he did. "The whole process took about two months," he explains. At the French Consulate in L.A. "They wanted to see a police report, bank account records, and evidence of medical insurance." (He used the inexpensive DAN program.) "Then they fingerprinted me, I gave them photos, and had to sign a letter promising not to work in FP."



Michael will get to stay twice as long as most.

Last year, having sold Angel City Brewing company, Michael was faced with the quandary of what to do next. "I've been sailing all my life," he explains. "All of a sudden I had some money, so I bought this beautiful Catalina 42 in April and headed south with the Baja Ha-Ha last fall. It's turning out to be a personal journey of growth as well as a sailboat trip."

Two young travelers will crew for Michael on the crossing.

Realtime — Norseman 447

Bob & Karyn Packard, Long Beach

We're always curious about the inspirations that lead to making this bold voyage. Bob recalls, "When I was a kid I read a lot of books that touched on the South Pacific — Jack London and others. They always had this romantic, mystical flavor. So when I got the idea to buy a



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boat I said, 'Let's think about getting one that could do the South Pacific.' Here we are, four years later."



Bob and Karyn say it's time to get 'real'.

It didn't take much arm-twisting to get Karyn to sign on: "I'm from Hawaii, so Polynesian culture is very special to me — the language, the music and the cultural traditions. I'm always happy to be with those people."

Breeze — Moody 64

The Fischer-Eliasson family Stockholm, Sweden

A few years before their daughter Ella was born, Per and Sabina made their first Pacific crossing via the Galapagos. So you might say they already know the

way to Tahiti. Although Ella has been aboard since the family bought this boat in the BVI two years ago, she seemed a bit tenuous about crossing such a big patch of water. One thing that she's looking forward to, though, is turning 11 in



This lovely Swedish family has sailed the Caribbean. Now it's time to see the Pacific.

the middle of the passage. That might happen right about the time she goes from being a 'pollywog' to a 'shellback' — that's sailor talk for one who has crossed the equator.

After a year in French Polynesia (the

time allotted to EU citizens), the family will slowly meander toward Australia.

Huck — Shannon 43

Joe Rademacher & Heidi Camp New Orleans, LA

"We quit our jobs and retired four weeks ago," Joe explained last month, "so we're headed off to go sailing — open-ended — with no land-based ties at all. No storage units, nothing. As clean as it gets." That's gotta feel good.

Of course it stands to reason that folks who'd name their boat after Mark Twain's Huck Finn would be attracted to the notion of carefree wanderlust: "We're just going to get on the raft and go!"



Joe and Heidi of 'Huck' left their baggage behind.

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Haulback — Spencer 35

Jim & Jan Kellam, Vancouver, B.C.

What's the game plan for Jim and Jan? "Continue round and round the world until we get dizzy and fall off," says Jim. Being a longtime offshore sailor, he



Meeting Jan cured Jim of sailing solo.

can joke about such things. Jim's sailing resume includes three Singlehanded TransPacs (to Hawaii). After the second, in 2004, he continued on around the world and made it back to Kauai's Hanalei Bay in time to

greet the finishers of the '06 TransPac.

He and Jan met at a sailing club in Vancouver and were married just 11 months ago. Offshore voyaging is new to her, but she's game. "This is all his idea, but I'm going along to be sure he does it right this time!"

En Pointe — Searunner 31 tri

Tom Van Dyke, San Francisco

"I've been wanting to do this for 25 years," says Tom, "and I'm finally getting to it." He's been upgrading this classic tri since buying her four years ago.

Crewing on the passage, and perhaps beyond, will be a bright young Mexican girl named Tulia. "My dream is to go all around the world. So I'm starting with this huge, huge, step, and I'm very ex-

"We'll continue round and round the world until we get dizzy and fall off."

cited." She hails from Guanajuato, which is a long way from the sea, but she took to sailing like a natural. Already worldly, she earned a nursing degree, did medical research at UCSF, then got a job working for the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. So why did she

jump off that fast track? "The trouble was, I had never seen the world, so how could I relate?"



Young Tulia is eager to see the world. And Tom of 'En Pointe' is happy to get her started.

Bella Vita — Hylas 45

Brett & Stacey Hoopes, Seattle

"I grew up in the era when Robin Lee Graham's adventures aboard the *Dove* were being published in *National Geographic*, and I guess I always thought I'd do something like that," Brett recalls. "After we met, he told me his dream and I

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thought, 'Hmm, traveling with my house. I like it.' I love to travel, but I hate living out of a suitcase," says Stacey. We can relate.



Brett and Stacey are livin' the good life.

Pacific Highway — Davidson 44 Bruce and Laura Masterson St. John, US Virgin Islands

For years Bruce and Laura ran a charter boat in the Virgin Islands, while raising their family. They worked up to this cruise in a roundabout manner. "Actually, I never thought we would get to the South Pacific," confides Laura. "It just seemed so overwhelming." But after they

sold their boat in the Caribbean, they got crew spots on a supposed cruise to the Pacific. But by the time they reached Panama the relationship with the rest of the crew seemed "unworkable," so they went up to California to visit their grown daughter. "But after a few days there," Bruce explains, "we realized, 'We've to get a boat and get out of here.'" So South Pacific, here they come.



