

Ken Williams

Subject: Interviews with all three GSSR Participants

Jennifer Stern, at Nordhavn, sent each of the boats a 15 question questionnaire to complete. I have included all three of the boat's responses below, in their entirety.

There is also a huge amount of additional information (and pictures) on the websites of the three boats:

<http://greypearl.talkspot.com>

<http://www.seabirdlrc.com>

<http://www.kensblog.com>

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Braun and Tina Jones, Grey Pearl, Nordhavn 62 =====

1. When did you come up with this idea?

Well, once upon a time, when Braun "closed" me on the idea of doing the Nordhavn Med-Bound '07 rally, "Hun...it's pretty much on the way back to Annapolis, MD(our home port)", we had the pleasure of meeting John & Veronica Kennelly(N62 'Walkabout'). They came by to see the Nordhavn's participating in the MedBound rally. It was early one evening and I was taking a bag of trash out when I saw them next to our boat. Introductions were made and I asked them where their boat was berthed. They said Japan. I asked them to wait a moment as I knew Braun would be completely intrigued by this. Relatively new Nordhavn owners, John, his wife and three children had made the passage the summer before to Japan. Braun lived in Japan during his high school years when his Father served with the Naval Mag group in Tokyo. He has often spoke fondly of the time he lived there and the Japanese people.

Fast forward - we met one evening with Ken & Roberta Williams(fellow NAR buddies) in Seattle last June '08 and pitched the idea to them. We could tell that their interest was piqued...timing is everything. We had cruised with Steve & Carol Argosy of 'Seabird' late last summer and ran the idea by them. They shut us down immediately...they were on their way to warmer climates and none too soon!

2. Did you always consider it an "en masse" thing? Or were you going to go no matter what?

Depends on who you ask...

I had a few conditions if we were to consider such an undertaking. We needed to have at least two other boats going and with folks who had some cruising experience under their belts and, if at all possible, to keep the long extended passages of all day and nights, limited to a week. Not so much a question of if I can do the lengthy extended passages - just prefer not to! Braun & I were never really crazy about doing the South Pacific and when we learned more details from the Kennelly's...well my fate was sealed. We thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie that we experienced from the NAR and the added safety traveling as a group.

3. Are there other places you considered going to that you haven't seen? If so, what?

The plan for now is to enjoy the Far East & Asia. In a "pirate-free" world, we would love to eventually make way for the Gulf of Aden, cruise the Red Sea and Suez canal and pop back out in the Eastern Med...technically, we will have circumnavigated!

4. Once you reach Japan, what will you do with the boat? Continue exploring throughout Asia? Ship her back to the States or elsewhere?

We will likely winter the boat in Japan and come home for a few months. Or, spend less time at home and use the boat as a home base to do some land-cruising. No fast or firm plans as of yet for next year's cruising season.

5. Was it hard to get the other 2 boats on board w/ your idea? Why or why not?

Note above -

We were 'over the moon' when we received a call from Steve & Carol Argosy last fall that they were seriously considering the trip to Japan...a decision made just a few weeks after Carol had donated their winter clothing J

6. Will the three boats stay together once final destination is reached?

In the immediate future, yes, we will plan to stay together and moor in the same location late September in Japan. Beyond that, it's undetermined as of yet. Personally, I think the advantages of collectively staying together are greater than not. Over the next few months, we'll be spending a lot of time together and, likely discuss future plans and travel interests.

7. From where exactly in Seattle will you meet and depart?

Presently, we all moored in Lake Union at Salmon Bay Marine Center. We are all departing within week or so of one another late this month and will likely connect somewhere in British Columbia and meet in Ketchikan, Alaska.

As Ken has noted, we are focused on June 7th, as the day we will meet at Glacier Bay Alaska (Hoonah) and form a much tighter group. We have two crew members that will join us in Glacier Bay, Wayne Davis, an experienced cruiser who participated in the NAR on his N46 'Envoy' and Kell Achenbach, a dear friend and former business partner of Braun's plus, a hard core sailor who particularly enjoys the attractions of power cruising! We pick up Wayne's wife, Pat Davis in Dutch harbor, Alaska to round out the crew list. From Hoonah we will always be in sight of each other.

