

Latitude 38

Latitude 38

VOLUME 388 October 2009

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OCTOBER 2009

VOLUME 388

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On the Right Tack

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Tackful*

The Santana 22 is a classic example of the durability of good design and construction. First introduced over 40 years ago, the class is still going strong.

This year the class racing schedule consisted of a split season, and *Tackful*, Frank Lawler and Cathy Stieroff's Santana, placed first in the first half and second by one point in the second. *Tackful's* Pineapple mainsail was built in 2000 and Pineapple class jib in 2001. More testament to the durability of good design and construction.

Even when the economy isn't weak, sails that stand the test of time, keeping their shape and strength, are a real value. Stated tactfully, we believe our sails succeed where others' fail. Race or cruise, we are committed to building the best sails possible, carefully designed and expertly constructed.

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Cover:

Rumor has it that BMW Oracle's monster trimaran has sailed at nearly 50 knots for an hour. Here, helmsman James Spithill can be seen 'going commando' about four stories high — he reportedly had the cage that would prevent him from falling to his death removed to show solidarity with his crew.

Photo: Gilles Martin-Raget / BMW ORACLE Racing

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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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\$69,000**



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\$153,500**

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Beneteau First 40.7, '00	124,900
Island Packet 40, '98	269,000
Beneteau 393, '03	139,500
C&C 37+/40, '89	104,000
Beneteau 373, '06	153,500
Island Packet 370, '04	299,000
Pearson 36, '85	69,000
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J/109, '03	185,00
Catalina 30, '79	22,500

POWER

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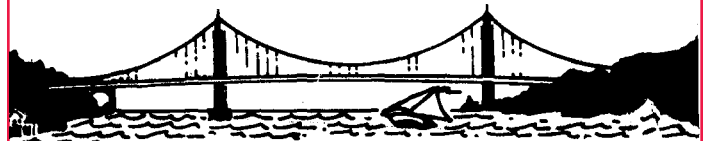
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CALENDAR

Non-Race

Oct. 3 — 2nd Annual SailFest at Sausalito's Modern Sailing School, 1-5 p.m. Free sailboat rides, live music, food and a boat show. Info, (415) 331-8250.

Oct. 3 — 10th Annual Cheoy Lee Rendezvous. All models welcome! Info, (415) 454-3234 or brentsue@inreach.com.

Oct. 3 — Free Flare Demo at Sausalito YC, 9-11 a.m. Bring your expired flares! Reservations, (415) 332-7400 x114.

Oct. 3 — Howl at the full moon on a Saturday night.

Oct. 4-25 — Free sailing at Pier 40 every Sunday courtesy of BAADS. Info, (415) 281-0212 or www.baads.org.

Oct. 7-28 — Wednesday Yachting Luncheon Series at St. Francis YC, 12-2 p.m., \$13.50. Enjoy lunch and a dynamic speaker every Wednesday. All YCs' members welcome. More info under the 'Events' tab at www.stfyc.com.

Oct. 8 — Single sailors of all skill levels are invited to the Single Sailors Association monthly meeting at Ballena Bay YC, 7:30 p.m. Info, www.singlesailors.org or (510) 233-1064.

Oct. 8 — 'Living on the Water on a Yacht' workshop at Tam High in Mill Valley from 6-9 p.m., \$35. Info, (415) 331-7095 or www.livingonayacht.com. Register at www.marinlearn.com.

Oct. 8 — *Saving the Bay: The Story of San Francisco Bay*, four one-hour episodes exploring the history of the Bay. Episodes 1 & 2 to air Oct. 8 on KQED, 8-10 p.m. Episodes 3 & 4 to air **Oct. 15**. Info, www.kqed.org/savingthebay.

Oct. 8-12 — 40th Annual United States Boat Show, a.k.a. the Annapolis Boat Show. Info, www.usboat.com.

Oct. 8-13 — Hey, sailor, it's Fleet Week, featuring the Blue Angels. Details can be found at www.fleetweek.us.

Oct. 10 — Get ready for the Pacific Cup with the first pre-race seminar at Berkeley YC, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Required for racers! \$35 pre-reg, \$40 at door. Info, www.pacificcup.org.

Oct. 10 — Martinez Marina Marine Swap Meet, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. The last of the year. Info, (925) 313-0942.

Oct. 10 — Chula Vista Marina's Swap Meet, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Info, (619) 862-2835 or www.chulavistamarina.com.

Oct. 10 — Janna Cawrse Esarey will read from her hilarious book *Motion of the Ocean* at Book Passage in Corte Madera, 4 p.m. Info, www.byjanna.com.

Oct. 10 — Triton One-Design & Albergs of SF Bay Fall Dinner at Quinn's Lighthouse in Oakland, 7:30 p.m. Info, <http://albergsfbay.memberlodge.com>.

Oct. 10-11 — 17th Annual Northern California Women's Sailing Seminar at Island YC. Info, www.iyc.org/wss.htm.

Oct. 17 — First of three classes by USCGA Flotilla 17 on Yerba Buena: About Boating Safety. Also, How to Read a Nautical Chart (**10/24**), and GPS for Mariners (**11/7**). \$55 each or \$135 for all. Info, FSO-PE@flotilla17.org or (415) 285-1100.

Oct. 17 — SF Maritime Park's Sea Music Concert Series aboard *Balclutha* at Hyde St. Pier, 8-10 p.m. Featuring Robbie O'Connell. \$14 each. Info, (415) 561-6662, ext. 33.

Oct. 17, 24, 31 — Sail aboard SF Maritime National Historic Park's scow schooner *Alma*. Learn the Bay's history on this 3-hour voyage, leaving Hyde St. Pier at 1 p.m. \$35 adult, \$20 kids 6 & up. Info, www.nps.gov/safr.

Oct. 18 — Ha-Ha Welcome to San Diego Party at Downwind Marine, 12-4 p.m. Info, www.baja-haha.com.

Oct. 19 — Electrical Systems seminar for Singlehanded TransPac at KKMI's Boathouse in Pt. Richmond, 7:30-10 p.m. Pac Cup racers welcome! Info, www.sfbaysss.org.

Oct. 19 — Downwind Marine's Cruisers' Seminar Series kicks off with AIS: The Best Collision Avoidance System, by Steven Gloor at Downwind Marine at 7:30 p.m., \$3. More seminars at the same time and location. **10/20**: Sailing Downwind with the Proper Gear & Technique (Bruce Brown); **10/21**:

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CALENDAR

Preparing for the Puddle Jump (Dick Markie); **10/22:** Solar Powered Battery Charging & Systems (Rick Cullen); **10/23:** Cruising Self Sufficiency (Paul Mitchell) & Cruising Woman's Round Table discussion (Susan Mitchell); **11/5:** AIS (Steven Gloor); **11/9:** Pressure Cooking for Cruisers (Steve Ford); **11/10:** Outfitting for Safety at Sea (Bruce Brown); **11/11:** Cruising on 12 Volts (Barry Kessler); **11/12:** Outboard Motor Needs for Cruising in Mexico (Tom Teevin). Info, www.downwindmarine.com.

Oct. 20 — SailMail Marine Communication Seminar by Jim & Sue Corenman and Shea Weston at Pt. Loma Assembly Hall in San Diego, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. \$50/person or \$75/couple. Info, Downwind Marine at (619) 224-2733.

Oct. 25 — Cal Sailing Club's free introductory sail at Berkeley Marina, 1-4 p.m. Info, www.cal-sailing.org.

Oct. 25 — Ha-Ha Halloween Costume Party & BBQ in San Diego West Marine parking lot.

Oct. 26 — Baja Ha-Ha 'Sweet Sixteen' Cruisers Rally starts from San Diego!

Oct. 31 — Dress like a pirate on Halloween.

Nov. 1 — Daylight Saving Time ends.

Nov. 8 — Downwind Cruisers' Kick-Off Potluck BBQ at Downwind Marine in San Diego, noon-4 p.m. Info, www.downwindmarine.com.

Jan. 4-Mar. 26 — Full-Time Sailmaking & Rigging Course at Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building in Port Hadlock, WA. Info, www.nwboatschool.org or (360) 385-4948.

Racing

Oct. 2-3 — 46th Annual San Diego to Ensenada Yacht Race. Southwestern YC, www.southwesternyc.org.

Oct. 2-4 — International Masters' Regatta, a J/105 regatta/reunion for seniors. StFYC, www.stfyc.com.

Oct. 3 — South Bay YRA Summer #7. Contact Richard at rjgreenawald@hotmail.com.

Oct. 3 — YRA-WBRA Southampton. Info, www.yra.org.

Oct. 3 — Wallace Cup, a PHRF championship for East Bay clubs. OYC, www.oaklandyachtclub.com.

Oct. 3 — 6th Annual VNA & Hospice Regatta on Monterey Bay. MPYC, www.mpyc.org or (831) 402-3181.

Oct. 3 — Fall Race #2. SSC, www.stocktonsc.org.

Oct. 3 — Kathryn Eavenson Regatta, for all-women crew and skippers. FLYC, www.flyc.org or (916) 635-3911.

Oct. 3-4 — Islander 36 Nationals hosted by GGYC. Info, www.islander36.org/09race.html.

Oct. 4 — El Toro Stampede. RYC, www.eltoroyra.org.

Oct. 4 — Berkeley YC Chowder Series begins and continues every Sunday through March, except on Berkeley Midwinter weekends. BYC, www.berkeleyyc.org.

Oct. 4 — 29th Annual Women Skippers Regatta to benefit youth sailing. SYC, www.syc.org or race@syconline.org.

Oct. 10-11 — SSS Vallejo 1-2, a mellow way to end the shorthanded season. Info, www.sfbaysss.org.

Oct. 14-15 — IOD Team Races. SFYC, www.sfyyc.org.

Oct. 17 — YRA-HDA Yankee Cup & YRA-ODCA Champion of Champions. IYC, www.yra.org.

Oct. 17 — YRA-WBRA Knox. Info, www.yra.org.

Oct. 17 — South Bay Championship. SeqYC, www.seq-uoiayc.org.

Oct. 17 — El Toro Corkscrew Slough Regatta. Sequoia YC, www.eltoroyra.org.

Oct. 17 — Doublehanded Race. TYC, www.tyc.org.

Oct. 17 — Twin Island Race #3. SYC, www.syc.org.

Oct. 18 — Singlehanded Race. TYC, www.tyc.org.

Oct. 17-18 — Jessica Cup, fleet racing for big woodies.

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Asking **\$79,000**

77' Andrews, '03**	Reduced!	\$899,000
56' Andrews, '94, <i>Charisma</i>	Pending	\$324,900
52' Santa Cruz, '00, <i>Isis</i>		\$520,000
52' Santa Cruz, '99, <i>Renegade</i>		\$595,000
48' J/145, Hull #9, '03**		\$700,000
48' Kristen Steel Offshore, '01, <i>Trinity</i> **	Reduced!	\$529,000
44' J/44, '90, <i>Phoenix</i>		\$219,000
41' J/124, '07, <i>Fortuna</i>	Reduced!	\$298,000
41' Passport, '90, <i>360</i> **	Reduced!	\$239,000
40' Advance, '85, <i>Caribou</i> **		\$159,500
40' J/120, '01, <i>OuiB5</i>	Reduced!	\$199,000
40' J/40, '86, <i>China Cloud</i>		\$159,000
40' Tripp, '92, <i>Snake Oil</i> **		\$85,900
40' Olson, '83, <i>Elka</i>		\$79,000
39' Carroll Marine CM 1200, '95**		\$82,500
39' Schumacher Custom, '96, <i>Recidivist</i>		\$149,000
38' Sydney, '00, <i>Howl</i>	SOLD	
38' X-Yachts 382, '99, X-TC	SOLD	
36' Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 36.2, '97**		\$89,900
36' J/109, '04, <i>Crazy Diamond</i>	Reduced!	\$185,000

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36' J/36, '83**	\$57,000
35' J/105, '04, Hull #617, formerly <i>Chili Pepper</i> **	\$127,500
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35' J/105, '00, Hull #347, <i>Bald Eagle</i>	Reduced! \$109,000
35' J/105, '00, Hull #298, <i>Chilaxn</i>	\$114,000
35' J/105, '99, <i>Life Is Good</i> **	\$83,000
35' J/105, '99, Hull #255, <i>Roadster</i> **	SOLD
35' J/35c, '91, <i>Belle</i> **	\$120,000
35' J/35, '87, <i>Storm Front</i> **	\$55,000
35' 1D35, '01, <i>Tabasco</i>	New Listing \$79,000
35' 1D35, <i>Sweet Sensation</i>	New Listing \$69,000
35' Ericson 35 MkIII, '84, <i>Symmetry</i>	\$49,000

34' J/34, '85, <i>The Zoo</i> **	\$29,900
34' MJM 34z, '08**	\$499,000
34' MJM 34z, '05**	Reduced! \$384,000
34' Classic Hans Pederson Power Yacht, '63**	\$59,000
33' J/100, '06**	\$125,000
33' J/100, Hull #5, '05, <i>Reddie Freddie</i>	Reduced! \$112,000
32' J/32, <i>Independence</i> , '00	\$125,000
30' J/30, '84**	\$34,000
29' J/29, '85, <i>Masthead</i> **	\$28,000
29' MJM 29z, '07**	\$298,000
29' Back Cove, '05, <i>Diamond Lil</i>	Reduced! \$159,000
29' Cobalt 292, '01**	Reduced! \$69,000
28' Alerion Express, '06**	\$110,000
27' NorSea, aft cabin, '91**	SOLD
27' Antrim 27, '98, <i>Luna</i>	Reduced! \$34,900
26' J/80, '01, <i>Lay Down Sally</i>	SOLD
26' Maple Bay, '92**	\$65,000
22' Aquapro Raider 665, '04	Reduced! \$34,900

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2010 Hunter 49	CALL	2000 Hunter 42	\$165,000
2009 Jeanneau 49i	CALL	1986 Cheoy Lee 41	\$89,500
2009 Hunter 45	CALL	2008 Hunter 41 DS	\$228,500
2009 Jeanneau 45DS	CALL	2001 Hunter 410	\$139,950
2008 Jeanneau 45DS	CALL	2001 Catalina 380	\$116,900
2009 Jeanneau 44i	CALL	2004 Hunter 386 LE	\$137,500
2008 Jeanneau 44i Prf.	CALL	2004 Hunter 386 LE	\$136,900
2009 Jeanneau 42DS	CALL	1996 Hunter 375	\$89,900
2009 Hunter 41DS	CALL	1993 Hunter 375	\$71,900
2009 Jeanneau 39DS	CALL	1991 Hunter 37	\$69,950
2009 Jeanneau 39i	CALL	1987 Catalina 36	\$54,500
2008 Jeanneau 39i	\$237,725	1986 Freedom 36	\$69,900
2010 Hunter 39	CALL	2007 Hunter 36	\$149,995
2009 Hunter 38	CALL	2007 Hunter 36	\$149,500
2009 Hunter 36	CALL	2004 Hunter 36	\$103,000
2009 Hunter 33	SOLD!!	1992 Solaris 36	\$89,990
2009 Jeanneau 32	CALL	1996 Bayliner 3485	\$49,995
2009 Jeanneau SunFast	CALL	1997 Catalina 34	\$79,500
2009 Hunter 31	CALL	1999 Hunter 340	\$83,500
2008 Hunter 31	CALL	1999 Hunter 310	\$44,995

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'08 Hunter 31 '09 Hunter 33 '09 Hunter 36



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CALENDAR

StFYC, www.stfyc.com.

Oct. 17-18 — Joe Logan (Mercuries) & Calvin Paige (Stars) Regattas. StFYC, www.stfyc.com.

Oct. 18 — Lady Skippers Race. PresYC, www.presidioryachtclub.org.

Oct. 24 — Ruth Gordon Schnapp Regatta, a fundraiser for Susan G. Komen for the Cure that requires a woman to be at the helm. GGYC, www.ggyc.com.

Oct. 24-25 — Great Pumpkin Regatta, a Halloween tradition. RYC, www.richmondyc.org.

Oct. 24-25 — Fall Dinghy & Olympic Classes. StFYC, www.stfyc.com.

Oct. 31 — YRA-OYRA Jr Waterhouse. RYC, www.yra.org.

Oct. 31 — Red Rock Race. TYC, www.tyc.org.

Oct. 31-Nov. 7 — Dry Creek Vineyard Pro-Am Regatta on Virgin Gorda, hosted by Bitter End YC. Info, www.beyc.com.

October, 1979 — It Was Thirty Years Ago from the article "Phantom Gynecologist" by Sue Rowley:

"Hi, how ya'll?" Ted Turner greeted me in his disarming Andy Griffith drawl. His face was smeared with goopy white sunscreen and he looked like a little boy who had just finished a pie eating contest.

We were on our way out to the starting line of the Six Metre eliminations in a big power yacht towing Ted's boat *Ranger* and Tom Blackaller's *St. Francis VII*. Turner was subdued and philosophical that day, wanting to talk more about the crises in America and his dreams for the future than about sailing. Maybe because he wasn't doing so well.

"I don't really like sailing — never did," he claimed. I told him that was difficult to believe, coming from the recent winner of three major ocean events (Annapolis to Newport, Fastnet and SORC).

"My whole life is competition," he continued. "It's an 18-hour day of top-level, back-to-the-wall competition. I'm burned out. I don't have that killer instinct anymore. For a grown man to be screwing around with sailing boats when our nation faces the greatest crises in history . . . we oughta be working."

"Would you like it better if you were winning?" I asked.

"I'd like it somewhat better, but it wouldn't make that much difference. I've won at so many things in my life that it's disgusting! I've literally had the Midas touch. I have a beautiful wife that I love to pieces; I've got five healthy children; I'm worth over a hundred million dollars; I own baseball, basketball, and soccer teams; I have an eight-square-mile plantation with a mansion like Tara; I just bought a 1,200-acre island and am going to put a little beach house on it; I have a 500-acre farm near Atlanta; I own two private TV networks; I have three or four gorgeous girlfriends; I have everything and I'm only 40 years old. I couldn't list anything more that I want. Everywhere I go, people love me."

"Is that what happiness is for you?"

"No, what I want to do is set an example for common sense and dignity and brotherhood and humanity," he said with touching sincerity, and I began to think that Ted Turner has been misrepresented a bit.

He altered my preconceived image of him as the Muhammed Ali of sailing. I found him to be articulate instead of "mouthy," considerate as opposed to "arrogant," independent rather than "opinionated." He has a style all his own, to be sure, but it is definitely a likeable one.

Perhaps he's mellowing. I hope not too much. Now he's off to play with 12 Metres and, hopefully, to defend the America's Cup. Will he really give up sailing? I wouldn't bet on it.

Nov. 1 — Jack & Jill +1, the woman-skipped triplehanded

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- Mon 10/19 **AIS: The Best Collision Avoidance System** – Steven Gloor, Veteran Cruiser
- Tues 10/20 **Sailing Downwind with the Proper Gear and Technique** – Bruce Brown, Forespar & Johnson Marine
- Wed 10/21 **Preparing for the Puddle Jump/Ocean Passage** – Dick Markie, Dockmaster, Paradise Village Marina, Puerto Vallarta
- Thurs 10/22 **Solar Powered Battery Charging and Battery Systems** – Rick Cullen, President, Blue Sky Energy Inc.
- Fri 10/23 **Cruising Self-Sufficiency** – Paul Mitchell, Circumnavigator
Cruising Women's Round Table Discussion – Susan Mitchell, Circumnavigator
- Tues 10/27 **Cruising Wisdom: Planning Provisions and Storage** – Rod and LeNan Thompson, Veteran Cruisers
- Thurs 10/29 To Be Announced
- Tues 11/3 To Be Announced
- Thurs 11/5 **AIS: The Best Collision Avoidance System** – Steven Gloor, Veteran Cruiser
- Mon 11/9 **Under Pressure! Pressure Cooking for Cruisers** – Captain Steve Ford
- Tues 11/10 **Offshore Safety: Gear You Need and How to Use It** – Bruce Brown, Switlik & Survival Technologies
- Wed 11/11 **Cruising on 12 Volt Batteries, Alternators, Invertors: Tips and Troubleshooting** – Barry Kessler, Xantrex & CEO, Altra Regulators
- Thurs 11/12 To Be Announced
- Fri 11/13 **Outboard Motor Needs for Cruising in Mexico** – Tom Teevin, Aquarius Yacht Services

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Tues 10/20 **Sailmail Marine Communication Seminar**
8:30am-4pm, Point Loma Assembly Hall, 3035 Talbot Street
Intensive training on Internet email service for cruisers with Jim & Sue Corenman and Shea Weston, \$50/person or \$75/couple – includes lunch!
Visit www.sailmail.com/seminars to reserve space.
- Sun 11/8 **Downwind Cruisers' Kick-Off Potluck BBQ**
12-4pm at Downwind Marine. Fun for all!
We bring sodas, burgers & hot dogs.
Cruisers bring salad, side dish or dessert to share.
Meet other cruisers (families, friends and singlehanders).
- 11/9-14 **Downwind Cruisers Week** at Downwind Marine.
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CALENDAR

race on the Estuary. IYC, www.iyc.org.

