

OFFICIAL PROGRAM



SINGLEHANDED  
SAILING SOCIETY



*Singlehanded*  
**TRANSPACIFIC YACHT RACE**  
**2023**

SAN FRANCISCO BAY, CA TO HANAIEI BAY, HI  
JUNE 25-JULY 15, 2023

Dear Sailors, Families, and Friends,

As 32 skippers sailed out the Golden Gate 45 years ago, in the first Singlehanded Transpacific (SHTP) Race, the San Francisco *Chronicle* headlined our story as a “motley navy of crazies.” Being at sea the first day, dealing with gale-force conditions, seasickness, broken gear, leaking boats, and uncertainty, we never read the dismissive headlines. Nobody had raced solo across the Pacific before. We were headed to Kauai with only a compass, sextant, sun, stars, our wits, dreams and determination. Liferafts, EPIRBs, watermakers, GPS, trackers, email and sat phones? Not around yet. Families and friends did not know if or when we 1978 singlehanders would finish until we rounded Puu Poa Point and entered beautiful Hanalei Bay.

This year, 18 solo skippers will again be challenged by the 2,120 nautical mile course. Since 1978, more humans have been in outer space than have raced singlehanded from San Francisco to

Hawaii. But paradoxically, if you like to sail alone, you’re in good company. As Greg Morris, a five-time vet, so aptly put it after completing the 1998 race on his Moore 24, “The SHTP is a bug light for weirdos with boats.” These weirdos will likely turn into some of your best friends, all racing the boats they have prepared and completed their 400 nautical mile qualifier in.

I applaud all skippers and race organizers, including 2023 Race Chairman Dave Herrigel, two-time veteran and overall winner in 2016, for weathering the mental, physical and financial ropeburn of race preparation. The most difficult part of soloing to Hawaii — untying the docklines — is about to be behind you. The next hardest is weathering your first night at sea. Then things just get better, and soon it is time to “ease sheets and go

fast.” With a full moon eight days after your start, nighttime sailing will become a joy as the Pacific High is left astern and to the north.

With a rhumbline of 230 degrees magnetic toward Hanalei, on the second half of the SHTP course (west of 140 degrees), if sailing higher than 275 degrees or lower than 200 degrees, it is time to “jibe-ho,” shift to the favored and closer jibe, and save many miles on more complacent competitors.

Alone, but together, sailors of SHTP 2023 will experience a once-in-a-lifetime fulfillment of both a dream and sense of accomplishment as they arrive to receive their traditional welcome, share stories under the fabled “Tree,” and are presented with their hard-earned SSS bronze belt buckle. Racing to Hanalei is not only about the satisfaction of winning a trophy. It’s the race you do for yourself.

Fair winds to all.

