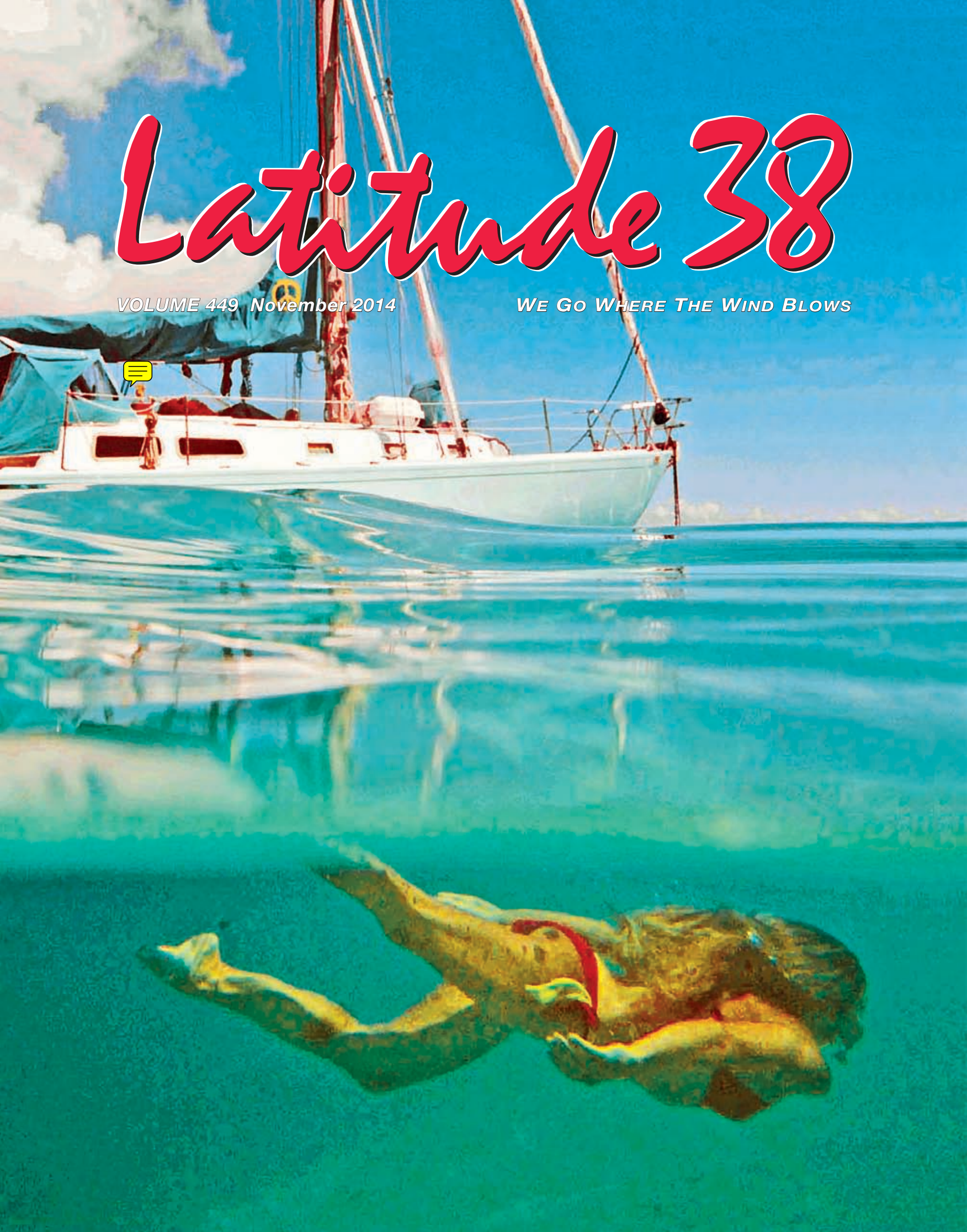


Latitude 38

VOLUME 449 November 2014

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Golden Moon*

After Express 37, *Golden Moon*, was sailed all season with the same driver and core crew, they faced the prospect of sailing the nationals without their steady driver. (They had won their class in Saint Francis Yacht Club's Big Boat Series just weeks before.)

As it turned out, the crew raced the boat and did very well without him. As in "they won first place."

Kame Richards was out of town for family commitments. Mike Mannix, usually working hard in the cockpit, took the helm. And the rest of the crew worked their magic: co-owner Bill Bridge, Brent Draney and son Jeff, Tom Paulling, Don Teakell, Larry Tuttle, Jason Westenberg, Kevin Moore, Jeff Brantley and Friday specialists: Jeannette Daroosh, George Hughes and Ryan Simmons.

Mike will tell you: It was the crew and the sails, or was it the sails and the crew? Kame was there in spirit. And he did design *Golden Moon's* Pineapple sails. He would be happy to do the same for you.

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Cover:

Who wouldn't want to be the young woman in this month's cover photo? If you know your boats, you can probably guess who she is. More on her and the photographer in the December issue of *Latitude*.

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Latitude 38 welcomes editorial contributions in the form of stories, anecdotes, photographs – anything but poems, please; we gotta draw the line somewhere. Articles with the best chance at publication must 1) pertain to a West Coast or universal sailing audience, 2) be accompanied by a variety of pertinent, in-focus digital images (preferable) or color or black and white prints with identification of all boats, situations and people therein; and 3) be legible. These days, we prefer to receive both text and photos electronically, but if you send by mail, anything you want back must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. **Submissions not accompanied by an SASE will not be returned.** We also advise that you not send original photographs or negatives unless we specifically request them; copies will work just fine. Notification time varies with our workload, but generally runs four to six weeks. Please don't contact us before then by phone or mail. Send all submissions to editorial@latitude38.com, or mail to Latitude 38 editorial department, 15 Locust Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941. For more specific information, request writers' guidelines from the above address or see www.latitude38.com/writers.html.

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Oct. 27-Nov. 8 — 21st Annual Baja Ha-Ha Cruising Rally from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas with stops in Turtle Bay and Bahia Santa Maria. Info, www.baja-haha.com.

Oct. 31-Nov. 5 — The 112-ft tall ship *Lady Washington* visits San Francisco on her California tour, followed by stops at Half Moon Bay on 11/7-11/11, and Moss Landing on 11/13-12/8. Walk-on tours, \$3 donation; adventure sails, \$43. Schedule and info, www.historicalseaport.org.

Oct. 31-Dec. 5 — The 103-ft swift topsail ketch *Hawaiian Chieftain* is berthed at Old Sacramento's floating dock and open for public tours on Tues.-Fri., 4-5 p.m., and Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Closed on Thanksgiving. \$3 donation. Info, www.historicalseaport.org.

Nov. 1 — Cruisers Kickoff BBQ, Downwind Marine, San Diego, 12-4 p.m. Meet other cruisers and bring a dish to share. Downwind Marine supplies hamburgers and sodas. Info, (619) 225-9411 or www.downwindmarine.com.

Nov. 1 — Chantey Sing aboard *Balclutha* at Hyde Street Pier in SF, 8 p.m.-midnight. Dress warmly and bring your own mug. Free, but RSVP to Peter, (415) 561-7171.

Nov. 1-2 — Pop-up gallery exhibiting artwork by Jim DeWitt, 1160 Brickyard Cove Rd., #202, Pt. Richmond. 12-7 p.m. on 11/1; 12-4 p.m. on 11/2. Reception on 11/1, 4-7 p.m. Pam, (510) 236-1401.

Nov. 2 — Daylight Saving Time ends.

Nov. 2-30 — Veterans' Sail, 10 a.m., and Sunday Keelboat Sail, 12 noon, every Sunday with BAADS at South Beach Harbor, SF. Free. Info, (415) 281-0212 or www.baads.org.

Nov. 3-7 — Cruising Downwind Evening Seminars, Downwind Marine, San Diego, 6 p.m. Admission, \$3. No reservations needed. 11/3: Health Coverage Abroad; 11/4: Passagemaking with Today's Nautical Chart Info; 11/5: Onboard Power, Tips on 12-Volt Cruising; 11/6: Downwind Sailing Techniques & Equipment; 11/7: National Weather Service Meteorologists present the U.S. marine weather program and warning coordination for mariners. Info, (619) 225-9411 or www.downwindmarine.com.

Nov. 3-24 — San Diego's South Bay Sea Scouts meet at Chula Vista Marina aboard the schooner *Bill of Rights* on Mondays at 6 p.m. Sea Scouts is a program of the Boy Scouts of America for guys and gals ages 13-20. Nate, (717) 654-3797 or n8kraft@gmail.com.

Nov. 5-26 — Wednesday Yachting Luncheon Series at St. Francis YC, 12-2 p.m. Enjoy lunch and a dynamic speaker each Wednesday for about \$25. All YCs' members welcome. More info under 'Events' tab at www.stfyc.com.

Nov. 6 — Sail under the full moon on a Thursday night.

Nov. 9 — Open House with free sailboat rides at Cal Sailing Club in Berkeley, 1-4 p.m. Info, www.cal-sailing.org.

Nov. 11 — Take a veteran sailing today!

Nov. 13 — Are you a single boatowner needing crew? The Single Sailors Association has crew to help sail your boat. Monthly meetings at Ballena Bay YC in Alameda, 6:30 p.m. Info, www.singlesailors.org or (510) 239-7245.

Nov. 15 — Music at the BoatShop Series, Gig Harbor BoatShop, WA, 5:00 p.m. Featuring Americana and folk with Eli West. \$15-\$20. Info/tickets, (253) 857-9344.

Nov. 18 — YRA Trophy Party at BYC. Info, www.yra.org.

Nov. 20 — Welcome to La Paz Baja Ha-Ha Beach Party, La Costa Restaurant, 4-7 p.m. Mexican folk dancing, live music, food & drinks. Free for the first 50 Ha-Ha participants Info, www.golapaz.com.

Nov. 22 — Sail the Bay aboard SF Maritime Park's historic scow schooner *Alma*, 12:30-4 p.m. \$20-\$40. Info, (415) 447-



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CALENDAR

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Nov. 27 — Thanksgiving Day.

Nov. 1984 — From a *Sightings* piece titled, "Third Reef":

Santa Cruz's notorious Third Reef off Point Santa Cruz, also known as Lighthouse Point, ensnared an Olson 30 on October 10, severely damaging the boat. The incident illustrates a point brought out in Peter Costello's September article "Santa Cruz Cruise" (Volume 87), which said that 'sneaker' waves can sometimes surprise boaters who venture too close to the Third Reef area. This appears to have been the case with *Deliverance*.

Aboard the boat were Paul Gallus, the owner, Christina Goyhenetche and her son Blake Woessner, and Grant Worchester. According to Gallus, they obviously felt safe being 300 to 400 yards offshore. They were out on a daysail, having cruised up to Natural Bridges from the Small Yacht Harbor and were returning on a heading for Mile Buoy. The wind had virtually died and they were trying to reach offshore a bit to catch some more breeze. "All of a sudden," says Gallus, "a swell came by. We saw it was big; and then it broke right where we were. If we had been ten yards to either side we would have risen up over it."

The mast broke off on the first roll, and everyone was thrown overboard except Gallus, who was sitting in the companionway and was thrown into the cabin. He climbed back into the cockpit and tried to lower the jib before realizing what had happened. His next thought was to get flotation for everyone in the water and he went below again. The next wave caught the boat and "spun it like a log. I'm awful glad it was an Olson 30," he says, "because any other boat would probably have broken up." While he was tossing inside the boat, Gallus suffered injuries to his ribs.

Fortunately, surfers in the water were able to assist in pulling the four sailors from the ocean. Only Gallus suffered serious injuries. The moral of the story, though, is when you're out there sailing off Santa Cruz in the light fall winds and you can't get out of the way of a sneaker, don't get closer to take a look at the surfers. They're a telltale sign that you've gone from the safe zone to the potentially sorry zone.

Dec. 6 — Lighted Yacht Parade on the Oakland/Alameda Estuary, 5:30 p.m. The theme is 'Light Up the Night'. Sponsored by EYC & OYC. Info, www.lightedyachtparade.com.

Dec. 6 — Lighted Boat Parade in Santa Cruz. SCYC, www.scyc.org.

Dec. 6 — Lighted Boat Parade in Stockton. SSC, www.stocktonssc.org.

Dec. 7 — Lighted Boat Parade on Monterey Bay. MPYC, www.mpyc.org.

Dec. 12 — Decorated Boat Parade on the Cityfront. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or www.stfyc.com.

Dec. 13 — Sausalito Lighted Boat Parade, 5 p.m. SYC, (415) 332-7400 or www.sausalitoyachtclub.org.

Dec. 13 — San Rafael Lighted Boat Parade, with more than 100 decorated yachts, starting at 6 p.m. Info, (415) 526-7577 or www.lightedboatparade.org.

Dec. 13 — Lighted Boat Parade, South Beach, San Francisco. SBYC, www.southbeachyc.org.

Racing

Nov. 1 — Red Rock Regatta. TYC, www.tyc.org.

Nov. 1 — Commodore's Cup. CPYC, www.cpyc.com.

Nov. 1 — Last Gasp of Summer Regatta. HMBYC, www.hmbyc.org.

Nov. 1, Dec. 6, 13 — Fall Series Races #3-5. SSC, www.stocktonssc.org.

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Nov. 1-2 — Match Racing. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or www.stfyc.com.

Nov. 1-2 — Perry Cup/Kelp Cup. MPYC, www.mpyc.org.

Nov. 1-2 — Rum Runner Regatta from Balboa YC in Newport Beach to San Diego. A 75-mile feeder race for SDYC's Hot Rum Series, which begins on 11/8. SDYC, www.sdyc.org.

Nov. 2 — Jack & Jill + 1 for women skippers. IYC, (510) 521-2980 or www.iyc.org.

Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 — J/22 Fall Series. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or www.stfyc.com.

Nov. 8 — Santana 22 Team Racing in Santa Cruz. SCYC, www.scyc.org.

Nov. 8 — Turkey Shoot Regatta (turkeys are the prizes). LWSC, www.lwsailing.org.

Nov. 8-9 — Opti Winter Series #1. SFYC, www.sfyc.org.

Nov. 9 — Crew's Revenge. MPYC, www.mpyc.org.

Nov. 15 — Turkey Race. KBSC, www.kbsail.com.

Nov. 15, 29, Dec. 13 — Chowder Cup Races. ElkYC, www.elkhornyc.com.

Nov. 18 — The Big Sail: Stanford vs. Cal. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or www.stfyc.com.

Nov. 22-23 — Turkey Day Regatta. Alamitos Bay YC, www.abyc.com.

Nov. 28 — Wild Turkey Race. TYC, www.tyc.org.

Dec. 8-9 — Opti Winter Series. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or www.stfyc.com.

Midwinter Regattas

BERKELEY YC — Midwinters: 11/8-9, 12/13-14, 1/10-11, 2/14-15. Bobbi, (925) 939-9885 or www.berkeleyyc.org.

BERKELEY YC — Chowder Races: Sundays through March except when it conflicts with above. Paul, (510) 540-7968 or www.berkeleyyc.org.

CAL SAILING CLUB — Year-round Sunday morning dinghy races, conditions permitting, intraclub only, typically in Laser Bahias and JY15s. Info, www.cal-sailing.org.

CORINTHIAN YC — Midwinters: 1/17-18, 2/21-22. Info, (415) 435-4771 or www.cyc.org.

ENCINAL YC — Jack Frost Series: 11/15, 1/10, 2/21, 3/14. Info, (510) 522-3272 or www.encinal.org.

GOLDEN GATE YC — Manuel Fagundes Seaweed Soup Series: 11/1, 12/6, 1/3, 2/7, 3/7. Info, (415) 346-2628 or www.ggyc.com.

ISLAND YC — Island Days on the Estuary: 11/9, 12/14, 1/11, 2/8, 3/8. John, (510) 521-2980 or www.iyc.org.

LAKE MERRITT SAILING CLUB — Midwinters: 12/13, 1/11, 2/14, 3/8; this year at Oakland's Jack London Aquatic Center on the Estuary instead of on the lake, due to construction. Mark, (925) 245-0287.

MONTEREY PENINSULA YC — Perry Cup/Midwinters: 11/1-2, 12/6, 1/3, 2/7. Info, www.mpyc.org.

REGATTAPRO — Winter One Design: 11/8, 12/13, 1/10, 2/7. Jeff, (415) 595-8364 or www.regattapro.com.

RICHMOND YC — Small Boat Midwinters: 12/7, 1/4, 2/1, 3/1. Optis & El Toro Green Fleet: 12/6, 1/31, 2/28. Info, www.richmondyc.org. Laser Sundays: 11/2, 11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 12/14, 12/21, 1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29. Info, <http://rycsunday.myfleet.org>.

SANTA CRUZ YC — Midwinters: 11/15, 12/22, 1/17, 2/21, 3/21. Info, (831) 425-0690 or www.scyc.org.

SANTA ROSA YC — Spring Lake Winter Series: 11/15, 12/20, January & February 2015 dates TBA. Info, www.santarosasailingclub.org.

SAUSALITO YC — Sunday Midwinters: 11/2, 12/7, 1/4, 2/1, 3/1. Info, www.sausalitoyachtclub.org or race@sausalito.

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Updates for Boat in Mexico & Health Coverage Abroad
- Tues., Nov. 4 - Capt. Ann Kinner, Seabreeze Books**
Passage Making with Today's Nautical Chart Info
- Wed., Nov. 5 - Barry Kessler, CEO, Altra Regulators**
Onboard Power to the Cruiser! Tips on 12-Volt Cruising
- Thurs., Nov. 6 - Bruce Brown, Cruiser/Forespar Rep.**
Downwind Sailing Techniques & Equipment
- Fri., Nov. 7 - Stephen Harrison & Alex Tardy, NOAA**
NWS Meteorologists present the U.S. marine weather program and warning coordination for mariners

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SEQUOIA YC — Winter Series: 11/1, 12/13, 1/3, 2/7, 3/14. Redwood Cup pursuit race series: 11/15, 12/20, 1/10, 2/21, 3/7. Info, www.sequoiayc.org.

