

Latitude 38

# Latitude 38

VOLUME 395 May 2010

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MAY 2010

VOLUME 395





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Cover: If two is company and three is a crowd, four cats are a blast in the tight quarters at this secret, shallow, bluewater anchorage in the Sea of Cortez. Clockwise from the bottom, the boats are Bill Lily's Lagoon 470 *Moontide* from Newport Beach, Arjan Bok's Lidgard 43 *Rotkat* from San Francisco, *Latitude's* Surfin' 63 *Profligate* from Punta Mita, and Bob Smith's Custom 44 *Pantera* from Victoria, B.C.

Photo by: *Latitude 38*/Richard

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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](mailto: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](http://www.latitude38.com/writers.html).



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50' Chinese Junk	1972	new listing	325,000
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47' Beneteau 473	2006		324,000
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46' Beneteau 461	1998	reduced	179,500
45' Hunter Legend 450	1998	pending	159,000
45' Beneteau 45f5	1991		157,500
42' Beneteau 423	2005		239,000
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41' Tartan 4100	2008	SOLD	365,000
41' Tartan 4100	1996		229,000
40' Beneteau First 40.7	2002	SOLD	159,000
40' Beneteau First 40.7	2000		124,900
40' Island Packet	1998		255,000
39' Beneteau 393	2003		137,900
38' Tartan 3800	1994		135,000
38' Island Packet 380	1999		245,000
40' C&C 37+	1989		99,000
37' Beneteau 373	2004		145,000
36' Beneteau First 36.7	2002		118,000
36' Islander	1976	pending	46,500
36' Catalina	1988		63,500
36' Pearson	1985		60,900
35' Fantasia	1979		74,900
35' J/109	2003		173,900
34' Beneteau 343	2007		128,500
34' Express	1987	SOLD	59,900
33' Beneteau 331	2002	pending	85,900
32' Beneteau 323	2006	SOLD	94,900
32' Island Packet	1990		89,000

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# Latitude 38

"we go where the wind blows"

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yacht sales

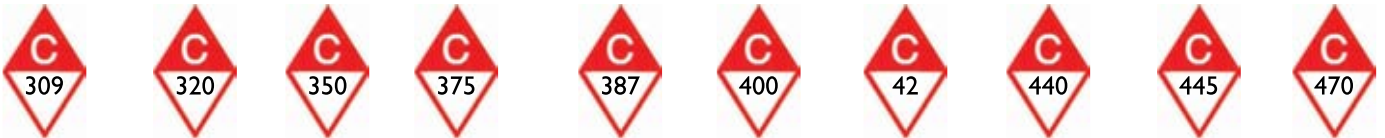
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Catalina 36	1987	\$52,500
Catalina 36	1983	\$47,500
Catalina 36	2005	\$139,000
Catalina 350	2008	\$169,500
Catalina 350	2005	\$149,000
Catalina 350	2004	\$127,500
Catalina 350	2004	\$149,000
Catalina 34	2007	\$139,000
Catalina 34	2004	\$126,000
Catalina 320	1999	\$83,750
Catalina 320	2002	\$84,000
Catalina 310	2007	\$109,000

Catalina 280	2004	\$65,500
Catalina 28	2004	\$59,000
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Hunter 466	2004	\$209,500
Hunter 460	2000	\$219,500
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Cavalier 45	1985	\$199,500
Morgan 45CC	1992	\$149,000
Jeanneau 43	2002	\$225,000
Hunter 44DS	2004	\$249,000
Fair Weather Mariner 39	1895	\$129,900
Hunter 37	1987	\$61,500
Hunter 36	2004	\$125,000
Hunter 36	2004	\$99,000
Hunter 36	2007	\$92,000
Hunter 36	2007	\$139,000
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# CALENDAR

## Non-Race

**Apr. 30-May 2** — Loreto Fest and Cruisers' Music Festival. This classic Baja event, started to clean up Puerto Escondido, draws a very large crowd of cruisers and Baja land-travellers for a chili cook-off, dinghy races and other water activities, the Candeleros Classic race, and lots of participant-created music. The goals are to have fun and raise lots of money for Mexican charities in Puerto Escondido and Loreto. Visit [www.hiddenportyachtclub.com](http://www.hiddenportyachtclub.com).

**May 1, 8, 15, 22** — Sail aboard San Francisco 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 adults, \$20 kids 6-15. Info, [www.nps.gov/safr](http://www.nps.gov/safr).

**May 2, 2000** — The U.S. government announced that civilians would be able to access military-quality GPS system.

**May 2-30** — Free sailing at Pier 40 every Sunday courtesy of BAADS. Info, (415) 281-0212 or [www.baads.org](http://www.baads.org).

**May 4-25** — America's Boating Class by Marin Power & Sail Squadron in Novato, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 7-9 p.m. \$40 fee. Info, (415) 924-2712.

**May 5-26** — 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](http://www.stfyc.com).

**May 6** — Cruising the Mexican Coast by Neal Dotem at San Carlos West Marine, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Info, (650) 593-2070.

**May 8** — Port Supply Tradeshow at San Carlos West Marine, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Info, (650) 593-2070.

**May 9** — Let Mom take the helm today.

**May 10** — Singlehanded TransPac Provisioning and Return Options seminar at Oakland YC, 7:30-10 p.m. Socializing starts at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome! Info, [www.sfbaysss.org](http://www.sfbaysss.org).

**May 13** — 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](http://www.singlesailors.org) or (510) 233-1064.

**May 13, June 10** — Fishing Seminar Series at San Carlos West Marine, 6-7 p.m. Free. Details, (650) 593-2070.

**May 16** — Cal Sailing Club's free introductory sail at Berkeley Marina, 1-4 p.m. Info, [www.cal-sailing.org](http://www.cal-sailing.org).

**May 16** — Marina Bay Yacht Harbor Boaters Swap Meet, 8 a.m.-noon. Info, (510) 236-1013 or [info@mbyachtharbor.com](mailto:info@mbyachtharbor.com).

**May 16** — Elkhorn YC Nautical Flea Market in Moss Landing. Come early for breakfast burritos, music, and fun. Starts at 7 a.m. Info, (831) 724-3875 or [eyc@elkhornyc.com](mailto:eyc@elkhornyc.com).

**May 16** — Safe Boating Sunday at Berkeley YC, 12-4 p.m. Tons of demos: USCG helicopter SAR, MOB, PFDs, liferaft, flares, & fire extinguishers. Info, [www.safety.berkeleyyc.org](http://www.safety.berkeleyyc.org).

**May 18-July 26** — Boating Skills & Seamanship course by USCGA Flotilla 14 at Loch Lomond YC on Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$85 fee. Info, (415) 485-1722 or [paula.j.russo@kp.org](mailto:paula.j.russo@kp.org).

**May 20** — Sail Repair seminar at San Carlos West Marine, 6-7 p.m. Free. Reservations, (650) 593-2070.

**May 22** — KFOG KaBoom Concert & Fireworks Show at Candlestick Park. Info, [www.kfog.com](http://www.kfog.com).

**May 22** — Peninsula YC's Boaters Swap Meet at Docketown Marina in Redwood City, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Info, (650) 369-4410 or [www.pychoating.org](http://www.pychoating.org).

**May 22** — 13th Annual Delta Loop Fest, the opening kickoff to Andrus Island's summer season. Info, [www.deltaloop.com/loopfest.html](http://www.deltaloop.com/loopfest.html).

**May 22** — Tradewinds Sailing School & Club's Open House. Go for a free sail! Info, [www.tradewindssailing.com](http://www.tradewindssailing.com).

**May 22** — Pre-season Boaters' Event at San Diego Marine Exchange, Downwind Marine and Sailing Supply in San Diego, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Info, [www.downwindmarine.com](http://www.downwindmarine.com).



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2003 Hunter 466	\$219,000
1999 Hunter 450	\$189,000
2008 Jeanneau 45 DS	\$318,500
1983 Morgan Neslon 45	\$109,000
1997 Catalina 42 MKII	\$148,500
2005 Hunter 41 AC	\$185,000

**PRE CRUISED SPECIALS**

1999 Hunter 410	\$129,000
2008 Beneteau 40	\$208,900
1986 Beneteau 40.5	\$65,000
1997 Hunter 40.5	\$114,900
1993 Hunter 40.5	\$114,000
1980 Islander 40	\$69,900
2000 Jeanneau SO 40	\$159,000
2003 Beneteau 393	\$135,000
2009 Hunter 38	\$190,000
2000 Hunter 380	\$114,500
2004 Hunter 386 LE	\$129,900
2004 Hunter 386 LE	\$130,500

**PRE CRUISED SPECIALS**

2005 Sabre 386	\$270,000
1967 Tartan 37	\$35,000
2007 Hunter 36	\$149,995
2007 Hunter 36	\$139,500
2003 Hunter 356	\$85,000
1994 Hunter 35.5	\$59,000
2004 Jeanneau 35	\$119,990
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2001 Hunter 320	\$54,900
2003 Hunter 326	\$59,000
2007 Hunter 31	3 Avail. from 84K
1988 O'Day 302	\$24,900

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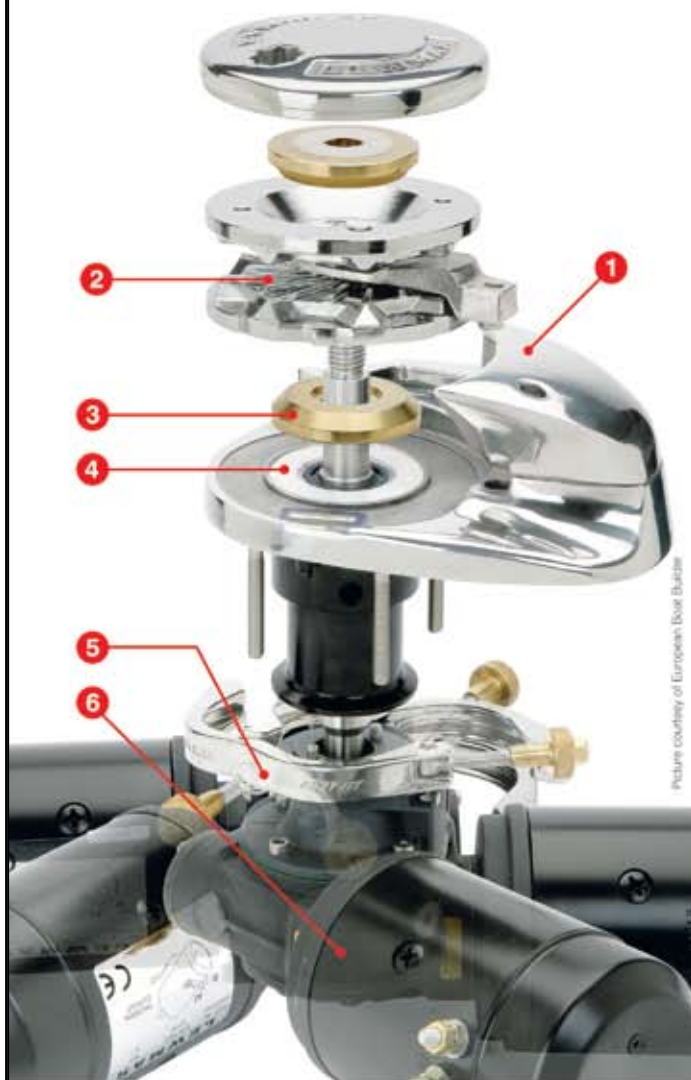
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## CALENDAR

**May 22** — Water Safety Day at Treasure Island SC, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. First 100 visitors win a PFD! Info, [www.tisailing.org](http://www.tisailing.org).

**May 22-23** — Corinthian YC presents its annual Women's Sailing Seminar. Info, [www.cyc.org](http://www.cyc.org).

**May 22-28** — Safe Boating Week. In 2009, 84% of California drowning victims were not wearing a PFD. Wear it!

**May 23, 1701** — Convicted pirate Capt. William Kidd was executed by hanging in England.

**May 26** — Baja Ha-Ha & Pacific Puddle Jump seminar by Andy Turpin at Ullman Sails Newport Beach in Santa Ana, 6:30 p.m. Info, [www.ullmansailsnewportbeach.com](http://www.ullmansailsnewportbeach.com) or call (714) 432-1860.

**May 27** — Howl at the full moon on a Thursday night.

**May 27** — Trailing Your Boat by USPS at San Carlos West Marine, 6-7 p.m. \$35. Reservations, (650) 593-2070.

**May 31** — Take a cruise over the Memorial Day weekend.

**May, 1980** — It Was Thirty Years Ago from the article 'Play For More' by Dotty Haynes:

Churchill said it best: "Play for more than you can afford to lose and you *will* learn the game." We did, Gene, me and *Whither Thou*. We won our gamble and *are* learning the game.

*Whither Thou* is our proud golden Nor'West 33 sloop — hull #1 — designed by Chuck Burns in '76, and built in '77. We came, saw and christened her in '78, and damn near sank her in '79, but it takes more than a pooping by a rogue wave to stop this stalwart boat. She bobbed right back up, shook herself off and seemed to growl, "Okay, you turkeys, now what?" Her hatch cover was lost in the black night, her batteries deluged and her boom was bent. Gene sported an extra bump or two, and I came close to buying the farm, but our first offshore passage has still been gleefully stamped 'We did it!' Yes, the three of us *are* learning the game.

Even before we found *Whither Thou*, we itched to turn the sailing we both loved into our full-time lifestyle. No matter that Gene's experience was barely three years at the start of the '78 Solo TransPac — when his first boat broke, and he had to turn back. No matter that this first mate was 47 before setting foot on a sailboat, was a two-pack-a-day smoker, and a workaholic who was scared of water, didn't know how to swim, had claustrophobia and was scared of heights. No matter that we were starting the second half of life, each with grown children and grandchildren. No matter that Gene had contributed his engineering and design skills to the same electronics firm for 25 years, or that I'd been his travel agent for 12 of those years. All that had been just dandy . . . once. But priorities change, and now, after finding each other and our beautiful *Whither Thou*, each work day doing jobs we'd once loved had become a 9-to-5 frustration. The important times were when we were together, the three of us.

We became liveaboards two months after *Whither Thou* was christened. Now living in two worlds, the weekends flew past, and Monday through Friday became impossible with the frustration of mounting gas prices, choking commuter traffic, and a longing to be on the boat full-time. Both of us had given — so gladly! — half our lives to family, jobs and myriad responsibilities to others, but those days were over. We were in a new today and, damn it, we wanted our tomorrows while we were still young and agile enough to absorb and enjoy! But could we afford it? Could we break those ties? Where to start?

We already had by buying *Whither Thou*. Chuck Burns' full-keel cruising boat loves to run, can out-point anything on the water, and has held her own against the best of 'em in a race, but still had been our comfortable home for over six months. He designed her as such, Nor'West built her as such, and she yearned to sail any waters, anywhere. So by



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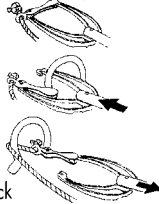


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# CALENDAR

God, if *Whither* was going sailing, we were going with her!

Our first trip took us north to Puget Sound, where we spent a dream-like month. But even dream cruises must end, and when we saw the geese flying overhead for their trek south, we knew it was time to follow. We were off, the rains and wind pelting us as we scooted through the Straits of Juan de Fuca and hung a left at Cape Flattery. The weather changed in an eye blink. Running with the 10- to 15-ft swells, literally surfing in the 20-knot winds, we neared the California border three days out of the Strait — a record run. If this kept up, we'd be home in less than a week! Then, it happened . . .

**June 3** — Cruising the South Pacific by Jim Hancock at San Carlos West Marine, 6-8 p.m. Free. Info, (650) 593-2070.

**June 5** — Nautical Flea Market at Napa Valley Marina, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Info, (707) 252-8011.

**June 5** — Electrical Seminar at San Carlos West Marine, 12-4 p.m. Free. Reservations, (650) 593-2070.

**June 6** — Minney's Marine Swap Meet, daylight to noon in Costa Mesa. Info, (949) 548-4192 or [minneys@aol.com](mailto:minneys@aol.com).

**June 18-20** — Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous, hosted by *Latitude 38* and Tahiti Tourisme. This free event is focused on cross-cultural appreciation and includes a cocktail party, a sailing rally to Moorea, Polynesian music and dance performances, and cruiser participation in traditional Tahitian sports — the highlight of which is the six-person outrigger canoe racing. Info, [www.pacificpuddlejumps.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejumps.com).

**June 19** — Bay sailors are invited to Treasure Island's big Summer Sailstice party, 12-7 p.m. Live music, food, treasure hunts and a boat-building contest will keep the whole family entertained. Anchor in Clipper Cove for the weekend. Find out more at [www.summersailstice.com](http://www.summersailstice.com).

**June 19-20** — Celebrate with sailors around the world during Summer Sailstice. Sign up for fun prizes and see who'll be sailing in your area at [www.summersailstice.com](http://www.summersailstice.com).

**June 27** — Master Mariners Wooden Boat Show at Corinthian YC, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Info, [www.mastermariners.org](http://www.mastermariners.org).

## Racing

**May 1** — YRA-WBRA Races. SYC, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**May 1-2** — The 111th annual Great Vallejo Race, one of the biggest races on the Bay, which also serves as the YRA season opener. Info, (415) 771-9500 or [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**May 1-2** — MHRA Chico Classic on Black Butte Lake. For multihulls only. Info, [www.catamaranracing.org](http://www.catamaranracing.org).

**May 1-2** — San Diego Yachting Cup. Info, [www.sdyc.org](http://www.sdyc.org).

**May 1-28** — Otter Cup Series every Sunday. Elkhorn YC, [www.elkhornyc.com](http://www.elkhornyc.com).

**May 2** — Frostbite #5. Elkhorn YC, [www.elkhornyc.com](http://www.elkhornyc.com).

**May 2, 16, 23** — Spring Series #5, 6 & 7. SSC, [www.stocktonsc.org](http://www.stocktonsc.org).

**May 2, 23** — Spring Series #1 & 2 (Lidos) on Fremont's Lake Elizabeth. Info, [www.fremontsailingclub.org](http://www.fremontsailingclub.org).

**May 8** — YRA-OYRA Full Crew Farallones Race. SFYC, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**May 8** — Mercury Series #3. EYC, [www.encinal.org](http://www.encinal.org).

**May 8** — Doublehanded Long Distance Race #2. SSC, [www.stocktonsc.org](http://www.stocktonsc.org).

**May 8** — Annual El Toro Flight of the Bulls, Foster City Boat Park. Info, [morrillgreg@aol.com](mailto:morrillgreg@aol.com) or [www.eltoroyra.org](http://www.eltoroyra.org).

**May 8** — Otter Cup #2. Elkhorn YC, [www.elkhornyc.com](http://www.elkhornyc.com).

**May 14-16** — Inaugural California Invitational Blind Sailing Regatta, hosted by Island YC. Teams from all over the world will race J/24s on the Estuary. Info, [www.cibsr.com](http://www.cibsr.com).

**May 15** — 2nd Annual American Armed Forces Cup on the Estuary, 2-5 p.m. The five branches will compete on the water



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## CALENDAR

for bragging rights. Root for your favorite from Club Nautique's dock. Info, [www.clubnautique.net/armedforcescup](http://www.clubnautique.net/armedforcescup).

**May 15** — YRA-WBRA Knox. Info, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**May 15** — Long Distance #2. SSC, [www.stocktonsc.org](http://www.stocktonsc.org).

**May 15** — Summer Series #2. SeqYC, [www.sequoiayc.org](http://www.sequoiayc.org).

**May 15-16** — BAYS Summer Series #1 for Optis, Lasers, C420s & CFJs. SeqYC, [www.bayarea-youthsailing.com](http://www.bayarea-youthsailing.com).

**May 15-16** — Elite Keel (Melges, Etchells, Express 27s, J/24s, Knarrrs). SFYC, (415) 789-5647 or [www.sfy.com](http://www.sfy.com).

**May 15-16** — Stone Cup for PHRF, one designs, and IRC. StFYC, (415) 563-6363 or [www.stfy.com](http://www.stfy.com).

**May 15-16** — 12th Annual Lake Yosemite Sailing Association Regatta. Info, [www.lakeyosemitesailing.org](http://www.lakeyosemitesailing.org).