~ Skip Allan, *s/v Wildflower*  
Capitola, CA  
1978 & 2008 SHTP

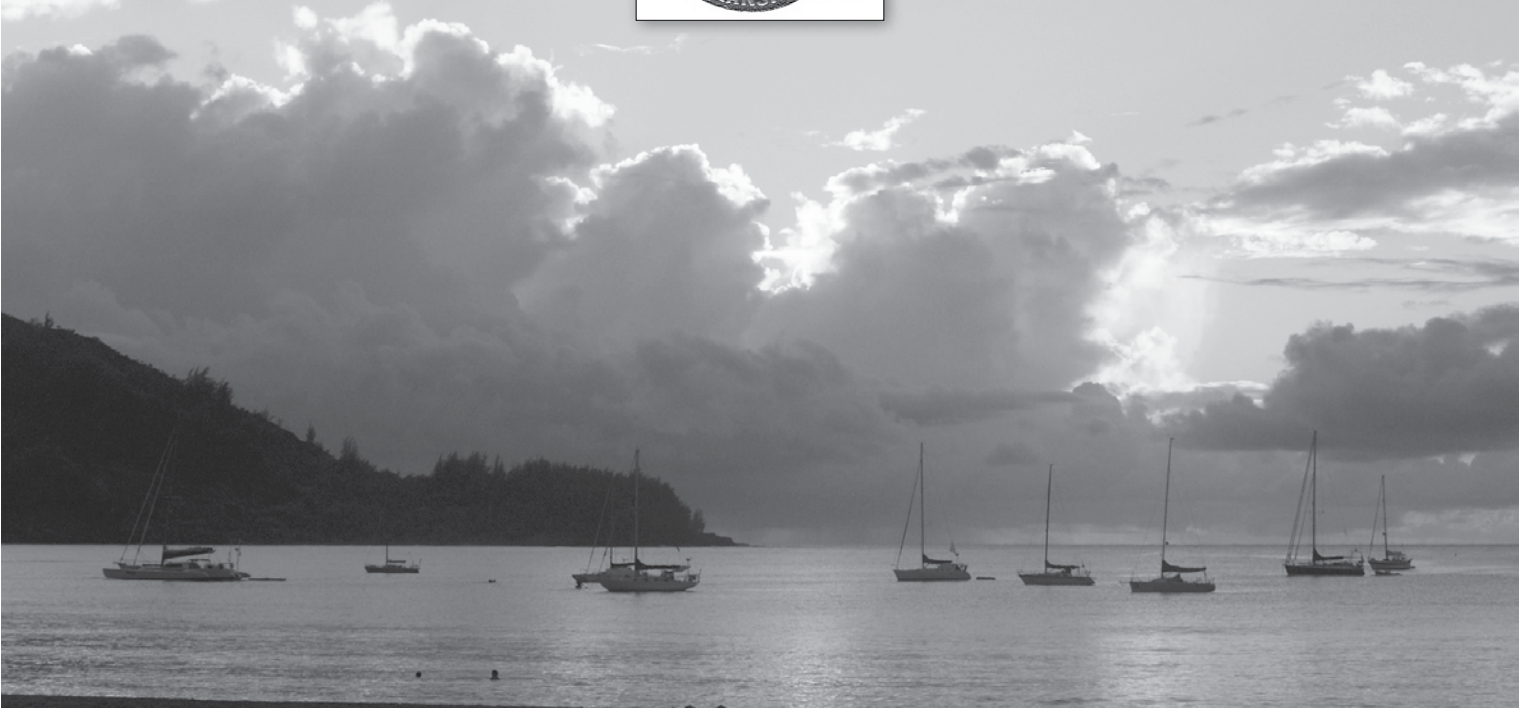


Photo: Singlehanded Transpacific Yacht Race boats anchored in Hanalei Bay after the 2008 race.

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On the cover: Kyle Vanderspek sails into Hanalei Bay after finishing the 2021 Singlehanded Transpacific Race in first place on the Hobie 33 *Aloha*.

Photos within these pages are courtesy of *Latitude 38*, [www.norcalssailing.com](http://www.norcalssailing.com), the racers and the SSS.

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**Piyush Arora**  
**Horizon — Beneteau First 305**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**Coyote Point Yacht Club,**  
**Singlehanded Sailing Society**  
**Previous SHTPs: none**