Nov. 7-8 — Perry Cup for Mercs. MPYC, www.mpyc.org.

Nov. 17 — The Big Sail: Stanford vs. Cal in J/105s. More fun than football! StFYC, www.stfyc.com.

Remaining Beer Can Regattas

BALLENA BAY YC — Friday Night Grillers: 10/2, 10/16, 10/30. Info, (510) 523-2292 or race@bbyc.org.

CAL SAILING CLUB — Year-round Sunday morning dinghy races, intraclub only, typically in Laser Bahias and JY15s. Email Gary and Alistair at racing_chair@cal-sailing.org.

COYOTE POINT YC — Every Wednesday night through 10/28. Torin Knorr, (650) 863-2570 or regatta@cpyc.com.

LAKE TAHOE WINDJAMMERS YC — Every Wednesday night through 10/14. Mike Robinson, (530) 713-9080.

SANTA CRUZ YC — Wet Wednesdays, every Wednesday night during Daylight Saving Time. Larry Weaver, (831) 423-8111 or lweaver@cruzio.com.

SEQUOIA YC — Every Wednesday night through 10/7. Rich Butts, (650) 576-3990 or rcbutts@pacbell.net.

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 either are free or don't cost much to attend. The Calendar is not meant to support commercial enterprises.

October Weekend Tides

date/day	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH
10/03Sat	0510/1.2	1138/5.7	1743/0.7	
		HIGH	LOW	HIGH
10/04Sun	0013/5.1	0540/1.5	1204/5.8	1818/0.3
10/10Sat	0616/4.3	1020/3.4	1624/5.7	2335/-0.1
10/11Sun	0724/4.5	1152/3.3	1740/5.5	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
10/17Sat	0450/1.2	1121/6.3	1737/-0.3	
	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
10/18Sun	0020/5.2	0530/1.7	1153/6.4	1820/-0.6
10/24Sat	0614/4.4	1041/3.5	1601/5.0	2313/0.5
10/25Sun	0712/4.4	1204/3.3	1707/4.7	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
10/31Sat	0351/1.6	1018/5.8	1645/0.3	2323/4.7

October Weekend Currents

date/day	slack	max	slack	max
10/03Sat	0122	0404/3.4E	0738	1029/3.1F
	1327	1622/4.0E	2003	2258/3.4F
10/04Sun	0207	0443/3.3E	0808	1059/3.0F
	1355	1659/4.4E	2040	2337/3.5F
10/10Sat	0049	0354/3.1F	0735	0934/1.6E
	1230	1532/1.8F	1808	2149/4.2E
10/11Sun	0156	0503/3.0F	0838	1040/1.7E
	1358	1644/1.8F	1925	2255/4.1E
10/17Sat	0111	0351/3.5E	0716	1008/3.5F
	1301	1607/4.8E	1952	2255/4.2F
10/18Sun	0205	0437/3.2E	0757	1047/3.3F
	1338	1648/5.0E	2038	2342/4.1F
10/24Sat	0045	0353/2.7F	0721	0918/1.4E
	1249	1521/1.4F	1759	2126/3.4E
10/25Sun	0143	0454/2.5F	0816	1018/1.3E
	1359	1627/1.3F	1905	2223/3.1E
10/31Sat	0016	0248/2.8E	0616	0909/2.8F
	1205	1508/4.1E	1859	2155/3.3F
11/01Sun	0107	0232/2.7E	0552	0844/2.8F
	1136	1447/4.6E	1838	2137/3.6F

Lighted Yacht Parade

THIS YEAR'S THEME
**Christmas
Carols**

33rd Annual
**Saturday
December 5 2009**

Starting around 5:30pm

Oakland/Alameda Estuary

WHAT: Invitation to enter your boat in the parade or to watch the parade from your local waterfront restaurants, or at Wind River Park in Alameda, or at Jack London Square in Oakland.

COLLECTING FOOD & TOYS Please bring unwrapped toys for the Oakland Firefighters Random Acts (www.OfRandomActs.org) distributing toys to kids in need. And collecting food for the Alameda County Community Food Bank (www.accfb.org) distributing food for those in need.

AWARDS Categories include: Best Decorated Sailboat, Best Decorated Powerboat and Best Overall Decorated Boat, with a \$500 Grand Prize to the top winner.

www.LightedYachtParade.com for more info and to register. Entry deadline: Dec. 4, 2008. Entry fee: \$30 (includes a photo of your boat and a skippers goodie bag)

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LETTERS

↑↓ "MMS KILLED MY WIFE"

The following is an excerpt from a group email sent to me by Doug Nash of the Dana Point-based Spindrift 43 *Windcastle*, who is a veteran of the '04 Baja Ha-Ha. It's about the tragic death of his wife Silvie Fink at Epi Island, Vanuatu. She died 12 hours after taking MMS, a so-called alternative medicine prophylactic and remedy for malaria and many other diseases. It was sold to her by another cruising couple. The 76-year-old Nash and his wife Silvie, who was from Mexico, had been cruising the South Pacific for several years.

"My life during the past five weeks has been a nightmare, but I've been supported by many people in the cruising community here and abroad, plus all Silvie's friends and relatives back home in Mexico and in the States. The outpouring of grief has been overwhelming. But no one else can answer all the questions people have asked about what happened to her, so I must do that. Here is a summary:

"While in Port Vila, Silvie decided to purchase some MMS that she'd heard about from a cruising couple. The guy is from Belgium and his wife is from California. I was not happy about her wanting to try the stuff, but I didn't interfere because I knew nothing about it at the time. Besides, she was a grown and savvy woman with lots of experience with all kinds of good and bad medicines. She'd even done a little internet research on MMS over several weeks before trying it. Neither of us thought she would be in any danger from taking it. How dreadfully wrong we were!

"We left Port Vila on August 4, and sailed 90 miles north to Epi, which is another island in the Vanuatu group. We anchored at Lamén Bay the day after their annual canoe race festival. Having decided to stay an extra day at the nice anchorage, Sylvie decided to try MMS. Its proponents had told her that it would prevent malaria, which is prevalent in this part of the world.

"From almost the moment Silvie drank the mixture of MMS and lime juice — which she'd brewed up according to the



instructions of Jim Humble, the principal proponent of the stuff — things went wrong. She became nauseated, and was soon both vomiting and suffering from diarrhea. But since the MMS literature emphasized that this was a normal reaction, she assumed it would pass. It didn't.

"It turned into a day of torture, with Silvie gradually getting worse, to the point of having severe abdominal pains, then urinary pains. I helped her all day, bathing her, comforting her and trying to get liquids into her. But she couldn't keep anything down. About the time it started to get dark, she began to feel faint. That's when I became fully alarmed. She fell into a coma while I was on the VHF calling for assistance.

"With her unresponsive, I put out another radio call, this time for immediate emergency care. Fellow cruisers rushed to our boat within minutes. For over an hour we administered CPR and oxygen. But neither they, nor an adrenalin shot administered by a physician from the village, were able to revive her. Sylvie died aboard *Windcastle* around 9 p.m., just

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12 hours after she'd taken that fatal drink of MMS. Her body was flown back to Port Vila the next day and put in the hospital morgue. I brought *Windcastle* to Port Vila the next day.

"Since then, there has been — because Sylvie hadn't died a natural death — a three-week-long police investigation involving Vanuatu criminal investigators. For one thing, it's illegal for anyone to promote or sell MMS as a medical remedy in Vanuatu. Australian joint command investigators, who aid in law enforcement in Vanuatu, also became involved. That led to a court order and, eventually, a senior pathologist's being flown from Melbourne to conduct a post mortem autopsy. That was two weeks ago. Then Sylvie's son and daughter agreed that her body should be flown to New Zealand for cremation.

"Last week, I accompanied Sylvie's body to Auckland by plane. I was present for the cremation and arranged to have her ashes sent to her daughter Aretha in Mexico City. I'm now back on *Windcastle* in Port Vila, where I await the results of the autopsy from Australia's Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine in Melbourne. I'm also dealing with the need to secure our boat against the approaching cyclone season, which may mean having to sail her to another country.

"My heart has been absolutely crushed by the sudden loss of my dear wife Sylvie. It's so shocking I can hardly believe it. I miss her immensely, and *Windcastle* is empty without her presence. But with all of her relatives and friends, Sylvie, who brought so much joy and happiness into the world and to us, will live on forever in our hearts and minds. I've been told that the villagers at Epi, who had been so entertained by Sylvie's dancing the night before she died, have built a shrine to honor her.

"As for MMS, I wish I'd done a better job of preventing Sylvie, who had become the love of my life, from messing with it. I know now that it's a dangerous, toxic chemical which, if ingested, can be lethal. MMS killed my wife, Sylvie."

So ends Doug's letter.

John Nelson

Crew on *Tres Estrellas*, 35-ft Horstman tri
Cat Harbor

Readers — We feel terrible for Doug's loss.

We looked up MMS, which stands for Miracle Mineral Supplement — oh boy! — at a site called the Alternative Medicine Network. There we learned that the "miraculous" product, which is actually chlorine dioxide, and which needs to be "activated" by vinegar or lime juice, was accidentally "discovered" by Jim Humble. He's a gold miner rather than a chemist or physician, and supposedly stumbled upon it while prospecting for gold in South America. According to the literature, "the proof of the efficacy of this simple protocol was in successfully helping over 75,000 people in several African nations — including Uganda and Malawi — rid themselves, primarily of malaria, but also hepatitis, cancer, and AIDS." As we continued to read, we began laughing so hard we never got to the part that we're sure claimed that MMS isn't generally available because of the vast global conspiracy by the medical profession, big pharma, the American Cancer Society and others. If it weren't so terribly tragic, it would be hilarious.

We're not sure where the couple who sold Sylvie the MMS are right now, or if some authority will charge them with something along the lines of wrongful death.

↕ PUBLICITY STUNTS REFLECT POORLY ON SAILING

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While it may seem reasonable to state that these young people are not old enough to take on these challenges, it overlooks the fact that in many places 14-year-olds can fire lethal weapons and 16-year-olds can drive and join the Armed Forces, where they are put into far more dangerous situations.

If these girls can pull off just getting to the starting line, they will have accomplished more than most 'world class' circumnavigators. If they can dream it, prepare for it, work their way up to it, and then get going, I say we should let them go. After all, this is what youth and adventure are all about. Risky? No doubt. But it's also risky for kids trying to live in most inner cities in North America.

A 17-year-old sailing around the world via the Southern Ocean in a \$250,000 boat? Youth dreams big and pushes the limits. And yes, some of them don't come home. But when they do, they inspire the youth of the world with their dreams and daring.

The idea of a 13-year-old who has lived her life on a boat, who has completed some pretty good passages, and who will have a ton of support along the way, sailing around the world singlehanded might seem crazy. But let's not forget that many other countries don't coddle their kids the way we do. Kids from other places are expected to fully pull their weight from a very early age. I applaud the Dutch for taking a serious but open-minded look at whether Miss Dekker has the skills and capacity to sail a boat around the world.

Is age what really matters? After all, one of California's finest, certainly over the age of majority, has recently demonstrated that age is no guarantee of competence, knowledge, skill or judgment — even for a trip across Clear Lake. And while on that note, thank you, *Latitude*, for the great work you did showcasing the Bismarck Dinius case to the world.

Wayne Bingham
Atlante, Bris de Mer 34
Victoria, Canada

Wayne — What in the world could you possibly mean when you write, "if these girls can pull off just getting to the starting line, they will have accomplished more than most 'world class' circumnavigators?" How could they accomplish something before they even started? Besides, there are any number of six-year-olds who could motor a boat to a starting line. What's the big deal about that?

It's correct that youth dream big and push limits. That's precisely why society tries to make sure that youth has some kind of adult supervision. God knows there's plenty of evidence of what happens to kids when there isn't enough supervision. You should also note that eight-year-olds are physically capable of taking drugs, driving motorcycles and having sex. But as adults, we realize they are not psychologically or emotionally ready to make intelligent decisions about engaging in such activities. Maybe they never will be, but at least we give them time to develop to the point where they can make a reasonable evaluation about what they're getting themselves into.

Let's also talk about specific cases, because the two in question are very different. First, there is the case of Laura Dekker, the 13-year-old from the Netherlands, who wanted to depart in September on a two-year solo circumnavigation. It came as a huge relief to Dekker's mother when the courts refused to let the girl go. Though she initially supported her daughter's bid, Mom finally admitted that she thought Dekker was too young for the trip and only said otherwise because the girl threatened to never speak to her again if she didn't. Mom stated what we thought would be the obvious: Dekker isn't mature enough. We'd also be willing to argue that she might not be physically strong

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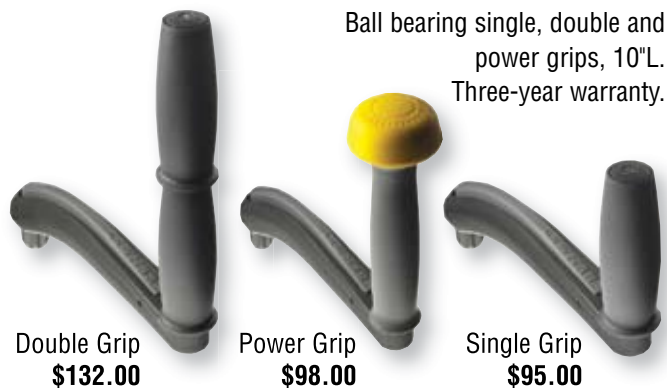
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enough to handle some situations that would likely develop.

The case of 15-year-old Abby Sunderland is at least as extreme. While we wouldn't bet our boat on it, we wouldn't be surprised if she had the physical and emotional chops to do what her older brother Zac did. But the problem is that she wants to surpass him on two counts. Abby wants to do it while she's two years younger, which is pushing it a little, but she also wants to do a non-stop circumnavigation in six months via the Southern Ocean in an Open 40. This is a supremely greater challenge, sort of like the difference between climbing the highest peak on Catalina and climbing Mt. Everest. In the last Vendée Globe, which is essentially the same route that she's planning to take, only 12 of the 30 highly experienced and well-equipped sailors managed to complete a similar course. So in the case of Sunderland, we're talking either the monumental arrogance of youth or, more likely, a monumental ignorance of the dangers of the route. It strikes us as being like a novice surfer's wanting to catch her first wave at the Pipeline.

But it all comes down to risks and rewards, doesn't it? Since you acknowledge that 'some won't come home', we're curious about what kind of mortality rate you deem to be acceptable for female sailors in their early and mid-teens. And even if they do survive, there is no guarantee that they'll be the same when they come back. The great Ellen MacArthur, who was a very experienced ocean racer before she took off to set an around-the-world record, has never been the same person since. So even if these girls survive, and survive with their faculties intact, you still have to ask yourself what their lives are being risked for. A segment on Good Morning America? A minor book deal? In our opinion the risk/reward ratio has reached the point where these things are nothing but publicity stunts and, as such, reflect poorly on sailing in general.

↑↓ NEREIDA STARTS NON-STOP CIRCUMNAVIGATION

While refueling this morning at St. Peter Port, Guernsey, I noticed a sailboat that appeared to have spent the night at the fuel dock. Her name was *Nereida*. As the dock was crowded, the surge significant, and the woman on deck apparently alone, I offered assistance casting off. When I asked if she was singlehanded, the woman said she was. She asked if we read *Latitude 38*. Since we're from San Francisco, we said that of course we do. Then she told us that she had been written about in *Latitude* several times.

Now that we have internet access again, I've searched *Latitude* for *Nereida* references, found some, and am now confused. An article from June 30, 2008, has *Nereida* lost on the beach between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo. But an October 31, 2007, article had *Nereida* leaving Cocos-Keeling bound for South Africa. It's definitely the same boat and person — Jeanne Socrates. Both boat and person seemed undamaged in '09 when we saw them in the English Channel. How do you explain this?

Shirlee Smith & John Forbes
Solstice, Sceptre 41
San Francisco

Baja Ha-Ha '07 / Currently cruising in Europe

Shirlee and John — The very simple explanation is that it's not the same *Nereida*. As reported in the August 2008 issue of *Latitude*, the original *Nereida*'s autopilot failed, and drove her up on a beach just short of Zihua — and just 50 miles short of Socrates' completing a singlehanded circumnavigation. The boat was a total loss. Thanks to an insurance settlement, the irrepressible Jeanne was able to commission a new *Nereida*, this time a *Najad 380* instead of a *Najad 361*. That's the one you



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saw at St. Peter Port. But get this: Jeanne is planning to start



LATITUDE / LADONNA

Jeanne Socrates has a new 'Nereida' — two feet longer than the old one, seen here in Hanalei.

a second circumnavigation — this one non-stop — at the beginning of this month. (We're giving her credit for the first one.) Read more about it in Sightings.

And a tip of the Latitude hat to you, too. You folks have covered a lot of ground since the '07 Ha-Ha.

↑↓ THE BAY BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Regarding Don Perillat's letter in the September issue, the boat on the cover of August's *Latitude* is a TP 52, not a Farr 40. It makes a difference to those of us who crew on the two Farr 40s on the Bay. It probably also makes a difference to the crews of the TP 52s as well, because we're all pretty decent people, and racers who pride ourselves on being good citizens.

While the Bay does indeed belong to all, it would be really good for non-racers to note that these boats are moving a lot faster than they might seem. So while it might appear that there is enough time to cross in front of a racing boat, there might not be, and therefore the crews of the two boats might be put in jeopardy. In addition, what are actually multiple boat lengths of clearance may seem to be mere feet to someone on a slower boat who is watching a fleet of 40- to 50-ft boats coming down at them at 15-20 knots.

It bears noting that what we're doing is pushing already fast boats as much as we possibly can. And sometimes things can go a little pear-shaped, either through a mechanical malfunction or boat handling error. While we do appreciate the attention, keeping a safe distance from an obvious race course is probably a good idea.

Nick Salvador
Richmond

Nick — We enjoy racing and love shaving transoms as much as the next sailor. And we agree — for folks not used to racing, a boat coming at them at 15 knots may seem a lot closer than it actually is. Nonetheless, we think you've got everything backwards. Racing on the Bay is an exception to the normal use, which is why race organizers are required to get permits for races. People doing regular old sailing don't need a permit. So on some level, racers should always think of themselves as being the burdened vessel.

As for the notion that folks on non-racing boats should "keep a safe distance from an obvious race course," we find it ridiculous on two counts. First, race courses on the Bay are rarely obvious. For instance, sometimes Little Harding will be a rounding mark, and sometimes it won't. So how is anybody without a course sheet to know whether the fleet is going to sail right by, make a 90-degree rounding toward the Cityfront, or make an 180-degree turn and head back down the Bay? Second, there are many situations when racing boats sail upwind in the middle of the Bay to take advantage of an ebb and then hug the shore to sail downwind in the flood with their chutes up. Do you really think that folks on a six-knot boat headed from Mile Rock to South Beach Marina should have to



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sail around the north side of Alcatraz to 'keep a safe distance from an obvious race course'? Or to make sure a racing boat having a mechanical malfunction or boathandling error doesn't T-bone them and their crew?

For the record, when we ran the boat on the cover of the August issue, we identified it correctly as a TP 52.

↑↓ WAS KANYE WEST DRIVING THE SAILBOAT?

Our crew of eight recently completed a day on the Bay. We anchored out in the Berkeley Circle and ran the 505 Worlds. Unfortunately, the day ended on a sour note.

During the 505 racing we felt completely safe. Despite being surrounded by 505s travelling at high speeds, we knew they were being sailed by some of the best small boat sailors around. Shortly after the last 505 finished, we were also delighted to see some boats practicing for the Big Boat Series. After one of the big boats headed downwind and popped their chute, they started coming our way. To my amazement, a boat similar to the TP 52s I've seen in your magazine headed right for us!

As this big boat came closer, there was no indication that they intended to obey the Rules of the Road, which requires that a boat sailing keep clear of a boat at anchor. Instead of staying clear, when the boat got to less than 20 yards of us, her crew began waving at us to move out of their way! It seemed the skipper made no attempt to avoid collision, and collide with us they did.