**May 16** — Women's Regatta. CYC, [www.cyc.org](http://www.cyc.org).

**May 22** — YRA Spring 1 City. Info, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**May 22** — 33rd Singlehanded Farallones Race, a local rite of passage. SSS, [www.sfbaysss.org](http://www.sfbaysss.org).

**May 22** — SBYRA Summer #2. Info, (650) 558-1549.

**May 22-24** — International 505 PCCs in Port Townsend, WA. Info, [www.ptsail.org](http://www.ptsail.org) or (206) 604-6007.

**May 23-24** — Jazz Cup on Lake Washington in West Sacramento. LWSC, [www.lwsailing.org](http://www.lwsailing.org).

**May 28** — Spinnaker Cup, leaving Knox Buoy at 11 a.m. and arriving in Monterey by midnight (hopefully). SFYC, (415) 789-5647 or [www.sfy.com](http://www.sfy.com).

**May 29** — Master Mariners Regatta, hosted by Encinal YC. A must for woody-philies. Info, [www.mastermariners.org](http://www.mastermariners.org).

**May 29-30** — 46th Annual Whiskeytown Lake Memorial Day Regatta. Two races each day for everything from Pelicans to Moore 24s. Info, [www.whiskeytownsailing.org](http://www.whiskeytownsailing.org).

**May 29-30** — 67th Swiftsure International Yacht Race, the big one for Northwest sailors. Four different race courses ranging from 18 to 138 miles. Info, [www.swiftsure.org](http://www.swiftsure.org).

**June 4-6** — Olson 30 Nat'l's. RYC, [www.richmondyc.org](http://www.richmondyc.org).

**June 4-6** — Woodies Invitational. StFYC, [www.stfy.com](http://www.stfy.com).

**June 5** — Summer #3. SeqYC, [www.sequoiayc.org](http://www.sequoiayc.org).

**June 5-6** — YRA-OYRA Drake's Bay. CYC, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**June 5-6** — J/120 & Express 37 Regatta. SFYC, [www.sfy.com](http://www.sfy.com).

**June 5-6** — Cal Race Week in Marina del Rey. Cal YC, [www.calyachtclub.com](http://www.calyachtclub.com).

**June 5-6** — Go for the Gold Regatta on Scotts Flat Lake in Nevada City, CA. Runs in conjunction with Catalina 22 and Sunfish championships. Gold Country YC, [www.gcy.net](http://www.gcy.net) or (530) 265-2070.

**June 5-6** — 27th Classic Mariners' Regatta in Port Townsend, WA. Info, [www.woodenboat.org](http://www.woodenboat.org).

**June 12** — YRA-WBRA City. StFYC, [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).

**June 12** — Delta Ditch Run, from Richmond to Stockton. RYC/SSC, [www.richmondyc.org](http://www.richmondyc.org) or [www.stocktonsc.org](http://www.stocktonsc.org).

**June 12** — Mercury Series #4. EYC, [www.encinal.org](http://www.encinal.org).

**June 12** — 2nd Annual Westpoint Marina Regatta hosted by Sequoia YC. Info, [www.sequoiayc.org](http://www.sequoiayc.org) or (650) 430-5567.

**June 12-13** — J/105 Invitational. SFYC, [www.sfy.com](http://www.sfy.com).

**June 17** — Coastal Cup Race, from the Bay to Catalina Island. EYC, (510) 823-5175.

**June 19** — The Singlehanded TransPac, the 2,120-mile race from SF to Hanalei, starts at CYC. Info, [www.sfbaysss.org](http://www.sfbaysss.org).

**July 5** — 16th Biennial Fun Race to Hawaii, aka the Pacific Cup. For details on the race and seminars, visit [www.pacificcup.org](http://www.pacificcup.org).

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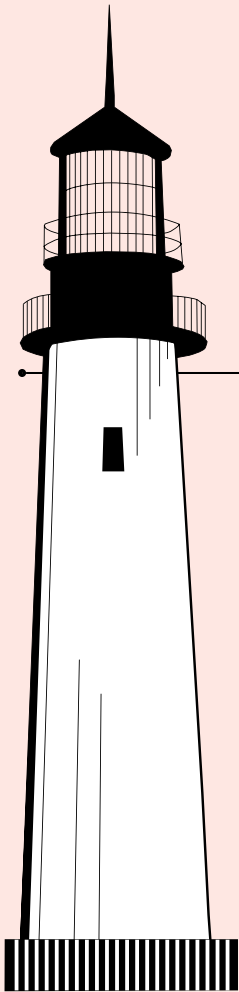
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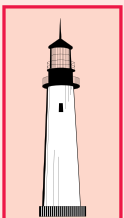
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# CALENDAR

or [race@bbyc.org](mailto:race@bbyc.org).

**BAY VIEW BOAT CLUB** — Monday Night Madness Spring: 5/3, 5/17, 5/31, 6/14, 6/21 (make-up). Arjan Bok, (415) 864-4334 or [bayviewracing@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bayviewracing@sbcglobal.net).

**BENICIA YC** — Thursday nights: 6/24, 7/8-8/26, 9/9-9/30. Grant Harless, (510) 245-3231 or [harlessgrant@sbcglobal.net](mailto:harlessgrant@sbcglobal.net).

**BERKELEY YC** — Every Friday night through 9/24. Bobbi, (925) 939-9885 or [bobbi\\_john@jfcbat.com](mailto:bobbi_john@jfcbat.com).

**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](mailto:racing_chair@cal-sailing.org).

**CORINTHIAN YC** — Every Friday night through 9/3. Donal Botkin, (415) 497-5411 or [racing@cyc.org](mailto:racing@cyc.org).

**COYOTE POINT YC** — Every Wednesday night through 10/27. Torin Knorr, (650) 863-2570 or [regatta@cpyc.com](mailto:regatta@cpyc.com).

**ENCINAL YC** — Friday Night Spring Twilight Series: 5/14, 6/4, 6/18. Victor Early, (510) 708-0675 or [rearcommadore@encinal.org](mailto:rearcommadore@encinal.org).

**FOLSOM LAKE YC** — Every Wednesday night: 5/5-7/7 & 7/21-9/22. Info, [www.flyc.org](http://www.flyc.org).

**GOLDEN GATE YC** — Friday nights: 5/14, 5/28, 6/11, 6/25, 7/9, 7/16, 7/30, 8/13, 8/27. Mont McMillen, (209) 481-5158 or [ggycracedeck@aol.com](mailto:ggycracedeck@aol.com).

**ISLAND YC** — Friday Night Spring Twilight: 5/7, 5/21, 6/11, 6/25. John New, (510) 521-2980 or [iycracing@yahoo.com](mailto:iycracing@yahoo.com).

**LAKE TAHOE WINDJAMMERS YC** — Every Wednesday night: 5/19-10/13. Pete Russell, (775) 721-0499.

**LAKE WASHINGTON SC** — Every Thursday night: 5/6-8/26. Roy Pitts, (530) 908-7160 or [rpitts@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rpitts@ucdavis.edu).

**LAKE YOSEMITE SA** — Every Thursday night: May-August. Steve Eyberg, [seyberg505@sbcglobal.net](mailto:seyberg505@sbcglobal.net).

**MONTEREY PENINSULA YC** — Sunset Series, every Wednesday night through 9/29. Ray Ward, (831) 659-2401.

**OAKLAND YC** — Wednesday Night Sweet 16 Series: 5/5-6/23 & 7/28-9/15. John Tuma, (510) 366-1476 or [j\\_tuma@comcast.net](mailto:j_tuma@comcast.net).

**RICHMOND YC** — Wednesday nights: 5/5, 5/19, 5/26, 6/2, 6/16, 6/23, 6/30, 7/7, 7/14, 7/28, 8/4, 8/11, 8/18, 8/25, 9/1, 9/15, 9/22, 9/29. Eric Arens, (510) 841-6022 or [ericarens@comcast.net](mailto:ericarens@comcast.net).

**ST. FRANCIS YC** — Wednesday Night Series: 5/5-6/30 & 8/4-8/25. Thursday Night Kiting Series: 5/13, 5/27, 6/10, 6/24, 7/15, 7/29, 8/12, 8/26, 9/6, 9/23. Friday Night Windsurfing Series: 5/14, 5/28, 6/11, 6/25, 7/16, 7/30, 8/13, 8/27, 9/10, 9/24. John Craig, (415) 563-6363 or [racemgr@stfyc.com](mailto:racemgr@stfyc.com).

**SANTA CRUZ YC** — Wet Wednesdays through 11/3. Greg Haws, (831) 425-0690 or [greg@scyc.org](mailto:greg@scyc.org).

**SAUSALITO YC** — Tuesday Night Spring Sunset Series: 5/11, 5/25, 6/8, 6/22. John Mount, (415) 509-8381 or [race@syconline.org](mailto:race@syconline.org).

**SEQUOIA YC** — Every Wednesday night through 10/13. Steve Holmstrom, (650) 400-8584 or [steve@toothvet.info](mailto:steve@toothvet.info).

**SHORELINE LAKE AQUATIC CENTER** — Catalina 14.2 racing every Thursday night during Daylight Saving Time. Laser Racing every Wednesday night, May-October. John Stedman, (650) 940-9948 or (650) 965-7474.

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**STOCKTON SC** — Every Wednesday night: 6/2-8/25. Phil Hendrix, (209) 598-4415 or [regatta10@stocktonsc.org](mailto:regatta10@stocktonsc.org).

**TAHOE YC** — Wednesday Night Beer Can Series: 6/2-9/1.



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**TIBURON YC** — Every Friday night: 5/21-8/27 & 9/10. Ian Matthew, (415) 883-6339 or [ian.matthew@comcast.net](mailto:ian.matthew@comcast.net).

**VALLEJO YC** — Every Wednesday night through 6/23, 7/7-9/29. Gordon, (530) 622-8761 or [fleetcaptainsail@vyc.org](mailto:fleetcaptainsail@vyc.org).

Please send your calendar items by the 10th of the month to [calendar@latitude38.com](mailto: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.

### May Weekend Tides

date/day	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW
5/01Sat	0123/6.0	0814/-1.0	1541/4.4	2009/2.8
5/02Sun	0205/5.6	0901/-0.7	1639/4.3	2107/3.0
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
5/08Sat	0242/1.7	0823/3.9	1412/1.2	2104/5.0
5/09Sun	0326/1.1	0929/3.9	1454/1.4	2132/5.3
	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
5/15Sat	0015/6.1	0708/-1.3	1435/4.4	1849/2.8
5/16Sun	0057/6.1	0752/-1.4	1525/4.4	1939/2.9
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
5/22Sat	0137/1.3	0729/4.2	1315/0.7	2017/5.8
5/23Sun	0238/0.6	0853/4.1	1409/1.1	2059/6.1
	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
5/29Sat	0017/6.1	0712/-1.3	1441/4.6	1902/2.9
5/30Sun	0057/5.9	0753/-1.1	1526/4.5	1951/2.9
5/31Mon	0138/5.6	0834/-0.8	1609/4.5	2045/3.0

### May Weekend Currents

date/day	slack	max	slack	max
5/01Sat		0023/2.6F	0308	0632/4.9E
	1033	1336/3.6F	1705	1910/2.0E
	2221			
5/02Sun		0109/2.2F	0351	0718/4.4E
	1124	1428/3.2F	1759	1959/1.7E
	2316			
5/08Sat		0101/2.4E	0449	0740/2.0F
	1019	1303/2.5E	1648	1952/2.6F
	2246			
5/09Sun		0141/3.0E	0533	0829/2.9F
	1117	1353/2.5E	1729	2025/2.7F
	2319			
5/15Sat	0202	0535/5.3E	0925	1228/4.0F
	1602	1811/2.3E	2101	
5/16Sun		0004/2.6F	0241	0620/5.2E
	1010	1315/3.8F	1652	1859/2.2E
	2147			
5/22Sat	0349	0635/2.5F	0927	1209/3.0E
	1547	1852/3.2F	2155	
5/23Sun		0056/3.8E	0449	0746/3.0F
	1041	1316/2.8E	1642	1943/3.2F
	2238			
5/29Sat	0206	0529/5.2E	0930	1236/4.0F
	1559	1807/2.1E	2115	
5/30Sun		0003/2.5F	0247	0611/4.9E
	1013	1317/3.6F	1644	1849/2.0E
	2200			
5/31Mon		0046/2.2F	0328	0653/4.5E
	1056	1359/3.3F	1729	1933/1.9E
	2249			



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## LETTERS

### ↑↓ SWEET TALKING THE SUPES

Regarding your editorial response to Bruce Munro's letter describing the reasons that the America's Cup should be held on San Francisco Bay, in which you said San Francisco officials would be a major obstacle, all I can say is that you sure know how to sweet talk local government officials. You said some pretty negative things about them.

As for me, I'd love to come to the Bay Area to watch the Cup races. One solution for team compounds could be to simply build them on big barges. But if you've sufficiently irritated the Board of Supervisors so that they reject the Cup on the Bay out of spite, I'm sure we can figure out a way to host the Cup down here in Long Beach, where we have both ideal winds and an actual summer.

Bill Waterhouse  
Honu, Corsair 24  
Alamitos Bay

*Bill — How much do you know about the San Francisco Board of Supervisors? For a group facing a half billion dollar deficit starting in July, they have a strange set of priorities. We give you Chris Daly who, despite moving his wife and children to Fairfield — where unlike the City by the Bay, residents are discouraged from using public parks and streets as toilets — started the new year with a resolution to use the word 'fuck' in Board of Supervisor meetings no fewer than 60 times during the year. No, we're not making that up, but it's the kind of issue that obsesses what passes for leadership in San Francisco.*

*Even former Mayor Willie Brown, who was about as liberal as can be, says he thinks the America's Cup will end up being held in San Diego or Newport, Rhode Island, ". . . if the man from Oracle gets another brush-off from San Francisco — as he has in the past." San Francisco is an unusual place. The priorities of the politicians and the citizens up here are rather different from those in most cities in the country — although that's beginning to change now that all the bills are coming due.*

*Speaking of Long Beach, we were surprised that your city hadn't made a big pitch for the Cup. After all, you've got quite a bit of dormant waterfront land across from San Pedro, and the sailing conditions off Long Beach are much livelier than off San Diego. But we now hear that Long Beach is actually about to make a pitch for the Cup.*

### ↑↓ "HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR TONE?"

In your editorial response to my April issue letter on the feasibility of holding the America's Cup on San Francisco Bay, you mostly agreed with me, but took exception to my con-

GILLES MARTIN-RAGET/BMW ORACLE



***We think the odds of America's Cup action like this coming to the Bay are greater than ever.***

ten-  
 tion that our local government would get behind a San Francisco venue for the 34th America's Cup match. On this point of the debate, you agreed with Dick Enersen's contention that we will never get the support of our political leaders for such an event. You went so far as to ridicule our Board of Supervisors, suggesting that in order to have an America's Cup match on the Bay, each team would have to be composed



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As it turns out, a single wire needed to be redone. They took it away to fix, and came back before I knew it with the new stay. I was blown away, and it didn’t end there! I could go on and on about Svendsen’s.

– **Dan Augustine**  
Owner, *SV Natasha*



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## LETTERS

of 'politically correct' crewmembers. It was humorous to be sure, but off target, as recent developments will attest.

During the past week, our Board of Supervisors passed a resolution congratulating Larry Ellison, the Golden Gate YC, and the BMW Oracle team for winning the 33rd America's Cup. The most important part of the resolution was the last statement, which states that it will be the policy of the City to "... work diligently and with enthusiasm to develop a worthy plan for a San Francisco waterfront venue to host the 34th America's Cup." Now that is what we are looking for. Are you ready to change tacks and join with us who see a San Francisco venue as a Cup half full?

Bruce Munro  
Princess, Sabre 402  
San Francisco

*Bruce — We're surprised by and even more impressed with the progress to date. But we're still cynical enough to note the qualifier that the plan be a "worthy plan" means that the resolution doesn't count for all that much. After all, one can only imagine what might constitute a "worthy plan" in the mind of a supervisor such as Chris Daly.*

*Kyri McClellan, at the Mayor's Office in San Francisco, wrote a letter to Latitude's Assistant Publisher John Arndt in which she noted that, in addition to the support for the event expressed by the Commission of the Port of San Francisco, the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Bay Area Council, and the Board of Supervisors, she hopes to get a similar expression of support by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which will meet on May 21 to consider a resolution on the issue, and fully expects to get the support of the San Francisco Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Commission. She wrote that she hoped this "might change the tone" of the editor of Latitude, which would be us.*

*We'd say that our 'cup' is more than half full right now, but hardly overflowing. After all, we've seen how it has taken ages for there to be any real progress in San Francisco's takeover of Clipper Cove from the Navy, we've seen how the attempts to improve the San Francisco Marina have been thwarted, and we're familiar with agencies such as the BCDC doing things such as classifying boats as 'Bay fill' for their own purposes. And as former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown noted, this area has become so politically correct that nobody knows how to have fun anymore. What surprises us more than anything, however, is the amount of time and energy that less cynical folks than we are putting into bringing the Cup to San Francisco Bay. We salute them all.*

*If we were the betting type, we'd currently put our money behind the general idea that the next America's Cup will consist of four or more Acts, such as there were leading up to Valencia in the 32rd America's Cup, hopefully in some of the windiest locations in the world, and that the Finals, or perhaps the Semi-Finals and Finals, would be held on San Francisco Bay. And hopefully, as you'll read Stan Honey suggest in Sightings, the wind for the Semi-Finals and Finals would have to be between 20 and 40 knots for racing to commence.*

### ↑↓ TRAGIC DEATH AT THE DOCK

There has been discussion in the last several issues of *Latitude* on how to get out of the water if you fall in at a marina. In a tragic coincidence, Dave Gish, a much-loved dock neighbor here on E Dock at Ventura West Marina, died on the evening of April 9 after apparently falling into the water.

According to the *Ventura County Star*, the 64-year-old Gish,



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## LETTERS

who lived aboard his 30-ft *Mele Kai*, had left a gathering of friends to get a beer. When he was gone for a longer time than thought necessary, friends searched for him around the dock, in the bathrooms, and in the parking lot. When they didn't find him, they called the authorities. The Ventura Harbor Patrol found Gish's body only a few feet from his boat. The coroner said the cause of death was asphyxia by drowning.



BIRGIT HABROCK

**David Gish drowned after apparently falling into the water at his marina.**

Friends who had been with Gish shortly before he died insist that he had not been intoxicated.

There are two facts that weren't reported in the article. First, Gish had a disability in one eye that made it difficult for him to judge distances. Second, the water temperature was 55°. I'm sure both factors contributed to his tragic death.

Not surprisingly, everybody on our dock has been re-evaluating their strategy for getting out of the water in the event they fall in. Personally, I have taken note that many docks, including ours, have at least one powerboat with a swim-step located much closer to the water than are the docks. I also noticed that there are many inflatable boats in the water. Of course, you'd need good situational awareness and more than a little body strength to make use of either of these options for getting out of the water.

My main lesson learned is that, like having a plan for exiting a burning building, you need a plan for exiting the water before you fall in. For my family, I'm investigating installing a ladder attached to our boat or dock, with a means of pulling it down in an emergency. In a related coincidence, the marina next to Ventura West, operated by the Ventura YC, already has dock-attached ladders that pull down into the water.

Dave, who loved his boat, the blues and the simple life, was a vital member of the community on E Dock. He thought he was living in paradise. Dave was always friendly and always willing to help anyone. We will miss him. But perhaps this tragic loss will generate more public awareness, thereby improving the chances of survival of the next person who falls in at the dock.

