

DREAM CHASERS —

Just under 200 boats registered for our loosely structured Pacific Puddle Jump rally this year. That tally makes this annual migration from the West Coast of the Americas to French Polynesia one of the largest cruising rallies in the world. It's also one of the most internationally diverse — especially the contingent who are now jumping off from Panama.

Although often referred to as The



Kaija and Gary of 'Kajisong' are a bit behind schedule, but what do they care?

Ditch, we think of the Panama Canal as 'The Great Funnel' because it is the conduit through which westbound boats from all over the world must pass in order to enter the Pacific — unless, of course, they want to make the 9,000 mile diversion around South America.

At our PPJ Send-off Party in March at Panama's Balboa YC, we met sailors from the U.S., Canada, Europe, South Africa,

"We set a 10-year goal to go again and 12 years later we made it."

Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, all eagerly anticipating making sunny, palm-fringed landfalls in the fabled isles of Polynesia.

We'll introduce you to them here, and hopefully some will share tales of their South Pacific adventures with us in future editions of *Latitude*.

**Kajisong — Beneteau 50
Gary & Kaija Leno, Vancouver, BC**

Cruiser quiz: How do you get a reluctant partner to go cruising with you?

Name the boat after her or him. This tactic isn't guaranteed to work every time, but it was successful for Gary. Not only that, he made this 50-footer a Christmas present to Kaija. "How could I say no?" she asks with a broad smile.

Their long-term cruising dreams were born in 1992 when they did an ARC Rally across the Atlantic. Although they're from BC, they bought this boat on the East Coast in 2003. "We said we'd give it 10 years or until the fun stops. But it took us the first eight years just to get through the Caribbean. So if it's another 10 years that's fine with us." One thing you can bet on is that cruising plans always evolve.

**Shellback — Custom Schooner
Gerrit & Sue Drent, Long Beach**

Gerrit and Sue took the old-fashioned approach to fulfilling their cruising dreams: They built their own boat. And not just any boat. *Shellback* is a 65-ft Bill Crealock-designed schooner built of



With the boat finally built, the 'Shellback' crew is all smiles.

steel. Gerrit claims his earliest inspiration to sail the South Seas was watching the 1950s TV show *Adventures in Paradise*, so this trip has been a very long time coming. "We've sold everything but the boat," explains Sue, "so we're just going to take our time and enjoy it."

**Full Monty — Privilege 48
Will & Jenny Lang
Topsail Beach, NC**

We're not sure how the boat name *Full Monty* relates to this family of sailors — it was famously used in a hilarious British comedy film to describe the strip-teasing antics of a bunch of unemployed steel workers. Captain Will, his wife Jenny, daughter Justine, 12, and son Colin, 10, all seem to have a healthy sense of humor, so perhaps that's the connection.

In any case, this happy crew seems thrilled to be heading west this season, as departure to the islands has been a longtime dream. "I was a cruising kid myself," explains Jenny. "Will and I started cruising before kids, 14 years ago. We thought we were going west then,



but plans change and things happen." Things like having two kids. "So we set a 10-year goal to go again and 12 years later we made it."

So far the kids seem to be having a ball, "I've loved all the things we've seen,"



As far as we can tell, 'Full Monty' is a boat full of happy sailors.

says Justine, "whales in Maine, dolphins in the Bahamas..." Her brother feels the same, "I love snorkeling sooo much. It's amazing, magical," says Colin.

**Voyageur — Morgan 461
The Bauza family, Berlin, DEU**

Michael, who hails from Germany, and his Trinidadian wife Maina think of their boat as a floating classroom, as they are educating their 14-year-old son

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Posing here in front of the Balboa YC, the Panama contingent of the PPJ Class of 2013 is a wildly diverse group of adventurers.

Nikolai as they cruise. How does he like the boating life? It appears that he loves it, but then it's the only life he's known, as he was "born aboard a boat," and has lived aboard ever since.