Could somebody please inform racers that the Bay belongs to all mariners, not just them?

This incident scared the hell out of me and my crew.

Scott Gordon
W.L. Stewart, Grand Banks
San Francisco

Scott — What you've described is not a case of bad manners, but what would seem to be incompetence or worse. We're curious what their explanation was for hitting your boat.

↑↓ COURTESY AND COMMON SENSE ON THE BAY

Your responses to letters are usually right on, and I really appreciate your ability to admit when you were wrong. Some of us old farts who have been sailing for 50 years have trouble admitting we occasionally make mistakes.

In your response to Don Perillat in the September issue, you say that had you been him, "we would have held our course and speed to the bitter end" when sailing through a fleet of large boats racing on the Bay. Having raced and cruised on the Bay and many other locations, I don't think that this was good advice, and it is not consistent with other advice you have given.

In your response to Jordan, Kelly and Marnie in the same issue, regarding a problem of there not being enough room for two boats to exit the San Francisco Marina at the same time, you state: "We can think of countless situations when we voluntarily gave up our rights to prevent a potentially dangerous situation from developing." That is good advice and consistent with what you have written in the past.

When cruising on the Bay during a weekend, I watch out for racing boats and make every effort to stay out of their way. Although the racing vessels may not have any greater rights than I have, why get in the way of a fleet of boats that are competing against each other? I think that courtesy and common sense require that boats not racing make a reasonable effort to stay out of the racing fleets. When racing, I have sometimes yelled at a cruising boat: "We're racing!" Most boats



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respond by tacking or taking appropriate action to allow us to hold our course.

P.S. Your thumbnail report on cruising to Southern Cal may have been more appropriate as a separate article, rather than a three-page response to a letter to the editor.

David Hammer
Weaverville

David — Like you, we're always happy to make an effort to stay well clear of racing fleets. After all, we know how much fun it is to try to get every bit of speed out of a boat, and therefore take pleasure in not interfering with other sailors having a good time.

But in the case of the Perillats, it's our understanding that they didn't sail into a racing fleet, but rather were surprised to find themselves being overtaken by such a fleet. Such situations happen all the time on the Bay. When they do, we still think holding course and speed is the best option, as it gives the skipper of the overtaking boat the easiest and best chance to avoid hitting them. As courtesy and common sense are a two-way street, we think it's incumbent upon the skippers of racing boats not to scare the hell out of daysailing boats they are overtaking.

As for the very long response to the inquiry about sailing in Southern California, we had intended for it to be the heart of a 2.5 page article. But when it comes to laying out a magazine, there are lots of variables that aren't decided until a day or two before we go to the printer, so we have to be flexible. Having been at this for over 32 years, we ask you to trust us that we did the best we could under the circumstances. But we'll try to do better in the future.

↑↓ **TO HECK WITH FIVE YEARS, LET'S DO IT THIS YEAR!**

We saw the letter about the Delta-based Westsail 32 *Bag End* being members of the 'Over 30 Club'. Dan and Nancy Chism were recently in the Seychelles, still cruising after 30 years of living and raising three kids aboard in Antioch. They left Antioch to start their cruise almost 20 years ago, and are currently on their way to South Africa.

We met the Chisms in the Chagos Archipelago in the middle of the Indian Ocean in April '08. At the time, we were on a friend's boat sailing from Malaysia to the Seychelles. It was Dan and Nancy who convinced us to make our dreams happen now rather than making a five- or 10-year plan. They said if we waited five or 10 years, it would never happen. We took their advice! So although we're just one year into our five-year plan, we're starting our shakedown sail right now and will be setting off for Mexico in November. Although this will not be our first sailing trip, it will be our first boat. In 30 years we hope to become members of the '30 Year Club' ourselves.

Kim & James Knull
Doin' It
Maui, HI

Kim and James — Congratulations! We hope to cross paths somewhere down the line. And thank you for the Chisms' email address. The last one we tried didn't seem to work.

↑↓ **NOT ALL PETROCHEMICALS ARE EVIL**

It sure looks like those fine people enjoying "harnessing the power of the wind" in your most recent 'Lectronic are doing so thanks to the power of those nasty petrochemicals, what with that fiberglass boat and Dacron sails and all.

Brian Guck
Planet Earth

THANK YOU

To Our Loyal Customers:

After more than four decades, Anderson's Boat Yard in Sausalito will be permanently closing its facilities at the end of November. Forty-two years ago I started this company with the intent of providing the Bay's best quality workmanship in the maritime industry at a fair price. My sons, Tom and Ron Jr., and grandson Tom Jr., came into the business and fine-tuned what that service meant to our clients over the past decade. Together we built the finest boat yard on the San Francisco Bay.

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Throughout the years we've weathered numerous storms – atmospheric, political and economic – but in the end it was none of the above that led to our closure. The owner of the land that Anderson's Boat Yard sits on simply inherited a new manager, who has other plans for the space we've occupied. We have been informed our lease will not be renewed under any circumstances. We are attempting to relocate to a new location in Sausalito: STAY TUNED!

My sons, grandson and I wish to thank all of our loyal customers who have become friends over the years, and to wish you well. Next month, I'll have a bit more to relate, but for now, please accept our sincere gratitude for the business and confidence you've placed with Anderson's Boat Yard since 1967.

Sincerely,



Ron Anderson

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LETTERS

Brian — We're not sure which boats or what 'Lectronic you're referring to, but your point is well taken. However, it's worth considering the astonishing durability of fiberglass boats and Dacron sails. Many of the fiberglass boats built 50 years ago in Southern California and other places are not just going strong, many of them are being cruised around the world. And most of them will probably be good for at least another 50 years. In addition, some cruisers are sailing around the world with Dacron sails that were built 30 years ago. All things considered, fiberglass boats and Dacron sails seem to be some of the most lasting uses of petrochemicals — wouldn't you agree?

↑↓IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE . . .

The photos you ran in the September 14 'Lectronic



CRAIG ALLENDER

of the wreckage found on Muir Beach sure looks like the fuselage of a small Piper Arrow or similar small plane. Are you sure it was a wrecked boat?

Brian McGuire
Oakland

Has Piper started installing sailtrack on the exterior of their planes?

Brian — Unless they've started to

put boat cleats on the outside of airplanes, we're pretty sure it was a sailboat.

↑↓THE ADVENTURES OF CACTUS LADY AND NACHO

I bow to the Cactus Lady and her infinite wisdom regarding the SOS sent out by Liz Clark on *Swell* for funds to help repair her boat. I — like many other sailors — return to the grind to replenish the kitty, upgrade our boat, and for other reasons. As Nacho said, "I am the gatekeeper of my destiny, and I will have my day in the sun." But hell, if someone wants to play Santa Claus for other people, who am I to stand in their way? Joy to the world!

Jerry Metheany
Rosita, Hunter 46
Mexico

Jerry — Pardon our ignorance, but who are Cactus Lady and Nacho?

↑↓I CAN PADDLE, STAND, WIGGLE AND FALL

First, regarding the Liz Clark controversy, it may have been a wee bit rash of her to make a request for money, but I'm shocked at some of the vehement responses. Some people just need to re-calibrate what it is they choose to get worked up about. If somebody doesn't agree with her request for money, just don't send her any, end of story.

As for Liz, I'd be happy to kick in to help refuel her dream, but perhaps she can offer some time aboard *Swell* to help offset expenses. I also dream about cruising the South Pacific, but regrettably don't know of anybody that I can crew for. By the way, I'm a physician — read: responsible community member and upstanding citizen. I'm also a novice sailor, having regularly sailed in ocean races out of the Morro Bay YC. But I yearn to break the coastal sailing bonds and experience sailing trips to exotic locales. Oh yeah, Liz would have to agree to teach me to surf as well. As of right now, I can just paddle, stand, wiggle and fall.



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LETTERS

Actually, I don't think it would be a bad deal for her. She would get to keep on cruising in trade for a temporary boat buddy and some surfing lessons. Heck, I'd even submit to a thumbs up or thumbs down inspection by her parents, just so she wouldn't be inviting a total stranger aboard. So maybe the wise and omnipotent *Latitude 38* gods will ferry this offer to Liz.

Gary Hatch
 Former owner of *Thalia*, 26-ft Privateer ketch
 Cayucos, CA

Gary — We know you mean well, but despite having graduated from medical school you're flunking *Men and Women 101*. If Liz wanted to run *Swell* as a charter boat, she could pack her Cal 40 with guys 52 weeks a year. You're not understanding what she's dedicating this phase of her life to. Offering to present yourself to her parents for inspection also proves you mean well, but that you're also clueless. Young women will make their own decisions about who they will spend 24/7 with, thank you.

But here's some good news. If you want to sail across the Pacific, you shouldn't have much trouble getting a bunk. You can meet people at the Ha-Ha Kick-Off Party in San Diego on October 25, in Cabo on November 6 at the end of the Ha-Ha, or at the Pacific Puddle Jump events: the PPJ Seminar at the San Diego West Marine on October 24 or the Kick-Off Party at Vallarta YC in Nuevo Vallarta on February 6. And don't forget to sign up on our online Crew List — as we went to press, there were no fewer than 150 skippers looking for long-distance crew. Check out the listings — and create your own profile — at www.latitude38.com/crewlist/Crew.html.

↑↓QUIT YER WHININ'

I disagree with people who are whining about Liz Clark "begging" for money. I've enjoyed reading her many reports — keep 'em coming, Liz! — in *Latitude*. So when I learned that she was in need of funds to repair the problem with her keel, I just jumped right on PayPal and sent her some money. She did not ask or expect anything. I just wanted to help.

I did the same thing when I heard that Bismarck Dinius needed money, too. His was a different need, but a need nonetheless.

My donation was a modest \$100 to both Liz and Bismarck. It wasn't going to break the bank for me, or make them rich. I just care about both causes, so it seemed like the right thing to do. Besides, I don't smoke, drink coffee, or drink that much alcohol, so I could send them the money I might otherwise have used for those things.

I don't have a boat right now and don't sail that much either. But I chartered a monohull in the British Virgins four years ago. And this summer I'm going to Belize to charter a catamaran with my wife, daughter, brother, brother's girlfriend, nephew and ex-girlfriend over Thanksgiving. The wife, bless her, approved of the ex-girlfriend coming along. I still enjoy my limited time on the water and reading about people's sailing adventures.

Vance Sprock
 Cupertino

↑↓THE GOOD SAMARITAN HANDICAP RATING SYSTEM

I did the Ha-Ha last year with my little Gemini catamaran *Double Play!!*, and had a great time. We later cruised down as far as Manzanillo, then returned north to leave the boat on the hard at Puerto Vallarta. We'll fly back to the boat in January and head farther south.

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LETTERS

While back in the States, I bought some new stuff for my boats, including a 44-lb Bruce anchor, 200 feet of chain, and three gallons of bottom paint. It's all top quality, but not exactly the kind of stuff I could bring on an airplane. Luckily, my friend Arjan Bok is doing the Ha-Ha this year with this homebuilt 43-ft cat *Rotkat*. Although Bok is anxious to show off his cat's speed, he has nevertheless offered to carry all my heavy stuff to Puerto Vallarta. So it sure would be nice if the Ha-Ha folks could adjust his handicap in return for his carrying the extra weight to help a fellow sailor.

Don Parker
Double Play!!, Gemina 105Mc
Alameda

Don — It's great the way cruisers help other cruisers. We'll plug that info into the program that calculates the handicaps for each boat, so don't worry, he's covered.

HA-HA VETS SHOULD FLY THEIR FLAGS PROUDLY

I love the idea that the fireboat in San Diego, with all its hoses squirting, will be leading a parade of boats out to the Ha-Ha starting line this year. And that it's likely there will be other spectator boats coming out to the starting area. I think Ha-Ha vets should fly their old burgees. We'll be there with our '07 flag flying!



NICHOLS BOATS

Debbie Farmer
Oasis, Mariner 48
San Diego

It won't be raining, but cruisers are advised to wear their foulies for the start of the Ha-Ha.

Debbie — It should be something. We'll see you there.

"NO WAY WILL A PRETTY BITCH BEAT ME!"

For two years, I cruised with my dog Perra Bonita aboard my Gulfstar 41 *Someday*. But last year I left her home when I went cruising, and I missed her dearly.

Other than the cost of airfare back and forth, and finding a place to stow her travel house, I had no problems with her in Mexico. I obtained a 'Pet Passport' that shows all her shots. It was cursorily examined each time I returned to the U.S.

Perra Bonita is a 70-inch-long mutt who loves kids and who could outswim Mark Spitz. At Matanchen Bay, she swam nearly one mile from the boat to where I was on the shore. I think she was worried that I was spending too much money — or maybe getting too drunk to drive the dinghy home. I believe she was perfectly capable of running the dinghy, and not only that, could most likely have landed it in 3-ft surf.

Perra Bonita doesn't have a death wish, though. While exiting the river at Tenacatita Bay, big rollers — and I mean huge! — started to break just as we hit them with the dinghy. My dog was smart enough to bail. To restore her faith in my ability to negotiate waves, I made her wait until we were outside the surf line before I let her reboard. When she shook herself, she sprayed my hair and clothes.

Bill Nokes
Someday, Gulfstar 41
San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua

Bill — In a remarkable coincidence, Mark Spitz just dropped



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LETTERS

by the office. He says that while he's not as young or as fit as he was when he won all those Olympic medals, there is no way he'll be beaten by a dog.

Sailing Trivia: What boat did Mark Spitz race in the TransPac, and in what year?

↑↓NEXT STOP: CHINA CAMP

I just read the September issue, and loved hearing about different places in the Bay I can visit with my boat. I used the information to spend a few nights at Angel Island with my



COURTESY WISDOM

Clausen uses Angel Island's webcam to check out the moorings at Ayala Cove.

brother from San Diego. By the way, Angel Island has a web cam that shows the dock and mooring field at Ayala Cove. It's a good way to see how crowded it is and if the sun is out at that time.

And having now read about

China Camp in the current *Latitude*, I'm planning on doing an overnight there over a long weekend.

Greg Clausen
Wisdom, Santana 30
Marin County

↑↓"I'M APPALLED AT THE LACK OF EMPATHY"

On the evening of September 1, I received a phone call from an old sailing buddy who was obviously distressed. He called because he needed information on getting from Avalon to Long Beach with his Cal 34, and getting a berth there. My friend, who lives at Pearlblossom in the high desert, had just received an alarming call from his family that the gigantic Station Fire was threatening his community and home. He called me because, until I moved to Seattle last year, I'd kept my boat at Long Beach's Shoreline Marina.

My friend had asked the harbormaster at Avalon for a mooring, saying that he needed to get home as soon as possible. If he'd been assigned a mooring, he and his wife could have caught a ferry for the hour ride to Long Beach, where he could have picked up the car that I leave there. But the Avalon harbormaster told him the moorings weren't the property of Avalon, and he therefore couldn't give him permission to leave his boat. So my friend called me.

Ultimately, my friend and his wife took their boat to Long Beach, where they arrived at 9 p.m. The marine patrol told them that while slips were available, they had to wait until the office opened the next morning at 10 a.m. to get one. As a result, my friend and his wife sailed through the night and half the next day to get to Ventura, where they have a slip. It was hard and frustrating but they had no alternative. Fortunately, when they made it home, their house wasn't damaged.

I'm appalled at the lack of cooperation and lack of empathy displayed by the authorities at both Avalon and Long Beach! There wasn't anyone in the United States who didn't know that the biggest fire ever was burning in Southern California. I'm shocked that my friend didn't get more cooperation. Has the boating community gotten so callous as to not lend a hand to someone obviously in need?

Per Curtiss
Aquavit, Freedom 44
Seattle

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LETTERS

Per — Let's make sure that we distinguish between the "boating community" — which invariably takes care of itself — and the law enforcement agencies in Avalon and Long Beach that run the moorings and slips in those respective places. Even so, something sounds a little funny. The Harbormaster's office in Avalon is the agency that rents out the moorings, so your friend must have misunderstood at least part of what he was told. It may have been that all the moorings were taken or reserved because it was just before Labor Day weekend, one of the busiest weekends of the year there. And trust us, officials at places like Avalon have been burned countless times by earnest people who "must have" a mooring because of one claimed emergency or another. Then, too, maybe the harbormaster did a little checking and found that your friend's home wasn't in immediate danger.

That the marine patrol in Long Beach wasn't more cooperative doesn't seem right, particularly if there were open berths. Of course, your friend could have anchored off one of the oil islands for the night, then gotten a slip at 10 a.m., and would have been able to get to his house six hours earlier than he did by going all the way to Ventura.

Had we been in your friend's Top Siders and been turned down by the harbormaster at Avalon, we either would have anchored our boat off Avalon, and been careful to let the people on other anchored boats know about our emergency, or we would have taken our boat to Newport Beach, knowing that the Sheriff's Office, which rents out the slips and moorings, is open 24 hours a day, and that they always have open slips or moorings.

↑↓ BAIT FISH BUFFET

Last week three dolphins cruised through Pete's Harbor in Redwood City. Presumably they were there to take advantage of the full moon high tide and the bait fish buffet that comes



CYNTHIA SHELTON

First there are dolphins in the ocean, now they're in Pete's Harbor. Where next, Lake Tahoe?

with it. I got in our dinghy to take photos. The dolphins were toying with us a bit, but then skedaddled when too many curious boaters came out to gawk.

Cynthia Shelton
La Bonita, Lyndsey 30
Redwood City

↑↓ A WHALE OF A TAIL

On August 21, my son John and I departed Channel Islands Marina headed for Mariner's Basin in Mission Bay, San Diego, some 145 miles away. Staying inside the shipping lane, my San Juan 24 hit 7.8 knots sailing wing-on-wing, which is in excess of her theoretical hull speed. It was a glorious run in 20 knots, although having gybed in those winds once, I impressed upon my son the inadvisability of doing it again.

I was feeling good, as I'd just spent three delightful weeks in the Channel Islands with my fiancée. I'd proposed to her



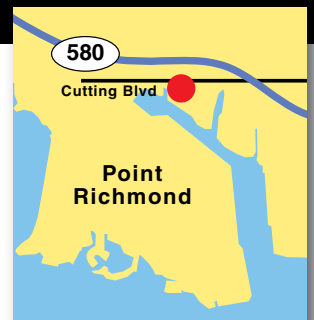
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LETTERS

at Coches Prietos, and she said yes! In addition, we'd stopped everywhere, visiting old friends and making new ones. When we got to Oxnard, my son showed up with the car and traded places with her.

We rocketed cross Santa Monica Bay, crossed the L.A./ Long Beach shipping lanes at night with all lights on and the spotlight handy. Despite having no engine, we dodged eight container ships before we ran out of wind at the oil rigs off Huntington Beach. After we'd slatted for two hours, there was a sudden 25 knots from the southeast, meaning it was right on our nose. After it hit, NOAA was nice enough to issue a weather alert. Thanks.

Down to a storm jib and a reefed main in big and sloppy seas, John sudden yelled, "Whale!" It was a breaching whale not more than 30 feet in front of us. Its spume hit the main of my boat. I didn't think I'd be able to miss what appeared to be an 80-ft long beast, and I know for sure that we sailed over its flukes. Running through my mind in a nano-second were these thoughts: Where's the ditch kit? I need my belt knife to cut away the lashings on the kayak. Will there be time to get the paddles and my passport and driver's license from down below? Will there be time to get off a Mayday?

Miraculously, the whale didn't hit us with its flukes. "Camera!" I yelled to John. He grabbed the Canon from



JOHN PRINGLE

The fuzzy blue whale tail — it doesn't occur that way in nature, only when the shutter speed is too slow.

below, and got a photo of the whale's flukes back in the air a few seconds later. Then we saw the whale-watching boats come pouring out of Newport, packed with people who had paid \$50 each for a chance to take a photo of a whale from 200 yards away. John and I high-fived

each other, for none of the people on those boats had the remotest chance of experiencing what we just had.

It was a hard sail the rest of the way to Mission Bay, but my boy is a trooper. He was born in Bequia, so he can hand, reef and steer, and has great reserves of fortitude. When I caught some sleep, I was comfortable with him at the helm — which is more than I can say when I'm with a lot of so-called sailors.

Like my old buddies Don Street and John Smith, I'm a sailor, so my boat doesn't have an engine.

William 'Billy Bones' Pringle
Sea'Scape, San Juan 24
Mission Bay

Billy — Congratulations on your impending nuptials!