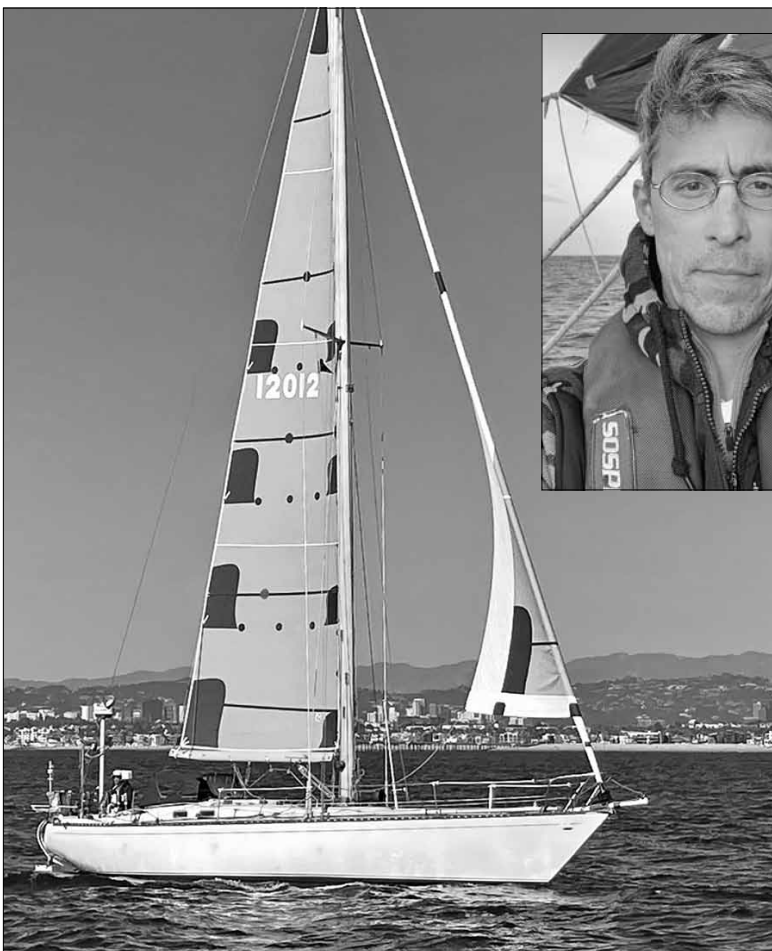
At age 39, Piyush Arora is the youngest of this year's skippers. When asked why he's taking on this challenge, he replies, "My boat and I expect to find out during the voyage. I sure hope that the answer will be revealed. I am probably the least experienced in the fleet with a few years of sailing in the Bay and along the coast. I didn't grow up sailing or being a 'water person'."

His personal prep for the race has been "mostly psychological preparations and whispering motivational quotes to my boat." His strategy is to "Go west and don't do anything silly. Since this is my first long passage, my goal would be to keep it simple, find decent wind, and sail *Horizon* somewhat conservatively.

"I reluctantly added windvane self-steering, but I am so glad I did! I got rid of my saloon table to create more room and reduce my chances of bruising. I removed my telltales; they seemed to be fluttering a lot, causing unnecessary drag."

*Horizon* was the boat on which Piyush first sailed and raced on San Francisco Bay, when a friend owned her.

"I hope to sail it back with the others. But I wish I could stay longer to explore the islands a bit before turning back."



**Alexander Benderskii**  
**Reverie — Tartan 41**  
**Los Angeles, CA**  
**Pacific Singlehanded**  
**Sailing Association**  
**Previous SHTPs: none**

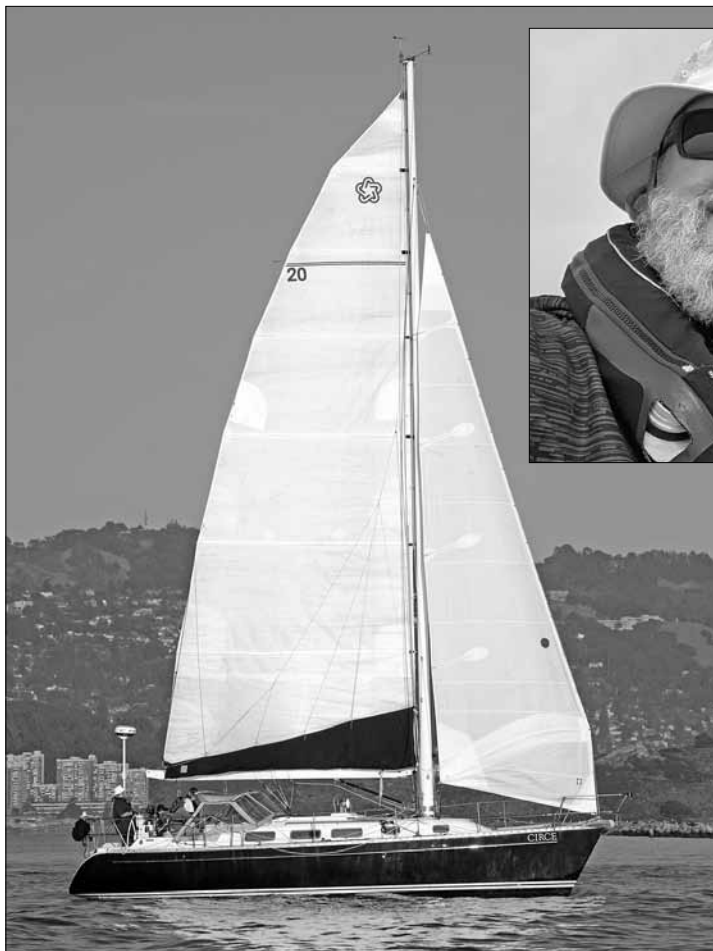
"I love the Hawaiian islands," says Alexander Benderskii, "but I do not like flying.

