

PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PROFILES, PT I —

It's been said that risks and rewards are intrinsically linked. That's certainly true for those sailors who trade the hard-earned security of comfortable mainstream living for the ambitious adventure of crossing 3,000 miles of open ocean in order to cruise the storied isles of French Polynesia and beyond.

We call that annual westward migration the Pacific Puddle Jump, and each year we're fascinated to meet many of the brave souls who accept the inherent risks that come with making the passage alone and unassisted. At the end of their often-exhausting, three- to four-week crossings come the rewards: entry into a maze of dreamy archipelagos blessed with majestic mountains, lush rainforests, clear-water anchorages and a welcoming population eager to share its centuries-old cultural traditions.

As in years past, the backgrounds of the 'Jumpers' you'll meet in these pages are as diverse as the boats they sail aboard — and the budgets they live on. One thing they all share in common, though, is a salty wanderlust for



The 'Nauti-Nauti' crew.

experiencing unspoiled anchorages, abundant reefs and smog-free sunsets, while putting the pressures of 'normal' urban living on hold indefinitely.

The mini-profiles that follow were gleaned from interviews done last month during our annual PPJ Sendoff party at the Vallarta YC, in Nuevo Vallarta's popular Paradise Village Resort. Next month we'll introduce you to an even larger contingent of voyagers whom we met during our two Pacific Puddle Jump events in Panama.

**Nauti-Nauti —
Leopard 40 cat
Allen &
Patricia Valkie
Fond du Lac, WI**

In contrast to the many life-long sailors who do the Puddle Jump, Allen and Patricia are relative newbies, as they learned to sail only eight years ago.

But as they explain, the idea of cruising the South Pacific has been with them since the beginning. "I've always been a traveler," says Allen. "I visited Tahiti when I was in my early 20s, and I can't wait to get back there now on my own boat."

Is he dragging Patricia along? "No way," she says. "Making this trip has been in my dreams a very long time."

**Le Chat Beaute — Privilege 42
Paddy Barry & Queenie Peck
San Diego, CA**

Paddy is one of the few skippers in this year's fleet who's made the crossing before. Back in 2006 he 'jumped the puddle' with friends aboard a monohull, but he expects a much smoother ride this time, as he and Queenie are now sailing aboard their comfortable catamaran.

Last year when Paddy shared his Pud-



Paddy, Queenie & Larry of 'Le Chat Beaute'.

dle Jump insights in seminars, Queenie got "all hyped up" about making the trip herself, and it wasn't hard to get Paddy



to sign on to the game plan. Longtime sailing buddy Larry Johnson — who is a veteran of other South Pacific adventures — will crew on the passage.

**Triton — Hylas 44
Steven Counard & Kathryn Owen
Eugene, OR**

Steven probably doesn't know how lucky he is to have Kathryn as a sailing mate. Not only is she willing to cross 3,000 miles of open ocean with him, but she wants to do a complete circumnavigation.

They did the Baja Ha-Ha rally last year and were originally intending to make the Jump last season also. But they soon realized that plan was much too rushed, as Mexico has so many wonderful attractions for sailors. The same can be said of the South Pacific, so it's lucky that the couple has an open-ended timetable.



Meet the 'Triton' crew.

**Moonshadow — Deerfoot 62
John & Deb Rogers, San Diego**

We always like to ask westbound cruisers how long they've been thinking

ALL PHOTOS LATITUDE / ANDY

THE RISKS & REWARDS



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

about sailing to Tahiti. That question brought a smile to John's face. "I sailed to French Polynesia when I was 19,"



'Moonshadow' voyagers.

says John. Back home afterward, he met Deb and pitched the idea of the two of them getting a boat and repeating his cruise. "She said, 'Sure, but I'd have to be married or my folks would never allow me to go.'" So they got hitched, but as John explains, "Kids, careers and mortgage payments got in the way of that plan." Now, 42 years later, they are finally about to make good on their long-anticipated South Pacific cruising plan.

Batu — Valiant 40

The Arpag family, Hood River, OR

One of the Arpag family's favorite sailing memories is the time they clocked 14 knots aboard a C&C 25 during the Hood River's famous Double Damned Race. These days Peter and Karen, their son Sean, 13, and daughter Sarah, 12, are looking forward to much mellow

adventures in the South Pacific.