8. Do you have the ports and slips all lined up ahead of time that you'll be coming into or are you "winging it"?

As Ken has noted:

We have a few places planned; Ketchikan, Juneau, Glacier Bay, Hoonah, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Petropavlovsk (Siberia), Hokkaido and then Japan ... but that's it. The rest fit into the "drop anchor" category.

9. If you know, what marina is the exact location of the final destination?

Ken's response:

*** <http://ashiya.bellport.co.jp/> near Osaka Japan. We plan to arrive there mid August.

10. Are you nervous?

Anxious is probably a better word. As Ken so aptly noted, there's always a bit of "fear of the unknown" aspect to this trip. I try not to project that concern. When I look back at the places we have been, the adversity we overcame...whether it be weather(meltemi's, mistrals, etc...), mechanical(fortunately, relatively few...but, memorable), tight harbors in the Eastern Med(So.Turkey, Syria, etc!), language barriers, etc...in the end - it's all part of the journey! We continue to learn, experience and challenge ourselves...together. Doesn't get any more real than that.

11. Did you make any special equipment purchases or adjustments in preparation for this trip?

I think we've been preparing for this trip for years. After the boat returned from the Med in late '06, she underwent a complete re-fit, her age('98) was starting to show. Here in Seattle, we just installed a new water maker, fancy new I-talian hot water heater, all new appliances and more. Braun is meticulous in his planning especially when undertaking such a major passage as this.

12. What other research/preparations did you do to ready yourselves?

Braun's taken a wilderness medical emergency course.
I just completed my USCG Captain's license upgrade to Master 100 ton. A terrific refresher course!

13. To your knowledge, what are the number of private powerboat owners who have done this route before?

I will defer to Ken's comments:

*** There are probably 1 to 3 sailboats a year that make the passage, west to east, and perhaps one power boat every couple of years. Going east to west is a more difficult passage, and it is possible that John Kennelly was the first private power boat to make the passage (east to west). Certainly, he is the first I've found, and I've dug fairly hard. There are probably more than this, but I'd guess that not 20 private power boats in history have made the journey in either direction, and I expect that our trip will be more unusual than most. Bill Harrington is an amateur historian, and is passionate about the Aleutians. Whereas most boats are "passing by", we have a tour guide who knows the islands, and wants to show us sites that few have ever seen. I promised him we wouldn't just blast through. We'll be stopping to see military sites essentially no one has seen since world war II.

As to Siberia... I have found only ONE other private boat that has been to Petropavlosk....

Japan sees almost no private power boats. I don't know the count, but it is very low, possibly as low as one to three a year.

14. What will be the best and worst parts of this trip?

High points - Clearly the adventure aspect of the trip. Seeing Alaska by boat, cruising the Aleutian chain of islands, the very idea that our little ship will dock in Siberia and cruising in Japan just seems unreal and exotic!

Downside - The crummy weather that could plague us particularly, near the Aleutians and Bering Sea...and, typhoons in Japan!

15. Will you be making daily log updates? I would love to be able to create a new section on the nordhavn website that followed the daily happenings of your trip (a la the Voyage of Egret section.)

Hope to...as sea conditions permit!

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Steven and Carol Argosy, Seabird, Nordhavn 62 =====

1. When did you come up with this idea?

We were kind of "roped in" by a conspiracy between the other two couples. We were adamant about not ever going back to cold weather and somehow, during a dinner with Ken and Roberta, we gave in, mostly due to the "adventure" aspect.

2. Did you always consider it an "en masse" thing? Or were you going to go no matter what?

We missed out on the NAR due to business issues at the time and always regretted not going on a group adventure with other Nordys. This is not as organized and nowhere near as large a group, but Grey Pearl and Sans Souci are "veterans of this sort of thing and it made it that much more attractive to us.