"I bought my boat in 2016 and started racing with PSSA in 2018." Alex has sailed in PSSA's singlehanded Category II races and a singlehanded Cat I race (the 582-mile Guadalupe Island Race this March). "I am getting close to 6,000 offshore miles, almost all singlehanded." He's been listening to Stan Honey (and other Transpac/Pac Cup) seminars on YouTube.

A classic Olin Stephens design, the Tartan is hull #7, built in 1972. Alex has been refitting her for singlehanded since he bought her. He built an auxiliary rudder/self-steering windvane driven by Pelagic tiller pilot, and a 2-ft bowsprit.

"My boat actually has a much more accomplished sailing résumé than I do — it was a class winner of Newport-Bermuda and Annapolis-Newport races."

Alex plans to sail back to L.A. alone.



**Tony Bourque**  
 Circe — Freedom 40/40  
 Point Richmond, CA  
 Richmond YC,  
 Singlehanded Sailing Society  
 Previous SHTPs: none

For Tony Bourque, the Singlehanded Trans-pacific Yacht Race “seems like an interesting and fulfilling challenge. It is also a significant and serious adventure/challenge I am capable of achieving — unlike, say, climbing Mount

Everest!”

Tony has been sailing for many years on the Bay, ocean and Delta, singlehanded and crewed. He delivered his current boat from San Diego, and helped to deliver *Green Buffalo* from Hawaii to San Francisco. He completed his 400-mile solo-sail qualifier in April.

While preparing for this challenge, he’s been trying to incorporate a daily Qigong routine. His goals for the race: “Be safe, have fun, win. In that order.”

*Circe* is large, comfortable and easy to sail, with an unstayed carbon-fiber mast and camber-spar jib. For the passage, Tony installed a second autopilot and more solar.

After the race, Tony plans to sail *Circe* back to the Bay Area.

**Gary Burton**  
 Elizabeth Ann — Westsail 32  
 Brookings, OR  
 Previous SHTPs: 2014, 2016

This solo race is always on Gary Burton’s radar, and things have worked out for him to go again this year.

He grew up lake sailing and has 15 years of ocean experience. His strategy for the race is to try to keep up with fellow Westsailors Bill Stange on *Hula* and Randy Leasure on *Tortuga*.

Gary found *Elizabeth Ann* in a Tucson backyard where she had been for 37 years.

He’ll sail her back home to Oregon after the race.





**Max Crittenden**  
**Iniscaw — Martin 32**  
**Oceanside, CA**  
**PSSA**  
**Previous SHTPs: 2010**



When he retired, Max Crittenden moved from the Bay Area to SoCal. He's sailing in the SHTP because "The last time was such a great experience, I want to have that feeling at least once more."

He started sailing at age 11. "My dad caught the bug and dragged the family along. We sailed out of Palo Alto Yacht Harbor (when it existed), on California lakes, and in the San Juans and Baja." The family cruised Europe, the Pacific Northwest and Maine. "I didn't buy a boat of my own until 1996 and soon gravitated more toward racing. *Iniscaw* is just my second boat." He's owned her since 2002; her previous name was *Solar Wind*.

To prepare for the race, Max has been doing some cycling and weight-lifting. "Aaron, my cat, has helped with sleep training by waking me up every half hour." His strategy: "Follow Quanci! More seriously: Play it by ear and don't get too hung up on routing. Skip Allan has a game-plan write-up that worked out well for me last time."

