

# Latitude 38

VOLUME 440 February 2014

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# A-mazing Sails!

PHOTO PATRICE NELSON



## *Kite\**

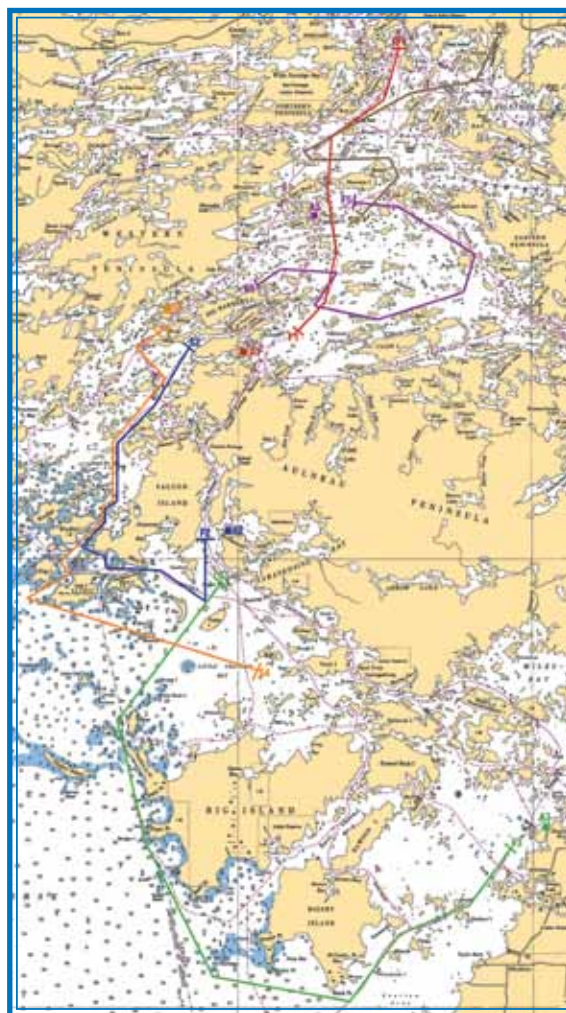
We'll let David Nelson and his Antrim 27, *Kite*, of Ontario, Canada, tell you the story!

"Lake of the Woods International Sailing Association's 48th annual LOWISA Regatta, held this past August, hosted 48 boats and crews for a week of point-to-point racing on Lake of the Woods. The lake spans the U.S.-Canada border east of Lake Superior and is a maze of 65,000 miles of shore-line and 14,600 islands.

Each day we sailed a separate race, approximately 20 miles long. To solve the maze, we needed a really versatile sail inventory, as conditions and headings change very quickly. Our 4-year-old carbon mainsail from Pineapple Sails is still going strong and their asymmetric spinnakers are so versatile, we carried only two: a big A2 and a smaller, flatter A3.

The A3 is a true weapon in light air close reaching. Additionally, we were amazed at how deep we could carry this efficient little sail in the light air. When winds get up over 20 knots we use the A3 as well. We believe that when conditions allow us to sail with the A3...we win!"

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Cover: Rigger Craig Shaw of the Portland-based Columbia 43, *Adios*, as seen from above.

Photo: 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).

## SELECT BROKERAGE



**BENETEAU OCEANIS 49, 2009**  
\$299,000



**BENETEAU FIRST 30, 2011**  
\$128,500

### BENETEAU BROKERAGE

OCEANIS 49	2009	\$299,000
OCEANIS 473	2005	\$249,000
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OCEANIS 393	2006	Pending
OCEANIS 393	2003	\$124,500
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OCEANIS 34	2009	\$145,000
FIRST 30	2011	\$128,500
FIRST 25	2013	\$89,000

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JEANNEAU 45	2007	\$250,000
ISLAND PACKET 380	2000	\$225,000
ISLANDER 36	1973	\$27,500
ISLANDER 36	1972	\$34,995
ERICSON 35	1977	\$29,900
ERICSON 28+	1987	\$27,888

### POWER BROKERAGE

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## BRAND NEW OCEANIS 38 DESIGN: European Yacht of the Year Arrives at Our Docks in February!



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PHOTOS NICOLAS CLARIS



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at our docks



**First 25**



**Barracuda 9**



**Oceanis 41**

*Sense* 43 46 50 55 **FIRST** 20 25 30 35 40 45 Oceanis 31 34 37 38 41 45 48 50 55

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

- **Thursday, February 6:**  
Boat as Business Seminar  
Please call for details.
- **Saturday, February 8:**  
Open Boats  
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
- **Sunday, February 9:**  
VIP Demo Sails (RSVP)
- **Saturday, February 22:**  
Boat as Business Seminar  
Please call for details.

  
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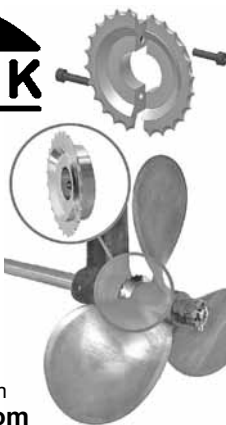
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**INDIVIDUAL ISSUE ORDERS**  Current issue = \$6 ea.

Back Issues = \$7 ea. MONTH/YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

### DISTRIBUTION

We have a marine-oriented business/yacht club in California which will distribute copies of *Latitude 38*. (Please fill out your name and address and mail it to the address below. Distribution will be supplied upon approval.)

Please send me further information for distribution outside California

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*Latitude 38*

"we go where the wind blows"

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# SIGN UP FOR THE 2014 RACING SEASON

Entry Form  
next page!



## Welcome to YRA Racing, the BEST racing value on the bay!

Thank you for participating in the YRA! We offer a choice for racing both on the Bay and on the local ocean!

### SERIES INFORMATION

#### **The YRA Party Circuit**

- Includes the 3 marquee YRA Weekend Regattas plus the new Westpoint Regatta. Weekend regattas are The Great Vallejo Race, the YRA 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Opener, and the YRA Season Closer. The three weekend regattas features 2 days of racing and a party at the host club Saturday night.
- All 5 races are longer, destination style races.
- There are 6 Divisions available for each Regatta: PHRF, Sportboat, One-Design, Double/Singlehanded, Non-Spinnaker & Multihull. Divisions may be split into multiple fleets to ensure competitive racing.

#### **The PHRF, Sport Boat & One-Design Series**

- In the Bay racing for boats with a current NCPHRF rating certificate, Portsmouth Rating or for One-Design classes.
- The series is broken in two separate series, each with 3 race days. Multiple races will be held on each race day.
- PHRF Divisions are determined by grouping similarly rated boats.
- Series Racers are invited to race in the OYRA Crewed Lightship ocean race for an additional \$10.00. Additional OYRA equipment requirements must be met. See [http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean\\_safety.html](http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean_safety.html).
- One-Design starts are available for any fleet that signs up for the Spring or Summer series, or, gets at least 5 boats to sign up for a single race day. If you are not sure if your One-Design fleet is eligible, or would like to sign your fleet up for the series, please contact the YRA office at (415) 771-9500 or [info@yra.org](mailto:info@yra.org).

#### **OYRA (Offshore Yacht Racing Association)**

- In 2014, there are 9 ocean races ranging from 25 to 60+ nautical miles.
- OYRA racers are invited to race in the Great Vallejo Race for only an additional \$10.00!
- Racers will be divided into divisions determined by the OYRA board. Racers can also choose to race in the Short Handed division:

#### **WBRA (Wooden Boat Racing Association)**

- The WBRA participates in the US Sailing Golden Anchor program which makes WBRA racers eligible for a discounted US Sailing Membership. US Sailing memberships through the WBRA Golden Anchor program must be purchased online here: <http://www1.ussailing.org/membership/MPP/Default.aspx?ycid=112274N>
- Bay racing for one of the following 5 fleets:
  - Bird Boats
  - Bear Boats
  - Folkboats
  - IODs
  - Knarrs

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- **YRA Sailing Instructions are available on the YRA website at [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org).** Sailing instructions are normally posted approximately 1 week prior to each race. If you do not have access to the internet and need to have your race instructions mailed to you, please contact the YRA office at (415) 771-9500 or [info@yra.org](mailto:info@yra.org)
- Entries for a series, or individual regatta, must be received by 5 pm the Monday before the race or a \$35 late fee will be applied. No entries will be accepted after 5 pm the Thursday before a race.
- **A YRA sailing membership and a membership in a YRA member yacht club is required to register a boat for any YRA series.** A YRA membership is required to race in any individual YRA Race, but one time racers do not need to belong to a member club.
- The YRA Offers a discount on all race fees to US Sailing Members. YRA Racers are eligible for a discount on US Sailing Memberships through the Golden Anchor Program. US Sailing Memberships can be purchased online at <http://www1.ussailing.org/membership/MPP/Default.aspx?ycid=101132Z>.
- Sailors entering the OYRA Season, or any individual OYRA Race, must submit complete an online crew & boat registration form through [jibeset.net](http://jibeset.net) before each ocean Race. See [http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean\\_safety.html](http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean_safety.html) for more information. **Please note that to race in an OYRA Race there are rigorous additional safety requirements in effect, including the requirement for a 406 EPIRB or 406 PLB.**
- Please fill out your entry form completely, sign, date and return it to the YRA office along with your payment. If you need additional assistance completing this form, please contact the YRA office.
- You can save time and postage by signing up online! Visit [www.yra.org](http://www.yra.org) for more information!



# Yacht Racing Association of San Francisco Bay – 2014 Entry Form

1070 Marina Vaillage Pkwy., Suite 202-G  
Alameda, CA 94501  
Phone: 415.771.9500  
Fax: 415.276.2378  
email: info@yra.org

Name: _____	Boat Name: _____	Sail Number: _____
Street: _____	Boat Model: _____	
City, State, Zip: _____	Manufacturer: _____	Yr Built: _____
Evening Phone: _____ Daytime Phone: _____	Designer: _____	Yr. Designed: _____
Email Address: _____	U.S. Sailing #: _____	YRA Member #: _____
Yacht Club Affiliation: _____	Marina: _____	Berth/Slip #: _____

<b>Membership Fees:</b>	YRA Membership:	<b>Required for YRA Racing</b>	\$50	\$ _____
<b>NCPHRF Fees:</b>	Renewal of 2013 Certificate:		\$30 for YRA Members/\$40 for NON-YRA Members	\$ _____
	New Certificate/Renewal of 2012 or prior Cert.:		\$45 for YRA Members/\$55 for NON YRA Members	\$ _____

<b>Season Racing Fees:</b>	<b>US Sailing Members</b>	<b>Non US Sailing Members</b>	<b>Fleet: (PHRF, One-Design, etc.)</b>	
PC Series	\$180	\$195	_____	\$ _____
PHRF, Sport Boat and One-Design Spring Series	\$90	\$105	_____	\$ _____
PHRF, Sport Boat and One-Design Summer Series	\$90	\$105	_____	\$ _____
Offshore Yacht Racing Association (OYRA) Full Season *	\$195	\$210	_____	\$ _____
Wooden Boat Racing Association (WBRA) Season	\$155	\$170	_____	\$ _____

<b>Single Race Fees:</b>	<b>US Sailing Members</b>	<b>Non US Sailing Members</b>	<b>Fleet: (PHRF/One-Design, etc.)</b>	
PHRF Series racers entering the Lightship Ocean Race *	\$10	\$15	_____	\$ _____
OYRA season racers entering Vallejo	\$10	\$15	_____	\$ _____
Vallejo Race Only	\$75	\$80	_____	\$ _____
2nd Half Opener Only	\$75	\$80	_____	\$ _____
Season Closer Only	\$75	\$80	_____	\$ _____
All other YRA Races (write in race name):	\$55	\$60	_____	\$ _____

**Late Fee:** **No entries are accepted after 5pm the Wednesday before the race**  
Any entry Rec'd after 5pm the Mon before the race \$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Participants in an ocean race or ocean series must complete an online boat crew registration form through Jibeset.net. See [http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean\\_safety.html](http://www.yra.org/OYRA/ocean_safety.html) for add'l info safety requirements** **TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

In consideration of being admitted to sailing membership in the Yacht Racing Association of San Francisco Bay (YRA), I agree to abide by "The Racing Rules of Sailing" and the Sailing Instructions of the YRA and the regatta sponsors. I warrant that I will maintain compliance with the YRA Minimum Equipment requirements. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I hereby waive any rights I may have to sue the YRA with respect to personal injury or property damage suffered by myself or my crew as a result of our participation in the YRA and hereby release the YRA and it's race organizers from any liability for such injury or damage.. I further warrant that I have not relied upon any of the above entities or individuals in preparing my yacht for racing.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to YRA. To pay by MasterCard or Visa please provide card info below, including billing street address and zip code

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CW # \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Holder's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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C.C.	Check Number _____	Amount PD _____	DATE Received in office _____







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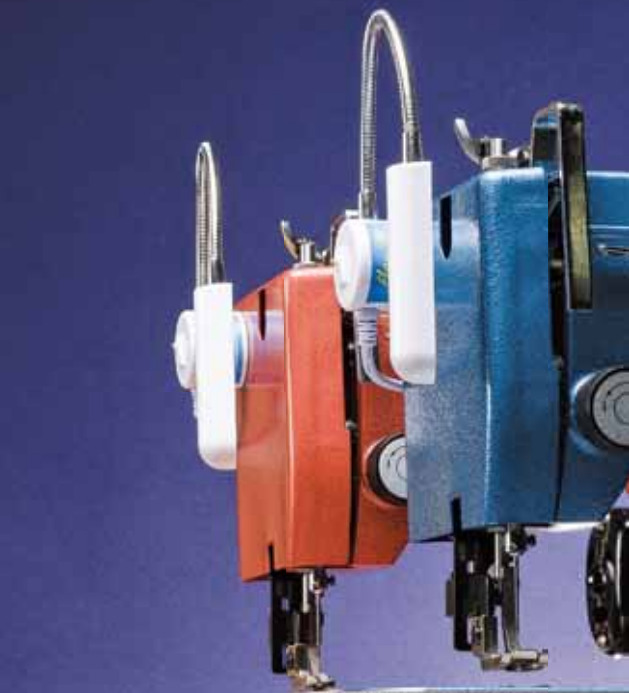
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## CALENDAR

### Non-Race

**Jan. 31-Feb. 1** — Seattle Boat Show, Indoors + Afloat at CenturyLink Field and South Lake Union. The largest boat show on the West Coast. Info, [www.seattleboatshow.com](http://www.seattleboatshow.com).

**Jan. 31-Feb. 3** — Tall ships *Lady Washington* and *Hawaiian Chieftain* California schedule includes 1/31-2/3: Ventura; 2/7-11: Morro Bay; 2/15-19: San Francisco; 2/21-24: Oakland; 2/26-3/2: Antioch; 3/4-12: Sausalito; 3/14-30: Redwood City; and back in SF 4/1-6. Info and tickets, (800) 200-5239 or [www.historicalseaport.org](http://www.historicalseaport.org).

**Feb. 1** — 25th Annual Women's Sailing Convention at Bahia Corinthian YC in Corona del Mar. \$185. Info, go to [www.womenssailingconvention.com](http://www.womenssailingconvention.com).

**Feb. 2** — Open House/Introductory Sails at Cal Sailing Club in Berkeley, 1-4 p.m. Info, [www.cal-sailing.org](http://www.cal-sailing.org).

**Feb. 2-23** — Veterans Go Sailing, every Sunday, 10 a.m., followed by Sunday Sail, noon, at Pier 40 in SF courtesy of BAADS. Free. Info, (415) 281-0212 or [www.baads.org](http://www.baads.org).

**Feb. 3, 10, 24** — San Diego's South Bay Sea Scouts meet at Chula Vista Marina on Mondays at 6 p.m. Sea Scouts is a program of the Boy Scouts of America for guys and gals ages 13-20. Info, Nate, (717) 654-3797 or [orn8kraft@gmail.com](mailto:orn8kraft@gmail.com).

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

**Feb. 6-9** — Progressive Los Angeles Boat Show, L.A. Convention Center & Pier 44, MDR. Info, [www.laboatshow.com](http://www.laboatshow.com).

**Feb. 8** — US Sailing Race Management Seminar at Encinal YC, all day. \$50. Info, [encinalseminar@gmail.com](mailto:encinalseminar@gmail.com) or sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/7wbko59>.

**Feb. 8** — Auction of remaining vessels at Nelson's Marine in Alameda, 1 p.m. Previews 2/6-8. Postponed from 1/11. Info, [www.michaans.com](http://www.michaans.com).

**Feb. 9** — Sausalito Herring Festival, Gabrielson Park, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., rain or shine. Info, [www.cassgidley.org](http://www.cassgidley.org).

**Feb. 9** — North U. 'Boatspeed!' seminar at Del Rey YC in MDR, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. \$85-115. Info, [www.northu.com](http://www.northu.com).

**Feb. 11-May 6** — Sailing Skills and Seamanship class from the USCG Auxiliary at USCG Station Golden Gate, Sausalito. Tuesday evenings, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$50. Info, Sean Harvey, [latitude38@thoughtsfromthetop.com](mailto:latitude38@thoughtsfromthetop.com).

**Feb. 12** — Singlehanded TransPac race seminar #5: 'The Return Trip' at Oakland YC, 7:30 p.m. All seminars are free and open to the public. Info, [www.sfbaysss.org](http://www.sfbaysss.org).

**Feb. 13** — Red Dress Racing: Dream Big! presentation by RDR founder Moe Roddy at Corinthian YC, 6:30 p.m. Free. RSVP at [www.cyc.org](http://www.cyc.org) or (415) 435-4771.

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

**Feb. 13** — Club Nautique's Winter Seminar Series continues with 'Mobile Apps for Mariners' by Joe Brandt in Alameda, 6:30-8 p.m. Other seminars run at the same time at alternating locations (A=Alameda, S=Sausalito). \$10 members/\$15 non-members. 2/27: Tour the Bay Model, (6 p.m., S); 3/13: 'Coastal Tides Explained' by Kame Richards (A); 3/27: 'Cruising with Club Nautique's Captain & Admiral' by Don & Judy (S). (510) 865-4700 or [www.clubnautique.net](http://www.clubnautique.net).

**Feb. 13-14, 17-18** — Basic Navigation/Day Skipper, SFYC, 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$250. Prerequisites are Sea Survival course (see below) and VHF course. Info, (415) 435-9133 or go to [www.sfyc.org](http://www.sfyc.org).