3. Are there other places you considered going to that you haven't seen? If so, what?

We have planned as far as Southern Japan and possibly South Korea, China and Taiwan. A lot of what happens after that depends on many things, not the least of which is cruising in safety in pirate-proned areas. Having said that, our goal has always been to travel around the world. We shall see!

4. Once you reach Japan, what will you do with the boat? Continue exploring throughout Asia? Ship her back to the States or elsewhere?

See above

5. Was it hard to get the other 2 boats on board w/ your idea? Why or why not?

N/A

6. Will the three boats stay together once final destination is reached?

Not sure at this point. I think we will definitely stay together in Japan as we have arrangements to moor there for the winter months. I think if our schedules and plans work out, we would all like to stay together. It is a very good group!

7. From where exactly in Seattle will you meet and depart?

As of now, we all plan on departing Seattle at different times. My sense is that we will probably meet up along the way and definitely in Ketchikan, Alaska. We traveled through BC and Alaska last summer, but Grey Pearl and Sans Souci have only limited cruising in BC, so they may want to stop at different locations than us on the way up.

In Alaska, after Ketchikan, we most likely will see more of each other until Glacier Bay, where we will all gather to cruise there and depart to Kodiak as a group. After that, we are joined at the hip!

8. Do you have the ports and slips all lined up ahead of time that you'll be coming into or are you "winging it"?

Kens response: There aren't a lot of slips between here and there!!!! We have a few places planned; Ketchikan, Juneau, Glacier Bay, Hoona, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Petrapovlosk (Siberia), Hokkaido and then Japan ... but that's it. The rest fit into the "drop anchor" category.

9. If you know, what marina is the exact location of the final destination?

Ken s response: <http://ashiya.bellport.co.jp/> near Osaka Japan. We plan to arrive there mid August, and then spend two months cruising Japan.

10. Are you nervous?

Not really. We cruised from Connecticut to Florida to Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Venezuela, Columbia, through the canal and up the west coast in some pretty nasty stuff for days at a time. The big difference now is that it could be a little rougher, foggier and COLDER! Having Bill Harrington as a guide certainly makes it easier to swallow.

11. Did you make any special equipment purchases or adjustments in preparation for this trip?

Mechanically, we did a lot and the list is very long! We replaced every appliance, Electronics, Hatch and window seals, ground tackle parts, extensive hydraulics upgrades, new Generator, new air conditioning chillers, pumps, added survival suits, upgraded medical stores. It goes on and on. We are a different boat now.

12. What other research/preparations did you do to ready yourselves?

Carol is taking a medical course.

13. To your knowledge, what are the number of private powerboat owners who have done this route before?

Kens comments: There are probably 1 to 3 sailboats a year that make the passage, west to east, and perhaps one power boat every couple of years. Going east to west is a more difficult passage, and it is possible that John Kennelly was the first private power boat to make the passage (east to west). Certainly, he is the first I've found, and I've dug fairly hard. There are probably more than this, but I'd guess that not 20 private power boats in history have made the journey in either direction, and I expect that our trip will be more unusual than most. Bill Harrington is an amateur historian, and is passionate about the Aleutians. Whereas most boats are "passing by", we have a tour guide who knows the islands, and wants to show us sites that few have ever seen. I promised him we wouldn't just blast through. We'll be stopping to see military sites essentially no one has seen since world war II.

As to Siberia... I have found only ONE other private boat that has been to Petropavlosk....

Japan sees almost no private power boats. I don't know the count, but it is very low, possibly as low as one to three a year.

14. What will be the best and worst parts of this trip?

For me it is simply the adventure. Seeing the Aleutians is something that few have ever done other than commercial fisherman. Russia is kind of an unknown but we have a good agent handling the details. I am VERY excited about visiting and living in Japan. Also, once we are across the Pacific, in one way or another, a new adventure begins.

The worst part is some of the apprehension with the weather in the Aleutians. It can be very inhospitable and help is never near. I am happy we are traveling in a group.

15. Will you be making daily log updates? I would love to be able to create a new section on the nordhavn website that followed the daily happenings of your trip (a la the Voyage of Egret section.)

