

# CHANGES

which are among the largest and most expensive cruising yachts in the world.)

Ron is just one of several accomplished ex-Northern California sailors who sails with Enersen. Others include Peter Brown, who dropped out of his law practice to race the Olson 30 *Gold Rush* in the Singlehanded TransPac, then sailed around the world. And Dan Newland, who won a Singlehanded TransPac with a Wylie 34. And Linda Weber-Rettie (now Newland), who did a Singlehanded TransPac and later singlehanded from San Francisco to Japan. Like Dick, all are members of the Cruising Club of America (CCA).

In addition to light winds, the Pacific Northwest is known for strong currents.

"I read about there being as much as 16 knots of current in Seymour Narrows," says Dick, "but I personally haven't been caught in anything more than eight knots. But current is a very big deal in the Pacific Northwest, so it's important to read up on it and treat it with respect."

It's not always possible to anchor in the Northwest, but when it is, Enersen says it's generally in 20 to 80 feet, mostly in mud bottoms.

Enersen has found that mosquitoes can be a problem in the early summer, and sometimes yellowjackets depending on the location. "But neither has been enough to spoil my day."

Shellfish such as crab are a staple in the Pacific Northwest, but Dick isn't into crabbing. "I've done it, and there are those who love it, but I'd just as soon scrounge shrimp, crab and oysters from others. Or just buy it."

Type-A cruisers will be thrilled to learn that Dick says he can often get Internet while cruising on *Brass Ring*.

"I've tried many plans over the years, but I'm currently using a Canada Calling

**Enersen sailing mate Ron Holland came out of nowhere with the design of Dave Allen's 'Imp' to become a designer of huge sailing yachts.**

Plan from AT&T, which allows me to use my iPhone as a hot spot. Cell coverage has expanded greatly in recent years for those on boats," he says. "In addition, some marinas and many restaurants offer Wi-Fi."

*Brass Ring* is kept in the water year-round. Enersen notes that marina rates are significantly lower in the winter.

— *latitude/rs* 11/15/2016

## Ñandú — Maine Cat 41 Juan and Kathy Navarro The Big Transition (Silicon Valley)

Transitioning from the working life to retirement cruising is not easy. Juan, a retired software engineer, and Kathy, a medical doctor before the couple legally moved to the United States from South America, know all about it. Last summer they sold their house and bought a Maine 41 catamaran, and christened her *Ñandú* after the large flightless bird native to South America.

The transition has proved "long and exhausting." First there was selling the house, which was actually easier than expected because neighbors bought it before they put it on the market, negating the need for staging. The buyers were nice enough to rent the house back to the couple for five weeks, too. Then they rented a storage space in Fairfield because it's a lot less expensive than similar space in the Valley.

Juan and Kathy quit their jobs to deal with the 'only in America' health insurance mess. Juan got a new laptop that is "no longer supported by people who know what they are doing." He then spent 22 continuous days getting just 50% of a backup with CrashPlan.

"Getting rid of everything" meant half of his windsurfing gear and a lot of his photography equipment, plus "thousands of things at home." For each one of the things they were getting rid of, they had to decide whether to dump it and where, recycle it and to whom, sell it and to whom, or decide if it would fit in the tiny rented storage space or on the boat. "Truly overwhelming" was their verdict on all the decisions they had to make.

"We made one trip to the used-record store, three carloads to Half Price Books, one trip to the San Francisco windsurfing swap meet, and another to a Delta swap meet," the latter just to sell a mast and a boom at a tenth



the price I paid for them". There was another trip to San Francisco to donate art supplies, one to the local recycling center, another to the household waste center, a garage sale, and lots of transactions on eBay, which required trips to the Post Office.

Then there was updating estate-planning documents, wills and powers of attorney, and scanning important documents. There were final visits to various doctors, dentists, optometrists and therapists. And the accountant, too. Other jobs included closing some bank accounts and opening better ones, doing some financial planning, getting their kids to open checking and credit-card accounts, and teaching them some basic 'financial hygiene'.

Juan also had to finish his dinghy. "I started building *Gecko* three years ago when our cruising plans were still nebulous. I finished her just in time to use it as a tender for the big boat."

Looking after the construction of the



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ALL PHOTOS COURTESY NANDU

in colleges less than 100 miles away and most of our possessions, all to cram ourselves into a small floating platform with composting toilets and no Internet 3,000 miles away from everything we know?"

They do have some prior adventuring experience. When they were "half our current age," they did an eight-month drive on secondary and tertiary roads from Montreal to Quito, Ecuador. This time their adventure could last "anywhere from one year to 10 years."

Then there was the matter of getting 3,600 miles to their new catamaran in Maine. "We passed through 14 states and provinces, three national parks, and took 23 days — 14 on the road — doing it. The best town was Jackson, Wyoming; the worst town was Jackpot, Nevada. Most you-cannot-be-there-and-not-mention-it town: Fargo, North Dakota. The most scenic drive was Beartooth Pass Montana, which was truly breathtaking."

As anybody knows who has ever had a boat, even a production boat, built for them, the boat was ready right on time. Just kidding.

"Moving onto our new boat was nothing like the romantic and exciting start of a new life that we had envisioned," say the couple. "We had to load a ton of stuff from the minivan and trailer, but there was no place to store anything because the storage spaces were not finished. And the shelves and doors that would be part of the storage space were on the beds and floors, interspersed with tools and rags, leaving very little space for anything else. On top of that, there was fiberglass dust everywhere. Our new boat was not the most welcoming place."