**Feb. 14** — Take your sweetheart for a Friday night sail



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Catalina 250, 2005.....	<b>REDUCED!</b> 19,900

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Bristol 35.5, 1985.....	54,900
Beneteau 36.7, 2010.....	133,500
Ericson 32, 1970.....	<b>REDUCED!</b> 26,900

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Ranger 27 Tug, 2014.....	159,937
Ranger 25SC Tug, 2014.....	129,937

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Ranger 29 Tug, 2011, fully loaded.....	239,900
Ranger 29 Tug, 2011.....	224,000
Ranger 25 Tug, 2010.....	105,000
Ranger 25 Tug, 2009, includes trailer.....	105,000
Ranger 21 Tug, 2009.....	<b>REDUCED!</b> 39,000
Ranger 21 Tug, 2008.....	39,000

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Stephens 70 Classic Motor Yacht, 1966.....	1,100,000
Ocean Alexander 44, 1991.....	<b>REDUCED!</b> 139,000



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CANADIAN SAILCRAFT 40, '87 \$69,900



HUNTER 380, '01 \$99,900



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## CALENDAR

under the full moon on Valentine's Day.

**Feb. 15-16** — ISAF Sea Survival course #1, SFYC, 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., \$240. Internationally recognized certification for offshore racers. Info, (415) 435-9133, [www.sfyf.org](http://www.sfyf.org).

**Feb. 17** — President's Day.

**Feb. 19-20** — Weather for Mariners seminar, SFYC, 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$120. Info, (415) 435-9133, [www.sfyf.org](http://www.sfyf.org).

**Feb. 22** — North U. Boat Speed and Racing Trim seminar with Andrew Kerr at Berkeley YC, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. \$60-\$125 includes lunch. Repeated 2/23 at Seattle YC. Info, Francine, (203) 245-0727 or [www.northu.com](http://www.northu.com).

**Feb. 22-23** — ISAF Sea Survival course #2, SFYC, 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., \$240. Info, (415) 435-9133, [www.sfyf.org](http://www.sfyf.org).

**Feb. 26, 28** — Stretching at Sea workshop by Pat Henry at La Cruz Marina in Banderas Bay, Mexico. Free intro class 2/25; repeats 3/12, 14 (free class 3/11). \$95 per person/\$145 per couple includes DVD. Two-day stretching program for cruisers. Info, [www.pat-henry.com/organicstretching](http://www.pat-henry.com/organicstretching).

**Mar. 1** — Pacific Puddle Jump Send-off Party, Balboa YC, Panama, 12-4 p.m. Repeated 3/7 at Vallarta YC in Paradise Village, Mexico, 3-6 p.m. Info, [www.pacificpuddlejumps.com](http://www.pacificpuddlejumps.com).

**Mar. 1** — Sail a Small Boat Day at Richmond YC. 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Free boat rides; free hot dog lunch. Info, Greg Pfeiffer, (707) 548-8281, [www.richmondyc.org](http://www.richmondyc.org).

**Mar. 1** — North Sails Sausalito Open House, 11 a.m. Meet the team; food & drinks. Info, (415) 339-3000.

**Mar. 5-9** — San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival. Info, [www.oceanfilmfest.org](http://www.oceanfilmfest.org).

**Mar. 9** — Spring forward: Daylight Saving Time begins!

**Mar. 13** — In-the-water liferaft training class by Sal's Inflatable Services, 3:30-5 p.m. at Golden Gate YC, \$29 if you reserve by 3/5, \$39 after. Reservations & info, (510) 522-1824.

**Mar. 13** — Latitude 38's Spring Crew List Party at Golden Gate YC, 6-9 p.m. \$5 for ages 25 and under (with ID)! \$7 for the rest of us (cash only please). Info, [www.latitude38.com](http://www.latitude38.com).

**Mar. 15** — Laserpalooza III at Alameda Community Sailing Center, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Laser demo rides, racing clinic, rigging and boat repair demos, raffle and BBQ lunch. Free. Info, Ryan, (510) 421-2914 or Nick, (415) 601-7483.

**Mar. 15-Apr. 12** — Cruisers Rally to El Salvador in Bahia del Sol. \$66. Info, [www.elsalvadorrally.com](http://www.elsalvadorrally.com).

**Mar. 16** — Pacific Offshore Academy prep seminar #4 at Richmond YC, 8 a.m. Perfect for anyone planning to sail to Hawaii, especially in the Pacific Cup. Free for Pac Cup skippers, \$18 for others. Pre-registration strongly advised! Info, [www.pacificcup.org](http://www.pacificcup.org).

**Apr. 10-13** — Strictly Sail Pacific at Jack London Square. Info, [www.strictlysailpacific.com](http://www.strictlysailpacific.com).

### Racing

**Feb. 1** — Double Up and Back Race. CPYC, Tom Fedyna, [regatta@cpyc.com](mailto:regatta@cpyc.com) or [www.cpyc.com](http://www.cpyc.com).

**Feb. 1** — Singlehanded/Doublehanded Series #1. SeqYC, [www.sequoiayc.org](http://www.sequoiayc.org).

**Feb. 8** — Perry Cup Series. MPYC, Dick Clark, (831) 373-8956, [www.mpyc.org](http://www.mpyc.org).

**Feb. 8-9** — North 1-2 Coed and Bryson Women's Inter-conference hosted by Stanford. [www.pccscracing.org](http://www.pccscracing.org).

**Feb. 8, Feb. 22, Mar. 8** — Spring Series on Folsom Lake, water level permitting. FLYC, [www.flyc.org](http://www.flyc.org).

**Feb. 8, Mar. 8** — Santana 22 Team Racing. SCYC, [www.scyf.org](http://www.scyf.org).

**Feb. 15-16** — BAYS Winter Optis. EYC, [www.encinal.org](http://www.encinal.org).

**Feb. 16** — Tune-Up Race. MPYC, [www.mpyc.org](http://www.mpyc.org).

**Feb. 22-23** — PCISA #4 & 5/Golden Bear Regatta for high

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## CALENDAR

school teams, Treasure Island. Info, [www.pcisa.hssailing.org](http://www.pcisa.hssailing.org).

**Feb. 22-23** — North 3-4 Coed Interconference; women's & JV available. Location TBA. Info, [www.pccscracing.org](http://www.pccscracing.org).

**Feb. 23** — Sadie Hawkins Race. Full crew, Sadie drives. Kicks off *Latitude's* unofficial Women's Circuit. [www.iyc.org](http://www.iyc.org).

**Feb. 28-Mar. 2** — Team Race 101. Friday night classroom, Saturday on the water, Sunday Scrimmage. [www.stfyc.org](http://www.stfyc.org).

**Mar. 1** — John Pitcher Memorial Race. CPYC, Tom Fedyna, [regatta@cpyc.com](mailto:regatta@cpyc.com) or [www.cpyc.com](http://www.cpyc.com).

**Mar. 1** — Long Distance #1. SSC, [www.stocktonsc.org](http://www.stocktonsc.org).

**Mar. 1-2** — Appleton High School Regatta on Richardson Bay. Info, SFYC Youth Office, (415) 435-9525, [www.sfyyc.org](http://www.sfyyc.org).

**Mar. 1-2** — Jeremy McIntyre Team Race, Stanford & Cal Team Race at UC Berkeley. Info, [www.pccscracing.org](http://www.pccscracing.org).

**Mar. 2** — Whales Chase. BBYC, [www.bbyc.org](http://www.bbyc.org).

**Mar. 7-9** — Harbor Cup Keelboat Interconference, hosted by Cal Maritime Academy at Los Angeles YC and sailed in Catalina 37s. Info, [www.pccscracing.org](http://www.pccscracing.org).

**Mar. 8** — Mercury Series #1. EYC, [www.encinal.org](http://www.encinal.org).

**Mar. 8** — Londerville Cup. HMYC, [www.hmbyc.org](http://www.hmbyc.org).

**Mar. 8-9** — Big Daddy Regatta, with drop-mark racing on Saturday and a pursuit race around Angel Island and Alcatraz in either direction on Sunday. RYC, [www.richmondyc.org](http://www.richmondyc.org).

**Mar. 8-9** — Spring Dinghy. StFYC, [www.stfyc.org](http://www.stfyc.org).

**Mar. 9** — Spring 1 & 2 PHRF. MPYC, [www.mpyc.org](http://www.mpyc.org).

**Mar. 11-15** — Banderas Bay Regatta. Friendly racing for cruisers hosted by Vallarta YC and Paradise Village Marina in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico. Info, [www.banderasbayregatta.com](http://www.banderasbayregatta.com).

**Mar. 14** — Guadalupe Island Race, a 582-mile biennial single- or doublehanded race from Marina del Rey to Baja's Guadalupe Island and back. Info, [www.pssala.com](http://www.pssala.com).

**Mar. 15-16** — Spring Keel and One Design Regatta. StFYC, [www.stfyc.org](http://www.stfyc.org).

**Mar. 22** — 35th Annual Doublehanded Farallones. BAMA, [www.sfbama.org](http://www.sfbama.org).

### Midwinter Regattas

**AQUATIC CENTER WINTER RACING CLUB** — All small boat sailors welcome every Sunday through 3/16 to sail six races in Capri 14.2s. At Mountain View's Shoreline Lake, 2-4 p.m. Info, [www.ShorelineLake.com](http://www.ShorelineLake.com).

**BENICIA YC** — Frostbite Series: 2/8, 3/8. Info, (707) 746-6600 or [www.benicia yachtclub.com](http://www.benicia yachtclub.com).

**BAY VIEW BC** — Midwinter Madness: 2/8, 3/8. Info, (408) 210-0517 or [www.bayviewboatclub.org](http://www.bayviewboatclub.org).

**BERKELEY YC** — Midwinters: 2/8-9; Champions Race: 2/23. Bobbi, (925) 939-9885 or [www.berkeleyyc.com](http://www.berkeleyyc.com).

**BERKELEY YC** — Chowder Races: Sundays through March except 2/9. Patrick, (415) 328-2819 or [www.berkeleyyc.com](http://www.berkeleyyc.com).

**CAL SAILING CLUB** — Year-round Sunday morning dinghy races, intraclub only, typically in Laser Bahias and JY15s. Info, [www.cal-sailing.org](http://www.cal-sailing.org).

**CORINTHIAN YC** — Midwinters: 2/15-16, including 'Rob-gatta' (Rob Moore Memorial Regatta, a fund-raiser for lung cancer research) on 2/15. Kim, [racing@cyc.org](mailto:racing@cyc.org) or [www.cyc.org](http://www.cyc.org).

**ELKHORN YC** — Frostbite Series: 2/8, 2/22, 3/8, 3/22, 4/5. Info, (831) 724-3875 or [www.elkhornyc.com](http://www.elkhornyc.com).

**ENCINAL YC** — Jack Frost Series: 2/15, 3/15. Info, [rearcommandore@encinal.org](mailto:rearcommandore@encinal.org).

**GOLDEN GATE YC** — Manuel Fagundes Seaweed Soup Series: 2/1, 3/1. Info, (916) 215-4566 or [www.ggyc.com](http://www.ggyc.com).

**LAKE MERRITT SC** — Robinson Memorial Series: 2/8, 3/9. Mark, (925) 245-0287.

**ISLAND YC** — Estuary Midwinters: 2/9, 3/9. John, (510) 521-2980 or [iycracing@yahoo.com](mailto:iycracing@yahoo.com).





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# CALENDAR

**OAKLAND YC** — Sunday Brunch Series: 2/2, 2/16, 3/2. Jim, [urrailmeat@yahoo.com](mailto:urrailmeat@yahoo.com) or [www.oaklandyachtclub.net](http://www.oaklandyachtclub.net).

**REGATTAPRO** — Winter One Design: 2/8. Jeff, (415) 595-8364 or [www.regattapro.com](http://www.regattapro.com).

**RICHMOND YC** — Small Boat Midwinters: 2/2, 3/2. Opti Midwinters: 2/1, 3/1. Info, [www.richmondyc.org](http://www.richmondyc.org). Laser Sundays: 2/9, 2/16, 2/23, 3/16, 3/23. Info, <http://rycsunday.myfleet.org>.

**SANTA CRUZ YC** — Midwinters: 2/15, 3/15. Info, (831) 425-0690 or [www.scyc.org](http://www.scyc.org).

**SANTA ROSA SC** — Spring Lake Winter Series: 2/15. Info, [www.santarosasailingclub.org](http://www.santarosasailingclub.org).

**SAUSALITO YC** — Sunday Midwinters: 2/2, 3/2. Dave Borton, (415) 302-7084 or [www.sausalitoyachtclub.org](http://www.sausalitoyachtclub.org).

**SEQUOIA YC** — Winter Series: 2/8, 3/15. Redwood Cup: 2/22, 3/29. Info, [www.sequoiayc.org](http://www.sequoiayc.org).

**SOUTH BEACH YC** — Island Fever Midwinters: 2/15, 3/15. Info, [www.southbeachyc.org](http://www.southbeachyc.org).

**TIBURON YC** — Midwinters, revised schedule: 2/8, 3/8, 3/29. Rob, [race@tyc.org](mailto:race@tyc.org), [www.tyc.org](http://www.tyc.org).

**VALLEJO YC** — Tiny Robbins Midwinters: 2/22, 3/22. Info, [www.vyc.org](http://www.vyc.org) or (707) 643-1254.

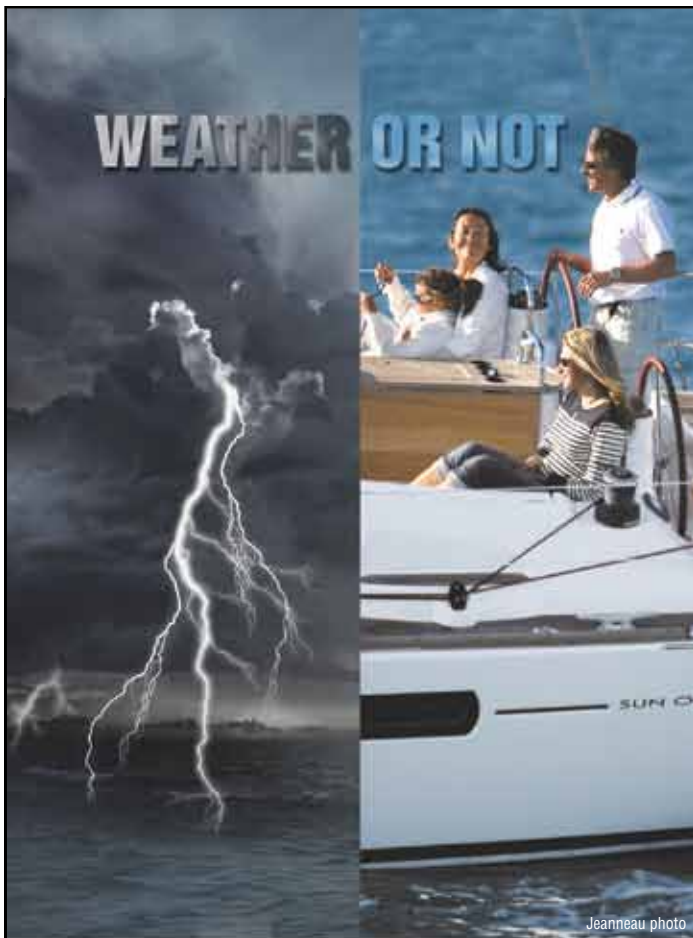
Please send your calendar items by the 10th of the month to [calendar@latitude38.com](mailto:calendar@latitude38.com). If you're totally old-school, mail them to *Latitude 38* (Attn: Calendar), 15 Locust Avenue, Mill Valley, CA, 94941 or fax them to us at (415) 383-5816. But please, no phone-ins! Calendar 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.

## February Weekend Tides

date/day	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW	time/ht. HIGH	time/ht. LOW
2/01 Sat	0044/5.9	0601/1.5	1215/6.5	1831/-0.7
2/02 Sun	0125/6.0	0656/1.4	1309/6.0	1915/-0.2
2/08 Sat	0618/5.7	1332/0.6	2035/4.3	
	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
2/09 Sun	0103/2.8	0715/5.7	1425/0.4	2129/4.5
	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>LOW</b>
2/15 Sat	0010/5.2	0525/2.0	1128/5.7	1746/0.3
2/16 Sun	0036/5.3	0600/1.8	1206/5.5	1815/0.5
2/17 Mon	0103/5.4	0637/1.6	1246/5.2	1845/0.8
2/22 Sat	0420/5.7	1111/0.7	1819/3.8	2245/2.7
2/23 Sun	0522/5.8	1221/0.3	1941/4.1	

## February Weekend Currents

date/day	slack	max	slack	max
2/01 Sat	0223	0454/3.8E	0816	1108/3.8F
	1407	1709/5.2E	2054	2352/4.3F
2/02 Sun	0306	0542/3.9E	0912	1202/3.6F
	1503	1758/4.6E	2140	
2/08 Sat	0226	0524/2.2F	0811	1129/3.5E
	1537	1850/2.8F	2142	
2/09 Sun		0026/1.6E	0326	0625/2.3F
	0905	1230/3.7E	1629	1942/3.1F
	2236			
2/15 Sat	0144	0409/3.0E	0737	1025/2.9F
	1323	1622/4.2E	2009	2301/3.3F
2/16 Sun	0215	0446/3.2E	0813	1103/2.9F
	1402	1700/4.0E	2038	2333/3.2F
2/17 Mon	0246	0525/3.4E	0852	1144/2.8F
	1443	1740/3.7E	2107	
2/22 Sat	0003	0318/2.2F	0613	0933/3.8E
	1340	1631/2.5F	1957	2207/1.9E
2/23 Sun	0118	0422/2.2F	0717	1035/4.0E
	1446	1744/2.9F	2105	2313/2.0E



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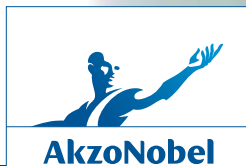




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## LETTERS

### WORKING ON BRINGING THE DREAM TO REALITY

Garth Wilcox, my husband, has been possessed by the dream of building his own boat since he was a young boy. It started when he was four years old and his parents took him sailing on their 26-ft Thunderbird, which they raced out of Redwood City. For vacations, the Wilcox family cruised up the Delta with other members of the Sequoia YC.

From the time he was a small boy, Garth knew that his parents' dream was to sail around the world. He adopted that dream as his own. In 1973, at age 13, Garth and his family set off on their proposed circumnavigation. This was, of course, long before the advent of GPS or even SatNav, and meant that if it was cloudy, it would be impossible to get a sun sight and really know where you were.

At age 14, Garth found himself and his family, as a result of being unable to get sun sights for several days, shipwrecked on a reef in Fiji. They lived Robinson Crusoe-style until help arrived to take them to the capital of Suva.

Initially the family assumed that the boat — with a hole in her side the size of a Volkswagen, and being ground on the reef more with each passing day — couldn't be salvaged. But the more they thought about it, the more confident they became they could save her. After pulling her off the reef, Garth's parents, with assistance from him, spent nine months rebuilding the boat in the tropical heat and humidity. They wanted to see their dream come true that badly.

