

Montage
BioGraphics

Sister Sailor



A Loving Tribute to Jan Anderson



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Acknowledgements

Some material and photographs were received from, and used with the permission of, the following contributors, who retain all rights to their contributions:

Ed and Cornelia Gould (*A Cappella*)

Poul Kjaer (*Surf Scooter*)

Kent and Heather Sisk (*Hiatus*)

Dave and Helen Peoples (*Jammin'*)

Jim and Sheilagh Goetsch (*Aurora*)

Bill and Lisa Novak (*Beyond Reason*)

Jim and Kay Kerrigan (*Grace*)

Roy and Michelle Parsons (*Dream Odyssey*)

Cheryl Seidner (landlubber)

John and Lela Bickford (*Yachtsman's Dream*)

Gene and Susea McGearhart (*Moody Blues*)

Lyman and Terri Potts (*sans clés*)

Maps used on pages 156 and 157 are from Google Maps.

Introduction

We lived side-by-side on our respective boats from April, 2008 through March, 2009. Seldom did a day pass without us having spent some time together. This book, a very brief glimpse into the joys we shared as we made our way from Mexico to Florida, is my catharsis. I have also brought together photographs, memories and tributes from some of the cruisers whose lives she touched along the way just as profoundly as she touched my own.

Jan was a woman you loved instantly. Her warm and giving nature pulled you close immediately. Her sunny attitude never dimmed. She had the strength to overcome her fears and the courage to "put herself out there," in order to live life fully. Life delighted her, and everyone she came in contact with benefited from her enthusiastic approach to it. I am so grateful to have had all those wonderful experiences with her. Now, when I look back at our blogs, both hers and mine, I will smile through the mist.

For all the past memories we shared, now tinged with sadness, and all the future memories that have been taken from us, I mourn deeply.

You will always live in my heart, Jan.

“ WOW what a rush. We crossed the finish line at 7:30 pm the night before but slowed the engines as we were still some 20 miles from Turtle Bay. So we arrived about 4:14 am and followed 2 other boats in who had been there before. Our rule...do not enter an unknown harbor or anchorage at night unless ABSOLUTELY necessary. We anchored at 5 am and all 4 of us celebrated with champagne and shrimp cocktail, then went to bed until 7:30 check in! Went into Turtle Bay after a little brunch at the internet cafe, walked around, met Poul & Manfred.”

Excerpt from Jan's blog, dated November 1, 2007

Mexico



We first met Jan and Rob in October of 2007, in San Diego, with all the other crews that were taking part in the 14th annual Baja Ha-Ha, a cruiser's rally to Cabo San Lucas. I was immediately drawn to both of them, but most especially to Jan, as a sister sailor with the same fears and apprehensions that all women experience, who follow their mates to sea.

During one of our earliest conversations, Jan told me she really wanted to be a courageous sailor, but she didn't know if she had it

in her. Like me, for a long time prior to their departure she suffered from bouts of anxiety. Long ocean passages were a great unknown, and she questioned whether she would be up to the challenges and capable of upholding her share of the duties. On top of that, no mother looks forward to making such a dramatic break from their children, least of all someone as nurturing as Jan.

But, when it came time to cast off, she was too strong to give in to any of those feelings.

Opposite: Jan and Rob at the beach celebration following a successful first (breezy) leg of the Baja Ha-Ha.



Bahía Tortuga



Above: Jan and Rob enjoying a cold one with Poul Kjaer (left) and Manfred Wolf (right), brothers-in-law and sailing duo on *Surf Scooter*.
Opposite: View from the nearby cemetery overlooking Bahía Tortuga and the Ha-Ha fleet.

I look back on all the good times we had together with you and Lyman and it most of the time included Jan and Rob. I have a hard time to comprehend what has just happened on Triple Stars. We all know it could have been any of us that have crossed open sea.

I have forwarded your e-mail to Manfred. He will, like all of us, be devastated. We were all happy with what we did, and I think we all showed it, but nobody had a better attitude than Jan. Remember Jan and Rob entered the kissing-in-the surf at Cabo (well done) and lots of other very positive adventures, that you know better than most.

