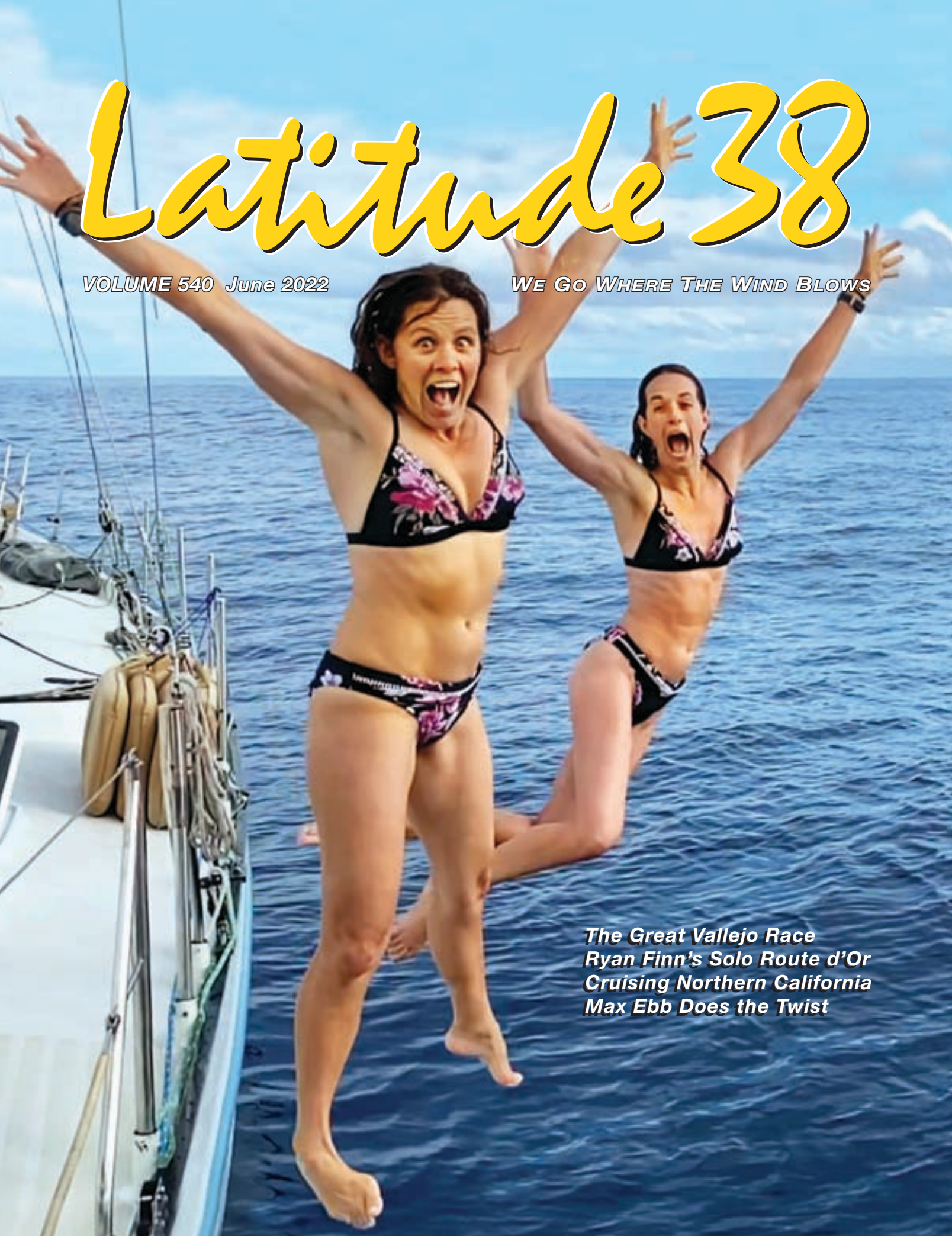


Latitude 38

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WE GO WHERE THE WIND BLOWS



*The Great Vallejo Race
Ryan Finn's Solo Route d'Or
Cruising Northern California
Max Ebb Does the Twist*

CHANGES

Expense-wise, even with most of the work done himself, the cost for redoing *Ellie* was huge. Tom didn't keep close track, but says the rigging and sails alone were about \$24,000. He reckons the total cost could easily be three or four times that.

To Tom, it was worth every penny. "*Ellie* gives me an immense amount of pleasure, partly because she's unique and I love just hanging out on her. And I hope maybe she will inspire more people to rehab or at least appreciate these well-mannered old gals."

— Tom & JR 5/7/22

Ellie wintered over in Alameda. Tom and Barbara brought her north — "a slow and relaxing three-month trip" — last summer and had a fun time sailing and exploring the Bay Area. As this was written, the plan was to head back to the boat in mid-May to enjoy another month or so in the Bay, then it's out the Golden Gate and turn right, to begin a leisurely (and mostly solo) trek north, eventually ending up in Anacortes. Barbara will sit that trip out to enjoy the reason they're relocating — their grandkids — but looks forward to exploring the great PNW cruising grounds later this summer, with an eye toward a cruise to Alaska in summer 2023.

