

BOOK REVIEW

“Tightwads on the Loose: A Seven Year Pacific Odyssey”

by Wendy Hinman

Review by Ami Green, wife of Bob Green, Essex Station

“Go small, go simple, but go now”

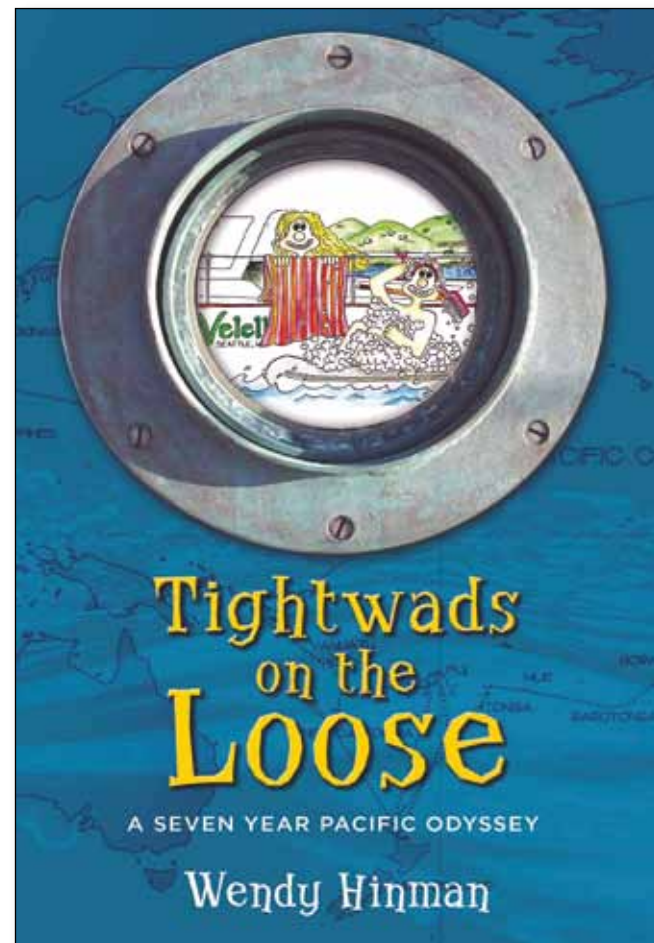
Lin and Larry Pardey

Is it possible that Wendy Hinman and Garth Wilcox (Pacific Northwest Station) heard this mantra before they set sail from Seattle in 2000 on a seven-year Pacific odyssey? Choosing to leave in a 31-foot cold-molded Tom Wylie-designed cutter named *Veleva* certainly qualifies for “going small.” Carrying only essentials and letting humor and a sense of lightheartedness fill the spaces that could have held more sophisticated gear speaks to the Pardeys’ go-simple creed. By making the decision to go now on a restricted budget in a small, seaworthy vessel, Wendy and Garth show that you don’t always need the biggest boat or budget to cross an ocean.

“Tightwads on the Loose,” Wendy Hinman’s entertaining book, introduces us to two very different people with a shared love of sailing and adventure. Wendy, a social creature, is filled with wanderlust that was formed during

her childhood as she moved with her family “every two or three years to culturally diverse places like Guam.” These early experiences seem to have created a woman eager for adventure and unafraid of the unknown. Her extroverted nature opens numerous doors along *Veleva*’s path. This is a woman who needs people and finds it in the cruising community. I was often amazed and exhausted by the pace she kept once her feet hit the ground.

Alternatively, her husband Garth Wilcox falls squarely on the “I” of the Myers-Briggs personality test where regular private time is required to recharge his batteries. A trained naval architect, Garth’s idea of a good day is reading or catching up on boat chores that are always waiting. Having circumnavigated the globe with his family as a child in the 1970s Garth hopes to return to the island of Makaluva in Fiji where his family once spent a