Bill Willcox  
Faith, Scandia 34  
E Dock, Ventura West Marina

*Bill — We were terribly sorry to hear about Gish's tragic death. According to reports, he was such a fervent recycler that his family made sure that his organs were donated. They said he wouldn't have wanted it any other way.*

*The County Star also reported that on April 3, just a week before, authorities had found the body of Steven Gnehm, 57, floating near his boat at Channel Islands Harbor at nearby Oxnard. The cause of his death was also found to be asphyxia by drowning. Presumably Gnehm also fell into the water and couldn't get out.*

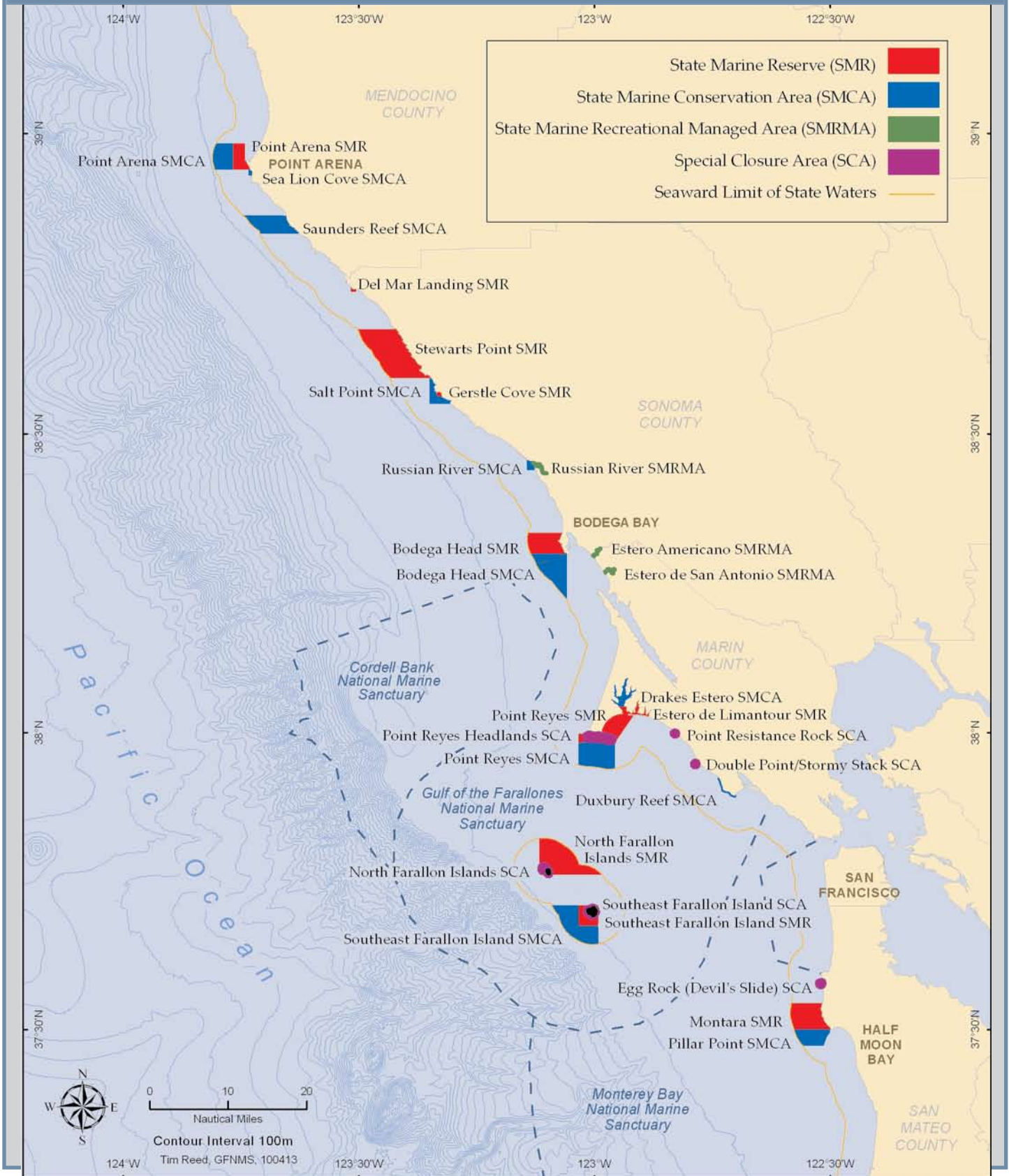
*As you say, these tragic deaths should alert everyone to the dangers of falling off marina docks or one's boat, and the need for planning how you would get out of the water if you did fall in. The danger of such deaths is much greater in the winter*



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## LETTERS

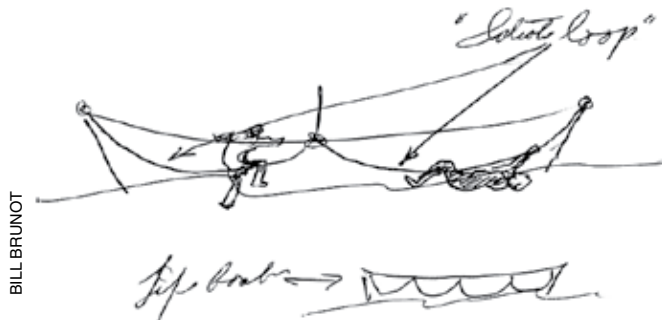
when the water is colder and there aren't as many people on their boats to hear shouts for help.

### ↑↓ **MAN OVERBOARD SYSTEM FOR DUMMIES**

Regarding the problem of getting out of the water if you fall in at a marina, there is a solution. It's called the Idiot's Loop, and while it's older than the hills, it works.

I've read many articles in *Latitude* about people going overboard, both at sea and at the dock, but I've never heard the Idiot's Loop mentioned. But I used it all the time when I was living aboard my Traveller 32 on the hook. The loop works for all overboard situations, on boats big or small, moving or still, crewed or singlehanded, sailing, or motoring, on the hook, or tied up in a slip. I don't know why everybody doesn't use it, although some have said that it's "ugly."

An Idiot's Loop is a long line over the side that runs from the bow to stern, looped down and tied to an amidships cleat or chainplate on one or both sides of the boat. It droops down



BILL BRUNOT

*Bill Brunot's sketch for his 'Idiot's Loop'.*

to just barely above the surface of water twice along the length of the boat. You will see the same system used, but with many more loops, on lifeboats and other rescue boats.

With the drooping line system of an Idiot's Loop, you can grab the line and hang on, or you can get a leg over the loop and haul yourself up to a sitting position on the line, rest, then pull yourself up the rest of the way out of the water. It even works if you are weak, injured, or dressed in heavy clothing, or are tangled up in the rigging. And it works even if you're by yourself. That's because the line runs the whole length of your boat, and your body weight is almost nothing when your body is horizontal in the water.

I also used the Idiot's Loop for something easy to grab when returning to my boat in the dinghy when the sea was up.

I once fell overboard through the ice at a dock in winter. Even though I was a young and strong swimmer, it was an immediately serious matter. The guy on my boat didn't know where I'd disappeared to, and I quickly became weak. Had I had an Idiot's Loop rigged, it's wouldn't have been a problem.

I think the Idiot's Loop should be in every book about seamanship.

Bill Brunot  
Planet Earth

*Bill — It sounds great in theory, but are you sure it works so well in reality? Even in the still waters of a marina, it seems as if it would require a lot of upper body strength to pull oneself up such a rope, even to the sitting position. And we can only wonder at the beating users might take if they were sitting on such a loop while their boat was in a seaway. If someone — preferably in the tropics — would like to give the Idiot's Loop a try, we'd be interested in the results. We're willing to bet that*





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## LETTERS

*the most young, strong and nimble sailors would be able to do it, but that the typical boatowner wouldn't.*

*It seems to us that the two best solutions are sugar scoops on*



LATITUDE / RICHARD

*boats and — not to be smartasses — not falling over in the first place. Indeed, after taking a man overboard seminar recently, a man was overheard to say, "The only thing I really learned was to*

*not go over in the first place."*

*It seems to us the Loop — and bow sprit chains — are only for the young and nimble.*

### ↑↓ NOW IT'S TIME FOR RICHARDSON BAY

Having read about all the great changes — namely, getting rid of the derelict and permanently anchored boats — at Clipper Cove, I can't wait to go and visit with my boat.

Is there anyone who can tell me why the same changes can't be implemented in Richardson Bay? That place is a joke. In fact, I wonder if all the boats that used to be in Clipper Cove haven't come over to Richardson Bay.

Gary Ryan  
i'liahale, Hanse 341  
Sausalito

### ↑↓ WHAT IS THE COAST GUARD AFRAID OF?

I want to give a big 'thank you' to *Latitude* and everyone who helped get the derelict boats out of Clipper Cove. I know it wasn't easy. My family and I can now go and spend the day there safely anchored in the protected cove.

But my question is whether Richardson Bay will be the next place to be cleaned up of derelict boats. Many times I've seen the following scenario: A small Coast Guard vessel stops a well-equipped sail or fishing boat that has just left a harbor in Sausalito, while a small boat with no visible CF numbers zips by going to the area where many derelict boats anchor out. I can almost guarantee that the Highway Patrol would not stop a vehicle for a tire tread check while another car, particularly one without a license plate, sped by at 90 mph.

I finally became part of one of these scenarios when the sun came out for a day last month. I was transiting the Richardson Bay channel at about five knots when I saw a Coast Guard vessel from Station Golden Gate on the northbound side of the channel about 100 yards off my bow. At that moment, a 15-ft speedboat came out from the vicinity of Paradise Bay restaurant, and crossed the channel diagonally at a full plane in excess of 20 knots. In fact, on the way out to his anchored-out boat, he went right in front of the Coast Guard vessel.

You can guess what happened next. The Coast Guard came alongside my boat and asked if they could do a safety inspection! I asked the Coasties if they hadn't seen the boat that had sped across the channel — with a five-knot speed limit — at a speed in excess of 20 knots. They told me that they had seen it, and they had noticed it didn't have any CF numbers. I told them I would remain in position while they enforced the law. They said it wouldn't be necessary, and didn't do anything. As far as I'm concerned, this reeks of selective enforcement of the law. When the Coast Guard was done with me — and didn't find any violations — they headed back to Station Golden Gate.

Does the anchor-out community have some type of 'diplo-



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## LETTERS

matic immunity'? Are they all part of the Lake County Sheriff's Department or something like it? I've asked anchor-outs if they have ever been boarded by anybody wanting to check on their marine sanitation devices. I was told "the Coast Guard is afraid of us." What do they have on the Coast Guard?

The moral of the story is, I guess, if you're about to be boarded, tell the Coast Guard you're an anchor-out in Richardson Bay.

It's my understanding that San Diego has dealt with their derelict vessel issue. Why can't the governments that have authority over Richardson Bay do the same? If someone moored a 150-ft derelict fishing boat — such as the one that has been anchored off the Sausalito YC for four years — in Morro Bay, it would quickly be removed. I guess we'll have to wait until a winter storm smashes it against a house on the Belvedere shore, at which time the residents of Belvedere will no doubt have to clean up the mess.

One time I was on the Issaquah Dock on the north end of Sausalito, where the houseboats are berthed, and I saw firemen checking the fire fighting equipment. When I asked how often they performed the same check on the dilapidated docks just to the south, they said those docks weren't safe enough for their personnel to walk on!

I don't get it.

Name Withheld Due to Lack of Diplomatic Immunity  
Sausalito

*N.W.D.L.D.I. — It's not just the Coast Guard who seems to be afraid of the anchor-outs, because the rough, tough officers in the Marin County Sheriff's Marine Patrol don't seem to want to tangle with them either.*

*There indeed seem to be two legal standards in Richardson Bay: one for the boats in mostly good to excellent condition on the southwest side of Richardson Bay, who must obey all laws, and another standard for the mostly dilapidated boats on the northeast side of Richardson Bay, to whom laws don't seem to apply. It's the kind of thing that increases your veneration of government, isn't it?*

*It's our understanding that the anchor-outs were accorded 'sacred cow' status about five years ago by one of the most powerful Democrats in the state, who told the heads of various government agencies and jurisdictions that if the anchor-outs were hassled in any way, the budgets for their agencies and jurisdictions would be slashed. That wouldn't apply to the Coast Guard, of course, it being part of the federal government's Home-*



TIM SELL

*land Security Department. In the past, however, the Coast Guard has told us they don't have jurisdiction over boats at anchor, only those that are underway, and therefore they can't do anything with the derelict and illegal boats anchored on Richardson Bay. Frankly, we don't buy this explanation. Besides, that doesn't explain why the Coasties didn't cite the guy in the registration-less dinghy speeding across the Richardson Bay Channel.*

*land Security Department. In the past, however, the Coast Guard has told us they don't have jurisdiction over boats at anchor, only those that are underway, and therefore they can't do anything with the derelict and illegal boats anchored on Richardson Bay. Frankly, we don't buy this explanation. Besides, that doesn't explain why the Coasties didn't cite the guy in the registration-less dinghy speeding across the Richardson Bay Channel.*





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## LETTERS

We've also been told that some anchor-outs have taken to putting out buoys around Richardson Bay, buoys that are held in place by weights far too light to secure a boat. The apparent reason for the useless buoys is to prevent other boats from anchoring in those areas. That's a nice Somalia-like anarchist touch for Marin County.

For the record, on the grounds of safety, efficiency and protecting the environment, we've long advocated that there should be regulated mooring fields in Richardson Bay, just as there are in places such as Newport Beach, San Diego and all up and down the East Coast. The buoys should be professionally installed and maintained, and all boats on them should be required to meet minimum navigation, safety and environmental standards, and pay a reasonable fee to cover the cost of installing and maintaining the buoys. If the various Marin governments with authority over Richardson Bay want Richardson Bay to continue to serve as low-income housing, we suppose that's their business, but every boat should have to meet the same minimum standards.

Make no mistake, we have nothing against anchor-outs. Indeed, we spend half of the year as anchor-outs in one of three countries. Our problem is with an anchorage that's been unsafe and in a state of chaos for decades, and with the unequal application of the law.

### ↑↓ THE MONKEY TWINS, SEE AND DO

We had a monkey aboard the schooner *Reef Chief* for a sail out of Key West. When I went into the water with a hookah



COURTESY REEF CHIEF

to clean the bottom, the monkey found the EPIRB and set it off. When I got back on deck, the Coast Guard phoned and said they'd received an emergency distress signal from my vessel. I explained to them that a monkey had set off the EPIRB. They asked for the name. I said the monkey's name was Kayla. Then they asked for a last name. I told them that monkeys don't have last names.

Allen Cody Taube  
*Reef Chief*, 65-ft schooner  
Key West, FL

*Kayla is cute but mischievous, as all monkeys should be.*

Allen — Thanks for the letter and the laugh. It's exactly what we would expect from Key West — and we mean that in a good way.

### ↑↓ A SPECIAL COMMUNION WITH NATURE

We hadn't been aboard *Odyssey*, the Peterson 44 owned by Marv and Ardy Dunn, friends of ours from Portland, long when they suggested that we spend the next morning swimming with whale sharks just outside of La Paz. "I'd love to see them," I said, sidestepping the invitation to swim with them. I was visiting from San Francisco with Madison, my daughter, a teacher from Compton, who was on Spring Break. We envisioned a week of sun, sailing, swimming, snorkeling and perhaps a hike or two, but neither of us had signed up for swimming with whale sharks. To be honest, there was a part of me that hoped we wouldn't find any.

Whale sharks are the largest fish in the ocean, with mouths



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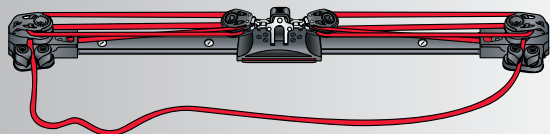
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## LETTERS

up to five feet wide, and 300 to 350 rows of tiny teeth. They are sharks, but are named whale sharks because they are as large as a whale. The largest verified whale shark to date was 41.5 feet long and 21.5 tons. That's almost as long as the Peterson 44 we were on, and six tons heavier. Did I mention I wasn't thrilled at the thought of swimming with them?

But being a tenacious guy from the Midwest, Marv drove us out of the La Paz Channel, at which point Ardy directed



MARV DUNN

*Just outside of La Paz, the whale sharks are waiting for your visit.*

us five miles west along El Mogote toward a few boats she had sighted with binoculars. When we finally saw the whale sharks, the word 'massive' took on a new meaning. They slowly swam around *Odyssey* and even under her

bow. Marv assured me that whale sharks aren't aggressive, and that the only people who have gotten hurt had been accidentally whacked by the whale shark's tail, which can strike a powerful blow. I wanted to ask Marv how he knew the tail strikes were "accidental," but didn't ask.

The Kenyans believe the whale sharks got their spots from God's throwing shillings onto their backs. The Vietnamese believe the whale shark is a deity. These whale sharks didn't look like gods to me. Well, perhaps a mean Old Testament-style god.

While standing on the bow watching with excitement, Madison turned to me and said softly, "I'll swim with them." With that, I knew I was lost. Motherly instinct is a strange animal, almost as hard to understand as this six million-year-old fish. I don't know what I thought I could do to protect her, but we donned masks and flippers, and both went in. Within a minute, Madison was just a few feet from the whale shark's mouth — and clearly enthralled with the beast. We were in the shark's world, so I had no idea how to behave. What was the protocol? How close could we get to them without being too aggressive? Were three of us in the water too many? Would the shark feel surrounded?

The shark closest to us was standing up vertically in the water, opening and closing its huge mouth as it gulped plankton. It stood up for the longest time, which made it seem even more imposing. When it decided to come down, where would it turn? Questions of survival ran through my mind. Yet it was magical and mystical. A special communion with nature. A rare gift. An opportunity of a lifetime. And we had taken it! There are many things I thank my daughter for, and having the courage to swim with the whale sharks is one of them.

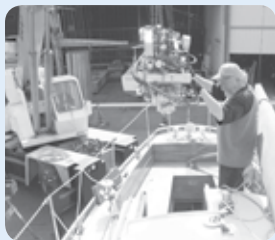
How long will others have this opportunity? The whale shark's conservation status is vulnerable. They are harpooned for food, and their fins are popular in a number of Asian countries. There is some fear that traveling whale shark factories might come into existence on the open ocean, making regulation hard if not impossible. On the other hand, an increasing number of eco-tourism enterprises are discovering that whale sharks are more valuable alive than they are dead. I can only hope that humans, the whale shark's main predator, learn enough about them to respect their feeding,





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## LETTERS

breeding habits, and habitats, and thus ensure that they are around for another six million years.

Rozanne Enerson Junker, Crew  
Odyssey, Peterson 44  
La Paz, Mexico

### ⇅ **BOTTOM CLEANERS UNITE!**

I recently contacted a number of my fellow boat bottom cleaners to let them know about a letter from the San Diego Port Tenants Association to the San Diego Port District, two of the major players in determining waterfront policy in San Diego Bay. In the letter, Sharon Cloward, president of the Port Tenants, expressed that association's support for what she calls a 'Baywide Underwater Hull Cleaner Permit' process. This permit apparently would entail a "requirement of competence" from hull cleaners, as well as an enforcement component. It's pretty scary stuff.

If my fellow divers think that in-water hull cleaning activities in California are flying under the radar and will remain unregulated, they need to think again. What goes into practice in one major California bay can easily become standard procedure everywhere else in the state. The best way for us to protect the hull cleaning industry, and our livelihoods, is to join together under the California Professional Divers Association, become informed about the issues, and become active in the process. I know it sounds lame, but united we stand, divided we fall. If you are a Northern California hull cleaner — or other stakeholder — and haven't registered for the CPDA Best Management Practices Certification Course yet, please consider doing so. It's important and it's the right thing to do.