Max is reminding himself to drink plenty of water. "Last time, I suffered my first-ever kidney stone 12 hours after getting home."

He built a crude emergency rudder years ago and had to use it in a Farallones race, so he knows it works. "I've replaced the big water tank in the bow with two smaller tanks under the settees to meet the split-tankage rule." Max plans to sail home solo.

We asked the sailors if the COVID pandemic had affected their SHTP plans. "My wife has a different health issue that could be exacerbated by COVID," replied Max. "So we are still isolating as much as possible. The three-week return delivery will be a de facto quarantine."

**Christophe Desage**  
**Elmach — X-Yachts XC-42**  
**Vancouver, BC**  
**Royal Vancouver YC**  
**Previous SHTPs: none**

"I like the challenge and pushing the envelope," says Christophe Desage. "This will keep me out of my comfort zone."

Christophe took up windsurfing and dinghy sailing in the 1980s in France, followed by lake sailing in the '90s in Quebec. "As soon as I arrived in Vancouver 12 years ago, the calling was too strong. We added *Elmach* in 2013, a robust solution for family sailing, with bluewater and singlehanded capabilities. The first eight years were a lot of fun growing into ocean sailing and discovering the beautiful coast of British Columbia and Vancouver Island."

His strategy for the race is to "keep enough pressure on the sail, even at night, don't over-think things, and don't get injured — boat go fast, Christophe go slow."

"If I am in trouble, it won't be because of the food. My French side kicked in, and between cassoulet, osso bucco, braise or lamb curry, I should keep a good mood. I will have enough food to get to Tahiti if need be.

"ELMACH stands for ELior, MARie-Jeanne and CHARlotte, the names of our three kids. Mum and Dad are MARie and CHRistophe too.

After the race, Christophe's goal is to find a spot in Hawaii for nine months to a year, to await another adventure to French Polynesia. But, "I did not find a marina, and I am afraid of missing her too much in BC."

He registered for the 2021 SHTP and was ready to go, but the Canada-US border didn't open in time. Making it to the starting line this year will mark the end of a very long project.



**David Garman**  
Such Fast — 1D35  
Renton, WA  
Des Moines YC, SSS  
Previous SHTPs: 2016



“The ocean calls you, and you either live big and go, or you spend the rest of your life wondering,” says David Garman.

He has 40+ years of ocean experience, including the 2016 SHTP aboard the Santa Cruz 27 *Giant Slayer*.

David’s strategy this year is to use Expedition software to route using polars developed around singlehanded on the 1D35. “This boat is a lot of fun and does pretty well in up to about 22 knots of true wind. It then changes into a fast and very hard boat to sail.”

He plans to sail and race in Hawaii until September, then he’ll ship the boat to Seattle via Oakland.

**Brendan Huffman**  
Siren — Santa Cruz 33  
Los Angeles/Sausalito, CA  
Del Rey YC, Cruising Club of America, Blue Water Cruising Club  
Previous SHTPs: 2021

Brendan Huffman is sailing the SHTP again “to see if I could do better than last time with more experience, preparation and wisdom.” He’s completed five Pacific Cups, two Transpacs and 10 Mexico races.



He keeps *Siren* in the Bay Area for the challenging sailing and competition. His strategy for this race is to push the boat harder in light to moderate conditions and be more cautious in heavier winds.

Brendan has added a new Pelagic autopilot, a UK spinnaker sock and a Selden furler for a reacher.

He loves his boat. “Bill Lee is one of my all-time favorite sailors, and he has designed many of my favorite boats.” Brendan bought the SC33 specifically for the SHTP. “I wanted a fast offwind boat with standing headroom, a real head, a fairly dry cockpit and a tiller.

“I hope to sell the boat in Hawaii or donate it to a youth group.”



**Chris Jordan**  
The Pork Chop Express — Express 27  
Point Richmond/San Francisco, CA  
SSS  
Previous SHTPs: none

Chris grew up racing on Lake Erie. On the West Coast, he’s been doing deliveries and racing since 1991. A licensed master for 30 years, he’s sailed in six fully crewed Hawaii races and a doublehanded Pacific Cup with his wife Charlotte in 2018. “She insisted on checking the boat and systems by sailing the course with me first.”