You sound like an experienced and intrepid sailor to us, so we're puzzled by why you would be concerned about gybing in 20 knots of wind. If you were doing 6 or 7 knots, the apparent wind would have been only 13 or 14 knots. Gybing in such conditions wouldn't concern us anywhere near as much as trying to dodge ships in Southern California without an engine. We admire your 'sail-only' attitude, but there are so many ships out there now.

Based on our experience and that of others, whales seem to have made a huge comeback from Alaska all the way down to mainland Mexico. This being the case, everyone sailing from California to Mexico should have a plan of action ready in the

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LETTERS

event of a collision with a whale.

↑↓ **BOY, YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL**

In last month's *Changes* you ran a photo of just two tips of the sun showing over the horizon because the rest of it



COURTESY DAYDREAM

had been blocked by the earth in a solar eclipse. When the earth, moon and sun are all aligned — which they had to be in this case — it's called syzygy.

Ken Schulze
Williwaw, Hobie 33
Santa Cruz

Things may have to be syzygistic for this to occur, but we don't think that's the name for two tips of sunlight peeking over the horizon.

some name for just the two tips of the sun showing over the horizon.

Ken — Thanks for that answer. But we're actually wondering if there isn't

↑↓ **EVERYONE PAYS AS FEW TAXES AS POSSIBLE**

The article about Bill Joy's 190-ft sailing yacht *Ethereal* was interesting — but I didn't like the photo showing the oversized surfboard flying a foreign flag. Having often cruised the ECW, I'm sick and tired of owners who are ashamed to have their national flag flying on their boats. And that goes for Tiger Woods and his big powerboat on Lake Worth, Florida, too.

I know foreign flags are flown to avoid taxes, but I believe that if you use the benefits and privileges of your country, you should fly that country's flag. Maybe we should make the owners of such boats turn in their passports. I bet many of these 'foreigners' wear American flag buttons on their suits at political rallies. And I'm writing this as a tree-hugging, bleeding-hearted liberal.

Jack Mooney
Utopia Too, Westerly Centaur 26
Hudson, Florida

Jack — There are several good reasons why all big yachts — which for a whole different set of good reasons are owned by corporations rather than individuals — are flagged outside of the United States, and these reasons have nothing to do with being "ashamed" of this country. First of all, flagging a vessel outside of the United States means that the corporation can have anyone be the master. Because of what many perceive to be archaic U.S. law, foreign citizens can't master a U.S.-flagged vessel in U.S. waters. Second, vessels flagged outside the United States do not need to provide USL&H Workman's Compensation, which means fewer hassles and lower insurance premiums. In addition, foreign-flagged vessels don't need to report payroll taxes for employees.

But let's not kid anyone, the main reason such vessels are flagged outside the United States is to save money on taxes. People might have differing opinions on the morality of taking steps to limit one's tax liability, but it's pretty clear that just about everyone does it. For some people, it's buying stuff over the internet from out-of-state sellers; for others, it's taking delivery of expensive jewelry or art at a second home in a no-sales-tax state, and for yet others, it's using the income tax code to their best advantage.

It would be easier to get angry about it if passing out huge



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LETTERS

tax breaks to favored friends wasn't so popular with cities, states and the federal government. Just the other day Berkeley — about as left-wing a place as there is in the universe — fell all over itself rushing to give mighty Bayer \$100 million in tax credits to keep and upgrade its facility in that city. The state of Michigan has given the most lucrative Hollywood studios tens of millions in tax credits to film in their state rather than California. And there is a whole host of states that 'steal' from neighboring states by having either no state sales tax or no state income tax.

Given such an uneven playing field for being assessed taxes, and the number of people in the higher levels of government who have been found to have outright cheated on their taxes, it's not hard to understand the reasoning by the people who own the corporations that own the big yachts.

↑↓ **BOOZERS IN BAJA ARE A BORE**

Can you tell me what the policy is on drinking in the Ha-Ha, both while offshore and at the stops along the way? I'm a moderate drinker, but I don't like being around people who drink to the point they make fools of themselves and endanger themselves and others.

Name Withheld By Request
San Diego

N.W.B.R. — We're on the same page as you, because while we do enjoy a few cocktails a week, we detest irresponsible drinkers. Our recommendation for people in the Ha-Ha — and everybody else sailing — is to not drink at all while underway. We know some folks will have a glass of wine with dinner, but we think anything beyond that would compromise safety and therefore be foolish. While ashore, those who choose to drink need to do so responsibly, for not only are there more physical dangers in Mexico — potholes in sidewalks, rickety ladders up piers, and shorebreaks — but everyone in the Ha-Ha is also a representative of the United States and sailing. The general rule is that you should behave in public the way you would behave in front of your best friend's children.

Once everybody makes it to Cabo, of course, a little celebration is in order. That's why there's an annual gathering of a couple of hundred Ha-Ha folks at Squid Roe on Thursday night for group dancing and, for those who wish, cocktails. It's usually quite wholesome for the first couple of hours, but once the younger folks and locals take over, it sometimes gets a bit more adult. While the large security team at Squid Roe is pretty lenient, the police on the streets will not put up with noisy or obnoxious drunks. Misbehave in public, and six serious cops will jump out of the back of a white pick-up and unceremoniously take your butt to jail. Unlike cops in the States, they won't discuss the matter with you, they'll just haul you off. And Lord help you if you try to resist. We're pleased to say that, despite all the fun Ha-Ha folks have had in Cabo, we're not aware of any who have had so much fun that they were hauled off to jail.

For 15 years the Ha-Ha has been a sailing and social event, not a drinking event, and we're confident everyone will do their part this year to keep it that way.

↑↓ **"DOING MY PART FOR THE ECONOMY"**

Having done the Ha-Ha last year as a hired gun, I was hoping to do it again this year with my new-to-me boat. Unfortunately, it looks as if I won't be able to blow the Ha-Ha staff's minds with my newest boat until next fall's Ha-Ha 17.

After having some issues with the owner of the boat I sailed aboard to Cabo, I shut down my yacht repair business and

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LETTERS

went into chartering. By doing this, I figured I could at least control who goes and stays on my boat. (By the way, I'm happy to report that the owner of the boat I did the Ha-Ha on and I have made amends and become good friends.)

Anyway, my new boat is *Cloudia*, a 1920 85-ft LOA Colin Archer design. She's currently at the Driscoll yard in Mission



COURTESY CLOUDIA

It's hard to believe but Capt. Blanchard's other boat is an Islander 34, which he calls "rocket fast."

Bay getting a refit. *Cloudia* is probably one of the last of the big wood hulls to be re-planked. I even had a hard time finding vertical grain planks — and I grew up in the Northwest where my family was in the lumber business. The problem in finding the wood is that the government won't let us harvest the good trees needed for this purpose anymore. But by buying a semi-truck and scrounging from Alaska all the way down to Eugene, I managed to get 7,000 board-feet of Alaskan yellow cedar to redo the entire hull one last time. You don't want to know what it cost for the wood or the fastenings, but I'm pretty sure that I'm stimulating the U.S. economy more than the government is.

My restoration was going to be the whole shebang — planks, deck, machinery — the works. But then I got a fright!



COURTESY CLOUDIA

Timber! That's what's inside big wood boats.

The man who was going to plank the boat backed out at the last second. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because we decided to cold mold the hull instead of replanking it, and it's turning out much better all the way around.

To all but the Colin Archer purists — who live in Norway — *Cloudia* will still look planked. I sometimes complain about the refit's being an expensive pain, but I just love old wood boats because they have something that the newer ones lack. For instance, I have an Islander 34 that's a rocket ship. While she's a blast and all, *Cloudia* is just classier in my book. Believe it or not, she's faster, too. Yeah, my big Colin Archer really hauls ass. The trick is stopping her!

Work hard, sail free!

Captain Thaddeous Blanchard
Cloudia, Colin Archer 85
San Diego

Thaddeous — Your boat, which has more character than 25 fiberglass boats, would certainly be welcome in the next Ha-Ha. Good luck with the refit — and thanks for all that you're doing for the economy.

⇕ DROP OUT, BECOME A BILLIONAIRE

We think you made a mistake when you corrected George

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LETTERS

Backhus in his *Changes in Latitude*. He said Paul Allen's *Tatoosh*, which was anchored near Backhus' Deerfoot 62 *Moonshadow* at Taormina, Sicily, was 200 feet. You said she was actually 420 feet. Well, when we were anchored near her at Falmouth Harbor, Antigua, a few years ago, we understood her to be about 302 feet. By the way, she had a 40-ft powerboat and a 40-ft sailboat — both Hinckleys — on her sidedecks.

Barritt Neal & Renee Blaul
Serendipity, Peterson 46
 San Diego

Barritt and Renee — Allen has had so many large motoryachts that we get confused. But you're right, Tatoosh



WEBB LOGG

is 302 feet, which makes her the 26th largest yacht in the world. We'd been thinking of Allen's newer yacht, the 413-foot Octopus, which is the 8th largest yacht in the world.

It's hard to keep all of Paul Allen's motoryachts straight. This is 'Tatoosh', which is indeed 302 feet long.

While doing research, we were surprised to learn that Larry Ellison is no longer the sole

owner of the 453-ft Rising Sun, the sixth largest privately owned yacht in the world. According to Wikipedia, David Geffen, a brilliant businessman, is now listed as a co-owner.

For those keeping score, if you eliminate motoryachts owned by Arab heads of state, the biggest private motoryacht in the world is Russian Roman Abramovich's recently launched 548-ft Eclipse. Rising Sun is second and Octopus is third.

Kids, are you having trouble convincing your parents that you should drop out of college or university? Here's your best argument: Paul Allen dropped out of Washington State University and convinced Bill Gates to drop out of Harvard so they could start Microsoft. Larry Ellison dropped out of the University of Illinois and then the University of Chicago before living hand-to-mouth in Berkeley and starting Oracle. As for David Geffen, he dropped out of what was then called Santa Monica City College to take a job in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency, where he laid the groundwork for starting his fortune by representing rock 'n rollers.

↑↓ HURRICANE STATISTICS CAN BE MISLEADING

Just a quick note to point out that your coverage of Hurricane *Bill's* threat to St. Martin had some pretty basic historical errors. St Martin does *not* get hit by a hurricane every year. In fact, since the extreme Category 4 Hurricane *Luis* in '95, there have been only two: *Lenny* in '99 and *Omar* in '08. There's a big difference between a hurricane every few years and every year.

Bob Wise
 Paradise Connections Yacht Charters
 St. Martin, French West Indies

Bob — Our sincere apologies. What happened is that we ran that factually inaccurate claim by Mike Harker of the Manhattan Beach-based Hunter 49 Wanderlust 3, then corrected it in the next paragraph. But as a result of having to juggle the layout at the last minute, the corrected paragraph was mistakenly left out. We hate it when we do that!

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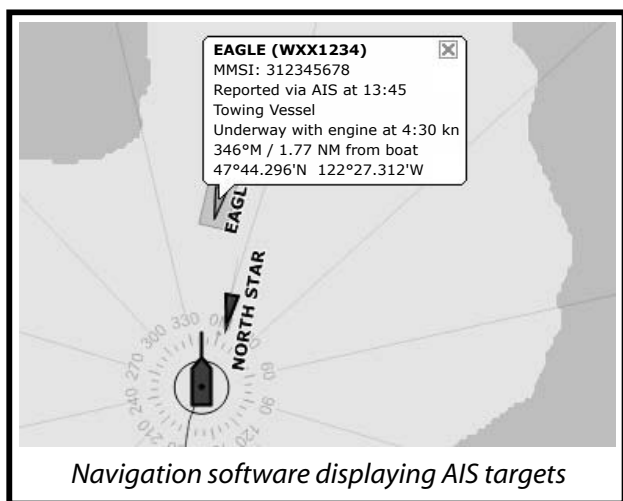


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LETTERS

While St. Martin certainly does not get hit by a hurricane every year, it's gotten hit a little more frequently than you remember. We know this thanks to www.HurricaneCity.com — an extremely informative site with data based on detailed study of



MIKE HARKER

False alarm. Boats have hid in the mangroves of St. Martin many more times than the island's been hit by hurricanes.

multiple sources. The overall picture is that St. Martin has been hit, or at least brushed—meaning an eye within 60 miles — by a hurricane a total of 49 times in the last 139 years. That averages out to once every 2.8 years. But these statistics can be very misleading because, for example, St. Martin wasn't hit or brushed in the 29 years between Faith in '66 and horrible Luis in '95. To prove the inconsistent nature of hurricane occurrences, St. Martin was hit just 10 days after Luis by Marilyn. Anyway, here's the hurricane history for St. Martin for the last 15 years:

— 1995, Hurricane Luis hit on September 5 with 140 mph winds and a barometric pressure as low as 27.65. Fourteen people were killed on the island or on boats, 1,000 were left homeless, and over 700 boats — most of them in Simpson Bay Lagoon — were destroyed. Indeed, debris from many of the boats destroyed by Luis still litter the lagoon.

— 1995, a week after Luis, Hurricane Marilyn brushed the island to the south and west with 105-mph winds. Most of the buildings in Grand Case were destroyed.

— 1999, Hurricane Jose hit on October 20 with 100-mph winds, but the damage was relatively minor because the hurricane was rapidly fizzling to just 70-mph winds when it got close.

— 1999, Hurricane Lenny, with 120-mph winds, parked between St. Martin and St. Barth for November 17 and 18, and severely punished both islands. Thirteen people were killed, and the south-facing beaches of St. Martin were devastated. Since the island had been hit or brushed by five hurricanes in just seven years, insurers either cancelled policies or greatly increased the premiums.

— 2000, Hurricane Debby hit north of St. Martin. Damage was light as there were only 75-mph winds and Debby was moving away to the WNW at an amazingly fast 21 mph.

— 2008, Hurricane Omar, which had been heading right for the British Virgins, jogged to the east, and brushed St. Martin with 60-mph winds. The damage was not severe.

But that's the way it goes with hurricanes. None hits St. Martin in 29 years, then there are five in seven years, then none for another seven years. Try to make sense of that.

For what it's worth, we had our Ocean 71 Big O in the Caribbean from '86 to '96, and thank goodness she never got hit. There were two close calls, however, with Gilbert in '88 and Hugo in '89. Most people on the West Coast probably don't remember them, but they featured winds of 160 knots and 140 knots respectively, making them among the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit the Caribbean. We've had our Leopard 45 'ti Profligate in the British Virgins for the last three years, and she hasn't been hit — although Omar came very close last year. Please keep your fingers crossed for our cat and everyone else who has a boat in a hurricane zone.



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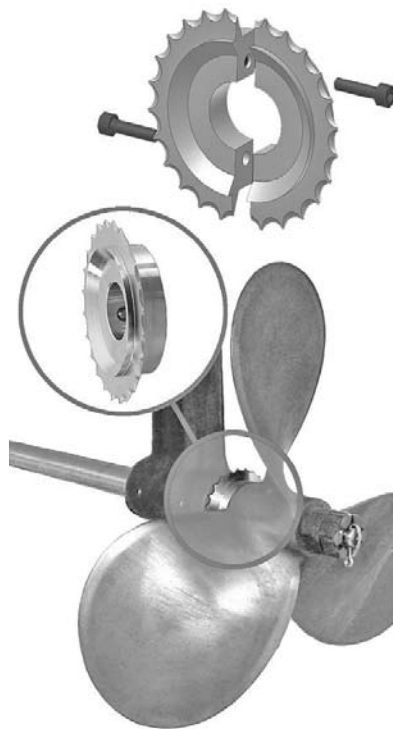
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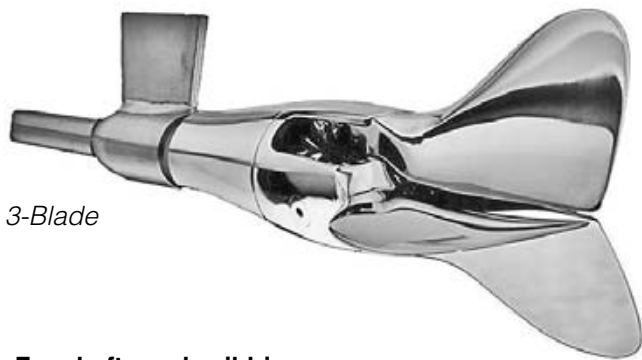
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LETTERS

↑↓ ANYONE DRIVING DOWN BAJA AFTER THE HA-HA?

I'll be sailing our Hunter 36 *Delight* in the Ha-Ha again this year. We had a great time when we did it in '07 — even though we had some big problems. As you might remember, once south of Turtle Bay we lost our engine, had to steer with the emergency tiller for 13 hours, and were taking on water at a little over a gallon per hour.

Anyway, I have a bit of a problem, and wonder if somebody might be willing to help me out. My wife is legally blind, so she won't be doing the Ha-Ha with us. But she and I will later cruise Cabo and the Sea of Cortez until we get tired of it. My problem is that I'd like to find a way to get my wife and dog to Cabo without having to rent a car and drive up to San Diego to get her. Is there anybody driving down to Cabo right after the Ha-Ha who would be willing to take them? Naturally, I'd be more than happy to help out with the cost of fuel. I can be reached at (916) 972-0706 or (916) 849-5961.

By the way, *Delight* is a very different boat now, as she sports 400 watts of solar power, a genset, a new steering system, and a new autopilot.

Al Miller
Delight, Hunter 36
Carmichael

↑↓ THE EVIDENCE IS IN AND IT POINTS TO PERDOCK

As a retired naval officer and sailboat owner, I have always believed that there was more than one person to blame in the accident on Clear Lake that claimed the life of Lynn Thornton. As a lifelong resident of the area, I know there is a good 'ol boy club up here. But please remember that while Deputy Perdock may have been at fault for the way he operated his powerboat, the folks on the sailboat were at fault, too. And sad to say, if you accept the helm, as Dinius did, by definition you are operating the boat. So both Perdock and Dinius should have been on trial. Not for manslaughter, but for reckless endangerment.

Skip Lethin
Lake County

Skip — If you read Latitude regularly, you know that from the outset of our coverage we said there was shared responsibility for the accident — assuming that the sailboat's running lights were not on. We put Deputy Perdock at 80% responsible, Mark Weber, the owner of the sailboat at 19% responsible, and Bismarck Dinius, who happened to be at the helm, at 1% responsible.

But if you followed the recently concluded trial in Lake County, you know that there were five witnesses for the defense — including a retired police officer — who testified that the sailboat's running lights were indeed on. Even an eye-witness for the bumbling prosecution testified that the sailboat's running lights were on!

As a retired naval officer, surely you know that the burden to stay clear is on the overtaking vessel, that a safe speed must be observed by all vessels, and that when navigating against a background of lights, you never head for the lights and try to avoid other vessels by hoping to see their silhouettes. Perdock broke all of those rules. Based on the evidence, nobody on the sailboat did anything wrong, nor was there anything they could have done to avoid being hit. That's why the jury voted 12-0 to acquit Dinius on the charges of felony BUI resulting in death and BUI, and 11-1 on operating with a BAC over .08 (that charge was then dropped by the D.A.).

With all the evidence in, it seems clear to us that there is only one person responsible for the collision and the death of



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LETTERS

Lynn Thornton, and that person is Chief Deputy Russell Perdock. We hope he is prosecuted. A lot of people are assuming that the accident was the result of Perdock being drunk, but there doesn't seem to be evidence to support such a belief. We think he was just getting his kicks by recklessly hauling ass through the black night — as he testified he'd done many times before — without being able to see because it was black out, he wasn't wearing his prescription glasses, and because the speed would have made his eyes water up. It was just an instance of really poor judgement.

↑↓ TELL ME THERE'S A SPEED LIMIT ON CLEAR LAKE

I'm surprised that I haven't heard anything about it, but can you please assure me that, in the light of the death of Lynn Thornton, there is now a 5 mph speed limit on Clear Lake after dark?

Carl Chesney
Ghoolie, Catalina 22
Sacramento

Carl — An attempt was made a few months ago to establish a night time speed limit but it was quickly quashed by Lake County's powerboater-filled Clear Lake Advisory Committee. Regardless, the California Harbors and Navigation Code does require that all vessels "be prepared to stop within the space of half the distance of forward visibility." Just how much forward visibility does one have on a pitch black night? Not much.

By the way, having travelled from shore to our anchored-out boats well over 100 times this year — including in Mexico, the Caribbean and Catalina — we consider ourselves to be experts on operating sailboats and fast dinghies at night. We can report that on nights when the moon is full or close to it, visibility is actually pretty good. But on moonless nights, such as the night that Perdock rammed the boat Lynn Thornton was on, you're all but blind. No wonder two unlit pangas slammed into each other behind Profligate one night last December while we were anchored at Punta Mita.