SOUTH BEACH YC — Island Fever Midwinters: 11/15, 12/20, 1/17, 2/21, 3/21. Janelle, (650) 303-8236 or www.southbeachyc.org.

VALLEJO YC — Tiny Robbins Midwinters: 11/1, 12/6, 1/3, 2/7, 3/7. Info, (707) 643-1254 or www.vyc.org.

Please send your calendar items by the 10th of the month to calendar@latitude38.com. If you're totally old-school, mail them to *Latitude 38* (Attn: Calendar), 15 Locust Avenue, Mill Valley, CA, 94941, or fax them to us at (415) 383-5816. But please, no phone-ins! Calendar listings are for marine-related events that are either free or don't cost much to attend. The Calendar is not meant to support commercial enterprises.

November Weekend Tides

date/day	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH
11/01 Sat	0435/1.7	1100/6.2	1726/-0.4	
11/02 Sun	0017/4.9	0415/1.9	1036/6.4	1707/-0.8
11/08 Sat	0452/5.1	1006/2.6	1553/5.3	2226/0.0
11/09 Sun	0549/5.3	1128/2.2	1712/4.9	2328/0.3
11/15 Sat	0340/2.0	1000/6.3	1639/-0.6	2339/4.9
11/16 Sun	0422/2.3	1033/6.2	1716/-0.6	
11/22 Sat	0406/4.6	0910/3.1	1428/4.7	2114/0.5
11/23 Sun	0450/4.7	1020/2.9	1527/4.4	2203/0.8
11/27 Thu	0039/1.7	0728/5.7	1402/0.8	2024/4.1
11/28 Fri	0128/1.9	0805/6.0	1444/0.2	2126/4.3
11/29 Sat	0215/2.1	0844/6.3	1525/-0.5	2221/4.6
11/30 Sun	0301/2.3	0954/6.6	1608/-1.0	2313/4.8

November Weekend Currents

date/day	slack	max	slack	max
11/01 Sat	0114	0340/3.1E	0701	0954/3.1F
	1250	1558/4.9E	1947	2244/3.9F
11/02 Sun	0104	0327/3.1E	0641	0935/3.1F
	1226	1542/5.2E	1930	2229/4.1F
11/08 Sat		0257/3.6F	0625	0844/2.5E
	1219	1457/2.2F	1745	2055/4.1E
11/09 Sun	0052	0359/3.5F	0719	0948/2.7E
	1333	1612/2.3F	1901	2159/3.6E
11/15 Sat	0020	0248/2.6E	0606	0856/3.0F
	1146	1457/4.7E	1854	2200/3.8F
11/16 Sun	0109	0330/2.4E	0648	0935/2.8F
	1224	1536/4.7E	1936	2241/3.8F
11/22 Sat		0207/2.9F	0539	0749/2.0E
	1127	1357/1.6F	1636	1956/3.4E
11/23 Sun		0254/2.7F	0625	0841/2.1E
	1231	1456/1.5F	1738	2047/3.1E
11/27 Thu	0302	0604/2.8F	0912	1209/3.7E
	1611	1857/2.7F	2205	
11/28 Fri		0028/2.6E	0350	0650/2.9F
	0951	1257/4.3E	1656	1949/3.2F
	2303			
11/29 Sat		0121/2.6E	0436	0735/3.0F
	1031	1344/4.8E	1741	2038/3.6F
	2357			
11/30 Sun		0213/2.6E	0522	0820/3.1F
	1112	1431/5.3E	1826	2125/4.0F



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65' J/Boats J/65 2006
\$1,499,000 Contact: Jeff Brown



56' Perry Custom 1995
\$619,000 Contact: Rick Boyce



50' HANSE 505 2014
\$549,000 Contact: Jack Lennox



49' C Burns Schooner 2007
\$635k Contact: Alan Weaver



42' Bruckman/Zurn 2006
\$389k Contact: Kenyon Martin



41' Island Packet SP Cruiser 2007
\$417,500 Contact: Alan Weaver



40' J/Boat J/124 2007
\$279k Contact: Kenyon Martin



38' SABRE 386 2005
\$239,900 Contact: Jack Lennox



38' SABRE 386 2004
\$259,000 Contact: Alan Weaver



36' J/111 2010
\$275,000 Contact: Jeff Brown



35' J/109 2004
\$181,000 Contact: Kenyon Martin



36' Doral Boca Grande 2005
\$128,000 Contact: Alan Weaver



30' Raider 9m RIB 2009
\$69,000 Contact: Jack Lennox



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| 2005 52' TP52 | \$349K |
| 1997 48' SWAN 48 | \$479K |
| 2001 47' BAVARIA 47 | \$146K |
| 2006 43' J/133 -Tango | \$349K |
| 2005 43' J/133 Forgiveness | \$349K |
| 2000 42' J/42 | \$199K |
| 1997 42' CATALINA 42MkII | \$99K |
| 1991 42' CATALINA 42 | \$91K |
| 2008 41' X YACHTS X41 | \$275K |
| 2007 40' J/122 - Grace | \$329K |
| 1994 40' J/120 - Fee Event | \$175K |
| 2001 35' J/105 - Hibiscus | \$75K |
| 2001 35' J/105 - Hey Viento | \$76K |
| 2000 35' J/105 - Kestrel | \$83K |
| 1999 35' 1d35 - Relentless | \$79K |
| 2013 23' J/70 | \$47K |

- ADDL USED POWER.....**
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 2002 85' AZIMUT 85 | \$1,998,000 |
| 2004 38' True North 38 | Pending |
| 2002 28' Protector RIB | \$81K |
- ADDL NEW POWER AVAIL....**
- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 2015 54' SABRE 54 SE - IPS | CALL |
| 2015 48' SABRE 48 SE - Zeus | CALL |
| 2015 37' BACK COVE 37 | CALL |
- ADDL SAIL AVAIL....**
- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 2015 45' HANSE New 455 | CALL |
|------------------------|------|



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LETTERS

↑↓ HOW OLD IS TOO OLD TO START SOLO CRUISING?

Based on my experience, 72 is not too old for a novice to start a 48-month cruise as far southwest as New Zealand and as far north as Alaska. That's the trip I started in November 2008, when I left Moss Landing for San Diego and then across to the Marquesas. My passage to Nuku Hiva was my first offshore sail and I just left without checking the weather. The passage took 41 days, and I sure learned a hell of a lot on the way to Nuku Hiva.



COURTESY RADIANCE II

Age is just a number to sailors such as John David.

I continued on to the rest of French Polynesia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands — then Kodiak, Alaska. I wintered over in Kodiak in 2011. It was the coldest winter they'd had in 30 years, and one day it got down to 12 degrees below zero. The next spring I sailed back down to Moss Landing. When my vision started to fail me, I moved up to the Delta, where I am now.

I did my trip with — and am currently living aboard — *Radiance II*, my Olympia 34. She's a really tough boat that was custom-built in Long Beach way back in 1969. She had to be tough given all the things that I did to her.

Using the pen name J.D. Savid, I've recounted my trip and my learning experiences in *The Voyage of Radiance II*, which is available as an ebook on Kindle and Nook, and which has a five-star rating on Amazon. The book is 72 pages long with 58 color photos. My book might be considered a primer for an extended bluewater voyage by a novice senior citizen solo sailor with the desire to be at sea.

John David
Radiance II, Olympia 34
The Delta

↑↓ THE LOSS OF TRANSIT OF VENUS

I want to share the contents of the letter I sent to Rear Admiral Joseph A. Servido, Commander, United States Coast Guard District 11, Alameda:

"I wish to extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to the men and women of the Search and Rescue group under your command. Specifically, my thanks go out to officers Ed Skinner and Stephanie Wefel, as their professionalism was much appreciated.

"On September 25, my Corsair trimaran *Transit of Venus*, being sailed from Hawaii back home to Oakland by a professional delivery skipper and volunteer crew, struck an unknown object while traveling at over 10 knots. They were about 600 miles from San Francisco at the time. About 10 feet of the starboard float was completely torn off. Three-quarters of the buoyancy of that float was gone.



COURTESY TRANSIT OF VENUS

A huge chunk of the starboard ama's bow was obliterated in the collision.

completely torn off. Three-quarters of the buoyancy of that float was gone.

The skipper and crew contacted me at my home in Saratoga, and then proceeded to try everything they could to sail



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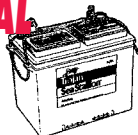
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LETTERS

or motor the boat to land. But with so much buoyancy gone, and the float presenting a blunt surface forward, we decided to abandon the ship and get the crew home safely.

"I contacted Mr. Skinner and Ms. Wefel at their desk on Coast Guard Island. Their instructions were clear, concise, and reassuring. The captain of *Transit of Venus* activated the EPIRB, and within a few hours a C-130 was circling overhead and guiding a nearby freighter to the sailboat. Wefel and Skinner located the freighter, contacted the ship, and directed it for the rescue.

"My captain and crew arrived back in San Francisco from Panama after 12 days aboard the ship *Golden Heiwa*. I would also like to thank Commander William Mees at the US Embassy in Panama. He greeted the crew, got them new passports, and put them on a plane home."

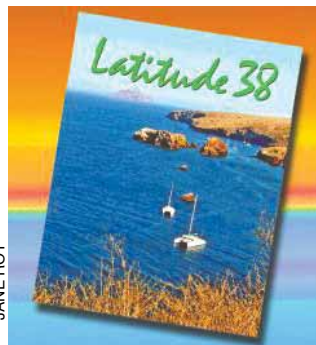
After the collision and attempts to sail and motor the boat, the Coast Guard did a very efficient job of getting the crew onto a freighter. Abandoning a boat is no small matter. While most of the damage of the collision was to the starboard ama, the main hull was severely torqued, cracked in many places, and compromised. I suppose it is testimony to the safety of these boats that there was never a concern that the boat would sink and that the crew would have to get into a liferaft.

Rick WaltonsSmith
 Saratoga

↑↓ CALIFORNIA CRUISING CAN BE BEAUTIFUL

Jane Roy's October cover photo is so appealing that I found myself thinking, "Remind me why my boat and I are back here in Alameda and didn't stop at Santa Cruz Island." There was a reason, but I can't seem to remember what it was."

Rick Drain
 Espire, 1965 Ocean 40
 Alameda



JANE ROY

The Channel Islands offer great cruising to SoCal sailors.

Rick — We agree that the view depicted in Jane's cover photo is very appealing. It's less than 100 miles from the 16 million people of the Greater Los Angeles area, but only a tiny fraction of them have had the opportunity to enjoy it. It's good to have a boat and use her.

↑↓ WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SATPHONE CONTINUITY?

After reading letters about Iridium and other satellite communication services in recent *Latitudes*, I noticed some misconceptions in the letters and the answers that were provided by the satellite phone store. I hope I can clear some of it up.

Before anyone heads offshore, they should consult their airtime provider to verify the details of their account. They will want to confirm minute balances and expiration dates

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LETTERS

or terms of their airtime package, and/or confirm that their account is set up for automatic renewal if it runs low.

In the case of Iridium, there are two kinds of plans: postpaid and prepaid. With postpaid plans, you pay a monthly fee, plus minutes. There can be many different variations on this depending on how the dealer wants to market it. So pay attention to the details.

The other type of plan is prepaid. With these you pay a one-time fee for a block of minutes that are valid for a set



The devil is in the details when it comes to sat-phone service plans.

amount of time. If you have a prepaid airtime account, you can call or send a text SMS from your Iridium phone to the number 2888, and the system will reply with information on your remaining airtime balance and term expiration date.

If your prepaid minutes run out, you will not be able to make any further calls. Some but not all carriers offer a number that you can call, even after your minutes have been used up, that will connect you to customer service and may allow you to have more minutes added to your account. However, this is not a foolproof method and can vary dependent on the provider. It's

not something that I'd want to rely on in an emergency.

Satphone owners should keep in mind that there are a number of entities between the end user and the network provider, be it Iridium or Inmarsat. For example, Iridium sells its airtime to distribution partners (DPs) that may add a layer of services and features to the package. These DPs then sell the airtime plans to the dealers, who may also add to the offering before finally selling the plan to the end user.

Trying to coordinate adding airtime or reactivations, and having that filter through the system so that the Iridium network will allow you to make a call, can take time, especially if it's not a standard new activation or just adding minutes to a regular account in good standing. Also keep in mind that the dealer is on the hook for the airtime charges. If the end user does not pay or defaults on their account, the dealer still has to pay for the airtime. Thus the dealer is going to be very concerned about adding airtime if there is any uncertainty about payment.

In addition, dealers may have access to multiple DPs to tap into for airtime. SIM cards, and thus the plans, are tied to specific DPs that cannot be mixed. The dealer cannot sell you a plan (SIM card) that was sourced from one DP and add minutes to it from another DP. So if your dealer switches DPs, they may ask you to switch out your SIM card or refuse to add minutes to your older card.

As both a sailor and a satellite solution provider, I highly recommend that end users make a test call from their sat-phone each month as a best practice. Making a test call will do the following:

- Make sure the battery is charged. It is a good idea to fully discharge the phone a few times per year to keep it in top condition.

- By making a call you are verifying that your airtime plan is still active. If your phone will not register on the network, or gives you an error message, it may indicate that your airtime plan has expired. You will need to contact an airtime provider to obtain new service. This will most likely require that a new SIM card be sent to you.

- Making a successful call verifies that you remember

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LETTERS

how to make a call. Most satellite phones are treated as international, and require you to call all numbers as if you are making international calls — no matter where you are or where you are calling.

- The test also confirms that the phone is in operable condition. Verify that you are receiving a good signal, that you can hear the voice on the other end, and that they can hear you.

Many carriers have a dedicated number for making free test calls, but I recommend calling someone you know for better feedback.

Jeff Thomassen
OCENS, Ha-Ha Sponsor
Des Moines, Washington

Jeff — Everybody knows that satphones are frequently relied upon in life-and-death situations, and that 99% of the end users can't remember the expiration date of their plan — let alone the very fine details of whatever plan their particular retailer talked them into. So we think it's incumbent upon the vendor who sells the time to alert the end user a month in advance of the expiration of their plan and/or when 90% of their usage is up. If AT&T can do it by MTS and email with their cell-phone service, why can't satellite time providers do the same? Besides, isn't it in the best interest of the vendor to do this? It gives them the opportunity to sell more time and keep from losing a customer to a competitor.

↑↓ FLARES ARE STILL RELEVANT SAFETY EQUIPMENT

In a recent *Latitude*, the editor wondered if flares are still necessary in the age of GPS. In my case, when my Morgan 45 *Painkiller* sank in the Caribbean in 2000, we were in 12- to 15-ft seas. At midday, when the Coast Guard C-130 was flying ellipses over us, we used the flares so they could spot us amongst the spume.

By the way, I had both my new and outdated flares, and all of them worked. So don't discard the old ones. But don't store them with the current ones either, as the Coast Guard doesn't approve of it.

Ron Landmann
Minden, Nevada

↑↓ "THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!"

I was surprised to see and then realize that my boat *Panache* was one of the boats on the cover of the October *Latitude*. In the forefront is *Profligate*, sitting proud, as always, and another catamaran. Farther east in Little Scorpion, way off to the right of the picture, hiding half behind the rock, is my *Panache*, Bill Lee's third and last 40-ft ULDB.

I would like to thank the skipper of *Profligate* for taking at least one year off my life just hours before your cover photo was taken. In the photo there are three boats anchored astern of *Panache*, which the skipper of *Profligate* will recall were not there at the time of the incident. The incident started when *Profligate* came into the harbor from the west and turned into Little Scorpion on a wide starboard turn under power only. As she continued to execute the turn, I could hear the engine rpm increase incrementally to what sounded like flank speed. At that point she was on a direct collision course with the transom of *Panache*. It looked as if there was no way *Profligate* could complete the turn without first mowing down my boat, my wife and myself.

My wife and I were sitting on the aft deck watching this unfold. When it seemed inevitable that we were going to be hit, we looked at each other and, with our eyes, said, "This

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LETTERS

can't be happening!" We weren't sure whether we should jump or duck.

As *Profligate* closed in for the kill at eight knots about 80 feet from our stern, getting bigger, wider and taller with every foot of approach, a scene from *Jaws* popped into my mind.



COURTESY PANACHE

'Panache' was nearly eaten alive by the gaping maw of 'Profligate'.

Specifically the scene where Robert Shaw was sliding toward the transom on his back, headed straight for the gaping mouth of the shark, which was chewing through the transom of *Orca*! It was kinda like that. My wife actually said, "I think that boat's going to eat us!"

With only a few seconds to spare, and enough water past the foils, *Profligate* successfully completed the turn, passing *Panache* to starboard, just missing a broadside collision by about four feet!

The freeboard aft on *Panache* is 32 inches. It appeared to be eight feet plus on *Profligate*. That was awesome! In passing, the skipper apologized genuinely, and stated that he was piloting on one fan, the wrong fan for that turn. Apology accepted. I don't know if he was really that talented or just lucky. I think a little of both.

Attached is a photo of *Panache* at the same spot under more sedate circumstances, probably the same day as your cover photo. Maybe if that skipper has any pull, he might extend his apology to include a cover photo of *Panache* at Little Scorpion for your next issue of *Latitude 38*.

Anyway, you guys got balls! I'm going to change my underwear now!

Martin Buxton
Panache, Santa Cruz 40
Santa Cruz

Martin — Your wife and you both thought "This can't be happening!"? What a coincidence, as we at the helm of *Profligate* were thinking the same thing. We can't remember doing anything quite that stupid with a boat, and misjudging something so much, since we T-boned an anchored boat we somehow didn't see in Richardson Bay in 1979.

Our apology was genuine then and it's genuine now. We are soooooo sorry for scaring the daylights out of you. We are, however, a tiny bit disappointed to learn that you two were scared speechless, for we'd thought you and your wife were the most cool and collected two people we'd ever seen. You exhibited no outward signs of panic.

In addition to being apologetic, we tried to pull off being nonchalant. That was the business of us, when we were just four feet away, casually looking down and complimenting you on how nice *Panache* was looking these days. Which is true.

