

Latitude 38

PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP 2009

— WESTBOUND WANDERERS PART II

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WESTBOUND WANDERERS, PT. II

You might call this our interim Puddle Jump report, as about a third of the fleet has now arrived in the islands, another third is en route — from California, Mexico, Panama or the Galapagos — and the final third is frantically attending to last-minute chores so they can finally up-anchor and follow in the wakes of the leaders.

So far we've heard no reports of major carnage, dismastings or even engine breakdowns. The few crews who have written detailed reports so far seemed extremely excited to have made landfall in the dramatically beautiful Marquesas Islands, an event that, for most, has been dreamily anticipated for years.

We're also happy to report that for the first time ever, Pacific Puddle Jump rally members have been granted special bond exemptions by the Tahitian government — thanks to our friends at the Tahiti YC — which saves them time, money and hassle. Many of them — especially families with passels of kids — were overjoyed to be given this special privilege. We're hopeful that receiving the exemptions will become a regular feature of future Puddle Jumps.

Picking up where we left off last month, we'll introduce you now to another batch of passage-makers. As is always the case, they sail aboard a wide variety of boat types, and come from a broad range of backgrounds. Some are lifelong sailors, while others were smitten by the sailing bug only in recent years. Some are intent on circumnavigating at a meandering pace, while others are committed to a tightly defined timetable, before they have to return to the mainstream.

This year, as always, the common denominator within the fleet is a thirst for adventure, and an eagerness to experience new cultures and view new horizons. En route, the vast Pacific will test them and temper their seamanship skills, giving them an education that cannot be found in any classroom.

Here then, is installment two of our Pacific Puddle Jumper profiles. Many whom you'll meet here are taking the 'southern route', via Panama, Ecuador

and the Galapagos. Look for a complete recap of the crossing in an upcoming issue, in addition to a report on the Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous, June 19-21, a special welcome-to-Polynesia event put on for cruisers by Tahiti Tourisme with support from *Latitude 38*.

Jubilee — Corbin 39 Joe Bayne, Norfolk, VA

Joe's homeport of Norfolk, Virginia, may have tipped you off that he's a former Navy man — but as a submariner, he mostly served beneath the water, rather than above it. Nevertheless, he says he's dreamed of blue-water cruising since he was a teen, and since then has sailed in a variety of places around the globe, including the Indian Ocean and the Med. This time, he's singlehanded and his itinerary is open-ended.

A circumnavigation is probably in the cards for Joe, but he'll avoid colder latitudes along the way. What's impressed him the most so far? "The luck of the unprepared."

Wasabi — Oyster 56 Brian Randolph & Isabelle Peloquin Long Beach, CA

Most South Pacific cruisers that we interview say they've been planning, preparing and dreaming about getting 'out there' for years — sometimes decades. But not Brian and his girlfriend Isabelle. Apparently their trip was planned only last summer, after he bought the boat the year before.

Since then they've been busy, having already cruised the Americas as far south as Ecuador before jumping off for the Galapagos and the Marquesas. Wherever they end up, their classy Oyster 56 will take them there in style.



Isabelle and Brian will be travelin' in style aboard 'Wasabi'.

Sidetrack — Morgan 38 Erik Dix, Seaside, OR

We don't know too much about Erik, as he was underway before we'd heard of him. As a self-sufficient singlehander, we're sure he'll be horrified to learn that his mom actually contacted us to see if he would be eligible for the much-coveted bond exemption.

Erik, who's an engineer in his late 30s, spent several years sailing in the



Northwest, then a year in the Sea of Cortez before making the big jump — which his mom assures us is the most adventurous thing he's ever done. And believe us when we tell you she is very proud of his bravery, independence and self confidence, as well she should be.

Zephyra — Morgan O/I 41 Russ & Debbie Noorda Lake Tahoe, CA

"The boat will never be ready, so set a date and go," say Russ and Debbie knowingly. We've heard similar comments from hundreds of cruisers, all of whom probably wished they'd headed out sooner. The Noordas themselves spent eight years preparing to cut their docklines.

We have no worries that this couple — both of whom are longtime racers — will do well out there, because between them they've got an impressive set of pertinent skills: rigging, sail repair, mechanical repair, and accounting proficiency. This season they'll head to New Zealand, then reassess.