The worst conditions of all are moonless nights when there are background lights — as was the case the night of the Perdock collision. The biggest problem with background lights on moonless nights is that you have no depth perception, making it all but impossible to know if the light you're looking at is 100 feet or 1,000 yards away. And Perdock's stated concept of avoiding boats by looking for their silhouettes against background lights is sheer lunacy.

For everyone headed south to Mexico this season, try hard to reach your anchorage or harbor while it's still light. If you must enter in the dark, proceed very slowly. We've entered the harbor at Santa Barbara countless times, but on a recent dark night, we felt that anything over two knots was still too fast to safely pick out the channel markers from the background lights reflected on the water.

↑↓ "PEOPLE WANT TO HELP SO SUCK IT UP!"

The Gold Country YC celebrated Bismarck Dinius' victory after three long years of his having to fight charges that he was responsible for the death of Lynn Thornton in that terrible boating accident on Clear Lake. Our little yacht club here in the foothills of Nevada County on Scott's Flat Lake has been behind Dinius, who is one of our own, for what's been a long and hard road for him. He was welcomed to cheers of joy as he arrived at our most recent general meeting. We, along with much of the sailing community around the country, had been praying for him all during the ordeal. And we haven't forgotten about Lynn Thornton. Our prayers are with her family



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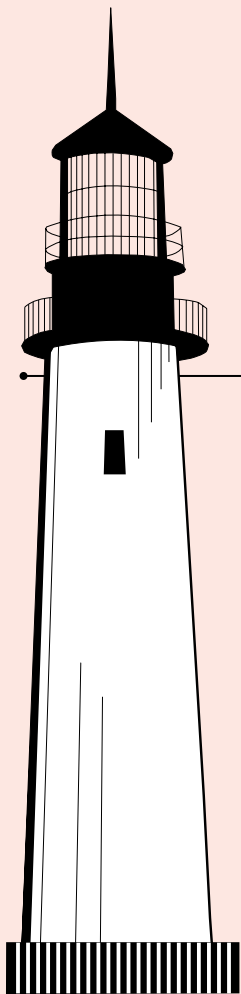


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LETTERS

as well. We can't thank *Latitude* enough for your coverage of the story and support of Bismarck. We're sure it helped the outcome of this unbelievable injustice. Thank you! Thank you!

GOLD COUNTRY YC



The Gold Country YC, aka The Bismarck Dinius Defense & Fan Club.

Thank you!
Your readers might be interested in the following letter that Bismarck sent to us after the meeting:

"I'm so glad that I made it up to the yacht club for the meeting. It was won-

derful to see everyone and be able to say thank you. The club has really embraced me, and I have been moved by everyone's genuine kindness. It was great to hear the cheers as I walked up. You made me feel like family, and you were all there to lift me up when I was down. I am truly grateful.

"I owe a few special thank yous. One goes out to Bruce. He is the one who contacted *Latitude* and really got the story going. He also took me aside one day and really encouraged me to open a defense fund. He said, 'Look, there are a lot of people who want to help you and donate to your cause. People keep asking me where they can send money. Suck up your pride and open a fund. Everyone needs a hand now and then, and people want to help you. You are a wonderful human being.' That was some of the best advice I have ever received. The fund has helped immensely."

Joe Day, Commodore
Gold Country YC
Daydreams, Pearson 385
Mental Floss, Catalina 22

Joe — We're so happy for Bismarck. On the other hand, we're still livid that it took a jury to finally bring some sense to the case, and that Perdock still hasn't been charged.

By the way, Bismarck is a little off on how Latitude got involved. One morning about a year after Thornton was killed, the publisher rolled over in bed and said to Doña de Mallorca, "We wonder whatever happened in the case of the woman who got killed in the boating accident on Clear Lake?" So when we got into the office, we asked Editor LaDonna Bubak to call the D.A. in Lake County to find out what was going on. It turned out that he'd just then made the foolish decision to charge Dinius rather than Perdock for the wrongful death of Thornton.

↑↓ THE FLINTSTONES DAGGERBOARD SYSTEM

In the 'Triangulation' photo aboard *Profligate* in last month's *Sightings* section, I noticed that your cat's port daggerboard has what appears to be a hole in it a few inches down from the top. As I am building a Schionning Wilderness 1100, which is the little cousin to Jim and Kent Milski's Berkeley-based *Sea Level*, I have been pondering daggerboard system designs. Do you secure your boards in various positions via an athwartship pin through the board near deck level? I like the simplicity of that concept and was thinking of using it on my cat.

Brian Timpe
Seattle

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LETTERS

Brian — For reasons we prefer not to go into, we have what we call a 'Flintstones System', so named because it's about as sophisticated as everything was on that cartoon show. For better or worse, our daggerboards are limited to two positions: all the way up or all the way down. As it turns out, the only time we have the boards down is when we are beating or close reaching.

Our daggerboards are 14 feet long. Even though they are heavy, they have a certain amount of positive buoyancy. If not secured in the up or down position, the top nine feet float in the daggerboard case. When we want a board in the up position, it gets held in place — as you suggested — by a 1.5-inch dowel that runs athwartships at the deck level. It sounds stupid and looks a little silly, but it's worked out well. The dowel broke the only time we hit bottom with a daggerboard, allowing the daggerboard to pop up and avoid any damage beyond a scratch.

If we want to put the board in the down position, we have to lift it slightly to be able to slip the dowel pin out. It's a one-person job when we use the electric halyard winch. If we're in a hurry, two guys muscle the board one quarter inch up, and another member of the crew pulls the pin. Then we step on the top of the board to counteract the positive buoyancy and make it flush with the deck. At that point a person in the head pushes the pin through a hole in daggerboard case and the daggerboard, which secures it in the down position. To raise the board, someone has to step on it just right in order for another someone in the head to be able to pull the pin out. Once the board pops free, it has to be lifted to the full-up position, either with a halyard or by hand.

To date we've been happy with our ultra KISS system. Good luck with your cat and daggerboard system design.

↑↓ JOLLY ROGER IS WORRIED ABOUT PIRATES

I'll be sailing from Guaymas, Mexico, to the Panama Canal in November of this year, and expect to take two months to reach the Canal, including a week or so in Costa Rica. I have a few questions about my route. First, can you suggest interesting ports that I should stop at? I have all the large ones plotted, but you may know a few that are small, inexpensive and interesting. Second, are there places that I should avoid because of known piracy or other factors such as very high mooring or fuel prices?

I'm then going to sail south from the Canal, and was told to avoid Colombia. What information do you have on ports in Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles? And last, I will need to put the boat on the hard out of the hurricane zone, and therefore need to know of a place south of Venezuela.

By the way, I did the Ha-Ha last year and had a really fun experience.

Roger Behnken
Jolly Roger, Bombay 44
Berkeley

Roger — Thanks for the kind words about the Ha-Ha. As for places to stop between Guaymas and the Canal, they are all pretty well-known, and as you near each place you'll be getting the most current info and recommendations from fellow cruisers. Puerto Madero, Mexico, is a place where some cruisers have had trouble with officials, so keep your ears open once you get in that area. Lots of cruisers rush past the islands off the north coast of Panama, but those who stop seem to really enjoy them. But you may be in too much of a hurry to do that. Berthing and moorings in Third World countries tend to be at least as expensive as in the States, so if you're on a budget, ask around for the best places to anchor. There are plenty. As



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LETTERS

long as you take the normal precautions, you shouldn't have any problems with crime.

You confuse us when you say you're going to sail south of the Canal, but then seem to suggest that you'll be doing it on your way to Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles. If you sail south of Panama, you'll pass the Pacific coast of Colombia on your way to Ecuador. The Pacific coast of Colombia is not only remote, it's largely lawless. Some cruisers were attacked there a year or so ago while anchored out, and think they only survived because their shouts attracted the attention of another cruising boat that just happened to be nearby. This is not the safest place.

If, on the other hand, you're talking about the Caribbean coast of Colombia, you shouldn't have any problems at the San Blas Islands or Cartagena. The last time we were there, the coast between the two was a no-man's land. Lots of folks in the San Blas can give you the current info. A few years ago there were a number of violent incidents against cruisers — including some Ha-Ha vets — on the coast of Colombia between Cartagena and Cabo Velo. You should consult with the big cruising community at Cartagena before deciding whether to stop. We assume you're aware that the passage from Cartagena to Cabo Velo is frequently one of the nastiest upwind passages in the world of cruising, particularly between mid-December and June. And it's not very easy the rest of the year either, so make sure you gird up for it.

Lots of cruisers still go to Venezuela, but violent incidents have been on the rise, particularly in the eastern part of the country. There's no convenient place to put a boat on the hard for hurricane season that is south of Venezuela, so we'd recommend either a marina in the area of Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, or at Trinidad. While Trinidad is north of Venezuela, it's still south of the hurricane zone.

No matter where you go, your greatest security risks will be while you're ashore. Nonetheless, we suggest that you always be vigilant along the coasts of Colombia and Venezuela.

↑↓ WE'RE PRETTY SURE WE AGREE WITH YOU

In a recent *Lectronic* there was a piece about the Delta, with a photo of boats anchored in Middle Slough. The far boat looked like a Searunner trimaran, which is the kind of boat I own.

Having established a connection, I know you've run many Delta articles in the past, but here is how it works now. I go to maps.google.com and drill down to see what I want to see. The point is, I want to orient myself on a map/chart, so I look for 'waypoints' — places that were mentioned in the article — on Google Maps. That's the way it works these days, not just for me, but for any internet-savvy person.

Name Withheld By Request
Bay Area

N.W.B.R. — We're a little bit confused about what you're recommending, but we're enormous fans of Google Maps and Google Earth. In fact, some of our favorite 'sailing porn' is using Google Earth to revisit anchorages we've been to around the world.

Ever since Google Earth came out, we've recommended that cruisers heading to Mexico — and other places — print out a color aerial photo of each anchorage they might want to visit. Such aerial views are great safety aids in that they correct inaccurate 'chartlets' found in many cruising guides, and give a great overall idea of the lay of the land and possible dangers. So, of course, mariners should use Google Earth to help plan and enjoy their sailing adventures in the Delta and elsewhere.

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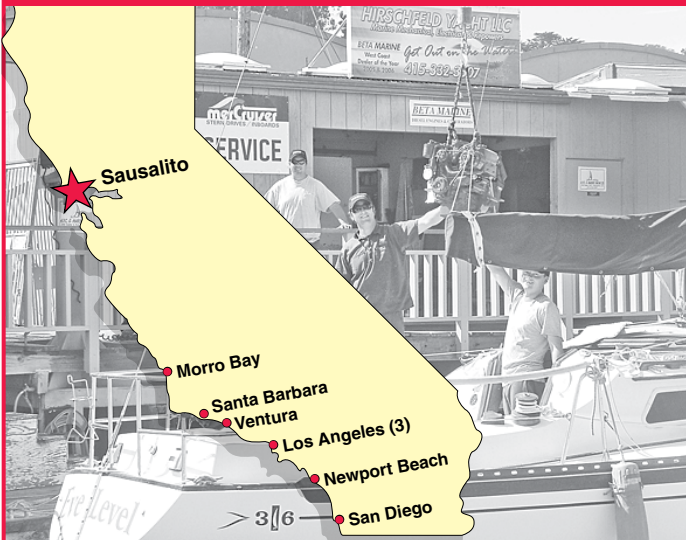
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LETTERS

↑↓ YOU, TOO, CAN HAVE A 65-INCHER

My wife Mary and I are currently moored at Avalon, and have just finished watching a movie on the 65-inch screen inside our 40-ft boat. It sounds crazy, but we'd like to let everyone know how easy it is to have an actual theater in one's boat.

Mary and I rented our north Orange County home out in October of last year and moved aboard our Island Packet



COURTESY ISLAND TIME

I scream, you scream, we all scream for a 65-inch screen — like the one rolled up here in the main salon of 'Island Time'.

40 in Los Angeles Harbor. It's something that we'd been looking forward for many years, and the time was right. There were only a couple of things that we missed from our shore-based life: the hot tub and

the big screen TV. I couldn't really do much about the hot tub, but I figured we'd at least work on the TV. When I spoke with Mary about upgrading our tiny 15-inch flat panel television for something larger — say 20-22 inches — she asked me, "Why don't you look at a projector?" Man, I love it when she says things like that! So, I embarked on the research mission from hell to find a projector we could use. *Voila!* I discovered the digital DVD projector system called Movietime from Optoma. Movietime is an "all in one" digital projector that has built-in speakers and a top-loading DVD player. It is a 'short throw' projector that is really meant to plop down on a coffee table, plug in, and project on a wall or screen. This thing can easily project a 100-inch or better high-quality picture on a wall.

Being thrifty, I found a used one on *Amazon.com* for about half the \$600-900 retail price. I placed the unit on the shelf above my starboard settee, and initially used a white sheet



COURTESY ISLAND TIME

The Optoma Movietime may look weird but it works great.

hung on the port side just to get an idea of how big a screen I would need. I found the projected image to be 64-65 inches wide, and about 35 inches high. After a quick shop around on the internet, I was able to locate a couple of screen dealers with really reasonable prices. I ordered a manual 50-x 67-inch screen for less than \$100. I mounted the screen with quick-release hooks to two padeyes located above and to either side of the port settee. With the screen up, you have to look twice to even notice that it is there, because the white housing blends in with the background. Thanks to the quick release hooks, I can take it down in about five seconds and stow it in the aft stateroom.

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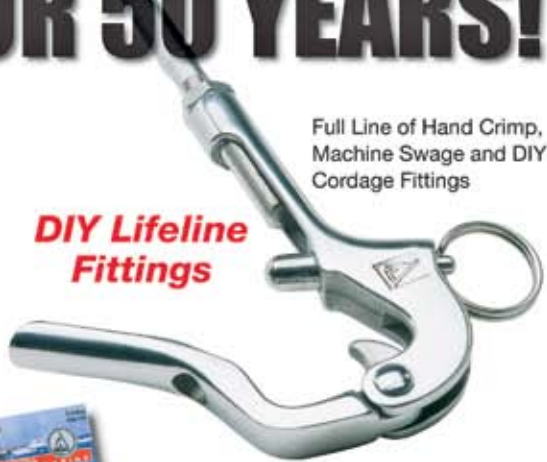
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LETTERS

You have got to see this thing to believe it! We now do the Netflix thing, and watch movies nearly every night. Our 'boat theater' has blown away just about everyone who has visited us — it's really funny. From sports to movies to concerts, the viewing is just great.

As I kept the little flat screen mounted on the starboard bulkhead for 'morning coffee' television, I had to buy a digital converter. But I found that I was able to hook a pair of cables from the back of the converter to the input at the rear of our Movietime, allowing us to project the digital broadcasts with the projector!

Mike & Mary Kelley
 Island Time, Island Packet 40
 Los Angeles Harbor

Readers — Please, let's not have any smart ass remarks about Mary being a 'screen size queen'. What are the Kelleys'



COURTESY ISLAND TIME

'Captain Ron', the secular patron saint of sailors, as seen on 'Island Time's big screen.

favorite movies? "Captain Ron is probably our favorite, so it's what we usually put on when we demonstrate the set-up to friends,"

says Mike. His other favorites are Black Hawk Down and Meat Loaf Live With the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Mary's favorites are Sex in the City, True Blood and Metallica S&M.

↑ **DON'T BOTHER US, WE'RE BUSY BEING FRIENDLY**

As I was scanning the July *Changes*, the reference on page 135 to The Nature Conservancy jumped out at me — because I'm now working for that organization in Nevada.

The caption on the photo spread that said TNC "kicked out" cruisers struck me as making us seem, well, unfriendly. But that's something that the TNC is definitely not. In fact, TNC is so successful at finding "solutions that benefit people and nature" because we are non-confrontational and we work with everyone to protect critical habitat for biodiversity. And as far as there being "all kinds of rules . . .", one of our biggest challenges is how to allow people to enjoy fragile habitats without unduly impacting them. In fact, I was impressed that the crew of *Cocokai* got to stay at Palmyra for four whole days! I guess that doesn't seem very long to bluewater cruisers.

To learn more about why Palmyra is so special, go to www.nature.org/wherewework/asiapacific/palmyra. There readers will learn that if TNC had not purchased the Palmyra Atoll in '00, it might be home to a nuclear waste dump or a casino by now.

Anne Thomas
 Raven, CM1200
 Gardnerville, Nevada

Anne — We don't like to disagree with you, but if The Nature Conservancy came across as being "unfriendly" for kicking the Cocokai crew out after "four whole days," we think it's because The Nature Conservancy was unfriendly. If they owned the only



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LETTERS

water hole in a massive desert, we shudder to think how few drops they would allot each parched traveller who came by.

Maybe four whole days would seem like a long time to the billionaires who are the core supporters of The Nature Conservancy, and who often travel to Nature Conservancy sites by private jet or megayacht. But it's not to sailors to who make big sacrifices to arrive at such remote places in such an eco-friendly fashion. As anyone who has crossed an ocean can attest, it takes at least 24 hours to recover from an ocean passage and 24 hours



to prepare for the next leg — which would have left the Cocokai crew with a pitifully short two days at Palmyra to relax and have a peek around. Geez, thanks a lot.

How could The Nature Conservancy staff at Palmyra give sweet little Coco the boot after just four days?

As we recall, Cocokai burned only 15 gallons of diesel on their three-week, 3,000-mile trip from the Galapagos to the Marquesas. That's about one quarter of what self-proclaimed ocean-loving mini-megayacht owners burn using one generator for one day while tied to the dock. And a fraction of what they use in a single hour while underway. So we think The Nature Conservancy should not only welcome visiting sailors with a week's stay at Palmyra, but should also honor them with an exhibit celebrating what a small footprint they've left in getting there.

Yes, we understand the need to protect critical habitats and for such places not to be overrun by crowds, but we don't think respectful cruisers staying a week would pose any danger to Palmyra. As for the contention that remote Palmyra might have become a casino had the Conservancy not bought it, come on — that was about as much in the cards as our becoming the next black President of the United States.

⇕ **HE SEEMS LIKE SUCH A NICE MAN**

My wife and I have just spent the past two months in the river/estuary of Playa del Sol, El Salvador, aboard our boat *Freedom*. It's a beautiful, peaceful place to pass the days, explore, do boat projects, and enjoy the cruising lifestyle. During this time, we've come to know the people and politics of the small community quite well.

The May edition of *Latitude* featured a letter titled "44 Days in an El Salvador Jail," that was written by a man named Alfred. The man painted a colorful picture of his experiences here, and described how a local man named Santos allegedly assaulted him, broke his arm, and threatened him with a pistol. As a result of the dispute, Alfred claims to have spent 44 days in an El Salvadoran jail.

Alfred writes an entertaining article, and while we must admit that we weren't around when the alleged incidents occurred, there are clearly holes in what he presented as facts. In the two months that we've spent here, we've learned that Alfred changed his story many times. For example, I read court documents that said his left arm was broken, but at a later hearing, his right arm was in a cast. Furthermore, Alfred never presented an X-ray of his broken arm, proof of the injury, or even evidence that he'd visited a doctor.

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LETTERS

Alfred sued Santos for \$15,000 to settle the case, far more than any medical care or legal fees would justify. The suit that had been dragging on well over a year just came to a close in mid-July, and Santos was given two options: 1) Sign a confession and pay Alfred \$3,000 U.S., or 2) go to jail for six years, with his mother being incarcerated, too.

There was no jury or any semblance of a legal process in the case. It was a confess-and-pay-or-go-directly-to-jail choice. It's a shame what an American cruiser might do to replenish his cruising funds.

Santos signed the confession, and will have to struggle greatly to make the payments to Alfred over the next six months. It's a real tragedy, because the Santos we know is an honest, kind, humble, hard-working family man, who only wants only to provide for his wife and young son.

Santos provides moorings and marine services to cruisers. We got exceptional service from him at a very reasonable price. We've spent enough significant time with Santos and his family to know that the charges against him are false and that he's been wronged by this whole episode. Santos is a good man, and we support him.

Robert & Keli Parker
Freedom, Downeaster 38
San Pedro, CA

Robert and Keli — To put a little perspective on things, it should be noted that while cruisers have had few problems in El Salvador, the country has one of the highest crime and murder rates in the Americas. It's a country where gangs and extortion are rampant. According to National Public Radio, almost all small businesses in the cities have to pay daily la renta to gangs. Some bus drivers even say they get hit up more than once per route. So we're not talking New Zealand or Switzerland.

