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Locals set sail on the journey of a lifetime

by Joey Clarke Jr.

In 1999, three friends returned to the Redondo shore after a 15-month sailing voyage to the South Pacific and back. In the 12 years since, they've dreamed of setting sail yet again, this time determined to sail around the entire world.

On Saturday, two of them, Redondo locals Jake Adams and Bill Babington, along with Jake's wife Jackie, began the life-altering journey that will ultimately make that dream a reality. The third friend, John Stuhldereher, will sail the first leg to Mexico before returning home to New York for work.

The foursome set sail out of King

Harbor in Redondo Saturday morning aboard identical Liberty 458s, boats so rare there are less than 35 in the world. The Adams couple are aboard Hokule'a, and Babington is aboard Solstice on what is budgeted to be a five- to seven-year expedition around the world.

"The ultimate goal is to share the stories of our encounters with other people from remote countries, places people don't usually go," Jake Adams said. "We want to tell the story of a guy diving for pearls in the French Polynesia and then some lady in downtown L.A. is buying that pearl from a jewelry store without any idea of where it came from."

That is just one of many stories

Babington and the Adams couple hope to tell. They hope to encounter people from the far corners of the world, maybe a fisherman in Vanuatu or a coffee bean farmer in Tonga, people with stories completely unique to their part of the world, and tell those stories to an audience who would otherwise never hear them. To do so, the Adams couple and Babington will film their journey and the people they meet and hope to befriend.

"This is a complete career change for me," Adams said. "As a hobby I've done a lot of underwater photography, but by no means has it been professional."

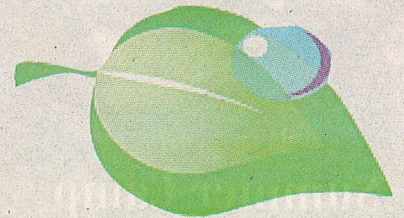
Jake Adams is leaving behind a career as a civil engineer. Babington, however, has spent 22 years as a writer and filmmaker. Stuhldereher, who will rejoin them on various legs throughout the trip, makes his living in New York in video post-production. The three of them, along with various other film industry-related contacts, will upload video updates to www.island-earth.com along the way. They hope to ultimately create a feature-length documentary when all is said and done.

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Jake Adams (left) and Bill Babington (right) left Redondo Beach to sail around the world.

(photo by Chris Miller)



Health & Fitness

A Special Section

Sailing

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With more and more importance given to living green in the United States, the group hopes to discover what role the green movement plays in these corners of the world.

"We want to see how other cultures are handling the green issues in these small islands," Adams said. "We want to see how global climate change is affecting these people in fishing regions and how their day-to-day customs are being forced to change."

They can only imagine what they'll discover, and where, in approximately the next two and half years. No real timetable

or route is set in stone.

"The only set schedule is you have to pay attention to the weather. We don't want to be anywhere near the cyclone season," Adams said. "Other than that, we just want to explore, find stories and share them."

After leaving Redondo, the plan as of now is to head south to Mexico. From there, they'll sail across the Pacific to the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia. They'll then make their way to Tahiti and through the many islands in the South Pacific before eventually arriving in New Zealand sometime in 2012 or 2013. They'll then circle back east toward Fiji, turn northwest to Vanuatu and make their way north to Papua New Guinea. Finally, sometime around 2014 they'll sail through Indonesia into Malaysia.

"Then where do you go from that point? Well, today it'd be the Cape of Good Hope," Adams said.

With the current pirate situation in the Arabian Sea and off the coasts of northeast Africa, the crew would sail directly south toward South Africa and avoid any possibility of trouble.

By that time, Babington and the Adams couple will be halfway around the world and, they hope, halfway to telling the unheard stories of people around the world.