We know how intimidating *Profligate* can be. For some reason she doesn't look as big as she really is from a distance, but when you get close, and particularly when you have to look up, yeah, she's huge. Her decks are about seven feet off the water, and the top of the house is 13 feet off the water. (If you want interior headroom and bridgedeck clearance, it's pretty much what it has to be.)

Anyway, we're lucky we got to learn our lesson the easy way — except for your fright. We'll try to be smarter in the future. As for using your photo for the cover, it's not the cor-

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LETTERS

rect shape. But we'll tell you what, we will be there again the same time next year, and if you're there, we'll be happy to get out our photo drone and do a cover shot of your boat. It's the least we can do. As for your wife, please buy her a very nice lunch and send us the bill.

↑↓ CALIFORNIA DREAMING

I'm sorry to have waited so long to write this letter, but wow, the 2014 SoCal Ta-Ta was a great time! My grandma used to say you could measure an event's success by all the different reasons people participate and are satisfied. Well, we saw folks getting way in to their rasta groove. Families pulling



The SoCal Ta-Ta offered lots of variety for the 39 entries.

closer together. Old friends taking a break from the grind and truly enjoying each other's company. People exploring the rugged beauty of the Channel Islands. Sailors testing their anchoring skills, because on this trip it really mattered. New or wannabe offshore

sailors getting great tips from veteran cruisers. Wonderful 75 degree ocean temps for swimming.

And the sailing! Holy cow, the Grand PooBob couldn't have ordered up better 15-knot beam-reaching conditions. Hour after hour of glorious asymmetrical spinnaker runs in warm weather — it just doesn't get any better. And kudos to the *Latitude* team for plotting such a clever route between the islands and the coast.

Our crew would also like to pass along a huge thank you to the staffs who welcomed the fleet to the various ports of call. Opening the event at the Santa Barbara YC was a fantastic way to get acclimated to the beach life, and we found their bartenders to be very skilled. We were blown away with the hospitality afforded everyone by the Channel Islands Harbor Marina and Vintage Marina and their staff at Channel Islands Harbor. Hosting 135+ people on the docks, with live music and food — not to mention free berthing for 40 boats! Plus the evening bonus of Frank Laza giving guided tours of the harbor on his Duffy Electric Boat. Everyone at Channel Islands was so gracious and helpful. And, as always, the Two Harbors staff out on Catalina gets it all done with their professional, calm island spirit.

It sure felt great to take a California sailing stay-cation, spending some dough with these fine Southern Cal small businesses. I sure hope they are looking forward to welcoming the Ta-Ta as a tradition. Someday before too long I'll be able to realize my dream of doing the Ha-Ha and long-range cruising but, for now, the SoCal Ta-Ta has been a pretty damn good way to get an ocean fix close to home. Thank you so much for making it possible.

Greg Carter, Crew
Origami, F-27 trimaran
San Francisco Bay

Greg — On behalf of everyone, thanks for all the kind words. The only downside is that it would be foolish to expect to ever have such ideal weather again. It was unreal.

By the way, we don't want to forget the great folks at the Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol, who were nice enough to let members of the Ha-Ha fleet reserve slips this year.

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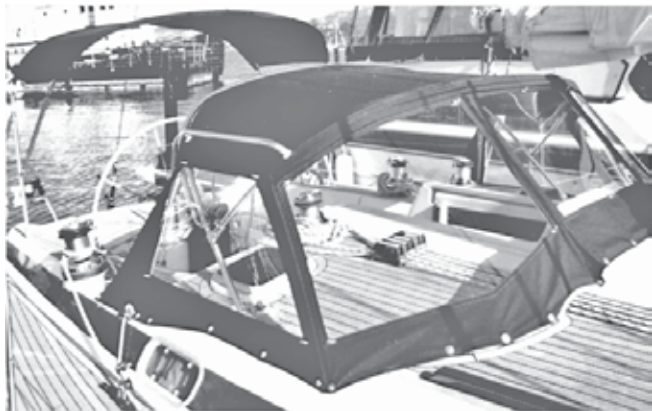
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LETTERS

Will there be another Ta-Ta in 2015? The PooBob thinks the chances are excellent.

↑↓ GOING OVER TO THE REALLY DARK SIDE?

Somebody told me that they read on Facebook that the Wanderer went to Europe and bought a boat without a mast. What's the story? Isn't that sacrilege?

David Murray
San Rafael

David — After a whirlwind trip to London, the Netherlands and France in late August, the Wanderer indeed bought a 30-year-old 32-ft Dutch steel cabin cruiser.

Sacrilege? Over the 37-year history of Latitude, we've owned a number of powerboats, including two Bertram 25s and a Bertram 28, for use as photoboats. You know how many times we took them out for pleasure as opposed to work? Not once. It never even occurred to us. With no disrespect to contented owners of motor vessels, we can't fathom the concept of Zen powerboating.

It's true that you can take sailboats — with the mast(s) down — on six thousand miles of canals and rivers in Europe. Indeed, a number of Latitude readers have done so, including Horst Wolff and Julia Shovein of the Paradise-based Island Packet 35 Pacific Star. After the 2007 Ha-Ha, they did a six-year circumnavigation, which included dropping the mast at Port St. Louis in the Med, then motoring 1,000 miles through the French canals. They passed through as many as 28 locks in one day before finally arriving at Arsenal Marina in the center of Paris, where they spent 10 relaxing days "playing tourist." They later took the Seine down to the Atlantic.

Since one of our goals is to write a humorous travel book a year, we were interested in finding the most simple, ready-to-go boat possible. We think we found what we wanted in the boat we now call Dalat — after the name of a city in the Central

Highlands of Vietnam we've never been to. While Dalat has double cabins in opposite ends of the boat, she's small for her length, has only one head, and doesn't have a shower or oven. That's fine by us. We think. She's been kept in immaculate condition by



LATITUDE / RICHARD

The Wanderer will soon be author-in-residence aboard 'Marjani', soon to be 'Dalat', to discover his roots.

the same owners since new in 1974.

At a price of \$24,000, Dalat had the virtue of being the 'biggest bang for the buck' of all the boats we saw. And we caromed all over the Netherlands looking at boats, including attending a fortuitously timed boat show at Hoorn. When it comes to canal-suitable boats in the Netherlands and France, they are located at far-flung places that are often time-consuming and expensive to get to. You could spend several months and a small fortune on transportation to see just a fraction of them.

We did see two other boats we liked quite a bit. One was a similarly aged 44-footer that we nicknamed Majestic Dalat. She was more spacious and had two heads, but her forward cabin wasn't as big as Dalat's and she wasn't as well-maintained. Plus, she cost almost three times as much. The canal boat we liked best was built in Germany seven years ago and, despite being only three feet longer than Dalat, had about four times the usable space. The \$360,000 price tag was her major shortcoming.

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LETTERS

We think we stole Dalat, for part of her being the 'biggest bang for the buck' was that she was among the very best maintained boats we saw. Just as in the States, many boatowners in the Netherlands think they can bring their boat in from a season of use, leave her a mess, hand the keys to a broker, and expect her vessel to quickly sell at full price.

As we intend to use Dalat only in the months of May and June, we're looking at two options. The first is taking on two partners, one for the months of July and August, the other for September and October. Many friends have expressed a strong interest in this, so we could bring the buy-in cost of our having a boat in Europe for two months a year to less than \$10,000. Given the cost of accommodations and restaurant meals in Europe, we think the boat could 'pay for herself' in the first year or two. The other option is to charter her for long



LATITUDE / RICHARD

Yes, you can take your boat, even your sailboat, right through the heart of Paris on the Canal St. Martin. It even has a mile long tunnel.

periods of time — such as three weeks minimum — to extremely experienced and responsible boatowners. Dalat is now on the hard at Vollandam, Netherlands until May, so we have the winter to figure out what we want to do.

Naturally, there are annual expenses, but they are reportedly much less for canal boats than boats sailed in salt water. We're told to expect 5% of the purchase price for annual winter storage, mooring, upkeep and such. Mooring fees can be a minor issue, as outside of big cities you can frequently just tie up to the side of the river or canal. In fact, those moored in downtown Dijon told us they paid nothing.

Running around Europe looking at boats without masts was a blast, the perfect European complement to spending so much time in California, Mexico and the Caribbean. Alex Haley went to Africa to better understand his roots. We're going to Europe to better appreciate our roots, as it turns out a great-grandfather was apparently the captain of a merchant ship that called on ports around the world.

As much fun as running around England, the Netherlands and France was, we couldn't wait to get back aboard Profligate for what turned out to be a fabulous SoCal Ta-Ta. And as we write this in the middle of October, we can't wait for the start of the Ha-Ha, followed by lots of tropical sailing in Mexico and the Caribbean. So no, we're not turning our back on sailing by any stretch of the imagination.

There was actually a funny sailing angle to our search for a canal boat. Our hunt led us to a small town called Zwartsluis, about 40 miles from Amsterdam. Knowing that the Netherlands is one of the more densely populated countries in the world, we figured we'd be able to get there easily via public transportation, and that this yachting center would be quite populated. After two train rides followed by a bus ride, we found ourselves in what looked to be a very green version of the most remote parts of the Sacramento River Delta. It was Twilight Zone-ish compared to what we expected. We had to walk a little more than a mile from the bus stop to get to the sales dock marina. On the way, shortly after walking past a marina — with a bowling alley! — we came to an intersection with signs to different businesses. One of the signs read 'Vitters Boat Works'.

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probably second to only Royal Huisman. We'd once done an 'around St. Barth' New Year's Race aboard Timoneer, a spectacular 155-ft ketch that had been built by Vitters. We were flabbergasted that she could have been built in such a remote and lightly-populated agricultural area of the Netherlands.

There's more. When Sophie-Marie, the broker we dealt with, was driving us down another two-lane road to a train station a couple of days later, we passed another sign, this one pointing

LATITUDE / RICHARD



The 292-ft 'Athena' is one of the world's great megayachts that was built in the farmland of the Netherlands.

to Royal Huisman Yachts. It was hard to believe that boats such as Jim Clark's 156-ft Hyperion, then the largest sloop in the world, his 295-ft schooner Athena, the second

largest private sailboat in the world, and his 135-ft J Class yacht Hanuman had been built surrounded by contented cows.

It's going to be interesting to see how this inland nautical adventure plays out, because we know nothing — nothing! — about canal boats in Europe. We're not worried about the locks or the handing of the boat or anything like that; the thing we've been warned about and fear are stifling French and European Union rules and regulations.

↑↓ ETYMOLOGY FOR SAILORS

Just a tidbit of information that you are probably already aware of. You published a photo of the lovely harbor of Hoorn in the Netherlands in a recent *Lectronic*. Cape Horn is named after Hoorn.

Randolf Klein
Mountain View

Randolf — Thanks for bringing it up, but we did know that. We also know that Harlem on Manhattan came from Haarlem, a Dutch city and province in the Netherlands, and that New Zealand came from the Zeeland, another province in the Netherlands. Those Dutch — why don't they call them Netherlands? — got around.

LATITUDE / RICHARD



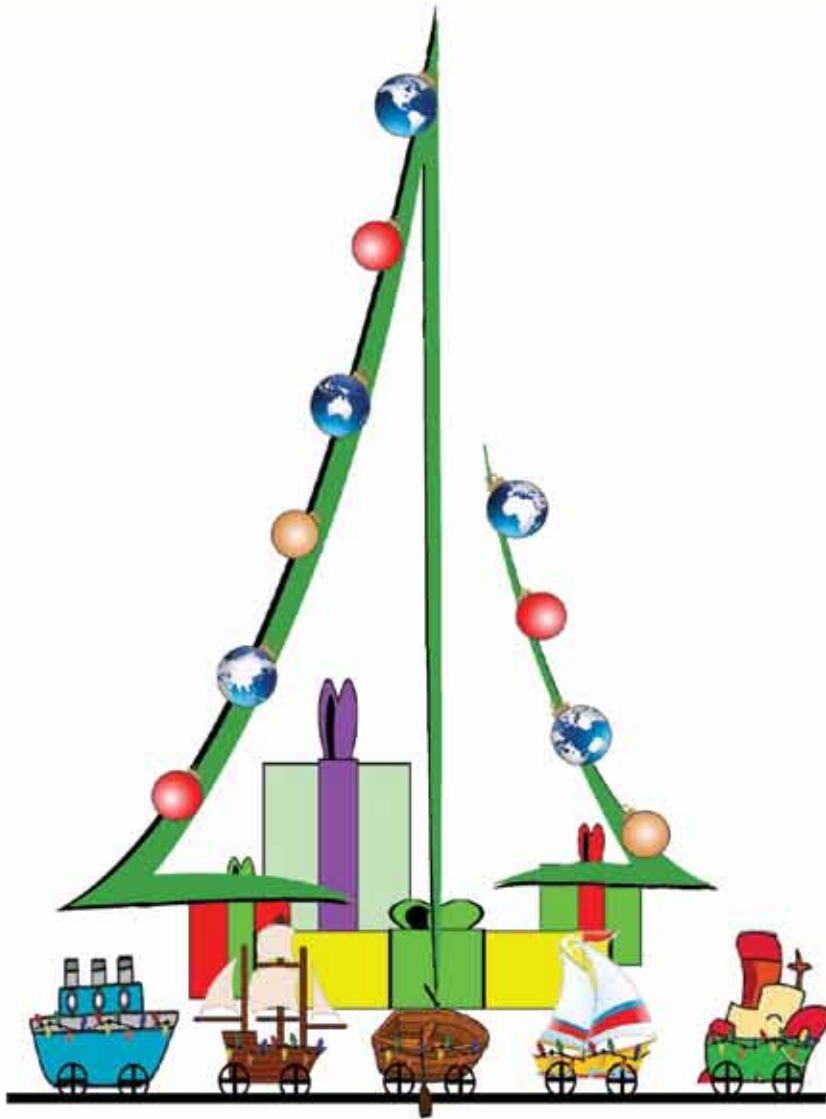
Cape Horn was named after Hoorn, a gorgeous harbor in the Netherlands. But here's a couple of new things we learned. Amsterdam is named after the dam on the Amstel River, the latter also the name of a Dutch beer that was aggressively promoted in the States a few decades ago. And that Borkum Reef is not just the name of a popular brand of pipe tobacco, but the name of the westernmost Frisian Island, on the border with the Netherlands, one that is popular with German jet-setters.

We're not sure that learning stuff like that does anything for most people, but it gives the Wanderer a lot of pleasure. Like fitting a couple of more tiny parts in a gigantic jigsaw puzzle.

↑↓ PAPERWORK FOR MEXICO

We just came down the coast from Vancouver aboard the 76-ft motoryacht we are running. While in San Diego, I sent the following to ship's agent Victor Berrera in Cabo San Lucas: 1) our crew List; 2) copies of passports of all the crew; 3) our

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LETTERS

Mexican liability insurance; and 4) the boat's documentation. I also got the boat's TIP (Temporary Import Permit) online.

We entered Mexico at Cabo San Lucas. I fueled at the marina, where Victor collected the five crew passports. He came back four hours later with all the passports stamped, tourist visas for everyone, and the approved Crew List. For the 76-ft, 114-ton vessel, it came to \$400 USD

The only problem we had was the scooter on the aft deck, which I had mistakenly listed at Step 3 of the TIP application form. Alas, that meant it can only be in the country for 180 days. When the boss arrives in a couple of days, he can ride on his scooter and play at the islands. I will deal with fixing the paperwork here. As they say in Mexico, "It's much easier to beg forgiveness than ask for permission." As for fishing licenses, I was told you just have to buy one for a year and it's 690 pesos or about \$45.

The weather down here in tropical Mexico is great, the beer is cold, and life is good. I wish we'd been sailing our own little cat down the Baja coast, as there was great wind and nice seas all the way down. But we have to do something to pay the bills, and having run several 110-ft yachts for the last six years, while still being able to cruise our cat a bit, hasn't been a bad ride.

Rob & Linda Jones
Cat 'n About, Gemini 3000
Whidbey Island, WA

Rob and Linda — 'It's better to ask forgiveness than permission' was always the motto in Mexico, which is one of the reasons that life was so sweet and easy down there. That changed, of course, in November of last year when a branch of the Mexican IRS went bonkers and impounded 338 foreign owned boats. What made it so terrible was that most of these boatowners didn't need to ask forgiveness for anything, as they'd done nothing wrong. Mexico's AGACE had simply decided to assume that pretty much everyone was guilty until they decided otherwise. It was a game-changer for Mexico, because now many boatowners are freaked that any minor error in any paperwork will be viewed as a near capital crime. We don't believe that will be the case, but only time will tell.

It's our understanding that the error you made by listing the scooter on Step 3 of the TIP application form means you'll have to pay to get a whole new TIP. But when you do, at least you'll get one of the 'new' ones that have only been available at Banjercito branches in Mexico (Ensenada, La Paz, Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta) but not online. It's not having to pay another \$55 bucks for a new 'new' TIP that's really going to piss off us and a whole lot of other boatowners, but rather not being told about the "parallel TIP" in the first place, and having to go through the hassle of canceling the old one and getting a new one.

You paid \$45 for a fishing license? If that's the case, you only got one fishing license, not one for each member of the crew. You probably didn't hear that Mexico has changed its tune, so now everybody on a boat with any fishing gear needs have a fishing license. And because you got the license from the Mexican government as opposed to H&M Landing in San Diego, it's only good until the end of the calendar year, not for 365 days. This information should have been freely available to everyone in advance of going to Mexico, don't you think?

One of Mexico's biggest problems is that they've always assumed that foreign boatowners are clairvoyant, and thus can 'see' what the rules and regulations are and what paperwork Mexico wants done. They finally made an effort to correct this enormous oversight in October by publishing the eight-page



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LETTERS

Visiting Mexico by Private Boat brochure. When these were handed out to invited guests by officials from Immigration, SAT (their IRS) and their Fishing Department in Huntington Beach, there were two unfortunate provisos: 1) The brochure had been produced by Tourism and thus wasn't an "official document" of the Mexican government; and 2) some of the information was incorrect. It's unclear what was incorrect, but we know the information about fishing licenses was wrong. A third problem was that despite wanting to get the maximum distribution possible, they hadn't even put it online. How hard would that have been?

