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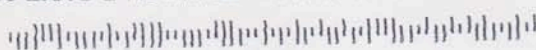
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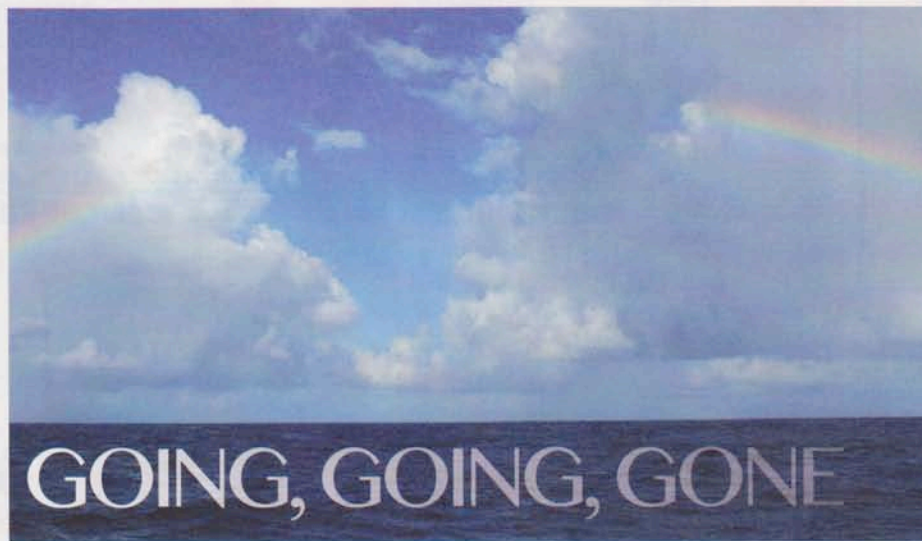
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BY JIM LEISHMAN

AFTER WORD

A PAEAN TO POWER-CRUIISING FROM A FOUNDER OF THE MODERN PASSAGEMAKING MOVEMENT.



From my desk here at Nordhavn, I've watched people do the same thing for almost 40 years now. Retire, buy the boat, and go. Until recently I really didn't think much about, or even appreciate, the enormity of the process. Going cruising sounds so easy, and it really is easy in the sense of safely running the boat from point A to B, but to get all the personal planets and stars to align to allow for the necessary lifestyle change is where the real challenge lies.

My dear friend Jim Sink died a while back—made it into his 80s. I can remember meeting him and his wife Suzy in Houston, Texas, in 1990. Jim was wrapping up a rewarding architectural career and was ready to vigorously embrace his retirement with a new Nordhavn 46 to be christened *Salvation II*—the first *Salvation* having been a classic Chris-Craft runabout he'd owned 25 years earlier. *Salvation II*'s voyages to Alaska, around America's Great Loop, her travels through Europe via the Rhine-Main-Danube canal system, and her circumnavigation of the globe, have all earned Jim and Suzy's boat a place in the history books. He was about 60 when he ordered her in Houston—not much older than I am now—and he and Suzy later reminisced endlessly about their adventures aboard *Salvation II* being the absolute highlight of their lives.

There are few things I know for certain at this point in my

life, but one thing I am sure of is that cruising on a well-found vessel is a wonderfully rewarding endeavor, whether you harbor-hop along a coastline or cruise around the world. In fact it could be argued that ocean cruising is one of the last great frontiers, with unlimited horizons and a lifestyle that's perfectly suited to people of retirement age.

Throughout my life, I've owned three airplanes and dozens of motorcycles, as well as sports cars, jeeps, and motorhomes. But, to quote a famous line: "There is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

What I like most about a long passage is beautifully summed

up by Norris Hoyt when he writes about a night watch while crossing the Atlantic aboard the 50-foot trawler, *Passagemaker*, more than 40 years ago:

You're alone on a pulsing, pushing boat on the dark ocean and under the open, luminous sky. You check the compass for a while, and she's hunting about four degrees across the course. You go out on deck, gaze carefully around the horizon, see nothing Creation didn't put there, and gaze in silence at the stars. Your fellow rovers are breathing trustfully in the darkness below, and you're absolutely alone in the absolute middle of peace. It's an expansive sensation. You watch the bow wave for a while, check around the horizon every half hour, make a sandwich, check the compass again, think about important things, and go inside and repeat the process. A sensation of enormous well-being fills you. As the watch runs out, you wake your relief, and talk with him for 15 minutes or so before you wander peacefully to bed.

I've been fortunate enough to experience many ocean crossings over the years, most of a circumnavigation, the comfort of the tropics, the harsh beauty of high latitudes, and a trek around Cape Horn onboard a boat I personally helped design and build. But I've never really had what I wanted most—the time to savor such cruising experiences. I find myself dreaming more and more these days about finally having just that. □

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