Young Nikolai will get a real-world education on 'Voyageur'.

Miss B'Haven — Morgan 44 John Marshall & Paul Amone Tasmania, AUS

In the U.S. you rarely find farmers who are sailors, but in Australia and New Zealand it's easy to find folks who till the soil all week, then grind winches on the weekends. John, whose home is on the Aussie island of Tasmania, is a perfect example. The way we understand it, he bought this boat in the Virgin Islands three years ago during one of several six-month stints away from his farm.

Through a friend, he met crewman Paul who was working as a scuba instruc-

tor in St. Thomas. Goes to show, you never know what opportunities might come



The 'Miss B'Haven' crew have a reputation to uphold.

your way when you get away from the main-stream. Although John was born and raised in the South Pacific, he's not yet seen French Polynesia — as it lies 2,000 miles to windward.

Sheer Tenacity — Shearwater 39 Rod & Mary Turner-Smith Cape Town, ZAF

Rod built this Dudley Dix-designed sloop in the couple's garden over a three-year period, while Mary wound down the family business. Despite the years of preparation, though, Mary wasn't totally sure such an adventure was for her. "She said she'd bail out at St. Helena Island if she didn't like it," recalls Rod. "But we've done 10,000 miles since then, so I guess she's okay with it."

The highlight so far was spending nine months in Brazil, which they loved. After that they spent a couple of years in the Caribbean before transiting the Canal.

Beez Neez — Warrior 40

Pepe & Big Bear Millard, Plymouth, GBR

"We're on a 10-year plan to circumnavigate," explains Pepe. But Big Bear quickly adds, "Which is already five years behind schedule!" They left Plymouth, England, in 2008 and have had so much fun exploring the Caribbean and Eastern Seaboard that their original schedule was thrown overboard long ago.

Their kids have been complaining that *Beez Neez* has been doing too much zigzagging north and south, so now, at last, they're headed west again.



Pepe and Big Bear are having big fun.

Rogla — Alubat Ovni 38

Tom Robinson, Edmonton, AB, CAN

On the 3,000 mile passage to the islands, Tom will be in the company of his brother Larry and good friend Bevan Slater. "I was a sea cadet," explains Larry, "and I've been going to sea for 50 years. Tom needed crew and it was minus 20° at home, so joining him was an easy decision."

Cap'n Tom and his wife set out from Seattle in 2008 and have been working their way south ever since. "It's been a long-held dream to do an ocean crossing



We tested the 'Rogla' crew to see how well in sync they were with each other.

like this," he says.

Apparently his wife feels differently about so much open water. She will fly out and join him soon, however, for some interisland cruising.

DREAM CHASERS —

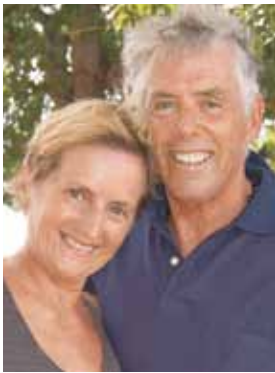
Sea Whisper — Fraser 50
Lionel Dobson & Barbara Erickson
Vancouver, BC, CAN

The tale of how Lionel and Barbara got together may warm the hearts of many wanna-be cruisers. They first met in the Med two years ago. When Lionel finally got back to Canada, he found Barbara's card in his chart table and looked her up — she's from Victoria. Lionel recalls,

"Life is not a dress rehearsal."

"On our first date she said, 'Where would you like to sail to next?' I said the South Pacific. She had the same idea, so we hatched a plan together."

He's a lucky guy, as Barbara seems to be an ideal traveling partner: "I've always loved sailing — I'm very passionate about it. I love visiting other cultures and learning about their traditions, and I love the journeys."



Lionel of 'Sea Whisper' found an ideal partner.