Nevertheless, this was a major step in the right direction. In regulatory terms, Mexico needs to do two things to make it a more attractive destination. First, they need to produce an official guide detailing what's required when bringing a



LATITUDE / RICHARD

Mexico's unofficial guide to cruising in their waters.

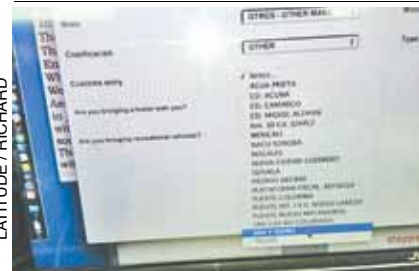
foreign-owned boat to Mexico, but with the correct information, and with this information also online. Boatowners could then bring a hard copy with them to show to local officials who, unfortunately, often don't know the law. The second step is that Mexico needs to make their online application forms understandable to foreigners, particularly Americans. Before they go live with the forms, they should have them carefully reviewed by a foreigner who understands what they want

and what Americans can understand. We nominate ourselves for this position, as we have in the past.

We actually think that things are going to be really great in Mexico this winter, which is why it's such a shame they couldn't have gotten their act together before the season started.

↑↓ WILL A SPACE CAUSE A PROBLEM DOWN THE ROAD?

Whenever I try to enter 'Vandy', which is my first name and isn't 'short' for anything, on the Banjercito form to apply for a Temporary Import Permit (TIP) for our boat to Mexico, it kicks me off immediately. My husband, Eric, had no problem getting the whole thing to work for him, or when trying to get



LATITUDE / RICHARD

The online application for a TIP leaves a lot to be desired.

it to work with first names other than mine.

We can get my name to work if we introduce a space in my name, as in 'Van dy', but that's not how it appears on any of my official documents, which makes me think this will cause a problem

down the line?

Ideas?

Vandy Shrader
Scoots, Able Apogee 50
San Francisco

Vandy — Trying to complete the Mexican paperwork online can be extremely frustrating — if not impossible — because the programs are so unsophisticated. In many cases you either

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LETTERS

have to enter something incorrectly or not be able to fill out the application. In your case, we'd put the space in, then take up the matter with Banjercito when you get to Mexico. No matter what an official tells you at a Banjercito office, another official at another office, or the Mexican Navy, is very likely to tell you the opposite. That's the nature of rules and paperwork in Mexico. We don't believe it will be a big problem, but only time can tell. Keep smiling and good luck.

↑↓ **YET ANOTHER PROGRAM PROBLEM**

I just filled out the online application for a nautical visa per suggestions by *Latitude* to do the Ha-Ha. One *Latitude* instruction may be misleading to those of us who have children aboard.

The instruction to fill out each application individually only works for adults. An error message comes back in the system saying that the child "must be of age." When you input their birthdates, you cannot complete the transaction.

I feel I should have just filled out the form as captain and paid for four visas as indicated in the application.

Unfortunately, I'd already paid for three of the four family members when I ran into this problem. So I took a screen shot and attached my crew list and sent it in. I hope we can just fix it in Cabo as we were attempting to comply.

I share this not to find fault with repeated instructions to fill out this form individually, but to recalibrate these instructions for those of us who have children aboard. Others are running into the same issue.

Ed Starinchak
Lorien, Panda 38
Bellingham, WA

Ed — This is another case of the Mexican programs simply being unable to handle anything slightly out of the ordinary. The reason we said people should fill out the forms individually is that the Immigration honcho at the meeting in Huntington Beach said that if everybody's name was on the same form, they all had to leave Mexico together. Actually,



LATITUDE/RICHARD

Mexican officials in Huntington Beach trying to explain problems with paperwork.

he didn't just say that, he quite forcefully insisted that it was the case. So while most families may travel together, it's also possible that one family member might go home briefly while the others stayed in Mexico — which would be a big problem if all your names were on the same form. But we know, you the applicant have to try to decide which of the problems you're going to have will be the least trouble in the long run. We think you chose the smart route. As long as you show good intent, we're told you'll be good.

↑↓ **WHEN IN ROME . . . WHEN IN MEXICO . . .**

*Amigo, when in Mexico you must be a Mexican. Too many cruisers act like they are in an RV or something. That is no bueno. Forget the Temporary Import Permit (TIP) and all that jazz. Mexican drivers put a 200-peso note on their dashboard when driving. If the police beep and stop you, they tell you that you are in big trouble. They keep talking, then they reach in the window and take the 200-peso note and say, *adios y buenos dias*.*

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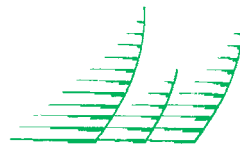
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LETTERS

I sailed in Mexican waters and lived in the colonies many years. Believe it, that's how it works. Mexico is not *los Estados Unidos*. Heck, they just want to get by. Americans are so stiff and rich. The truth is that 500 pesos and a smile will get you out of anything short of murder.

Tom Williams
Arctic Ark, 64-ft schooner
Guaymas, Sonora

Tom — It's not 1980 anymore, and while that stuff may still work on some roads in Mexico and in more rural areas, things are changing. Case in point: If you didn't have a TIP on your boat when AGACE inspected them last November, your boat was impounded for months. (Your boat could also be impounded even if it did have a TIP, but that's another story, hopefully one that has ended.) During the meeting with Mexican officials in Huntington Beach in October, Rodolfo Figueroa Pacheco, head of Immigration for Baja, reported that the Mexican navy had stopped nearly 300 boats so far, and something like 65 of them had been turned back because they didn't have TIPs, fishing licenses, passports or whatever.

Why does it make sense to 'go by the book'? The \$55 you pay for a 10-Year Temporary Import Permit is — don't tell anyone — ridiculously cheap compared to anywhere else, and it's our understanding that after 10 years it can be renewed for free for another 10 years. By comparison, you pay more for the first week you visit any island in the Eastern Caribbean. Second, if Mexico could just make it clear what paperwork they want, and make their application forms understandable, the process would be all but painless. We have high hopes for next year.

That said, we won't deny that it's always good to have a 200-peso note on the dashboard — 500 pesos in the month before Christmas — when driving in Mexico.

↑↓ THE PROS OF GETTING A RECEIPT

Perhaps I can clear up the situation mentioned in the October 17 *Lectronic* with regard to the possibility that the Immigration desk at Ensenada was trying to entice a bribe. Last year, we checked into Mexico at Ensenada using Fito's service at Marina Coral. All of us received our visa, but when I asked Fito for a receipt, he wasn't able to produce them before we left.

We dropped one of the crew off at Cabo, and that person had no trouble flying home. Two more crew flew out of Puerto Vallarta, but missed their flights because the airline told them they couldn't leave the country with the visa they had because the Immigration stamp had a small image of a boat on it, not an airplane. Take a look, I never noticed it before, but it is there. Apparently the boat image indicated one entered the country by boat, while the plane indicates entering by plane.

Anyway, these two went over to the Immigration window at the airport and waited in line. The agent said that Ensenada doesn't charge for the visa when they issue it, and that they would need a bank receipt to prove the visa was paid for. As they didn't have a receipt, they had to pay \$35 each to get the visa restamped with one that included an airplane symbol.

As I mentioned, they missed their plane due to the time this took, and the rebooking fee added salt to the wound.

I later contacted Fito and told him what had happened. After a number of emails back and forth, he said he still couldn't send me any copies of the receipt, but that Ensenada Immigration had called Puerto Vallarta Immigration and told them that all visas they issue are paid for and don't need a

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receipt. A week later we had another crew person fly out from Puerto Vallarta and the same thing happened. Apparently Puerto Vallarta didn't get the message.

We spent a couple of months in Barra de Navidad, during which time we heard of the same problem with folks flying out of the airport there. Two months later, I experienced the same thing when trying to fly out of Puerto Vallarta. The airline gate agent told us our visa was improper and sent us over to the Immigration window. This time I patiently explained the entire story to the woman in Manzanillo Immigration. She said she believed me, and gave me the second stamp without charge.

Tom Collins
Misty Sea, Bertram 46
Puerto Vallarta

Readers — In the Lectronic version, the officers at immigration in Ensenada kept demanding an exit zarpe from the United States, something we don't know of anyone ever getting — or needing — for Mexico. After a long back and forth, the tourist visas were stamped or given the wrong stamp, perhaps as payback for failing to pay a bribe for not having a zarpe.

For what it's worth, up until a few years ago, the immigration counter at Ensenada was notorious for soliciting bribes. Numerous boatowners and skippers vowed never to clear into and out of Ensenada again. But that immigration officer died several years ago.

Nonetheless, the fact that the same visa is rejected by some immigration officials at the airport but not others at other airports, is pure Mexico. If you can't get what you need from one official, try another, you'll often get an entirely different result.

↑↓ THE 2014 PACIFIC CUP WAS EPIC

After reviewing all the comments from the 2014 Pacific Cup competitors and volunteers, we're already gearing up for the 2016 race, and wanted to share a consolidated Top Ten list from this year.

10) It takes a village! The Pacific Cup Village at the Richmond YC, created to host our out-of-town competitors, promoted socializing before the race and led to greater camaraderie out on the ocean as well as in Hawaii.

To quote one competitor, "The PCV was excellent! We had access to great resources through Richmond YC, including a huge Sub-Zero fridge where we could store our race meals. And the seminars and parties were fantastic."

9) The app. It's not surprising that a Bay Area yacht club would be the first to come up with a smartphone app to facilitate start/end logistics and race information. Developed by Greg Gorsiski, a Richmond YC member, the app is available for both Android and Apple devices and packs an amazing amount of information that is particularly useful for the out-of-town competitors. We're told that TransPac and US Sailing are developing apps for other regattas.

8) The Aussies were great fun, and they took the Cup! Robert Date and his crew from Sandringham YC in Melbourne, Australia made the 2014 Pacific Cup the last event on their



LESIE RICHTER

'Invisible Hand' got the Fastest Passage trophy for finishing first in the Pacific Cup.

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LETTERS

'round-the-world racing season. They saved the best for last, as their Reichel Pugh TP52 *Scarlet Runner* won the *Latitude 38* Division, the *Latitude 38* Performance Trophy, and the Pacific Cup. Rob must have thought no one at home would believe him, so he made extraordinary arrangements to take the Pacific Cup home with him. We're hoping he'll be back to join the fun in 2016, and bring some of the other great Aussie boats with him.

7) You don't really need to race! When the Holo Holo Cruising Division was added this year, not everyone in the Pacific



STUART HOOPER

Entries in the Pacific Cup literally sail into the sunset.

Cup world thought the Cruising Division was a great idea. "How will we penalize them if they're not racing?" lamented one veteran. "The Cruising Division was a great way to attract people such as us who have wanted to do a Hawaii race, but can't get up to race mode without an 'entry level' opportunity. The level of organization was impressive on all fronts," opined one of the cruisers. Judging from the smiles and commitments to return in 2016, this was a successful ad-

dition.

6) Look Ma, no rudder! Two boats proved that you don't really need a rudder to make it to Hawaii — but you will need adult supervision and assistance, which means the race is over. Would they do it again? Absolutely! Will we look hard at their rudders? Absolutely!

5) Crew? We don't need no stinking crew! More than a quarter of the fleet sailed the race doublehanded, with the overall PHRF trophy going to the smallest boat in the fleet, Carl Robrock's Moore 24 *Snafu*. We hear rumors of more Moores looking to race in 2016. We also hear that doublehanded is good for relationships — one couple is now engaged, a father-daughter team fulfilled a longtime dream, and the others are ready to do it again in 2016.

4) Kaneohe Bay YC mai tais! And delivered to the boats as they reach the dock, day or night! Where else in the world can you get mai tais in a beer pitcher?

3) It's a strip tease! Start out in foulies and fleece in San Francisco, start peeling off layers, and finish in shorts and a T-shirt in Hawaii. What's not to like about this?

2) Downwind: The pure joy and speed of sailing in the bluest water and nicest waves you've ever seen.

1) It is the FUN race to Hawaii — but it's serious racing, too! Even the veterans liked the new Pacific Cup: "We did this in '06 and it was hard to imagine it would be better but it was. Amazing effort and evolution, thank you!"

Steve Chamberlin
Commodore
Pacific Cup Yacht Club

LOOKING FOR MORE NORCAL ENTRIES

I'm currently advertising my 52-ft Malcolm Tennant catamaran *Afterburner* in *Latitude*. As you probably know, she's the fastest catamaran on the West Coast and has had 56 line-honor finishes and five second-to-finishes in 72 races. And now that I have purchased a performance cruising catamaran in South Africa, I find the magazine even more interesting to read. I plan to ship the cat from South Africa to the British Virgins, then sail her from Tortola to Ventura next year. It will be an entirely new adventure for me.

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LETTERS

1400 performance cruiser. She was being built by a 'two-boat-a-year' custom builder in South Africa who is also the agent for Schionning designs. The builder was making the boat for himself, but then his life changed and he didn't need a boat.



COURTESY WAHOO

Bill Gibbs bought 'Wahoo' as-is and hopes she'll be ready to sail by spring.

I bought the cat 'as is' and contracted with him to outfit and rig her. With luck, she'll be done this year and then shipped to Tortola. It's going to take most of next year to bring her home. From January to April, we'll be heading south in the Caribbean, flying home periodically for work and family. We hope to be in Panama in May, do the Baja Bash in July, and be home in August. At least those are my thoughts.

But the real reason I'm writing is to ask if you might have any suggestions to help promote more Northern California participation in the Newport-to-Ensenada Race. I'm been on the board of directors of the race for a couple of years now, and when I was tasked with trying to figure out how to promote it, my thoughts fell to *Latitude 38*. What do you think?

Bill Gibbs

Wahoo, G-Force 1400
Afterburner, Tennant Blade Runner
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Bill — The Ensenada Race is a difficult sell in Northern California because of the dates. Next year's race is April 24-26, which is right when all the racing has revved up in Northern California. At that point in the season, it would be hard to get owners to take their boats south, do the race, and then maybe need as much as two weeks to get their boats home in the often-breezy spring conditions off the Central California coast. Asking an owner to give up a run at a season championship for one distant race is a lot to ask. Even though the Big Boat Series is a long weekend, the St. Francis YC has a similar problem getting Southern California boats to come north.

About the only thing we can think of is maybe several of the Southern California yacht clubs could throw down some kind of multiple-boat challenge against some of the Northern California yacht clubs in a North vs. South challenge. Maybe it could be



COURTESY AFTERBURNER

'Afterburner' is for sale.

a group of three to five boats racing against each other, boats that weren't otherwise going for season championships. Another thought would be to aggressively go after the trailerable boats, of which there are many.

Good luck on selling Afterburner. She truly is a screamer, and at your asking price of \$175,000, it's really a huge speed-bang for the buck.

And congratulations on your new carbon cat. If we may be so bold — and we frequently are — we'd like to offer some



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LETTERS

suggestions on the delivery and an itinerary. If you were able to get time away from work, we'd highly recommend that you sail your cat from South Africa to the Caribbean. After the first couple of hundred miles, which are potentially quite nasty, the 6,000-mile sail from South Africa to the Caribbean is probably the longest sweet downwind sail in the world. And you've got the current with you. That's the reason that all the hundreds of Leopard sailing cats have been sailed on their bottoms to the Caribbean rather than shipped. And if that means you don't get to the Caribbean until mid-February, no big deal, as that's when the best weather of the year starts.

Knowing your proclivity for competition, we'd encourage you to then spend January through May between the British Virgins and Antigua, as there is lots of every kind of great racing you can imagine, from super-casual to super-serious, and in the most ideal conditions that you can imagine. In some cases, particularly the Bucket, it's just great to watch the boats from your own boat or get a ride on some of the great yachts of the world. Mind you, this great racing takes place just minutes from some of the finest anchorages in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean season ends abruptly on May 1, at which point you should immediately head for the Canal via the 'can't miss' stops of Cartagena and the San Blas Islands. Three days at the former and a week at the later are the minimum. Assuming you take a week to get through the Canal and maybe change crew, that should have you headed north to California from Panama before the end of May. Blessed by good weather, a long waterline and generous fuel capacity, and stopping only twice, Doña de Mallorca once drove Profligate from Panama to San Francisco in just 19 days at that time of year. We suggest you take a full month — it's still moving right along — to get to Puerto Vallarta. Come early July, your new boat and Profligate can buddyboat the Bash together.

We know that few if any builders have ever completed a boat on time, but in your case, it's important. Because if you don't get your new boat to the Caribbean by around the middle of March, at the latest, you'll have missed almost all of the season there. You don't want to do that. And, if for some reason, you don't get through the Canal by July 1, you'll be headed up through Central America when the lightning really gets cracking and the rain starts coming down in buckets, and by the time you get to mainland Mexico, it will be hot, humid and well into hurricane season. The point is, if completing the boat starts running too late, a good argument can be made for waiting a year before bringing her to the Caribbean and California.

↑↓ TELL EVERYBODY TO GET REAL ABOUT HURRICANES

In the October 3 'Lectronic I read that some Ha-Ha entrants were worried about hurricanes in late October and wondered if the event should be postponed. Huh?

The Ha-Ha was born because all the boats departing San Diego on November 1, the official end of hurricane season, needed someone to organize the beach parties and fuel, not to take responsibility for the weather. The only way to get a boat to Mexico without any risk or discomfort is to buy her there!

I think the Ha-Ha should add a new contest, the 'Closest I Ever Came to a Hurricane' story, and maybe a pirate story.

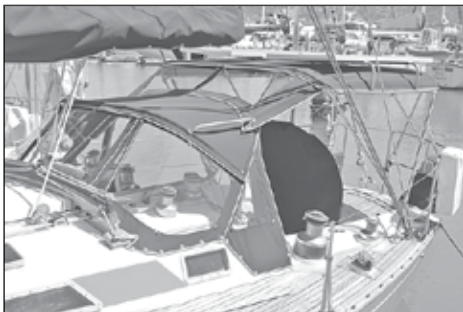
Whenever anyone asks me if we worried about hurricanes or pirates on our trip to Mexico, I tell them the scariest part was when the fishermen in Coos Bay started shooting at each other!

