

Ahoy Puddle Jumpers!

As of today, 143 boats from more than a dozen countries have registered for the 2018 Pacific Puddle Jump, and will be heading west in the coming weeks from many ports along the west coast of the Americas.

The fact that you are receiving this confirms that you are officially registered, and your info has been uploaded to our fleet database which has proven to be an essential resource during emergency situations in past years.

You should have already received our email with Fleet Letter #1, please reply to this email if you have not!

SENDOFF CELEBRATIONS

It took a bit longer than usual to organize our upcoming sendoff events, but we're happy to report all is now set for three sendoff celebrations in Mexico and Panama. All crews who are planning to cross this year are invited to attend, free of charge.

- **March 5 — PPJ Sendoff Party at Vallarta Yacht Club**, in Nuevo Vallarta's Paradise Village Resort; 3-6 p.m.

Latitude 38 magazine's Editor-at-Large Andy Turpin will host a highly informative media presentation, with additional in-depth immigration and customs info provided by our longtime Tahitian associates at the yacht agency Tahiti Crew.

- **March 8 — PPJ Sendoff Party at Balboa YC**, (officially called the Tahiti Bon Voyage) on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Latitude 38's Andy Turpin will be joined by Tahitian partner Stephanie Betz in presenting an informative and entertaining program; reps from marine businesses in Fiji and Tonga will also attend in order to share info on services and attractions for cruisers. (Detailed flyer to follow.)

- **March 10 — PPJ Sendoff Party at Shelter Bay Marina**, (officially called the Tahiti Bon Voyage) on the Caribbean side of the Canal: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Similar program to the above. (Detailed flyer to follow.)

LONG STAY VISAS

A quick word about immigration rules and visas. When some international cruisers jump off for French Polynesia, they have done lots of 'homework' about immigration and boat import issues, while others don't know much about what to expect. So let us run through some important points.

- Foreign yachts may stay in FP waters for up to three years without importation. (An improvement, as it used to be 18 months.)

- Currently, European Union passport holders may stay in FP as long as they want without special visas (but may not work without special permission).

- Visiting sailors with NON-EU passports, i.e. Americans and Canadians, will get 90 day-visas upon arrival, with no prior arrangements. These visas CANNOT be renewed in French Polynesia.

At the end of 90 days, these visitors must leave the territory for at least 90 days before returning and 'starting the 90-day clock' again. (Also an improvement, as it used to be 90 days within a year-long period.)

- By special arrangement PRIOR TO JUMPING OFF, Non-EU citizens may apply for and receive long stay visas which allow them to stay for up to one year. These can (sometimes) be renewed in FP, without exiting the territory.

French Polynesia is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful sailing grounds on earth, and therefore one of the last places you would want to be in a hurry. So we highly recommend taking the steps to acquire a long stay visa. (See www.pacificpuddlejump.com for details.)

Basically, Americans and Canadians are supposed to apply at the French Embassy or Consulate closest to their permanent home address. However, we are told that both the Panama and Ecuador (Quito) Embassies will process visa requests if you have been sailing away from your home waters for more than three months. It takes three to seven weeks for visa applications to be processed and returned, but we think the benefits are well worth the hassle.

SAVE THE DATE

Please note also that *Latitude 38* staff will again co-host the following three-day event in French Polynesia:

- **June 22-24 — The Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendez-vous** serves the dual purpose of celebrating the fleet's safe arrival in the islands while introducing several hundred international sailors to time-honored cultural traditions in music, dance, cuisine and sport. We hope you will make a special effort to attend. We know you'll be glad you did.

Thanks — Andy Turpin, *Latitude 38* editor-at-large & the PPJ Rally Committee