Gallivanter of Lymington — Gallant 53
The Elgar family, London, GBR

Adam and Tamlin's kids probably don't remember a thing about it, but they did a stint of cruising when son Jack was only two and daughter Katinka was only two months old. "It was fun," recalls Tamlin, "but mostly it was a lot of hard work." Now that Jack is 10 and Katinka is 8, things are different — everyone is having a fine time. "This time it's been a wonderful experience with the kids," says Adam, who is British.

They bought this boat 13 years ago in South Africa, where Tamlin was born and raised. We learned that her dad is one of the weather gurus there who advise cruisers about the best weather windows for sneaking around the Cape of Good Hope with its tricky Agulhas Current. Before this family has to worry about navigating those waters again,



The Elgars are heading to South Africa on 'Gallivanter', where Grandpa will keep them safe.

though, many adventures await them on their way around the planet.

Saliander — Tayana 55
Peter & Raewyn, Auckland, NZL

The *Saliander* crew proves there's more than one approach to South Pacific cruising. After a stint in French Polynesia, this Kiwi couple plans to reach up to Hawaii, then continue north to Alaska. The start of their cruise was different



The 'Saliander' crew will divert to Alaska.

from the norm also, as they bought this boat in Greece and started heading west — slowly — from there. "Here we are five years in and only a third of the way to New Zealand." But

what's the rush, right? In addition to visiting Caribbean islands, they spent a couple of seasons cruising the East Coast of the U.S. and loved it.

Tempest — Amel Mango 53
Bob & Annette Pace, Baton Rouge, LA

"Growing up in Colorado I dreamed about blue water sailing," recalls Bob, "but I had never actually set foot on a sailboat until I was 45." Annette, however, had three sailboats before this and a whole lot of powerboats.

They'd been friends for 10 years,

when one day at work they both found they were having a bad day. Bob said, "Wouldn't you just like to get on a boat and sail away?" Annette replied, "Well I've got the boat!" Turned out she'd been left with this boat in a recent divorce and was looking for someone to sail with." You never know where casual conversations around the watercooler might lead you. They've been out for six years now, and are apparently ready to take their adventuring up a notch.

Giggles — Hallberg-Rassy 42
Ben Kooiman & Anya Drok, NLD

In 2009, Ben left Holland for the Caribbean.



The 'Giggles' crew are taking their time.

When he got to the Dutch island of Curaçao in 2011, he met the ideal cruising partner, Anya. Like Ben, she's had a longtime dream of sailing to Tahiti. So the couple is now heading west with no particular timetable. "Someday," they expect to return to Curaçao.

Nirvana — Irwin 37
Marcus & Wendy Blackburn
St. John, USVI

"In 2006 we decided we wanted to take off on a sailboat," explains Marcus, "although we didn't have one and I didn't even know how to sail! But we bought one, fixed it up and took off. We never dreamed at the time of sailing around the world, but we did pretty well in our first year and liked it."



The 'Nirvana' crew made a long pit stop in the Virgin Islands.

After a stint exploring the Eastern Caribbean, the couple settled in St. John, USVI, in order to replenish their cruising kitty. While they were there, their South Pacific fantasies were nurtured after meeting

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Tom and Amy Larson of *Sadie Sea*, who were just completing a circumnavigation, and humorist Fatty Goodlander and his wife Carolyn, who'd just completed their second lap!

Eric Anaclerio will be along as crew.

MacPelican — Whitby 42 The Lambert-Ryan family Southport, AUS

You guessed it, this boat's name was taken from one of nine-year-old Finn's storybooks. Since buying the sloop in Guatemala 15 months ago, this Aussie family has had a lot of fun aboard her while exploring the coast of the Western Caribbean.



The 'MacPelican' crew calls the Land of Oz home.

But now it's time to start heading home to Southport, on an island (with a great surf break) south of the Great Barrier Reef. As you may have heard, the Australian economy avoided the meltdown that the U.S. and Europe have suffered, so the Aussie dollar

stretches a long way when shopping for boats in the U.S., Caribbean and Europe.