My boat *Nomad* rode out Odile just fine in Marina Palmira, La Paz. Keep the info flowing, and tell everybody to just get

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LETTERS

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Damon Cruz
Nomad, Horstman 45 tri
Anchorage, AK

Damon — 'Lectronic did not report that some Ha-Ha entrants were "worried" about hurricanes, but that a few had expressed "concern." There's a significant difference. We also reported that the Grand Poobah, who has sailed the Ha-Ha course 25 times in the last 30 years, was also "concerned." Since we are the Grand Poobah, let us explain.

First of all, you're 30 days off on what you think is the official end of the hurricane season in Mexico, as it's November 30, not November 1. There is, however, a reason boat insurance companies don't have a problem with Ha-Ha and other boats leaving for Cabo in late October, which is that there is a lot of north-south in the Eastern Pacific hurricane zone. With the end of summer and the onset of fall, the more northern waters generally cool to below the temperatures that can sustain tropical storms and hurricanes. There have been a few November hurricanes along the southern coast of mainland Mexico, and even one in December. They were minor and short-lived.

While every skipper is solely responsible for starting and continuing any leg of the Ha-Ha, as the figurehead of an event that sees 500+ mariners heading to Cabo San Lucas, we take comfort in the fact that no tropical storm or hurricane has ever



SHELLY WARD

crossed the Ha-Ha route during the Ha-Ha dates. That said, the water has been very warm off Mexico this year, and we think we'd be negligent to assume that there could never be a tropical storm or hurricane on the Ha-Ha path during the Ha-Ha dates. Based

Hurricanes should not be taken lightly. on history, it's extremely unlikely, but there is also a first time for everything. You may have heard that 10 years ago Brazil was hit with its first ever hurricane.

With so many lives potentially at stake, heck yes, we're concerned, which is why we have been monitoring the water temp and other tropical storm factors since the beginning of October. But even in years when the waters were cooler, we've still been concerned. That's why at the end of our daily Ha-Ha weather conversation with Commander's Weather, we ask about the tropical zone. We don't just ask if there are any tropical storms, we want to know if the conditions are conducive to the possibility of a tropical storm's even forming. Ignorance may be bliss, but when it comes to the Ha-Ha fleet, we're more concerned with safety than bliss.

Frankly, we're rather surprised by what comes across as your somewhat cavalier attitude toward the effect tropical events can have on sailors. After all, it's only been weeks since Odile killed three of your fellow cruisers just hundreds of yards from where you keep your boat.

Not to pile on, but your theory about why the Ha-Ha started is all wrong.

↑↓ RIMAS IS LIKE A DAFT UNCLE

I'm sorry, but I've got to call B.S. on the Rimas Meleshyus and his much-publicized plan to sail around the world. Am I the only one who thinks he's dangerously delusional?

Let's review the facts:

1) Few if any experienced sailors think a San Juan 24 is

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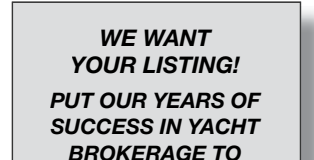
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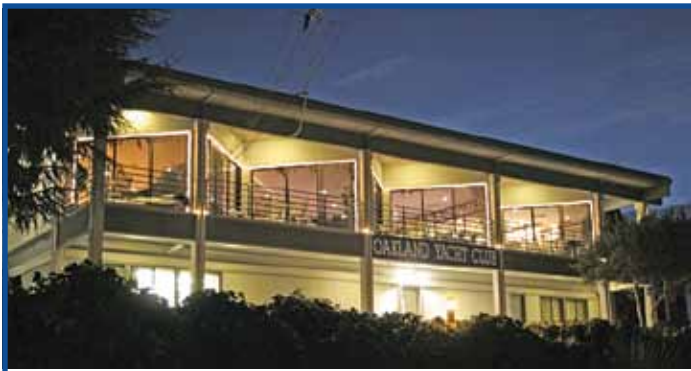
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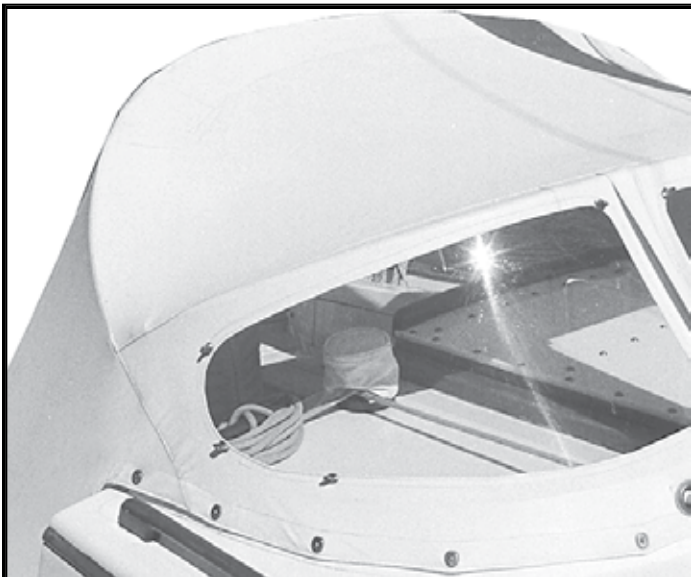
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suitable for sailing around the world, let alone via Cape Horn.

2) Rimas lost his first San Juan 24 in Alaska after sailing her only briefly.

3) During his first attempt to sail around the world, nonstop, I believe, the rigging failed on one side of his boat near Cabo San Lucas. He had no choice but to sail on the other jibe to Hawaii.

4) When Rimas sailed to San Francisco from Hawaii earlier this year, it took him forever, something like 50 days. That's ridiculous. And during the passage, he reported he lost his liferaft and thus was "in real danger." That triggered a Coast Guard rescue response, which was soon aborted when it was learned that Rimas wasn't in immediate danger after all.

5) After months of getting a refit on his boat in Sausalito, he was towed several miles past Mile Rock to start around the world again. Apparently he couldn't even reach off down the coast, despite such a big head start, and had to return to the Bay. He later started a second time.

6) A couple of weeks later, Rimas reported he was in danger of getting caught up in a couple of hurricanes.

7) His mainsail tore and is apparently not repairable.

8) He is going so slowly that he's on a pace to take 40 days to reach Hawaii [as of early September] — if that's even where he is going.

9) Most recently, he said he's going to have to ask some ships for food because he's run out.

As if that weren't all, Rimas is delusional about his place in history. Several times he wrote posts claiming that what he was doing was the greatest nautical adventure since the *Kon-Tiki*. Right. And more recently he claimed he was going to be the first to sail a lake boat around the world. Did he read about Mike Riley and his *Columbia 24* in the September *Changes*? And didn't Serge Testa, formerly of Berkeley, sail his 12-footer around the world?

I love big dreamers and was originally a supporter of Rimas. But now I think he will have to be rescued at some point — if he isn't killed first.

Furthermore, compare what Rimas has done to what Webb Chiles has accomplished at the same time on another 24-footer, the Moore 24 *Gannet*. Having already circumnavigated five times in boats as small as 18 feet, and actually knowing how to sail, the September *Latitude* reported that Webb had made it from San Diego to Hilo in 17 days — about the same time it would take Rimas to sail from San Francisco to Santa Cruz. And Chiles did it without crowing about it.

Rimas seems to me like a lovable but daft uncle who has no idea of what he's doing. I worry about him and don't find what he's doing to be a credit to sailing or adventuring.

Name Withheld By Request
Orange County

N.W.B.R. — We worry about Rimas, too. As of the middle of October, he was nowhere near land, and seemed to have no idea where he was going. He's reported via his DeLorme InReach tracker that he's running out of food and drifting at about 1.5 knots near the equator, and that he hopes a freighter will come close enough to drop him some supplies.

↑↓ SAILING BACK TO CUBA

Twenty years ago I had the unique opportunity to visit Cuba to produce a documentary about the underground art scene. This was shortly after the Soviet Union had discontinued aid to the small Caribbean country. Things were bleak and quite depressing, with shortages of everything. Fidel Castro called it "the Special Period."

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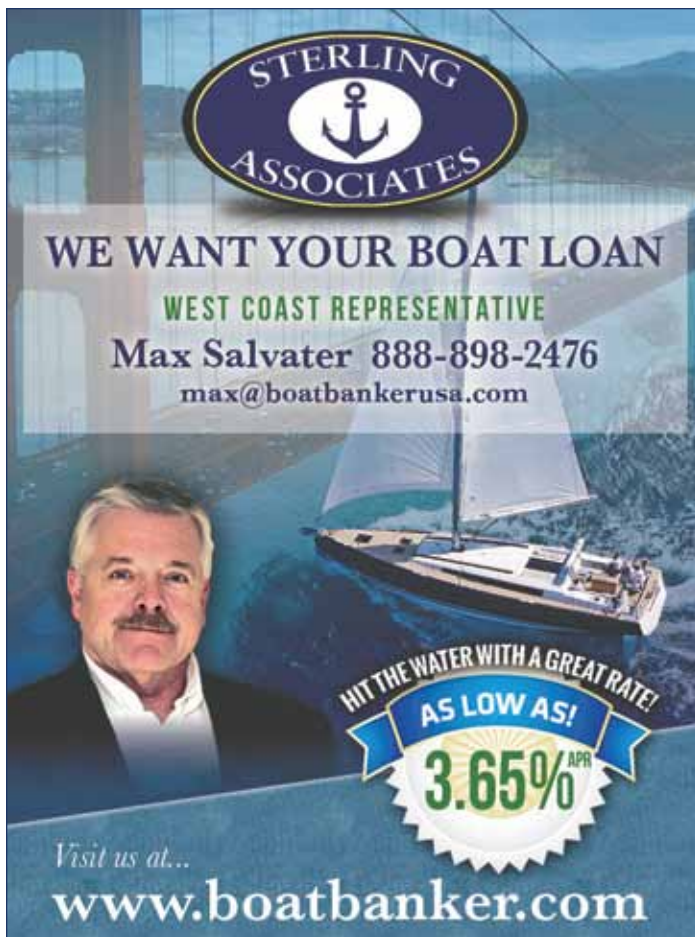
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LETTERS

Even though Cuba was in crisis, I loved the country. The people were great, the music and dancing a blast, and the old architecture and cars beautiful. So I made a decision that one day I would sail back to Cuba on my own boat. Twenty years later I did exactly that.

Three friends and I sailed my 56-ft *Ganymede* to Cuba, where we had an amazing time and shot a documentary about our adventure.

Anyone interested in Cuba, or a good sailing adventure, should check out our documentary on YouTube. Just search 'Sailing Back To Cuba'.

Captain Ron Moler
Ganymede, Northwind 56
Marina del Rey

Readers — Having taken our Ocean 71 Big O to Cuba about 18 years ago for a two-week visit, we were interested to check out Moler's 'documentary'. We found it to be a 'documentary lite' that often seemed to be little more than a vacation video. It was mildly interesting and has the virtue of not buying into the nonsense that Cuba is a 'Worker's Paradise'. You can tell by the shot of the old man snarling "Communism is shit!" Check it out.

↑↓ THE GPS THAT KEEPS ON TICKING

All the hoopla about the 25th anniversary of the Magellan Nav 1000 handheld GPS reminded me that mine stopped working in January 2000. I thought it was a victim of Y2K, which we all know turned out to be a false alarm. Nonetheless, I thought my 1000 had given up the ghost for good.

Being a good pack rat, I'd kept the Nav 1000 along with all the rest of my nautical memorabilia. To my surprise, a recent article in *Latitude* mentioned that some folks were still using their revered handheld GPSs. So I guessed Y2K had been no match for the 1000. After 14 years of its collecting dust, I put new batteries in — and the old Nav 1000 came back to life!

It took about 25 minutes to find satellites and digest the data, but it's as reliable as before. I guess I'll keep it for emergencies, or conversation.

Jorge Morales
Bolero, J/46
Dana Point

↑↓ THE CHOICE IS YOURS

When you go to the meeting of Mexican officials in Huntington Beach regarding paperwork for bringing boats to Mexico, could you ask them to specify what would cause them to seize a vessel and by what authority?

I appreciate *Latitude's* interest in keeping sailors heading south, but I am not going to Mexico until such a time as the government clearly and conclusively gives explicit protection of the property rights of visiting boatowners. It's absurd for them to be able to seize boats for such vague and ambiguous reasons.

The uncertainty matters a lot more than you think to many would-be visitors. Cruising, if it means anything, is all about going where your options allow you to. We have a choice of whether to go to Mexico. Many more than you think are choosing not to go.

Brad Petway
Berkeley

Brad — Like the United States, Mexico believes it has the right to fine or even seize vessels suspected of breaking their laws within their sovereign territory. The devil, of course, is in



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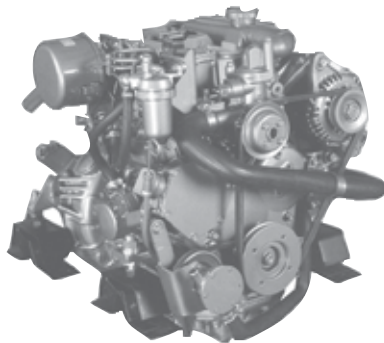
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LETTERS

the details of those laws and how they are interpreted.

Mexico is not in the habit of seizing boats on a whim. As one official at the Huntington Beach meeting told us, the normal first step in any case of intentional breaking of Mexican law is a fine if not just a warning. That said, Mexico's impounding of over 300 foreign-owned boats for up to four months was the biggest national 'crime' against cruisers that we can remember in all our decades of covering sailing. Australia, Italy and Greece have all had their turns at idiotic policies, but nothing compares to what Mexico did last year.

Our interest is not, as you claim, "keeping sailors headed south." It's in letting sailors know what's going on to the best of our ability, and telling them that only they can decide what to do. You may recall that we relentlessly and unmercifully attacked Mexico earlier in the year for their idiotic policy and procedures of late November 2013, and stated that we were going to tell it like it was even if it meant there would only be four entries in this fall's Ha-Ha. Despite the fact that Latitude (and the Ha-Ha) probably had more to lose than anybody, we believe we were unique among publications in not downplaying or sugarcoating what was going on. In social media and elsewhere, we took a lot of crap from certain gringo maritime interests in Mexico that wanted us to pretend: 1) It wasn't happening at all; 2) it wasn't a big deal; and 3) that it was all the fault of irresponsible American boatowners. All of which was, as we reported, complete bullshit.

Based on the conditions you set for going to Mexico — "until such a time as the government clearly and conclusively gives explicit protection of the property rights of visiting boatowners" — you're never going to cross the border. Mexico is not going to explicitly say, "Mexican law does not apply to owners of pleasure boats." By the way, last year the boats were impounded, not seized. That said, we wholeheartedly agree, the reasons for the impoundings were vague, ambiguous — and totally ridiculous.

When you claim "more people than we think" aren't going to Mexico because of last year's fiasco, it means you know how many we think aren't going to Mexico. That's amazing because we've never even thought about it. We can tell you that we're very surprised — shocked, actually — that so many people signed up for this year's Ha-Ha, considering we told a lot of people, not that many months ago, that we thought we'd be lucky to get 100 entries. That we got 170 entries, the most in three years, came as a major surprise. Of course, had it not been for last year's fiasco, we think we might have gotten a record fleet of 205+ boats. But who knows for sure? Besides, 170 is plenty.

We are not criticizing your decision, or that of anybody else, in not going to Mexico. Based on the best information we can give you, you have decided the rewards are not worth the risks. That's a decision that each boatowner has to make for him-/herself.

MEMORABILIA FROM GOODWILL

My fiance Doug Perry and I recently read Glenda Bilich's letter in the July *Latitude* requesting information on the 161-ft schooner *Goodwill* that was lost on Sacramento Reef, Baja, many years ago.

Virgil Bilss, my father, sailed on *Goodwill* about the same time as Glenda's husband did. In fact, I have an abundance of slides and 8mm and 16mm movies from his adventure to Tahiti aboard *Goodwill*. I have a large photo as well. I would be happy to share.

My father was an experienced powerboater and diver. He became part of the team that was contracted to renovate the vessel to get her ready for a group from a California university that was going to use her for a scientific research expedition

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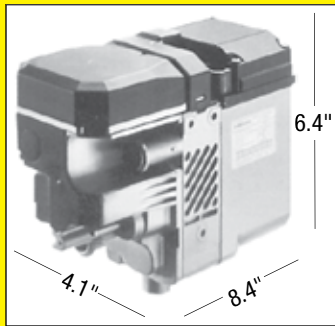
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to Tahiti. Ralph Larrabee, *Goodwill's* owner, hired my father to be the electrician on the schooner for the Tahiti trip. I can remember many stories my dad told me about the trip.

My father was also scheduled to join the fateful Mexico voyage, but was not able to go. He considered Mr. Larrabee to be his good friend, and I remember his being very upset at not being able to go.

I would love to meet with Glenda. I'm also looking for a trusted entity to digitize all my photos and movies. Because the movies may be fragile, I hesitate to take them just anywhere. My ultimate goal is to share them with a nautical museum. I can be reached at vnewcomer2@att.net.

Vicki Newcomer
Alameda

IT'S A 'NO GO' FOR US

The September *Latitude* referenced an in-depth discussion of the Iridium Go. I am trying to get some independent comments in order to decide whether to purchase one and subscribe for the duration of the Baja Ha-Ha. I know the price of the product, but not the data speed and the cost. Is there something out there for surfing the net offshore?

Ron Orr
Fast Reorrg, Hunter HC 50
Marina del Rey

Ron — According to Iridium, which makes the Iridium satellite phone we think very highly of, their "GO" is unlike anything the world has seen before. Powered by the world's farthest reaching network, this compact, rugged and portable unit creates the first-ever reliable global connection for voice and data communications on up to five smartphones or tablets."