The Wilcoxes did complete their circumnavigation, despite having to endure numerous other significant challenges that also almost ended their voyage. In 1977, months overdue, they sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge. Bewildered by the media fanfare, the then-18-year-old Garth looked forward to his post-voyage life, particularly going to school. Garth's home schooling during the circumnavigation left him a few credits short of a high school degree. The California school system, in its infinite bureaucratic wisdom, insisted that Garth's four years of sailing, rowing, hauling water and other strenuous physical exercise, wasn't equivalent to the four years of gym he'd missed in high school.

The years of sailing and rebuilding the family boat gave Garth an excellent real-world and practical education, and it changed him forever. Because he was 18, he was allowed to attend Foothill Community College upon his return to make up the high school credits he lacked. Armed with a GED and a stellar SAT score, he then transferred to MIT, intent on

studying naval architecture at one of the few institutions that offered such a program.

Garth's voyaging experience convinced him he could design a boat that could sail not only better than the tank on which his family had circled the world, but better than most of the other boats out voyaging, too.

He dove into his studies and downplayed his unusual past. Until, that is, he met and married a woman who shared his dream of exploring the world under sail. That would be me.

Together, we raced Thunderbirds and saved our money with the idea of voyaging. In 2000, we set out for what we thought might be a brief cruise aboard a rather modest 31-ft custom design by Tom Wylie. Seven years later, after 34,000 miles of cruising in the Pacific, Garth had to beg me to sail



COURTESY VELELLA

Garth and Wendy's 31-ft custom Wylie 'Vellela' took them around the Pacific.



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## LETTERS

back home to the Pacific Northwest.

One of the main reasons he wanted to return home was that he didn't want to end up looking like Quasimodo from having to stand or sit stooped over in a boat with inadequate headroom. An equally big reason was that he wanted to build the dream boat he'd been designing in his head for years. So what might have started out in his mind as a 'research trip' to refine the criteria for his boat design turned into its own epic voyage. But that's another story.

After years of Garth's mentally refining his dream boat and considering all the options that might make her perform better, he became impatient to turn his nautical dream into reality. An often-frustrating search to find the right place to build the boat finally ended with the perfect spot: a conveniently located farm house that featured a workshop in the backyard that was just big enough to build a 38-ft boat inside.

And so we've begun. The dream is already looking like more than just a pretty picture on a piece of paper, a multi-colored



WENDY HINMAN

**Garth's design is taking shape, and soon the couple will be voyaging again.**

AutoCAD model, or a stack of wood. It's beginning to resemble a boat.

Inspired by the T-bird's simple plywood boat-building method, Garth designed a boat that would be easy to build with

plywood sheets and a soft chine, but would have a lifting keel and an unstayed rig. She'd be a simple 38-footer with which we plan to explore the canals of Patagonia and the canals of Europe.

Yes, we've been around the water long enough to know that such a dream isn't very rational. But to an audience of sailors, who are somewhat irrational by their very nature, I think you'll understand. There comes a moment in life when we must not only dream, but follow it wherever it might lead.

Wendy Hinman  
Bainbridge, WA

*Readers — You can read about Garth and Wendy's 34,000-mile, seven-year adventure aboard Velella, which started with the 2000 Baja Ha-Ha, in Tightwads on the Loose, a Seven Year Pacific Odyssey. See [www.wendyhinman.com](http://www.wendyhinman.com).*

*But from home schooling almost directly to MIT? Pretty impressive.*

### ↑↓ SOMALI PIRACY ON THE DECLINE

Did *Latitude* see the report from the US Office of Naval Intelligence saying there were zero hijackings of commercial vessels by Somali pirates last year? The peak for hijackings was in 2009, when 52 ships were hijacked. It's been declining every year since. I wonder how many private yachts were hijacked last year.

Tom Van Dyke  
En Pointe, Searunner 31  
San Francisco

*Tom — We don't believe any private yachts were hijacked in the Indian Ocean last year, because if any had been, the news would have quickly gotten around the world. Besides, we're not sure any yachties are willing to risk those waters yet. While no ships were successfully hijacked there in 2013, nine vessels were still attacked, four in the last two months of the year.*

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## LETTERS

Experts suggest there are three reasons for the sharp decline in piracy: 1) An increased presence of international navies in and around the Indian Ocean; 2) Kenyan military intervention against al-Shabab strongholds in Somalia; and 3) the vigilance among vessel owners, who have rerouted and fortified ships to combat piracy threats.

Ships transiting the west coast of Africa were less fortunate in 2013. Pirates fired on 31 vessels in the Gulf of Guinea and seized nine.

### ↑↓ **COUNT US IN FOR THE SO-CAL TA-TA 2014**

We had so much fun in the 2012 Ta-Ta that we absolutely gotta do it again this year. Count us in!

Bill & Kathryn Gaffaney  
Wayward Wind, Catalina 42  
Marina del Rey

Bill and Kathryn — For readers who may not remember, the Ta-Ta, aka Reggae 'pon da Ocean, started with a party



LATITUDE / RICHARD

### ↑↓ **Rasta women wave to a boat starting at Santa Barbara.**

at Santa Barbara on a Sunday night, two nights at Santa Cruz Island, a night at Paradise Park, a night at King Harbor, and a wrap-up party at Two Harbors on Saturday. We had a great time, and over the next few months will be seeing if we can't coordinate the event with the Santa Barbara Yacht Harbor, the Santa Barbara YC, the King Harbor YC, and Two Harbors. The event will be held in September if there are 30 or more entries. The number of entries would be limited by the amount of space available at King Harbor. We'll keep you posted.

### ↑↓ **CAN'T WAIT TO DO IT AGAIN**

My wife Michele and I were part of the first Ta-Ta in 2012, and had so much fun that we can't wait to do it again. Besides, it was great to get together with old UC Santa Barbara friends while in town before the start. Count us in!



LATITUDE / RICHARD

Cary & Michele Hansen  
Kailani  
Catalina 400 MkII  
Nawiliwili, HI

### ↑↓ **Going for a hike on Santa Cruz Island.**

Cary and Michele — Having attended UCSB in the 1960s, we wonder how many graduates have managed to live at such a place after they graduated. As they used to say, "Life is all downhill once you graduate from UCSB."

### ↑↓ **US TOO, PLEASE**

If Latitude is going to be doing another SoCal Ta-Ta this year, please count us in. We love sailing the Channel Islands and Southern California coast. We sailed a total of 30 days in 2012, including four trips to Catalina, two to Anacapa Island, and one to Santa Cruz Island.

We hope you will allow our Catalina 250 to enter. She mo-



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## LETTERS

tors at about 5.5 knots, and is fairly well equipped for coastal cruising. We have automatic inflatable PFDs with harnesses and tethers, a PLB, a Lifesling, two anchors and rode, a double reefing mainsail, a roller furling jib, a whisker pole,



LATITUDE / RICHARD

### The Ta-Ta logo.

And since we live in Southern California, we'd be happy to help with any logistics.

Don & Linda Murphy  
Serendipity, Catalina 250  
Camarillo

*Don and Linda — We can't imagine why we wouldn't allow you to enter. Stay tuned.*

### ↑↓WE'RE IN

I did the first Ta-Ta in 2012 with my Beneteau 440 *St. Somewhere*, and we had great weather and a hell of a good time. The only way a 2014 Ta-Ta could top it is if nobody has to go to the hospital. Kurt Langford, my crew from 2012, is already inked in as crew, so sign me up!

Patrick McCormick  
*St. Somewhere*  
Beneteau 440  
Alamitos Bay

*Patrick — Doña de Mallorca has had a couple of minor bouts of vertigo since — she never left her cabin during the Little Ensenada Race — but hasn't had any major episodes like the one that struck her in the dining room of the King Harbor YC. It turns out vertigo is far more common than we realized.*

### ↑↓WE DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD BIRDS IN SAN DIEGO

I read that you are seeing if anyone is interested in doing a SoCal Ta-Ta in 2014. You can count *Moonshadow* in. If you can convince a couple of 60-year-olds to Bash all the way up from Mexico, we don't imagine you'll have a problem filling out the rest of your dance card.

I should be back in Marina Riviera Nayarit in La Cruz in another week or so, and I'm really hoping we don't find yellow crime scene tape around *Moonshadow*. Maybe we'll find we lucked out, slipping into the marina just after AGACE's visit, and the authorities are now all off to other marinas. Or better yet, a more sensible solution.

We have a Temporary Import Permit (TIP) and all the other correct documentation. However, *Moonshadow*, the third of four Deerfoot 2-62s built in Finland in 1986, doesn't have a HIN (hull identification number) or any other kind of hull number markings. Our US Coast Guard document accommodates this fact by stating 'None' in the box for hull number. I would be happy to break out our Dremel and engrave '3' in our transom, but somehow don't think that will get us out of the penalty box if we find ourselves there.

Finally, I also read about the Bird Boat named *Swallow*. I really hope somebody steps up to restore her. David Rogers,



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## LETTERS

my uncle, owned and sailed *Swallow* in San Diego from the early 1950s until the late 1970s. Back then you scrounged up an old engine block and some heavy chain and tires, and made your own mooring. That's what my uncle did in front of my grandfather's La Playa Cove waterfront house, and that's where *Swallow* could be found for about 25 years.

I had my first sailing experience aboard *Swallow* on San Diego Bay at age five — and let me tell you, that was a long time ago. I remember that my uncle made us kids wear life jackets that were made of bulky cork covered with canvas. More than once we had to come about to get out of the way of US Navy sea planes landing in the bay next to North Island. It would be nice to know that *Swallow*, the boat that launched a lifetime of passion for sailing for me, is still going strong after all these years.

John & Debbie Rogers  
Moonshadow, Deerfoot 2-62  
San Diego

*John and Debbie — We're sure you're going to Bash north for more than a Ta-Ta, but it would be great to see you two on the*



LATITUDE / RICHARD

*ocean again. One night when you were passing through St. Barth wasn't enough.*

*Your story about your uncle's setting his own mooring at La Playa Cove is indicative of how quickly and dramatically things have changed along the California coast. If you tried something like that today, we*

*imagine it would only be minutes before the harbor police's phone lines were ringing off the hook with complaints.*

*The matter of 338 foreign-owned boats being impounded in Mexico is about as big a story as we have ever covered in Latitude, as it has a tremendous effect on the marine industry both in Mexico and on the West Coast of the United States. Almost the last half of Letters will be devoted to that subject.*

**↑↓ WALLOWING IN THE MIRE**

The entrance to Treasure Island's Clipper Cove has silted in more than ever recently. With winter's lower tides, I've regularly seen boats getting mired in the muck near the



LATITUDE / LADONNA

*Treasure Island Sailing Center. Our boat draws four feet, and at the extreme low tides we try to heel her way over when entering and exiting the cove. But we frequently still get muck on our keel. After asking for tips from one of the TISC instructors, we got this in reply. Keep in mind that his reference is a*

*J/24, so boats with greater draft will have to adjust accordingly.*

*"At low tide, I have been able to enter and exit the cove by staying very close — two to three boat lengths — to the pier that houses the Google barge. I take this all the way down until I am about two lengths from the corner where*

*Hug the Google barge and pier as you enter Clipper Cove for the deepest water.*

# A New Year, a New Look



January is a time for a fresh start, and so it was for a number of owners of new boats for 2014. Bay Marine Boatworks has been busy commissioning and customizing boats to get them ready

for the 2014 season! New boats recently commissioned at Bay Marine Boatworks include 48', 37' and 25' Beneteaus, a Barracuda 9 and a new aluminum work boat.



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## LETTERS

the small red crane has been living near the west end of the Google barge pier. At this point I am two to three boat lengths from the rocks as well. Here I make a left turn and aim for the tip of the ramp. This strategy lets me enter and exit the cove without heeling the boat over, dragging on the bottom, and other bad stuff. I even used this when I went out on New Year's Day. I got back into the cove with -1.5 tide, as I recall. I hope this helps."

Melissa Litwicki  
*Downtown Uproar, J/24*  
San Francisco

*Melissa — It would be nice if the government would use some of the billions of dollars we use to bribe corrupt officials in Iraq and Afghanistan to do a little dredging at Clipper Cove. Until that happens — look for snow in hell — watch those tides.*

### ↑↓ **PRESSING DRAGONFLY INTO SEA MERCY'S SERVICE**

Fourteen years ago we completed a homebuilt Hughes 60 catamaran that we started in Indianapolis and finished in Florida. Her hulls are similar to *Latitude's Profligate*, although we subsequently stretched her five feet. Based out of Florida, we then spent most winters cruising in the Caribbean. We're now starting a big change and new adventure in our lives.

A few years back we had some guests aboard who had started a nonprofit organization called Sea Mercy. The mission of the program is to provide much-needed medical services and supplies to the remote islands of the South Pacific via boats. The more we heard about the program, the more we wanted to become involved, and soon signed up our *Dragonfly* to be one of the first boats in the fleet. Our cat's large platform is perfect to transport a variety of medical skills and supplies to the remote islands. So after we complete an adventurous 8,000-mile trip from Florida to Tonga, we will become a float-ing health clinic.

With such a demanding trip ahead of us, we needed the boat and all systems to be in great shape, and to have adequate spares onboard. So we replaced the engines, purchased a new DC refrigerator and freezer, and installed more solar panels and a back-up autopilot. As you can imagine, the list of spares is pretty long. We also are changing our navigation system, which now will be based on the iPad and Mac, using WiFi to get data from the instruments.

We left Florida on December 18 and, after a boisterous trip, arrived in Belize on the 22nd. By the time you read this, we should have passed through the Canal. We expect to be in Tonga by mid-June. Our crew for the various legs of the trip consists of people willing to donate their time and share of costs of getting *Dragonfly* to Tonga.

As we say goodbye to the Caribbean, we will miss all those wonderful areas we cruised and the friends we made along the way. But we are looking forward to the adventurous journey and putting *Dragonfly* into service helping those in need. For more info on Sea Mercy, visit [www.seamercy.org](http://www.seamercy.org).

Al & Jill Wigginton  
*Dragonfly, Hughes 65*  
Florida

*Readers — Before having Profligate built, we flew to Indianapolis to see the Wiggintons, who had completed about a hull and a half and were offering to build boats for others. We passed. We didn't see them again until about 10 years later when they anchored in front of us in St. Barth. They not only completed the boat, they have covered a lot of ocean miles since then. We wish them a happy voyage.*



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## LETTERS

*By the way, it's too bad they aren't in Tonga right now, as it needs help following being hit by Tropical Cyclone Ian on January 11.*

### ↑↓ **THE FIRST COUPLE OF CRUISING**

I appreciate *Latitude's* use of 'The First Couple of Cruising' to describe the Lin and Larry Pardey, but I believe that even they would defer that title to Eric and Susan Hiscock.

P.S. Great magazine and superb *Lectronics*.

Steve Hersey  
SeaScape, Union 32  
San Diego/San Carlos

*Steve — We're also sure that Lin and Larry would defer to the Hiscocks. On the other hand, Eric passed nearly 30 years ago and Susan nearly 20 years ago, so the description seems a little dated.*

### ↑↓ **CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?**

Having done last year's Ha-Ha, I have a comment on something that mostly didn't work. All boats were required/asked to report in each morning via radio. Although we tried to comply with this safety feature by monitoring the VHF, for the most part we were unsuccessful. The idea was that boats that only had VHF radios could communicate with other boats in the fleet, who would then relay that information to the committee boat. It sounded good, but didn't work very well for us. Between San Diego and Cabo San Lucas, we were able to make contact only two or three times.

Obviously those boats that had SSB radios had no problem staying in touch. But since I had no plans or desire to continue on across the Pacific, there was no way I wanted to drop \$3,000 for a piece of equipment — SSB — that I would have no use for once the Ha-Ha was over. While it was not something that caused any problems or was a cause for worry, I wonder what other 'VHF-only' boats in the fleet thought about this.

Joe Helfand  
Jolin, Nonsuch 30  
Alameda

*Joe — If you were able to reach other Ha-Ha boats only two or three times between San Diego and Cabo, we think there must have been something wrong with your radio, radio antenna or radio technique. Unless you were sailing courses that were wildly out to sea, there is no way you could have been out of range of 124 other boats that were sailing a relatively straight line to the next stop, particularly with the second and third legs being only 240 and 175 miles respectively. Every year there seem to be three to five boats that are unable to make VHF contact with other boats, even if they are just a few miles away.*

*To give you some examples, our roll call records show that 42 VHF-only boats successfully checked in via relay on day three of the long first leg. That's about 2/3 of the VHF-only boats. On day two of leg two, 47 of the VHF-only boats were able to relay their positions. A number of VHF-only boats were unsuccessful because they didn't try to reach anyone, they overslept, their radio didn't work, etc.*

*When we started doing races to Mexico in the early 1980s, there were no roll calls or weather reports between the starts in California and the finishes off Cabo or other ports. There was simply no contact with the outside world, and only by chance with other boats in the races. If we remember correctly, we didn't have daily weather reports or roll calls when we started the Ha-Ha in 1994 either. When SSB radios became more com-*



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## LETTERS

mon on boats, we instituted the daily roll calls. Owners of boats that didn't have that expensive equipment pleaded with us to still be allowed to participate. Since the Ha-Ha is basically a straight off-the-wind course with so many boats, and because all boats are required to have EPIRBs, it seemed like a reasonable request.

We haven't gotten any negative feedback from VHF-only boats, but we're as interested as you in the thoughts of people without SSB. For what it's worth, while we personally wouldn't get a new SSB radio just to do the Ha-Ha, being able to tune into the daily roll call makes the Ha-Ha a much richer experience.

### ↑↓ 2014 RESOLUTIONS

Thanks so much for all your efforts at *Latitude*. I particularly enjoy the 'Lectronic *Latitude*. You asked about New Year's sailing resolutions. On December 31, 2012, I took off singlehanded from my marina near Annapolis aboard my 1979 Pearson 365 ketch *Evening Ebb*. On February 4, I got a weather window out of Morehead City, North Carolina, and arrived at West End Tortola in the British Virgins on February 15. I spent the spring in the BVIs, St Martin, Antigua — where I crewed on a winning Carriacou sloop in the Classic Regatta — Nevis and the BVIs again. In June I sailed my boat to Grenada, and have been here since. I crewed on a Carriacou sloop in the Mango Bowl Regatta the weekend before last in St. Lucia, and am helping an owner move his Freedom 44 up to Antigua later today.

My plan for 2014? To sail from the BVIs with Tom Postin on his Beneteau 423 *Dancing Bear* to Brisbane, Australia. We plan to be part of the 2014 Pacific Puddle Jump. After a bit of time in Australia and then the States, I'll return to my boat and figure out what to do in 2015.