Matt Peterson  
FastBottoms Hull Diving

*Matt — The devil is always in the details, of course, but we think what the organizations in San Diego are calling for is actually good for divers, boatowners and the environment. There have been tremendous improvements in bottom paints and bottom paint technology in the last few years. For example, when we had Profligate's bottom painted last June, Stan Sussman, the rep for Interlux, the company that makes the Micron Extra we had put on our bottom, repeatedly emphasized how important it was that our bottom be cleaned only by knowledgeable divers who use just a diaper or non-abrasive piece of carpet rather than heavy 3M scratch pads. "If the diver scrubs your bottom with a scratch pad, he'll prematurely remove too much paint, unnecessarily polluting the bottom and greatly shortening the life of your bottom job. If your diver uses just a diaper — which is all he should normally need — you shouldn't have to paint your bottom again for three years or more." So yeah, we think it's in the best interest of boatowners — and the environment — that divers be educated and certified in best practices.*

*For the same reasons mentioned above, we enthusiastically support your efforts to encourage divers to join the California Professional Divers Association to, as you say, become knowledgeable about the issues and become active in the process of identifying best practices. Doing so is in the best interests of themselves, their customers and the environment.*

*Being an educated and certified diver is going to become more important with the passing of time. While the state's Water Resources Control Board resolution seeking state regulation of the water quality of every facility that accommodates 10 or more boats has been temporarily been put on hold, something of that nature is eventually going to become law. When it does,*



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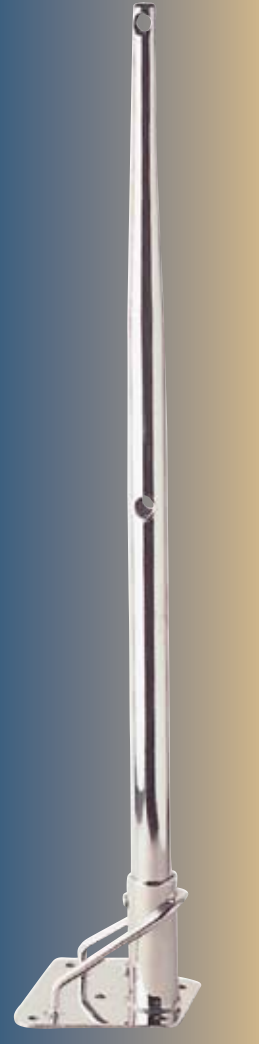
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## LETTERS

each facility will have to file a Marine Pollution Prevention Plan with the agency, outlining the best management practices they will employ to keep copper levels from going up. Then the facility will have to track and report how much copper is in their water. If they can't show that the levels are decreasing over time, they are going to have to modify their best practices to get better results. An important part of reducing those copper levels in marinas will be for knowledgeable divers to clean boat bottoms in the most environmentally sound way — which does not include generating underwater clouds of overzealously scrubbed-off bottom paint. Because of this, there will almost certainly come a time when marinas and similar facilities will permit only certified divers to work in their facilities.

### ↑↓ THE U.S. COAST GUARD TO MOST, 'COASTIES' TO US

Right there on page 40 of the fascinating book *Flotsametrics and the Floating World* by Curtis Ebbesmeyer, released in '09, is the word 'Coasties'. No doubt you and the author are acquainted, because I immediately assumed that he picked up the term 'Coasties' from *Latitude*. Is that correct?

Jim Cox  
Beaverton, OR

Jim — To our knowledge, nobody else was using the term 'Coasties' when we began using it about 25 years ago. But geez, it's easy to imagine that countless other people could have independently come up with the same nickname. And it's not as if it's of any consequence. What bothers us is when people don't give us credit for discovering the last two elements on the periodic table and when that Al Gore guy claims that he, rather than we, invented the internet.

### ↑↓ CRUISING ALASKA IS MORE CHALLENGING

I'd like to make a few comments about Richard and Sharon Drechsler's *Changes*, in which they compared cruising in Mexico with cruising in Alaska.

The couple seems to think that Alaska is a hard place to cruise. We've been teaching seamanship and navigation up here for many years aboard *Arctic Traveller*, and virtually all our students have gone on to enjoy uneventful cruises. While I agree that Alaska requires some heads-up navigation, I've been in a lot of other places where I could say the same thing. Uncharted rocks are mentioned as being one problem, but in my 15 years of cruising and teaching in Alaska, I've never hit a rock. The channels are generally very deep until you get close to shore, and even then just watching the depthsounder



TIM SELL

closely should keep you out of trouble. They also mentioned logs, crab pots, big seas and possible mechanical failures — but you can find the same things off almost any coast. Thinking that a breakdown in Mexico might be more desirable than in Alaska is shortsighted thinking in my book. A well-maintained boat should be just as reliable in Mexico as Alaska.

**When you cruise Alaska, you definitely need to know what you're doing.**





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**LETTERS**

The Zamovia Straits are mentioned as being particularly challenging, but with the proper charts, and by paying close attention to the proper inserts, they're relatively straightforward. Certainly, there are some challenges with the currents, but proper voyage planning all but removes these issues. I did, however, recently discover a problem with some of the current tables in the '09 issue of *Rosepoint Coastal Explorer*. A call to the company alerted them to the issue, and a patch is due. Using multiple sources of current information is always prudent.

The Drechslers also mentioned a problem with the currents in Tlevak narrows near Craig. They don't mention why their current predictions were in error, but I know it can happen. What surprised me is that even though they noticed that the red buoy was being held underwater by the current, they continued on. Such narrows are best avoided until slack current. I do agree, however, that a loss of steering at that point could have been disastrous. I've piloted a 90-ft steel yacht through those narrows, and there is little room for error.

Finally, I found it hilarious that they felt everyone they met in Alaska seemed to be in the witness protection program. We Alaskans may be a little rough around the edges — just look at the cast of characters on *The Deadliest Catch* — but all in all, most of us are pretty normal. And we go out of our way to lend a hand when it's needed. I've come into port and had complete strangers lend me a car to go shopping, and have done the same for others.

If you're looking for moderate seas, shallow anchorages, and benign weather, then perhaps Alaska won't be to your liking. On the other hand, if you have a sense of adventure a good grasp of seamanship and navigation, enjoy empty wilderness anchorages, and want to see some of the most spectacular scenery and animals on the planet, a trip to Alaska is not to be missed.

Jeff Coult  
*Arctic Traveller, Defever 49*  
Juneau, Alaska

*Jeff — Not to be too critical, but you spend most of your letter saying that it's easy to cruise in Alaska, but then you conclude by agreeing with the Drechslers that it's more difficult to cruise the 49th state than places such as Mexico, where the weather is more benign, the seas more moderate, and the anchorages less challenging. To that we might add that Mexico doesn't have any narrows with strong currents, floating or submerged logs, or very many crab pots in the Sea or along the mainland. Further, we think it's foolish to think that even the best maintained vessel is immune to breakdowns, and that if a boat had a breakdown, it would be less dangerous and less of a hassle to have it happen in Mexico. As it turns out, we all seem agree that the Drechslers were correct in their opinion that it's harder to cruise Alaska than it is Mexico, no?*

**↑↓ SAYING WHAT YOU MEAN AND VICE VERSA**

In Richard Drechsler's report in the March *Changes* about negotiating the current in the Tievak Narrows in Alaska, he mentioned being worried about losing steerage if his over-the-ground speed fell to about two knots. It seems to me that speed over ground is irrelevant to steerage in a situation where a boat is traveling up-current. The important factor is speed-through-water — or more specifically, the speed of water flowing by the rudder. What's your take on the matter?

Bill Crowley  
*Clarsa, Ventura 23*  
Napa





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## LETTERS

Bill — Our take is that Drechsler is far too knowledgeable a sailor to think that water speed past the rudder isn't the key factor. We suspect that he simply didn't say what he meant. And we should have corrected it.

### ↑↓ ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE 'OVER 30 CLUB'

I've owned my 1976 Pearson 26 since I bought her new right off her cradle. My current wife and I were even married aboard her in '05. We now find that we need to replace the salon curtains, and I can't find the original style curtain tape that was used on Pearsons. I'm hoping that one of *Latitude's* great readers will be able to help me out.

P.S. Thanks for the best sailing magazine ever.

Bill Brummel  
 Midnattsolen, Pearson 26  
 Discovery Bay

Bill — Curtains for boats are always subcontracted out. Since a lot of curtain tapes have come and gone since your boat was built nearly 35 years ago, we recommend you do a search of curtain tapes at a local boat canvas place or on the internet. And congratulations on becoming a member of the 'Over 30 Club' for having owned your boat more than 30 years.

### ↑↓ "THE SEA SUCKS. YEAH, THAT'S THE TICKET"

Your hyping of the Sea of Cortez in *Lectionic* surprises me, given that anyone who has ever sailed there will tell you how rotten a place it is. Perhaps a carefree afternoon race or as part of the Sea of Cortez Sailing Week can be enjoyable, but for cruisers like me, forget it. Fluky winds, barren anchorages, dying sealife, garbage galore, and lots of commercial shipping that would run you down with no qualms are big problems. My advice is to stay away. Stay in Puerto Vallarta and let those of us trapped here just suffer it out.

Joel Meister  
 Sea of Cortez

Joel — Waaaaaaaaaaaaaait a minute, you're pulling our leg, aren't you?

Actually, we hype everywhere we go, because no matter where we go, we always find so much to like. To each their own, of course, but we personally find it hard to understand why



LATITUDE / RICHARD

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people would stay in the same place the whole year. Isn't it like eating the same thing for every meal? Our preference is to sail in a number of different regions each year. That's why we've been long-time supporters of the development of affordable international teleportation, not just for us, but for our boats, too. After all, who cares about going to Mars if you could instantly move yourself and your boat from the Sea of Cortez to Croatia in a couple of seconds?

### ↑↓ THAT'S STILL A LOT OF MILES

In the last issue you referred to Frank Robben of Berkeley



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# LETTERS

when writing about people who have moved down in size from big boats to small boats. Frank did a hell of a lot of miles on his S&S 73 *Kialoa II* — I probably did 25,000 miles with him myself — but he only did one Pacific Cup, the one in '88. He also circumnavigated just once, but returned to the South Pacific before selling the boat in Hawaii.

Name Withheld By Request  
Planet Earth

*N.W.B.R. — Thanks for the facts. Scanning over Robben's blog, we were reminded that he also did a 24-day Hiroshima Cup from Honolulu to Japan, and after spending a year in Ja-*



**'Kialoa II' is a beauty, but a million bucks?**

*pan and Korea, did a 31-day passage back to California. Both you and Frank will probably be surprised to learn that the 73-ft yawl Kialoa II, built by Yacht Dynamics in Southern California way back in '64, is now for sale in Italy for just under \$1,000,000 U.S. A lot of money has been poured into her, of course, but still, \$1 mil for a 46-year-old 73-footer in this market?*

*As to our point of big boats having great potential for becoming big holes in the water, Robben wrote in his blog, "Economically, Kialoa II turned out to be a disaster." Of course, there is more to owning a boat than economics. He also had some of the greatest times of his life with her.*

## ↑↓ **THEIR HEARTS ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE**

Our experience with Norm Goldie of San Blas over the last 15 days has been absolutely the opposite of what was mentioned in the February issue of *Latitude*. Every morning at 8 a.m., Goldie was up and running the net in a professional way. We never heard any profanities. Norman Goldie is the kind of person who wants to help the cruisers and fishermen. He knows the San Blas area, and loves to share his information for the benefit of cruisers.

My wife Rita and I spent several evenings with Janet and Norman Goldie during our stay in Matanchen Bay and at the marina in San Blas. We found that the two have big hearts, and several times witnessed things they are doing for the local community. For instance, Norm gave us clothing to pass out at Singayte, a small village 11 kilometers from San Blas. He also gave a local resident clothing for his children. And two days ago, while we were sitting in the plaza, Norm asked Janet to tell an Indian woman to come to their house the following morning and he would give her clothes and shoes for her five children.

I say its slanderous for people to say that the Goldies have taken donations for their own benefit. It is beyond me that people would dare to make such suggestions without any proof.

Despite the infamous no-see-ums, I wouldn't think twice about returning to San Blas. And during our 10 years of cruising, it's the first time that we got such a nice and warm reception from a couple who have their hearts in the right place and who care for the community in which they have lived for 44 years.



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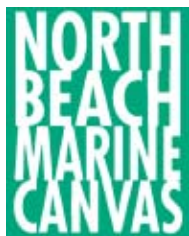
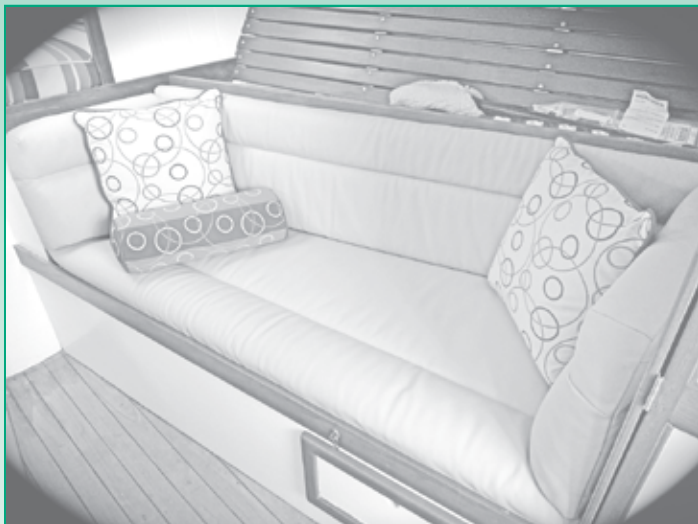
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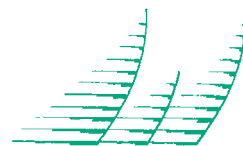
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## LETTERS

And no, they never asked us for donations or made any hints in that respect.

Rita & Antoon Goedecke  
Royal Albatross, Freedom  
Dana Point

Rita and Antoon — We're glad that you had a wonderful experience with the Goldies, and were able to witness some of their charitable activities. We've never doubted that the Goldies love to help people out.

On the other hand, there is no denying that other cruisers have had what they consider to have been very negative experiences, with Norm in particular. Two months ago we noted that we didn't have room to run all the letters from cruisers who were critical of him. When it came time to run these letters last month, we decided not to, in part because we had lots of other good letters, but also because Norm has to be close to 80 years of age and has had a history of heart problems. Since just about every-



**San Blas, Norm and Jan's stomping grounds.**

body is aware of his controversial reputation, we didn't see the necessity of dwelling on it. But based on those letters, we can assure you that if you think Norm has been slandered by cruisers, there is much evidence that he has done just the same to others — including some he's never even met. And just because you didn't hear Norm going into a profanity-laced rant on the VHF during the time you were there, this doesn't mean it didn't happen earlier in the season — which is what a number of other cruisers have reported.

So as we've said before, this is mostly a giant tempest in a teapot. If anybody wants Norm's help, great, he'll be more than happy to give it. If, on the other hand, you don't want his help, just tell him loud and clear. And have no fear of any threatened or implied consequences, for Norm's reputation is well-known to local officials. In any event, nobody should skip San Blas. In fact, we put together a little piece for this month's Changes explaining some of the reasons.

Update — In one of the more curious emails we've ever received, on April 19 Norm Goldie sent us an urgent request from Manchester, England, for a "soft loan" of \$1,500 to help pay for a cousin's medical bills. Even more curious is that according to his missive, "the hospital management is demanding a deposit of \$2,500 before they can invite a surgeon from Spain to carry out the surgery." Concerned that Norm's email account had been hacked by a scammer, we responded to the email. The 'English-as-a-third-language' response we received made us even more suspicious. But, having not been on the best terms with Norm for years, we knew the letter was a fake when we saw the signature: "Love, Norm." Convinced that Norm would never sign anything to us with "love," we posted a note in April 23's 'Electronic Latitude' to get the word out. We hope no one fell victim to the scam.

### ↑↓ RUMORS AND LAUGHTER

You asked me if I was under the impression that *Latitude* had hired somebody to do a video of the Ha-Ha, and if I was





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## LETTERS

bothered by such rumors because you knew that I was working on a video of the two Ha-Ha's that I'd done. I can assure you that it's not true.

The funny thing is, I was talking to a guy who did the '09 Ha-Ha, and he told me that *Latitude 38* had hired — and paid — a guy to film the '08 Ha-Ha, but the guy stiffed *Latitude* and took off to Central America with the money. I kid you not! I was laughing so hard that the guy asked me what was so funny. When I told him that I'd filmed the '08 Ha-Ha, and was still slowly working on the editing, but wasn't in Central American yet with *Latitude's* pile of cash, he laughed, too.

Rich Boren  
Third Day, Pearson 365  
Port San Luis

*Rich — It's strange how such rumors get started. We've long thought about doing a Ha-Ha video, but to really do it right, figured we'd need*



LATITUDE / ANDY

*we'd need cameras on a number of boats and on land, and one on a helicopter at the start, and would then have to spend a lot of time and money editing the footage. We said to heck with it, because we'd rather just enjoy the Ha-Ha rather than start another project. Besides, we think putting up a bunch of clips on YouTube and the not-yet-ready-for-prime-time Ha-Ha Facebook page would do the best job of getting the Ha-Ha story out to the most people.*

*For the record, some people have or are putting together Ha-Ha videos. None are official ones, and we haven't paid anyone to do one. But we wish them all the best of luck with their endeavors.*

*But did you hear the rumor that Lady Gaga now owns Latitude?*

*But did you hear the rumor that Lady Gaga now owns Latitude?*

### ↑↓ BUOYING TO SAVE THE CORAL — AND THE BOAT!

We spent five months cruising in French Polynesia last year, and some friends recently asked what advice we had for them vis-à-vis navigating in the Tuamotus. One thing came to mind immediately: buoying our chain. This technique was new to us at the time and was one that very few other boats were using, yet it made all the difference to our peace of mind.

Our 300 feet of anchor chain and heavy Bruce anchor performed flawlessly from Oregon to Mexico, and again in the Marquesas. But once we got to the Tuamotus, we frequently had problems. We'd anchor as usual, which meant finding a patch of sand large enough to provide some swinging room, at which time we'd drop the anchor and let out plenty of rode. This technique worked fine when the wind kept coming out of the same direction, but at night the wind would often die out and then come back up from a different direction. This caused our boat to drag her chain along the bottom until it caught around a coral head. Not only did it damage the beautiful coral, but it left us with difficult anchor retrievals. Once or twice we had a really hard time bringing the anchor chain up, and had the weather turned bad, we would have been in serious trouble. And we've always felt like idiots when we



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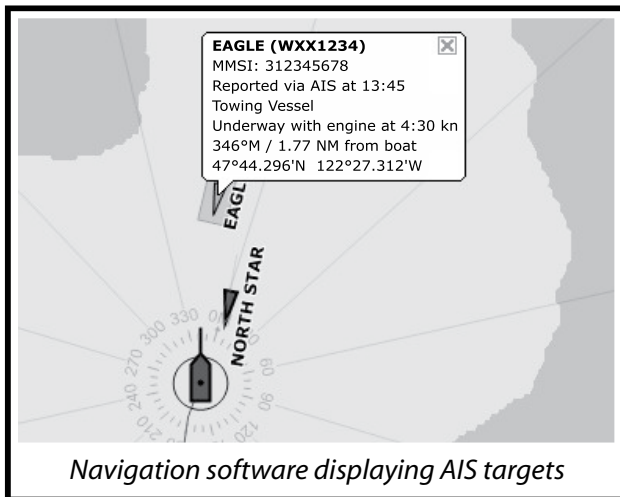
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## LETTERS

finally did jerk the chain loose and found bits of living coral tangled in it.

I knew we had to come up with a new strategy. Fortunately, I remembered reading something about buoying chain, and decided to give it a try. Here's the drill: At a new anchorage where there was a risk of getting hung up on coral, I'd look for the largest patch of sand, and I'd drop the anchor as usual. But after laying out about half my normal length of



COURTESY SEA WOLF

chain, I'd attach a float — I used old net floats, but fenders would work, too — with a short length of rope and an appropriate hitch. Then I let out more chain until the float began to sink. I then added another float, and repeated until I had enough scope for the depth. It usually took only two or three floats to do the job.

During my first couple of sets, I had to adjust the distance between buoys in the water to get it right. But after a few sets, I was able to get it right the first time. If the wind died, the weight of the chain would pull the boat toward the anchor, and 'accordion-ed' the chain clear above any coral. When the wind shifted, our boat would swing in a small arc, but then pulled out the buoyed section with no dog-legs around the coral. Using this technique, I let out more scope than usual, keeping in mind that it affected the catenary of my rode, and therefore the holding power of the anchor. We never had a problem with dragging, and avoided spoiling this incredible part of the world.