But what's the point if the connect speed is slower than slow? Ground Control, one of the GO! retailers offers the following as "realistic expectations:"

"At 2.5 kilobytes per second, the Iridium GO! is not a solution to those looking for a workable connection for normal Internet use. Since the connection is slow, email attachments of any size will take many minutes or possibly hours to transfer, and there does appear to be a size limit for the email program. A single standard-sized web page, with images, would easily take 10 minutes to load — if it ever did. With images turned off, the page load time is normally under one minute."

Ground Control went on to report that "in ideal conditions, a 100 kilobyte .jpg image would take 5.3 minutes to transfer on a 2.5 Kbps connection. A 1 Megabyte compressed file would take 55 minutes — in ideal conditions." One can only imagine if there were five computers trying to use that connection at the same time. At this point, it seems like a solution in need of a suitable problem.

If you want to surf the net offshore at reasonable speeds, you need two things: 1) A BGAN portable terminal, and 2) mountains of cash to pay for using it. When we were in the islands a few years ago, we overheard the crew of a superyacht saying how furious the owner was. He'd apparently let a couple of unknowing nephews stay aboard unattended, and they used the BGAN system to download two movies to the tune of about \$35,000.

A DISASTROUS END TO THE JAZZ CUP

The finish of the South Beach YC's Jazz Cup race from South Beach to Benicia was a disaster. Participants should be given a refund for the fiasco at the end. The last downwind turning mark drifted significantly, which greatly affected the finish time of the boats. I think it would be safe to say there could be no reasonable way to offer a redress for that error.



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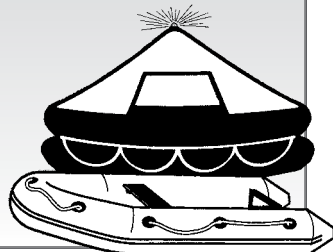
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LETTERS

I received an email that claims notices were posted which allowed for redress, but there is nothing in the rules to address this issue. The note claimed that this race was monitored by a certified race officer. S/he should have anchored the mark to



LATITUDE / CHRIS

ensure that it would not drift. Get it right next year!

Steve Strunk
Cold Drinks II
 Newport 33
 Vallejo

Steve — We can understand your frustration. After all that time, expense and effort, the results aren't fair. But one of the things we

Spinnaker snafus were the least of the fleet's worries during the Jazz Cup.

remember from our eighth-grade Latin class at Monteria Junior High School in Oakland was Seneca the Younger's famous quote: 'Errare humanum est,' which means 'to err is human.' We've all screwed up, haven't we? And it was Alexander Pope who had a nice addition: 'To err is human, to forgive is divine.'

We're sure the person or people responsible for setting the buoy have chastised themselves enough and the mistake won't be made again next year.

↑↓ **BACK ON BOAT BIKES**

We picked up a nice all-aluminum folding bike inexpensively while cruising Thailand. It has 20-inch wheels. But we are getting ready to cross the Atlantic this season and found it ate up too much space on our Bristol 32, so we sold it here in the Canaries.

P.S. My family and I did the first Baja Ha-Ha in 1994.

Ken Stuber
Sand Dollar, Bristol 32
 New Smyrna Beach, FL

Ken — All these years since the first Ha-Ha and you're still rolling on the ocean. Respect!

↑↓ **DETERMINED DUTCH BIKE THIEVES**

We took a Dahon Mariner folding bike with us when we sailed from San Francisco to Alaska in 2006. Although it took up space in our Sceptre 41, it was great to have.

We used the bike everywhere on our southbound voyage through Mexico and Central America, and still had it when we reached Amsterdam in 2008. It was there our wimpy California bike locks didn't survive determined Dutch bike thieves. We weren't there three days when it was stolen. We think it would have been safe on the boat, but we'd locked it ashore with the other bikes.

It was so important to have a bike in Europe that we bought a couple of serviceable but unattractive ones — and heavy-duty Dutch chains and locks to replace our lost folding bike.

I still miss that bike, and I'm thinking of getting another. It has to be a folding bike in case we go cruising again.

Shirlee Smith
Solstice, Sceptre 41
 San Francisco

Shirlee — We know how you feel, as somebody just stole our custom cruising bike in San Diego. It probably wasn't the same person who stole your bike in the Netherlands, but we hope they burn in the same place.

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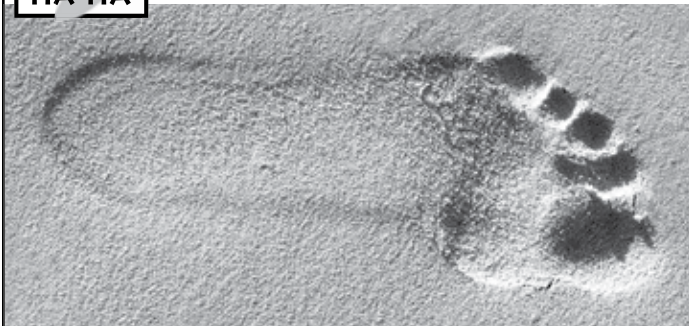
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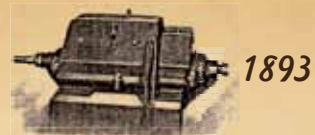


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↑↓ MY BIKE WASN'T STOLEN TILL WE GOT TO THE U.S.

My husband Joe and I did the 20th Baja Ha-Ha, and then cruised Mexico for the season. We purchased folding bicycles for the trip and loved having them. They fit nicely in our 'garage' — aka the v-berth — and were a great way to exercise and get to where we wanted to go.

Ironically, before we left everyone told us "Mexico is dangerous; you shouldn't cruise there" and all that. I'm pleased to say that Mexico was wonderful and we never had a problem. It was when we got back to the States that my bike was stolen — from in front of a Von's on a Sunday morning. The thieves made quick work of breaking the lock and off they went. It made me very sad.

The moral to the story is that shit happens in every country.

Debbie Graham
Sosiego, Westsail 32
Alameda

↑↓ MY BIKE IS UP THERE WITH NEW SAILS

The Dahon Speed 8 folding bike that I purchased for \$400 in 2014 has been a flawless performer in the San Francisco Bay Area, opening up many horizons.

I put it right up there with new sails and my folding prop as best boat-related purchase ever. I was really surprised that the bottom bracket has held up, even though I push the bike hard — like on the climb out of Sausalito, over the Golden Gate and back.

The bike has also freed me from bothering people for car rides, such as when I drop my boat at Svend's for a haul-out. From the yard I simply ride to the ferry, take that to the City, bike to Cal Train, take that south, then ride home.

P.S. I highly recommend Primo Comet Kevlar Belted Tires with the smooth tread. They are fast and pretty impervious to flats

Dave Biggs
Runnin' Late, Cal 35
Coyote Point, San Mateo

↑↓ EXPENSIVE, BUT SHOCKINGLY GOOD

Before doing the 2008 Ha-Ha, we bought two electric folding bikes and had them delivered to Downwind Marine. At \$800 each, they were pricey, but we have used them all over Mexico.

We get a lot of stares as we go flying by without pedaling. They have held up well for six seasons of cruising. Invariably *gringos* will ask about range or speed, while the Mexicans all want to know how much they cost.

Don & Terri Parker
Double Play, Gemini Cat
Marina Mazatlan

In a typical month, we receive a tremendous volume of letters. So if yours hasn't appeared, don't give up hope.

We welcome all letters that are of interest to sailors. Please include your name, your boat's name, hailing port and, if possible, a way to contact you for clarifications.

By far the best way to send letters is to email them to richard@latitude38.com. You can also mail them to 15 Locust, Mill Valley, CA, 94941, or fax them to (415) 383-5816.



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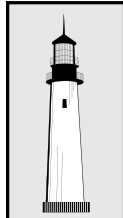
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SIGHTINGS

volvo ocean racers rocket south

The world's premier offshore sailing event is on again. Now in its 12th edition, the Volvo Ocean Race is better than it's ever been with a fleet of seven brand-new one-design Volvo Ocean 65s racing nearly 40,000 miles around the globe in the capable hands of many of the world's best professional racing sailors. Beginning on October 11 in Alicante, Spain, and headed for Cape Town, South Africa, the first of nine legs got off to a thrilling start with ultra-tactical inshore-type racing in the Mediterranean and out the Strait of Gibraltar.

An Azores High that moved far east kept the competitors jibing down the African coast in light air within sight of one another and often right off the beach. As we go to press, Team Dongfeng has proven to be the

biggest surprise of the race and is leading the fleet just past the Cape Verde Islands, despite breaking and replacing a rudder after a collision with a UFO. The rest of the fleet is just miles behind, however, and is reconsolidating in a race that is very far from over at this early stage.

After South Africa, the VOR fleet will race through the pirate-infested waters of the Indian Ocean to its second stop in Abu

Dhabi. They bypassed much of these waters aboard freighters during the last edition, amid concerns of piracy off the Horn of Africa. Setting sail from Abu Dhabi in the New Year, the race will again take the fleet through more dangerous waters, including the notorious Malacca Strait, then on a long upwind bash to Sanya, China.

Leg four from China to Auckland, New Zealand, in February won't be any easier. After arriving, fleet members will get their final rest and prep period before tackling Cape Horn and the Southern Ocean. After rounding Cape Horn in late March and enduring a prolonged beat up the coast of Argentina on their way to Itajai, Brazil, the fleet will be thoroughly tested in the pivotal fifth leg.

After some R&R in Brazil, the fleet will ascend the Atlantic en route to this race's American stopover at Newport, Rhode Island, in May. Leaving Newport, conditions are likely to line up a fast, windy downwind romp across the Atlantic to Lisbon, Portugal. After Portugal, the legs will get much shorter, with a stop in the sailing-crazed Breton port of Lorient, France, before racing to a 24-hour pit stop in The Hague, Netherlands, and a final sprint to Volvo's corporate headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden, in late June.

One of the most veteran teams is Abu Dhabi Ocean Racing. Skippered by double-Olympic medalist Ian Walker, the Emirati syndicate is back again with a crew rich in both talent and VOR experience. Their yacht *Azzam* should consistently be near the front of the fleet. Another experienced team is that of Team Vestas Wind, skippered by four-time race veteran Chris Nicholson. After leading *Camper* with ETNZ to a second-place finish in the last VOR, 'Nicho' has brought on a wealth of experience and skill with super-pros like Rob Salthouse and Tony Rae, which should bode well for the team that also includes several talented young Danish sailors.

Iker Martinez and Xabi Fernandez, the two-time Olympic 49er medalists, and three-time VOR race veterans from Spain have teamed up yet again to secure sponsorship for a Spanish VOR entry in *MAPFRE*.



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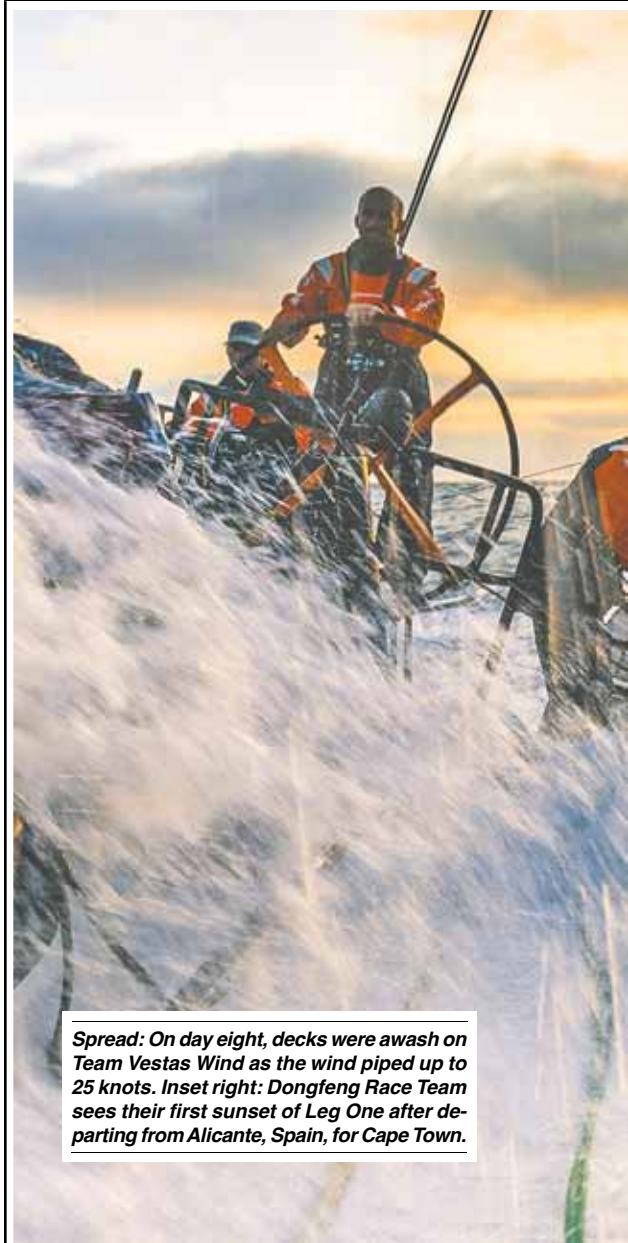
On an enduro like the Volvo Ocean Race it's always wise to catch up on sleep during stints of light air. When conditions get rough and rowdy, exhaustion is part of the game.

puddle jumpers

The ideal time to cross from the West Coast of the Americas to French Polynesia is between late February and May, but we're already getting boatloads of inquiries about the 2015 Pacific Puddle Jump rally.

We and our Tahitian partners have been working behind the scenes to give westbound cruisers departing from both Mexico and Panama a memorable send-off, and to streamline arrival procedures. Plus, we've got a terrific arrival celebration planned for June.

Here's the scoop: As in years past, there will be a series of worthwhile crossing-related seminars in February



Spread: On day eight, decks were awash on Team Vestas Wind as the wind piped up to 25 knots. Inset right: Dongfeng Race Team sees their first sunset of Leg One after departing from Alicante, Spain, for Cape Town.

BRIAN CARLIN / TEAM VESTAS WIND / VOLVO OCEAN RACE

set sights on tahiti

and March at Paradise Village Marina and Marina Riviera Nayarit (both on Banderas Bay). In early March, *Latitude 38* will co-host PPJ Sendoff Parties at the Vallarta YC (in Paradise Village) and at the Balboa YC in Panama. Both dates TBA soon. We may also co-host a second *fiesta* in Panama at Shelter Bay Marina, on the Caribbean side of the Canal.

Yes, there will be a 'bond deal' again this year. For the uninitiated, let us explain that French Polynesia requires every arriving sailor to post a cash bond equal to the value of an air ticket to your home country *unless* you get a bond exemption

continued in middle column of next sightings page

volvo — continued

Accompanying the two kings of Spanish sailing is none other than Frenchman Michel Desjoyeaux, the only two-time winner of the Vendée Globe. Six-time race veteran Bouwe Bekking is back as skipper of the Dutch-flagged Team Brunel, with the legendary Andrew Cape navigating. The wily old race vet may finally find that elusive race win. Playing the role of wild card is China's Team Dongfeng. Skippered by Charles Caudrelier, the French/Chinese crew could be a shocker. Turkish entry *Alvimedica* will be on a steep learning curve throughout the race with a young and comparatively inexperienced skipper and crew, while the all-female Team SCA will have their work cut out for them to keep up with the boys.

As you read this, the fleet should be approaching Cape Town. You can follow the tracks of all competitors at www.volvoceanrace.com, and check local listings to catch television coverage on NBC Sports Network and Outside Television.

— ronnie simpson



INSET MARC BOW / VOLVO OCEAN RACE

SIGHTINGS

northwest passage, step two

For centuries, the allure of transiting the fabled Northwest Passage has been high on the list of extreme challenges for adventurers of all stripes. Norwegian Roald Amundsen was the first to successfully complete the 3,000-mile trip in 1906, and in the 108 years since then only 87 sailing vessels have made the crossing successfully. Mike Johnson's 44-ft fiberglass schooner *Gitana* is among them.

"This season we were one of four vessels that passed through westbound," reports Mike, who is 69. Two others made it eastbound, he says, and a number of others were turned back due to heavy ice.

A few years ago every boat that attempted the maze-like transit made it through, and it seemed as though that trend would continue, given the recession of the Arctic ice cap. Not so. The summer of 2013 saw more menacing sea ice than there'd been for more than 15 years. Go figure. By the end of that summer, Mike, who has been sailing to remote regions for decades — often with *Latitude* Crew List recruits

continued on outside column of next sightings page

puddle jump

or can show a homeward air ticket. For the past few years we have worked with French Polynesian yacht agents who offer registered fleet members a flat-rate package. For a reasonable fee, they will do clearance in and out, provide bond exemptions for crew, and arrange for you to get duty-free fuel as soon as you arrive in the Marquesas. Full details will be posted at www.pacificpuddlejump.com in mid-November, when free PPJ registration begins on the site. Fleet members are under absolutely no obligation to use the services of the bond agents. Their services are offered simply as a convenience — and *Latitude 38* does not make a penny from



— continued

their work.

Non-European Union citizens get 90-day visas upon arrival with no prior arrangements, although their boats can stay for 18 months (perhaps longer, as rules in this regard are loosening). When your visa expires, you now only have to leave the country for three months before returning for another 90 days. That's more liberal than the previous policies, but the smarter idea is to arrange in advance for a "long stay visa" (six months) through a French consulate or embassy. Under normal circumstances, visas *cannot* be extended once you are in French

continued in middle column of next sightings page

northwest passage — continued

aboard — was lucky to make it to remote Cambridge Bay, the only place where it's possible to haul out for the winter. After *Gitana's* crew retreated to warmer latitudes for the winter, the stout Lapworth-designed hull endured temperatures of 67° below zero.

In mid-July Mike, his nephew Zack Johnson, 27, and his old college roommate Rodney Schmitt, 69, of Tiburon, arrived to recommission the schooner for the remaining 2,200 miles to Nome, Alaska. (Officially, a NW Passage transit is from the Arctic Circle, 66°33'N, in the Atlantic to the same latitude in the Pacific — about 120 miles north of Nome.)