"We've had the dream of cruising with the kids for 10 or 12 years, says Peter. Where we would go was never as important as just going, and giving the kids a different type of education."

"It's a little cramped," admits Sean, "but we're making it work." The plan is to



The Arpag family on 'Batu'.

reach New Zealand, then decide whether to carry on or make the long sail back to Oregon.

Anakena — Corbin 39 **Bill Schmid, Everett, WA**

Even though Bill grew up in North Dakota, he got the sailing bug at an early age, as he spent his early summers waterskiing and sailing on a lake in Minnesota. "Thirty-five years ago I moved to Seattle from North Dakota specifically

to buy a boat so I could go cruising." Needless to say, it took a while to put the full plan in action, but today he's rarin' to go.



'Anakena' Bill.

Athamor — Jade 48 **Rob Bordner & Susan Mitchell** **Seattle, WA**

It would be fascinating to know how many cruising sailors credit Robin Lee Graham, author of *Dove*, as being at least partially responsible for their cruising dreams. In any case, Rob counts himself among them. "Making a trip like this has been in the back of my mind ever since," he says.

He and Susan set sail from Seattle last

September on a one-year sabbatical, but the more they learn about what the South Pacific islands have to offer, the harder it will be to stick to that schedule. Most likely, they'll leave the boat somewhere and return later for another stint of exploring.



The 'Athamor' crew.

Sarita — Hallberg Rassy 46 **The Brierley-Jones family** **Caernarfon, UK**

Jude, who is an Australian, and Richard, who migrated Down Under from the UK, had a boat years ago when they lived in Sydney. But as she recalls, it

'Sarita' will head Down Under.



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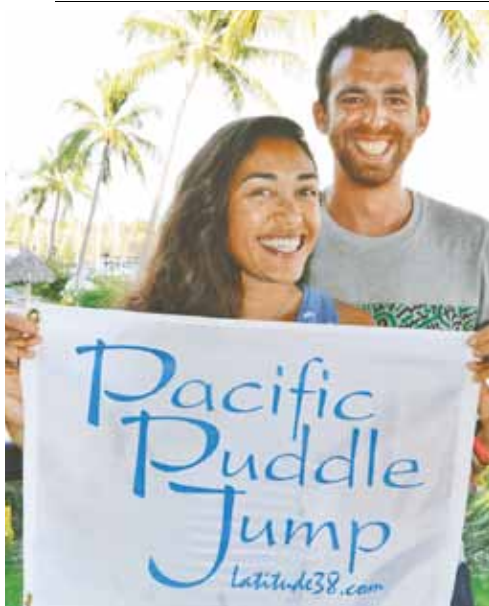
was a sailing trip through the spectacular Whitsunday Islands that introduced them to the idea of carefree cruising. "For me, that trip really kindled my love for sailing. I think we had the best week ever there."

Later, while living in Colorado with their now-12-year-old daughter Katya, Jude remembers Richard being obsessed with reading about cruising in sailing mags, including *Latitude 38* — "sailing porn," as she calls it. The cruising plan evolved there, and they now intend to slowly sail back to Sydney, arriving in time for Katya to enter high school there.

Carthago — Beneteau 43
Jose Costello & Gina Harris
San Francisco, CA

We're pretty sure that Jose and Gina are the envy of their more adventurous friends in the Bay Area, as they're living the cruising dream while still in their late 20s.

Jose vividly recalls that their cruising plan was hatched while sailing on San Francisco Bay, "wishing it were warmer, wishing the water were clearer, and wish-



Gina and Jose sail on 'Carthago.'

ing we didn't have to go to work the next day — then reading about other people's sailing adventures every day after returning home." "Now we are doing it!" adds Gina with a broad smile.

"The plan was always to go to the South Pacific," she says. "Mexico was just a place on our route there, but we've had a blast here!"

They hope to be 'out there' for two or three years before having to return home to re-enter the workaday world.

Konami — Westsail 32
John Clark & Diane Stanford-Clark
Portland, OR

John and Diane explain that they bought *Konami* six years ago, specifically to do the South Pacific circuit that they're



Diane & John of 'Konami'.

about to embark on. In the past few months, though, they've really enjoyed getting to know Mexico. In fact, John says, "I think if we don't leave

Mexico now, we might not ever leave."