As part of his prep for the SHTP, he’s been doing lots of solo sailing and team racing on other boats, plus cardio, weights, stretching, cold showers and some breath work.

“*The Pork Chop Express* was the name of the semi truck Kurt Russell drove into the city in *Big Trouble in Little China*, a cult classic. It’s also the name the troops jokingly gave to the Navy-commandeered fishing boats out of SoCal that delivered supplies to the Pacific. My father-in-law, Frank Anderson, survived Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal and Saipan. I like to think he’s pushing for a faster *Pork Chop* delivery!”

Following the race, Chris will sail the Express to Oahu for shipping, then return to Kauai to deliver Randy Leasure’s Westsail *Tortuga* back to the mainland.



**Randy Leasure**  
Tortuga — Westsail 32  
San Francisco, CA  
SSS, Island YC,  
Westsail Owners Association  
Previous SHTPs: 2012, 2016

“Being completely responsible for everything on the boat is overwhelming, but it’s also incredibly rewarding and provides a unique sense of accomplishment,” says Randy Leasure.

His strategy for the race is to keep the boat



moving and to avoid the Pacific High. “There don’t seem to be any ‘normal’ weather patterns anymore.

“Racing a full-keel boat is very different than most fin-keel boats. You can’t point nearly as high, so you have to find the right angles and not be over-canvassed and create too much weather helm.

“I have the benefit of a full galley, unlike the small racy boats, so I like to make meals like pasta and baked goods.

“This is my 25th year of ownership. Next year will be *Tortuga’s* 50th birthday. Crazy to think in this day and age — there’s not much stuff we still use that is 50 years old!”





**Greg Mardock**  
Lohengrin — Swan 371  
Portland, OR  
Sauvie Island YC  
Previous SHTPs: none

Greg Mardock's previous experience includes coastal cruising, the Pacific Cup, Hobie Cat sailing, miscellaneous deliveries,

yearly trips from Oregon up the Washington coast to the San Juans, and local river sailing.

The Swan has been to the South Pacific and was set up well by the original owner. The second owner upgraded many of the systems and replaced the engine. Greg upgraded most of the electrical wiring and replaced the navigational hardware.

"The boat usually shows up at the Northwest Westsail Rendezvous. Many of the Westsail sailors who entered the race encouraged me to enter."



**Sean Mulvihill**  
Jamani — J/120  
San Francisco, CA  
San Francisco YC  
Previous SHTPs: none

"I love sailing, the ocean and this boat," says Sean Mulvihill.

Included in his vast sailing experience are two crewed Transpac races to Honolulu, two crewed Pacific Cups, two doublehanded Pac Cups, four deliveries from Hawaii to California, and many local ocean races.

Sean's strategy is to get through the windy reach in one piece, select a transition point depending on the Pacific High's location and strength, monitor the trade-wind pattern on the downwind leg, and minimize jibes to the finish.

"We bought *Jamani* new in 2002," recounts

Sean. "She has done many Pacific crossings and is outfitted with great electronics, a watermaker, and all relevant safety gear." He got a new Iridium GO! to use in place of his old SSB.

"*Jamani* means 'let's go, friend' in Swahili — a saying a guide used every morning when my wife and I took our kids on a camping trip in Africa.

"My wife, Kim, and I will doublehand the delivery back to San Francisco after a short family vacation on Kauai."





**Todd Olsen**  
Gwendolyn —  
Olson 29  
Alameda, CA  
SSS  
Previous SHTPs:  
none

Todd Olsen started sailing in Southern California on a Naples Sabot when he was 12 years old.

For the Singlehanded Transpacific Race, he says, “I have been training by doing the qualifying sail, 400 miles non-stop with a minimum of 100 miles offshore, and practicing singlehanded sailing inside and outside the Bay, including sail changes and self-steering with and without the autopilot.”

His strategy is to get out past the Farallon Islands by the first evening, sail a little south of rhumbline for the first third of the race, then sail the fastest angles to Hanalei Bay.