Get out your world atlas or power up Google Earth and you can trace their route: First, they had to wait two weeks at Cambridge Bay before the heavy sea ice allowed them to pass through Dease Strait. When an electrical problem caused them to divert to Kugluktuk (Coppermine), they met researchers searching for the Franklin expedition ships — an ill-fated British expedition that famously disappeared in 1845 while searching for a route through the labyrinth of land and ice.

"Once out of Kugluktuk," recalls Mike, "we proceeded through Dolphin and Union Strait into Amundsen Gulf. Near Cape Bathurst we sailed past the famous Smoking Hills, burning low-grade coal that has been smoldering for untold ages. Communities were few and far between, and self-sufficiency was of utmost importance in those waters. After Tuktoyaktuk, we passed the Mackenzie River Delta, which spews inland logs into the Arctic Ocean. We stopped at the old whaling station of Herschel Island with its graveyard of sailors from all corners of the earth. After that decent anchorage there was the long haul to Point Barrow. Shallow seas and ice clung to the shore to port, with a 60-80-mile wide corridor between us and the ice hovering north to starboard.

"After anchoring to the west of Barrow (Elson Lagoon) in a very exposed and shallow spot for most of a week waiting out bad weather, we made the next gauntlet run to Point Hope before proceeding on through the Bering Strait to Nome." There, where temperatures are expected to be only 40° below, they laid up *Gitana* for the winter. And you thought San Francisco Bay sailing could get chilly!

— andy

the solo sailors' proving ground

Eight maxi trimarans, nine Open 60s, 11 Multi 50 tris, 20 Rhum Class boats and a staggering 41 Class 40s will begin their charge across the Atlantic November 2 — each with a single crew. This is the Route du Rhum. Now in its 10th edition, the quadrennial classic departs from Saint-Malo, France, and will take the record 89-boat

continued on outside column of next sightings page



GITANA

Looking weary but fulfilled, Mike Johnson is thrilled to have made it through.



Spread: Doesn't this shot just scream, "Let's go sailing!" Pictured here, 'Gitana' rides out some nasty weather in Elson Lagoon, near Pt. Barrow, Alaska. Inset left: 'Gitana' hauled out at Cambridge Bay, where winter temps reached 67° below zero. Inset right: If you look closely behind Zack and Rodney you can see the grave markers of departed souls at Herschel Island's whaling station.



LATITUDE / ANDY

When Mike dropped by our office a few months ago, he pointed out where 'Gitana' was spending the winter: remote Cambridge Bay (lat 69°N), the only place along the route with any possibility of hauling out for the winter — via a giant construction crane.

solo sailors — continued

fleet some 3,542 miles to Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, in the Caribbean. Representing the single biggest spectacle in all of solo sailing, the Route du Rhum is a larger-than-life event that seemingly brings everyone who's anyone out to play.

The solo skippers run the whole spectrum, from superstars at the top of their game to legends of yesteryear coming out of retirement, to the top up-and-coming solo sailing talent, mixed in with a handful of amateurs living out their dreams on France's biggest stage. Adding to the atmosphere in Saint-Malo will be more than 300,000 rabid fans watching from every possible vantage point, including the cliffs above this historic Breton sailing port. With the most impressive array of



ERIC LEGRET / ROUTE DU RHUM

It's fair to say this field of skippers is a ballsy group, who are anything but 'risk-averse'. Pictured here is Alan Roua of 'Exocet'.

ocean racing hardware ever assembled in one place, this year's Route du Rhum will truly be one for the ages.

Though the smallest division in the race with just eight boats, the Ultime division of maxi trimarans is the one that will grab the lion's share of media interest. The biggest and most undeniably cool boat in the fleet is Yann Guichard's *Spindrift 2* (ex-*Banque Populaire V* and current outright round-the-world record holder). She's almost guaranteed to stay in the headlines. If Guichard should win, it will be one of the greatest accomplish-

ments in solo sailing history. Should *Spindrift 2* get beat — by anyone — she'll again grab headlines in a David-versus-Goliath scenario. And if she should break, she'll do so spectacularly. The massive VPLP tri appears to be a bear to handle solo, and it's likely that one of the smaller, more nimble 110-footers will be the first boat into Guadeloupe.

Due to an unfortunate non-sailing injury, *Banque Populaire VII* (ex-*Groupama 3*, which won the race in 2010 with Franck Cammas) skipper Armel le Cleac'h has been replaced by Loïck Peyron and represents *Latitude 38's* favorite to win. Another boat to watch will be the newly-launched *Sodebo Ultim* (ex-*Geronimo*), skippered by Thomas Coville, but don't count out the three MOD 70s, the legendary *IDEC* with Francis Joyon, or Lionel Lemonchois' ultra-light *Prince de Bretagne*.

In the Open 60 division, Vendée Globe winner François Gabart is the odds-on favorite in what could well be his swan song in the IMOCA class. He'll join the big boys with a brand-new 110-ft trimaran of his own in early 2015. Gabart will have his work cut out for him with Jeremie Beyou and *Maitre Coq* though. Beyou is fresh off a win in the Figaro this summer and looks to be finally up to speed with his own VPLP sistership to Gabart's *Macif*. The 2013 Transat Jacques Vabre winner Vincent Riou is also a contender aboard *PRB*, as is the elder statesman Marc Guillemot on *Safran*. He's making his final IMOCA start before handing over the keys to Morgan Lagravière next season.

The Multi 50 fleet almost guarantees a capsized or two, along with the ever-present carnage that made big trimaran fleets like the ORMA 60s go the way of the dinosaur and the blooper. The massive Class 40 fleet should provide the most exciting and closest racing of the event, with the leaders likely crossing jibes all the way into Guadeloupe.

Follow the race at www.routedurhum.com.

— ronnie simpson

puddle jump

Polynesia. And there is much too much to see in a mere three months.

As with bureaucracy everywhere, there seem to be variations in both customer service and interpretation of the laws wherever you go. (The San Francisco consulate gets high marks, L.A., not so much.) The basic rule is you must go to the French government office nearest to your home, but we're told the Embassies in Panama and Quito, Ecuador, will deal with you as long as you have been away from home for more than three months.

Regardless, you will have to jump through some hoops to get a long-stay visa: i.e. show that you have some liquid



HELICO / AFP / ROUTE DU RHUM

— continued

assets, produce your police record (or lack thereof) from your home locality, show proof of some sort of medical coverage — many cruisers use inexpensive Divers Alert Network (DAN) policies which cover medevac. All crew must apply in person, but only one has to show up to retrieve the visas.

Here's where it gets a little weird. At consulates in the U.S. you'll be told six months is the max, but last season several cruisers got year-long visas in Panama and Ecuador. But previous-year policies are no guarantee of what the deal will be in 2015. Stay tuned.

— andy

oddball ocean rescues

One reason mariners should always keep a sharp lookout is that they never know what might cross their track — an oncoming vessel, dangerous debris, or a fisherman riding in a green plastic crate. The latter is exactly what the crew of the sailboat *U-Fin* encountered late last month, six miles off the central coast of Mexico.

According to online reports, fisherman Raymundo Rodrigues Loyola, 45, survived for five nights in the pale green crate, which is normally used to hold fish. It is unclear if he had abandoned ship or been thrown from it while his Manzanillo-based fishing vessel battled the effects of Hurricane Polo. His partner, Mario Morales Mayo, 60, did not survive.

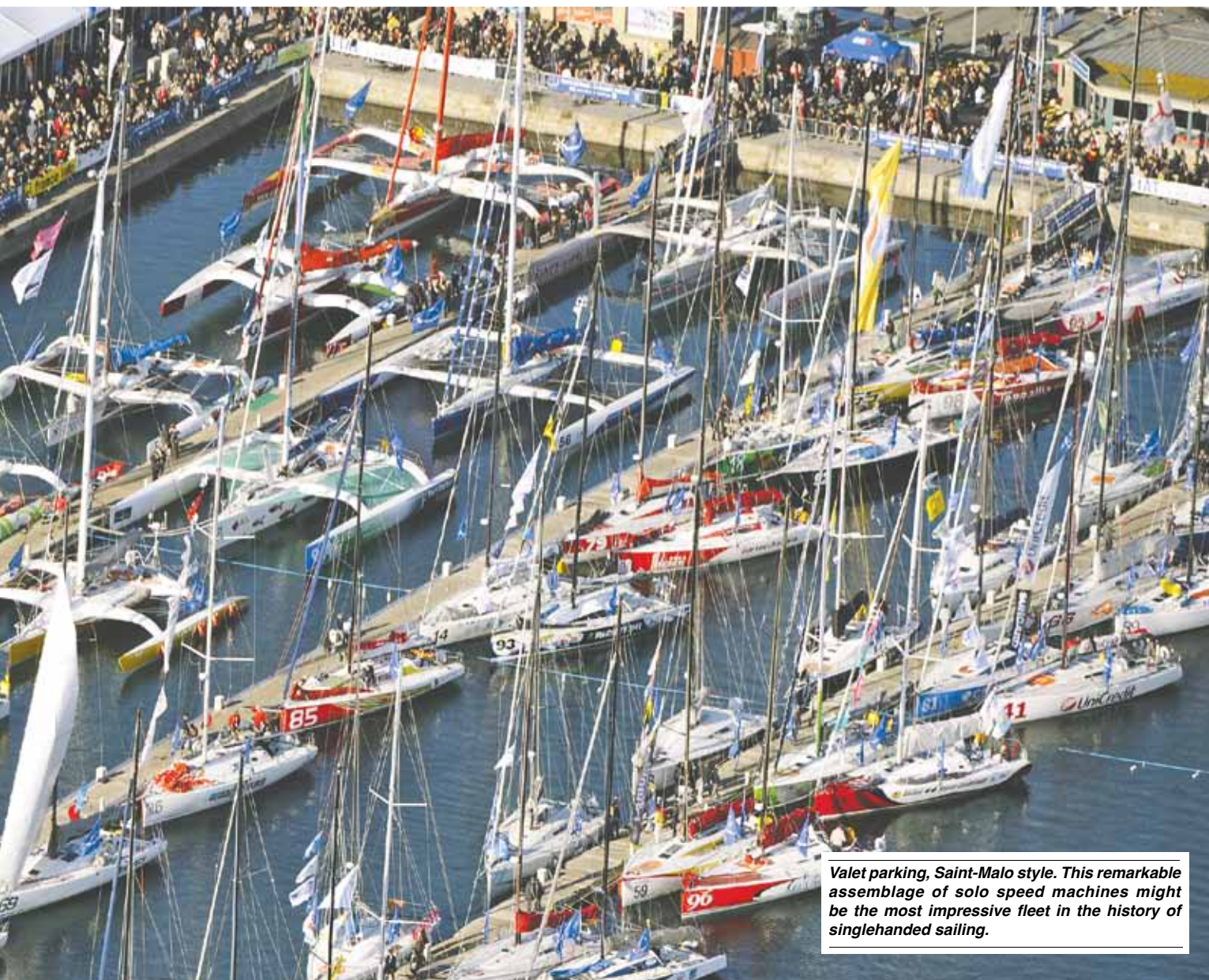
Rodrigues Loyola had second-degree burns from the scorching sun

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COURTESY U-FIN

Raymundo survived in this unconventional liferaft.



Valet parking, Saint-Malo style. This remarkable assemblage of solo speed machines might be the most impressive fleet in the history of singlehanded sailing.

SIGHTINGS

rescues — continued

and was suffering from severe dehydration when rescued, but was otherwise unharmed.

Meanwhile, an even more bizarre rescue took place off the Florida coast last week — and we're pretty sure this one was a first. According to various news sources, Iranian exile Reza Baluchi was rescued by U.S. Coast Guard resources Saturday after he activated his emergency beacon. His craft? A 'hydro pod' made of 3-millimeter-thick plastic.

The Florida Coasties probably weren't surprised to get the call, as one of their flight crews had flown out to check on Baluchi four

continued on outside column of next sightings page

the dumbest thing

So be honest, what's the dumbest thing you ever did in a sailboat? And what did you learn from it?

We're intrigued by these questions because in, our own experience, the knuckleheaded mistakes we've made that could have gotten us killed always left us with the strongest impressions, i.e. "Whew! I'll never do *that* again!"

We asked these questions about 10



you ever did?

years ago and the feedback we got made for a very entertaining and educational article. And because we're certain that there are sailors out there doing equally dumb things every day — that we can all learn from — we figure it's time to revisit the subject.

So give it some thought, and don't be shy. Write us at andy@latitude38.com.

— andy



The 'Phaedo' crew chills out in the Gunboat's spacious salon. Among other luxury amenities, she's even got a pizza oven in the galley.



ALL PHOTOS LATITUDE / RICHARD

rescues — continued

days earlier when he and his bubble were 70 miles east of St. Augustine. At that time he was reportedly "disoriented," but he refused the Guardsmen's offer of a ride. His stated destination was Bermuda, more than 1,000 miles from the Florida coast.

Disoriented? No wonder. According to Baluchi's website, the bubble was designed to be propelled forward by its occupant running inside it and pushing with his arms — much like a hamster wheel for humans. The goal was to pilot the orb first to Bermuda, then on around the so-called Bermuda Triangle. A wee bit far-fetched perhaps, but Baluchi is a world-class runner who's completed several other ambitious feats since migrating to the U.S. in 2003.

— andy

'fast cats on blue water' album is out!

Wouldn't the accompanying photo make great cover art for an album from the 1960s? We think so. But instead of Peter, Paul & Mary, this group would be called Sandra, Paul & Lloyd. Sandra would front the band with vocals, flute and fluid dance moves, sort of like Andrea Corr of the Celtic rock group The Corrs. Quiet Paul would live mostly in the shadows, but play a surprisingly wicked lead guitar. Rambunctious Lloyd would set the beat by enthusiastically playing drums in the manner of Mick Fleetwood of Fleetwood Mac. Their sound would be somewhere in the triangle of Simon & Garfunkel, Crosby, Stills & Nash and Sade.

In reality, they are sailors aboard owner Lloyd Thornberg's St. Barth-based orangish-red Gunboat 66 catamaran *Phaedo* (FAY-dough). Paul Hand is the captain and his wife Sandra is the health-food-obsessed cook. Having raced the boat in the Caribbean, across the Atlantic, and in the Fastnet, Thornberg brought the big cat to the West Coast to do the 2013 Transpac and to begin a circumnavigation. Armed with an all-star crew, *Phaedo* was burning up the course, setting a world record for the greatest 24-hour run by a boat with a pizza oven — 425+ miles in 24 hours. That's a 24-hour average of 17.7 knots on what truly is a luxurious cruising boat.

Phaedo was brought back to Newport Beach, where in addition to getting a new rig and sails while at the Newport Shipyard, she got new appendages and had other work done. More about that next month.

When we visited with the trio in the middle of October, they didn't know exactly where they were going next. When Lloyd asked us whether we thought they should go to Mexico and the South Pacific or back to the Caribbean, we suggested he do the Baja Ha-Ha. Since Lloyd has already done a lot of sailing in the Caribbean, and has a home on the water in St. Barth, we recommended Mexico followed by the South Pacific and around the world. After all, it would give Paul a chance to visit his native Australia, and, given *Phaedo's* speed, Lloyd and crew could go around just about as quickly as they wanted. With pizza and music all the way.

— richard



U.S. COAST GUARD

Next time Baluchi wants to visit Bermuda, he'll probably choose another mode of transport.



Sandra loves her juicer!

SIGHTINGS

a whale of an app

Whale populations have recovered dramatically since the days of rampant international whaling, but those that migrate near shipping lanes are still sometimes struck and killed. Meanwhile, sailors — especially those who transit coastal areas — are often concerned about

colliding with cetaceans, for their own sake as well as for the whales' sake.

The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, a NOAA affiliate, is encouraging West Coast sailors as well as commercial vessel operators to download a free Whale Alert app for iPhones and iPads, and use it to participate in data collection efforts. (See <http://westcoast.whalealert.org> for info and a download link.)

According to GFNMS literature, "The app uses GPS, Automatic Identification System, Internet and NOAA nautical charts to provide mariners with a single source of information about whale locations and conservation measures that are active in their immediate vicinity. New features include information about California Marine Protected Areas, PORTS

(Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System) tide and weather data, and the ability for the public to report whale sightings to databases that NOAA and whale biologists use to map whale habitats and migration patterns."

We haven't used the app yet, but we intend to do so this month as we sail off the Baja coast to Cabo with the Baja Ha-Ha rally. In recent years we've reported on a number of sailboat-versus-whale incidents, including the sinking of J World's *J/120* in 2009. We're also reminded that sometime during the last decade Bernard Slabek's San Francisco-based *Freedom 33 Simple Pleasures* collided with two whales during a single season.

Researchers tell us that 19,000 gray whales, in addition to other species, migrate along the coast between November and May, while endangered humpback, blue and fin whales are present along the coast in their greatest numbers from June through November. In 2007, four blue whales were killed, probably by ship strikes, in and around the Santa Barbara Channel. In 2010, two blue whales, one humpback and two fin whales were killed by strikes in the San Francisco area and elsewhere along the north-central California coast.

— andy

rimas reconnaissance

Regular readers know we've been tracking the exploits of Russian-born sailor Rimas Meleshyus since 2012, when he sent us a report on

his ill-fated trip from Southeast Alaska to Japan. He survived being washed ashore in the Aleutian Islands, but totaled his tiny *San Juan 24*.