Dirk Aardsma  
*Evening Ebb*, Pearson 365  
Annapolis, Maryland

*Dirk — Thanks for the kind words. We like to hear from people who are really getting their money's worth from their boats. Enjoy a safe trip to Australia.*

### ↑↓ OUR RESOLUTION

After cruising Mexico, we've been back in Southern California for three years taking care of parents, a privilege that all of us will most likely have at some point in our lives. It was an experience that we will never regret, but it meant that we had to quit cruising and bring our boat north. As I write this, it's late in December and we're very close to heading back to Mexico. It's cold here in Channel Islands Harbor and blowing like stink. We want out of here for the new year!

John & Debby Dye  
*Lovely Reta*, Islander 41  
Channel Islands Harbor, Oxnard

### ↑↓ ELECTRICAL TIPS FROM A PRO

It's been too long since we were in the Baja Ha-Ha in 2004 and in the Puddle Jump in 2006. We made it to New Zealand, where we sold our Whitby 42 — which is now being circumnavigated by her new Australian owners.

We agree with *Latitude* with respect to the enhanced — although not perfect and not guaranteed — comfort and actual aid from sailing with groups, even small ones. When we broke an inner forestay on our trip from Tonga to New Zealand, it was comforting to know we had two buddyboats within 100 miles that we could keep in touch with and who would have



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## LETTERS

come to our aid if we needed it.

Let's talk about AC shorepower cords. I was a certified marine electrician in Anacortes for several years before our cruise started. During that time I saw many, many damaged and unsafe power cords and inlets. Whenever I got on



ROLAND FALKENSTEIN

**Burned-out or discolored shorepower connections should be replaced immediately.**

a boat, whether in the yard or in a marina, I always unplugged the cord — after turning off the power at the pylon to prevent arcing at the boat plug — and gave it a visual inspection. If I saw any discoloration, brown or black, around the female end contacts, I strongly recommended that the owner replace the cord immediately. Ditto on the male boat inlet plug. The shore pylon end should be inspected also, but most problems happen at the boat end.

Discoloration is caused by heat. Heat means that there is a poor, high-resistance connection at the plug/cord. If there is enough heat, a fire will start. I would refuse to work on a boat if the discoloration was too bad. The cords and inlets are very expensive, but so are boats and people. The inlet can be a real pain to replace, too. Even slight discoloration should not be ignored. It is not sufficient to 'clean' the contacts. At a minimum, the cord end should be replaced. But the result is not as good as a new cord since a repaired cord will never be sealed as well.

What causes high resistance? Corrosion caused by salt air, loose plug contacts, arcing by connecting and disconnecting hot cords, and/or loose or corroded wires inside the boat at the shorepower inlet.

We have started looking at boats suitable for cruising again. We totally enjoyed cruising in Mexico and beyond, the most fun being making friends with locals and other cruisers. Money is the only thing stopping us. We did get to spend several days with our friends Terry and Diane Emigh of the *Tayana Vancouver 42 Harmony* (Ha-Ha 2011) out of La Paz in November.

I've also met Rimas Meleshyus in Anacortes. He is attempting an improbable and underfunded goal of circumnavigating aboard his 'new' *San Juan 24*. What an interesting character! The boating community is small indeed.

Joe Barnes  
Anacortes, WA

*Joe — Thanks for the professional advice.*

*Speaking of Rimas, we looked into what's happened to him. "Rimas left Whidbey Island, Washington, at the end of July, 2013 bound for Cape Horn," notes a report on his donation site. "After getting as far south as Mexico, the 40-year-old rigging that holds his mast up began to fail. Rimas was able to improvise to keep the mast up, but diverted to Hilo, Hawaii, for repairs. He landed in Hilo with \$28 in his pocket and is relying on the kindness of friends and strangers to repair his boat so he can continue his adventure." As of early January, Rimas reported he was taking off for the South Pacific "soon."*

*We don't want to be critical, but heading for Cape Horn on a *San Juan 24* with 40-year-old rigging? At what point does something become a manifestly unsafe voyage?*

### ↑↓ NEED REAL-WORLD TSUNAMI DEBRIS REPORTS

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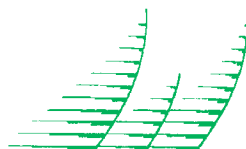


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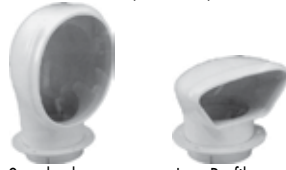
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# LETTERS

land, where we are cruising now, back to Alaska starting in mid-April. We've not been concerned about Tohoku debris for the passage from Hawaii, but *Latitude's* TransPac report got us thinking about it.

We'd sure appreciate hearing from anyone who has sailed in those waters to help us assess the risks. In the case of



WEBB LOGG

**Debris from the 2011 Japanese tsunami is still washing ashore on the West Coast.**

TransPac boats, when did you start coming across the debris, where was there the most, and what was the nature of the debris?

I've done some research and came up with: [bit.ly/1hE4xjV](http://bit.ly/1hE4xjV). As you can see, it looks to us that there is almost no direct physical data across the area of

interest. It's just drift modeling plus the odd yacht report. What is nearly impossible to find are the 'negative reports' from boats that have recently sailed some of our track but encountered nothing dangerous.

Steve & Dorothy Darden  
 Adagio, Morrelli and Melvin 52 cat  
 ex-Tiburon

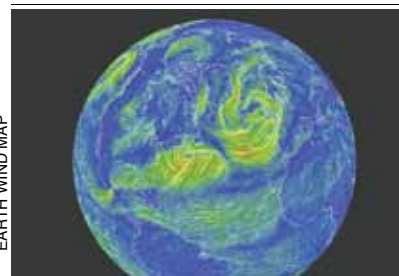
*Readers — Can anybody help Steve and Dorothy with first-hand information?*

*The Dardens love higher-latitude cruising in places such as Tasmania and Alaska. The only problem with high-latitude cruising is that it's a long way between high latitudes, whereas it's a short hop from Northern Hemisphere tropics to Southern Hemisphere tropics.*

### ↑↓ ANOTHER GREAT ONLINE WEATHER TOOL

I really like the earth wind map shown in the January 3 edition of *Lectronic Latitude*.

If anyone is looking for another good weather tool, here's a wave height and direction site I have used for years when planning trips along Coastal Alaska: [oceanweather.com/data](http://oceanweather.com/data).



EARTH WIND MAP

John Schroeder  
 Planet Earth

*John — The earth wind map is one of the most brilliant educational weather tools ever, as it gives an dynamic 'big picture' view of the weather such as we've never seen before. We think it's particularly educational for the ITCZ, the Sea of Cortez, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea . . . well, just about anywhere in the world. It's mesmerizing.*

### ↑↓ QUESTIONS ABOUT CATAMARANS

We have kept *Talofa*, our boat, in the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Over that time we have seen the percentage of catamarans growing substantially. As I write this, I'm anchored in the Bight of Norman Island in the British Virgin Islands. There are about 50 boats here, and more than 50% are catamarans — mostly on charter! I have made a few ob-

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## LETTERS

servations about catamarans, regarding which I would like to hear the opinions of Max Ebb and Lee Helm:

1) All cruising catamarans have their masts raked aft. Is this, as I believe, due to the fact they don't have real back-stays, but are kept from falling forward by two swept back spreaders, and the raking may provide better stability for the mast?

2) Almost all cats have fractional rather than masthead rigs. Maybe this is related to the raking of the mast.

3) Many modern cruising monohulls have their mains furl inside the mast. I have never seen a catamaran with a furling mainsail. Maybe that's indirectly related to the raking of the mast's forcing an undesirable shape on the main.

I would very much like to hear from the experts.

Cesare Galtieri  
Talofa, Gulfstar 43  
British Virgin Islands

*Cesare — Before we pass your question along to Max and Lee, we'll make a few comments. Some catamaran masts have no rake at all, some have moderate rake, and a few of the smaller Dean cats have masts that are raked so much the masthead is straight up from the cockpit. We'll leave the details of mast rake to Max and Lee.*

*Most cats do indeed have fractional rigs, but there have been quite a few — mostly older ones — with masthead rigs. As we recall, a lot of the Spronk cats in the Caribbean were not only masthead- but schooner-rigged. And many of them have been in heavy service for many years.*

*When catamarans have furling mains, they furl in the boom because it would be hard to furl with a typical cat's rake. The Darden's much-travelled M&M 52 Adagio has in-boom furling; so does Scott Stolnitz's Switch 51 Beach House, which is nearing the completion of a circumnavigation, and so do many others. In-boom furling is reportedly excellent once you figure out the details of how to use it properly, but it is not cheap, which is why you don't see them on charter boats.*

### ↑↓ LATITUDE AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

My eight-year-old son and I want to thank you for *Latitude* 38, which we look forward to each month.



SCOTT ALYN

**Scott's son was disappointed to discover no naked ladies in the December issue.**

After we got the October issue, my son spent hours staring at those three lovely European women sunbathing topless. He then declared his love for *Latitude* 38. I want to acknowledge *Latitude* for being a part of my son's rite of passage.

The accompanying photo shows him studying the current issue of *Latitude* while at Two Harbors, Catalina, searching in vain for what wasn't there.

By the way, we also attended the Wanderer's colorful presentation at California YC last year. A good time was had by all.

Scott Alyn  
X Cygnet, Swan 37  
(soon to go to the "dark side" with a multihull)  
Pacific Palisades

*Scott — We suppose it's a better rite-of-passage than he*



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## LETTERS

would get from the Sears catalog. But if we were you, we'd start saving up because it's likely he's going to want to spend his junior year abroad. His junior year in high school, that is.

### LOOKING TO CREW FROM BRAZIL TO FLORIDA

I'm currently on a bicycle tour down to Brazil for the World Cup in July. During my travels in Baja, I encountered many sailors, which is how I came to hear about *Latitude 38*. They told me it's fairly easy to get on a boat as crew.

After riding to Brazil, I would like to sail home to Florida via the Caribbean. I was wondering if there is a sailing crew networking site for the Caribbean. I have basic sailing knowledge and am a seasoned traveler. Please let me know if you have any insights that may help me out.

Henry Flaig  
[www.sustainablysouth.com](http://www.sustainablysouth.com)

Henry — If you were wanting to sail down to Brazil, you'd pretty much be out of luck because the currents and wind direction make it a difficult trip. But coming up is the easy way, and it's on the great highway from South Africa to the Northern Hemisphere, as nobody goes by way of the Red Sea anymore. You need to find out which are the most popular stops for cruising boats in Brazil, then just hang out there.

The only tricky part is that the World Cup doesn't end until July 13, which means it'll be getting on toward hurricane season in the Caribbean, so you're a little bit out of sync. But as hurricanes aren't an issue until you get up to Grenada, you shouldn't have trouble getting a ride there, and there are always a couple of late-season boats making the dash to Florida. As a young strong guy, you're a prime candidate for crew.

### AN UNCONVENTIONAL USE FOR A DREMEL

What do we use our Dremel tool for? To put our HIN (Hull Identification Number) on our boat.

Barry & Kathy Foster  
Tillie, Hans Christian 38T  
La Paz, Mexico

Barry and Kathy — Your letter made us burst out laughing. As many readers know, AGACE, a sub-agency of Mexico's IRS, was reportedly putting some boats into 'precautionary embargo' for more than a month if they didn't have a Hull Identification Number (HIN), not being aware that pre-1974 boats and many foreign boats were never given such numbers. And not being aware that boat hulls get painted, and in the process the HIN number often gets sanded off. The solution for some boatowners? Get a Dremel engraver — even Catalina used to use them to engrave hull numbers in some of their bigger boats. In fact, one marina in Mexico was loaning out a Dremel tool so boatowners could engrave the HIN number in their hull.

But here's something that was new to us. According to Soundings Trade Only, as of 1984 US boats are required to have HIN numbers in two places, one outside on the starboard transom and one inside in an inconspicuous place.

### MEXICO'S REPUTATION TAINTED

I'm sharing the following letter I wrote to officials in Mexico: "I am writing to you about the recent impounding of more than 300 boats by a branch of the Mexican IRS. I have sailed my own sailboat up and down the Mexican coast from Ensenada to Zihuatanejo for more than 10 years. My boat is currently in the United States, for which I am very thankful. My wife and I were planning to purchase a home in La Paz on our next visit to your beautiful country. I am sorry to say that

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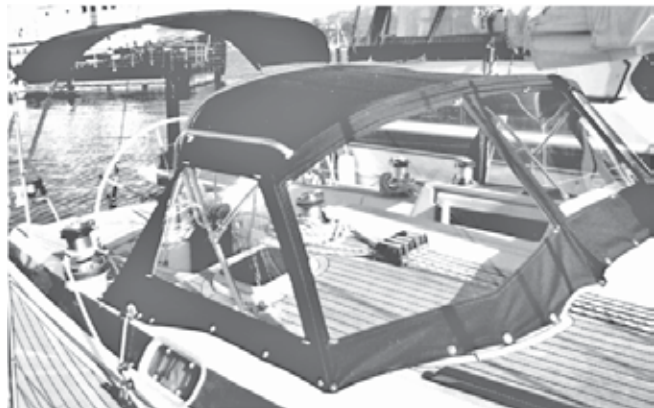
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## LETTERS

we will not be returning to Mexico, at least not by boat. And after watching what has happened to the boatowners recently, I believe it would be a mistake to buy property in Mexico, where assets can so easily be taken away for no reason. We have cancelled our intention to buy property in La Paz.

"I love Mexico and have made many friends in your country. This incident is going to bring terrible hardship and undeserved consequences to the thousands of workers who derive their living from nautical and other tourism. What a sad, awful mistake Mexico has made. I cannot imagine why. It breaks my heart."

Charles Lane  
Shamwari, Tayana 37  
San Francisco

*Readers — What's not made clear in Lane's letter is that almost all of the boats that have been impounded for more than six weeks have been found to be in compliance with Mexican law or are expected to be found in compliance.*

*Impounding foreign-owned boats — and planes, motorhomes and cars — is nothing new in Mexico. Sometimes it's been done because the owners of these modes of transportation hadn't gotten all the proper papers, but often the owners were in full compliance. Or, as in the famous Moreno case, when Mexico wanted to get back at the US for kidnapping a doctor who had helped torture a DEA agent in Mexico. A friend had a \$30,000 motorhome in Mexico at the time of the kidnapping, and his motorhome, along with a lot of other American assets, was seized. At the beginning of the week, the Mexican IRS was demanding more than a million dollars for the motorhome. By the end of the week they were down to some trifling sum, which was paid and it was all over.*

*According to Tere Grossman, who has been in the marina business in Mexico since 1977 and has been the president of the Mexican Marina Owners Association for most of the time since then, the Mexican government has periodically inspected, impounded and released foreign boats. The impoundments ceased when the TIP program was instituted in 1996. And after President Fox's wildly expensive — and ultimately failed — 'nautical stairway' program to bring more American boats to Mexico was announced following his inauguration in 2000, there hadn't even been any inspections, "and the government has left us in peace."*

*That all changed in late November. "The current program of inspections has been the worst one ever and the most complicated," says Grossman. Why a country eager to fill its marinas, increase the number of tourists, and attract investors would treat foreign boatowners — their best ambassadors — so badly is beyond understanding. It's as if Mexico won't stop punching itself in the face and undoing all the outreach it's spent so much money on.*

*It was too late to get it into this issue, but next month we'll present a history of Mexico's complicated relationship with foreign boatowners, which will demonstrate how things have gotten so much better — until the sudden reversal in late November.*

### ⚡ A HUGE NATIONAL NAUTICAL BRAIN FART

Ours was one of the many foreign boats seized at Coral Marina in Ensenada. We're trying to find other victims of the AGACE attack on boatowners, but it's not easy. I imagine most people are afraid to speak up because they fear revenge on the part of the Mexican government.

We were wondering if *Latitude* could connect us to others who have had their boats stranded in Mexico. Or perhaps



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## LETTERS

you can give us some advice on what we should be doing in this situation. We were even thinking that what we are going through could be the basis of a class action lawsuit.

We don't take the illegal seizure of our boat — which is also our home — lightly. We consider it to be an act of theft or an act of terrorism. After all, there have been no official charges against us or our property, nothing in writing, no legal proceedings, just verbal threats of violence against us if we make noise or try to leave.

Cranky Sailor  
Coral Marina, Ensenada

*Cranky — We know that the Marina Owners Association has a list of boats, but we don't know if they have contact information. In any event, they probably aren't authorized to release the names and addresses.*

*As infuriating as this disastrous episode has been, according to Enrique Fernandez, harbormaster at Puerto Los Cabos, it's the fourth time in his 25-year career that he can remember a branch of the Mexican IRS impounding a group of foreign boats without good cause. Thanks to the Internet, such news gets around faster and penetrates more deeply than it did in the 1990s, so AGACE's outrageous handling of the matter has generated worse and more widespread negative publicity for Mexico. In view of this, we expect that all boats that didn't have serious paperwork problems — which was most of them — will be released in less than the 140 days it took in 1996. Our advice is to grin and bear it, and have confidence that the foolishness will be over soon.*

*That's the same advice that we gave to a woman who phoned Latitude from Ensenada in late January and said that, after their boat had been impounded for six weeks, she and her husband had had enough. Their cruising dreams shattered, all they wanted to do was to get back to the US and sell their boat. They wanted to know what we thought of the idea of their making a run for the border in the middle of the night. We advised against it because if they were caught, the consequences could be severe. Besides, as of the third week in January, some boats had been released and there was a lot of pressure on AGACE to release the rest as quickly as possible. We also suggested that they wait just a bit before giving up their cruising dreams, as this is the biggest national nautical brain fart we can remember in the more than three decades that we've been covering sailing. The president of the Mexican Marina Owners Association agrees. That being the case, we don't expect we'll see anything like it any time soon.*

*A class action lawsuit in Mexican courts against the Mexican IRS? If you want to spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars and many years in court in a country where you don't speak the language, we think you'd have about a 3% chance of winning — assuming the Mexican legal system even allows for class action lawsuits. But you never know. Some dining companions who own a home at Higuera Blanca, which is near Sayulita, told us that about five years ago the local government was in desperate need of money, so they decided they would fine all gringo owners of waterfront homes that had non-native plants. Among the non-native plants was bougainvillea, which grows wild all over the area. When one homeowner fought the Mexican government in court over a proposed \$5,000 fine, the court sided with him.*

*By the way, the woman who called from Ensenada said there was another cruising boat in her marina whose owners have been so shaken by their boat's being impounded that they have a similar goal — get their boat back to the States as quickly as possible and put her up for sale. Another set of*

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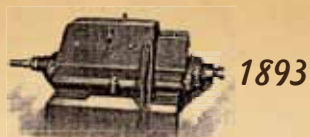
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## LETTERS

*crusing dreams destroyed by AGACE's very poor handling of what could have been a quick, clean and easy process.*

### ↑↓ ONE LONE BRANCH IS KILLING NAUTICAL TOURISM

As I recently wrote in a letter to Mexican officials, I just purchased a Peterson 34 and was planning to sail her from my home waters of San Francisco Bay to Ensenada to have her refitted. I planned on spending about \$30,000 on the refit. I would then continue on to La Paz and the Mexican Riviera, where I wanted to spend the winter and spring before turning right for Polynesia in May. I figure I would have spent another \$20,000 on a vacation with my wife in Mexico before continuing on to the South Pacific.