One thing about John and Diane's cruising plan that's unique within the fleet is that they eventually plan to explore the waters of Japan. From there, they'll brave the rowdy North Pacific latitudes in order to bring *Konami* home to Portland.

Speakeasy — Manta 42 Cat
Mark & Deanna Roozendaal
Victoria, BC

Reflecting on how she ended up about to set sail for the Marquesas, Deanna had to laugh. "When we first met he said, 'I'm going to sail the world.' And I said, 'Okay honey, you do that.'" She had no interest in such an ambitious adventure at the time. But 10 years ago they did the Baja Ha-Ha together, then crossed to Hawaii and back home to Vancouver Island, and she, too, got the cruising bug.



Canadians on 'Speakeasy'.

"I just loved it!"

Now enjoying what they call their "midlife sabbatical," they're finishing their second season in Mexico. "Cruising here is just so amazing," says Deanna, "and I'm sure we'll come back. But for now we're really excited about heading to the South Pacific."

Sababa — Cascade 36
Tim Jones & Lindsey Kleinrichert
St. Helens, OR

Not only did Tim follow his father's

lead into the field of nuclear contracting, but years ago he got swept up in his dad's long-time dream of cruising under sail. In fact, Tim beat him to it.

"My Dad is actually fitting out his own boat now in Oregon, and plans to sail down to Mexico in the next year or two."

Tim and Lindsey have been "poking around" Mexico since 2010, so they figure, "it's time to see what else is out there. We plan to base the boat in French Polynesia for a couple of years and make occasional trips back home to work."

Whisper — Niagara35
Greg Lakes, Missoula, MT

How did this singlehander from the Big Sky State get into sailing? "Actually, my son wanted to learn, so we got into it together," explains Greg.



Greg of 'Whisper'.

His dream of bluewater cruising to far-flung places was kindled while lake sailing far from any ocean: "When I used to daysail back in Montana, I always dreamed that I was sailing somewhere more exotic."

He's spent the last two years cruising Mexico, and now, as he heads off to the Marquesas, we have to believe that his sailor son is more than a little envious.

Carola — Young Sun 35
Cliff Smith & Mary Ann Paulazzo
Richmond, CA

Cliff, who grew up sailing, has been eager to make a trip like this for years, but Mary is still warming up to the challenges of such an adventure. "He's dragging me along. I keep on telling him



The happy 'Carola' crew.

'I'll follow you as far as I can,' and so far

THE RISKS & REWARDS

I've loved everything."

Reasoning that, "If I'm going to be a partner I'm going to have to know my stuff," she took a series of classes on San Francisco Bay before they headed south — training that will undoubtedly pay off.

Wave Dancer — Transpac 49
Vladimir Madorsky & Galina Palace
San Diego, CA

"Vee are not your typical cruisers," says Russian-born Vladimir." He and Galina immigrated to the US from the USSR in the late '80s, and "worked our way up the corporate ladder, then a couple of years ago we got out of the rat race, bought this boat, and got rid of all our earthly possessions." As Galina puts it, "So far we've had three lives: one in Russia, one in the US and one on the boat." Their cruising plans are open-ended.



The 'Wave Dancer' crew.

Impulsive — Outbound 44
Morris & Debbie Adams
Seattle, WA

"We've been planning this trip for more than 15 years," says Debbie. "Yeah," adds Morris, "we're two engineers, so she's got spreadsheets of everything all planned out."



Being 'Impulsive'.

In 2015 they joined the fledgling Coho Ho Ho rally (a feeder event for the Baja Ha-Ha, although not officially affiliated), then the Ha-Ha itself. Now they're thrilled to be heading west — especially to leisurely revisit many of the dive sites they've sampled in the past during a series of quickie dive trips.

"The plan is to spend five years in the South Pacific," says Debbie. "Maybe we'll come back and maybe we won't."

Idlewild — Reyse Marine 57
Tex & Grete Fimrite, Vancouver, BC
 Although *Idlewild* is probably the only



Captain Tex and his 'Idlewild' crew.

powerboat in this year's fleet, Captain Tex assures us that this custom aluminum hull does carry a steadying sail or two. And she's already completed a navigational challenge that no other PPJ boat would attempt: In 2005 she transited the Northwest Passage — back before it was relatively easy to do so. Current crewman Brad Gray was on that trip, and recalls that *Idlewild* was only the 103rd boat to make it through.