For the record, my wife Jessica and I are originally from New Orleans, but we left from San Francisco in '08. I crossed the Pacific solo as part of the Pacific Puddle Jump Class of '09. Many thanks to *Latitude* and Andy 'Mr. Puddle Jump' Turpin of *Latitude* for getting everyone the bond exemption! Jessica and our daughter, Tallulah, met me in Nuku Hiva and spent five months in French Polynesia, including about 45 days at Apataki in the Tuamotus — where buoying our chain came in very handy. Our *Sea Wolf* is a Bristol Channel-style cutter built of wood. She's currently for sale — plug, plug — at [suseawolfsale.blogspot.com](http://suseawolfsale.blogspot.com).

Adam, Jessica & Tallulah Stone  
*SeaWolf*, Bristol Channel Cutter  
New Orleans

Adam — Well done! Thank you for sharing the technique with our readers.

### ↑↓ A CALL FOR HELP FROM D.C. SAILORS

I'm writing in hope that you'll allow me to ask your readers to write a short letter to the Army Corps of Engineers supporting the installation of moorings for visiting boaters here in Washington, D.C. I know *Latitude* is primarily published for the West Coast, but I used to read *Latitude* when I lived in San Diego, and I know that you have many readers on both coasts.

The Capital YC in Washington, D.C. is requesting approval for the installation of nine mooring balls so that we can ensure that visiting boats have a place to tie up when they visit our

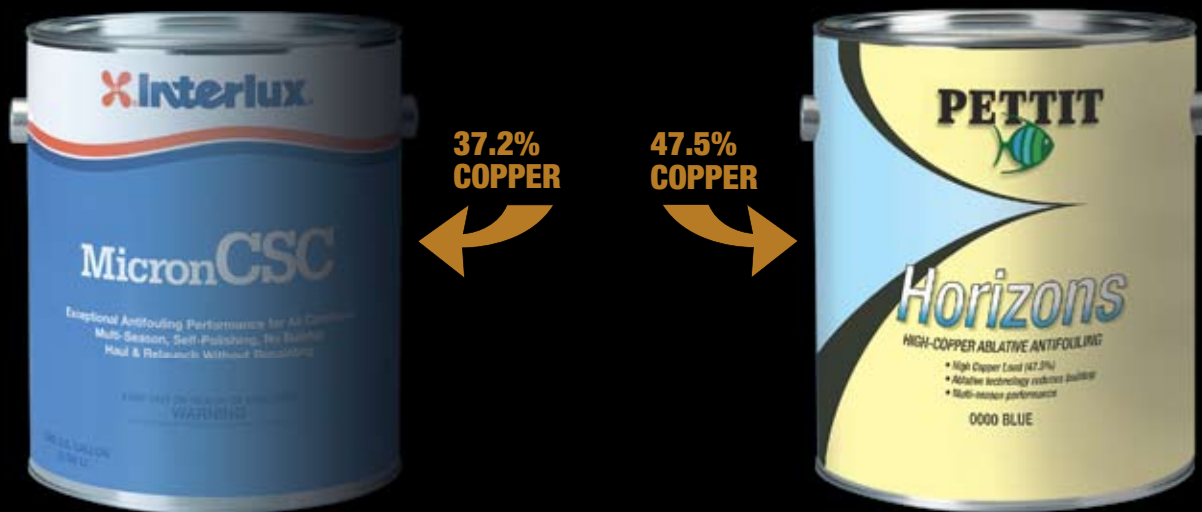




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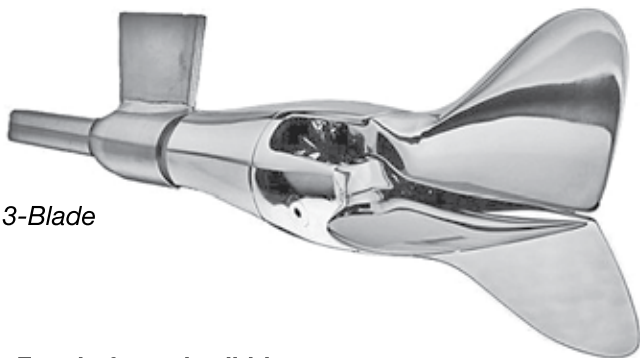
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## LETTERS

nation's capital. It's very important for cruisers to support the request, because D.C. doesn't have a very large boating community. It's not even a state, and only has a total of a few hundred slips. There is only one place for sailboats to anchor due to low bridge clearance, and having some moorings approved will protect our right to anchor there.

So it would help if anyone could write a letter or email in support of application number NAB-2009-01754-M07 (Capital Yacht Club / Mooring Field), and send it to Maria N. Teresi, Regulatory Branch, USACE, Baltimore District, Washington, DC 20024, or [maria.teresi@usace.army.mil](mailto:maria.teresi@usace.army.mil). Thank you.

Tom Des Jardins  
Capital YC

Tom — Anything we can do to help D.C.

### ↑↓ TO TOW OR NOT TO TOW

This recent video — see [www.king5.com/video/featured-videos/RAW-Disabled-sailboat-towed-in-choppy-Puget-Sound-waters-87876567.html](http://www.king5.com/video/featured-videos/RAW-Disabled-sailboat-towed-in-choppy-Puget-Sound-waters-87876567.html) — would seem to refute the claim by the Coast Guard that they save only lives, not property. There must be a different mindset in the Command Center in Washington State from that in California.

John Anderton  
Vancouver, WA

John — The 'we save lives, not property' policy of the Coast Guard seems to involve some flexibility, as others have reported that their boats have been towed to safety by the Coast Guard.

The text that accompanies the video reads, "A sailboat became disabled in windy, choppy Puget Sound waters be-



As you might be able to tell from this screenshot of the video, the ketch and her crew were about to go on the beach before they were rescued.

tween Alki and Lincoln Park in West Seattle. The boat had to be towed." You might notice it had to be towed off a lee shore. We assume the Coast Guard's reasoning is that if they didn't tow the boat from the

lee shore, the distressed boat's crew would have been injured or killed.

### ↑↓ WE'LL SAY IT LOUDER THIS TIME

Recent articles in *Latitude* have been enthusiastic about the situation in Thailand, especially the fact that fat, ugly, old, white men can get attractive young Thai women to have sex with them — as long as the man has money, of course. Regarding other countries, such as Cuba and Venezuela, you are harshly critical, supposedly because of a lack of freedom there. Is it possible that the 'freedom' you really seek is the freedom of those with money to spend it any way they like — including buying the bodies of desperate, poor, young women?

I will be interested to see what you have to say about the situation in Thailand now. Please note that Thailand is a monarchy, and that on April 12, the *Wall Street Journal* cited Paul Chambers, an expert on Thailand, as saying "the military is free to operate outside the control of civilian leaders . . ."





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*Andrew Linney, [www.nokaoui2.info](http://www.nokaoui2.info)*



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# LETTERS

and "the military has more power now than at any time in recent memory." Where's the 'freedom' there?

As for the issue of prostitution itself, I have two questions: 1) Would you suggest to your daughter or younger sister that she sell her body in order to finance a college education? And 2) As for the young woman — whose name I forget — who was recently asking in your pages for donations to help finance her trip around the world, why didn't you suggest this alternative to her? Or does her white skin make her ineligible for such a means of fund raising?

John Reimann  
Y-Knot, Catalina 36  
Oakland

*John — As we've written countless times, we believe in the freedom of speech, assembly, the press, travel, petition — and the freedom to behave halfway responsibly. There are varying degrees of these freedoms to be found in different countries around the world. While the people of Thailand may not be as free as Americans are, we can assure you that, our having recently been to the so-called 'Land of Smiles', the people there are much more free than are the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore, to say nothing of the dictatorships of Cuba and Venezuela. If Cubans or Venezuelans protested in their country as vigorously as the Thais have been doing recently in Bangkok, they'd all be dead. Indeed, Raul and Hugo won't mince words telling you that they would be happy to eliminate the enemies of their foundering 'revolutions'. By the way, we've spent time in Thailand, Venezuela and Cuba, and can't help wondering if you've been to any of them.*

*(This just in from Havana — Cubans are now allowed to rent barber shops and beauty salons with less than three chairs from the government, and charge whatever the market will bear for stylings. Wow. Cell phone and internet access, however, remain among the lowest in the world, with extreme censorship.)*

*Even a casual reading of our reports from Thailand would indicate that we're "enthusiastic" about some things in that country — the warm weather, the unusual scenery, the rural north, the Muslim south, the rubber tree plantations, the inexpensive sashimi, and the haunting ambience of the Bridge over the River Kwai. But there were other things that we didn't care for at all, such as the famous but totally bogus 'floating market', the mindless consumerism in Bangkok, the unvarying nature of Thai food, overdeveloped Phuket, the taxi mafia, and the surprisingly weasely nature of so many of the Thais. Who would think Buddhists would give off that kind of vibe?*

*As for your questions on prostitution, our answers are no and no. And how many times are we going to have to tell you before it sinks in that we believe in a swift death sentence for adults who sexually prey on minors. And none of that 'three strikes' rubbish. As for the general concept of prostitution, our libertarian nature says whatever genuinely free — and we want you to repeat that qualifier out loud — consenting adults of any color want to do between themselves is their own damn business. That's true no matter if it's between whites in Amsterdam, mixed race couples in Beverly Hills, Malays in Singapore's Little India or Arabs with the French in Paris. When such people aren't free because of economic or other circumstances, we don't support such relations any more than we do arranged marriages.*

*The key to people's being genuinely free, of course, is having enough money to take care of the basics of life. Hundreds of millions of people have emerged from poverty in the last decade. If you know the way for millions more to do it even faster than they have been, don't hesitate to share it.*

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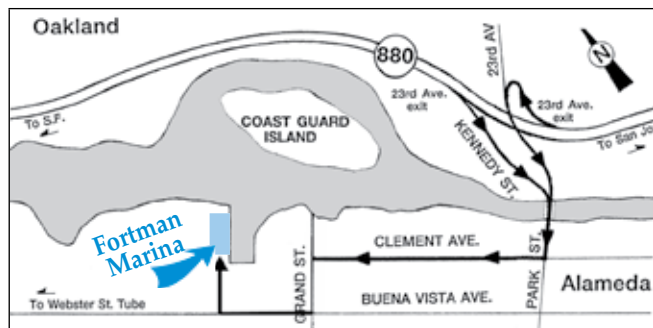
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## LETTERS

### ⚡ ZIPPING IT ON CATALINA

Did you see the report in the *L.A. Times* that a 3,671-ft zipline eco-tour opened on Catalina Island on April 14? According to the report, you'll be able to zip over rocky, cactus-filled canyons at speeds of up to 45 mph while dangling from a cable as high as 300 feet off the ground. It will cost \$89 per person, but there are five segments, so it will take between

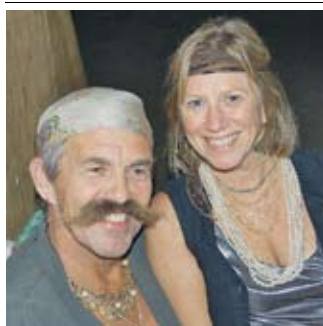


*Zip me up, will ya?*

90 minutes and two hours, breaks included, to drop from an elevation of 500 feet at Hog's Back Gate above Avalon until you get down to Descanso Bay. There will be educational eco-stations along the way.

*Michael — We did see the news. The zipline attraction is controversial because some folks believe that Catalina should remain as natural as possible, while other folks believe the island is caught in a time warp and has little appeal to younger folks and families. They note that the four-hour bus tour of the island recently closed due to a lack of interest, making the one-hour follow-the-leader golf cart tours of Avalon and walking through the Marlin Club on a Saturday night the two most exciting activities on land. So basically it's a battle between people who don't want the island's charm destroyed and those who think the island is too boring to be charming. Feelings are strong on both sides.*

*We don't consider ourselves to be big stakeholders, nor do we have a strong opinion either way. But we wouldn't mind*



LATITUDE / RICHARD

**Retiring Two Harbors Harbormaster Doug Ouden and his wife Maureen during a recent Buccaneer Days.**

*if a small part of Catalina became more upscale and more like Capri. To put this into perspective, we're also among the few people who think oil platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel — particularly when they are flame-throwing — make the scenery more interesting.*

*In other Catalina news, Doug Ouden, who has been the harbormaster and vice president of operations at Two Harbors for an eternity, is retiring in May. We'll miss him, although he tells us that he and his wife Maureen will be around for periods of the summer. A replacement has not been announced.*

### ⚡ NEAR KNOCKDOWN AT SAN BLAS

Thanks for running the video in the March 26 *Electronic* of our broach while crossing the bar into San Blas, Mexico. Since you asked for opinions on what our options might have been, we probably should start with a more detailed account of the facts.

About 10 miles out, we started calling Marina San Blas for a bar report. Unable to raise them, we were contacted by two other boats, *Gosling* and *Tanque de Tiburon*. They had both been awaiting slack low tide at the bar, which the marina had apparently told them was at 1045 hours. From





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# LETTERS

numerous potentially treacherous bar crossings en route to Alaska and back from California, we knew that the absolute best time to cross a bar is at the back of the flood. But since they also reported the tidal change was only 18 inches, we didn't consider that significant enough to warrant delaying our crossing — and rendezvousing with friends who had driven three hours to meet us. (That pesky old 'keeping a schedule' thing!)

Since the other two boats had an ETA at the entrance consistent with ours, we agreed we would follow them in. They had also arranged for a guide boat from the marina to come out to lead our small flotilla across the bar. In addition, we had the most recent set of waypoints from a vessel that had done a survey in February. So we didn't expect to see anything less than three feet under our keel.

As we approached, we noticed that some of the sets across the bar were large and looked prohibitive. But we also noticed there were long lulls between sets when the water on the bar was almost completely flat. This observation was consistent with the information Norm Goldie had relayed over the VHF. Arriving at the first of the five surveyed waypoints before the other two boats, we had about 10 minutes to closely monitor the wave action, so I felt confident that we could make it across during a lull. After we rendezvoused, we all waited for the marina's *panga* to arrive to lead the way.

When the *panga* arrived, the driver, like us, studied the waves for a few minutes. When the timing looked opportune, we set off in a line. Because our Catalina 470 *Last Resort* draws eight feet, we agreed that we'd hang back and let the others go first. After all, in the event we ran aground, it meant they wouldn't pile into us or have to find a way around our boat in the extremely narrow channel. *Tanque de Tiburon* took the lead because they had been in and out several times before, and therefore had some local knowledge.

As we started in, a very large set formed. I elected to hit hard reverse and back out beyond the break and await another opportunity.

In answer to *Latitude's* first question, the waves were far too close together for us to safely attempt a U-turn, not to mention that we didn't believe the channel marked by the waypoints was wide enough at that point to allow us to make a U-turn. But like you, I had initially considered the U-turn option. We have a Gori folding prop, and I elected not to put it in the 'overdrive' mode because I didn't want to shock-load the engine or the drive train, should I have to make a U-turn and crash over a series of steep 6-ft waves at full throttle. The decision not to engage 'overdrive' in advance would prove to be a mistake.


After watching the first two boats get knocked around like rowboats in a maelstrom, we waited at a safe distance until it looked as if a lull was starting. I had counted nine waves in the set, so I felt confident it would be calm enough to safely cross the bar. As we made our approach and entered the channel, we were doing 6.5 knots through the water but our GPS indicated that we were only doing 4.5 knots over the ground. This was highly inconsistent with the tide forecast, because by 1100 hours we should have had slack tide or the beginning



LATITUDE / LADONNA

**Dick, seen here with his wife Sharon, is happy to share the details of their exciting entry into the San Blas estuary.**

engage 'overdrive' in advance would prove to be a mistake. After watching the first two boats get knocked around like rowboats in a maelstrom, we waited at a safe distance until it looked as if a lull was starting. I had counted nine waves in the set, so I felt confident it would be calm enough to safely cross the bar. As we made our approach and entered the channel, we were doing 6.5 knots through the water but our GPS indicated that we were only doing 4.5 knots over the ground. This was highly inconsistent with the tide forecast, because by 1100 hours we should have had slack tide or the beginning



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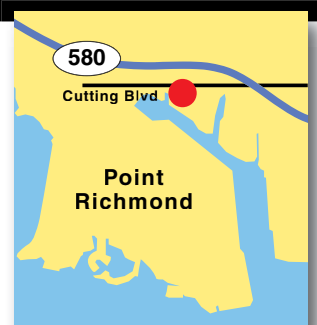


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## LETTERS

of the flood. Clearly, either the tide tables were wrong or the marina had given us bad information.

But by this time we were totally committed, and the seas astern still looked calm. I was, however, seriously wishing I'd engaged the 'overdrive' mode on the prop, because I could have achieved a thru-the-water hull speed of about 8.6 knots. However, just as we reached the bar, an even bigger set came up and a breaking 6-ft wave caught our stern. It rolled *Last Resort* about 60° to starboard. The boat actually handled it quite well, and I was able to straighten her out almost instantly and recover. After that, we continued on without incident.

As you might imagine, we spent a lot of time second-guessing our decision. We learned some valuable lessons we'd like to share: We had been too haphazard in our preparations, leaving one hatch only partially dogged, canisters of flour and other items perched precariously on a shelf, and an expensive Canon camera sitting unsecured on the cockpit table. Had we buttoned up the boat a little better in advance, the near-knockdown would have been a non-incident.

But would I do it differently in the future? Actually, probably not. We were relying on a boat with prior local knowledge and, most importantly, on the marina to know the tides and bar conditions. If it was too dangerous to cross the bar, we assumed the bar pilot wouldn't try to take us in. So, like you, with very little experience taking a big boat through surf myself, I'll be most interested to hear what your readers have to say. I know this issue will come up again when we get to El Salvador.

By the way, we're bringing our boat up to California for the summer and will be doing the Ha-Ha again in the fall. What's more, we're putting together a plan for transiting the Panama Canal and sailing across the Atlantic to the Med.

Richard Drechsler  
*Last Resort*, Catalina 470  
Long Beach

*Richard — Thanks for sharing all that additional information. As we said in 'Lectronic, we weren't second-guessing you, we just wondered if you'd had any other options. Since neither Sharon, you, nor the boat was hurt in any significant way, and since you recovered almost instantly, we'll chalk it up as a great educational experience with a bunch of good lessons for all. The only thing we'll add is that, as an old surfer dude, we'd recommend exercising greater than normal caution when dealing with a building swell, particularly one that would be hitting a bar flush.*

*We're not sure how many readers may recall, but as a result of an illness that resulted in the severe narrowing of his throat, Richard Drechsler hasn't been able to eat solid food for years, and therefore has to exist entirely on Nestlé Carnation's Very High Calorie Instant Breakfast drinks. We salute his and Sharon's cruising to date, and their plans for the future.*

### ↑↓ SURFIN' ACROSS THE BAR

Following the item in *Lectronic* about Richard and Sharon Drechsler's Catalina 470 broaching on a breaking wave at the bar going into the estuary at San Blas, you asked for reports of other crossings in breaking waves.

Aboard *Élan*, our M&M 46 catamaran, my wife Deborah and I have had only one troublesome bar crossing, and that was on the way into the estuary to Bahia del Sol in El Salvador. We crossed the bar on the same high tide as two monohulls, both of which took waves much like the ones seen in the video in *Lectronic* from the day *Last Resort* and the other two monohulls went into San Blas. About three waves passed un-

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# LETTERS

der each vessel, causing each of them to roll nearly to beam's end, and one of them to broach. Thankfully, none came out of it the worse for wear.

*Élan*, however, caught the first wave that tried to pass under us, and rode the single wave all the way across the bar at speeds of between 14 and 17 knots. This was completely unexpected by us — and by the crew of the guiding *panga*, who had



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to take evasive action to prevent getting run over. Though it sounds as though it might have been a 'white knuckle' sort of experience, *Élan* was actually very easy to control the entire time.

She accelerated well ahead of the breaking portion of the wave, and traveled straight down the slope of the wave, just as a surfer would, with the breaking portion of the wave staying well behind us. At the beginning, we were under engine power alone. But once *Élan* started down the wave, I didn't feel the need for additional speed, so I slipped the engines into neutral.

I'd be interested to hear if other multihulls have behaved similarly in these conditions, as I'd like to know that I could 'expect' the same surfing behavior on future bar crossings.