Elcie — 62-ft Custom Cat The Johnson Family, Oxford, MD

We found it interesting that this family that's based in a pre-American Revolution town with houses that date back to the 1600s has one of the most cutting-edge boats in the fleet. She's an aluminum cat custom-built in New Zealand to a David DeVilliers design.

As Cap'n Richard explained, the family lived in the land of the Kiwi while the cat was being built, but when their visas ran out they had to sail *Elcie* home — unfinished — to Oxford. "You mean, around the world?" we asked. No, they took her east through the roaring 40s of the Southern Ocean to Easter Island (4,500 miles), then east to Panama, upwind across the Caribbean, and home to the Chesapeake. Amazingly, neither Jessica (mom), nor her daughters Emma,



The Johnsons will help finance their travels on 'Elcie' by taking along paying crew.

12, or Molly, 10, jumped ship along the way.

After two years of finishing *Elcie* in Oxford, they're off again. "She's a working boat," explains Richard, meaning they take up to six additional (paying) crew on passages.

Pélagie — Lagoon 38 cat Nils Honhoff & Hanna Klaver Oostmahorn, NLD

"I always wanted to sail the world as a child," recalls Hanna, "but there was school, university, jobs... But then



The 'Pélagie?' crew just might circumnavigate.

when you're in your 40s and 50s, and you've had a good life, you ask yourself, 'What else do I want to do with my life?' At first I thought a sailing trip like this was not possible, but then my husband said, 'Oh, I think I'd like that lifestyle too!'" So they started taking courses, sailing on bigger and bigger boats and, as Nils says, "Here we are!"

Plan A is to circumnavigate — unless the pull of their grandchildren becomes too strong.

Westwind — Yankee clipper 49 Randal & Carol Barnhart, Juneau, AK

This salty Alaskan crew has had some amazing adventures since setting sail from Valdez 15 years ago. Now, having

circled the globe via the Cape of Good Hope and the Panama Canal, they plan to head back to the northern latitudes of Alaska where they'll cross their outbound track, with a pit stop at Clipperton Island along the way. That said, these are hardcore cruisers so their plans are always subject to change. "Actually, we haven't ruled out another visit to the Marquesas along the way," admits Carol.

Good News — Pearson 37 Lonnie Rupert & Bona Gordovez Lima, Ohio

Although Lonnie is from the Midwest, he says he's been dreaming of South

Pacific cruising for a couple of decades. He learned to sail in the Great Lakes 25 years ago. But for his girlfriend Bona, the sailing life is still pretty novel. After meeting three years ago, they hatched a plan to sail to her home country, the Philippines, then bought this boat in Mexico in 2011. "It's a new challenge for me," she says, "but I'm loving it." No doubt that's 'good news' to Lonnie.



Lonnie and Bona expect plenty of 'Good News'.

Vindicator — Custom 60-ft Woodie Brian Milgate & Lily Yang Brisbane, AUS

It's not every sailor who can say nonchalantly, "Yeah, we're heading across the Pacific to Australia, then back up to China a year from now." But then Brian



Ever met farmers who love sailing? Meet the 'Vindicator' crew from the Land Down Under.

is no ordinary sailor. Although he doesn't look appropriately weather-worn, he's currently on his fourth circumnavigation! His Chinese wife Lily is on her second lap, and seems as eager to cross

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another ocean as he is. Interestingly, Brian counts Madagascar as his favorite destination, followed by the Marquesas and Bora Bora.

Rounding out the crew are former backpackers Ben Corke and Jenny Parsons (both British) who met Brian through working on his farm. Now they're heading back for another stint of manual labor — after a few glorious months of trade wind sailing.

Flour Girl — Cheoy Lee Offshore 44 The Edwards Family, Coral Bay, USVI

Unfortunately Cap'n David missed our shindig in Panama, but we met his wife Kim and seven-year-old son Zack. Interestingly — to us anyway — this family has been living in our old stompin' grounds, Coral Bay, St. John, USVI.