Why did Mexico spend all these years encouraging visits by nautical tourists — and then shoot itself in the foot like this? Unless this problem is resolved, I will spend my money elsewhere.

Steve Bryant  
Svenska, Peterson 34  
San Francisco Bay

*Readers — Most of Mexico's government is doing all it can to encourage nautical tourism while one small branch is making life difficult and scary for nautical tourists. Once again, one hand of the Mexican government doesn't know what the other hand is doing.*

*One of the most troubling impoundings involves a multimillion dollar yacht that was brought from San Diego to Ensenada to have a few days' work done at a yard. The captain and crew were visited by AGACE agents while in Ensenada, and were left with the distinct impression that there weren't any problems with the boat's paperwork. Yet when they went to check out a few days later, the port captain informed them that they couldn't leave because their boat was on the impound list. Six weeks later the boat was still stuck in Ensenada, despite the owners' having hired a lawyer and enlisting the efforts of Arizona Senator John McCain. The last we heard, the owners were thinking that once they got their boat back, they would bypass Mexico entirely on the way to Panama. Could anyone blame them?*

### ↑↓ ZERO CHANCE OF SPENDING MONEY IN MEXICO

We're in the process of buying a new boat. As she's in Southern California, we were thinking of taking her to Mexico to get some work done on her. There is now zero chance of our doing that. This means there are a few thousand dollars that won't be spent in a Mexican boatyard, along with hotel rooms, air fares, etc. What Mexico has been doing is idiotic, and I have yet to get a reason that these folks would be so stupid.

Beau Vrolyk  
Santa Cruz

*Beau — First Ensenada loses its main highway with Tijuana and the States, and now this. Could it get any worse for what many cruisers have found to be a charming little city? Yes, it can, as it's likely that many potential participants in the Newport to Ensenada Race — once the largest on the West Coast — are having serious second thoughts. After all, they can do a similar race — the Border Run — that ends in San Diego and doesn't have the risk of their losing control of their boat.*

*Mexico needs to release the boats that have complied with their laws immediately, and get serious about making amends to foreign boatowners.*



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## LETTERS

### ↑↓ CHANGE OF PLANS

I'm sorry to hear about the problems cruisers are having with Mexican authorities. You probably don't remember the 'Nanamukers'. We met the Wanderer in Mexico in 1982. We spent five months in Mexico on that trip, and 30 months in Mexico at the start of our circumnavigation in 1994.

We just spent eight days at the Decameron Resort in Bucerias, dreaming of having *Nanamuk* back on Banderas Bay next season and staying for years. But the change in the way cruising boats are being treated by Mexico will definitely cause us to cancel these plans. Perhaps you can forward our letter to someone who can speed up resolving the problem with impounded boats, because if it drags on too long, we won't be motivated to do all that is needed to return *Nanamuk* to Mexico.

Rob & Grace Dodge  
*Nanamuk*, Endurance 35  
 Nanaimo, BC

### ↑↓ STAYING AWAY TILL THE NUTTINESS IS OVER

I had been hoping to bring my boat back to La Paz this year, but I'm staying away until the latest nuttiness goes away.

Jim Patrick  
 Tortuga, Grand Banks 42  
 San Diego

*Jim — Given AGACE's blow to the reputation of Mexico's nautical tourism industry, members of the Mexican Marina Owners Association tell us they don't believe they will be conducting any similar 'audits' in the near future. As a result, some US boats are coming down to Mexico. Unfortunately, nobody can guarantee there won't be any such raids, which is why it's easy to understand that some mariners are choosing to stay away.*

### ↑↓ COMPROMISED A LONG-PLANNED FAMILY REUNION

I'm a fellow cruiser at Marina Riviera Nayarit in La Cruz with all the proper paperwork whose boat was nonetheless impounded by AGACE. Like all involved, I find this situation quite upsetting, as it has compromised a long-planned family reunion here in Mexico. Like the owners of *Profligate*, the only thing I'm guilty of is not being on my boat during the unannounced inspection by AGACE. Actually, I did get back to the boat that afternoon in time to ask an inspection team if they needed to inspect my boat. They said it wouldn't be necessary but my boat ended up on the impound list anyway.

I hope we can go whale watching again soon.

Steve Wilson  
 Westerly  
 Oakland / Marina Riviera Nayarit

*Readers — There has been a small group of boatowners and former boatowners, most based out of the Vallarta YC, who have scoffed at our reports, saying: 1) Latitude has been making a mountain out of a molehill, and 2) if any boats got impounded, it was the owners' fault. These people seem unaware of how many winter plans have been disrupted, cruising dreams destroyed, and unnecessary expenses incurred — by mariners who did indeed follow all the rules. Nor do these people seem to appreciate the apprehension that AGACE's actions have instilled in the hearts of boatowners whose boats haven't been inspected yet.*

### ↑↓ LOCALS ARE THE REAL LOSERS

Having spent most of the last 14 winters in La Paz, it's obvi-

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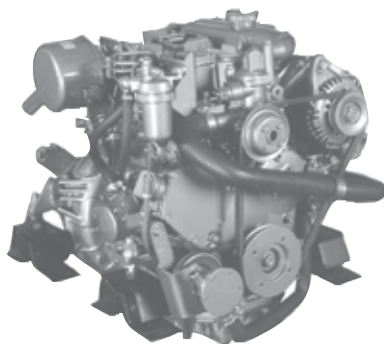
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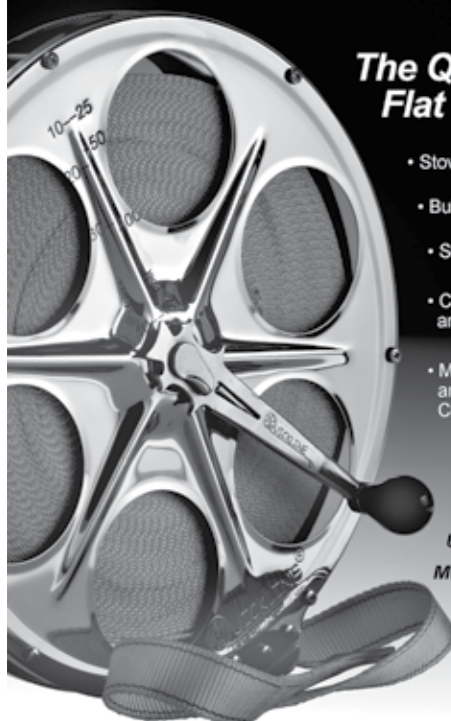
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# LETTERS

ous we love this place. However, if AGACE keeps impounding boats for long periods of time, and mariners either start leaving or don't come down, the real losers will be orphanages, local schools and local merchants that so many *gringo* cruisers and retirees spend so much time and money supporting. They are the ones who have taken the brunt of the hit from those bad raps in the past, and the recent actions by AGACE surely won't help them.

Rod DuFour  
Beachcomber, Lagoon 35  
Oak Harbor, WA / Sea of Cortez

Readers — That's true, as cruisers are big supporters of many charitable causes in Mexico, from the unbelievably successful SailFest to Subasta to smaller ones such as the Pirates for Pupils Spinnaker Run for Charity. Indeed, had Profligate not been impounded, we would have started our fifth charity regatta in Mexico, which was to be the Tenacatita to Barra Rally with Dino of Grand Marina in Barra. Maybe next year.

## ↑↓ GET SYRIA-US

If 338 US boats had been impounded in Iraq or Syria, the United States would have stationed 128 ships of war off their coasts firing rockets into their administrative and political offices as well as their military positions. Our planes would have turned their sand to glass by now.

Name Withheld By Request  
Planet Earth

N.W.B.R. — Yes, well thank goodness that Mexico isn't Iraq or Syria, because nobody needs to be killed over what's been a massive public relations blunder by a newly created sub-agency of the Mexican IRS. A lot of spankings are in order, but not bombings.

## ↑↓ MAKING A RUN FOR IT

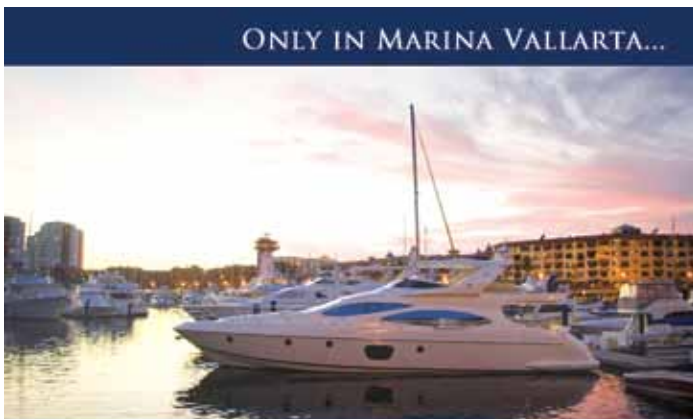
My documented boat was among the many foreign-owned boats seized by Hacienda (the Mexican IRS) in 1997. Marina Palmira in La Paz had misfiled my papers and I wasn't aboard at the time, so Hacienda chained my boat to the dock. I flew down the day after hearing of this, and went to the local office of Hacienda. I told them about the legal status of US-documented boats, but they weren't impressed by it or my fluent Spanish. So I told them I was going to go to the marina, cut the chain securing my boat to the dock, alert the US Coast Guard via Ham radio of my situation, and take off.

I cut the chain, then cast off as armed soldiers marched down the dock toward me. I got away and headed out toward the Cerralvo Channel. After four hours passed without any boats coming after me, I reversed course and headed for Isla Partida. I stayed on the hook at Partida for one week, then returned to my berth at Marina Palmira. I never heard another thing about it, nor did I ever find out why nothing happened to me. But the local head of Hacienda was fired a short time later.


Dane Faber  
WAFI, Vagabond 38  
Sausalito

Dane — AGACE told one Mexican boatowner that he couldn't leave a marina on Banderas Bay. The owner basically told them to buzz off because he'd not only bought his boat from Hacienda, he was taking off right then for Acapulco, and they could try to stop him. He did take off and they didn't try to stop him. But we're not sure what happened when he got to

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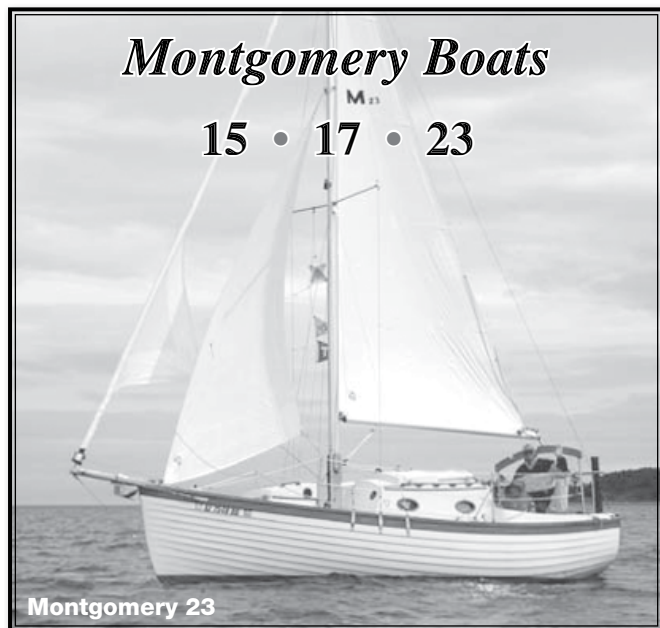
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## LETTERS

Acapulco.

*It was after the ill-conceived impounding of boats in the 1990s that the TIP (Temporary Import Permit) was instituted. Once that was instated, the Mexican government hadn't engaged in the mass impounding of boats — until late November.*

### ↑↓ PAWNS IN SOME POLITICAL GAME

The present situation in Mexico is like the second verse of an old song. *Latitude* will recall that in July of 1995 several hundred yachts were seized by Hacienda. My boat was placed in 'protective seizure' in Marina Palmira along with 12 others. I was given an attorney by the marina, but he couldn't speak English, so I hired another attorney. I contacted the US Embassy, my senators and state reps and the Coast Guard, and placed articles in *The Log*, the *L.A. Times*, San Diego papers and boating magazines.

In the November 1995 issue of *Latitude*, the publisher wrote, "Dr. Hersch [me] made a big stink in all the papers, hired lawyers and raised hell. It's unclear whether making a big stink was a smart move."

It took 140 days to get my boat released.

Since *Latitude's* boat *Profligate* has been seized, the publisher apparently has had no problem mounting a full-scale publicity campaign and making a big stink to get his boat released.

By the way, my papers were 100% in order and we never learned the true reason behind Hacienda's action. We were pawns in someone else's game. I predict that all the boats currently impounded in Mexico will be released, but as they say in Mexico, "not at this moment."

Dr. Robert Hersch  
Huntington Beach

*Dr. Hersch — The difference between 1995 and now is that back then people in the industry advised us against making a big stink, thinking it might be counterproductive. It's hard to say if it was or wasn't.*

*This time around we've received overwhelming encouragement from almost every member of the Mexican marine industry we've talked to, as well as important officials in Mexico's Tourism Department. They all say our reports and editorializing have been critical in putting pressure on AGACE to release boats sooner rather than later, and to encourage them to change their procedures before conducting any future 'audits'.*

*By the way, as we write this on January 20, AGACE seems to have made a distinction regarding which marinas boats are being released from. They haven't released more than 30 of the 338 foreign boats yet, but the only ones they've released have been from marinas that agreed to be depositarias, meaning they would take financial and other responsibility for all impounded boats in their marina. About half the marinas agreed, about half didn't because they are under no obligation to do so. *Profligate* is in Marina Riviera Nayarit, which refused to be a depositaria. So while a few days ago an AGACE agent confirmed that *Profligate* is in compliance with Mexican law, AGACE has refused to say when our cat will be released from impoundment. To us, it looks as though AGACE is using our boat as a pawn in a revenge game with the marina for not agreeing to be a depositaria. But we'll see.*

### ↑↓ ADDING FUEL TO THE BURNING INFERNO

I want to thank *Latitude* for all you've done for cruisers over the years. But according to some cruisers I've talked to via email and the Cruisers' Forum, your latest efforts regarding the situation in Mexico are counterproductive and are

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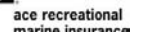
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## LETTERS

making cruisers very scared of what might happen to them. They haven't been nailed by AGACE, but are really shaking in their boots over what actions might be taken as a result of the negative publicity. Please reconsider adding fuel to the already burning inferno.

Steve Bondelid  
ex-owner, *Grey Max*, Lord Nelson 35  
Greenbank, WA

*Steve — Throughout this entire unfortunate episode, we've been in contact with many marina owners/managers in Mexico, as well as the director of Mexico's tourism office in California. Every single one of them has told us the same thing: Latitude's reports and editorializing have been great, and it's critical that we keep the pressure on. Indeed, most of them have been forwarding our writings to elected officials in their respective cities and states and Mexico City. Several of these people have cited the avalanche of negative publicity as the primary reason they believe it's highly unlikely — 99.9% unlikely, said one — that there will be any more 'audits' until AGACE procedures and policies have changed, and their personnel get the training they need to know what they are doing.*

*If we were writing what we've written without any skin in the game, it might be one thing. But our highly visible catamaran Profligate is one of the 338 impounded boats, and is probably worth considerably more than the average impounded boat.*

### ↑↓ A BACKFIRE IS NEEDED TO PUT OUT THE INFERNO

I'm asking *Latitude* to please use your contacts in the international press to make sure the story of foreign boats impounded in Mexico is reported daily in the international media. One problem is that many top officials in the Mexican government, including President Peña Nieto and Luis Eduardo Lara Gutierrez, the latter being the person at AGACE who came up with the stupid 'auditing' idea that created all the chaos, don't speak English. It takes time for the Mexican press to pick up these stories from the foreign press.

The level of stupidity behind AGACE's audit has been so high that the problem is not being resolved as quickly as it should. I read the January 17 *Lectronic* and want to make it clear that this fiasco was not created by the marinas, which along with owners of foreign boats are also victims of the official stupidity of AGACE. It's all AGACE's fault!

Because of varying amounts of experience, some marinas have handled the situation differently than others. Since I started working in marinas 25 years ago, I've always kept a copy of the TIPS, boat documentation and insurance. I didn't do this because the marinas I worked at were obligated to do it, but rather to be sure who was who and what was what. We've had many inspections from different authorities in the last quarter of a century, and our customers didn't even know the inspections had taken place. We tried to handle the most recent inspection as a 'desk audit'. I was successful in working with the authorities again this time, although I have to admit that luck was also an important factor.

I know that several marinas have hired attorneys, not only to keep themselves free of problems, but most importantly to resolve the nightmare for their boatowners. In addition to our Marina Owners Association group, we individual marina operators are putting political pressure on the authorities and state governments to get this problem resolved. We all know that AGACE eventually has to liberate all the boats with TIPS, which is most of those that have been impounded, but that time is our worst enemy because the bad publicity continues. All of us in the marina business understand that even





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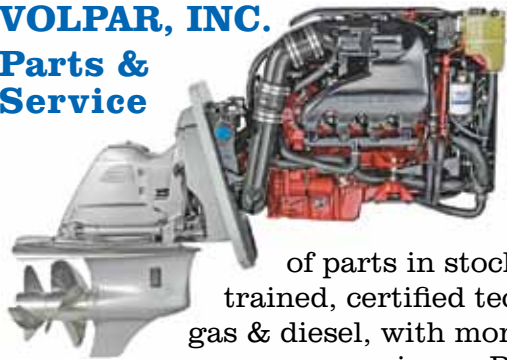
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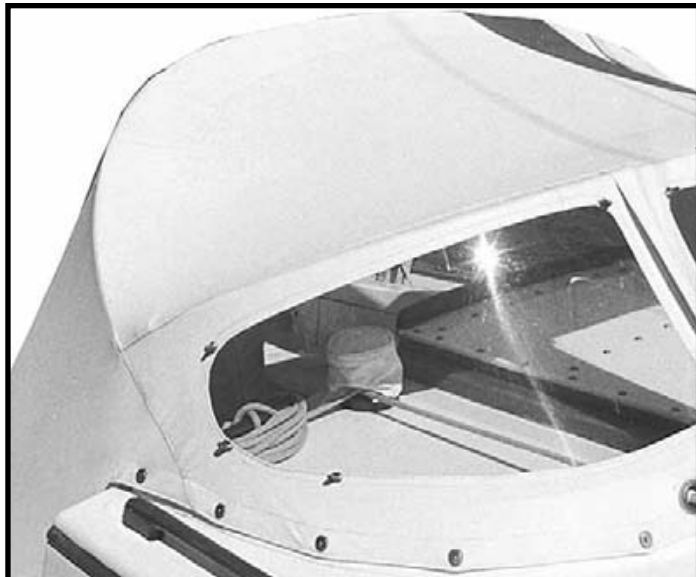
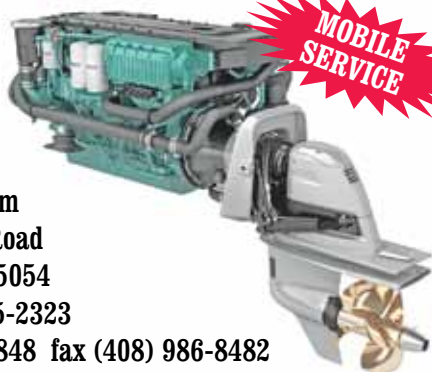
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## LETTERS

if AGACE did not raid our marina, we have to help owners of impounded boats, no matter what marina they are in.