Undeterred, he soon got hold of a sistership, *Pier Pressure*, and set off from the San Juan Islands to Mexico. Rigging failure caused him to divert to Hawaii though, where friends helped him re-rig. After 56 more days at sea he made landfall at San Francisco, where other

friends made many additional repairs and upgrades — his mission,

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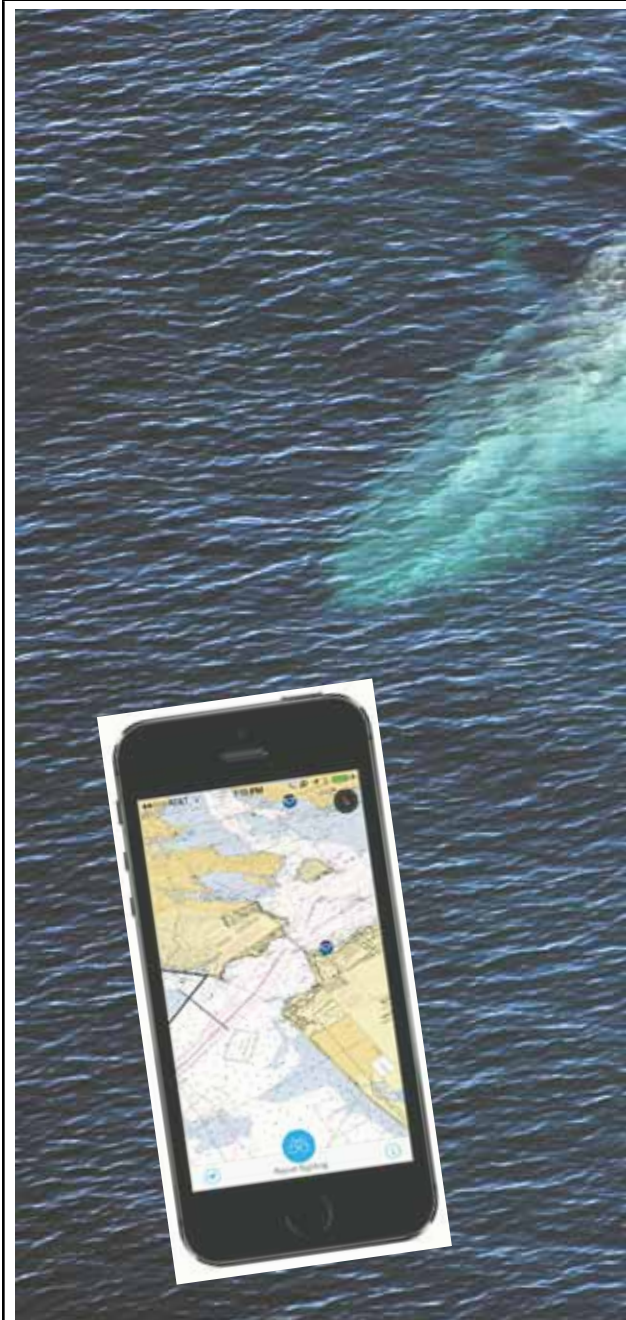
A typical screen view on an iPad.



Rimas' first boat ended up beached in the Aleutians, but he survived.

respite on

When frequent contributor Art Hartinger told us that he'd recently taken his Beneteau First 310 *Pied-a-Mer* all the way up the Napa River to downtown Napa, and had overnighted at the public dock there, we were intrigued — and realized it's been way too long since we've visited that charming North Bay city. The downtown bulkhead redo was an enormous operation that took several years to complete, but, as Art reports, it now gives boaters front-row access to fine dining, entertainment, shopping and, of



A LOMBARDI / NOAA

the river

course, wine tasting.

Depth is limited along some parts of the 15-mile cruise, so you'll want to plan accordingly. The most important precaution to note, however, is that the Imola Bridge, just south of town, has clearance of only 60 feet. (Three other bridges downstream are higher.)

Art reminds us, however, that, "vertical bridge clearances on charts are referenced to Mean High Water in tidal areas. Therefore if the existing height of tide is below

continued in middle column of next sightings page

rimas — continued

after all, is to sail around the world via Cape Horn.

Since his departure from Sausalito in August, his track has skirted several tropical storms and at least one hurricane. He blew out his main early on, and lost the hard dinghy that he was towing, but his unflappable stoicism seems to keep his spirits upbeat. As he often says, he absolutely loves the solitude of sailing on the open ocean alone.

Thanks to his DeLorme inReach transponder, we've seen that in recent weeks he's been averaging between 1.5 and 3.5 knots, while sailing — or drifting — S or SSW under jib alone. As we go to press, the tiny sloop is at latitude 5°7'N, longitude 151°0'W. That's 835 miles south of Hilo, Hawaii, and 450 miles from the remote Republic of

continued on outside column of next sightings page

In addition to allowing users to report and monitor whale movements, the free Whale Alert app contains NOAA charts and all sorts of educational info such as species I.D. photos and descriptions.



SIGHTINGS

rimas — continued

Kiribati, an island nation composed of 32 atolls and one raised coral island called Banaba. If Rimas really does have a guardian angel traveling with him, as we suggested last month, hopefully she will guide him to Banaba, as his food stores are reportedly running low.

It's anybody's guess if the naturalized American has charts for Kiribati, whose atolls are spread over a million square miles of equatorial ocean. But Rimas was intent on having adventures, and he's certainly attaining that goal. October 18 marked his 70th day at sea, but he still seems cheerful. "Remember guys," he wrote via inReach, "I love sailing."

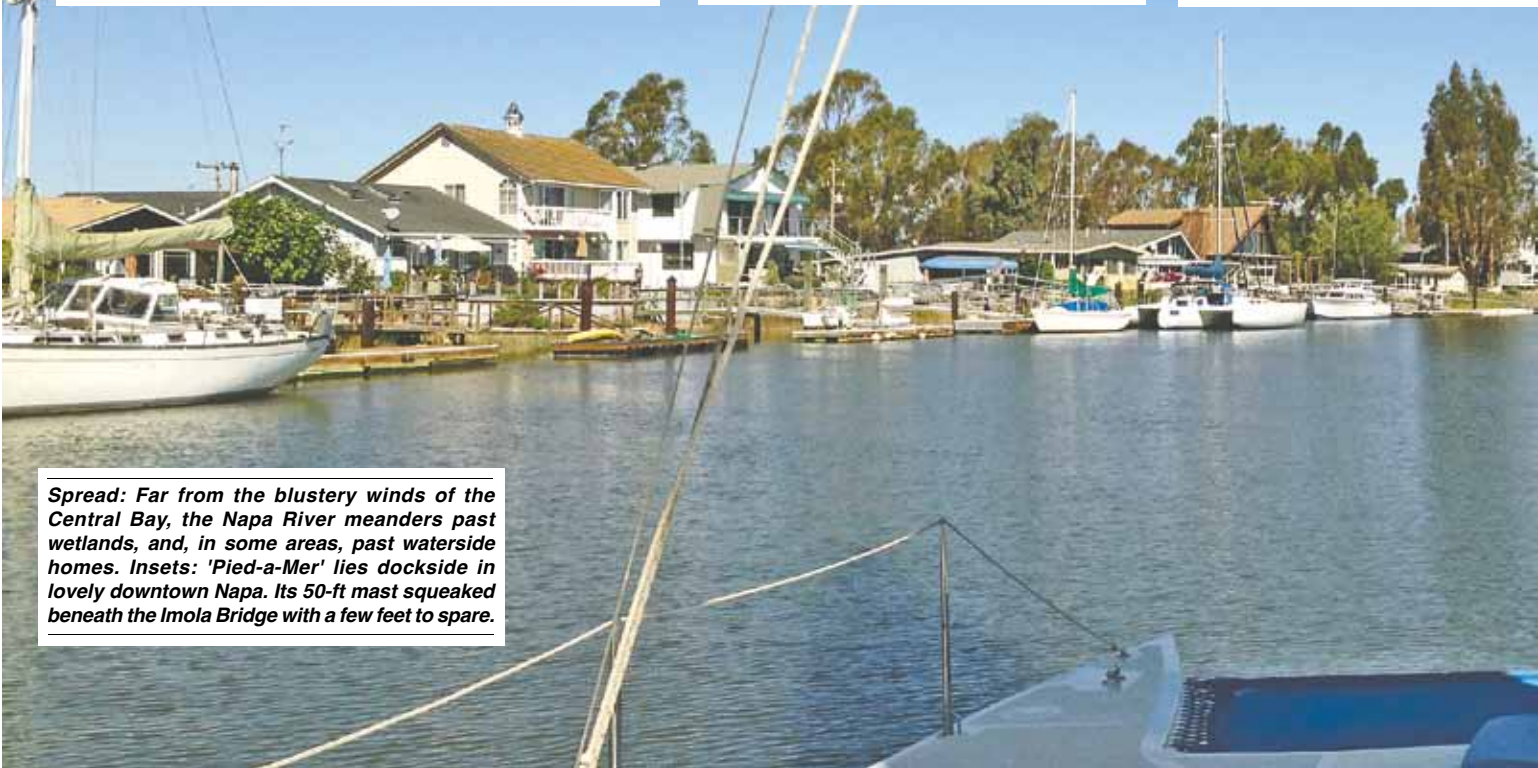
— andy

napa river

MHW, there will be greater clearance. If the existing height of tide is greater than MHW, there will be less clearance." True enough, but we're talking a few extra feet at low water, so a stick that's 65 feet or taller is a deal-breaker.

We intend to follow Art's lead sometime this winter, as we've never sailed (or motorsailed) all the way downtown. But we did take a pleasant trip partway upriver last month in order to haul out at Napa Valley Marina. Fringed by vineyards and

ALL INSETS ART HARTINGER



Spread: Far from the blustery winds of the Central Bay, the Napa River meanders past wetlands, and, in some areas, past waterside homes. **Insets:** 'Pied-a-Mer' lies dockside in lovely downtown Napa. Its 50-ft mast squeaked beneath the Imola Bridge with a few feet to spare.

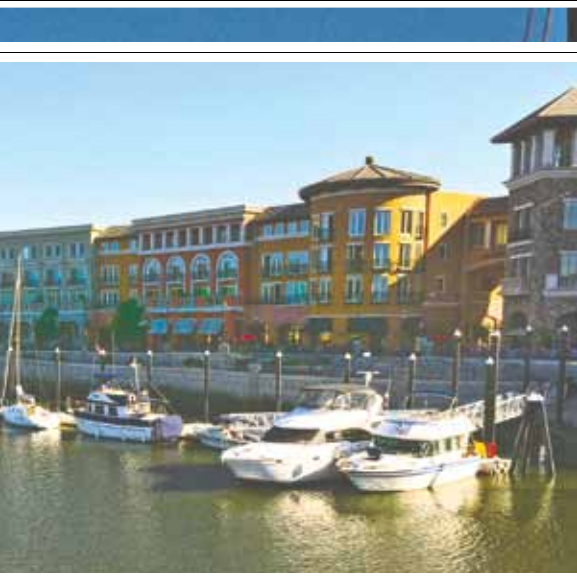
SPREAD LATITUDE / ANDY

— continued

wetlands, it undoubtedly has the most pleasant surroundings of any yard in the Bay Area. And while overnighing at its guest dock isn't quite as nice as being in the heart of Napa, it provides a pleasant getaway destination for anyone in need of a change of pace.

Sailing north from Vallejo (where the marina usually has guest slips), you'll immediately have to pass beneath the Mare Island Causeway Bridge. Its operator is

continued in middle column of next sightings page



treasures beneath the bay

Although the waters of San Francisco Bay may seem cold, dark and foreboding to boaters, a wealth of sunken wrecks and maritime artifacts lies beneath the surface. Using remote-controlled cameras and sensing equipment in addition to divers, a NOAA research team has slowly been cataloguing the patchwork of wrecks — estimated to be near 300 — that lie within the boundaries of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, and the adjacent Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The complete survey will take two years.

In mid-September NOAA confirmed the discovery of the 1910 shipwreck *SS Selja* and an unidentified early steam tugboat lying on the seafloor just outside the Golden Gate. Another recent discovery was the 1863 wreck of the clipper ship *Noonday*, despite its being obscured by mud and silt on the ocean floor.

"The waters of the sanctuary and the park are among the great undersea museums in the nation," says James Delgado, director of Maritime Heritage for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. "These wrecks tell the powerful story of the people who helped build California and opened America to the Pacific for nearly two centuries. Finding the remains of these ships links the past to the present."

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Park Service began researching local wrecks in the 1980s and published the first detailed inventory of their findings in 1990. Since then, NOAA maritime archaeologist Robert Schwemmer has conducted new research in archives around the world. He has also interviewed fishermen and pioneering wreck divers such as Bruce and Robert Lanham of San Francisco, who have discovered a number of historic Bay Area wrecks. The Lanham brothers were part of the NOAA team that found the *Selja*.

According to GFNMS, "In 1910, the steamer *Selja* sank after a fatal collision, which featured prominently in a legal case that was ultimately argued before the U.S. Supreme Court over a key aspect of maritime law, the 'rule of the road.'"

The other key find, the clipper ship *Noonday*, was lost in 1863. She was, of course, one of many fast-sailing ships that brought men and supplies to California during and after the Gold Rush. Noonday Rock, which lies north of the Farallones, was named for the wreck. To see video of *Selja*, plus photographs and other materials, visit: www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/farallones-shipwrecks.

— andy



COURTESY NOAA

As this classic painting shows, 'Noonday' was a spectacular vessel. She was built on Badger's Island, Maine, in 1855 and met her sad end eight years later.

why winter racing is ideal for newbies

Time for a little pop quiz.

Scenario #1: The fog is rolling in and out from the ocean. The wind is blowing a steady 20 knots, only it's not steady, and your instruments just recorded a 30-knot gust. The waves are big, sloppy and relentless, driven by the wind, with messy, stinging spray flying off the tops. You're soaking wet, cold, uncomfortable, worried about your sail, rig, or hardware, and — go on, admit it — a little scared. What season is it?

Scenario #2: The sun is out. The sky is clear of fog. The water is fluttered by a gentle breeze. It's so warm you have to remove your

continued on outside column of next sightings page

SIGHTINGS

why winter racing is ideal for newbies

jacket. What season is it? Need a hint? You're on San Francisco Bay.

If you've been sailing here for a few years, you already know the answers. In Scenario #1 it's summer. In Scenario #2 it's midwinter season!

Midwinter racing begins the first weekend of November in the Bay Area, and, if you've thought of making the transition from daysailing into racing, you couldn't pick a better time of year to ease into competition. Midwinters are also a good time to train new crew, bring along landlubber friends, and get some use out of the big genoa.

What about winter storms — and rain? (Remember rain?) Forecasters can see winter storms coming from a long way off. Everyone

napa river

on site from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Hail VHF 13 on approach or call (707) 562-3556. Max height is 102 feet. A few minutes later you'll pass beneath the Highway 37 bridge (100-ft clearance), then meander through about seven miles of mostly undeveloped wetlands and sloughs before passing beneath the Brazzo Train Bridge (97 feet), which is always up. Napa Valley Marina is less than a mile beyond it.

About five miles farther — beyond the



LYN HINES

— continued

Imola Bridge — is the Napa YC, which offers reciprocal docking privileges to other YC members. (Call in advance: 707-252-3342.) From there it's a long walk or short bike ride to downtown. Wanna go big? Why not hire a limo and treat your crew to some carefree wine tasting?

So if you tire of sailing the Central Bay this winter, or it's just too cold and nasty, follow Art's wake and head upriver.

— andy



Sea Otter sailors compete with their peers from Northern and Southern California in scenic Monterey. For more information on high school sailing, see www.pcisa.hssailing.org.

can watch their orderly march across the North Pacific. You can plan ahead, and, if you don't feel like sailing in the rain, you can stay indoors and catch up on the Volvo Ocean Race instead.

To find midwinter races near you, see *Calendar* on pages 10-14.

— chris

young sailors battle in monterey

Held in Monterey in Flying Juniors, the Sea Otter Regatta is one of two Northern California High School regattas that counts toward the Pacific Coast Interscholastic Sailing Association (PCISA) rankings. It's the kickoff for the PCISA season, which includes the Golden Bear (Treasure Island), Anteater (Newport Harbor), Long Beach, and Gaucho (Santa Barbara) regattas. PCISA originally also included the Cardinal Regatta in Redwood City until the number of boats outgrew that venue.

This year's regatta on October 11-12 involved 30+ boats each for the Gold and Silver divisions, with A and B fleets in each, and sailors coming from a 500-mile radius. Gold Fleet sailors usually have one or two years' experience, and Silver sailors are freshmen and sophomores with varying levels of experience. Boats are launched and crews rotate off the beach, which becomes a safety issue when the swell comes up.

As early as 1970, Bill Wakeman and Jack McAleer started something called the High School League. Redwood High School's Russ Silvestri called them up wanting to know how to start a team. "Pay your money and show up!" said McAleer.

In the mid-1990s, Jack Allen was the junior advisor at Monterey Peninsula Yacht Club. "I recommended a transition from the exclusive use of Lasers to the purchase of Optimists and FJs. We got two FJs and two Optis with funds raised at the annual auction and from the sailing foundation. This allowed the Monterey juniors to attend sailing competitions in the Bay Area." The Sea Otter Regatta was born when the club decided to host an event in Monterey.

"The first year we relied on parents and volunteers to help," said Allen. "We were ambitious those first two years, attending the Rose Bowl Regatta in Southern California and the Redwood City Regatta. We did not fare well in those events because we were novices and lacked good coaching. As a result, I recruited Cam Lewis to coach and run the program." MPYC Junior Commodore Carrick Pierce helped secure an inflatable chase boat.

"The Sea Otter started in 1997," said Lewis, who was a high school coach at the time. "While small, that first regatta was a lot of fun and was considered a success. I think it was the following year, 1998, that two Santa Cruz teams came down, so we had five in all." In the next couple of years teams from Redwood City, Marin Academy, Marin Catholic and Alamitos starting attending the regatta.

When Ray Ward became involved, the numbers were growing, and PCISA wanted another Northern California 'counter' regatta. "PCISA president Tim Hogan eventually brought a few teams up from Southern California," said Ward, "and they were impressed with our conditions and ability to run a quality regatta. It was suggested that the Sea Otter become a counter regatta, as the numbers were rapidly growing."

Today the Sea Otter provides an opportunity for Southern and Northern California coaches to meet and discuss common issues and goals. Another aspect of the Sea Otter involves youth development. About 100 kids go through June/July outreach programs, which are subsidized to give youngsters a free membership for a year. Many of these kids continue on to high school or yacht club sailing.

The Monterey event is rapidly reaching capacity levels, and the need for another Northern California PCISA regatta may be considered, but that will not diminish the popularity of the Sea Otter Regatta.

— lyn hines