Back in 1999, Tex did a previous SoPac voyage, but that time Grete only flew out to join him in exotic places such as Vanuatu and Tuvalu. This time, she's committed to the whole package.

Velic — Jason 35
Randy & Ruth Webster, Portland, OR

Ruth and Randy met by chance while crewing on a race boat and found they had a lot in common — such as a desire to circumnavigate. "In 2010 we did our shakedown cruise to Hawaii and back, doublehanded, and decided, yup that's what we wanted to do," recalls Ruth.



'Velic' may circumnavigate.

Randy has had a fascination with boats and offshore sailing since he was a kid, growing up in the Philippines. "I spent my free time swimming off the beach, sailing small boats, and paddling outrigger canoes called *boncas*, and I've always wanted to get back to that. At the time, Robin Lee Graham was sailing *Dove* around the world and I read all his stories in *National Geographic*."

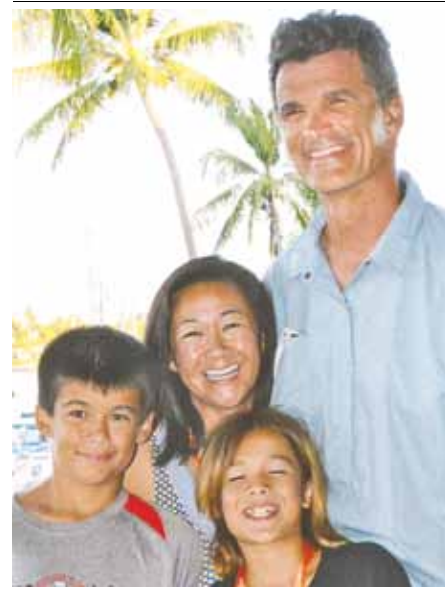
The couple's "loose plan" is to circumnavigate via South Africa

— a portion of the trip they are really looking forward to.

Enough — Lapworth 50
The Ashton family, Alameda, CA

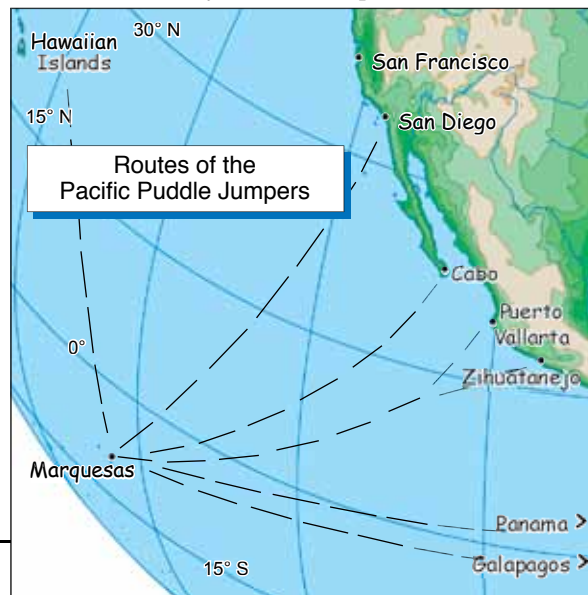
"Enough what?" we asked. "Working?" "Actually, yes," replied Geoff. "I've already lived and worked in Tahiti as well as many other exotic places around the world. But I wasn't able to spend time with the family. So now it's their turn."

Miriam adds, "We want to see as much as we can see while the kids are still with us." Their son Horatio is now 10 and Noah is 9.



It's family time on 'Enough'.

The family boat is probably the oldest in the fleet, but also one of the most soulful. They bought the classic woodie three years ago, after she'd been completely rebuilt. "She's essentially a brand-new boat," says Geoff with pride.



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Editor's note: For whatever reason, nearly a dozen Puddle Jumpers are heading west from La Paz this year — which is rare. The following are profiles from that group.

Talion — Gulfstar 50

Patsy Verhoeven, Portland / La Paz

Originally from Oregon, Patsy, aka 'Le Reina del Mar', is well-known to most *Latitude* readers as she's done the Baja Ha-Ha nine times (winning her class each time), and her antics and insights are often written up in the magazine.