Enrique Fernández del Castillo  
Gerente General, Puerto Los Cabos Marina  
San Jose del Cabo, Mexico

Readers — While all the marina owners we've spoken with have encouraged our articles and editorials on this matter, and say they have forwarded them to various Mexican officials, all but Enrique, who was previously the harbormaster at Marina Cabo San Lucas, have asked to remain anonymous. "If Hacienda wants to, they can create all the problems in the world for a marina like mine," said one marina owner.

To demonstrate how inconsistent the AGACE audit process has been, if some AGACE auditors couldn't find a HIN on a boat, it was grounds for putting a boat on the impound list. Yet at Puerto Los Cabos and some other marinas, the auditors didn't even go down to the boats.

Some members of the Vallarta YC have claimed that boats in some marinas got into trouble because the marina didn't have copies of all their documents. As you can see from Castillo's letter, he says marinas aren't obligated to have them. We were told the same thing by the manager of another marina, who is adamant that there is no law requiring marinas to keep copies of all the documents. Note that this is a marina manager who says things have been working out well at his marina with AGACE, except for a few boats with unique situations. What's a unique situation? The owner of an impounded boat taking AGACE to court for impounding his boat.

Besides, does anybody really believe that a boatowner should have their boat impounded for months because a marina office misplaced or lost copies of the boat's documents, or didn't believe they were obligated to have them in the first place? Since the boatowner has no control or knowledge of the situation, shouldn't that be a matter between just the marina and the Mexican government? Duh.

#### ↑↓KEEP IT UP

Keep up the pressure on Mexico. Money talks. It may take awhile, but when the tourist dollars drop like a winch handle into the Bay, policies will change. But thanks for being the one taking the heat!

Steve Ware  
Lafayette

Steve — Thanks for your support. As easily the biggest supporters of nautical tourism to Mexico for the last 30 years, we have a lot at stake here, and hate to see what AGACE has been doing to Mexico's nautical tourism industry — and to a lesser extent, the real estate industry.

#### ↑↓CAN'T ARGUE WITH THE BARREL OF A GUN

In the late '30s, my grandfather had his property in Mexico seized. His advice after that: "Never own property in Mexico, as you can't argue with the barrel of a gun." After a year in Vietnam, I understood with what he meant. Good luck with your boat, and to the other poor souls as well.

Jim Gunderson  
Next Adventure, Catalina 30  
San Jose

Jim — What happened to your grandfather was 80 years ago, and much has changed since then. But one thing remains constant, which is that Mexico needs to impound boats as a very last resort, not as first resort when they are just verifying

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## LETTERS

documents. At least if they want to keep a nautical tourism industry. Some Mexican officials just don't appreciate how skittish Americans are of having their assets seized or impounded. Foreign boatowners are in need of immediate reassurances by the Mexican government.

### ↑↓JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

I'm glad that *Latitude* has been keeping up with the impounding of foreign boats in Mexico. I am surprised that the US government or embassy has not been involved, since US-documented boats are considered property of the United States that can ostensibly be requisitioned in time of war or national emergency. In the States, even a simple repossession of a US-documented vessel has to be done by a US marshal who has to 'arrest the vessel'.

Actually, what's happening may only be the tip of the proverbial iceberg. President Enrique Peña Nieto was elected under the promise of going after what have been labeled 'tax cheats', meaning Mexican nationals as well as *gringos*. Currently the Mexican government is concentrating on boats, cars, motorhomes and other objects 'imported to Mexico'. But they will reportedly soon go after *gringos* earning money in Mexico and not paying taxes, especially on the condo/home rentals and sales.

Many Mexican nationals and *gringos* avoid much of the taxes they owe when they sell real estate in Mexico. For instance, if a house should sell for \$100,000, the owner will sell the house for \$10,000, which is taxable, and the furniture in it for \$90,000, the sale of furniture not being taxable. The Mexican IRS claims they are going to crack down on all that now, as well as anyone who earns income from rentals in Mexico. They are also going to be levying a tax on bank accounts and more. The new bank laws took effect January 1.

Mexico says they are cracking down on Mexican nationals also. Supposedly this has all been precipitated by the big drop in revenue from oil, and the fact that almost no one in Mexico pays any taxes — sort of like Greece, Portugal, Italy, etc.

A Mexican-American friend who recently returned from a holiday visit with her family in Cancun claims that everything they bought, even a simple Coke, had doubled in price because now everyone has to pay more taxes. For her it was not a big issue, but for her relatives in Mexico it was a major change.

At the moment the Mexican government seems to be acting more as the Venezuelan government did under Hugo Chavez. As *Latitude* pointed out, it's going to have severe repercussions for tourism, which was just starting to recover after years of *narco* violence. I just talked with Grace Bodle in Richmond this morning, and she told me that she and Bill had planned to take their 110-ft schooner to Mexico this winter, but have cancelled because of the impoundings.

John 'Woody' Skoriak  
Sausalito / San Carlos, Mexico

*Woody* — The US government was slow to get involved in the mess, but that was partly because most of the people who owned impounded boats didn't even know their boats were impounded, and because it was assumed that nothing could be done over the holidays. The State Department and consulates subsequently got involved, but it's hard to know what kind of effort they have made. In any event, sometimes constant mild pressure and patience is the most effective policy.

While it's true that all US-documented vessels are subject to requisition during time of a national emergency — as many great yachts were during World War II — it is not true that the US government is going to leap into action any time there is a problem

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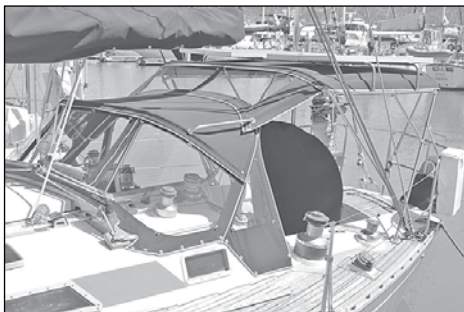
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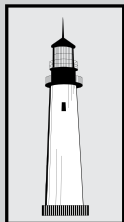
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## LETTERS

with a US-documented boat. In fact, we think documentation of a recreational boat counts for very little except proof — in most countries — of ownership.

For what it's worth, Mexico, which Goldman Sachs projects to be one of the 10 biggest economies in the world by 2020, ranks 53rd out of 189 countries in "ease of doing business" by the World Bank. Tellingly, Mexico ranks 133rd in availability of electricity, 150th in registering property, and 118th in the collection of taxes. As such, it's hard to believe Mexico has been doing as well as it has. Mexico rates best at the ease of starting businesses and resolving insolvencies.

It's hard to tell what's going on with the Peña Nieto administration. As Peña Nieto is a member of the PRI, which ruled Mexico with massive corruption during their 70-year-plus regime, many Mexicans are very suspicious. However, he's done some good things. One is that he's moved to clean up the corrupt Mexican teacher's union by arresting Elba Esther Gordillo, the president of the union, and accusing her of embezzling about \$200 million from the union's funds. During her 23-year reign, most teachers' positions were bought or inherited. Peña Nieto is also opening up PEMEX — Mexico's notoriously corrupt national oil concern — to outside foreign investment so they can reach oil they don't have the money or technology to get to now. And perhaps most importantly, he's also attacking those who don't pay the taxes they owe. Mexico's tax rates are notoriously low, the loopholes are huge, and compliance is poor.

One huge change is that there are no more 'small businesses' that have to pay just 3% of their annual gross in taxes. Now all businesses — even street taco stands — are supposed to have computers and frequently report all expenses and income. We're not sure how that's going to play out in a country where about 20% of the people don't even have electricity.

Personally, we think doing a better job of collecting taxes is essential for the future of Mexico, and some tax rates are ridiculously unfair or in need of being increased. For example, the property tax is assessed on the size of a house, not the value. As a result, there are \$500,000 condos on the ocean where the taxes are \$150, the same as cinder-block-and-tarp hovels a half-mile away. Yet the roads, except for the toll roads, are dreadful. Wait until Bill Gates, who just paid \$200 million for the Four Seasons in Punta Mita, tries to drive the pot-holed mess of a road from La Cruz to Mita. Of course, the big question is if the politicians will stuff all the new tax money in their pockets, or if it will actually be used for the public good.

AGACE, the sub-agency of the Mexican IRS that has caused all the problems for foreign boatowners, was actually created late in the term of Felipe Calderon, the previous president. At this point we believe the gigantic fiasco created by AGACE is a result of a political appointee who didn't know Mexican or US law, but thought he could create a big nationalistic splash by catching hundreds of foreign 'tax cheats'. Our belief is that when word of the fiasco finally filters to the upper levels of the Peña Nieto administration, they will have a fit. After all, they want as much tourism and foreign investment as possible, and are smart enough to know that the worst thing Mexico can do is scare the hell out of nautical tourists and potential investors.

At this point, any comparison between Mexico and Venezuela under Chavez is ridiculous — although Chavez never threatened to impound hundreds of visiting yachts. But we're keeping our eyes open on Mexico. How they handle this fiasco will be telling.

### ↑↓ A DECAL COULD BE THE ANSWER

The main issue in this boat impounding mess seems to be that the owners absent from their boats were judged guilty. The solution is obvious. Mexican authorities should require

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## LETTERS

that foreign-owned boats carry a decal on their bow, a decal that you get with your TIP. Or even with an annual cruising license fee. The decal will at least show compliance. A missing or forged decal means 'goodbye boat'. Here in the US we have such decals to prove that a boat is registered in a specific state. Easy peasy.

Tom Dalgliesh  
Waverly, Islander Freeport 41  
Seattle, WA

Tom — *It's hard to tell what the "main issue" was, as it appears that it was different in different places.*

Newer TIPs come with decals. According to the instructions — and we're not making this up — you're supposed to put the sticker on the boat window next to the "rear-view mirror." That instruction is all too typical of the Mexican bureaucratic (mis) understanding of boats. But one problem is that older TIPs didn't come with decals. The second problem is if you get a TIP online, nobody is verifying what you're claiming.

One solution might be similar to the one Mexico uses for permanently importing cars. You go through about a two-hour process, after which you get paperwork and decal — yes, you put it on your windshield near your rear-view mirror — and you're good. Well, you're good after you go to a different city to get a piece of paper, then a different city a hundred miles away to actually pick up your plate. Alas, Mexico doesn't have the manpower at each port of entry to do this with any kind of dispatch.

Then again Rick Todd, who used to fly corporate clients into Puerto Vallarta on Citation 10 jets, tells us the international check-in process for aircraft was quick and easy. "It took about 10 minutes." So if Mexico wants to come up with a solution, we know they can. It's a matter of whether the country has the political will to do what's in its best financial interest.

### ↑↓ NUMB FROM TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT

I just read the latest *Lectronic* post regarding the impounding of foreign-owned boats in Mexico. I can't figure out why the Mexican government would impound *Profligate* after all *Latitude* has done for Mexico in terms of the hundreds of positive articles and photos, 20 years of bringing many thousands of people down in the Baja Ha-Ha, and all the various charity regattas you have founded. It's nice to know they didn't single *Latitude*'s boat out for special treatment, but don't they have advisors or press agents who have even a little bit of common sense?

Reading the updates in *Latitude* has truly been disheartening, as it completely undermines our faith in the situation down there. Why would we want to risk our yachts and all we have invested to be at the whim of a jack-booted illiterate who knows less about boats than he does about hygiene?

We can appreciate all the good words you put forth on behalf of Mexico for the last 30 years, but what's happening in Mexico sure makes the Channel Islands, Catalina, and California coastal hopping much more inviting. After all, we don't have to worry that we're going to be held hostage by a banana republic trying to flex its position with the United States by using yachts as pawns. I know that cruising Mexico can be fantastic and beautiful, but when you consider that you can get beaten within an inch of your life, have officials impound your boat for nothing, and get your dinghy stolen, I think a trip through a local bad neighborhood on a wheelbarrow sounds like a better plan.

As wonderful as Mexico is, nothing beats seeing Diamond Head rise out of the horizon after 10 days at sea. Maybe that's



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# LETTERS

the future of the Ha-Ha. The Hawaiian Ha-Ha would also make the Puddle Jump less of a jump and more of a skip.

I'm partially numb from trying to understand what's happening down there. By the way, I was very sad to have missed the Ha-Ha this year, as I heard nothing but great stories about it from dock neighbors who went.

Dave Barten  
Ikani, Gecco 39  
Shelter Island, San Diego

*Dave — It's true that we at Latitude have been the biggest promoters of nautical tourism in Mexico for the last 30 years. But as you say, it's nice to know we didn't get any special treatment. We don't like countries where some people are more equal — members of the United States Congress and the political class, for instance — than everyone else.*

*You're right, there's nothing as disheartening as having your boat impounded — without notice — when she's perfectly legal, and when the agency doesn't contact you, and you don't speak the language. It's undermined the faith a lot of boatowners had*



LATITUDE / RICHARD

**What some cruisers have resorted to so AGACE auditors can find the HIN.**

*in Mexico, and Mexico is going to have to hustle to regain that faith. But can we cut the crap about "jack-booted illiterates"? While the excessive military presence was entirely unnecessary during AGACE's audits, our understanding is that the auditors and the marines were firm but pleasant. The "illiterate" business is insulting. AGACE officials may not have known anything about boats or the complexities of maritime law, but it's ridiculous and insulting to say they were illiterate. In fact, one of the nice things about Mexico is that the quality of their civil servants seems to have gotten a lot better in the last 10 years. It's not perfect, but it's been improving.*

*As for personal safety, there are something like a million Americans and Canadians who live in Mexico. Most feel safer in Mexico than they do in most big American cities.*

*Everybody, including many Mexican officials and port captains, is also partially numb from trying to understand the impounding of all the boats that were legal. Our take is that AGACE officials really believed they were going to catch a bunch of tax cheats and find a bunch of stolen boats, and thus be heroes. Unfortunately, they've stuck to their guns and become goats.*

*Readers — We're sorry to have to devote so much editorial space to this single issue, but it's a big one. If Mexico doesn't come to its senses quickly, the ramifications for their nautical tourism industry — and the West Coast boating industry — could be enormous. For the latest news on the subject, read 'Lectronic Latitude.*

*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](mailto:richard@latitude38.com). You can also mail them to 15 Locust, Mill Valley, CA, 94941, or fax them to (415) 383-5816.*

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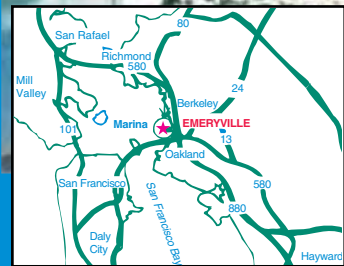
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## a thoroughbred returns to her roots

News of *Alaska Eagle's* permanent exit from the West Coast last month struck a heavy emotional blow to many who'd sailed offshore aboard her during her 31-year tenure as the flagship of the Orange Coast College School of Sailing and Seamanship in Newport Beach. She was sold to Dutchman Diederik Nolten for \$350,000.

Since 1982, when the school acquired this aluminum-hulled, S&S 65, roughly 3,000 sailors have honed their offshore sailing skills aboard her during countless long-haul sail-training voyages and 10



After polishing their skills during a Ha-Ha rally on 'Eagle', Rina (horizontal) and her husband Allan (tank top) took their own boat on a South Pacific circuit.

stints as the TransPac communications vessel. With student sailors aboard, she logged nearly 300,000 miles, zig-zagging all over the Pacific Basin and elsewhere, to make exotic landfalls at places such as Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia and Antarctica.

"Looking back, what we did was amazing," says Karen Prioleau, who served as a relief captain and one of several *Eagle* program coordinators.

"When most sailors head offshore they pick crew that they know well. But we took bunches of people who didn't know each other at all, and transformed them into cohesive teams, working together on long ocean voyages."

We know from the many first-hand reports we've received over the years that participating in those voyages gave 'student' sailors both the skill sets and the self-confidence to later cruise the world on their own boats. If you count yourself among those lucky passagemakers, and have funny, dramatic, or life-changing memories of time spent aboard *Eagle* we'd love to hear about them for possible inclusion in an upcoming feature article. Email: [andy@latitude38.com](mailto:andy@latitude38.com).

As offshore racing buffs will recall, this custom S&S thoroughbred, then named *Flyer*, first came to international prominence in 1978, when she won the second Whitbread Round the World Race ('77-'78). She'd been commissioned by Dutch businessman 'Conny' van Rietschoten specifically to race in the Whitbread. *Flyer* was built at the Netherlands' renowned Royal Huisman Shipyard, with no expense spared. That race, which *Flyer* won, marked the end of the era when race boats actually had relatively comfortable accommodations and interior amenities — including well-stocked wine lockers.

The boat, then owned by Alaskan businessman Neil Bergt, competed in the next Whitbread under the name *Alaska Eagle*. She was the first American entry in the Whitbread (the precursor to the Volvo Ocean Race and others), finishing a respectable 9th out of 29 entries. But Bergt could see that she would no longer be truly competitive against newer speed machines, so he made the decision to donate her to the U.S. Naval Academy. Before that happened, however, watch captain Mike Farley (an OCC alum) alerted his friend Dave Grant, who was an instructor and later Dean of OCC. Grant made repeated pleas to Bergt to steer the donation to OCC, and he eventually acted on his amazement, he did. It was quite a coup.

Rich Crowe was sent out to London to bring the prize back to SoCal and he finagled a ride for his girlfriend Sheri to come along as the cook — even though she was 'culinarily challenged'. The pair made it back to Newport successfully and went on to serve as *Eagle's* primary crew for decades — with school director Brad Avery and a few others occasionally subbed in. So long, *Eagle*, it's been great to know you.

— andy

## latitude 38's

You'll undoubtedly notice a couple of changes to *Latitude* starting this month. Hopefully the biggest change you'll see is that the overall quality of the print job is much better — especially the photos.

While we prefer long-term relationships with printers, we felt the quality had deteriorated and was getting worse by the issue. So we're now working with a new printer, Western Web of Samoa, CA. They have a much newer press than the one we'd been using, which results in much better quality. We hope you notice the difference. It's true that Western Web is located a long ways away, but a number of other Northern California publications have made the switch and are reported to be happy.