Camelot — Pan Oceanic 46 Neil & Jackie Michell, Clitheroe, UK Neil and Jackie left the UK 15 years

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Neil and Jackie strike a pose on the bow of 'Camelot'. Theirs is one of dozens of boats 'jumping' from Panama this year.

ago and began an itinerant lifestyle, living and traveling — initially overland — around the world. After a few years of schlepping backpacks all over the planet, it occurred to them that traveling by boat would be a whole lot easier. Little did they know at the time that cruising sailors actually do a lot of schlepping too!

They bought this boat as a fixer-

"Get rid of your 'stuff'. You'll be a different person when, or if, you come back."

upper, built up a cruising kitty while working in the Bay Area, and took off for Central America, the Galapagos and beyond. They hope to fatten their purse again in New Zealand.

Amikuk — Crealock 37

The Heimke Family, Homer, AK

Believe it or not, David's dreams of blue-water sailing were launched in his youth, hundreds of miles from any ocean

— on Lake Superior. Many years later he sailed from Seattle to Hawaii and back to Alaska, which undoubtedly rekindled his cruising ambitions.

Six years ago David apparently convinced his wife Jill that world voyaging was in their future, even though she was only a neophyte sailor at the time. That year they bought this boat — when their daughter Rachel (now 7) was only 1 — and began making cruising plans.

Today their game plan is to make a circuit to New Zealand, then back to Alaska within two years. When she returns to elementary school, Rachel will undoubtedly be the most worldly kid in her class.

Thin Wolf — Kelly Peterson 44 Luke Tornatzky & Mike Ward Wauconda, WA

According to their entry forms this pair of old friends is heading west to find "new inspiration for Luke's art and some direction for Mike's life!" They expect to spend two years in the South Pacific, then "who knows where."

During the nine months they've been cruising so far, their two biggest revelations have been that "there are more babes per capita in Mexico than

in the U.S." and the composting toilet they installed before leaving is "stupid, worthless and gross."

Their advice to future cruisers? "Think twice; the reality may not be as dreamy as the dream. That said, we couldn't recommend it too highly."

Tender Spirit — Hans Christian 33 Joan & Chuck Martin, Sitka, AK

Both hardy Alaskans, Joan and Chuck seem like practical folks: "We will cruise as long as we are both having fun," they write.

Given that their homeport is Sitka, in Southeast Alaska, it's no surprise that they've spent much of their lives out on the water. But it was Joan, not Chuck, who first caught the cruising bug — at age 13! She started sailing and single-handing many years ago, and eventually "sweet-talked" Chuck into joining her on an extended cruise.

Having picked up this stout double-ender four years ago, they headed south two years later. A circumnavigation is not out of the question, but time will tell.

Carina — Mason 33 Philip DiNuovo & Leslie Linkkila Kingston, WA

Having prepared for a decade, then cruised together for the past five years, Philip and Leslie have learned a thing or two, such as, "How simply you can live — and live happily."

As they head for Polynesia, they don't have a fully choreographed itinerary, they're just "putting one passage in front



Philip and Leslie of 'Carina' try to keep their plans loose.

of the other." The only places they plan to avoid are those that will try to impound their cat, who's reportedly ready to deal with the toughest agricultural inspec-

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David and Marcie of 'Nine of Cups' are now experts on cruising South America.

tors. Their advice to the wannabes back home? "Go now, don't wait. And get rid of your 'stuff'. You'll be a different person when, or if, you come back."

Nine of Cups — Liberty 458

David & Marcie Lynn, Denver, CO

David and Marcie's story is unique within the fleet. They've already cruised for nearly a decade, logging more than 50,000 miles. For the past five years they've circumnavigated South America. They jumped west from Porto Montt, at the north end of the maze-like Chilean fiords, and will stop at Juan Fernandez, Easter and Pitcairn islands before making their first Polynesian landfall at the Gambiers archipelago. They say they've always intended to do a full circumnavigation, but they are simply taking their time.

What has impressed this seasoned crew the most so far? "The warmth, help and hospitality extended to us in the most remote places."

Wind River — Contessa 32

Paul & Susan Scott, Maple Bay, B.C.

After a lifetime of sailing — which included offshore trips in the Med, Atlantic and Pacific Northwest — Paul and his son Ian headed south with the Baja Ha-Ha fleet last year.