By the way, we just got back from a month of cruising around Isla Carmen and Bahía Concepción in Baja. It was a very windy March, during which time the water actually got cooler rather than warmer! We did look at houses at San Carlos near Guaymas, but we concluded that the prices were too high. Besides, why would we want to have a house there when we can live aboard *Élan* moored in beautiful San Carlos Bay? But basically, we still don't know what we want to do when we grow up, so for now we'll continue to wander around, living on *Élan*, and visit the States from time to time for granddaughter fixes.

In the short term, Deborah and I will be flying to Spain to see the Grand Prix of Spain Formula 1 race. Seeing a Formula 1 race in Europe has always been on my bucket list. When we return, we'll spend some time in the Bay Area with our granddaughter, do a little camping and motorcycle touring, then drive back down to *Élan*, moored in San Carlos, to spend the riskiest part of hurricane season in the less dangerous northern part of the Sea of Cortez. Next winter, we might very well sail to Mag Bay for the gray whale season. We'll see.

We just finished up a 10-year refit on *Élan* in Guaymas, where we freshened up the rig and painted the topsides. She's looking good and sails as well as ever.

Guy & Deborah Bunting  
*Élan*, M&M 46  
Sea of Cortez

*Guy and Deborah — Your account of crossing the bar is very interesting. It makes us wonder if your cat's higher speed, her two hulls, or some other factor could account for her behaving differently than the monohulls. Maybe Max Ebb would like to bring it up with Lee Helm.*

*With regard to living aboard versus living on land, we spend*

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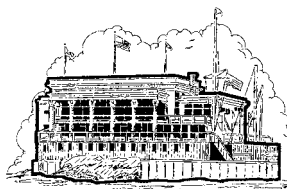
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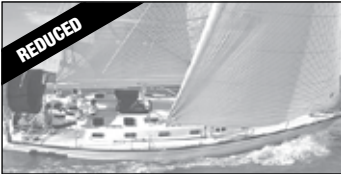
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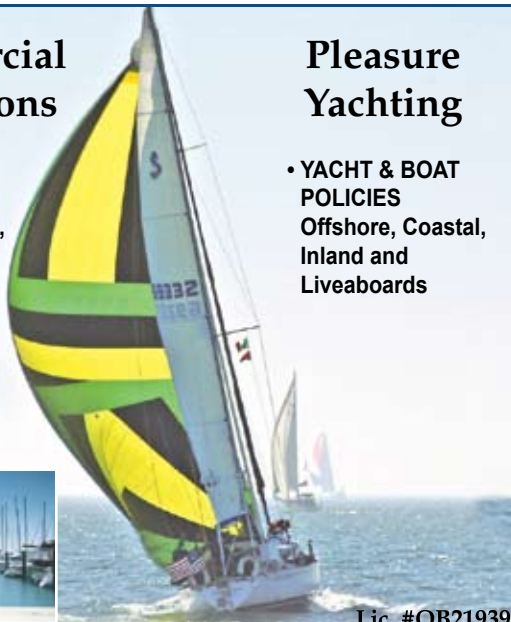
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# LETTERS

about half of the year doing each, and greatly prefer the former. As for Doña de Mallorca, she hates living on terra firma. When we used to live on land for two weeks in a little place over the water in St. Barth waiting for 'ti Profligate to get off charter, it was great. But it was also banal, and there were all kinds of hassles, most of them relating to needing a car. Life was so much more enjoyable when we got to move onto our cat, because depending on our whim and the weather, we could live off Fort Oscar, off Corossol, at Columbie or Forsche, or best of all, at Baie St. Jean in the shadow of the Eden Rock Hotel. Talk about an embarrassment of riches in places to live! And if we wanted to swim at Shell Beach or go bodysurfing at Grande Saline, we didn't have to pack water, food, towels and boogie boards, because we went there with our house and all our possessions. And you'll love this — our 'wheels' ashore is a beat-up old Spanish 125cc Senda we bought from the septic tank man for \$800. It's so fun to ride through the tropical French countryside in the morning. If any readers are jealous, we won't lie, they should be, because it's la vie en rose. But we write this not to make our readers envious, but to tell them that it's a kind of life that virtually all of them can attain.

Life aboard is, in our opinion, also very sweet in Mexico, but a little less so in Southern California, where it's nonetheless still way better than living on land. You know as well as anyone, when you live aboard, particularly in the tropics, everything on the real nature channel is so much more beautiful and satisfying than anything you see on cable's Nature Channel.

## ↑↓ CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS TAKES ON A STRANGE BAR

After Carnival in Mazatlan this year, we stopped by the office of the Singlar Marina Boatyard, where I noticed a map on the wall with the symbol for a marina at a place called Teacapan. A woman in the office made a few calls for us to get more information. She learned that the marina hadn't been completed, but three slips were available. She also reported that catamarans such as ours had made it in over the bar to Teacapan before. Since it is halfway between Mazatlan and San Blas, we decided it would be a great place to break up the trip.

We arrived at the bar off Teacapan at 5 p.m. with a low tide of zero. The entrance featured about 100 yards of whitewater on top of 3- to 4-ft waves. We were looking for some kind of channel when a *panga* came alongside, and the driver offered to guide us in. In broken Spanish, I told him our Gemini 34 needed about three feet of water and could only make about five knots. "No problema," he said, and off we went.

As we got closer to the breakers, I saw a patch of water about 30 feet wide that wasn't breaking. The waves were almost dead astern. Had they not been, I would not have tried to enter. Just as I was getting confident, Terri Farnstrom, my girlfriend, cried out, "Here comes a big wave!" It was only about three feet, and only had a little whitewater. The stern of my cat was lifted high and we took off surfing down the wave. I heard a lot of alarms go off and glanced at the instruments. Instead of any number, the depthsounder read 'SHALLOW'. I'd never seen it do that before. My cat veered left as it accelerated, but I was able to straighten her out as I had the engine at full throttle the whole time. There were no more big waves after the one we surfed down, but it was a little scary seeing whitewater racing past us on both sides. Terri said she saw as little as four feet on the depthsounder at one point. The *panga* then led us into deeper water, and the driver told us to anchor in front of the port captain's office. Even though the current ran as much as three knots, the holding was great.

Once we'd gotten started, there was no way I would have

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Aug 7	Fall 1 - Southhampton Shoals - 2 race day
Aug 28	Fall 2 - City Front
Sept 12	Fall 3 - Knox
Sept 18	All Islanders Rendezvous - fun race
Sept 25	Season Closer Race 1 - Knox
Sept 26	Season Closer Race 2 - Alcatraz and Angel Island
Oct 2	Nationals - Golden Gate YC - 2 or 3 races
Nov 6	Fall Meeting and Winners Dinner - Oakland YC

2010 Islander 36 Cruising Calendar	
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July 9-11	5th Canadian All Islanders Rendezvous - Thetis Island
Aug 13-15	Coyote Point Yacht Club
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## LETTERS

been able to turn around to face the waves, as they were coming in too close together. I would not have considered entering a bar with quartering or beam waves, as you would have to be very sure you could get to safe water in the time between waves. That would be hard to do. If the waves were on the aft quarter and I really needed to make it in, I would try to turn to take the wave as dead astern as possible. But even then you have to have room to surf a little.

It rained the entire time that we were at Teacapan, so we didn't get to see much. We departed a few days later in the morning on a 2-ft high tide, and a guy from the port captain's office guided us out. We were very nervous as we approached 100 yards of whitewater once again. But at high tide the 'channel' was 100 feet wide. We were kind of embarrassed to have asked for help because it was so easy to go out. But the help was good, because the pilot kept us to the outside of the flat water, whereas I might have tried to go down the middle. He knew how to find the deep water by looking at the wave pattern.

By the way, the estuary at Teacapan extends halfway to San Blas, and along the way is the old Aztec island-city of Mexcaltitan.

Don Parker  
Double Play, Gemini 34  
Currently in La Cruz

### ↑↓IT WAS JUST A JOKE

Lighten up guys! I saw the April 12 *Lectronic* clip of Georgia Congressman Hank Johnson — no relation — making his comment about the possibility of Guam's tipping over



**Could this be the Publisher of 'Latitude'?**

as a result of stationing 8,000 Marines there. Although Johnson's face was dead-pan, there was a twinkle in his eye. It was a great joke, and his point was well made.

Dave Johnson  
Black Opal, Morgan 45  
Channel Islands

Dave — If that was a well-made point, we're Lady Gaga, because all Johnson succeeded in doing was offering proof he has no business being in office. If he was worried that the addition of 8,000 Marines would overwhelm the local population and destroy the environment, why wouldn't he just say so and leave the looney talk out?

The next thing you know, some other dim bulb in government would want to issue tsunami warnings based on the danger of Guam and other islands' tipping over. We believe that government is opaque enough without members of Congress trying to be ultra-oblique — on the wild assumption that that's what Johnson was actually trying to do.

### ↑↓JOHNSON WAS RIGHT TO WONDER THAT

Congressman Johnson's comments about the possibility of Guam's tipping over were so clearly figurative, and not literal, that one must question why you chose to hold up these comments for ridicule. Congressman Johnson is an honorable and highly-educated man who has served with distinction in many capacities in both private and public life. He is obvi-



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## LETTERS

ously sufficiently well-educated to know that islands sink no more often than continents. It is a fair comment for him to use the metaphor of sinking in questioning a decision to add one-seventh of the island's existing adult population in the form of a contingent of U.S. military personnel. Proportionally speaking, this would be like stationing another 200,000 troops and their family members in Hawaii, or 500,000 in Puerto Rico. I have no personal opinion on whether that decision results from good policy or not — it is certainly not one of the great burning issues of the day — but I know it is fair and right for Rep. Johnson to ask the question, given the enormous proposed percentage increase in Guam's population.

So why do you insult a black, Democratic Congressman in this way? Sadly, I must conclude that there is a racial and political subtext to this piece, similar to the racial subtext that underscores so much of the political gibberish flowing from the right these days. Fanning the flames of bigotry by wrongly showcasing an African-American Congressman as a "moron" does a disservice to your readers.

Stephen Blitch  
Prime Number, Tartan 4100  
Alameda

Stephen — It's our responsibility to showcase whenever our elected representatives or appointed officials behave like "morons," and we've done so since the first issue without regard to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and all that. You should, too, as sacred cows benefit no one — least of all the cow itself. We'll leave it up to each individual to view the video for themselves (see it in April 12's 'Lectronic Latitude) and decide whether Congressman Johnson was speaking literally or not. In our opinion he was, as his delusional musing was consistent with his previous difficulty in articulating even the most basic concepts. But as you'll read in the following letter, perhaps there was a medical explanation for the Congressman's odd performance.

By the way, children are supposed to be taught how to draw correct conclusions from a set of statements or facts as early as the fourth grade. We wonder if you perhaps missed that year of schooling, because "sadly," you can't "conclude" anything about race or politics from our statements. Indeed, you haven't detected any racism, but rather projected your own into it.

### ↑↓ THE CONGRESSMAN IS ILL

Don't get me wrong, there is a lot of stuff in government to be worried about, but you may want to show some mercy on Congressman Johnson. It's my understanding that he is quite ill — with chronic hepatitis, I think — and almost near death. They say that he has periods of delusion and almost passes out frequently, so his statement about Guam's being in danger of tipping over is likely to have been a result of his illness. Just thought you'd like to know.

Dan Price  
Whisper in the Wind, Bowman 57  
Honolulu / Salt Lake City

Dan — Indeed, we'd like to know, and thanks for the heads up. If that's the case, we have all the compassion in the world for Johnson. On the other hand, we'd have none for the Congressional leadership for not removing a Congressman who is no longer capable of representing his constituents. Of course, if all the delusional people were removed from Congress, they wouldn't be able to form a quorum, creating a whole new set of problems.



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# LETTERS

## ↑↓YOU'RE #1! YOU'RE #1! YOU'RE #1!

We completed our application and paid to participate in the '09 Ha-Ha, only to realize that our boat, *Thee Amazing Grace*, was far from being ready for the event. Although the Ha-Ha has a 'no refund' policy, the Grand Poobah graciously granted us 'pre-paid' status for this fall's Ha-Ha. Since we signed up last year, do we get to be at the top of the list?

David Bloom  
*Thee Amazing Grace*, Vector 39  
Long Beach

*David — The Poobah says you're number one. By the way, the Ha-Ha will come out of hibernation to accept applications on May 3 at www.baja-haha.com. For more info, see Sightings.*

## ↑↓IF FIVE WERE GOOD, WOULD SIX BE BETTER?

It was great seeing the Grand Poobah at the party for the Banderas Bay Regatta and at the Strictly Sail Boat Show in Oakland. We just want him to know that we weren't kidding when we told him that we'll be doing our sixth Ha-Ha this fall. Furthermore, we know of at least five Catalina 470s from Northern California that will be doing this year's Ha-Ha also. So we say, 'Do it again in 2010!'

Roger & Diana Frizzelle  
*Di's Dream*, Catalina 470  
Pt. Richmond

## ↑↓WE JUST NEEDED A LITTLE NUDGE

We did last year's Ha-Ha, and just want to say 'thank you' to everyone involved in helping us cut the docklines. Sometimes we all need a little nudge, like a baby bird leaving the nest for the first time. The unknown is frightening, and you wonder if you can do it. Then comes the nudge and you're off soaring, doing things beyond your imagination. It was truly a wonderful feeling for us to do the Ha-Ha, and has been an amazing journey for us since the very first day. The sight of more than 160 sailboats leaving San Diego Harbor was something to behold, and will be engraved in our memories forever.

Our original plan was to do the Ha-Ha, then take off on the Puddle Jump. Sometimes God has other plans though. I couldn't commit to a four-week passage at this time because my 86-year-old mother was battling brain cancer — and what a fight she continues to put up! So Rick and I opted to cruise the

Sea of Cortez, which was close to home. Rick's dream had been to sail the South Pacific on his own boat, so it was a letdown for him. But he knew how important it was for me.

*If God's plan is for you to stay in the Sea of Cortez, there's no reason to complain.*

But we've been so happy

with the way things have worked out. The Sea is an amazing place, and anyone who passes it by is really missing out. And as everyone discovers, the people of Mexico are wonderful, warm and kind. Plus we've made so many good friends.

We've just left Puerto Escondido, Baja, and are making our way south to La Paz, stopping at the incredible bays along



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# LETTERS

the way. We'll probably Bash back north in May. And who knows, maybe we'll see you at the starting line of this fall's Baja Ha-Ha 17.

Connie & Rick Hedrick  
Rhino, Westsail 32  
Dana Point

*Connie and Rick — Thanks for the kind words. We're glad things worked out for you. The Sea is truly an amazing place, and the people of Mexico are wonderful.*

*If you decide to do the Ha-Ha again, you won't be the only repeaters. Among just the 23 or so boats in the recent Sea of Cortez Sailing Week, at least seven of them told us there is a very good chance they'll be doing the Ha-Ha again this fall. That would include Braveheart, Bob Callaway's Pleasant Harbor, WA-based MacGregor 65; Talion, Patsy Verhoeven's La Paz-based Gulfstar 50; Moontide, Bill Lily's Newport Beach-based Lagoon 470; Adios, Craig Shaw's Portland-based Columbia 43; RotKat, Arjan Bok's San Francisco-based Lidgard 43 cat; and, of course, Profligate. San Diegans Barritt Neal and Renee Blaul, two of the crew on Profligate for SOCSW, will also be doing the Ha-Ha aboard their Peterson 44 Serendipity. It will be Barritt and his boat's third Ha-Ha.*

## ↑↓ TOUGH TRIP, TOUGH DECISION

My wife and I own a 38-ft cruising sailboat. For the last couple of years, we've planned to sail her to Mexico this fall, cruise the mainland coast during the winter, and over a few seasons of intermittent fall/winter/spring cruising, move her through the Panama Canal to the Caribbean, where we'd likely cruise around. But because of a job change, we've relocated to the Great Lakes, and are reconsidering our plan. In fact, we're thinking of shipping our boat to Chicago, sailing the Great Lakes for a couple of seasons, then heading out the St. Lawrence and down to the Caribbean. We're on the fence about the options and are open to advice.

One of the bigger trade-offs we're exploring is how challenging the sailing would be heading eastward through the canal and Caribbean, compared to sailing down the St. Lawrence, the Atlantic Coast/ICW, and what would most likely be a sweep south then west in the Caribbean.

Anyone at *Latitude* willing to give their advice?

Doug Kuch  
Tranquility, Island Packet 380  
Mountain View

*Doug — Let us preface our response by saying that we'd toss the St. Lawrence Seaway out of the equation and replace it with the 175-year-old Erie Canal, which would save something like 1,500 miles on an Atlantic route to the Caribbean. There are 34 locks in the Erie Canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson River, but the locks are long, wide and deep enough. We're also told that it's a spectacularly beautiful trip in the summer and fall. The only downside is that you'd have to drop the mast and carry it on deck for the duration of the Erie Canal, as the vertical clearance gets down to 15 feet between Lake Erie and Three Rivers.*

*As we see it, you're basically asking us which is less challenging, getting to the Eastern Caribbean from Panama, or getting there from somewhere — Rhode Island, Virginia or Florida — on the East Coast. In our opinion it's a real toss-up, as all four routes can be challenging.*

*Panama Canal to St. Martin — This one is about 1,300 miles rhumbline, but there's no way you're going to go rhumbline against the relentless trades and adverse current. One viable*



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## LETTERS

option is working your way up the Western Caribbean, at which point you'll still have to go nearly 1,500 miles upwind to reach St. Martin. Although you'll still be battling the trades, you can take shelter at Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. If you're in no hurry, it's a pretty good choice.



LATITUDE / RICHARD

**No matter what route you choose or how difficult it is to get there, the Caribbean is worth it.**

A second potentially viable option is to sail to Cartagena, then pray for an unusually long break in the trades to sneak around the hump of South America, at which point you can hug the coast in lighter winds the rest of the way to Trinidad. But once at Trinidad, it's still a long tight reach or more upwind to St. Martin. The key is catching a long enough weather window out of Cartagena. A lot of cruisers have had their bottoms handed to them trying to make it east from Cartagena and had to backtrack.

Newport to St. Martin — The trick here is to leave Newport after the last hurricane of the season and before the first ice on the decks. The good thing is that you'll only freeze your ass off for about 48 hours, after which you'll be in the warm Gulf Stream and not too far from Bermuda. From Bermuda, you've only got 800 miles to go to St. Martin, and the farther south you get, the better your chance of decent weather. This one is also all about waiting for the right weather window out of Newport and Bermuda.

Virginia to St. Martin — This is basically the Caribbean 1500 route, and if you've followed the history of the event, you know you'll have to be prepared for some bouts of very strong winds and big seas. This is no Ha-Ha. It's not unusual for the fleet to delay the start a day or two for a better weather window, and sometimes participants take shelter at Bermuda. But if the weather is good, it should be possible for you to complete the course in 10 or 12 days.

Fort Lauderdale to St. Martin — There are two options on this one, too. You can either sail straight east until you get to 'Highway 65', then head due south to St. Martin. Capt. Jim Drake did this once with our Ocean 71 Big O, and said it was one of the best sails he's ever had. But it's often not such a sweet sail. The other option is to take Bruce van Sant's Thorny Path — 1,500 miles upwind against the trades with lots of stops at the various islands. This can be like a never ending root canal, and lots of folks who have done it swear they'll never do it again. But others have had success.

We don't mean to make all of these options sound unappealing, but they all involve some challenges. Good luck!

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

*Yankee Tar* will become a museum exhibit.

When famed stage and film actor Hal Holbrook sailed the 1980 Singlehanded TransPac on his Gulf 40, *Yankee Tar*, he wasn't 'in it to win it'. "I finished the race in just under 22 days, a few hours after the official deadline," he wrote to *Latitude* back in '06. "I was new to singlehanded ocean racing and, with my 30,000-lb sloop loaded up for a trip to the South Seas, was not much of a competitor." Holbrook had bought *Yankee Tar* three years earlier, and would spend the following three years sailing her around the Pacific before bringing her back to the West Coast.