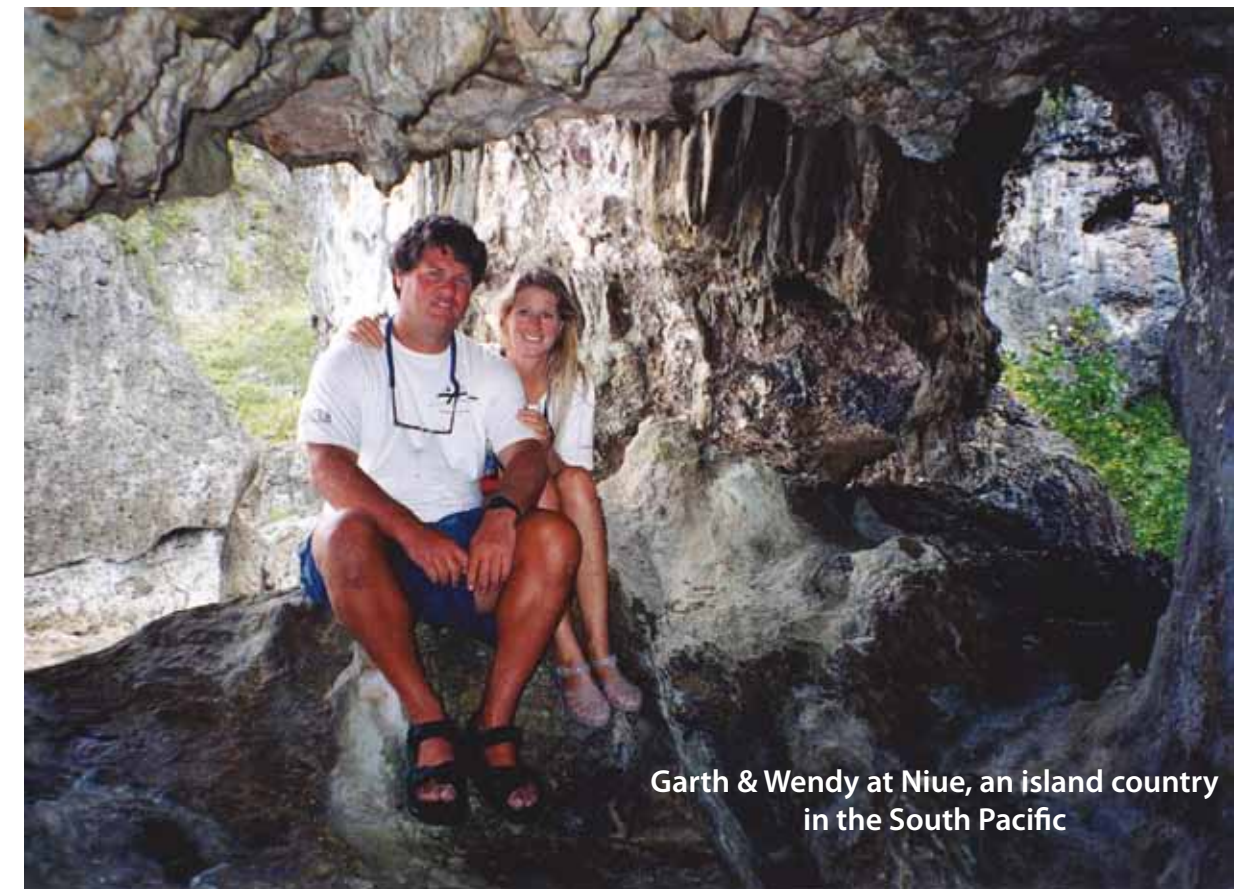
year rebuilding their severely damaged boat. Returning to Makaluva holds “many strong memories” for Garth and it becomes “a tour of his life after the 1974 accident” his family suffered on a Pacific reef.

After several years of cruising the South Pacific, hints of tension creep into *Veleva*’s cockpit. Garth seeks more “purpose” to his life. Although willing to continue on a circumnavigation with Wendy, he would prefer to return to Seattle on the more challenging route that would take them into the North Pacific. Dreams of designing and building his own boat (one that would finally accommodate his large frame) have been percolating for months. This sea change becomes a turning point in their relationship with new challenges and solutions.

Garth’s dream exposes Wendy’s vulnerability. As she acknowledges her fear of losing contact with the cruisers who have become close friends, she also opens Pandora’s box that contains questions that relate to her commitment to cruising. In revealing her heart, Wendy gives a poignant, personal account that highlights a possible fracture in the foundation of their sailing dreams. Anyone who has spent time on passage or lived aboard a boat understands the strain that can occur onboard...no matter how much you love one another.

Like her sailing acumen, Wendy’s account of her odyssey grows more vivid as her experiences expand. The naiveté in the first few chapters evaporates as she works her way towards the decision to sail to Japan where *Veleva* will follow “the trail of armed conflict [that took place] in the Pacific” during World War II. Her descriptions of temples, typhoons and terrifying Shisas are beautifully expressed. Hinman gives us an opportunity to experience parts of the Pacific that are on a path less traveled. I finished her book with salt spray on my cheeks and a strong desire to see Japan. ✨

Wendy’s Update: Garth and Wendy are now debating their next boat (likely a 38-footer of Garth’s design) and their next voyage (Europe, via the Horn). They recently purchased a 1920s farmhouse with lots of room for Garth, a naval architect, to build his dream boat to replace their beloved *Veleva*. When the new craft is shipshape, they’ll set off – this time in a boat Garth can stand. In the meantime, they’re racing boats on Puget Sound, and Wendy is doing presentations and promoting her book while writing another.



Garth & Wendy at Niue, an island country in the South Pacific