Like you, we weren't on the scene during the Santos-Alfred troubles. As such, we think it's impossible to know for sure who is guilty of what. But our two-letter response to your claim that you've gotten to know Santos well enough to know he has been wronged is: O.J. The prisons are full of charming people who have committed heinous crimes that their friends and relatives can't fathom.

We're particularly puzzled by your assertion that Alfred somehow got in a dispute with Santos "to replenish his cruising kitty." His case might be the one-in-a-million exception to the rule, but generally speaking, foreign visitors — particularly those on "yachts" in extremely poor countries — get the short end of the stick from local authorities and judges. After all, what kind of leverage could Alfred, a budget cruiser, possibly have had against a citizen of El Salvador in El Salvador? Particularly after Alfred had already spent 44 days in a Salvadoran jail?

We're never going to know for sure, but if we had to give odds, it would be that Santos and his mama might not be as angelic as you think. And for what it's worth, remember that Santos and Alfred started out as great friends, too.

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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LOOSE LIPS

Driving taxpayers to drink cheap rum.

The following are first three paragraphs of a story by Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten that appeared in the August 2 *Los Angeles Times*.



While the connection between sailing and rum is somewhat tenuous, we thought the story was so outrageous, but so typical, that we couldn't resist.

"Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum.

"With little fanfare, a deal is moving forward to provide billions of tax dollars and tax breaks to an unlikely beneficiary — the giant British liquor producer that makes Captain Morgan rum.

"Under the agreement, Diageo in London will receive tax credits and other benefits worth \$2.7 billion over 30 years, including the \$165 million cost of

Once a pirate, always a pirate. More than 300 years after he plundered the Caribbean, Captain Henry Morgan is back to his looting ways, this time here in the good ol' U.S. of A.

building a state-of-the-art distillery on the island of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, a U.S territory." So ends the *Times* excerpt.

A couple of interesting facts:

- Diageo is the largest distilled spirits maker in the world.
- The \$2.7 billion that Diageo will receive in benefits can also be expressed as \$2,700 million.

- The agreement will result in the creation of 40 to 70 jobs in St. Croix — but will also result in the loss of up to 300 jobs in Puerto Rico.

- According to the article, the deal has attracted "little opposition in Congress or elsewhere," except for a few representatives of Puerto Rican interests.

- Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee — which means he oversees tax policy and therefore has the "highest perch in the House" — cited his long-time support of the rum tax, and refuses to intervene in the massive giveaway.

- Also in the September 2 *L.A. Times*, there was an article reporting that the same Charles Rangel failed to report \$600,000 in income, is delinquent on taxes for two parcels in New Jersey, failed to report the sale of a \$1.3 million brownstone, and is illegally occupying four rent-controlled units in New York City. He'd previously admitted to have paid no taxes on \$75,000 worth of income on a condo in the Dominican Republic.

- If you're a taxpayer, you shouldn't be sailing and drinking rum — especially Captain Morgan rum — at the same time. But given the way the government pisses away taxpayer resources, we'd sort of understand if you did.

Can you hear me now?

Visitors to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park can now use their cell phones for a free audio tour of the park's features. With 28 topics ranging from 'Danger and Adventure on the High Seas' to 'Swimmers in San Francisco Bay', visitors can pick and choose which episodes to listen to. If you don't like surprises, you can even listen to the entire tour from the comfort of your salon — go to www.nps.gov/safri/planyourvisit/cellphoneaudiotours.htm for the list of topics and their corresponding tour number, then call (415) 294-6754.

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how young is too young?

It's funny how a world record can lie dormant for years, then suddenly challengers seem to appear from all quarters. That's what's been going on lately in the realm of teenage circumnavigating. In August, we brought you news of 17-year-old Southern California singlehander Zac Sunderland's historic homecoming, which earned him the crown for 'youngest around' by any route. Then last month we reported on British solo sailer Mike Perham stealing Zac's thunder by completing

his lap at a younger age. But even as the young Brit arrived at England's Lizard Peninsula, younger contenders seemed to be nipping at his heels.

What's the latest? Sixteen-year-old Australian contender Jessica Watson made headlines last month, but definitely not the sort she was anticipating: During the first night of her intended 10-day shake-down cruise from Mooolaba, Australia, to Sydney, her 34-ft S&S, *Ella's Pink Lady*, smacked right into a 69,000-ton freighter in the middle of a shipping lane. The ornately painted pink hull was damaged and its mast was snapped, but Jessica, who was below at the time, was unharmed. With repairs nearly complete, she expects to restart

her shakedown cruise any day now, then set off on her nonstop, unassisted attempt, east-about via the Southern Ocean, as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, within days of Zac's arrival, his younger sister Abby, who turns 16 this month, gave credence to the rumor that she intends to attempt a solo rounding, and do so nonstop and unassisted. The family has already purchased a water-ballasted Class 40 sloop for the campaign. With plans to depart next month, she hopes to complete her trip — and set a new record — next April. We should clarify that both Zac and Mike Perham made stops and avoided Cape Horn by transiting the Panama Canal.

As if Jessica and Abby's intentions weren't controversial enough, a 13-year-old Dutch girl named Laura Dekker made headlines around the world when her solo ambitions became known. But a Dutch court has put the kibosh on her plans, at least for now.

What's Mike Perham's reaction to all these female upstarts? If he's nervous, it doesn't show. Within days of his return, which was heralded by great media fanfare, he announced a plan to join a team of Brits in reenacting Captain William Bligh's epic 4,000-mile voyage in an open whaleboat. History buffs will remember that the *Bounty* mutineers set Bligh and 18 loyalist crew members adrift with a sextant and a pocket watch, but no charts or compass. Some people apparently just need a mission.

But with Jessica and Abby's departures still imminent, debate rages on the question: "How young is too young?" In a lengthy verdict, the Dutch court ruled that such a voyage would be too challenging, both mentally and physically — and Laura had intended to go around the easy way, west-about through the tropics via the Panama and Suez Canals. On this one, we have to side with the court. Thirteen? You've gotta be kidding. Even though Laura was born on a boat and has spinach in her veins, we have to wonder: Was all this more about her father's aspirations, or his daughter's.

And what about Abby Sunderland? We don't get it. About a year ago, her parents explained that they hadn't wanted Zac to go the Southern Ocean route because it was too dangerous. Did it suddenly become less dangerous? As far as we can tell, those latitudes are becoming increasingly *more* dangerous, with loose sea ice more prevalent than ever. Bergie bits aside, though, what is it about a background of sailing in California coastal waters that would prepare a barely-16-year-old

continued on outside column of next sightings page

waiting with

California State Parks officials had promised to announce which state parks would be closed due to budget cuts by mid-September, but then said that the process was more complicated than they'd initially thought, postponing the decision. That's left state park employees wondering if theirs will be among the 100 parks on the chopping block.

While the staff at Angel Island State Park holds their collective breath for the announcement, they're focused on "providing the highest level of service



LAURA DEKKER

Laura Dekker, 13.



GIZARAARTS.COM

Abby Sunderland, 16.



bated breath

possible,” says Superintendent Dave Matthews. But in an effort to offload unused assets, the park’s 56-ft 1956 Marinet landing craft will be offered up for auction on December 9. If you’d like to take a look at it, contact Gerald O’Reilly at (415) 435-1748.

In the meantime, don’t let the beautiful fall weather go by without visiting your favorite state park while you still can — 25 Bay Area parks are vulnerable, including China Camp and Angel Island.

— *ladonna*

too young — cont’d

to singlehand a 40-footer in 50-ft waves and hurricane-force winds? And do Abby and Jessica really have the mechanical skills to repair all the systems that will inevitably break during a nonstop attempt? Don’t get us wrong, Abby seems like a lovely girl and we wish her the best of luck. We just don’t want to see her teenage fantasy morph into a horrible tragedy.

When our old friend Harry Heckel, Jr. completed the first of two solo circumnavigations at the age of 78, we thought he got a raw deal from the folks at the *Guinness Book of World Records*. They refused to acknowledge it, stating that they didn’t want to ‘encourage such behavior’. Now that the focus is on the younger end of the spectrum, we’re starting to see the wisdom in such an attitude.

— *andy*

“Can I play too?” — When this five-and-a-half-year-old heard that Abby and Laura were planning to solo circumnavigate, she started brushing up on her nav skills. “I want that record!” she was heard to snarl.



SIGHTINGS

the wrath of jimena

During the last 10 years, the waters off the Pacific Coast of Mexico and the Sea of Cortez have been roiled by 82 tropical storms (sustained winds of 34 to 63 knots) and 69 hurricanes (sustained winds in excess of 64 knots). That's a lot of big blows. As a general rule, they tend to form down by the Mexico-Guatemala border, then head northwest to their death partway to Hawaii. Unlike hurricanes in the Atlantic/Caribbean, Eastern Pacific hurricanes and tropical storms generally head away from land and population centers.

There are exceptions, however. During the summer, almost all cruising in Mexico takes place in the Sea of Cortez. Over the last 10 years, cruisers in the Sea have been threatened by five hurricanes or their tropical storm remnants: *Juliette* ('01), *Ignacio* and *Marty* ('03), *John* ('06), and *Norbert* ('08). Early last month, Hurricane (and later

continued on outside column of next sightings page

sequoia yc's

On 09/09/09, Sequoia YC hosted the 4th Annual Give Something Back fundraiser benefiting the Peninsula Youth Sailing Foundation, the Marine Science Institute, and both girls' and boys' Mariner and Sea Scout programs.

This special race was started four years ago by club member Ted Hannig, who decided he didn't want gifts on his birthday. He'd always found the boating community helpful, particularly in his own youth, so he wanted to give back instead. With help from the generous members of the Sequoia YC, this hugely successful event



PHOTOS J. INNIS KIRKLAND

hannig cup

has raised \$75,000 — \$25,000 raised this year alone.

But this is no ordinary beer can race. Instead of beating the competition around the buoys, boats compete to raise the most money. The boat generating the most donations takes possession of the Hannig Cup, and its skipper receives a special perpetual trophy *cum* time capsule.

The fundraising came at the right moment for the PYSF team aboard *L₂O* — they tore their spinnaker that night!

— kris butler



Beer Cans for a Cause — The annual Hannig Cup beer can race raised \$25,000 for junior sailing programs. The money couldn't have come at a better time for the Peninsula Youth Sailing Foundation — they tore their kite that night (upper left)! For info on sponsoring or racing in next year's Hannig Cup, contact Kris Butler at (650) 868-8862.

jimena — cont'd

Tropical Storm) *Jimena* paid a visit to Baja and the Sea of Cortez. The one-time Category 4 hurricane (winds from 114 to 135 knots) did lots of damage but surprisingly little of it was to cruising interests.

After following the curve of the coast of mainland Mexico several hundred miles offshore, *Jimena* was forecast to hit both Cabo San Lucas and La Paz, the two biggest population and boating centers in Baja. Luckily for both places, *Jimena* drifted farther to the west, leaving those two cities all but unscathed.

The eye of *Jimena*, still packing hurricane-force winds, came ashore at remote Mag Bay on the Pacific Coast, about 150 miles northwest of Cabo. The villages of San Carlos on Mag Bay, and Mateo Lopez on the inland waterway, were severely damaged, as were the mid-peninsula towns of Constitución and Insurgentes. Other coastal villages, such as Abrejos and Ascunción, were said to have been hit hard.

As *Jimena* continued on, cruisers at cruising centers to the north had reason for optimism. Not only had it lost a lot of its power over land, but it was also forecast to abruptly turn due west, which would have taken it back out over the open ocean. The thing is, you just can't trust hurricanes or hurricane forecasts. Instead of turning due west, *Jimena* headed due east, 180° off her projected course. Here's what happened in the various cruiser centers:

Puerto Escondido/Loreto — According to Dave Wallace of the Redwood City-based Amel Maramu *Air Ops*, the eye of then-Tropical Storm *Jimena* passed within 50 miles of the nearly enclosed anchorage. It blew about 55 knots for a number of hours, with a reported gust of 89 knots. Over the years, Singlar's 170 mooring balls have been criticized by some cruisers as being inadequate. Yet not a one of them failed in the storm, while a number of boats' mooring lines to the buoys did fail. The sailboat *Saltshaker* broke loose, but her skipper, aided by the crew of a motor vessel, was able to grab another buoy. The sailboat *Neka* chafed through her mooring line, and drifted into the mangroves. The Singlar staff put her back on a mooring. *Waverly's* mooring line chafed through and, like *Wanderlust* and *Spirit*, which were on their own hooks, went ashore. Out in the Waiting Room, two boats went ashore. Wallace wants to emphasize that no attended boats went ashore. However, all the boats that did were refloated by the Singlar staff and other cruisers. The 14 boats on the hard at Singlar all stayed up.

Concepción Bay — Having survived Hurricane *Juliette* at Santa Barbara Cove in Concepción Bay years before, Bill Yeargean and Jean Strain of the Honolulu-based Irwin 37 *Mita Kuuluu* returned for *Jimena*. Also riding it out there were the sailing vessels *Tequila Mockingbird* and *Rocinante*, and the motor vessels *Topaz* and *Oso Negro*. Reporting that they were just 30 miles from the eye, Bill and Jean said they had 75-knot winds with 15-second gusts of 100 knots over six hours. Rain was driven right through their dodger, and they couldn't hear each other from three feet away. At the height of the fury, *Mita Kuuluu* dragged her anchors but, thanks to the full power of a 50-hp Perkins, Bill and Jean were able to get her hooks to grab again.

Santa Rosalia — About 20 cruising boats scrambled to find spots at the relatively new marina, and each used every line they could find to tie to the pilings. Alex and Sue Hasenclever of the Kelly-Peterson 44 *Maitairoa* reported "nine hours of wind gusting to 90 knots." With her husband Dean working in Seattle, Toast Conger and her three young daughters aboard the Lagoon 380 *Don Quixote* tied up their boat in the marina, then took shelter in the Singlar building. According to Toast, the wind wasn't the problem. "We mostly had 40 and 50 knots, with only an hour of 60 knots. The real problem was that it blew like that from 3 p.m. until 11 p.m. It seemed like it was never going to stop." Succeeding levels of the building leaked so badly that Toast and her daughters ultimately had to take shelter in a tile-walled bathroom.

After *Jimena* surprised everyone by heading in the direction of San Carlos/Guaymas, the sense of relief at Santa Rosalia was short-lived,

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jimena — cont'd

because forecasts called for it to double back on them. Fortunately, it fizzled out in the Sea first. While all the Santa Rosalia boats survived in good shape, the small, old marina was destroyed, and the town suffered extensive damage from flash flooding. Cars were overturned, homes and stores destroyed, and one on-duty policeman was carried to his death by a wall of water and mud. For mariners, the big problem became the five cars, various household appliances and other debris that blocked the entrance of the marina.

Puerto Don Juan, Bahía de Los Angeles — Jake and Sharon Howard of the Seattle-based Hunter Legend 45 *Jake* report that theirs was one of 21 boats that took shelter at nearly-enclosed Puerto Don Juan in Bahía de Los Angeles. The storm was supposed to come within 50 miles of them, then head due west. But it “faked left and went right.” After a five-minute cloudburst in the middle of the night, they awoke to sunny skies. “To us,” the couple wrote, “it proved once again that this is the best place to be during the height of the Mexican hurricane season. Not only is it the safest, but it has great cruising, too.”

San Carlos/Guaymas — Although not originally predicted to get so close, the eye, depending to whom you talk, either came within 40 miles or passed right over the two towns. In any event, the boating center was hit by 40-50 knots of wind for 20 hours. No boats in the water at Marina San Carlos or Marina Real were damaged, but 20 boats on private moorings went up on the beach. These were mostly good-quality cruising boats, all of which had been unattended when they went ashore. All but three were pulled off in relatively short order.

San Carlos is the center of sailboat dry storage in Mexico, with close to 500 boats on the hard between Marina Seca and Marina Real. The big threat to them was not the wind, but the rain that fell in biblical amounts. More than 27 inches fell in 24 hours, supposedly twice as much as has ever fallen in a 24-hour period in Mexico. Marina Seca, the bigger of the storage yards, became a massive flood plain. Nonetheless, only two boats went over: the DownEast 38 *Barnacle* and the Passport 45 *Plumas*. Thanks to the thick cushion of mud, neither boat was damaged. All boats on the hard in Guaymas stayed up.

The flood damage that hit the city, roads and homes of the area was worse, yet cruisers had nothing but raves about the response on the part of the government, utilities, businesses and individuals. By all accounts, Kiki Grossman and her staff did a miraculous job clearing mud from Marina Seca, refencing the yard and getting it back on its feet. And Grossman raved about the utility providers and the hard work of her employees. She even put the workers' wives on the payroll so their husbands could work as many hours a day as possible.

Remember the looting hordes in the wake of *Katrina* in New Orleans? “There are marauding bands of Mexicans everywhere,” blogged one cruiser in San Carlos, “and they are helping everyone who needs it!”

We think the lessons of *Jimena* are as follows:

- You can't trust hurricane forecasts. Don Anderson was singled out as having better forecasts than others, but people complained that even his projections were way off.

- Unattended boats have a much greater chance to go ashore. Everyone must remember, however, that *Jimena* had lost a lot of her punch by the time she reached boating interests. It's one thing to stay on your boat in 60 knots of wind, it's another if it's blowing 120 knots and the force of the wind is four times greater.

- The farther north you are in the Sea, the less likely it is that you'll get hit; and if you do get hit, chances are you won't get hit as hard.

- Flash floods and flooding can be killers in Baja.

And lastly, in this time of danger, everyone banded together to prepare, endure and recover from the storm. It was humanity at its best. Nearly every cruiser who wrote to us struggled to find words to sufficiently express their praise for the Mexican government, the businesses, and the private citizens of Mexico for all their help.

— RS

cruisers psych up

Ahhh, Polynesia . . . Just saying that word, we can practically feel the warm caress of the trade winds.

Although the prime weather window for jumping off from the Americas to the South Pacific is still five months away, there's already a lot of buzz within the cruising community about this year's Pacific Puddle Jump. For the uninitiated, that's the name we coined long ago for the annual migration of westbound cruisers.

As most readers know, *Latitude ex-*



PHOTOS COURTESY GEMINI

for the puddle jump

pendes a lot of ink and effort on behalf of sailors who make this 3,000-mile open water passage, because completing it is a major accomplishment within the realm of world cruising. On the front end this year, we'll host our annual Puddle Jump Kickoff Party on February 6 at the Vallarta YC located in Nuevo Vallarta's Paradise Village Resort. We'll also be doing some 'outreach' to more southerly members of this year's fleet, thanks to friends at

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coincidence or crackdown?

Safety inspections by the Coast Guard are a way of life on San Francisco Bay. Long contested by the Fourth Amendment crowd, such searches have been upheld in court since the inception of the Revenue Cutter Service (which later became the Coast Guard) in 1790 by an act of the first Congress. Most Bay Area boaters comply patiently, if not happily, with these intrusions on our time on the water, and look at them as a necessary evil.

Longtime readers will no doubt recall the bad old days of 'Zero Intelligence/Zero Tolerance' more than a decade ago when *Latitude* campaigned against stepped-up boardings of recreational vessels. The publisher was later told by Sector San Francisco then-Commander

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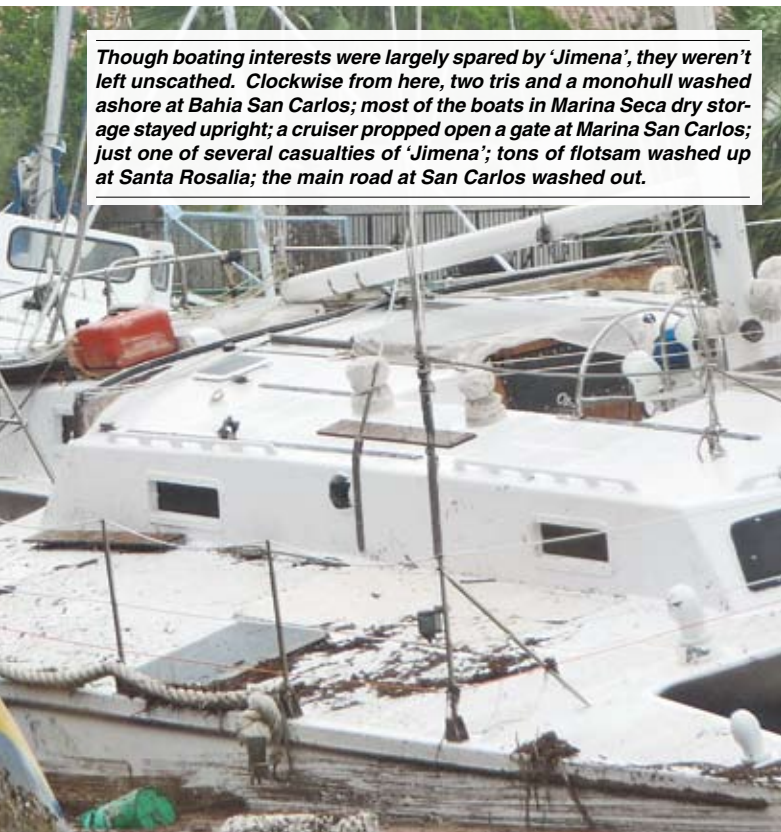


PHOTOS COURTESY ESTRELLA



COURTESY HOBG

Though boating interests were largely spared by 'Jimena', they weren't left unscathed. Clockwise from here, two tris and a monohull washed ashore at Bahia San Carlos; most of the boats in Marina Seca dry storage stayed upright; a cruiser propped open a gate at Marina San Carlos; just one of several casualties of 'Jimena'; tons of flotsam washed up at Santa Rosalia; the main road at San Carlos washed out.