Birthe and I feel for you, Terri, you were so close to Jan. I must admit with the open radio I often heard you and Jan talk (especially when we were all waiting for weather in Isla Mujeres). It was always positive and upbeat. To lose such a friend must be hard.

And Rob—I cannot imagine what he must feel. I will try to contact him. Right now he needs his close family.

*Poul Kjaer, S/V Surf Scooter
November 18, 2011*

During the rally itself, and over the next few weeks as many boats continued up the inside coast of the Baja peninsula, we mixed socially from time to time, but then Rob and Jan cut over to Mazatlán, while we spent a few more months in the Sea of Cortéz. I often heard her vibrant voice ring out over the “net,” that invaluable daily tool of communica-

tion for cruisers via single side-band radio. I knew they were planning to sail the same route we were and that, with a little bit of effort, we could catch up to them. I was so persistent in that effort, I wonder sometimes if they didn’t think we were stalking them.

La Paz

Dinner together in a fun restaurant on the malecón after a group exploration of La Paz. Left: Gil, Jan, and Rob (*Triple Stars*), Bill and Lisa Novak (*Beyond Reason*); right: Sheilagh and Jim Goetsch (*Aurora*), Ed (*A Cappella*), Lyman and Terri (*sans clés*).



Jan and Rob are a significant part of treasuring our adventure on Aurora. I'm remembering hanging out with them in La Paz, sharing a very non-traditional Thanksgiving and going back to Triple Stars for my first taste of Key Lime Pie with new-found friends. Every time I've made it since then, I've smiled in remembering that evening. Forever more when we enjoy that sweet/sour bite of Key Lime Pie it will be with a smile for Jan and Rob. Please send him our condolences.

Jim and Sheilagh Goetsch, S/V *Aurora*
November 13, 2011



Above: The malecón in La Paz, Mexico. Left: Jan with Cornelia Gould (*A Cappella*) and Sheilagh Goetsch (*Aurora*) on the malecón in La Paz, Mexico.

Below: Jan taking the bus driver's picture in La Paz.





This was all very devastating to Lisa and me. We had some great times with Jan.

It is not often you meet someone like Jan Anderson. From the short time we knew her we were amazed that she had overcome some of the most primal fears anyone could have regarding sailing the seas in a small boat. She expressed that she was very afraid, at first, to even leave San Francisco bay. Some 1000 miles later we made our acquaintance and the thought of being scared was the farthest thing from her mind. We

sailed from Mazatlán to Altata in February/March of 2008, and Jan of all people encouraged me to keep moving when I was concerned we were not making any headway through a long night of adverse winds. Jan was “uber” confident; taking watches like a seasoned old salt and pressing forward at every mark.

It seems like just short of half the cruising population are following their partners dreams, but we believe that Jan was following her own vision of what cruising was all about: friendship, exploring and enjoying the freedom to do things others just talk about, and exploiting life with a positive look on the sometimes difficult positions we put ourselves in. Even at the end of her cruise through life, Jan expressed that everything was OK and not to worry.

We can remember times when the weather was not working in our direction, but yet you would see Jan charging through the waves to make happy hour, getting soaked with spray in the process but arriving with a smile on her face. She smiled, not for the fact that it was happy hour and the booze was flowing, but rather for the reality that she was where she wanted to be and nothing was going to stop her express train to being happy and enjoying times with friends.

Although we were not a part of the East Coast cruising community, we are sure that in her final days she was smiling as her small ship charged through the waves, with only the thought that soon she would be enjoying times with friends, both close and newly met, in the days to come.

Bill and Lisa Novak, S/V *Beyond Reason*
November 13 2011



Top right: Rob, Kent, Jan, Bill, Lisa and Heather, dining out in Mazatlán.
Bottom right: This photo was taken on the “infamous” 2007 New Year’s eve. I urge anyone who reads this to ask Rob about what made it so notable.



