

Log of the *HILDE M²*



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WELCOME ABOARD! This first issue of the Log of the *Hilde M²* will bring you up to date from a landlubber's viewpoint -- later issues will consist primarily of authentic first-hand reports from the captain.

"Once upon a time" long ago, the idea begins for The Voyage. Other things take up time of course, family, career, traveling, bicycle and canoe touring, rock climbing, mountaineering, folk dancing, Scouting, amateur radio. Read and dream about the sea and sailors, learn to sail and cruise.

Things begin to get serious when the Catalina 27 *Hilde M* joins the family in 1976. Many short and longer cruises on the Chesapeake Bay from the C & D Canal to the Elizabeth River alone and with others. Early on, a solo circumnavigation of the Delmarva Peninsula....

Obviously, more ambitious cruises would need a larger and heavier boat, so the Southern Cross 31 *Hilde M²* joins us in 1979. We all participate -- daughter Hilde (the original) and her cat Mother Jones, sons Jan and Fritz, and wife (me, the admiral) crew one way or both to Block Island, Bermuda, Nantucket.

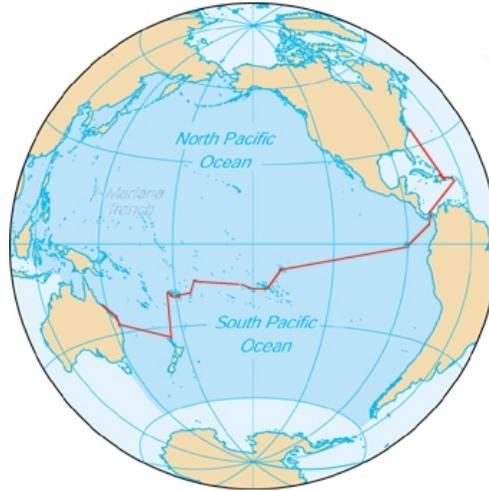
Then in March of this year, job abolishment, early retirement, how to make the best of it, what to do. Enter me: "Well, you have to make your own decision, I can't make it for you, but you've been talking about a major cruise for years, you'll never be any younger, etc., etc., if you really want to go for it, no way possible I can go WITH you but I'll back you up." He debates for a while and the rest is history....

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GETTING READY: April through early October. Marine insurers don't think too much of solo and short-handed offshore sailors in small boats, so we drop that and try to compensate by getting Sat-Nav and as much other good additional equipment as we can. Selecting, buying and installing it, modifying arrangements, provide for thousands of pounds of chain for anchoring in coral (not quite like good old Chesapeake mud).

Research, plan, sketch a tentative itinerary, people begin to get interested, The Voyage begins to take on a life of its own. Don't forget, do some things around the house to get ready to be away for a couple or three years, put on a new roof.

The approximate route of the *HILDE M²* will take her offshore from the Carolina Capes to the Caribbean, then via Panama to the Galapagos, French Polynesia, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and New Zealand to Australia -- and possibly beyond.



From the Potomac to Australia

We provision for three months. A critical scuba platform has to be mounted so as to be removable (*Hilde M²* is a double-ender). A compressor for filling air tanks. Then, the liferaft turns out to be bigger than its planned space, panic! Finally everything is settled. A Zenith 171 laptop (more like a lunch box, the kind with a thermos in the top) computer (like some IRS agents have) is first put to helping figure out and recording where all this expensive stuff is stowed!

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OCTOBER 15, 1986: We load the last gear and head for Cobb Island on the very day set months ago. Ready or not, Voyage, here we come!



Our "home port" at Cobb Island on the Potomac River