We plan on updating our website every few days or whenever something is going on, but we don't want to bore people with the mundane. I also will be sending out periodic emails to a list of people who want them. Also, at least two of us have SPOT devices, that broadcast our position to a google earth website map on a continuous basis. Ken is working on being able to have that information on the "our location" tab on our individual websites, which also has Google Earth.

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Ken and Roberta Williams, Sans Souci, Nordhavn 68 =====

1. When did you come up with this idea?

*** The original idea came from Braun speaking with John Kennelly about Walkabout's adventures. Walkabout made the same run a couple years ago, and had a great time. John excited Braun, who then excited Roberta, who then convinced me. Braun then spoke with Steven/Carol, and shared his enthusiasm for the project, getting "close, but no cigar." Later, Roberta and I had dinner with Steven and Carol, and to my complete surprise, we were able to push them over the edge.

2. Did you always consider it an "en masse" thing? Or were you going to go no matter what?

*** All of us wanted to cross the Pacific, but had three different plans for crossing. Braun wanted to go north, Roberta and I direct to Hawaii, and Steven south to Polynesia. We share a common belief that there is safety, plus increased fun, by traveling as a group. Given that we were all headed west, it made sense to travel together. The issues that led us to take the northern route are:

n Doing something unusual. It's fun to pioneer!

n John Kennelly is a heck of a salesman for the Bering Sea. It actually made it sound fun.

n We'll never be more than 500 miles from land. Long passages are boring.

3. Are there other places you considered going to that you haven't seen? If so, what?

*** The earth is a big place. It's easy to find somewhere we haven't been. Probably each of us has somewhere they'd like to go, and considers this the first step. Indonesia! Australia! New Zealand! Thailand! Hong Kong! I can go for a very long time....

4. Once you reach Japan, what will you do with the boat? Continue exploring throughout Asia? Ship her back to the States or elsewhere?

*** I don't know that any of us has the answer to this question. I claim this is the first step on a circumnavigation, but I really don't know. My general rule is that "I like to do more of things I like, and less of things I don't". My guess, with respect to Sans Souci, is that we'll head west until it stops being fun, and then ship the boat to the Med or to the Caribbean.

5. Was it hard to get the other 2 boats on board w/ your idea? Why or why not?

*** I tried for two years to put together a group to cross the Pacific. There was no way I wanted to make the passage alone. At one point I had 10 boats all of whom claimed that they would cross the Pacific, and none of which actually made the trip. The beauty of this trip is that everyone agreed to do it, and they were all people who were credible; who would actually make the run.

6. Will the three boats stay together once final destination is reached?

*** We really don't know. My guess is that we'll split up, but perhaps not. There's a chance that we'll stick together, a chance that we'll split up, but then come back together for serious passages - and, there's a chance we'll scatter to the wind. I don't think anyone is spending much time thinking beyond Japan. We all know there is a big world out there, and that we generally know where the "fun" places are, but we haven't really thought about where we'll go and when (or, at least Sans Souci hasn't)

7. From where exactly in Seattle will you meet and depart?

*** The first bit of the trip; the run from Seattle to Alaska, is a bit more "anarchic" than the rest. Each of the boats will have guests on board, and will be working to entertain guests. We'll be in fairly protected waters, and have a lessened need for each other's

company for safety and companionship. My sense is that we'll travel roughly the same direction, at roughly the same time, but expect we will often be a day or two's run from each other, rather than running side by side.

All of the boats depart Seattle the last week of April, but our departures will differ by a few days. My guess is that we'll rendezvous many times on the way to Alaska, but we're not sure exactly where.

We are focused on June 7th, as the day we will meet at Glacier Bay Alaska (Hoona) and form a much tighter group. From that moment until Japan I expect we will always be in sight of each other.

8. Do you have the ports and slips all lined up ahead of time that you'll be coming into or are you "winging it"?

*** There aren't a lot of slips between here and there!!!! We have a few places planned; Ketchikan, Juneau, Glacier Bay, Hoona, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Petrapovlosk (Siberia), Hokkaido and then Japan ... but that's it. The rest fit into the "drop anchor" category.