Now, with his wife Susan and good friend Art Lamoureux aboard, this retired professor has his sights set on the Marquesas. He and Susan plan to spend two years island-hopping to New Zealand, then circling back to B.C.

Nomad — Westsail 42

Brian & Megan Thom, Santa Cruz CA

"One of the best things about our trip has been the kindness of strang-

ers in every port we go to," say Brian and Megan. "We've been invited into homes of local fishermen for lobster, we've been given rides to hard-to-find places, strangers have made phone calls for us... Of course, there's all the free advice, too."

Because both are teachers who are only in their mid-30s, we assume this open-ended cruise is some sort of self-designed leave of absence. But after reaping the benefits of a long stint in the 'school of life', it may be tough to return to a traditional classroom.

As odd as it sounds, Brian developed his love of sailing in Kansas. Megan says she "married into the sailing life," but is now fully invested in her husband's long-held cruising dreams.

Yohelah — Baba 40

Rob & Teresa Sicade, Seattle, WA

Not long after meeting in college, Rob and Teresa got the sailing bug, and it's had a hold on them ever since. Prior to entering the cruising life full time three



Rob and Teresa of 'Yohelah' have been sailing together since their college days.

years ago, they lived aboard in Seattle for 10 years.

They've been planning to circumnavigate for as long as they can remember, and they intend to work along the way when opportunities arise — they're both software developers. Teresa credits a book by Lin Pardey as one of the early inspirations that steered her toward her

current path.

Incantation — Santa Cruz 50

David Ratner, Vancouver B.C.

When it comes to offshore sailing, David is certainly no slouch. Since buying *Incantation* in '81, he's done thousands of miles of blue-water racing, including a Vic-Maui, a TransPac, a Pac Cup and a Melcourne-Osaka.

After completing some major upgrades, he took off from Vancouver in 2004 on an open-ended cruise. Since then, his wanderings have taken him as far afield as the Falkland Islands — really! On the trip to French Polynesia, and perhaps beyond, he's singlehandeding. David's future plans? "Live long and prosper!"

Estrella — Magellan 36

Adam & Kristina Yuret, Portland, OR

"After more than five unchanging years in our cubicle jobs, we decided that we needed to spice up our lives," explain Adam and Kristina. Can anybody out there relate?

Both now in their early 30s, they bought this 1997 fixer, spruced her up, and spent 16 months cruising Mexico and Central America before returning home to fatten their purse.

Now headed for the Galapagos and points west, they plan to cruise for two more years before selling *Estrella* and returning to the workaday world. They advise, "If you're planning to cruise with loved ones, be realistic about their commitment to the dream. . . ."

Sanity — Hans Christian 38

Deane Lindbloom, Auburn, CA

This trip to French Polynesia should inspire Deane to quote Yogi Berra's famous quip, "It's déjà vu all over again!" You see, he spent five years cruising Mexico and the South Pacific in the late '80s and early '90s. Based in New Zealand most of the time, he spent several years zig-zagging between the land of the kiwibird and a number of tropical South Pacific isles. "There is so much to see — great diving, great food, and great people!"

As we go to press, he's about to begin a repeat performance — as soon as he finds crew, that is. Sailing directly from the Bay this time, he hopes to spend at least a month in the Marquesas, which he considers to be "some of the most beautiful islands I've ever encountered."

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Our guess is that Denis of 'Jubilant' enjoys the underwater realm.

Jubilant — Spencer 53
Denis Morgan & JT Sorenson
Seattle, WA

Of all the crews who are currently considering circumnavigations, Denis may be the only one who really knows what he's getting into. After all, he went around already, years ago.

And if that isn't impressive enough for you, consider that Cap'n Denis is now 69 years young. Joining him this time will be friend JT Sorenson.

This time, Denis has been out and about since 2002. He expects to cross his tracks again in 3 to 5 years. As for advice: "Stay flexible. Learn your boat systems along the way so skilled workers will not always be needed as things break. Slow down inside and enjoy this different lifestyle."

The 'Monkey Feet' crew is focused on family bonding in faraway places.



Journey — Passport 40
Jeff & Dori Beller, Ventura, CA

Jeff and Dori still have fond memories of their two previous cruises through Mexico — the last being 15 years ago. Ever since then, they've been looking forward to getting 'out there' again, and that day has finally come. This time they intend to stay unplugged from the workaday world for two to three years.

