



Pam and Eric.

Pied-a-Mer III at her berth on the Columbia River, near Clatskanie, Oregon.



SAILING ADVENTURES

FROM MEXICO TO SYDNEY ON A SEAWIND 1160 – PIED-A-MER III

by Christine Judd

Brent Vaughan, Director at Multihull Central was thrilled when he received a registration for the Sydney Seawind Regatta last October from Eric and Pam on board *Pied-a-Mer III*, a Seawind 1160 arriving from Mexico!

At one of the evening events, Brent was intrigued to learn more about this couple who sailed across the Pacific for his Regatta.

Pam had no sailing experience in 2010 with no desire to sail the oceans. On March 28, 2015 her and her husband Eric, a former engineer, set sail from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico to Sydney, Australia.

Pam and Eric are in their early 70's and come from Clatskanie, Oregon, 60 miles from Portland. They ran two successful restaurants

and enjoyed their children and grandchildren.

Eric had sailed from the age of 10 years old on the east coast and was trying to interest Pam in coastal sailing. One of the main concerns Pam had was safety and Pam wanted comfort, no heeling, and didn't want to crew.

Eric knew it had to be a catamaran! Through lengthy research, Eric discovered the Seawind 1160 and knew it would be displayed at the San Diego Boat Show in 2009. Pam and Eric flew down to have a look

and within six months, they had ordered a new Seawind 1160.

News of this purchase spread within their Oregon community and when delivery date came in May 2010, there was a crowd to welcome her to Vancouver, Washington. Their boat, moored near Clatskanie, was the only recreational boat in a fish station (not a marina) filled with working fishing boats! Pam took eight lessons with the Oregon Women's Sailing Association.

Gradually over the two years, Eric and Pam would take the boat out up

the Columbia River on weekends. Weekly trips away up the river led to their first offshore trip to San Juan Islands. They spent two months in British Columbia. And after that, Pam agreed to participate in the six day Baja Ha-Ha rally from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas from October 26 to November 8, 2012.

Having arrived in Mexico, they stayed a year exploring the coast, gaining local knowledge and enjoying the company of other cruisers. This year became invaluable for Pam learning more about cruising, provisioning and living aboard their boat. They attended some recommended free seminars at Paradise Village Marina in Banderas Bay, Puerto Vallarta on every aspect of cruising, bringing in experts in provisioning, medical, electrical and communication. At a dental seminar, they covered death at sea. Apparently, one of the causes can be an infection in the upper jaw and within a couple of days you could die! They discussed that the body would then need to be disposed overboard.

One of the difficult issues for cruisers is medication on boats. It is hard to get medication for situations you don't know may arise. The high frequency radio enables them to call shore side doctors to talk about health issues and get advice.

Some people have a defibrillator on board as a precaution. This still didn't deter Pam!

After delays with generators and helping their friends on Seawind 1000 *Stray Cat* back to San Diego they joined the next Baja Ha-Ha regatta in November 2014, Pam agreed if they had crew, she would agree to the Australian trip. So they signed up for the Pacific Puddle Jump of 120 boats leaving from Puerto Vallarta to cross the South Pacific.

They left on March 28, 2015 with two crew members, and for the next 26 days, sailed the South Pacific Ocean to Hiva Oa in the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia. This was the longest ocean stretch of the whole passage.

According to Eric the Seawind 38 is the safest boat he has ever been on



ABOVE: Offerings to Neptune upon crossing the equator.

BELOW RIGHT: The masks and shells honouring Neptune the day of the equator crossing.

in its size class. The 1160 is only 38' long however, it compares to any other catamaran up to 43-44'. "It's just built right," says Eric, "basically its truly an ocean going machine. The way the 1160 is built, it's got to be one of the safest boats of its size."

"The boat is extremely well fitted out for navigational purposes," says Eric. They had a chart plotter, four sets of digital charts, hard ocean charts, and satellite phone. Some boats had a Pactor modem. They sent their emails through Sat phone, however acknowledged it is very expensive.

Eric changed the VHF original radio on the Seawind in 2010 to a radio that had the ability to make sound signals and an AIS unit. Up to half of the cruising community now have them. Eric uses radar for weather and identifying anchor locations in busy areas.

One of the highlights from the voyage to the Marquesas Islands was crossing the equator. Before you cross the equator you are a 'Pollywog'. Once across you become a 'Shellback'. Pam had made masks from sequins, feathers, and shells for everyone to wear. The obligatory drink for Neptune was given along with shells that Pam had bought

THEY HAD A CHART PLOTTER, FOUR SETS OF DIGITAL CHARTS, HARD OCEAN CHARTS, AND SATELLITE PHONE

from Mexico. A speech was made in honour of the crossing.

Provisioning for the trip was a learning curve too. Most of the fresh produce made it the 26 days to Hiva Oa. Cabbage was wrapped in paper towels and put in a place of good air circulation. Five flats of eggs were placed within a plastic milk cart and turned every day, the limes covered in foil. Unrefrigerated produce lasts a lot longer. Mayonnaise and jam did not need to be refrigerated as long as the utensils used were clean. They made their own bread, cheese, yoghurt, kimchi, water and baked a lot.

The worst weather challenge was a few squalls that lasted 15 minutes, and winds of 30kts maximum. Most of the time they had 15-25kt winds. Eric says "it is a milk run and you usually don't get really bad weather until closer to October/November time."

Every night they made contact with 25 or more boats and logged in using Single Side Band radio, logging in their longitude, latitude and six day weather forecast, their speed, heading, wind course and direction and sea state. As they had four people on board they had three hour watches, would tether to the boat at night time and in bad weather use jack lines.

The next 90 days they spent in French Polynesia to the Cook Islands, to American Samoa, then



ABOVE: Pot luck dinner upon *Pied-a-Mer III* in the Marquesas Islands.

RIGHT: The delivery of *Pied-a-Mer III* in Vancouver, Washington, USA.



northern and southern Tonga to Fiji to New Caledonia and finally to Australia. On October 18 they reached Newcastle, NSW.

They budgeted about \$1500 per month, which sometimes made it, sometimes didn't! "There are two types of expenses," says Eric, "the living expenses and the boat expenses. It's not a cheap process but if you can do a lot of the work yourself it is doable."

One of the best experiences of the crossing were the people they met between the cruisers and the locals, the food and entertaining. Pam and Eric used to have pot luck dinners aboard their Seawind 1160 – sometimes having as many as 40 people!

The last passage from New Caledonia to Australia was in a brand

new rally – 'The Down Under Rally' from Noumea (or other departure points) to Newcastle, New South Wales. It was fun to finish the trip as they began it – with a rally.

According to Pam and Eric, "The mediocre reputation Australia has had among the world cruising community is certainly not valid, if it ever was. The organisers of the rally, the city of Newcastle, Newcastle's yacht club, and especially the people of the Border Patrol, Immigration, and Department of Agriculture all made coming to Australia fantastic. And everywhere we have been since arriving has enhanced our appreciation of the people and lands of Australia."

Pam and Eric now have a one year visa for Australia and plan to head south for a while then head up to

Brisbane in March. They have no firm plans. Consideration is being given to going to Europe across the Indian Ocean, or they make go back via Tahiti, Hawaii, Alaska then back home to Portland, Oregon.

Throughout all the islands and people they have met, one of Pam's favourite sayings that she has picked up is: "I'll see you somewhere in the world!" On that note, on behalf of Multihull Central, we wish Pam and Eric fair winds and happy sailing!

If you would like to contact Eric and Pam or read more about their sailing experiences, they have a blog at sailblogs.com/member/sesesail