They're very excited about exploring the South Pacific, especially since they'll be buddy-boating with a French-Canadian family on *Sueño*. After cruising together for the past eight months, the two families now seem almost inseparable. Luckily, their boats travel at roughly the same speed. (Sorry, *Sueño* didn't of-



Kid boats attract each other. The crews of 'Flour Girl' and 'Sueño' will sail west in tandem.

ficially register, so we don't know much about them, except that they seem to be very happy sailors.)

Scott-Free — Contest 43 Steve & Chris Rawlinson Falmouth, GBR

"Sailing to the Galapagos then onward to the South Pacific has been a lifelong dream," says Steve. He and Chris are obviously thrilled to finally be on that

track. Now in their fifth year of cruising since setting sail from the UK, they've spent two years in the Med and three in the Caribbean.

"We started feeling bad that we were behind schedule," admits Chris, "but then we figured, what's the rush?" One of their unplanned side trips took them up into the Black Sea, which they found to be fascinating.



Schedules don't work for the 'Scott-Free' crew.

Kuan Yin 1 — Shannon 38 Bob Carey, Victoria, BC

Remarkably, Bob only started sailing eight years ago, after buying this boat. He explains, "I've always been attracted to the sea. After an experience living aboard a powerboat, I wanted something

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that would give me total freedom and allow me to go anywhere in the world — where the only limitation would be my interest, courage or skill." You've got to admire his attitude.

The boat's unusual name, by the way, comes from Buddhism. Kuan Yin is the "patroness of shipwrecked sailors."

Sharing the highs and lows of the crossing will be longtime friends Adam Wanczura and Edie Dittman, and Janet and Gord Macatee.

Waka Irie — Mariner 32

Seatz Hof & Jen Murray, USVI

With a name like *Waka Irie*, you might think this boat is crewed by Rastafarians. It isn't, although its Dutch captain, Seatz, sports a pretty respectable mop of dreadlocks.

He and his Kiwi girlfriend Jen are definitely living a lifestyle that a lot of young people would love (both are 31). They met in the Canary Islands while crewing on different boats in the ARC Rally. By the time they got to St. Lucia, both were thinking about buying a boat of their



The 'Waka Irie' crew will avoid the usual milk run.

own. And they both soon focused on this affordable 32-footer. So rather than getting into a bidding war, they bought it together. And the rest, as they say, is history. During her travels so far Jen's favorite spots have been Dominica, Colombia, Sicily and Sardinia. Looking ahead, they both agree that they'll try to stay off the 'cruiser milk run'. Seatz, who's sailed the South Pacific before, says, "I think the South Pacific offers the best cruising for us. If you're independent, self-sufficient and you don't mind doing everything like the locals — eating like them, traveling like them — places like the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are amazing!"

Zenna — Westerly Ocean 49 **Mark Dunn & Marion McQuarrie** **London, GBR**

"We're jumping off and jumping in with PPJ," say Mark and Marion. They're Brits who intend to retire in Australia after they tire of cruising. Or is that if they tire of it?

Having bought this boat in England

more than three years ago, they've taken their time to reach Panama. So far, their favorite stops have been Grenada, the Colombian port of Santa Marta and Panama's



The 'Zenna' crew plan to eventually end up in Australia.

San Blas Islands. We'll bet their next stop, the Galapagos, will soon be added to that list.

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A Canadian crew named Matt had just joined them the day before our *fiesta*.

Moonbeam — Island Packet 52 **Ken Bardon & Jim Drinane** **Marco Island, FL**

"I've crossed the Atlantic three times," says Cap'n Ken, "but I had to wait until I totally extricated myself from business to do this."

He and his first mate, Jim, aren't worried about making such a long passage together, as they are longtime friends who've been boat partners in the past. Their wives will fly out to join them for some interisland cruising. The way we understand it, the plan is to leave the boat in Tahiti for the off-season, then return and continue around the world via South Africa.