Cap'n Patsy.

She's called La Paz home for nearly a decade, during which time she became close to Paul Whitehouse and Simone Wood of the ketch *Tabasco II*, who died tragically during Hurricane Odile in 2014. The couple's longtime dream of cruising the South Pacific is partly responsible for Patsy and other La Paz cruisers heading west this year. But believe it or not, Patsy plans to circle back to California in time for the 2016 Ha-Ha next October.

Cinnabar — Schumacher 52

Tom Condy & Sylvia Seaberg San Francisco, CA

During his years working as a scuba instructor, Tom used to lead trips to exotic places that featured pristine diving. "We remember seeing anchored cruising boats in Vanuatu, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere," recalls Cynthia, "and wondering what such an unusual lifestyle would be like." They now know the answer to that question.

With a game plan that includes two seasons in French Polynesia and an eventual cruise to New Zealand, we suspect they'll revisit some of those exotic dive spots, in addition to places where they can practice their other sporting passions: kiting and surfing. Longtime sailing buddy Bruce Ladd will crew on the crossing.

Scoots — Able Apogee 50

Eric & Vandy Shrader San Francisco, CA

Like most cruisers, Eric and Vandy like to keep their plans loose, rather than scripting their next moves way in advance. But last

fall, after a year and a half cruising Mexico, they decided it was "time for a change of scenery," so they decided to head west into the Pacific. What islands they'll visit and how long they'll stay are completely open questions at this point.



Eric & Vandy of 'Scoots'.

Avatar — Kelly Peterson 44

Shelly Ward & Mike Rickman Whitestone, VA

Expat friends of Mike and Shelly must be shocked that they are heading west to new adventures, as he's lived in La Paz for 25 years, and she for 11.

But evidently the idea of doing this has been on their minds for a very long time. Shelly recalls, "When I passed on an offer from Club Med to work on Bora Bora in 1988, I made a promise to myself that someday I would sail my own boat there instead. Finally, 28 years later, it is happening!"

Mike traces his South Pacific ambitions back even farther. He still remembers watching mind-expanding episodes of James Michener's TV series *Adventures in Paradise* in the early '60s.

"We have both done passages with other people on other boats," explains Shelly. "Now the adventure is on us!" They expect to be out roughly five years.

An abnormally large group is leaving from La Paz this year. Pictured are crew from 'Talion', 'Avatar', 'Jade', 'Huzzah', 'Cinnabar', 'Koza', 'Compañera', 'Morning Light' and 'Sovage'.



Huzzah — Jeanneau 46

Gerry Gilbert, Gig Harbor, WA

There's an old saying that "Nothing goes to windward like a 747." The same can be said for going downwind, and that's how Gerry's wife Jody will get to the Marquesas, after he and his sailing buds, Ken Slattery and Fred Morrison complete the crossing.

Because the couple has been greatly anticipating interisland cruising through the archipelagos of French Polynesia, they secured one-year Long Stay Visas prior to departure.

Gerry credits at least part of his inspiration for making this trip to members of his family's YC, who told tales of SoPac voyaging when he was a kid. "It took me 40 years to get the college-and-career thing done," he says, "but I have been planning this for the last 15 years!"

Compañera — Tartan 3800

Joel Sorum, Vallejo, CA

From his youth in North Dakota, Joel still has vivid memories: "During the endless, bitterly cold prairie winters, I dreamed of far-off places, palm trees and warm, sparkling ocean water."

When he finally got to the West Coast and glimpsed the blue Pacific, it "started a love affair with sailing and the sea that still nourishes my soul." He's been sailing ever since between Mexico and Alaska, and claims that "the South Pacific has always beckoned." But it wasn't until he met Laura Ashton two years ago that he had a partner who was equally willing to make the leap. Now, as they head west, he says, "Our cruising plans are written in sand on an incoming tide." Joel's son Bob will crew to the Marquesas.

As you can see, there's no shortage of risk-takers in this group — and so far you've met only a fraction of the entire 2016 Pacific Puddle Jump fleet — 170 boats are currently registered.

In our second installment of profiles next month we'll introduce you to the wildly international group leaving from Panama. We say "Bon voyage!" to all of them.

— **latitude/andy**