Then there is the binding. For years

Both male and female sailors of all stripes have elevated their seamanship skills during 'Alaska Eagle's' many offshore voyages. Sadly, she is now returning to her European roots under new ownership.



## quality boost

*Latitudes* were saddle stitched, which means they are held together by three staples. Then we had them 'perfect bound', which means the ends are squared and glued. Now we're back 'in the saddle' again. Hope you like it.

By the way, we polled readers recently to gauge whether our unconventionally small type (8.5 point) was too small. The majority of respondents urged us to bump it up a tad, but some said not if doing so meant less content. As John Guido put it, "At 61, I'm starting to feel the pinch/squint of smaller type, but if it means getting fewer words per issue — even one word — then NO!" So, like it or not, we'll stick with our long-established format. Sorry if it makes you squint.

— richard

## clipper race arrives in april

Two Bay Area residents who may never have crossed paths sailing on San Francisco Bay found themselves racing across the Atlantic Ocean together aboard *Henry Lloyd*, one of 12 70-ft racing boats participating in the 2013-2014 Clipper Round the World Race. What's even more remarkable is how completely juxtaposed their sailing resumes had been until they started training for the race in late 2012.

Both Elaina Breen and Tony Pohl live in the East Bay and had signed up for two legs of the Clipper Race. Each raced Race 3, Leg Two across the southern Atlantic Ocean from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to Cape Town, South Africa. From there Tony went on to sail Race 4, Leg Three to Albany, Australia. Elaina will rejoin *Henry Lloyd* in April to take part in Legs Seven and Eight (of Races 11-14), from San Francisco to New York via Panama and Jamaica.

Elaina had never taken a sailing lesson prior to deciding to participate in the Clipper Race. It was March 2012 and she'd interviewed some of the women who'd just finished the Clipper's China-to-San Francisco leg. Right after that a thought crept into her mind. "I wasn't willing to admit it to anyone," she says, "not even myself." In

continued on outside column of next sightings page



# SIGHTINGS

## clipper race — cont'd

fact she was two weeks away from her first OCSC sailing lesson: "I set participating in Clipper 2013-2014 as a 'stretch goal' for what I intended to learn with sailing." That's akin to deciding to race the Tour de France just months before learning to ride a bicycle. Elaina thinks of it in terms of being deployed into a war zone, much as her father had been during World War II. Especially for newcomers like Elaina, completing several Clipper legs will be a truly remarkable feat.

In stark contrast, English-bred Tony Pohl has been racing on San Francisco Bay since the early 1970s. He's owned at least six sailboats and he presently campaigns the Farr 40 *Twisted*. Yet the decision to join a Clipper crew came through his professional business career

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## auction to liquidate

In the aftermath of the abrupt closure of Nelson's Marine last May, a wide variety of boats and marine equipment remained unclaimed within the former boatyard's site at 1500 Ferry Point, Alameda. All these items will be auctioned off on February 8, beginning at 1 p.m. (The event was rescheduled from January.)

Acting on behalf of the city of Alameda, Michaan's Auctions will handle the liquidation, which is said to include approximately 50 vessels. In addition to



## nelson's leftovers

a variety of sailboats from 20 to 45 feet, there will be motor yachts from 40 to 70 feet, plus various runabouts.

As the date draws nearer a complete list of auction items will be available on Michaan's website.

Auction items can be previewed per the following schedule:

- Thursday, 2/6, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Friday, 2/7, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Day of sale, beginning at 10 a.m.

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**When the Clipper Round the World Race came to the Bay in 2012 it generated much excitement within the sailing community. The fleet's departure beneath the Golden Gate was quite a sight.**



## clipper race — cont'd

when he spoke in depth with some well-known world-class sailors about crossing the Southern Ocean. "I had a hankering to race in the Southern Ocean," Pohl says. "As I had semi-retired three years earlier, this seemed a perfect vehicle for me to accomplish that goal. I'm pretty active. Last year I climbed Kilimanjaro and I'm looking at the Everest base camp next year. For each of the last three years I've done the Death Ride out of Tahoe. I'm not going to sit around in a rocking chair on my porch!"

You'd have to be as driven as Elaina and Tony to compete at a level like this because without the drive, (and a significant amount of pre-race training), the rigors of the race would leave lesser individuals crumpled in a heap somewhere in the belly of the boat. "It was unquestionably the most physically demanding thing I've ever done," says Elaina. But in the end, it was the teamwork that made it possible.

Without a doubt, teamwork is how Clipper racers get through the most challenging circumstances and continue to finish each leg. Tony's first leg almost ended before it began: An injury he sustained just two days after stepping onto the boat left him with four cracked ribs and in a great deal of pain. Undeterred, he soldiered on with his team's help. Tony initially questioned his teammates' abilities — just as they may have questioned his. "I really had some doubts about going into the Southern Ocean with people I hadn't met." But after a successful first leg, he was fully confident in his teammates' abilities, so he continued racing on to Australia.

For Elaina, competing on this scale isn't so much about achieving personal goals. She's actually using this experience as an opportunity to raise money for Tragedy Assistant Programs for Survivors, or TAPS. This nonprofit organization is dedicated to supporting the families of military personnel who've lost their lives in duty — a cause very close to her heart. When a mother or father is lost in the line of duty, their spouse and children don't necessarily have the equivalent of a team of sailors there to support them, making the future all the more daunting.

Race 8 (Leg Five), which begins at Brisbane, Australia, should be finishing at Singapore at the end of the first week of February. Race 9 begins February 15 and ends in Qingdao, China. Race 10 begins there March 13 and the fleet is expected to arrive at San Francisco in early April — after sailing more than 5,000 miles.

After seven races, *Henry Lloyd* is one point behind first-place *One DLL*, with *Derry-Londonderry-Doire* in third (seven points). No pressure Elaina.

— ross



**Elaina Breen**



**Tony Pohl**

## remembering ramona

As Keith Fullenwider explained in a December *Letter*, when he was a grade-schooler in Sausalito during the mid-1950s, he and his buddies used to fish off a downtown pier. Anchored within their view was a beautiful, well-kept schooner named *Ramona*. Thinking back on those happy days, Keith wrote in to ask if we or our readers knew whatever happened to the two-masted beauty.

After receiving letters last month from both Dave Dennick and Skip Allan about this classic gaffer, our education continued when Margaret 'Pinkie' Pomeroy dropped by recently with a folder of spectacular photos of *Ramona* from her glory days. As Dennick pointed out in *Letters*,

continued on outside column of next sightings page

# SIGHTINGS

## remembering ramona

Pinkie's dad, Bill, owned *Ramona* during the years when Fullenwider used to gaze out at her from the Sausalito waterfront, and it was Bill who skippered her to Hawaii in the '55 Transpac, famously setting a 24-hour run record during the trip: 303 miles. (At age 11, Dennick got to crew on the trip back to the Bay, as his dad was the delivery skipper.)

Pinkie tells us *Ramona* was a Herreshoff design, commissioned for New Yorker Karl L. Tucker and launched as *Ohonkara* in 1920. She was a virtual sistership to *Mariette of 1915* (originally *Kebyar*), once owned by venture capitalist Tom Perkins of Belvedere. *Ramona* raced out of the New York YC and won many squadron races.

"*Ramona* was built of quarter-inch steel plate," explains Pinkie, "all hand-flanged and hand-riveted, with double laps and double riveting. Her overall length from the end of the bowsprit to the end of the main boom was 148 feet, and her sail area, uppers and lowers, was 16,000 square feet."

Pinkie tells us she took the name *Ramona* when sold in 1929. Five years later she was sold again and brought to the West Coast. Before Pinkie's dad purchased her in '52 and based her at Sausalito, she had two other West Coast owners — one of whom lent her to the Navy during WWII for an eight-month stint of coastal patrolling.

As Pinkie tells it, the year after Bill Pomeroy brought the lovely schooner to Sausalito "he took the entire family — my mother, two brothers and me — on a six-month voyage to the Hawaiian, Society and Marquesas islands." On a later family cruise to the Pacific Northwest she remembers sailing into Princess Louisa Inlet to see Chatterbox Falls. But sadly, *Ramona*'s 16-foot-deep keel grounded her en route.

After the Pomeroy's stint of stewardship, the boat appeared in the movie *A Summer Place*, then was sold again in 1959 and eventually ended up in the Eastern Caribbean.

As Skip Allan correctly pointed out in his January *Letter*, the lifespan of this spectacular schooner was cut short tragically in 1967, when she hit a reef off Bermuda and sank, causing the death of five crew. Longtime schoonerman Bill Bodle (currently of *Eros*, and formerly of *Nordlys*, *Grace* and *Panda*) fleshed out that part of the story. *Ramona*'s last owner was Walter Boudreau, a Canadian who'd been stationed in the Caribbean during WWII. He apparently fell in love with the place, because when the war ended he chose to muster out at St. Croix, then took his pay and bought Marigot Bay — the harbor and the headland — in St. Lucia, now home to resorts and charter bases. (Yeah, Caribbean property was a bit cheaper back then.)

Boudreau built an inn or hotel there, and to entertain guests he bought both *Ramona* and *Mariette*. According to Bodle, who, with his wife Grace, was a pioneer of early Caribbean yacht chartering, business was slow for Boudreau, so he eventually sold *Mariette* to a Frenchman who took her to Tahiti. With the money, Boudreau sailed *Ramona* up to the famous traditional shipbuilding port of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia for a refit with substantial upgrades. It was on the way back to the Caribbean that the splendid schooner met her untimely end.

But here's the little-known footnote to that tragedy: According to

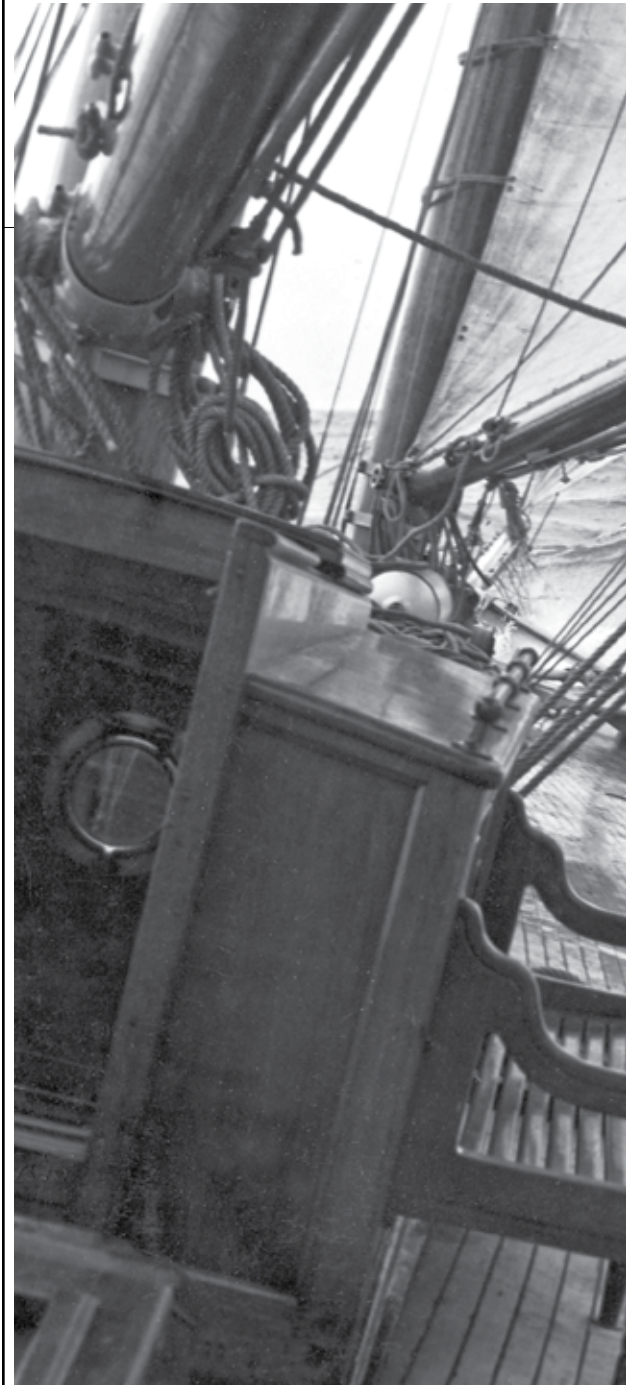
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## nelson's auction

• By appointment: (800) 380-9822 or (510) 740-0220

Although the city of Alameda's closure of Nelson's marked a sad end to one of the Bay Area boating scene's most well-known institutions, a potential silver lining may be that auction 'winners' could breathe new life into many boats that have been long neglected or abandoned.

The list (available on Michaan's web-



COURTESY PINKIE POMEROY



The Herreshoff-designed 'Ramona' was launched in 1920 and had 16,000 square-feet of sail area.



## — cont'd

site) includes not only all sorts of sailboats and motorboats, but also such things as small motorhomes, sailing dinghies, bare hulls, outboard and inboard engines, trailers for dinghies, powerboats and daysailers, rolling metal staircases, and lots and lots of boat stands.

If you're looking for a new project, you won't want to miss it.

— andy

## ramona — cont'd

Bodle — who keeps track of such things in that encyclopedic brain of his — Boudreau's insurance company insisted that their own captain pilot *Ramona* back to St. Lucia. And it was he — much to Boudreau's protests — who incorrectly assessed the approach to Bermuda and drove the renowned schooner onto a reef.

Here's the kicker: With his insurance settlement, Boudreau went to Tahiti and bought *Mariette* back from the Frenchman. And, as many schooner aficionados know, she is still racing and cruising today — the ultimate compliment to Nate Herreshoff's nautical artistry.

— andy



COURTESY PINKIE POMEROY

# SIGHTINGS

## kiss my hin!

As aggravating as the impounding of hundreds of foreign-owned boats in Mexico has been — including *Latitude's Profligate* — it's had its funny moments, too.

For example, no matter what you do in 36 years of writing, you're not going to be able to please everyone. So a small group of dislikers have taken the opportunity of the impoundment of *Profligate* to take all kinds of potshots at us. One of the potshots making the rounds of various cruiser forums is that *Profligate* had been impounded because her 20-Year Temporary Import — the precursor of 10-Year Import

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## eight bells

We rarely run obits as part of our editorial mix, but we couldn't help bidding farewell in print to one of the West Coast's most colorful characters. Merl Petersen, longtime captain of the 74-ft schooner *Viveka* passed over the bar last month at the age of 91.

Upon hearing the news, those who knew him well were probably more likely to crack a smile than shed a tear, as he



LATITUDE / RICHARD

## for merl

was a light-hearted prankster who was associated with all sorts of crazy antics back in the good old days before political correctness. One of his more famous stunts was a mock sea battle in 1961 off the Sausalito waterfront between *Viveka* and Enrico Banducci's lovely 60-ft Alden ketch *Shearwater*. The smoke and noise from cannon fire created gridlock on

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Permits — had expired.

In fact, we and our harbor master got a sincere email from a reasonable-sounding fellow cruiser asking about the veracity of the forum rumor. Having nothing to hide, we responded that it wasn't true, but if the gentleman wanted, we would be happy to welcome him aboard *Profligate* so that he could check out the expiration date on our TIP, our boat document, our HIN (hull identification number), our document number in the hull of the boat, our insurance policy, and whatever else he wanted to see. But he took us at our word and declined.

But the more we got to thinking about the rumor-mongers, the more we decided that they should either put up or shut up — which gave rise to the 'Kiss My HIN' challenge. Under such a program, we're happy to invite anyone who wants to come aboard to check all our documents and such for compliance. But the catch is that if *Profligate* has all she needs, you — even if you're a guy — have to let Doña de Mallorca paint thick, smeary, Rocky Horror Show type lipstick on your lips, and then you have to kiss *Profligate's* HIN and get your photo taken doing it. Perfectly reasonable, right?

Because Jane Roy of the Portland-based Columbia 43 *Adios* is fun-loving and enjoys seeing her photo in *Latitude*, she took us up on the challenge. First, she inspected our TIP to confirm that it doesn't expire until 2018, and then she went through all the other documents. Having lost the challenge, it was time for her to kiss our HIN. We feel a little cheated, however, as she used non-smearing lipstick. We're not going to let anyone get off so easily in the future.

Like some other boat owners, we have not only outlined our HIN number in blue tape, we sanded the paint off that part of the rear crossbeam so anyone and everyone could better see the HIN numbers pounded into the beam. Before sanding, the numbers were not as obvious, as the beam was painted over several times in the last 17 years. We did the taping and paint removal partly because we were told that AGACE inspectors had been looking for *Profligate's* HIN near the top of her rear starboard steps, 13 feet from the back of the boat, an area which in any event had been painted over three times in the last five years. Had they only asked the owner of *Profligate*, we could have pointed out the numbers to them, saving everyone a lot of trouble.

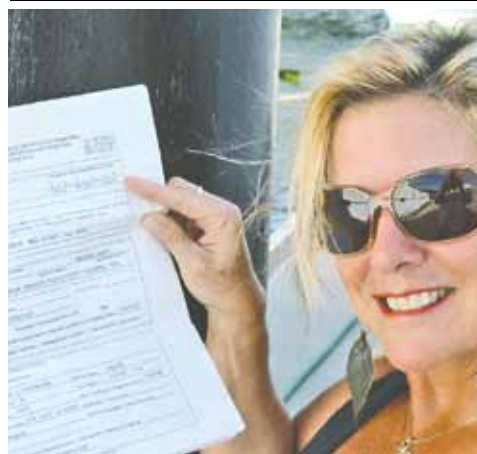
So, anybody still want to take the 'Kiss My HIN Challenge'?

—richard

## having a baby . . . in mexico?

In June 2012, Max and Elizabeth Shaw of Nova Scotia, then both retired after 23 years as engineers in the Canadian Air Force, sold their house and bought *Fluenta*, a Stevens 47, that happened to be on the other side of the continent in Washington. Their goal was to do the 2012 Ha-Ha with their daughter Victoria, then 8, and son Jonathan, then 6. Four months wasn't a lot of time to get familiar with a new-to-them boat, but they had a great Ha-Ha, during which time they met several other 'kid boats' that they have remained friends with.

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LATITUDE / RICHARD

Jane Roy inspects *Profligate's* documents as part of the 'Kiss My HIN' challenge.

## having a baby — cont'd

Max and Elizabeth had often thought about having a third child, and oddly enough one of the deciding factors was being told by friends that their Stevens 47 had proven to be a large enough boat for them and their three kids. Elizabeth discovered she was pregnant at the end of the Banderas Bay Regatta last March.