It's common to have 'small world' experiences in the sailing community, but how about this one: Adam and Tamlin of *Gallivanter of Lymington* (profiled earlier) used to live right next door to Jim in Brooklyn. But of course, everybody knows everybody in Brooklyn, right?

Sunny — Catana 471 **Aaron Worrall & Laura Payano, AUS**

Aaron bought this boat in Florida two-and-a-half years ago and began exploring the Caribbean. While in Trinidad he met — and fell in love with — lovely Laura, and eventually invited her and her adorable son Javier to join him on the trip back to Australia.

Asked if she'd ever imagined that she'd someday sail to Tahiti, she replied, "No way at all. But it's a good adventure, so I'm very excited." Although born and raised in the islands, she'd only been sailing once before meeting Aaron. "I never expected to go to the other side of the world."

Javier seems to love the boating life so far, and we're told he has an uncanny

knack for alerting his mom and Aaron when any of the boat's gear is out of place.

Chat d'O — 42-ft Manta Cat **Bill & Marta Gervan, CAN**

"I've seen the world the fast way," says Bill, who is a retired Air Canada pilot. "Now it's time to see it the slow way and smell the roses as we go."

Bill's Colombian wife Marta is a bit nervous about making such a long crossing, particularly after recently suffering through 18-hours of strong *Papagayo* winds and rowdy seas in the Gulf of Tehuantepec. But typically, few Puddle Jumpers experience extreme conditions for long, if at all.

After several years cruising Mexico and Central America, Marta says, "For me the best part is fishing. I love to fish! And also getting to meet new people and learn new customs."



During his travels on 'Sunny' young Javier will be sure all is shipshape.

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Millennium — Jutson 60 John Clayton & Nat Kamphang Sydney, AUS

We met John and Nat at last year's send-off party, but due to a few substantial setbacks — such as replacing *Millennium's* engine — they had to delay their plans. "This year we'll make it, though," says John with confidence.

An aircraft engineer by trade, he built this fiberglass sloop 20 years ago, and set sail from Sydney six years ago. Somewhere along the way he met Nat — perhaps in her native Thailand — and they've been sailing partners ever since. The game plan is to work their way back to the Land Down Under, but as is wise for any cruiser, they're in no particular rush to get there.

Spruce — Hallberg Rassy 42 Sue & Andy Warman, GBR

By the time we threw our PPJ *fiesta* in Panama, Sue and Andy were already en route to the Galapagos. But we learned about their background via an email sent from mid-ocean.

Both grew up sailing and racing dinghies, and as adults they explored Northern European waters whenever

"I never expected to go to the other side of the world."

they could. They liked the cruising life so much that they retired early to pursue it.

Today, after cruising the Eastern Caribbean, the Eastern Seaboard as far north as the St. Lawrence Seaway, and elsewhere, they each have 40,000 offshore miles beneath their belts.

In the future they hope to explore Alaska and the Northwest. But that will be *after* island-hopping to Australia. Sounds like the good life to us.

Orca Suite — Morgan O/I 33 Bill & Belinda Tackett, San Diego

We'll close this month with an introduction to Bill and Belinda of San Diego

— whom we've met only via email. They didn't make it to either of our send-off parties, but didn't want to miss out on their 15 minutes of fame in these pages.

When they did their first stint of cruising in 1996, Bill was confident, as he'd grown up sailing in California. But for Belinda, who was born and raised in the Midwest, the sailing life was a completely new adventure. That trip took them from San Diego through the Canal and up to Florida.

This year, newly retired, they're thrilled to be back 'out there' again with an open-ended timetable. "Our motto," says Belinda, "is: 'Live, laugh, love, show respect for all cultures, and make time to dance while you can, because life is so precious.'"

Words to live by, and an excellent sentiment to close on.

In the coming months, after all these voyagers make their landfalls, we'll bring you a recap detailing both the highs and lows of the fleet's passage to Polynesia.

— **latitude/andy**

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