COURTESY THE MARINERS' MUSEUM

**Dixie Carter on her maiden voyage aboard Hal Holbrook's Gulf 40 'Yankee Tar'.**

During that time, Holbrook met Dixie Carter on a film set. They married in '84 and spent the ensuing years enjoying time aboard *Yankee Tar*. "Dixie made every adventure glamorous and great sport," Holbrook said of his wife of 26 years, who passed away on April 10 of endometrial cancer. She was 70.

Prior to Carter's death, she and Holbrook were enthusiastic supporters of The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia. In addition to lending their celebrity to endorse the museum's objective of preserving maritime history — such as their building of a full-size replica of the Civil War 'ironclad' *USS Monitor* — Carter and Holbrook donated their own piece of history to the museum: *Yankee Tar*.

Plans are now in the works to turn *Yankee Tar* into an exhibit as a tribute to the couple's sense of adventure. "The boat paralleled the course of Hal Holbrook and Dixie Carter's relationship," said Lyles Forbes, chief curator for The Mariners' Museum ([www.mariner.org](http://www.mariner.org)). "When they donated the boat, we asked them to leave their personal effects aboard so visitors can feel like they are really aboard Hal and Dixie's boat. That way, it becomes less about the boat, and more about these people cruising around the Pacific."

Though the exhibit is still in the planning stages — no date has been set for its unveiling — Forbes says they'll be incorporating interviews with Hal and Dixie filmed aboard the boat into an interactive display. "They reminisced about their seafaring adventures over the previous 20-some years," he noted. "It was clear that the boat was special to them both, and that they had shared a lot of good times aboard. Now, a museum visitor will be able choose whether to hear fascinating tales of their trips to New Zealand, or Tahiti, or Samoa."

Holbrook has suffered a monumental loss, and he has our sincerest condolences. But it's comforting to know that the love of adventure he shared with Carter will live on.



COURTESY THE MARINERS' MUSEUM

**A plaque aboard 'Yankee Tar' — seen here in Tahiti — quotes Edna St. Vincent Millay: "Searching my heart for its true sorrow; this is the thing I find to be; that I am weary of words and people; sick of the city, wanting the sea."**

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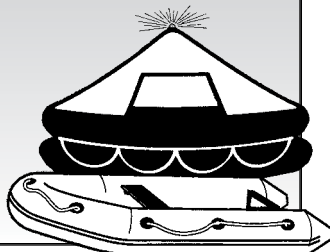
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## LOOSE LIPS

*Latitude* comes to the iPad.

Having heard all the buzz about the iPad — Apple's much-hyped and long-awaited tablet computer that sold an estimated 1 million units in its first month of distribution — we were as curious as anyone about this new gadget, so when Rich Hudnut, Jr. of the Alameda-based Schumacher 52 *Cinnabar* whipped his out at Strictly Sail last month, he had our full attention.

"Ooh, look how pretty," this reporter gushed. "Can you download *Latitude* on it?"

"Uh . . . duh!" was the reply.

"There are three ways to download *Latitude* to an iPad," Rich explained. "First, you can just use the browser to navigate to [www.latitude38.com](http://www.latitude38.com) and follow the links to the issue you want to download. The PDF will load in a separate window, but this isn't permanent and it can be lost if you open a lot of pages.

"Second, get a cool app called GoodReader — it's kind of like the 'explorer' file browsing feature on a PC. Open GoodReader, click 'web downloads', enter the URL or just navigate to the sections to download, and click on the version you want — the full magazine, which is a bigger file, or the individual partial versions. You'll be asked if you want to view it or download it. If you're like me and know you'll want to open it multiple times, just download it. It will be stored on your iPad like any other file. When you're done, just delete it.

"Third, use a different app, such as Air Share, that handles the downloading of PDFs."

"How do you like reading the magazine on that doohickey?"

"It's like any other PDF, really," Rich said. "You can move to any page, zoom in on any picture, even bookmark a page for later reference. But *Latitude* does a lot of double-page spreads, which looks great in the paper magazine, but doesn't work well on the iPad. It's a 'PDF issue' — you can't just turn the device sideways to get the cool double-page spread. It's not that big a deal though; it still looks great."

"Hmm, I wonder if there's a way to make the *Latitude* reading experience any better for iPad users," I wondered.

"It'd be cool to download it through iBooks [Apple's e-bookstore], but I wonder how the pages would scale. It's great for reading a paperback-type book, but reading the best sailing magazine in the world in that format might be tough."

"Aw, shucks," I said, blushing. "But I know what you mean. I tried loading the magazine onto my Kindle, and while it was readable, the experience was less than exciting. Of course, storing back issues on the computer, Kindle or iPad is a great way to save space aboard.

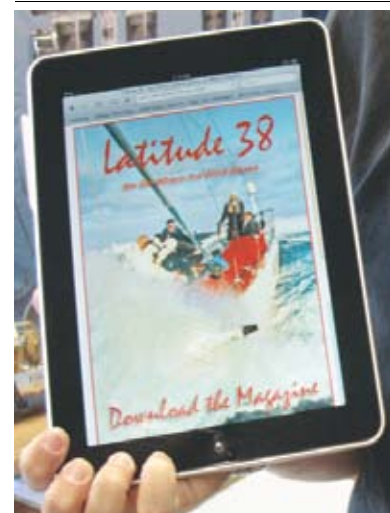
"So how else can the iPad benefit sailors?"

"Oh, I've already integrated iNavX into my boat and iPad. I can pause my reading to check the weather or monitor the AIS and all the other instruments without getting out of my bunk."

"Geez, can it make sandwiches for the crew, too?"

"Not yet, but we hear that app is coming soon."

— ladonna



LATITUDE / CHRISTINE WEAVER

Rich Hudnut shows off his new iPad, which sports a slick 'sail bag' made by sailmaker Synthia Petroka.



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# SIGHTINGS

## a great deal on a used boat

While at the Strictly Sail Boat Show in Oakland last month, we and some others fell into a conversation with Stan Honey, the Bay Area-based navigator who smashed the Jules Verne record in March aboard the 105-ft tri *Groupama 3*, circumnavigating in just over 48 days. He told us about what he thinks is a great used boat deal.



TEAM GROUPAMA

Stan was working on his boat broker skills at Strictly Sail last month.

**Stan:** You should buy *Groupama*.

**38:** (Extended laughter.)

**Stan:** Really. Franck Cammas, her French skipper, is currently outfitting her with a shorter mast and taking out the interior — mainly pipe berths — so he can race her in this summer's singlehanded race across the Atlantic. But he tells me that, after the race, this fantastic trimaran, which cost \$10 million, will be for sale for just \$500,000.

**38:** You must be joking.

**Stan:** No, I'm serious. *Latitude* should buy it.

**38:** (Extended laughter.) That's way, way, way out of our league on so many levels.

**Stan:** Well, if you bought her, you could bring her to the Bay and set new sailing records, both

for 500 meters and one nautical mile. So far we've hit 47 knots.

**Lee Helm:** But the speeds can't be current-assisted.

**Stan:** You would have to do it during slack water for an official record. After that, you'd set a new TransPac record. I figure 4.5 days.

**Lee:** You should be able to do it faster than that. After all, you sailed *Groupama* across the *Atlantic* in just 4.5 days.

**Stan:** Maybe it could do the TransPac in four days. But the TransPac is really a light-air race. Everybody thinks of it as a heavy-air race because they remember the last day when it blows 30 knots. But really, for five days in the middle, it only blows about 14 knots.

After you set the TransPac record, you'd set records in all the Mexico races, then you'd sell her. Or put the short rig back in and turn her into a cruising boat. It would be a cheap project. If *Latitude* doesn't want to do it, we'd have to get someone else.

**38:** Wanting and having the means and ability are two different things. What about Philippe Kahn? He loves fast boats, the loves races to Hawaii — and he's French.

**Stan:** Philippe is a good suggestion. But somebody on the West Coast ought to do it because, at \$500,000, *Groupama* is such a steal. Not only would the boat be cheap, but Philippe or whoever bought her could inexpensively hire a bunch of French guys to show him —

**Lee:** Or her . . .

**Stan:** Or her how to sail the boat, because French sailors don't get paid very much. *Groupama* has 40 full-time people and two giant buildings, but all the sailors are on contract. They get nothing.

The only problem with turning *Groupama* into a cruising boat is that you need two or three RIBs to get her off the dock. In reality, I think most big future offshore multihulls will be trimarans, but for cruising, catamarans are better because you're above the water and have such a better view of things from the salon.

**Lee:** Maybe retractable Z-drives in each ama would solve the maneuverability problem in port.

**Stan:** That would work. *Groupama* is really cumbersome getting off the dock the way she is now.

**38:** There's a lot of difference between sailing monohulls and multihulls, isn't there?

**Stan:** Yes, and it's a steep learning curve. The first multihull I raced on was Dennis Conner's *Stars & Stripes* in a Long Beach-to-Cabo Race with Gino Morrelli. It was probably the stupidest thing I've ever done. I was at the helm and everything seemed fine to me, with the wind

continued on outside column of next sightings page

## every sailor's

Sailing into a half-submerged container is every sailor's nightmare. On April 3, the 65 boats that sailed out the Gate in BAMA's Doublehanded Farallones Race came close to living that nightmare because of an accident the day before.

Weather conditions Friday morning had been severe. Rain cells rolled through the Bay, bringing driving rain and gusts to 40 knots. Outside the Gate, off Bolinas, a container ship lost five empty containers — two sank immediately, one was barely afloat, and two floated high. The Coast Guard responded to the scene and monitored the containers while Tim Parker and his crew from Parker Diving





## nightmare

Service got suited up for the ride out.

"It was rougher than a cob," Parker recalls. "We were on Oscar Niemeth Towing's 90-ft tug *American Eagle* taking green water over the cockpit." By the time *American Eagle* reached the coordinates given to them by the Coast Guard — they'd left the scene to aid a boater in distress — only two containers could be found. "We assume the one that was barely floating went down," Parker said.

"One was already in the surf — it wound up on the beach — so we monitored the other one," said Parker. "It went across Duxbury Reef, close to shore, got

continued in middle column of next sightings page

## groupama — cont'd

slowly building. But when I turned the helm over to Gino, he said, "Holy shit, what are you thinking? We've got to get the genoa down."

**38:** How hard was it blowing?

**Stan:** I don't know, about 14-16 knots. But we nearly killed Peter Hogg in the course of reducing sail.

**38:** Tell us more about *Groupama*.

**Stan:** Well, compared to *Groupama*, a Volvo 70 — which Cammas will be racing around the world — is torture. Sailing around the world on *Groupama* was just delightful. The boat was easy to steer, nimble, fast and fun. Plus, she was perfectly dry down below, there was a heater, the food was good, and everybody had their own space. Life was great. But in the Volvo 70s, it's pitch black, there's water everywhere on deck and below, you're soaking wet all the time, you're cold, you lose 25 pounds a leg. It just sucks. Plus, every time you tack or gybe, there's 45 minutes of backbreaking work — with your best

continued on outside column of next sightings page



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# SIGHTINGS

## groupama — cont'd

friends — just to get the sails restacked on the other side of the boat. You don't have to do that on *Groupama*, which made the navigator's job so much easier. I'd suggest seeing what the other jibe was like, and it was no big deal. The only really hard thing was reefing.

When I heard that Franck was going to be doing a Volvo Ocean Race, I said, "Franck, you French are generations ahead of everyone else racing offshore. Why are you going to do a Volvo?" He made the observation that, while racing on a Volvo boat would be much slower and harder, requiring a lot more brutal sail changes, at least it would be low-stress. The low stress is from knowing that the boat won't flip over. Almost all the great French sailors have flipped a big multihull while racing offshore, and it's something you don't want to do.

continued on outside column of next sightings page

## containers

caught in Bolinas Lagoon's eddy, then circled south." The tug's skipper carefully edged up close enough to the container for the crew to get a line on it.

"It had a large tear on the top and already had a lot of water in it," Parker said. "We didn't have it under tow for more than 100 yards before it took a roll and started taking on a lot of water, so we cut the tow and stood by to make sure it wasn't floating near the surface. It took about five minutes for it to go to the bottom."

The following week, Parker Diving was



**Even at 90 feet, 'American Eagle' still got spanked during the retrieval.**



**Parker's crew prepares to tow the container.**



**An estimated 10,000 containers go overboard each year. Every offshore sailor's nightmare is to run into one. Can you imagine coming up on this beast at night?**

PHOTOS TIM SELL



## — cont'd

contracted to remove the other container from the beach, which Tim Parker said went smoothly — even though the public had pried open the container's sealed doors, allowing water, sand and gravel to get in. "We had to tip it to pour it all out before we could move it," he noted.

Parker says his company gets, on average, one call a year to salvage a container. An investigation is underway to find out why the containers fell off the ship in the first place.

— ladonna



Tim Parker keeps an eye on the two floaters — the one in the background ended up on the beach.

## groupama — cont'd

**38:** Why are the Volvo 70s so wet?

**Stan:** It's twofold. First, the boats have low freeboard and a minimal hard dodger. But the reason they have low freeboard is all part of positioning the race as an example of life at the extreme. If they don't get the video of everybody getting soaked, with water everywhere, it's not going to come across as extreme. For example, when setting the around the world record on *Groupama*, the driver was sitting behind a windshield the whole time.

**Lee:** I would describe Volvo 70 racing as sailing's version of World Wrestling Entertainment.

**Stan:** Exactly. That's what the Volvo is all about.

Another interesting thing is how totally different the French are from the Kiwis when it comes to racing. The French all grew up single-handed, so from very early on they learned about triage. Meaning you can't do everything well all the time. You have to navigate, change sails, steer occasionally, fix things — you have to decide where you expend your energy. With the Kiwi approach, on the other hand, the first assumption is that the crew has the ability to make an infinite effort, and put up with infinite discomfort and pain. Both the French and Kiwis are wonderful to sail with. The Kiwis are no-holds-barred, grunt-up boys, and there is nobody you'd rather have on the foredeck with you. But the French are more fun, and the boats are so much more sensible because they are fast, delightfully rigged, delightful to sail, perfectly in tune, and dry down below. On *Groupama*, somebody hand-held the traveler and the gennaker sheet all the way around the world, but the guys holding them were inside the casket sitting on a cushion. Life wasn't bad. Plus, while both the Kiwis and French eat freeze dried food, the French know how to add spices so it tastes really good.

**38:** How was *Groupama* different from *Playstation*?

**Stan:** *Playstation* was big and heavy, hard to steer, and wanted to go in a straight line. *Groupama* is light and nimble, and fun to drive.

**Lee:** Did the center hull make *Groupama* better than *Playstation*, which is a catamaran?

**Stan:** Much more comfortable.

**Doña de Mallorca:** Did the French smoke a lot?

**Stan:** Most of them smoked, but not down below.

**Doña:** Would you like to see the Cup come to the Bay?

**Stan:** It would be great. I think they need to design a 60- to 70-ft skiff-like monohull, sort of like a TP 52 or STP 65, then hold Cup finals here in the Bay in June, which means all the boats would have to be designed to sail in 40 knots of wind on an ebb tide. It would make for the best boats and the best television. And they should pick the course imaginatively. I've worked with a lot of other sports, and they all design their events to make the best show. So I say the finals should be on the Bay in June when it blows like shit.

**38:** A minimum of 20 knots to do a race?

**Stan:** Sure. That's why you'd hold it in June, because it blows 20 knots on the Bay when it's light. During windy periods, it blows 35.

**38:** What should the course be?

**Stan:** Right up the Slot!

**38:** Should they have Acts around the world leading up to the Finals?

**Stan:** Oh yeah, that way you don't clog up the Bay for a long period of time. But the Finals need to be on the Bay. And the Acts have to be held in places where it blows, such as Hawaii, the Caribbean, Cascais, Portugal and places such as that. An America's Cup boat that's designed to race in 40 knots will have an afterlife.

**38:** What's up next for you?

**Stan:** The Bermuda Race aboard *Speedboat*, a 99-ft supermaxi owned by Alex Jackson, then a shot at the monohull record across the Atlantic on *Speedboat*.

—richard

## california condor takes flight

In the last two years, commissions for custom boats have been fewer and farther between for naval architects and yacht designers. But you'd never know it if you'd visited Berkeley Marine Center during that time. Late last month, owner Cree Partridge and his team were putting the finishing touches on a new Jim Antrim-designed Class 40 for Bay Area sailor Buzz Blackett and partners Liz Baylis and Todd Hedin. Named after *Condor*, a Redline 41 that Blackett's dad campaigned on the Great Lakes years ago, the new boat's 15-ft beam will help make it a powerful offshore machine. If the boat's ready, it will show its stuff at this year's Pacific Cup. Like *California Condor's* namesake species — which saw its first wild-born chick hatch last month after decades of decline — hopefully the boat is a sign that the endangered Northern California-built custom boat will recover. As long as there are owners like Blackett around. Blackett, an attorney by weekday, looked at his boat's near-sistership, Sue and Barry Senescu's Dana Point-based Antrim Class 40 *Yippee Kai Yay*, built by Columbia Yachts, and was impressed with the build.

"They did a great job on that boat," Blackett said. "But custom boatbuilding in Northern California has been moribund-to-dead, and having the boat built in the Bay has made it easier to be involved."

Blackett has managed the project — putting in many a late night along with Antrim, Partridge and Pineapple Sails' Kame Richards — and said he's been extremely happy with everyone involved. On the gruntier end of the labor spectrum, the build has allowed local Richmond YC young bucks like David Rasmussen and Max Fraser to earn some sailing money while they pick up valuable composites skills.

A relative newcomer to the local racing scene, the Class 40 box rule has been wildly successful in Europe. Over 100 boats have been built in the last four years. The simple rule places restrictions on materials — carbon is allowed only in the rig and prod while only e-glass and foam cores or plywood are allowed for the rest of the structure — in order to contain build costs and produce fast offshore-oriented shorthanded boats that basically look like miniature IMOCA 60s. The boat will carry a double-spreader Hall Spars carbon rig and Nitronic 50 rod for the standing rigging.

*California Condor* will be very similar to *Yippee Kai Yay*, but with one key difference — in order to fit in Dana Point Harbor, the latter's keel is some 18 inches shorter in draft.

"There might be one or two modes where that will be an advantage, but overall this boat will be faster almost all the time," Antrim said.

As launched, the boat will not be Class 40-legal for two easily changeable reasons. Per the rule, the sail inventory is limited to eight, including a storm jib and trysail. Spinnakers are restricted to nylon only — no laminate — and all other sails must be woven or laminated polyester — except two, which can be any material. Carbon battens are prohibited. Given that it won't be sailing any officially sanctioned class events — which all originate from Europe — the boat will carry an all-carbon working-sail inventory, and in the interest of stiffness, the rudders are carbon instead of e-glass.

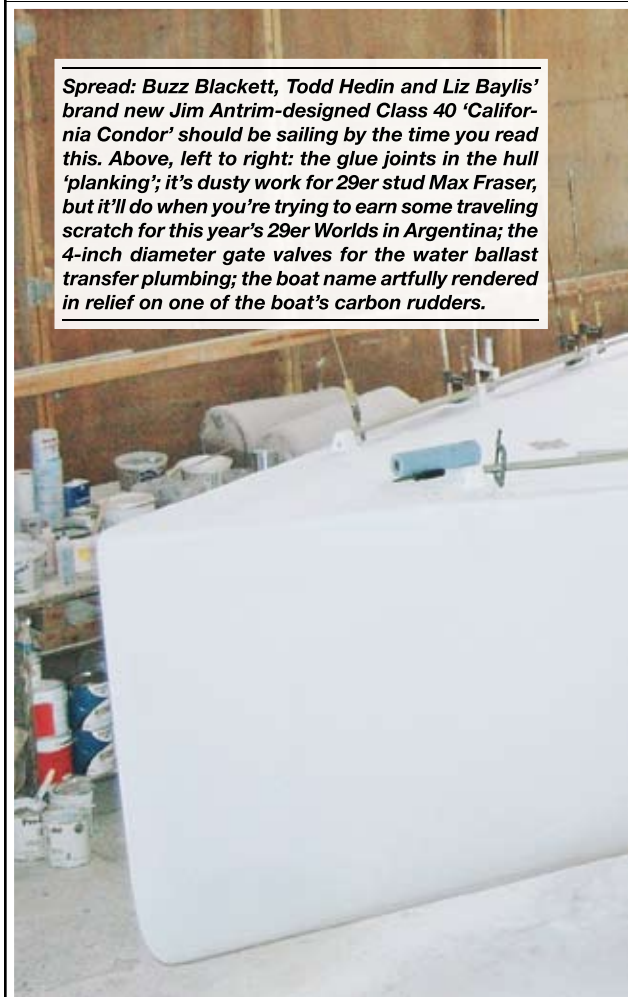
The rule also allows the boat to carry up to 400 gallons of water ballast, symmetrically distributed off the centerline, which means the equivalent of eight 200-lb guys can be packed up on the weather side when needed. The deck was built in a female mold, while the hull was built on a fenceboard plug, which resulted in a time savings of about two weeks and a 10% reduction in the tooling costs for the hull plug — roughly 10% of the cost of the finished product. With this method, long "planks" of foam and glass were laminated on flat tables and tortured into place before being edge-glued together. The outside skins of the hull were laminated to the planks, then the hull was faired. The hull was turned over and the interior received another layer of glass before being faired.