Emma — Deerfoot 62 Kurt Christofferson and Crew Doldrum Delights Santa Barbara

In early April, Bay Area native Kurt Christofferson jumped the puddle from Puerto Vallarta to the far-flung Marquesas Islands on his Deerfoot 62, *Emma*,

Lots of sailors dread the Doldrums. The crew on 'Emma' couldn't wait to be becalmed.



kicking off a circumnavigation that will last an undetermined number of years.

His four crew were a diverse bunch,



spanning ages and nationalities, with plenty of sailing skills for this 3,000-some-mile passage. A communal approach to watches, galley time, and maintenance was instituted on board, but if titles had been assigned to crew, they might go as follows: Suzy Garren (Oakland) — executive chef and czar of safety and logistics; Melissa Ward (San Diego) — crappy-little-jobs officer and chief navigator; Niels Frommann (San Francisco) — resident electrical whiz; and Adrien Vedrunne (Mexico-based French national) — master fisherman, translator, and all-important lead fixer of toilets.

After a gauntlet of delays for COVID followed by maintenance and more paperwork than any sailor wants to do, *Emma's* dock lines were cast off two years and one month after the planned departure, with a fridge full of carefully selected produce and high hopes for the South Pacific.

Given the anticipated three weeks at sea, the trip was better approached as a marathon than a sprint, which turned out to be useful during the tests of patience provided by the days spent becalmed. In the first lull, in search of the northern trade winds to deliver us to the edge of the ITCZ, we busied ourselves with small maintenance tasks, and had our first pool party, complete with a spinnaker halyard "rope swing." This was such a wild success that the daily weather forecast GRIB download took on a secondary purpose: when to plan the next party.

Luckily for us, the Doldrums did not disappoint. As the GRIB predicted, a week after our first party, we were again becalmed.

We had intended a fully dry passage, but decided this occasion merited a small exception. For this, invitations were drawn up:



What: Doldrums Pool Party
When: When the wind stops
Where: Inter-Tropical Cocktail Zone
Who: All crew attendance required;
RSVP via haiku only

Thanks to the three lines we trolled throughout the passage, fresh sushi was also on the menu for our Doldrums party.

By number, our fishing endeavors seemed quite successful. We caught and ate one bonito, one skipjack (an under-appreciated meat!), eight mahi mahi, and three bluefin tuna. Their size, though, left

IN LATITUDES



'Emma's puddle jump (clockwise from above): There was plenty of fresh sushi at the Doldrums parties. Left: Melissa works on the spreader caps during a calm day. Top left: Captain Kurt signals, "Cast off!" in PV; three amigos Adrien, Kurt, and Niels in matching "halfway party" swim trunks. Top center: Suzy and Mel check GRIB files for when to plan another ITCZ party. Top left: Adrien with catch of the day. Center right: 'Emma' anchored in Vaitahu Bay, Tahua.

much to be desired — a finding echoed by other cruisers on their own passages across the Pacific. Whether catching undersized fish was due to poor fishing skills or a lack of larger fish remains to be seen, although we strongly suspect the former. I'd wager every fisherman out there has their own answer on how we should change our tactics to catch some

monsters the next time around.

Needless to say, the Doldrums sushi-cocktail-pool party was an epic success, complete with silly matching swimsuits and haikus placed into bottles and cast adrift. It marked one of the worst days when evaluated by miles made good, but the best when evaluated by number of crew laughs.

Yet, despite our best efforts to make the passage feel like a tropical vacation, it wasn't all hopscotch and popsicles. Only hours after our party, the Doldrums provided us with a solid two days of squalls, with 0- to 30-knot winds moving all around the clock and periodic dumps of rain through recently re-opened hatches. Nevertheless, *Emma* and her crew survived with no casualties, aside from some lost hours of sleep and very wet cocktail umbrellas.

With a relatively quick transit through the ITCZ due to a favorable pressure cell to our west, we found the notoriously steady southern trade winds around 2°N. These winds carried us across the equator and all the way to Nuku Hiva right along the rhumbline, transiting over 200 nautical miles on our best days. Of course, a third celebration occurred at the equator in which Niels, an equator-crossing veteran, acted as Neptune's emissary to transition all Pollywogs to Shellbacks.

With few excuses for parties beyond the equator, these days were punctuated instead by the small dramas on board. Sadly, one ripped spinnaker marked day 16 of our passage — a sail that was sorely missed on the last stretch of light wind, broad reaching toward landfall. Days later, toward the end of the passage, I seem to have angered the sea gods in some way, shape or form, being first dive-bombed by a confused seabird, and stung by a Portuguese man-of-war shortly thereafter.

Later, the evening was capped with clear skies, encouraging the crew to lie on deck and ponder the southern constellations. However, this contemplative experience ended abruptly when a foot-long flying fish leapt onto deck, smacking me in the back of the head before it made its way into our frying pan.

About 3,000 miles of shenanigans, many fish, and one cocktail later, *Emma* pulled into Taiohae Bay in Nuku Hiva. It was a bittersweet arrival — we were happy for the chance to stretch our legs and swap stories with other cruisers, but lamented the end of that peculiar sense of calm found at sea, hundreds of miles from civilization. Thankfully, *Emma* has many a crossing in her future as she makes her way around the globe. Time will tell what new highs and lows will be found on her future passages.

— Melissa 5/5/22

Cruise Notes

• We never know what to expect when checking in with Stan and Sally Honey and their well-traveled Cal 40 *Illusion*.

Like her owners, *Illusion* has one of

ALL PHOTOS EMMA