“The Olson 29 is light enough for most loads to be easily handled, and the boat is relatively easy to keep sailing at about 80% of its potential speed.”

*Gwendolyn* will ride home on her trailer via Matson Liner.



## Michael Polkabla

Solstice — Cal 40  
Monterey, CA  
Monterey Peninsula YC, St. Francis YC  
Previous SHTPs: none

“I am a sailor who loves adventure and competition, and who equally loves, respects, and supports the health of our oceans,” writes Michael Polkabla. “I want to highlight my life experiences with a challenge that is fulfilling, meaningful and impactful. I have been dreaming of this challenge for much of my life, and recognize how hard and rewarding this effort will ultimately be to even finish. I also now recognize



that racing alone across the

Pacific Ocean takes an enormous amount of dedication, preparation and support from a team of individuals, friends and family to reach this goal. I am doing this event for all of them.”

Michael has sailed on Monterey Bay since he was 12. He competed for UC Santa Barbara as an all-American in the early ‘80s. “As a kid I got the chance to race on *Merlin* with great sailors like Bill Lee, Dee Smith and Harvey Kilpatrick.

“When I was a kid, I followed the Transpac Race and thought the Cal 40 was the coolest boat ever made.

“I’ve been working with a personal trainer/nutritionist with a goal to put on 15 pounds of muscle. I’m working equally hard on flexibility, stamina and balance, and practicing meditation to (hopefully) allow me to rest while racing.

“I am looking forward to the return trip and enjoying the sailing without having the throttle so wide open like it will be while going to Hawaii.”





**Jim Quanci**  
 Green Buffalo — Cal 40  
 Point Richmond, CA  
 Richmond YC, SSS,  
 Pacific Cup YC,  
 Cruising Club of America  
 Previous SHTPs: 2012  
 (overall winner), 2021



In contrast with some of the other skippers, Jim Quanci will sail to Hawaii and back yet again this summer in order to relax. You see, he’s been around this block a time or two (19 to be exact). He’s looking forward to disconnecting from “the buzz (email, social, text, mobile...)”

Jim likes the Cal 40 because she’s “big enough for a comfortable ride to Hawaii and a relaxing sail home, small enough that I can fly the spinnaker even in a brisk breeze.” He replaced the original mast two years ago, including rod rigging.

About the boat name, he says, “The original owner, Clarence Nelson, grew up across from the buffalo paddock in Golden Gate Park, so he named all his boats *Buffalo*.”

Jim and his wife Mary Lovely will sail *Green Buffalo* home with two friends. They’re “looking forward to relaxing reading, a bit of swimming, and fresh fish.”



**Mike Smith**  
 Eos — Cal 2-34  
 Brisbane, CA  
 Sierra Point YC  
 Previous SHTPs: none

“The SSS has proved to be the best group of folks I have ever met,” says Mike Smith. “They have helped me learn a huge amount about singlehanded sailing. Working through the Faralones Race and the LongPac last year as qualifiers helped me get my safety systems in place.

“The SSS crew encouraged me to think about Hawaii. We lived in Hawaii for more than 10 years, so this will be an interesting way to get back after several

years away.” Mike misses it.

He started sailing in the UK on the Norfolk Broads and raced in the round-the-world Whitbread. In the US, he took up windsurfing, kitesurfing and windfoiling. “I think I have windsurfed over nearly every inch of the Bay and a fair bit outside the Gate too.”

He learned a tremendous amount from two in-person safety training courses this year at Cal Maritime and San Francisco YC. “To me, safety training is as important, if not more important, as any other training.”

His strategy for the race is to “Take it easy, try not to break anything, and get there and back safely. I will be last if I make it, but that doesn’t worry me.”





**William Stange**  
Hula — Westsail 32  
Driftwood Key, WA  
Driftwood Key YC  
Previous SHTPs: 1988 (overall  
winner), 2021



“In 1988 I wanted to break Norton Smith’s elapsed-time record,” says Bill Stange. “In 2023 I want to break Michael Lintner’s Westsail 32 elapsed-time record, set in 1978. Having fun is my #1 goal, but I’d love to get there in less than 16 days, 3 hours, 54 minutes, 13 seconds!”