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## the boat

We're not talking about the skipper or crew losing weight — which is usually a good thing, too — but the boat itself. The net result of boats — and people — losing weight is that they become faster and more nimble.

People can lose weight by eating more veggies. In fact, by eating *mostly* veggies. Boats lose weight as a result of their manufacturers' using building innovations. Thanks to the public relations folks for Catana Catamarans, the self-proclaimed "world innovation leader in luxury perfor-



Spread: Buzz Blackett, Todd Hedin and Liz Baylis' brand new Jim Antrim-designed Class 40 'California Condor' should be sailing by the time you read this. Above, left to right: the glue joints in the hull 'planking'; it's dusty work for 29er stud Max Fraser, but it'll do when you're trying to earn some traveling scratch for this year's 29er Worlds in Argentina; the 4-inch diameter gate valves for the water ballast transfer plumbing; the boat name artfully rendered in relief on one of the boat's carbon rudders.



## diet

mance catamarans,” we have specific facts on how they’ve reduced the weight of their new Catana 50s by an astonishing 8,602 lbs. We found the areas and methods of weight reduction interesting, so we figured that you would, too.

1) Catana 50 catamarans — including hulls, deck, biminis, bulkheads and other parts — are now built with resin infusion. It shaves 3,483 lbs off the overall weight.

2) The Catana 50 hard-top bimini was

continued in middle column of next sightings page

## condor — cont’d

Blackett was a longtime and successful campaigner in the Bay’s Express 27 fleet with his now-former boat *New Wave*, as well as the El Toro YRA. He has a carbon Moore El Toro with a carbon mast and sail, and he also sails an all-carbon foiling Moth, which means that *California Condor* will be his lowest-tech boat! The spark for the boat was struck during the ‘08 Pacific Cup — which marked his return to ocean racing after a decades-long hiatus — when he was invited by Hedin to stand in for Baylis on their Antrim 27, *E.T.* As often happens, one of those ‘a bigger boat might be nice’ conversations ensued along the way, and that led them to where they are now. Hopefully by the time you read this, the boat will be out on the water tearing up the Bay.

— rob



ALL PHOTOS LATITUDE / ROB

# SIGHTINGS

## bogus sail training?

In the aftermath of a massive six-week search for the long-overdue 'sail training' vessel *Columbia* — which limped into a Chilean port April 11 with all crew members safe and sound — a spirited debate has ensued about a paid skipper's responsibility to his crew, and the wisdom of signing on to an offshore cruise aboard a vessel with limited communications gear.

Because we have extensive contacts with South Pacific cruising boats, the distraught father of *Columbia* crewman Mitch Westlake — a 23-year-old Australian — contacted us in mid-March asking for help. He explained that the 48-ft British-flagged vessel, run by Polish-born French skipper Boguslaw 'Bob' Norwid-Niepokoj, left Salinas, Ecuador, January 16 and had not been heard from since. *Columbia* had been due to arrive at Coquimbo, Chile, two weeks earlier, right around the time that a much-publicized magnitude 8.8 earthquake and tsunami brutalized that country (February 27). Aboard were the skipper, his Chilean wife, Carmen Moreira Santana, and three sail trainees: Westlake, and Canadians Jade Chabot, 50, and Lisa Hanlon, 22, each of whom had paid roughly \$4,000 USD to join what was advertised

continued on outside column of next sightings page

## boat diet

redesigned, not only for better visibility of the opposite bow while underway, but to reduce the overall weight by another 804 lbs.

3) The fore beam and catwalk of the Catana 50 have been changed from composite to aluminum, shaving an additional 1,018 lbs. Funny, we thought composite stuff would have been lighter.

4) The boat has been redesigned to reduce one redundant bulkhead, as well as some other stuff, eliminating 1,340 lbs more.

5) New carpentry fabrication techniques, lighter wood, and lighter cleats have cut off another 697 lbs.

6) For those who pick the carbon mast option, a new autoclave carbon mast has been chosen that reduces the weight of

*"Does this dodger make me look fat?" Anorexia has hit the boatbuilding industry, with builders — such as Catana — purging to lose weight.*



PHOTOS LATITUDE / RICHARD



## — cont'd

the mast an additional 322 lbs.

7) And finally, Catana has done a careful analysis of every detail of adhesive products, such as Sikaflex, to further reduce the weight by another 938 lbs.

In other words, the new Catana 50s will displace in excess of 20% less than the 38,000 lbs of the original ones. To put it in more graphic terms, the new boats save the equivalent of 3.5 Chevy Malibus in weight, which will make them much more responsive in all wind conditions. Catana says they are also dramatically reducing the weight of their 42s, 47s, 58s and 65s, too.

For the record, virtually all boat manufacturers are working to eliminate weight, so Catana is not alone.

— richard



## bogus — cont'd

as a 40-day, 3,000-mile cruise, in hopes of earning a Yachtmaster's Offshore certification.

We alerted the 220-boat Pacific Puddle Jump fleet to be on the lookout for *Columbia* — which is conspicuous due to the words 'Discovery Sailing Academy' printed in large letters on her hull. Within hours, concerned members of several other cruising groups had extended the network of watchful eyes all the way from Patagonia to Easter Island. Meanwhile, government agencies of the U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile put resources into play.

So where had *Columbia* been during her 86-day transit? According to her deeply frustrated crew, they'd logged 5,000 miles attempting to follow what Norwid called the "old pirate route," which took them as much as 2,000 miles west of the South American coast — well over halfway to French Polynesia. At one point they drifted for 12 days with little or no wind. But the skipper — who, according to Chabot, became staunchly militaristic as soon as the boat set sail, and was verbally abusive throughout the ordeal — reportedly refused to consider using his engine for either propulsion or to run the watermaker, despite having full diesel tanks. Instead, each crewmember was given a ration of about two cups of water per day, and Norwid instituted a contest to see who could get by on less.

Although *Columbia* operates as a commercial vessel, she only carries a VHF radio, plus an SSB receiver (no transmitter) for communications. Norwid insisted that both remain turned off throughout the trip. Consequently, no one on board knew anything about the Chilean earthquake, and apparently the tsunami rolled right beneath them unnoticed.

As the weeks wore on, it became obvious that there was no way they were going to reach their Chilean destination anywhere close to on schedule. All three trainees pleaded with Norwid to allow them to attempt making outside contact via the VHF so their families could be alerted that they were safe. He adamantly refused.

Needless to say, a VHF call probably would have been futile in those lonely latitudes. But the skipper's actions — or lack thereof — have raised some important legal questions. Because *Columbia* was involved in a commercial enterprise, should the skipper have been obligated to report his whereabouts when the trip became long overdue? Was he negligent for not attempting outside contact, knowing his clients' families would be anxious? Should such a vessel be required to carry some type of long-range communications device when operating offshore? Such questions seem particularly pertinent in Norwid's case, because he has a history of being long-overdue and incommunicado — at least twice before, search and rescue agencies have wasted valuable resources looking for him. If you've got a well-reasoned opinion about these issues, drop us a note at [editorial@latitude38.com](mailto:editorial@latitude38.com).

We're told that Norwid is under investigation by both British and Chilean authorities. One thing they'll undoubtedly look into is whether this controversial instructor — who says he thinks of himself as something of a pirate — is actually licensed to conduct Yachtmaster courses.

Despite initial surprise at Norwid's harsh tactics, Westlake — who'd previously done a three-year stint in the Australian Navy — reportedly completed all his course requirements, and has been promised his certificate. But both Hanlon and Chabot eventually exercised their option to give up on the rigorous 'training' regime, after 63 days and 70 days respectively, and finished the trip simply as passengers.

Hanlon had virtually no previous sailing experience — but had dreams of working on tall ships. She now says she never wants to go to sea again. Years ago, Chabot worked for six years on charter yachts in the Caribbean and Med, but mostly away from the deck action. She was hoping to fine-tune her seamanship skills, but returned home to Montreal totally disillusioned. "That man completely killed my passion for sailing," she says sadly.

— andy

## arctic wanderer to tackle russia

How does a kid from San Jose like Gary Ramos end up attempting to become the first person to sail solo around the North Pole? That's a very long story. But it probably began back in his teen years when one of his Camden High instructors took young Gary under his wing and taught him how to sail on San Francisco Bay.

Apparently Ramos took to boating like a duck to water, because after high school he joined the Coast Guard. During his eight-year stint, he was stationed in Alaska and developed a reverence for the far north that has remained with him ever since.

When we checked in with Ramos late last month, he was about to return to Iceland, where his steel-hulled, 39-ft cutter *Arctic Wanderer* awaits him. Having already traveled via the fabled Northwest Passage over the top of North America, he will soon attempt to solo across the top of Europe and Asia to complete his polar circuit. According to Ramos, roughly 40 small boats have now done the Northwest Passage, but only about six have gone over the top of Russia, and none have

continued on outside column of next sightings page

## abby to stop

Ever since Abby Sunderland — the Thousand Oaks-based 16-year-old trying to become the youngest person to solo circumnavigate non-stop — rounded Cape Horn without incident on March 31, we've been flicking through recipes in our dog-eared copy of *1,001 Ways to Prepare and Eat Crow*. We at *Latitude* had taken a firm position against children — which is, without a doubt, what a 16-year-old is — attempting such a hazardous journey. The Publisher even went so far as to say he believed neither Abby nor Jessica Watson — the 16-year-old Aussie attempting the same trip — would finish, believing some kind of mechanical failure would stop them. “After all, four-time circum-

**“Who turned on the AC?!” Spread, ‘Arctic Wanderer’ spent the winter of ‘05-06 tied to a dock at Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada. Inset top, the yellow line indicates Ramos’ trip so far; the red is his planned journey through Russia. Inset bottom, motoring down Prins Christian Sund at the bottom of Greenland was a much nicer trip than sailing around Cape Farval.**



PHOTOS GARY RAMOS



## in cape town

navigator Scott Piper of the *J/160 Pipe Dream IX* even said their biggest obstacle was breakage," he noted.

On April 25, his words proved true for Sunderland when it was announced on her blog ([soloround.blogspot.com](http://soloround.blogspot.com)) that she would be pulling into Cape Town, South Africa, to deal with a serious autopilot problem. As her Open 40, *Wild Eyes*, doesn't have a windvane, Abby is dependent on her autopilots to steer the boat. Unfortunately, her main unit died some time ago and the back-up has been temperamental, at best. "It would be foolish and irresponsible for me to keep going with my equipment not working well," her

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## arctic wanderer — cont'd

done so singlehanded.

If he's anxious about the trip, it's not because he's afraid to be alone in one of the most remote and inhospitable regions on earth, but because he's still waiting to receive permission from Russian authorities to pass through their waters.

Having worked as a merchant mariner most of his adult life, Ramos is not some wide-eyed dreamer who's way out of his depth (as some previous Arctic wanderers have been). In 1990, he singlehanded his first boat, a vintage 30-ft ketch, from Bodega Bay to Alaska. Shortly afterward he hatched the idea to sail 'round the pole. He bought this boat — which is double-welded with 5/32-inch steel — in 2000 and, when he got laid off in '04, he saw it as the perfect excuse to put his polar plans into action. *Arctic Wanderer* set off from Seward, Alaska in May '05, and has been working her way through the far north ever since.

One memorable moment came in the middle of a dark, nasty night near Hershall Island. With three reefs in the main, Ramos was below when *Arctic Wanderer* plowed right into an ice floe that hadn't shown up on radar. Despite some damage, he took note of the lessons learned and carried on. Another standout memory came in '08 while traveling near Devon Island in the northernmost latitudes he's seen so far. While below fiddling with his stove, he heard an unusual splashing sound at the stern. Turned out it was a huge polar bear who was determined to climb aboard. We'll be keeping tabs on Ramos during the coming months, so we can give you reports on his latest adventures.

— andy



COURTESY ARCTIC WANDERER

Gary Ramos took this self-portrait after a two-mile walk at -10°F.



## bridal boatyard blues

Hawaii is the land of fantasy, and could you think of anything more fantastic than a Japanese wedding outfit running the old Ala Wai Marine Boatyard — which has been closed for two years — and the old Texaco Fuel Dock, both of which are at the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor in Honolulu? Reg White, who has been living at the Ala Wai for more than 20 years, swears that's what is slated to happen when Japanese company, Honey Bee, and the state finally come to terms on the lease they've been trying to hammer out for 30 months. If all goes according to plan, Honey Bee would run the old boatyard to a maximum of five boats at a time, about half the yard's capacity. On the other half of the property, they would conduct weddings in a new chapel supported by various on-site wedding-related shops. What woman could resist getting married next to the groom's hauled-out boat? Perhaps in Tyvek suits covered in ground fiberglass? It's bizarre, but no more bizarre than the old fuel dock becoming the site of another Honey Bee wedding chapel — while still pumping fuel for marina tenants.

The other big news in Honolulu is that there are two bills — HB2582 and HB2741 — which, if they pass, would dramatically increase the cost of living aboard at the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor and at Ke'ehi Harbor. Bruce Lenheit is one of those who would be dramatically affected. In a widely distributed letter, he says he currently pays \$607 a month for his mooring fees and liveaboard permit, plus \$300 a year for parking. If either bill is passed, he would soon have to pay \$1,399.20 a month, an increase of 130%. By 2014, he would have to pay \$2,020.80 per month, or an increase of 231% over the current rate.

Noting that he's previously lived aboard in California, Mexico and Hawaii, he said he paid \$100 extra to live aboard at a first-class ma-

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## ala wai — cont'd

rina in California. And, when he lived aboard at first class marinas in Mexico and New Zealand, he paid only the slip fee, with nothing extra for living aboard.

One assumes that the dramatic increase in liveaboard fees at the state-owned and -run Ala Wai is to keep the marina maintained. But according to Reg White, who has lived aboard in the Ala Wai for more than 20 years, that's not the case at all. He told *Latitude* that, according to audited reports, the Ala Wai, as poorly maintained and run as it's been, had an operating surplus of about \$1.5 million a year in the early and mid '00s. Despite this, hundreds of slips in the Ala Wai and at Ke'ehi were allowed to fall into such disrepair that they had to be condemned! The 'profits' from the Ala Wai had been grabbed by the state and used for other purposes, such as creating hiking trails. White says that in '09, according to the state's unaudited figures, the Ala Wai had an operating surplus of \$990,000 — and that was with 218 berths being out of commission in the middle of June. Had those berths been usable — and there has been a long list of people waiting to get slips there for years — they would have added another \$400,000 or so to the surplus.

Nobody asked us, of course, but even given the generally poor condition of much of the Ala Wai, and its utterly and inexplicably charmless surroundings, we think its unique location alone makes the slips — not including liveaboard rights — worth well in excess of \$6/ft/month. While we know our readers in Hawaii will scream bloody murder, we think \$10/ft/month sounds about right. Plus maybe \$500 more a month for the first liveaboard. So if you live aboard a 55-footer, it's going to cost you \$1,000 a month. That would mean the Ala Wai would show a surplus of close to \$2.5 million, which could be used to bring many of the berths up to standard, and plant some trees and other vegetation, in general getting the Ala Wai's sorry-ass act together.

There's just one problem. According to White, the Department of Land and Natural Resources says the basic slip fees can't be raised more than 5% per year. And since 85% of the slips can't be used for living aboard, they are trying to raise a similar amount of money by really sticking it to the liveaboards, who represent, by law, a paltry 15% of the marina tenants.

We've said it for 25 years: it's in the best interest of mariners, the citizens of Hawaii, and the State of Hawaii itself, if the state got out of the marina business, which they've been bungling for decades.

— richard

## ha-ha online registration to begin

Seventeen years ago, a loosely organized fleet of 39 sailboats headed south from San Diego in late October, bound for Cabo San Lucas. Little did their crews know at the time that the low-key, 750-mile migration would become a much-anticipated annual tradition, and the second largest cruising rally in the world: the Baja Ha-Ha.

All told, more than 2,000 Ha-Ha boats have made the run to the Cape thus far, with more than 7,000 crew aboard. Tallied together, they've sailed more than 1.5 million miles! Enough to circumnavigate via the tropics 60 times.

With the Ha-Ha 17 starting date — October 25 — less than six months away, the Rally Committee has recently come out of hibernation and has been furiously gearing up for a new onslaught of entries. Online registration will begin Monday, May 3 around noon at [www.baja-haha.com](http://www.baja-haha.com). And as always, those who sign up early will have the best chance of getting a slip when the fleet arrives at Cabo.

But before you get caught up in the sign-up frenzy, let us repeat our annual mantra: If your boat was not built, equipped and maintained for offshore sailing; or if you would not be willing to make the trip on your own, please *do not* sign up. Even though the route

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## abby

blog noted.

Abby has truly achieved an amazing accomplishment, though we still think her parents' allowing her to leave in the first place was "foolish and irresponsible." To our way of thinking, it's as reckless as allowing a 13-year-old to climb Mt. Everest. Ridiculous, you say? Well, apparently in these never-say-no-to-your-child days it's about to happen — Big Bear's Jordan Romero, 13, will make an attempt on that famous peak this month. But considering that more than 3,000 people have climbed Everest in the last 56 years, while only 250 have solo circumnavigated in twice that time, his odds of succeeding are much better than Abby's were. Of course, that's likely cold comfort to her right now.





## — cont'd

Meanwhile, Jessica Watson is slated to finish her circuit later this month aboard her S&S 34 *Ella's Pink Lady*. If she's successful, she'll take the record for youngest around from England's Mike Perham, who was 17 when he wrested the title from Abby's older brother Zac last year. But who knows? With five more Sunderland children at home, Jessica's grasp on the unofficial record might be short-lived.

Back in the Pacific, Alessandro di Benedetto, 39, who is attempting his own non-stop circumnavigation on the smallest boat (a Mini), suffered a dismasting in late March while trying to round Cape Horn. Undeterred, the indefatigable Franco-Italian effected a jury rig and is continuing his attempt.

— ladonna

## ha-ha — cont'd

is off the wind with favorable currents, overnight offshore sailing is serious business. That said, if you *are* ready, we're eager to welcome you to the Ha-Ha 17 fleet, which promises to be a great one. At least a dozen boats currently cruising Mexico have vowed to bash back to San Diego just to be part of the fun again!

On the website you'll find complete info about the event (see "About the Ha-Ha"), as well as a wealth of tips and advice about cruising Mexico (see the "First Timer's Guide"). In a nutshell, the entry fee is still \$350 (or \$300 if your age or boat length is less than 35), which includes parties, all sorts of official Ha-Ha swag, and a mountain of worthwhile discounts from sponsors. We do our best to keep the entire event PG-rated, as we love having lots of kids along; hence, heavy partying is discouraged; the minimum boat length is 27 feet; singlehanded is not allowed; and powerboats are always welcome.

Beginning with the Costume Kickoff Party at the West Marine compound on October 24, the event runs two weeks, with the Awards Ceremony November 6 at Cabo Marina. So what do you say? Is this your year to Ha-Ha?

— andy



**Mermaids love to frolic on the Ha-Ha — how about you?**