But fresh water flowed out of the faucets, propane flowed out of the stove burners, and the mattresses had been delivered earlier that day. So while it wasn't their Silicon Valley house, they

**Having made their way down the Intracoastal, Juan and Kathy tied 'Nandu' up at Charleston, SC, home to crazy clouds.**



**Clockwise from lower right; A Maine Cat 41 is an interesting choice for a cruising cat. The beautiful Beartooth Highway. 'Nandu' as seen from the quarter. Juan rows Kathy in 'Gecko', his labor of love. Cruising down the ICW. Oliver the boat cat was slow to warm up to the cruising life.**

new catamaran from a distance was no minor matter either. While the fundamental decisions had been made, there were still many more, ranging from very important ones such as what anchors and rode to carry, to the critical ones, such as what toilets to install.

"There was still a long list of options, each one requiring some research," Juan remembers. "Rigid or semi-flexible solar panels? How many? Connected in series or parallel? MPPT or PWM controllers? (What do I know about solar energy?) Lithium or AGM batteries? How many 12v and 120v outlets and where? Pentex or Hydranet sails? Cork floor? Logo and lettering ("Nope, we can't paint it that way"). Choose color of everything: bottom paint (black), boot stripe and lettering (rochelle red), sail cover (charcoal gray), cushions (mixed redwood). Do we want Dyneema or wire lifelines? What about

AIS? Do we prefer GMR 18 HD or GMR 18 xHD? P-79 or triducer? It's the first time we'd heard of most of those acronyms, too."

Did we mention they needed to get their two children settled in college, too?

Nonetheless, the couple found time to attend "one last New-Age, crazy, hippie event that you can only find in California, in our case the Ecstatic Festival."

And they also found time to question their sanity.

"Haven't we shown terribly bad judgment with this decision? Leave a tech job and a steady check, a beautiful house in Silicon Valley, old and new friends, two daughters



NANDU

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could live on their cat.

After a few days floating tied to a mooring buoy, a more positive mood replaced their initial shock. "Firstly, while the builder may have seemed slow to finish the boat, we developed confidence in the workmanship, and the boat did look lovely — if we ignored some details, such as duct-taped plastic film in lieu of windows. Secondly, things started to find their place, so it took us less than a minute to find our underwear. And perhaps



**'Gecko' reflects well on the water — and her builder.**

most importantly, the composting toilets worked as advertised!"

The couple compiled a long list of things to fix and finish, only to learn that one of the key workers, the electrician, was at the hospital with a serious infection. They started to wonder whether they were the carriers of a nautical curse.

"A couple of years before we owned a 1948 Folkboat, and we'd hired a wooden-boat expert to inspect the boat to give us a recommendation on a particular issue. He didn't show up and then didn't return our phone calls. When we finally got hold of his assistant, we were told the reason he hadn't returned our calls was because he had died. Less than a year after that, I hired a diver to clean the boat's bottom. He didn't show up and didn't return our phone calls. Appallingly enough, the story repeated itself almost exactly.

**Eventually Juan and Kathy got their Maine Cat 41 together and cruising. Oddly, the alternator bracket was an ongoing misery.**

"So after two unexpected, tragic deaths in our nautical record, the news was downright scary. Luckily, the electrician survived our curse and came back two weeks later. By then the list had grown to include a broken alternator bolt."

In the following months, the alternator-mount problems would nearly become the bane of the couple's existence.

"We got ourselves busy learning about the boat's systems. We learned, for instance, that the watermaker will actually consume your precious fresh water. Turns out that if you don't use it for a few days — and we didn't because the seawater in that little fishing harbor didn't look clean enough — the watermaker will use three gallons of fresh water to flush the system in order to keep the very expensive membrane from getting ruined. When the time for the flush came, there was, of course, no water left in the tank the watermaker was connected to.

"Actually, there was water, but it wouldn't flow out of the tank because, as we learned later, of a clogged vent. Clogged with, most ironically, fresh water. So there we were, manually moving water with the kettle from the tank in the other hull, to feed water to this fabulous gadget that was supposed to feed water to us."

Then one day something was suddenly amiss.

"My beloved dinghy *Gecko*," reports Juan, "fruit of years of hard weekend labor, had just vanished! Panic ensued. And quite a bit of frustration, given that I had just spent almost two full days installing a gunwale guard. Without such an indispensable item as the dinghy, the situation was disastrous and, frankly, terribly embarrassing.

"Desperation turned into hope when we recognized a black, red and gray shape on a rocky beach on the island in front of us. The dinghy was there, waiting

for us! We quickly donned our wetsuits and jumped onto one sailboard each, and swam, paddled and kicked to the island. *Gecko* the dinghy had magically cradled itself a soft layer of seaweed, without even a scratch.

"What had happened was that each of us thought the other one was going to tie the dinghy, and neither of us did, nor did we double-check. Lesson learned. Maybe."



All and all, the couple found no time to relax. "The to-do lists remained long, with forms to fill out, manuals to read, spare parts to buy, things to organize, the van and trailer to sell, gear to inspect, and diesel engines to understand. But we know that for the moment we are just experiencing most of the bad and few of the good things of cruising, and we also know the tide will eventually change. So, when we get overwhelmed, we just take a deep breath and look outside to enjoy one of those good things: the landscape that surrounds us."

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## Cruise Notes:

Bill Leary of the Kaneohe Bay, Oahu-based Beneteau 351 *Moku pe'a* has just published an online cruising guide titled *Noodle's Notes, Fifty Years of Sailing the Hawaiian Islands*. Despite being free, we think it's the best cruising guide to the

