



Keys

By Carllie Hennigan

One by one, I've slid my keys off my key ring. I am now down to two keys – one to my bike and one to our beat-up old car. In 10 days, those keys too will be gone: my bike will be locked up in storage and the beater will have been sold at auction.

We are slowly and steadily cutting the ties that bind us to land. My heart lightens with each key shed.

My bundle of keys never weighed what Garrett's did. I guess, being an office manager and programmer, he was given more responsibility. (How many times was he called by the security company to check out a false alarm at his office?)

We are now actually 9 days and 12 hours from casting off on an extended voyage down the west coast of North America and through the Pacific Ocean. Leaving Vancouver, Canada, we will make our way through the Canadian Gulf Islands, the American San Juans, and angle up the Strait of Juan de Fuca. After rounding Cape Flattery, we will harbor-hop down the coast. The plan is to take it easy, enjoying many anchorages, towns and cities along the way. We will loiter for a week or so in San Francisco Bay. Then we will make our way down the Californian coastline, exploring Catalina and the Channel Islands en route. We hear there are many lovely places to see, and as we haven't spent a lot of time traveling, we are looking forward to exploring from the base of our own vessel. Eventually we will reach San Diego, and as hundreds of cruisers do every year, we will linger there until hurricane season in Mexico is over. Around November 1 we will proceed slowly down the Baja Peninsula, stop at Cabo San Lucas (only touching bases at Cabo as we hear it's terrifically expensive), and sail 100 miles or so up into the Sea of Cortez. We will visit those places with the imagination-inspiring names, like La Paz, Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta and Zijuatenajo, and many other picturesque anchorages and Mexican villages along the way.

When the hurricanes return – March 1 – we will hustle our bustle out of Mexico to ports farther south in Central America: Costa Rica, and thence across to the Marquesas, Tuomatos, Tahiti and Hawaii.

Or, we will cross straight to Hawaii, March 1, to follow our original plan for a 14-month trip.

Hawaii! It's been too long since my one visit as a young, single, wide-eyed wahine. Whatever route we take to get there, I can hardly wait to spend two to three months exploring the islands on our catamaran, *Light Wave*.

Eventually, we will sail north from those fragrant isles and curve east with the westerlies to reach British Columbia. Our return will be via the wild and beautiful Queen Charlotte Islands where we will slowly ease our psyches back into the land we have chosen to live in.

Slowly, we will add keys back onto our rings, and we will try very hard not to let those key rings get too big, nor the tentacles too strong. We will try to remain objective, and somewhat detached from the mad rush to acquire that permeates the land. We will try to stay relaxed, happy, and peaceful amid vehicles traveling past each other on city streets with a 3-foot margin at a collective speed of over 80 mph. We will try to keep the rhythms of the sea and the vastness of the ocean and the earth in our minds as we cope with the tentacles of land in a different fashion.

We must always be ready to lightly cast off and follow our hearts and dreams on another journey, another adventure; to learn, to see, to listen, to smell, to experience, to think, to be.

For this is what it is all about, isn't it? Being fully, completely, joyfully, free of the twisting influences of those tentacles – the prejudice, self-importance, acquisitiveness, and small-mindedness that separates us from our fellows on this vast planet Earth, and from the limitless possibilities in this endless Universe.

Lose the keys. 