

Bainbridge Islander

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FOR THE RECORD

There were two errors in the May 17 brief "Architectre firm receives award." First, "architecture" was misspelled in the title. Second, the firm was incorrectly identified. The correct title is Davis Studio Architecture + Design. Please see a corrected brief in this week's community briefs section.

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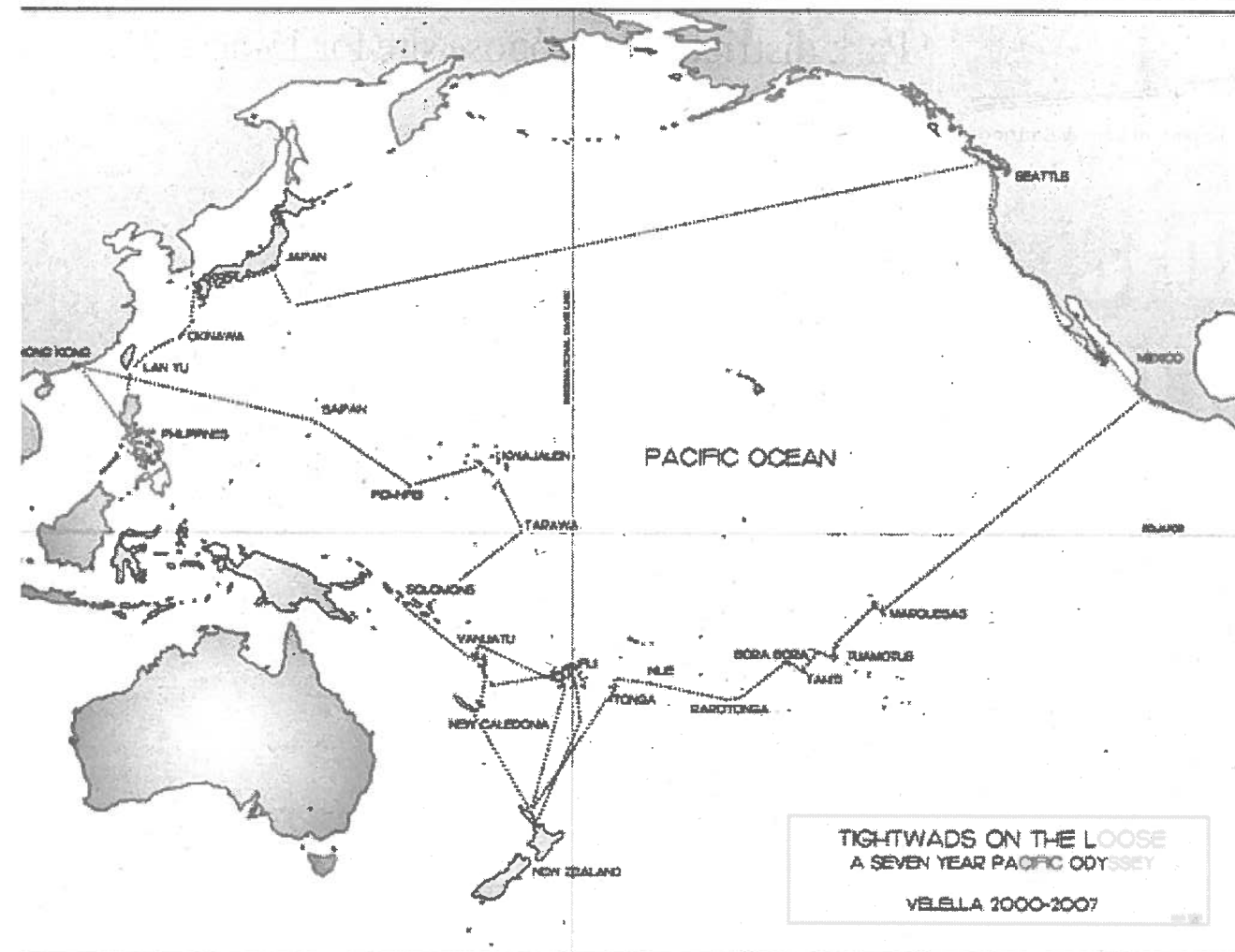


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COURTESY PHOTO

This illustration from the book, "Tightwads on the Loose," shows the seven-year, 34,000-mile route taken by Wendy Hinman and husband Garth Wilcox, of Bainbridge Island, aboard the sailboat Veleva as they left Puget Sound, sailed south along the coast and then across the Pacific.