Jan and Rob were our host on New Year’s Eve 2007 in Mazatlan, Mexico. We had come down on the Baja Ha-Ha and had just reconnected with them. As always Jan had the night well in hand, and a great time was had by all aboard. I found this snippet in our blog:

“We were invited to a fantastic lobster and shrimp New Year’s dinner aboard Triple Stars with Beyond Reason and Hiatus also being there. New Year’s Eve ended with some of us taking a midnight surfing trip outside the harbor with the dingy. Probably not the smartest thing but it seemed right at the time.”

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I thought Jan was amazing. She was easily one of the friendliest, most outgoing, just fun people I have ever met. You were instant friends as soon as you met her. We had several adventures in different locations in Mexico, from the Baja Ha-Ha to the Sea of Cortez (I remember one very fun happy hour in the rain on our boat in San Evaristo . . .), but we got to know Jan and Rob really well in Mazatlán. We had a Christmas dinner with them and were very honored to have a night with just the four of us for what they told us was their traditional steak dinner on their boat. My kind of tradition! We then had a fantastic party on Triple Stars for New Year’s, with Jammin’ and Beyond Reason in attendance as well. Lobster dinner!! We also spent many days just exploring Mazatlan and both Hiatus and Triple Stars got a bronze sculpture sailboat made with our boat names on it. We

still have that and think of you, Jan, every time we see it. The next time we saw Jan was a year later in the San Blas Islands. Unfortunately, it was just one night, but what a party we had, and it was like no time had passed between then and the last time we were together. Like I said, friends from day one, and friends for life.



One thing that I have thought of often: When we were in Panama, Rob had to come to Panama City to have some work done to his windlass, while Jan remained on the boat back

Jan enriched wherever she was, she made sure everyone felt included, and genuinely cared for and about people. We have been out of touch with Rob and Jan for about a year now, but we were looking forward to seeing them in the Caribbean . . .

Life has dealt us a mighty dose of reality, and taken the winds out of our cruising sails with the news of her lost. One cannot say the right words of comfort, nor fully process the sorrow connected to this event. But, one can lean on the finding of those snippets and photos that prove we shared in the times and the life of someone so authentic and giving. One can look back upon those times, reflect, remember, and process those moments. That is where we crossed paths and shared a laugh, a tear, a beer, an experience, a recipe, a sorrow, a joke, and always parted with a hug. It will be in those memories that she will come back to us and not be lost.

Dave and Helen Peoples, S/V *Jammin’*
November 13, 2011

in the San Blas Islands with Terri and Lyman. Rob stayed on our boat for a few nights. Jan would e-mail Rob from their sail mail account to Rob on my e-mail account. I could not help but read some of them, as they were sent to me. What I remember the most is how they talked to each other: it was just simple things, but it was so obvious how much they loved each other, and I remember thinking at the time that I need to do a better job of expressing myself to Heather and that I hope that we are still as close and loving with each other as Rob and Jan are after being together as many years as they had been.

Jan wrote to us on our blog at the end of our trip:

06/04/2009 | Jan & Rob: What a whirlwind of life you have had, not only in the past couple of weeks, but the past 2 years! But then again the fast track is what you two were born in! Good luck and much happiness in your next adventure, “Life in the real world!” We really do hope to see you two again some time! A reunion might just have to happen, sometime, somewhere! If you are ever on the East Coast (Maine) please do, give us a call! You’ve always got a place to stay!

I was so excited that you were heading out again, Jan, and I was following you every day. We always planned to visit you in Maine, and we knew it would be just like we saw you yesterday. We loved you too!

Kent and Heather Sisk, S/V *Hiatus*
November 29, 2011

At long last we rejoined *Triple Stars* and *Beyond Reason*, anchored out off the marina at La Cruz. We celebrated the reunion with them over dinner at Glorietta's. Thankfully, *Triple Stars* picked us up in their dinghy.

I say "thankfully" because we had to make a night landing on the unlit beach and find our way into town along dark backstreets; they had done this several times before.

Opposite: The waterfront in Puerto Vallarta, the Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe and us having dinner on the wharf at Marina Vallarta. Below: Reunion dinner at Glorietta's in La Cruz, a small village near Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (March 3, 2008).