9. If you know, what marina is the exact location of the final destination?

*** <http://ashiya.bellport.co.jp/> near Osaka Japan. We plan to arrive there mid August, and then spend two months cruising Japan.

10. Are you nervous?

*** I was very nervous about the Bering Sea, and perhaps still should be, but ... no more. We found a Commercial Fisherman who regularly fishes the Aleutians, who will be aboard Sans Souci as a "tour guide". He (Bill Harrington) knows the area, and where/how to hide. With Bill around, we'll be fine. Since Bill signed up, I've totally stopped worrying about the Bering Sea. He's a colorful character and would be great for any interviews. Very "Deadliest Catch." Now, I'm far more worried about the narrow passages in Alaska that Roberta and I will be doing alone. These will be fine, but I've never been there, so there's always a bit of "fear of the unknown." I also worry about Japan. It's a modern country, but I really don't feel I have the "lay of the land" yet. Lots of fishing, no VHF communications, not much English, strange charts. It will be fun!

11. Did you make any special equipment purchases or adjustments in preparation for this trip?

*** Lots, or nothing, depending on how you look at it. I prepared the same as I would for any other major passage. Lots of focus on spare parts, getting everything into perfect condition, worrying about extreme cold AND extreme heat. Lots of new equipment to provide fast internet around the world.

12. What other research/preparations did you do to ready yourselves?

*** I've been on a mission to get smarter about my boat; I actually got a marine electrician certification. I've been studying hydraulics, steering systems, diesel engines etc. I'm assuming there aren't a lot of local mechanics in Siberia. Self sufficiency is priority #1.

13. To your knowledge, what are the number of private powerboat owners who have done this route before?

*** There are probably 1 to 3 sailboats a year that make the passage, west to east, and perhaps one power boat every couple of years. Going east to west is a more difficult passage, and it is possible that John Kennelly was the first private power boat to make the passage (east to west). Certainly, he is the first I've found, and I've dug fairly hard. There are

probably more than this, but I'd guess that not 20 private power boats in history have made the journey in either direction, and I expect that our trip will be more unusual than most. Bill Harrington is an amateur historian, and is passionate about the Aleutians. Whereas most boats are "passing by", we have a tour guide who knows the islands, and wants to show us sites that few have ever seen. I promised him we wouldn't just blast through. We'll be stopping to see military sites essentially no one has seen since world war II.

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Japan sees almost no private power boats. I don't know the count, but it is very low, possibly as low as one to three a year.

14. What will be the best and worst parts of this trip?

*** We don't know yet. I can build a compelling case for any of the places to be the worst or the best. Plus, it will vary by person. I'll like anywhere the sun is shining, there is no wind, and the seas are calm. I don't catch, or eat, fish, and am not really a grizzly bear kind of guy. For others, these will be the high points of the trip.

My gut says that there is going to be nothing but high points, unless we get bad weather. The odds are that the worst part of the whole trip is going to be the head winds and currents across the Aleutians. We are going to fight a current and headwind for over 1,500 miles. It is not going to be dangerous (I hope!) but I do expect it to be slow, painful, going. I think we are going to have a long uncomfortable ride. Probably if I had to pick some predicted highlights, it would be "Geographic Harbor". This is where many National Geographic specials were filmed, and the film Grizzly Man. It will be a chance to hang out with LOTS of bears. Another high point will be seeing the military bases in the Aleutians, especially Adak, which is a large military ghost town. Siberia will be cool, just because it will be so incredible just to look around and realize where we are - and, Japan, cruising the inland sea, will be incredible!

15. Will you be making daily log updates? I would love to be able to create a new section on the nordhavn website that followed the daily happenings of your trip (a la the Voyage of Egret section.)

*** Yes. I will send daily updates, and know that both Seabird and Grey Pearl plan regular blog updates. I'm also planning to post lots of video.

Thanks for all your help, Ken! I may have a couple of follow-up q's but this should give me a good start.

*** Hopefully Grey Pearl and Seabird will improve on my answers! (and Roberta)