COURTESY PURA VIDA

SIGHTINGS

coincidence — cont'd

Capt. Larry Hall that his ravings had singlehandedly changed that policy. True or not, since that time, we've rarely received a complaint against the Coast Guard. More often than not, we get letter after letter commending them for assisting mariners in need.

So imagine our concern when, in a period of just a couple days, we received no fewer than three less-than-sterling reviews of recent Coast Guard interactions, all of which involved the racing community. The first, and most disturbing, episode occurred on August 25 during a Sausalito YC Beer Can race. After the start of the race, PRO Jeff Zarwell says he realized he'd forgotten to bring the 'anchor yanker' for the marks. He was operating the safety boat for the race, so he radioed the signal boat that he was returning to Schoonmaker Point Marina to pick it up — a trip that should have taken 10 minutes.

Zarwell reports that as soon as he entered Richardson Bay, a RIB from the Coast Guard vessel *Pike* began trailing him. Shortly before arriving at the marina, a 'mayday' was called on the race channel, VHF 71. According to Zarwell, neither he nor the signal boat received any other information, just the 'mayday'. "When I waved the RIB over and told them I'd received a mayday, they said 'We didn't hear

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puddle jump

the Panama YC (dates TBA). Officially registered fleet members (see www.pacificpuddlejump.com) will be profiled in the magazine. And thanks to our friends at the Tahiti YC, they'll likely be offered a special exemption from having to pay the normal entrance bond — a savings of roughly \$1,500 per person. You must register, however, before February 20.

On the back end, we're working with Tahiti Tourisme and other partners to co-host another Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous on June 18-20 — a free three-day gathering to celebrate the fleet's successful crossing, while introducing members to Tahitian culture through traditional sports, music, dance and cuisine.

In addition, we'll be hosting three upcoming Puddle Jump seminars: 1) At the San Diego West Marine (1250 Rosecrans)

While few Puddle Jump boats are this elegant, they all reach the same dramatic Polynesian landfalls.

SPREAD: LATITUDE / ANDY. INSET: COURTESY EMERALD STAR



— cont'd

on Saturday, October 24 (5 p.m.), the day before the Ha-Ha Kickoff Party; 2) At the Seattle Boat Show in January (specifics TBA); 3) At Oakland's Strictly Sail Pacific show in April (again, TBA).

In Puerto Vallarta, a wide variety of worthwhile seminars is being scheduled at both the Vallarta YC (www.vallartayachtclub.org) and Marina Riviera Nayarit (www.marinarivieranayarit.com).

Finally, every potential Puddle Jumper should check out the 'PacificPuddle-Jump' group site at Yahoo.com (under the 'Groups' menu), which contains a wealth of useful info related to making the crossing. Be aware also that most Puddle Jump articles published in *Latitude* can be downloaded for free at www.pacificpuddlejumper.com. See you out there!

— andy



coincidence — cont'd

it," Zarwell recalls. "I then had to explain that it came over the race channel and why a racer might think he'd have a chance of nearby boats hearing him on that channel. One of the men asked for my cell phone number — which I had to repeat five times before he finally wrote it down — and then I was told to continue to the dock."

Once there, Zarwell reports that he received a call from the officer aboard *Pike*, and once again had to explain the situation: A racer had called a mayday, and that, as the safety boat, he should go find out what had happened. "I was told that as soon as the safety inspection was complete, I could go check on my boats." He says this whole interaction took about 10 minutes, not including the time it took to conduct the inspection (he passed). "It's unbelievable that they let a safety inspection take precedence over a mayday call!"

What no one knew — not Zarwell, not the signal boat, not the Coast Guard — was that, while all this was going down, a flawless man-overboard rescue had been performed just outside Richardson Bay. In the midst of a spectacular spinnaker blow-out, a crewmember aboard Dale Flaming's *J/133 J/Hawk* fell overboard, only to be rescued within moments by the crew of Charles James' *J/105 Roxanne*. Zarwell reports that the crewmember was not wearing a PFD, and was inappropriately dressed, so he already showed signs of hypothermia after just a few minutes in the Bay. Other than that, he was unhurt. Zarwell fired off an irate letter of complaint to the Coast Guard — cc'ing *Latitude* — shortly after the incident.

Fast forward to Labor Day, three days before the Rolex Big Boat Series was to commence. Brent Vaughan was out practicing for the event with his full crew aboard his St. Francis YC-based *J/105 Jabberwocky*. "We were sailing to weather, hiking within the *J/105* rules, on a port tack about 500 yards off Golden Gate YC," Vaughan recalls. "A Coast Guard RIB came tearing out of Gashouse Cove and passed behind us. I thought they were saying hi so I waved. Instead, they came up next to us and said that my crew had to get inside the lifelines. I must have looked dense because I really didn't understand. They told me no one could have their legs hanging outboard!"

Vaughan says he told the men on the RIB that he and his crew were practicing for a race. "Where's your patrol boat?' they asked. It was truly bizarre. I asked them what they were talking about, and they said, 'You have to have a patrol boat if you're practicing.' I told them that I was pretty sure that California state law does not require me to buy a powerboat before I can sail my sailboat."

At this point Vaughan says things started to get contentious. "I was about two comments away from them boarding us so I just told my crew to pull in their legs and we'd practice on the other side of the Bay. I'd paid for Olympic silver medalist Jeff Madrigali to come up early for practice and I didn't want to waste three hours going down

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In this amazing sequence, 'Roxanne' can be seen coming to the rescue.

PHOTOS TIM SELL

coincidence — cont'd

their checklist. In the end, they said the rule was a state statute so they wouldn't cite us, but that they'd 'be happy to call the sheriff, and they won't be as understanding as us.' Like I said, truly bizarre."

Then came a report that a BBS race committee boat was boarded for a safety inspection — not only during the middle of a race, but in the middle of the race course. One person onboard told us that the Coast Guard vessel *Tern* stayed on station in the middle of the course, forcing racers to go around them. Perhaps not a big deal normally but, combined with these other incidents, a potential red flag.

"There's no mandate to crack down on sailing vessels or the racing community," insists Sector San Francisco Public Affairs Officer LTJG Jeremy Pichette. "If there's some disconnect between the Coast Guard and the boating public, that's something we'd like to address. We take complaints very seriously. Our top priority is to ensure the safety of our crews and the boating public."

Lt. Pichette reports that an internal investigation of Zarwell's complaint was completed at the end of last month. "It was found that all Coast Guard personnel abided by training and instructions," he said. "The boarding occurred north of the race location, so Mr. Zarwell's safety boat was not near the scene of the crew overboard." He noted that the officer aboard *Pike* relayed the mayday to Search and Rescue who then gained contact with *Roxanne*. "They were told no other Coast Guard assistance was needed."

It's worth noting that no complaints were filed in the other cases, and Lt. Pichette confirmed that the crew of *Jabberwocky* were not violating any laws. "That rule only applies to powerboats," he said.

So how can the "disconnect" that Lt. Pichette mentioned — if there even is one — be fixed? "Maybe they should put together a panel with members of the boating community," suggests Jeff Zarwell. "It doesn't seem that they know who it is they're supposedly serving."

If such a group were to form, one point of discussion would be how to avoid the inspection of race committee boats during active racing. A reasonable solution would be annual inspections that would exempt them from further boardings. That simple change would have prevented two of these incidents.

Whatever the solution, it's clear that the Coast Guard is willing to play ball — the boating community just has to step up to the plate.

— *ladonna*

the birth of a new *neraida*

In the wee hours of June, 19, 2008, British solo circumnavigator Jeanne Socrates slept as her Najad 361 *Nereida* veered toward the shore of Playa Michigan, situated between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo. Socrates had left Zihua 15 months earlier on a west-about circumnavigation via the Panama Canal, and was just 60 miles from crossing her outbound track when her autopilot failed and *Nereida* was lost on that desolate Mexican beach.

Jeanne spent days recovering what she could from the wreck, giving much of it to local fishermen, and sending the rest to San Francisco aboard another cruiser's boat. There she stored the gear in a friend's garage as she began the process of finding a new boat to call home.

Socrates, a veteran of the '06 Singlehanded TransPac, had signed up for the '08 running of the race, but she didn't let the loss of *Nereida*, just a month before the start, stop her from joining her old friends at the finish line. It was a

continued on outside column of next sightings page

baja ha-ha draws

Much to the surprise of the Baja Ha-Ha Rally Committee, the number of paid entries for the 'Sweet Sixteen' Ha-Ha blew by the old record of 183 boats to a total of 191 boats. Who would have thought?

There will be some new twists to this year's pre-rally activities. A consortium of San Diego port staffers, business people and Harbor Police have been working to make the fleet's visit more fun and more high-profile than ever.

On the way out to the October 26 start, Ha-Ha boats will parade past the tip of Shelter Island at 10 a.m., where a San Diego fire boat will salute them with a cloud of spray, while local print and TV news outlets record the procession — your

Spread, Jeanne Socrates aboard her new 'Nereida'. She oversaw nearly every aspect of her build, making dozens of small changes and several larger ones, such as changing her sail plan to a cutter. Inset, the original 'Nereida' as she lay dying on a forlorn Mexican beach.



record numbers

chance to get on the evening news. The head of Baja tourism has been invited to attend and officially start the parade with a blast from the special starter's shotgun used during the 1988 America's Cup held in San Diego.

While we're gratified that so many boats decided to enter, our primary concern is that everyone make it to Cabo safely. For this reason, we want to emphasize how important it is for all skippers and crew to make sure that the boat and all the crew are ready to sail offshore. It starts with personal issues. Everybody needs to understand the importance of not going overboard, getting hit in the head by the

continued in middle column of next sightings page

neraida — cont'd

bittersweet reunion, to be sure, but one that brought Jeanne a sense of closure — especially when, shortly before the race's final party, she learned that her insurance company, Lloyds of London, had honored her claim in full.

Instead of continuing to scour used boat ads on the internet, Socrates contacted Najad Yachts in Sweden and began an eight-month process of having a new boat built to her exacting specifications. Having sailed the first *Nereida* thousands of miles with her late husband George, and then tens of thousand on her own, Jeanne was intimately familiar with the changes she wanted made.

The new *Nereida* was launched this past April, and Jeanne spent the summer commissioning the boat and otherwise prepping it for her next goal: A singlehanded, nonstop circumnavigation via the Great Capes. If she completes the trip, which she expects to take six or seven months, she says she'll be the oldest woman do have done so — but she's not saying exactly how old that is. "Let's just say that I'm in my 60s," she noted. "I don't believe a woman over 60 has ever

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PHOTOS COURTESY NEREIDA

SIGHTINGS

neraida — cont'd

done it. Sir Robin Knox-Johnston commented that, if I succeed, I'll be the nineteenth Brit ever to have done so solo, nonstop."

Early last month, Socrates set sail from Guernsey on a 12-day shakedown cruise to the Canary Islands. When we caught up with her, she was just a week or so away from her anticipated departure date. "There are still items to fix in place so they won't move around in the expected big seas — or if we should broach or invert — but I hope to be ready to get underway by the beginning of October," Jeanne said, "so as to be in the area of Cape Horn around mid-January."

Socrates also hopes to raise money for a charity close to her heart: Marie Curie Cancer Care. "Too many people I know have suffered from cancer, and it has denied them the chance to enjoy what they'd looked forward to, often after a hard-working life," she said. "Some friends are still struggling to overcome it. Marie Curie Cancer Care enables terminally ill people to spend their final days at home, with the family supported by dedicated nurses provided free of charge."

ha-ha

boom or spinnaker pole, or losing one's fingers in a block. Then there are boat safety issues, such as everyone's knowing the importance of keeping a good watch and knowing how to reef. And knowing how to deal with emergencies, such as fire, water coming into the boat from an unknown source, losing the rudder, or having the mast come down.

We don't want to frighten anyone, because these things have rarely or never happened in the previous 15 Ha-Ha's but, in order to be safe, you must have knowledge and be vigilant. Besides, the more you know, the more relaxed you'll be and the more fun you'll have.

'Sweet Sixteen' promises to be the biggest Ha-Ha if all 191 entries show up to the starting line.



— cont'd

Speaking of safety, the Mexican Navy wants all fleet members to know they have recently expanded their Search and Rescue fleet dramatically, with new helicopters and U.S. Coast Guard-style runabouts, based out of Ensenada, that are capable of 50 knots. Their personnel have been trained by the USCG, and all speak English.

As you'll read in our second installment of profiles, this year's fleet has some very interesting characters, and some very accomplished offshore sailors. We look forward to meeting them all — in fact, we can hardly wait for the Ha-Ha to begin.

— andy



neraida — cont'd

We'll publish Jeanne's updates periodically, but in the meantime, you can track her progress — as well as donate to her charity — at www.svneraida.com.

— ladonna

shake rattle and roll —
remembering the quake of '89

No one who experienced the 1989 earthquake in Northern California will ever forget where they were or what they were doing in the early evening hours of October 17. Though the 6.9 temblor was not nearly as powerful as the Great Earthquake of 1906 (estimated to have been a Richter magnitude 7.8), the Loma Prieta quake will always be the 'Big One' of our time.

To refresh your memory: shortly after 5 p.m. on October 17, the San Andreas fault slipped in an area 10 miles northeast of Santa Cruz. The

actual epicenter was in Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, but the quake soon took on the name of nearby Loma Prieta Peak. The main tremor lasted for 10-15 seconds and, according to varying reports, was felt as far away as San Diego to the south, Southern Oregon to the north, and Western Nevada. When the final numbers were tallied, 63 people had been killed, more than



LATITUDE / JR

The marina fire as seen from the Marin Headlands.

3,700 injured, and upwards of 10,000 left homeless. Some 12,000 homes and 2,600 businesses were damaged or destroyed. Forty buildings collapsed outright. Most of the fatalities occurred when the top deck of the double-decker Nimitz Freeway in the East Bay collapsed onto the bottom deck, crushing scores of cars. The most concentrated damage occurred in the Marina District of San Francisco, where we all learned about a thing called 'liquefaction', in which landfill over marshy areas amplifies the shaking — and the destruction. The quake caused an estimated \$6 billion (\$10 billion in today's dollars) in property damage, becoming one of the most expensive natural disasters in U.S. history at the time.

Although we 'covered' the boating aspect of the quake in our November issue that year, the reality is that, back then, and for months to come, sailing didn't matter. All that mattered was making sure loved ones were okay, you had someplace warm and dry to sleep, and that you could put your life back together.

But that was then. On this, the 20th anniversary of Loma Prieta, we asked readers (via *'Lectronic Latitude'*) to remember where they were and what happened that day — but only if it related to boating. The stories we got were so great we wonder why we didn't ask the same thing years ago. From one couple who completed a 21,000 mile circumnavigation of the Pacific that day when they sailed under the Gate to the sailor who helped ferry people to the East Bay, all the stories were riveting.

Instead of editing them down to fit our space limitations, we've posted the best ones on our website at www.latitude38.com/features/lomaprieta.html.

— jr

ROLEX BIG BOAT SERIES



When it was announced at last year's awards ceremony that the '09 Rolex Big Boat Series would function as the US IRC Nationals, we were hopeful it would turn out to be one of the biggest and best in recent memory. That was, of course, before the bottom dropped out of the economy. All of a sudden we were left wondering just how many boats would actually make it.

Thankfully, the developing strength of the West Coast IRC fleet meant that the 45th anniversary of the regatta — held September 10-13 — showed you can't keep the West Coast's premier event down. Although the fleet of 95 boats — 29 in four IRC divisions and 66 in seven one-design divisions — was about

Jim Mitchell's IRC A-winning R/P 52 'Vincitore' also took home the 2009 US IRC national title.

16 shy of last year's total, the quality was high, and the mass sufficient to produce both great racing and spectating.

Along with their typically excellent race management and parties, hosts St. Francis YC and Rolex broke new ground on the spectator side of things, adding features like live race tracking for the IRC divisions with mark-by-mark updates that included corrected times.

Coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the passing of the still-admired Tom Blackaller, this year's event kicked off with an open mic tribute to the two-time Star world champion, America's Cup campaigner and one of the most colorful

in the pantheon of Bay Area sailing characters.

After an awesome opening two days, with breeze into the low 20s and sunshine, the one thing no one had any control over — the weather — produced a somewhat anti-climactic coda to the regatta. Frontal activity rolled in Friday night, bringing with it thunderstorms and lightning and killing any chance of consistent breeze, or sun, for that matter, on the final two days. Although two races were held on both the Cityfront and North courses on Saturday in a relatively steady breeze that never got above 10 knots, Sunday was a different story. The regatta ended with a bang for the four IRC divisions as well as the

— HANGIN' TOUGH IN '09



J/120s and 1D35s — actually three bangs to be exact, when a huge hole that marooned the only fleet to start — IRC A — at the southeast corner of Alcatraz as it made its way down the first run, and racing for all the fleets on this course was abandoned. The North Course boats were able to sail a final, shortened race that cemented the winners in the Express 37, J/105, Beneteau 36.7, Cal 40 and Melges 32 classes, though it produced no changes in winners.

That meant no final day Bay tour and boat parade in front of the club, much to the chagrin of just about everyone we talked to. Also absent, due to fog outside the Gate on Friday, was a race to Pt. Bonita for the bigger boats.

Yet these aren't the kinds of things that'll keep people from coming back, and, if nothing else, the locals could finally have the pleasure of telling the out-of-towners a line they don't often get to use — "It's never like this here. . . ."

IRC A

Although it featured four TP 52s — probably the most together for a regatta in California since the class began almost a decade ago — IRC A went to the only purpose-designed IRC boat, Jim Mitchell's R/P 52 *Vincitore*. Mitchell was back this year to improve on last year's runner up spot with a new team including Chris Dickson on the wheels, and Norman Davant on tactics.

"We talked about last year's regatta all year long," said Mitchell, a native of Chicago living in Switzerland. "We had a motto this year, super-fine in 2009."

After coming out of the blocks strong with a pair of bullets, *Vincitore's* lead evaporated in races four and five on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning respectively. A pair of fourths in those two races dropped them into a tie with Tom Akin and Mark Jones' TP 52 *Flash*, which scored a 1-1 in the same two races. Helmed by Jeff Thorpe with Paul Cayard calling tactics for the first two days and navigator Artie Means filling in for Cayard — who had a previous MedCup commitment — for the second two, *Flash* wound up scoring a third to

ROLEX BIG BOAT SERIES



The 'Vincitore' brain trust — from left, Chris Dickson, Jim Mitchell, Norman Davant, Rodney Keenan and Colin Booth put it all together against a competitive fleet of TP 52s to take IRC A.

Vincitore's second in what would prove to be the final race.

When Sunday's race was abandoned with *Flash* leading on corrected time as the fleet parked at the southeast corner of Alacatraz, the regatta win — and 2009 IRC National title — went to Mitchell's electric-blue speedster.

Although the racing was generally tight — four of the five boats were often within boatlengths of each other on the first beats of the races — Dickson said he felt *Vincitore* had a speed edge sufficient to overcome its higher rating.

"We were definitely the quickest boat downwind in both the light and the heavy," he said. "In light air, I think we were quickest upwind, but in the breeze, *Samba Pa Ti* and *Flash* were a bit quicker."

For Mitchell, the win, which came with the St. Francis Perpetual Trophy, was especially gratifying as his father Jim Sr. — who introduced him to the sport — was there to see it happen.