After exploring French Polynesia, the Cooks and Tonga, their Plan A is to head north to the Marshalls to avoid the hurricane season — a sensible option that, in our opinion, too few westbound cruisers choose.

"Life was beginning to tear us away from the important things."

Monkey Feet — Slocum 43
The Primrose Family, Edmonton, AB

Kasey and Giselle took an atypical approach to entering the cruising life. They quit their jobs, sold everything they owned, then went shopping for the right boat.

After a few weeks of boat-shopping in Florida, though, they found this sturdy cutter, which they consider to be an ideal ride for their cruise to Australia. Once there, they'll put their sons Blake, now 13, Radik, 7, and Talon, 5, in Aussie schools. (They have dual citizenship.)

Why take such radical steps? "Life was beginning to tear us away from the important things," says Giselle. "We wanted to get back to the basics and spend quality time with our children before it was too late."

QuickStar — Beneteau 46
Peter Bruckmann & Diana Young, Vancouver, BC

Peter and Diana will be among the late arrivals this year. They plan to sail for the Galapagos in June, then make the long crossing to French Polynesia with friend Doug Roehrig and his 11-year-old daughter Shelby. After several thousand more miles of island-hopping, they'll summer in New Zealand.



Setting out later than most, Peter and Diana of 'Quickstar' will arrive via the Galapagos.

For those who are considering following in their wake, they advise: "Each couple has to fine-tune their relationship so that both partners are happy. The sea has a tendency to turn normally enlightened men into despots!"

Sea Wolf — Warner 33
Adam & Jessica Stone
New Orleans, LA

Adam and Jessica say they set out from New Orleans two years ago to get away from George W. Bush, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and work.

When they initially threw off their docklines we suspect that they had no plans of taking on additional crew. That changed a year and a half ago in Guatemala when Tallulah was born. We're pretty sure she's the youngest Puddle Jumper this season — too bad she probably won't remember the crossing. The couple's itinerary is wide open.

Zulu — Amazon 44
Russ Nason & Marilyn Marais
Blaine, WA

In 1979 Russ and Marilyn took off from San Francisco aboard a 33-footer built by Sausalito legend Myron Spaulding. In addition to being lots of fun, you might say that four-year Pacific cruise was also very 'productive'. Their son was born in Hawaii and their twin girls were born in Brisbane, Australia.

Now retired, they intend to retrace some of their earlier steps and complete a lap around the planet. During the 10 months they've been out this time, they've been most impressed by "the beauty of Alaska, Mexico's sun and good people, and mangos!"

Their advice: "Cut the lines and va-mous. It's all waiting for you."

Xanadu — Cooper 37

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Paul Cahill & Tamar Lowell Auburn, CA

We don't know a heckuva lot about Paul and Tamar, as their answers to our questionnaire were extremely succinct.

We can tell you, however, that their 37-footer is a custom-built composite sloop, which they bought a decade ago. Their game plan is to complete a full circumnavigation on an open-ended schedule.

Nataraja — Flying Dutchman 37

Eric Willbur & Emmy Newbould Zephyr Cove, NV

"This trip is actually a 'do-over,'" explains Eric. "We sailed to the Marquesas from Mexico last year, but experienced some major engine problems that forced us to rethink things. After three months in the islands we sailed back to the Bay Area via Hawaii to repower."



Eric and Emmy of 'Nataraja' strike a pose during their aborted cruise last year.

He's no stranger to the cruising life, as he cruised the South Pacific with his parents back in the '70s. Emmy began racing and pleasure sailing on Lake Tahoe 20 years ago.

With a new engine, a thirst for adventure and an open-ended timetable,

we don't expect to see Eric and Emmy back in the Bay any time soon.

Like storage space on a sailboat, sometimes you just run out of room! That's exactly what's happened to us here. Although we managed to squeeze in all the West Coasters, there are perhaps two dozen East Coast and European boats we simply don't have room to profile here.

Hopefully, however, you'll eventually have a chance to meet some of them through cruising reports sent in from far-flung landfalls all over our planet's watery realm.

And for those of you who are envious of these lucky travelers, remember, if you want this lifestyle badly enough, you can make it happen.

— **latitude/andy**



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