Laura and Bruce of 'Pacific Highway' know where they belong.

Red — Waterline 48 Richard Dowling & Fran Kelly Juneau, AK

Having descended 38 degrees of latitude since leaving Alaska, Richard

and Fran have acclimated to the tropics and are ready to hang a left. "I lived in American Samoa back in the mid 60's," says Richard, "and I always wanted to go back.

Fran was curious but cautious about the idea of going cruising. But six years ago, while boat shopping, the couple flew out to the Marshall Islands to check out this boat. Three weeks of interisland cruising there sealed the deal — both the boat deal and Fran's enthusiasm for tropical cruising.



Fran and Richard's blood has already thinned considerably.

The game plan? "Open-ended," says Richard. "We're thinking of just going around in circles in the South Pacific.

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Exit Strategy — Wauquiez 41 Tom Christensen & Kim MacLean Victoria, B.C.

It is absolutely amazing how many ocean voyagers attribute at least part



Tom and Kim 'Exit Strategy' are following in the wake of 'Dove'.

of their inspiration to former teen circumnavigator Robin Lee Graham — especially since he retreated to a quiet life in the Rockies not long after publishing his famous book *Dove* and, as far as we know, never returned to sailing. As Todd explains, "I read about Robin Lee Graham when I was in junior high school and the images never went away."

"For me," says Kim, "the South Pacific is just the ultimate destination. The adventure of crossing the Pacific Ocean

is one aspect, but I also look forward to the cultures there, the beautiful warm water, the scenery... it's all going to be wonderful."

"When he bought that first boat, I thought he was crazy."

Starship — Islander 36 Chris & Anne-Marie Fox, Victoria, BC

In contrast to those who've spent their whole lives sailing, Chris admits he was initially attracted to sailboats six years ago as a cheap way to live in South San Francisco while working there. Little did he know when he took his first test sail how much he'd love the sport. "We were engaged at the time," explains Anne-Marie, "but I was in Canada working on my master's. When he bought that first boat, I thought he was crazy. But I

eventually agreed to move aboard with him, then later to do this."

Johnathan Busby will round out the crew. All three are now avid kitesurfers who are partially sponsored by KiteFix.



Chris' need for a cheap place to live was the first step toward this SoPac adventure.

Mary Powell — Discovery 37 Steve Dolman, Vancouver, B.C.

So if Steve is a singlehander, who is his boat named after? Actually, he doesn't have a clue. He thought about changing the name, but after learning that the boat is well-known in the

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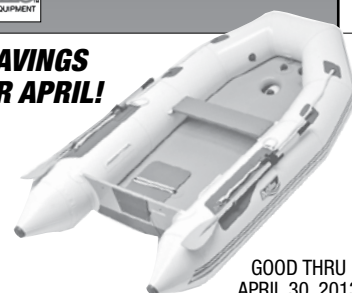
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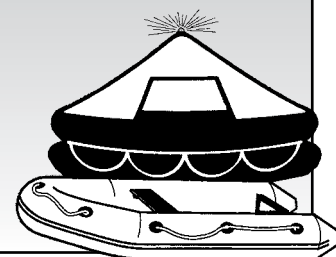
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Northwest, he decided to leave the name alone.

He did a South Pacific circuit with his girlfriend three years ago that included a loop up to Japan and a long haul home across the North Pacific — including six nasty systems with gale-force winds. This time he's got his sights set on a different destination: the Caribbean island of Trinidad, via South Africa. Steve lived there as a kid and has always wanted to go back.



Steve of 'Mary Powell' will sail solo.

Morrigan — Dolphin 46 cat Arne Langsetmo & Kristen Metzger Chippewa Falls, WI

Arne and Kristen were living in San Francisco before they started this trip. An interesting footnote about departure day was that they sailed out the Golden

Gate on the same afternoon that Oracle Team USA's AC72 cat #17 capsized and drifted four miles outside the Gate, where her wing mast broke up in the chop. The couple wasn't quite sure if that was a bad omen or just a quirk of fate.

In any case, it's been smooth sailing so far, and after countless hours of preparation, they're thrilled to be heading to the South Pacific. "It's been a dream that we've been working toward for about six years," explains Arne. "We're finally ready, so now is the time!"



"Now is the time," say Arne and Kristen of 'Morrigan'.


Well said. We wish the entire fleet the best of luck as they set off across the blue Pacific. And we salute their fortitude in completing preparations and finally casting off the docklines. Sadly, even after years of upgrading every possible system aboard, many would-be world cruisers can't seem to quit procrastinating and head offshore.

Tune in again next month and we'll introduce you to another batch of 2013 Puddle Jumpers — representing more than a dozen nations — that we met recently in Panama.


— **latitude/andy**

Readers — In addition to next month's installment of profiles we'll also publish two additional Pacific Puddle Jump reports this summer: a report on the annual Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous (June 28-30), and a recap of this year's crossing experiences.

If you hope to do the Puddle Jump yourself someday, check out our archive of articles on the passages of previous fleets at www.pacificpuddlejumper.com.



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