"This is a very emotional win for me," the younger Mitchell said. "At the end of racing, when I looked at my dad, who was out on the chase boat, we both had a tear in our eye. The speech I gave on the first day was that we have a passion for sailing, a passion for friends and family, and we will let the results speak for themselves."

That they did. If Mitchell's crew, which also included David Blanchfield, Colin Booth, Mike Buckley, Hayden Goodrick, Martin Hannon, Nathan Hislop, Rodney Keenan, Dallas Kilponen, Simon Minoprio, Brent Ruhne, Chris Skinner and Jack Toliver made any mistakes, we missed them. According to Mitchell their effort wasn't a two-shot deal.

"We are bringing *Vincitore* back again next year," he promised.

IRC B

IRC B was hands down the wackiest division of all. Featuring everything from a pair of Farr 36s to the division winner, and biggest boat in the regatta, Kjeld Hestehave's San Diego-based Tanton 73 *Velos*, IRC B was a mish-mash of displacement and planing boats pretty much covered the last three rating rules and the last four decades. The scratch boat was Chris Welsh's IRC-optimized Spencer 65 *Ragtime*, but it was all *Velos*, all weekend.

"This win is 12 years in the making," he said of winning the City of San Francisco Trophy and culminating in a four-time Rolex Big Boat Series ef-

Inset, from left — Kjeld Hestehave, Chuck Skewes and Will Stout, seen here with what would be a fitting Rolex for the biggest boat this year; Spread — Hestehave's Tanton 73 'Velos' dwarfed IRC B, spare the scratch boat, Chris Welsh's Spencer 65 'Ragtime' (not pictured).

fort. "We were here in '97 and '98, and we got two second places that year. We were here two years ago and got killed by everyone."

The IOR design used her relatively prodigious waterline to break away from the rest of the 10-boat pack at the start line and never looked back, sailing in clean air the entire time and giving her afterguard — comprised of San Diegans Will Stout and Chuck Skewes — any lane they wanted.

The duo took full advantage, and with the help of the generally non-planing conditions and some crisp boathandling from the 22-person crew — got the big boat around the course fast enough to reel off six-straight bullets. But Stout felt their size did carry some limitation.

"On the starting line, we're really not that manoeuvrable," he said.



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LATTITUDE/ROB



SHARON GREEN/WWW.ULTIMATESAILING.COM

Hestehave is also an avid Etchells sailor and *Velos'* main sported an Etchells insignia on the head.

"It was a little too big to measure in," he cracked.

Dale Williams' brand-new Kernan 44 *Wasabi* was the best of the rest, fending off Sy Kleinman's strong-finishing Schumacher 54 *Swiftsure II* to take second on a countback.

IRC C

Dan Woolery's Pt. Richmond-based King 40 *Soozal* won what was probably one of the two toughest divisions in the regatta. In doing so, *Soozal* took the Richard Rheem Perpetual and also wrapped-up the SF Bay IRC season championship. Featuring two previous division winners in Brad Copper's Tripp

'Soozal' took IRC C; Inset — Tactician Robbie Haines, left, and owner/driver Dan Woolery.

43 *TNT* and John Siegel's Wylie 42 *Scorpio* — neither of which cracked the top three this year — the eight-boat IRC C was tight, with one of the closest rating spreads and some of the most similar boats. With Robbie Haines calling the shots and rockstar crew that included Hogan Beattie, Matt Siddens, Chris Lewis, Scott Easom, Gary Sadamori, Pete McCormick, Rob Moore and Greg Felton, Woolery sailed the boat to yet another division win in a successful year, which included wins at Key West Race Week and the Pineapple Cup to name a few.

"I'm pleased with the win, but even more so because it capped a successful year-long effort," Woolery said. "The most important part of the formula was selecting the right mix of people that fit the sailing style that I am accustomed to. Knowing that we would ultimately end up sailing in the Bay for the summer, we wanted a crew that was local to our area, had plenty of racing experience and most importantly, had the personalities that befitted our program. I am a low-key guy, and love to sail with knowledgeable, low-key people. This was paramount as we were to spend the entire year sailing together, and didn't want to go through any crew changes if at all possible. We were also fortunate to have backups that fit these criteria as well if someone was unable to make a regatta."

Winning the IRC Nationals was the goal for the *Soozal* program this year, and while Woolery certainly put together the kind of effort required to do that, he was philosophical about the outcome.

"We had a very satisfying year — a fairy tale year of remaining on top in the 40-foot range against the boats we sailed against on the East Coast in the Grand Prix events, and the IRC boats we raced against here on the West Coast. Sure, it would have been a nice honor to have emerged at the top of the Nationals, but considering the type of boats racing in Division A, and the venue, we're very proud of what we accomplished, and feel we sailed as hard as we could have. We still believe we've had the experience of sailing on one of the fastest IRC 40-footers out there."

The runner-up spot in the division went to the only east coast entry, James Bishop's J/44 *Gold Digger*. Tim Fuller

Gerry Sheridan, left, and tactician James Mullarney put 'Tupelo Honey' in all the right spots, namely first in every race in IRC D.



LATTITUDE/ROB

ROLEX BIG BOAT SERIES



LATITUDE/LADONNA

'Chance's Barry Lewis couldn't be happier with the namesake of what turned out to be his good luck charm — a Mr. Magoo sticker on the bowsprit.

— who you may remember won his division aboard his other boat, the turboed 1D35 *Relentless*, in this year's TransPac — took third with his J/122 *Resolute*.

IRC D

Gerry Sheridan's San Francisco-based *Elan 40 Tupelo Honey* used the occasion of this year's RBBS to bookend its three-straight runner-up finishes since a division win in 2005.

With straight bullets, Sheridan and his tactician — and fellow Irishman — James Mullarney scored an emphatic win, finishing six-points clear of Timothy Ballard's San Rafael-based Beneteau

Sheridan said. "We really wanted it this year. We trained for it and the crew is outstanding. Every single one of them deserved to be on the crew."

In addition to Sheridan and Mullarney, the *Tupelo Honey* crew included Fabrizio Natale, Bill Nielsen, Jamie Platto, Mike Reed, Adam Simmonds, Arne Vandembroucke, Bart von Zastrow and Kevin Wilkinson.

Third in the six-boat division went Frank Morrow's IMX 38 *Hawkeye*.



John Wimer's team on 'Desdemona' turned it up this year, finishing second to 'Chance.'

pushed hard around the course by John Wimer's *Desdemona*. In what's become standard operating procedure for the class at the Big Boat Series, the regatta wasn't decided until the final run of the final race of the series.

"Going into the sixth race on Saturday we were one point behind *Desdemona*," Lewis said. "We led the entire race with *Desdemona* in second. Our tactician, Doug Nugent, said, 'We need to put a boat between us,' so we held back and sat on *Desdemona* which allowed Steve Madeira's *Mr. Magoo* to pass them. It blew up in our face because *Magoo* passed us too! Around the final weather mark we had *Desdemona* on our tail with *Magoo* five or six boatlengths in front of us. But *Magoo* twisted their kite, and we ended up bow to bow for the last 100 yards before we nosed them out by no more than 10 feet."

When Sunday's final race was cancelled, Nugent's call looked pretty good as the *Chance* crew — which also included Scott Kozinchik, Blaine Pedlow, Matt Gingo, Michael Redmond, Amy Guarneri, Aaron Elder, Mark Ruppert, Bryan Murdock and David Krausz — won on a countback.

"Of course we didn't know that Sunday's race would be cancelled," Lewis



LATITUDE/LADONNA

The 'Good Timin' gang racked up yet another title at the RBBS in the J/105 division.

40.7 *Inspired Environments* to take the Keefe-Kilborn Perpetual. But Sheridan said that it looked easier on paper than it was on the water.

"*Inspired Environments* sailed really well and pushed us the entire time,"

J/120

The J/120s can always be counted on to provide one of the closest contests at RBBS, and this year was no exception for the eight-boat fleet. Defending champion Barry Lewis and his gang on *Chance* got

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LESLIE RICHTER/WWW.ROCKSKIPPER.COM

This year we decided to get our bad race out of the way on Thursday. Other than that, we had all firsts and seconds. We were determined that it wasn't going to stop us from sailing really hard, as it was quite close with the top couple boats sailing fast the entire regatta and *Desdemona* sailing better than they have in Big Boat Series in very long time."

J/105

Chris Perkins has been sailing his J/105 *Good Timin'* in Big Boat Series since '00; in that time, he and his core crew of Dave Wilson, Pete Scott, Tom and Melissa Purdy, Jon Perkins and Darren Ward have won their division at least five times. But Perkins isn't keeping count.

"It's not that important to us," Perkins said. "We look forward to each and every regatta. Big Boat Series is so special because it's home for us, and the biggest regatta on the Bay for the 105s."

Even so, Perkins said it wasn't until about a month before the regatta that he decided to sail. He hadn't sailed the boat all year, due in large part to the fact he's been working in San Diego as CFO for BMW Oracle Racing.

"The crew said, 'Hey, how come we're not sailing this year?'" Perkins said. "We decided to do it, then I realized the winches hadn't turned since April, we didn't have a bottom on the boat, etc."

After hurriedly preparing the boat, the *Good Timin'* crew put their experience to work for them, suffered no breakdowns,

Philippe Kahn's Melges 32 'Pegasus' pulverized the Bay during Friday afternoon's breezier race.

and sailed a consistent series without a single bullet, to finish four points clear of Bruce Stone's *Arbitrage*.

"Bruce had his boat going phenomenally fast," Perkins said. "It was clear he had the best speed of any boat. We were happy with our speed, and we just hung out, didn't try to win any races, bang any corners or 'ring the bell.'"

"Big Boat Series is different from the normal class events," Perkins said. "Instead of staying in relatively confined racing area, you're out there traversing the Bay and making some do-or-die decisions."

Stone scored three bullets, a second and two sixths, but Thursday's second race proved to be his undoing, as a 15th in the 25-boat fleet put him behind the eight ball. The leader after day one, Jeff Litfin and John Case's *Mojo* also sailed a consistent series to finish three points behind *Arbitrage*. Howard Bentley's *Swoosh* found some previously untapped speed to notch a bullet in the series and slide into fourth when Tim Russell's *Aquavit* slipped up in the fluky and shortened Sunday race on the North Course and scored a 22nd, which dropped them from a tie for second to fifth.

1D35

The 1D35 was the other one-design class whose regatta was cut short by Sunday's weather. Like the J/120s, the competition within the seven-boat fleet was close. Like the 120s, the regatta produced a repeat winner. Five boats scored

said. "But that was a great call by Doug — we've never not raced on a Sunday and it came as a surprise."

Four boats led the division at various points during the regatta, and *Chance's* win came despite restarting after being called over early in the second race.

"We had a real hard time climbing back through the fleet," Lewis said. "Normally for us, it's a 'bad Saturday' event."



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LATITUDE/ANDY

Tactician Rick Schudt and owner/driver Gary Boell had 'Diabalita' atop the podium in the 1D35s for the second consecutive time.

at least one bullet, and only two points separated second through fourth places after a three-way tie for first was broken in race five. Despite a 30% penalty for a Cityfront short-tacking infraction, Gary Boell's Richmond-based *Diabalita* held on for a win, to finish four points clear of the regatta's only Japanese entry — a crowd favorite — Masakazu Toyama's chartered *Ebb Tide*.

Despite the tight racing, the most intense moment of the regatta for Boell came at around 10 a.m. Saturday morning, when he realized they'd wrapped a spinnaker sheet around their prop on the lee side of Alcatraz, shortly before the start of race five.

"I had to strip down to my red boxers with white hearts on them, and do four dives under the boat to clear it," Boell said.

Backing up Boell were tactician Rick Schudt, Geoff Love, Chris Loughran, Cyril Guaraud, Randall Landaiche, Ellen Hoke, and Tone Chin, all of whom are Category 1 — non-pro — sailors, who with the exception of Love, were returning from the boat's '08 win.

The *Ebb Tide* crew — back for its third attempt in the fleet — included two former America's Cup campaigners and sailed well, but they suffered at times from a lack of local knowledge. At the awards ceremony the team received a prolonged ovation from the crowd — and showed why, when they presented Boell with a bottle of premium sake that they'd brought for the division winner.

Beneteau 36.7

The Beneteau 36.7s fielded a one-design division for the second year in a



LATITUDE/ANDY

Crowd favorites, the Japanese entry 'Ebb Tide.'

row. Before sliding to second by the end of the regatta, Aaron Kennedy's *Ay Caliente!* jumped out to an early lead in this competitive six-boat group, which saw last year's winner, Ed Durbin's *Mistral*, finish third, and last year's runner-up, Pat Patterson's Bellingham, Washington-

based *Summer and Smoke* finish five points clear of *Ay Caliente!*.

"Three different boats took first in the first three races," said Patterson, who dedicated the win to his wife Leanne and their 30-year anniversary, which coincided with the event. "It was all spread out — anything could have happened. We clawed our way to second last year. This year we got lucky."

The *Summer and Smoke* Crew, which included the Bay Area's Bill Colombo on tactics and Victor Beltran navigating,



LATITUDE/ROB

Bill LeRoy, inset, and his Cal 40 'Gone With Wind' were gone with the division's title after a 2-1-1-2-1-1-1.



ROLEX/DANIEL FORESIER



Dave and Brock Steffen, Terry Tavelli, Gabe Murphy, Erik Smitt, Keith Rarick, and Mike Spencer-Smith, sailed well enough to score a 3-3-1-1-2-1.

"Our win was all about our great crew," Patterson said. "They're mostly from Bellingham YC. . . and most came last year also. Our MVP was 18-year-old Brock Steffen from Bellingham. He launched every kite perfectly, without a single problem."

Express 37

If the competition among the Express 37s seemed a little heated it was because the nine-boat division was sailing for one of the most coveted trophies in Bay Area racing. No, not the Rolex that awaited the class winner for the second consecutive year. We're talking about the vaunted Timex Cup! With its origins in the days of the class' perpetual snubbing of the fancier timepiece — despite being its longest-running one-design class — the Timex Cup Perpetual, a dime-store watch mounted haphazardly with duct tape on an irregularly-shaped piece of plywood, has become the class talisman.

Kame Richards won both the Timex Cup and a Rolex this year aboard *Golden*



LATTITUDE/LADONNA

Rolex? What Rolex? Kame Richards and Bill Bridge's 'Golden Moon' took home both the Express 37 class's coveted 'Timex Cup' Perpetual, and a fancy watch for a consistent, winning performance.

Moon. Backed up by tactician Scot Owens, Richards, boat partner Bill Bridge and the rest of the "Moonies" — Tom Paulling, Jamal Berkeley, Brad Jeffry, Todd Hedin, Mike Mannix, Andrew Hura, David Liebenberg, Lynn Davis and Aimee Daniel — got out of the blocks strong on Thursday, scoring a pair of bullets.

"One of the hardest things for me to control is my stress level," Richards said. "So it was refreshing to have various crew members remind us we don't have to win every race. With two wins on day one, we were sitting pretty. But on day two, we got a second and a third and were feeling fragile, until someone reminded us we still had a very comfortable lead."

Relaxed and groovin', the Moonies sailed to a very consistent 3-2-3-3-3 in the next three days to fend off Mick Schless' Southern California-based *Blade Runner*, which followed its opening 5-6 with a 1-1-2-1-2 to get within two points of *Golden Moon*.

"The best part of the whole thing is the people who own the boats and people who crew on the boats," said Richards, who won his division for the third time in the last seven years. "What makes a one design strong is not how new it is; that's not it. There's a special glue, a societal kind of glue. Ron Moore once said, 'The boat chooses you,' and I wonder if that's not what the Express 37 has done to us."

Cal 40

Perhaps the coolest thing at this year's Rolex Big Boat Series was the advent of the Cal 40 one design division. And as good as it was to see six examples of the classic Bill Lapworth design racing against each other on the Bay, it was even better to see how well-kept they are. The true peach among this cherry fleet was Bill LeRoy's *Gone With the Wind*, which handily won the division with five bullets and a pair of seconds. LeRoy, who came to the boat following the break from sailing after successfully campaigning an

SC 50 by the same name, put together an effort as impressive as the restoration of the boat.

"I was talking with Stan Honey, and I asked him if there were any Cal 40s around," LeRoy said. "We started discussing the design and the more we talked, the more apparent it became that it was exactly what I wanted in a boat. It doesn't have any bad habits and it has a safe and secure cockpit for taking my grandchildren sailing."

He found a boat last year and began a restoration that went, "way over budget," and culminated in a beautiful boat, a Big Boat Series win, and big plans for next year.

"We're going to ship the boat to the East Coast to do both the Bermuda Race and some cruising," he said. And when he does, he'll doubtless get the same reaction he said he's gotten here at home.



LEEANNE PATTERSON

Pat Patterson and his Bellingham, Washington-based 'Summer and Smoke' team came down to raid the Beneteau 36.7 division title.



ROLEX BIG BOAT SERIES



SHARON GREEN/WWW.ULTIMATESAILING.COM

"When you tell people you have a Cal 40, they light up and say, 'Ohhh.'"

The battle for second went to Steve Waterloo's *Shaman*, which pulled away from Rodney Pimentel's *Azure* in the final races of the regatta.

Melges 32

The Melges 32s were sailing for their U.S. National Championships; unfortunately you wouldn't know it, given that only five entries showed for the regatta. With the class' World Championships beginning in Sardinia a week-and-a-half later, the deck was stacked against the class' chance of matching last year's total of nine entries that included two European teams.

But the lack of entries didn't translate into ho-hum racing. Mill Valley's Don Jesberg and his all-corinthian team on *Viva* — which had won the seven-boat North Americans held earlier in the week at Sausalito YC — battled with Andy Lovell and Burton Benrud's Louisiana-based *Rougarou*.

Rougarou finished strong, posting a pair of bullets on Saturday to pull away and finish three points clear of *Viva*. Stephen Pugh's Sausalito-based *Taboo* rounded out the top-three, another three points behind *Viva*.

With 45 years under its belt, the '09 Rolex Big Boat Series proved the regatta can hold its own no matter what's

Andy Costello's Pt. Richmond-based J/125 'Double Trouble' screams downwind.

happening in the greater economic context. It also proved that IRC can do the same, and while there are some areas that could use improvement, many people — whether they like the rule or not — agree that it's working better than anything that preceded it.

Count IRC D winner Gerry Sheridan among them:

"I think IRC is saving big boat racing around the world," he said. "It's giving a new sense of purpose to racing and serious big boat campaigns. Handicap racing is never perfect, but this is close to perfect."

Newly-crowned National Champion Mitchell agreed:

"I like it, and not because we won," he said. "With IRC, your boat's not obsolete every year. I didn't design it as a stripped-out boat; it has a proper galley, cherry-wood floors, benches in the cockpit for when I take my dad and friends sailing, plus it's comfortable for distance races."

Yet another division winner, Dan Woolery, pointed out that despite the success he's had with *Soozal*, there are still some areas in the administration of the rule — which in the 45- to 50-ft range begins to favor lighter displacement, more power, and planing hull forms — that need work.

"Most of the sailing venues around the

U.S. typically feature less breeze than the planing conditions we get here in Northern California," Woolery said. "The planing verses non-planing attributes of the 50-plus footers become an issue for the equity in IRC. When racing in all kinds of wind conditions over this past year against the typical IRC boat — the racer/cruiser, the medium displacement boat with legitimate headroom, a real head, a galley, berths, water tanks and so on — we had many occasions where places were determined by just a few, or 20 to 30 seconds — which is pretty close after two hours of racing. The results of this year's Big Boat Series show that all of the TP 52's, even the last-placed boat, corrected out ahead of anyone in our fleet. To make a good rating rule even better, there should be some accommodation to level the playing field, if combining all these types of boats together into an overall regatta format is the goal."

With so many great stories to tell, and not enough space, we were forced to make a difficult decision: run more awesome photos, or a blue box with tiny type inside, that essentially duplicates the body of the story? We chose the former, and hope you're happy. But if you want to see the full results, video and images from the '09 Rolex Big Boat Series, all you have to do is visit: www.big-boat-series.com.

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***Congratulations to
Gerard Sheridan & the
crew of 'Tupelo Honey',
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Rolex Big Boat Series IRC C Winners King 40 'Soozal'

Easom Racing & Rigging wants to thank Dan & Suzie Woolery for bringing us aboard *Soozal* for an incredible 2009 Racing Season. *Soozal* is an 'Easomized' production King 40. Starting with winning Key West, then winning the Miami Grand Prix, winning the Jamaica Race, and finally winning the SF IRC Championship, *Soozal* became the dominant 40-ft IRC boat in the world.

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