

mexico and panama

minutes of fame in these pages:

- February 29, 3-6 p.m. — Vallarta YC at Nuevo Vallarta's Paradise Village
- March 6, 2-5 p.m. — Shelter Bay Marina, Panama
- March 7, 2-5 p.m. — Wyndham Hotel, Balboa (Albrook), Panama

In June, we and our Tahitian partners will again host the three-day Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendez-Vous (June 24-26), a celebration of the fleet's arrival that introduces cruisers to Polynesian traditions in music, dance, sport and cuisine. Stay tuned for PPJ updates.

— andy

a marquesan epiphany

When cruising sailors find themselves getting stressed out from trying to stick to a planned itinerary, the best solution may simply be to change the plan. That's what Eric and Leslie Rigney have done at least twice since setting sail from their Marina del Rey homeport.

The first time was in the fall of 2014 when they were scrambling to complete preparations on their 1987 Tayana 42 *Kandu* in order to participate in that year's Baja Ha-Ha rally with their adolescent sons Bryce, then 13, and Trent, then 11. "The stress of trying to achieve that goal prevents me from sleeping," Eric wrote to the Rally Committee in his dropout note. They'd actually signed up and dropped out the previous year also due to a misunderstanding over Eric's retirement status. But they did attend the 2013 Costume Kickoff Party in full pirate garb, and collected their swag bag full of Ha-Ha logowear.

The family finally began their cruising adventures in February 2015.

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SIGHTINGS

epiphany — continued

sailing first to Mexico, then eventually to the Galapagos Islands and on to the Marquesas. Eric was wearing his bright-yellow 2013 Ha-Ha shirt when Sausalito-based cruisers Sylvia and Barry Stompe of the Hughes 48 *Iolani* bumped into him on the dock at Nuku Hiva's Taiohae Bay last month. "Before the family's arrival," explains Sylvia, "They'd been beset by difficulties — poor weather, the adjustments to living aboard, breakdowns — and thus had not been having a great time. But after arriving in the Marquesas, they had an epiphany. Rather than rush onwards with their planned five-year circumnavigation, they decided to spend a whole season here. As a result, of course, they're having a much more in-depth experience than most cruisers we've met." And as you can see by the photo on the left, they're now all smiles.

Sylvia explains, "The family has recently obtained certificates of

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tompkins biopic

Commodore Tompkins has never won the America's Cup or an Olympic medal, but he is widely regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and accomplished sailors on the West Coast.

Born into a voyaging family, he famously rounded Cape Horn aboard the family schooner, *Wander Bird*, at the age of four, and he's been adding impressive feats to his sailing résumé ever since.

A new film about Warwick 'Commodore' Tompkins, Jr.'s life will premiere February 24 at Mill Valley's Throckmorton Theatre — the latest in the highly



When the Rigneys finally reached the Marquesas they asked themselves, "What's the rush?" Today, they've obtained special residency status, Bryce, 14, and Trent, 12, attend the local school, and Eric and Leslie have volunteered to help with myriad community projects.

premieres on 24th

acclaimed *Life on the Water* series of salty sailor profiles by Director Oleg Harencar.

Commodore will fly up from New Zealand to attend, and will field questions. A who's who of local sailing luminaries will also be on hand to share stories. This is sure to be a sellout, so get tickets early at the box office or call (415) 383-9600.

— andy



Aboard 'Wander Bird'.

LIFE ON THE WATER

epiphany — continued

resident status in Taiohae Bay, the administrative capital of the Marquesas. The boys are attending the local secondary school; Eric [a former motion picture exec.] is involved with a vocational training program, helping entrepreneurs present their ideas, and culinary students learn their trade. He is also organizing an outrigger racing team to travel to Southern California. Leslie, a musician and opera singer by trade, is teaching English to locals for free, working with the local music club and school music program, and she sings in church. Volunteering is fun for them, and has been a great way to make friends and integrate into the community."

As we learned by digging out the family's entry materials from the 2013 Ha-Ha, this unplanned stint in the remote Marquesas archipelago is a case of coming full circle for Eric. He and his three younger brothers were raised by their Uncle Bill (Kohut), a mechanical engineer who, Eric recalls, "taught us self-sufficiency, and how to repair and maintain just about anything mechanical or otherwise. He set strong examples in the areas of education, making your own opportunities, dreaming outside the box, the power of small steps leading to big achievements, service to others, and avoiding materialism at all cost."

The ultimate example of Uncle Bill's rugged individualism was when he enlisted Eric, then 14, to help him build a 32-ft ferrocement Colin Archer-style cutter, which they sailed to Hawaii and back, followed a few years later by a more ambitious cruise to French Polynesia, where they lived among the islanders for 18 months.

After completing college, Eric took a break from grad school at California State University at Northridge to captain the same boat, *Getel*, back to the islands again, where he researched his master's thesis on the effects of television on remote islanders.

With such a background, we can't imagine why the Rigneys would ever have thought they could stick to a predetermined game plan. But we certainly look forward to hearing from them as they slowly make their way around the planet.

— andy

super 12s to debut in 2017

About a year ago, when ex-America's Cup employee Tom Ehman introduced his pipe dream of staging a 12-Meter racing renaissance on San Francisco Bay — in reaction to the astronomical costs of foiling-era A-Cup campaigning — the idea drew a mixed reaction. But today, momentum is building, with several nations showing strong interest, a summer 2017 race date announced, and last month the first renderings released for this sexy new one-design class.

Farr Yacht Design embraced the challenge of drawing an elegant-looking sloop reminiscent of the classic 12-Meters (used in Cup competition prior to 1987) above the waterline, yet with ultra-modern

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Back in 2013, the family struck this pose for inclusion in the Baja Ha-Ha event program. Not surprisingly, these days the guys' hair is a bit longer, and their shirts are not freshly pressed.

KANDU



SYLVIA STEWART STOMPE