Couple chronicles 7-year, 34,000-mile adventure around the Pacific

BY TAD SOOTER
BAINBRIDGE ISLANDER

AUTHOR APPEARANCES

Wendy Hinman, author of "Tightwads on the Loose," speaks at 2 p.m. Monday at the Manchester Library and 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Sylvan Way Library in Bremerton. Hinman also takes part in the Bainbridge Island Wooden Boat Festival on June 15-16. For information, go to www.wendyhinman.com.

There were moments when Wendy Hinman just wanted to go back to shore.

There was the crossing from New Zealand to Fiji when her little wooden sailboat pounded into towering seas for 11 days straight. Huddled in the womblike cabin, she and husband Garth Wilcox felt the boat absorb each wave.

"We could just feel the boat shuddering," Hinman said. "I thought, 'Why do I want to do this again?'"

Those moments were rare in the seven years the Bainbridge Island couple spent sailing the Pacific on their 31-foot boat Veleva. More often, Hinman remembers the people she

met, the sunsets on secluded harbors, the dolphins carving phosphorescent patterns into the water at night. Moments when she never wanted to go back.

Hinman captured the highs and lows of those nomadic years in her book, "Tightwads on the Loose," a lighthearted account of a 34,000-mile ocean voyage on a too-small boat. The boat — purchased with budget rather than comfort in mind — was so cozy Wilcox could hardly sit upright, let alone stand in the cabin. They spent

nearly every hour together aboard Veleva, sometimes traveling for weeks without seeing other humans.

The couple pushed off from a Seattle dock in 2000 with no particular itinerary and no schedule. The departure was the culmination of years of preparation for Hinman and Wilcox.

Both were lifelong sailors, Hinman said, and a world cruise was a dream they shared. Eventually, they realized it couldn't wait.

"You never know how

much time you'll get," she said.

They left Puget Sound and pointed Veleva south and then west, scooting among the South Pacific Islands. The couple fell into a new rhythm of life on Veleva, a life guided by the weather, tides and a miserly budget. Their rental house in Seattle gave them a small but steady income, and they lived on about \$33 a day.

"If we spent too much we'd just go to some remote anchorage and snorkel or something that didn't cost any money," Hinman said.

"Character-building experiences" waited around every corner. They weathered multiple typhoons, survived near-misses with cargo ships in the fog, and

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endured an electrical melt-down aboard Velella that waylaid them for months in the Solomon Islands.

They also made new friends. It's the community of fellow wanderers Hinman remembers and misses most. At sea, people pitched in to help each other, she said.

"It's a great community of people," she said. "Here

you'd never go change the oil on your neighbor's car. You do stuff like that all the time out there."

Hinman and Wilcox spent years poking around the South Pacific, New Zealand and the Philippines, visiting nearly 20 nations in the process. Finally they sailed north to Japan and pointed Velella east. In the end, it was Hinman who wanted to keep going, while Wilcox

was eager to return home and begin building a boat for another sea voyage, a boat with a little more space.

"I wanted to go on forever," Hinman said. "But then I could stand."

They sailed back across the Pacific to Puget Sound, a grueling, 49-day crossing capped by yet another storm. Hinman has spent the past few years adjusting to life on shore

and writing "Tightwads," which was published in 2012. Wilcox, who works as a naval architect, is designing the boat for their next voyage.

When it's finished, they'll set sail again.

Until then, Hinman is content writing and speaking about her sea travels.

"It's fun to share the story," Hinman went on to explain. "It keeps it alive for me." ■