The delivery down the coast singlehanded is an important part of getting ready for Bill. “My wife Darlene really wanted to come with me when I did the delivery in 2021, but I explained the psychology of getting into a singlehanded mindset before the race starts. I do my pushups and a small run every day. I’ll be ready to eat nails for breakfast on June 25, 2023.”

He’s a vegetarian and is relying on his wife for provisioning advice. “The pressure cooker was handy and saves a lot of fuel.”

Bill found *Hula* when he was strolling through the Puerto Vallarta Marina on a layover during his career as a flight attendant with Alaska Airlines. “I called my wife and asked her if she’d want to fly down, take a look, and be up for an adventure sailing back to Seattle by way of Hawaii. Darlene is now looking forward to her fourth return trip from Hawaii.

“*Hula* is immensely strong and has taken great care of us for thousands of miles. Sure, she can’t get up and plane like the Olson 30, but a Westsail 32 at 11.1 knots is every bit as exciting as an Olson 30 at 19.”



**John Wilkerson**  
Perplexity, Express 37-1  
Port Madison, Bainbridge Island, WA  
Sloop Tavern YC  
Previous SHTPs: 2021

John Wilkerson hopes to sail a better race than he did in 2021. Since then, he completed the 2022 Pacific Cup. As a shakedown cruise, he’ll sail *Perplexity* down the coast from Washington.

His strategy is to take one day at a time, and to appreciate being out there.

*Perplexity* has a new class carbon rudder, having lost the previous one to a whale strike coming



back from Hawaii last summer. John will sail the Express 37 back again this year, but he’s not sure when or to where.

“COVID isolation inspired me to do an SHTP qualifier in the summer of 2020,” he says. “I probably would have put off doing the race until ‘later’ (never?) otherwise.”

Boat Name	Boat Make/Size	Year	Sail #	Division	Rating	Skipper Name	Homeport	Age
Circe	Freedom 40/40	1999	20	Lono	81	Tony Bourque	Richmond, CA	60
Elizabeth Ann	Westsail 32	1973	119	Kanaloa	199	Gary Burton	Brookings, OR	56
Elmach	X-Yachts XC-42	2013	CAN1702	Kāne	72	Christophe Desage	Vancouver, BC	52
Eos	Cal 2-34	1975	none	Kanaloa	171	Mike Smith	Brisbane, CA	67
Green Buffalo	Cal 40	1967	8538	Lono	114	Jim Quanci	Pt. Richmond, CA	64
Gwendolyn	Olson 29	1985	7	Kū	102	Todd Olsen	Alameda, CA	57
Horizon	Beneteau First 305	1988	305	Kanaloa	165	Piyush Arora	San Francisco, CA	39
Hula	Westsail 32	1975	88	Kanaloa	219	Bill Stange	Driftwood Key, WA	66
Iniscaw	Martin 32	1980	49143	Kū	126	Max Crittenden	Oceanside, CA	70
Jamani	J/120	2002	52879	Kāne	45	Sean Mulvihill	San Francisco, CA	68
Lohengrin	Swan 371	1982	49099	Kū	117	Greg Mardock	Scappoose, OR	67
Perplexity	Express 37-1	1986	41729	Kāne	72	John Wilkerson	Port Madison, WA	64
Pork Chop Express	Express 27	1986	115	Kū	129	Chris Jordan	Pt. Richmond, CA	54
Reverie	Tartan 41	1972	12012	Lono	110	Alex Benderskii	Los Angeles, CA	53
Siren	Santa Cruz 33	1977	57663	Kū	117	Brendan Huffman	Sausalito, CA	52
Solstice	Cal 40	1963	4	Lono	114	Michael Polkabra	Monterey, CA	62
Such Fast	1D35	1999	USA35020	Kāne	30	David Garman	Renton, WA	61
Tortuga	Westsail 32	1974	207	Kanaloa	216	Randy Leasure	San Francisco, CA	52

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