The couple decided that Elizabeth should do a water birth — what else would you expect from a couple who named their boat after the

Latin word for 'flowing water'? And they were thrilled to find Dr. Antonia Vargas, who specializes in such things at her Hacienda Libre Clinic near the cruise ship terminal in Puerto Vallarta. "Tony," says Elizabeth, "is a mid-wife at heart, but she's also a GP. Her husband, Augustin Audulo, is a pediatrician. And they are backed up by two obstetricians."

Elizabeth wasn't going to let her being pregnant stop the family from doing an early summer cruise in the Sea of Cortez. "I got the basic prenatal care, and had baby's heartbeat and other things checked from

time to time. But I did a lot of self-care. I felt confident, as I do yoga, eat well, felt healthy, and had already had two children."

The Shaw parents and children had a great time cruising in the Sea, as they met up with the six other 'kid boats' in La Paz, and cruised from April until June. "I don't want to leave out any names, but there were 10 parents and 10 kids. It's was ideal for the kids, as they had plenty of playmates and things to do, and ideal for the parents, as we'd take turns caring for the kids, and thus get lots of free time to ourselves we wouldn't have otherwise gotten. We enjoyed bonfires on the beach and lots of other activities."

*Fluenta* was put in a marina in Mazatlan in June while the Shaws returned to Canada to visit family and friends. They returned to Mazatlan in October. "It's really too hot to be pregnant in Mazatlan in October," says Elizabeth. They then moved *Fluenta* down to Marina Riviera Nayarit in La Cruz near Puerto Vallarta. "It's really too hot to be pregnant in La Cruz in November," says Elizabeth. So the family rented an air-conditioned condo in La Cruz for the duration of her pregnancy and beyond.

Elizabeth spent the last week of her pregnancy living in the birth house in Puerto Vallarta. "It worked really great." She gave birth to Benjamin, a healthy young boy, in late November. Not only were the parents delighted, but the kids have been, too. "I have to wait my turn to hold him," laughs Elizabeth.

She notes that women living on boats or who have taken a brief leave from living on boats have given birth to at least six babies in the Vallarta area in the last year. As you might expect, the Shaws are going to take a break from cruising until Benjamin gets a little older. Oops, check that! Max and Elizabeth aren't taking a break from

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LATITUDE / RICHARD

Once the Shaws realized 'Fluenta' was big enough, they decided to expand their crew list with a new recruit.

## merl

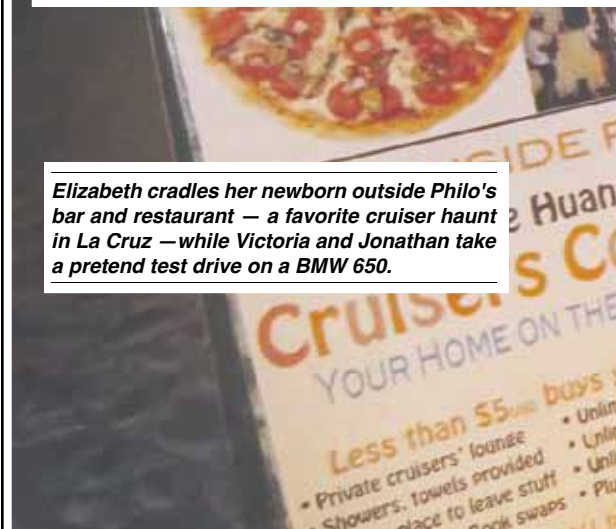
Bridgeway.

Merl was proud of such silliness — don't get us started about the waterskiing elephant — but undoubtedly even more proud of his seven-year circumnavigation, westabout, via the Suez and Panama Canals. It started when Merl entered *Viveka* (she was then 60 years old) in a 1989 race from Honolulu to Hiroshima, Japan. She took third.

All in all, he and his beloved schooner (which is now being meticulously renovated by Jeff Rutherford for a European owner) logged roughly 150,000 miles during Merl's 54 years of ownership. Together, they weathered a Mexican hurricane at sea, another on the way back from Tahiti,



Elizabeth cradles her newborn outside Philo's bar and restaurant — a favorite cruiser haunt in La Cruz — while Victoria and Jonathan take a pretend test drive on a BMW 650.



## — cont'd

and a third while in Japan. *Viveka* also outran at least one boatload of pirates.

The backstory to this final anecdote is a bit hazy, but years ago when a flamboyant salt named Spike Africa passed away, Merl

somehow inherited his lofty nickname: President of the Pacific Ocean. So now we were wondering who deserves that moniker next. Nominations?

Farewell to a truly fun-loving friend.

— andy



**Mischievous Merl**

## having a baby — cont'd

cruising at all, as they are planning to make the 2,800-mile Puddle Jump to French Polynesia in March.

"Our goal is to do the Puddle Jump," says Max. "We have no goals beyond spending a couple of years exploring the South Pacific."

The Shaws have already connected with "three or four" other 'kid boats' that will be doing the Puddle Jump. "Naturally kid boats gravitate toward each other," says Elizabeth, "but we're all agreeing that we're going to leave on our own schedule and cross at our own speed. The attitude is 'We'll meet up again when we get there.'"

What do Victoria and Jonathan think about the cruising life? "They love it," says Elizabeth. "We all go through moments of wistfulness for friends and places back home, of course, but we love it. And there are lots of jobs the kids can do on the boat. For example, Victoria and I took the bus from Mazatlan to Puerto Vallarta, while Max, another adult, and Jonathan sailed the boat down. With supervision, of course, Jonathan was able to sail a compass course and stand watch."

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LATTUDE / RICHARD

# SIGHTINGS

## having a baby — cont'd

The Shaws have very specific safety rules for the kids. The kids have to ask permission to leave the center cockpit, they have to be clipped in if they leave the cockpit when sailing and after dark, they have to wear PFDs, and so forth.

In addition to being home-schooled, the Shaw children are getting an additional kind of education. "Kids on boats get along very well with adults. They look people in the eye when they talk to them, and they can explain all kinds of things you wouldn't expect, such as 12-volt systems."

What's the difference between a family living nearly 24/7 on a boat and normal life in Nova Scotia? "It's less frenetic, for wherever you go, there you are," says Elizabeth.

Being pregnant while cruising the Sea of Cortez with two other kids, and happy to head to the South Pacific with a nearly newborn baby, Elizabeth sounds like an earth mother to us.

"Real earth mothers think I'm too mainstream," she says, "and mainstream mothers think I'm too much of an earth mother."

— richard

## old guys

Sailing industry analysts often point out that our sport's demographics — pertaining to racing and cruising as well as daysailing — are trending upward. While it's probably true that fewer young people are getting into sailing than did several decades ago, the other reason for this trend is that modern sailors are staying physically active far longer than previous generations did.

Take, for example, participants in last fall's Baja Ha-Ha rally: there were at least 18 entrants who were 70 or older, many of whom were skippering. At the awards ceremony at Cabo Marina, we called them all up for an 'old guys — and gals — portrait'

The 'youngsters' among them were



Sorry, with all these gray beards we can't remember who's who, but in no particular order the 2013 Ha-Ha elders were: Joe Helfand of 'Jolin', 70; Walt Frickie of 'Dulcinea', 73; Babe Lambert of 'Simpatica', 70; John O'Day of 'Dulcinea', 73; Nick Gibson of 'Serendipity', 73; Lynn Miller of 'Four Choices', 72; Fred Hazzard of 'Fury', 71; Mala Laurin, 74, and Dane Laurin, 75, of 'SeaQuester'; Bill Noonan of 'Rocket Science', 71; Fred Delaney of 'Scout', 71; Mike Stafford of 'Hotel California', 71; Bob Seddig of 'A Good Day', 72; Bob Gray of 'Trial Run', 73; plus Wayne Hendryx, Ingemar Olsson, Maureen Gray and Jim Tantillo (mentioned above).

PHOTOS LATITUDE / ANDY

## (& gals) rule

Wayne Hendryks of the Brisbane-based Hughes 45 cat *Capricorn Cat* (front left with arms spread) and Ingemar Olsson of the Seattle-based Nautic 43 *Fool's Castle* (kneeling with blue jeans). Both had just turned 70.

The 'most senior' were Jim Tantillo, 80, (far right kneeling) who was crewing aboard the Ventura-based Nordic 40 *Seaquel* for blind skipper John Berg, and Maureen Gray, 86 (pink shirt), of the Newport Beach-based Islander 55 *Good News*. We think she probably set a new Ha-Ha benchmark for elder-but-active, as she insisted on provisioning the boat and cooking all the meals for her son Gary and the rest of her boatmates.

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## a hypnotically fascinating tool

The Information Age has been a boon to mariners in more ways than we can count, providing innovations such as GPS, chart plotters, AIS and GRIB files, all of which greatly enhance the safety of travel on the ocean. But a new graphical development called the Earth Wind Map has set a new standard for combining fascinating imagery with (near) real-time wind information. Check it out online at [earth.nullschool.net](http://earth.nullschool.net) and we think you'll agree that the 'wow' factor is off the chart.

Developed by software engineer Cameron Beccario from data gathered by the US National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, the interactive map allows users to monitor wind patterns virtually anywhere on earth. The Google Earth-style display lets you adjust the globe's image to wherever you want, and zoom in for a more detailed analysis. Data are updated every three hours.

While flow patterns indicate wind direction — almost hypnotically — all over the planet, a subtle color scheme indicates wind strength, with gentle breezes represented by thin green lines, stronger winds by bright yellow, and extreme winds by red.

One look at the central North Pacific (top image) and it will be obvious to you how all that rubbish ends up in the North Pacific Gyre. And why Tahiti-bound cruisers need to pick their route carefully as they head west.

Take a look at the Atlantic and you can see how Columbus easily found his way to the West Indies — and how he made it back to Europe on a contrary wind pattern with relative ease. Despite what we think about many government expenditures, the National Weather Service's work certainly represents money well-spent — especially in the hands of a visionary like Beccario.

— andy

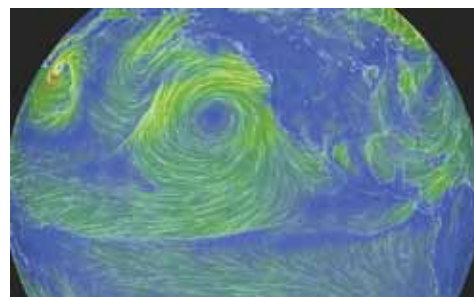
## new ditch in financial logjam

Considering the legendary difficulties that both the French and Americans endured while building the original Panama Canal a century ago, it's not surprising that construction of a new set of locks — originally slated to open this summer — has fallen substantially behind schedule. But recent news reports indicate that the colossal construction project has much bigger problems than meeting a theoretical timetable.

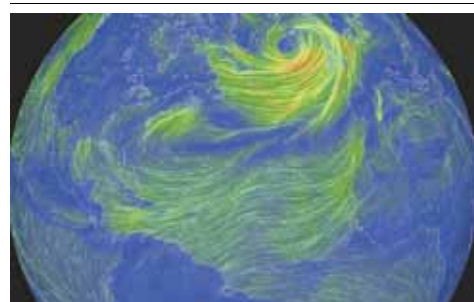
The whole issue is intensely complicated, but in a nutshell the multinational contracting group GUPC (United for the Panama Canal Group) has run out of funds to continue the multi-phase project, and is demanding — but so far has not received — an overrun payment of \$1.6 billion in order to continue, which is more than a third of its original \$3.2 billion bid. It's been reported that a complete work stoppage could come this month.

When proposed in 2006, the project received overwhelming support from both the Panamanian government and its citizenry, 76%

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The North Pacific



The North Atlantic

EARTH WIND MAP

EARTH WIND MAP

# SIGHTINGS

## new ditch in financial logjam

of whom showed their approval in a national referendum. When — or if — completed, the new locks will accommodate 'New Panamax' class vessels, which are up to 1,400 feet long and 180 feet wide, as compared to the current maximums of 950 feet x 106 feet.

The root of the problem today, however, seems to be that the project was massively underbid, which many now claim was obvious at the outset. Allegations of corruption are rampant. According to *The Panama News*, "The US Embassy and every credible independent business observer identi-



ACP / PANAMA CANAL

The new lanes will recycle water via three basins.

fied the winning bid as a grossly unrealistic lowball offer at the time that the contract was awarded to GUPC, with the Americans suspecting that there was a hidden subsidy from the Spanish government at the time." The key players in that government are now out of office, however, and Spain has enormous financial problems of its own.

The further you dig into the controversy the more tangled this web appears to be. But construction is so far along already — and so critically important to Panama's future — that we have to believe it will be completed one way or another. Indeed, The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is considering a plan to finish the work with its own resources, while (again, according to *The Panama News*) the "US-based Bechtel corporation [is] waiting in the wings."

Meanwhile, 500 miles to the north, it was recently announced that Nicaragua will break ground this year on its own Pacific-to-Caribbean waterway. The project, expected to take five years to complete, will traverse 170 miles across Central America, and is largely being funded by Chinese telecom billionaire Wang Jing.

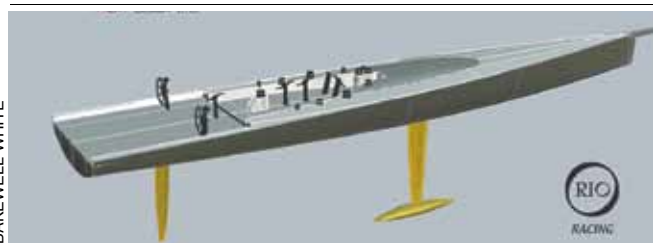
What will the bottom-line impact be on sailors? That's anybody's guess. When and if Panama's new lane opens it could make small boat transits easier. But that's not a sure bet. And while Panama has a mandate to allow (annoyingly) small vessels through, it remains to be seen if Nicaragua will follow suit or simply shoo them away in deference to massive cargo traffic.

— andy

## hawaii race update

The bi-annual Pacific Cup race to Hawaii now has over 70 entries in four divisions including cruising, doublehanded, fully crewed and mul-

tihull. One recent stand-out entry is Manouch Moshayedi's *Rio 100*, a Bakewell-White-designed, Cookson-built sloop from



BAKEWELL-WHITE

The yet-unlaunched 'Rio 100' will be the definition of sleek and sexy.

Corona del Mar. Although it is still being finished in New Zealand, it should put on quite a show.

If you are planning to race, be sure to go online to [www.pacificcup.org/seminars](http://www.pacificcup.org/seminars) and dive into the variety information, including written

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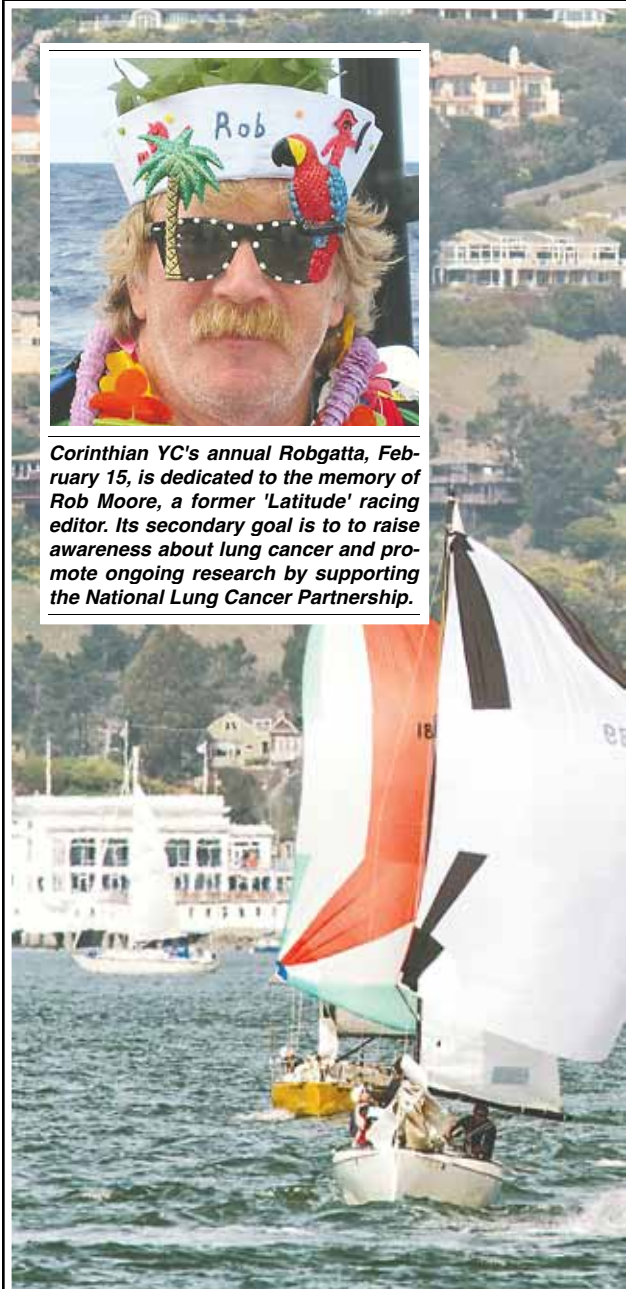
## old guys & gals

Likewise, Tantillo has been an inspiration to us ever since he crewed aboard *Profligate* in 1999 (then a youngster of 66), and earned the nickname "Twinger" because he would tirelessly fiddle with the big cat's running rigging in an effort to maximize her performance. Since then, he's crewed on five other Ha-Has, and we hear he'll be looking for a ride this fall too.

"My six Baja Ha-Ha trips were all good," says Tantillo, who often coaches would-be cruisers on proper preparation before they head south. "No broken bones, lots of new friends, and lots of new experiences."



Corinthian YC's annual Robgatta, February 15, is dedicated to the memory of Rob Moore, a former 'Latitude' racing editor. Its secondary goal is to raise awareness about lung cancer and promote ongoing research by supporting the National Lung Cancer Partnership.





## — cont'd

But sailing with John Berg was a standout: "He is completely blind and did more on his boat than any sailor I have seen. What I learned from sailing with John is that all of us humans are so much more capable of doing anything than we can imagine."

Our hats are off to all of these spunky seniors, although we probably shouldn't be so surprised to see so many fit, active oldsters cruising offshore because, as someone cleverly noted: "Old is the new young!"

— andy

## hawaii race update — cont'd

material and videos that provide valuable details on many aspects of Pacific Cup racing. There is also one last public seminar on March 16. The half-day event is suitable for anyone interested in long-distance racing and/or cruising across the Pacific. Sign up online for \$20.

Look for further updates on this 2,070-mile contest both here and in *Lectronic Latitude*. Starts for the various classes of the 2014 Pacific Cup will run July 6-12 off the St. Francis YC.

Meanwhile the biennial Singlehanded TransPac is also holding seminars at the Oakland YC. On Wednesday, February 12 at 7:30 p.m., the evening's topic will be about returning from Hawaii, and how you can ship your boat home or what you should consider when planning to race. For more information, go online to [sfbaysss.org](http://sfbaysss.org). Racing starts June 28.

— ross



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