

## Portrait of a Cruiser – [www.noonsite.com](http://www.noonsite.com)

Thank you for agreeing to contribute to our “Portrait of Cruiser” feature. Please complete the following questions in as much detail as you can, and include anything extra you feel you would like to add in the section at the end. The final article will be sent to you for approval prior to publishing. Please also send a photograph of the crew and the boat. Thank you for participating.

Names of Owners (and crew): Eric and Leslie Rigney, Bryce Rigney (16) Trent Rigney (14)

Nationality: USA

Boat Name: S/V Kandu

Boat Type/Model and Size: (eg: Beneteau Oceanis 423, 42 ft): 1987 Tayana V42 CC cutter 42-foot

Your Home Port: Marina Del Rey & Ventura, California, United States

Blog/website/facebook pages: Our website and blog: [www.RigneysKandu.com](http://www.RigneysKandu.com), FB: Rigneyskandu or Eric Rigney, Leslie Dennis Rigney, Bryce Rigney or Trent Rigney, Youtube: Rigneyskandu and BroVENTURES rigney, Instagram: Rigneyskandu, bryce.rigney, tnertr\_rigney

How did you start cruising?

Leslie: In a way, it was a prenuptial agreement 28 years ago before we married. Not long after we met, we sailed the Hawaiian Islands for a couple of months, then sailed back to California over twenty-five days together on Eric’s uncle’s boat. On that trip Eric said, “I want to do something like this again. And I want to know” — this was a kind of interview — “if you’d like it, because if it isn’t something you would like to do....” Well, it was definitely something that I wanted to do. I wanted to travel around the world and by sailboat sounded fine with me. Eric had already cruised on his uncle’s homebuilt 32-foot ferro-cement cutter, ‘Getel,’ early in his teenage life to Hawaii and back in 1974, and then for two years in French Polynesia, 1976-77. Eric’s Yoda-like mentor and uncle, Bill Kohut, during his youth, not only taught him how to fix all things mechanical, but educated and inspired him to seek a life of joy with less materialism. In August 2010, we bought Kandu and started Uncle Bill working on her. In early 2014, we left our jobs, rented our Los Angeles home, and moved the boys to Ventura schools all in order to live aboard Kandu in the Ventura Harbor. It was a yearlong process of further boat preparation and extracting ourselves from our landlubber lives in prep for our intended 5-year journey. Kandu was still not completely tested and ready when we felt it necessary to finally ‘throw-off’ the dock lines and get going. Eric was not ready, but I felt we needed to shove off. Our sailing down the Southern California coast before Mexico was a ‘breaking in’ of newly installed equipment. This required many visits to West Marine and other chandleries in each port along the way. The ticking clock of a nature’s weather season pushed us to leave San Diego for Mexico and her Baja coast. Throughout Mexico and the Galapagos, we continued to experience equipment challenges. Before we left, a friend of ours said, “Cruising is just

repairing your boat in exotic locations.” Well, it’s definitely true. We repaired problems with the alternator in the Galapagos, changed out our refrigerator and other things in Nuku Hiva, Marquesas, did an overhaul of our rigging in Raiatea, Society Islands plus anti-fouling, plus plus. In Pangkor Marina, Malaysia, the engine needed attention, so we pulled out the engine, had her reworked, cleaned/repainted the filthy bilge and in the meantime fixed leaks, replaced teak ruined by leaks, re-varnished cockpit combing and handrails, anti-fouled again, and so so much more. Bryce and Trent, our two teenage sons have really learned how to work. One of our hopes was to teach the boys a strong work ethic during our travels...and it’s happening. Eric and I also wanted to pull the boys away from contemporary influences during their teenage years hoping that more adult interaction would be good for them. So many say cruising is the best education a young person could have. It remains to be seen, but they have had a chance to learn a second language (French – two years in Fr. Polynesian schools), to live in and experience many different cultures, and to spend lots of quality time with us. Eric: My uncle, Bill Kohut, surfed the crest of the DIY ferro-cement boat building craze, starting up a DIY Sampson Marine boatyard in Ventura, California in 1971, a way of paying for and completing the building of his own backyard project, Getel. I grew up around ferro-cement boat building and DIY cruiser wannabes. Hiscock, Moitessier, Knox-Johnson set the examples and the courses for many back then. Getel was launched in 1972, sailed the Santa Barbara Channel Islands for two years before we headed off to Hawaii. I was 14. We left not knowing celestial navigation. Armed with a sexton, Nautical Almanac, log tables, a chronometer, and a how-to book (“Kindergartner’s Guide to Celestial Navigation,” I think), we figured it out 7 days later. From that point on, I realized what it took to “make things happen,” and I’ve been doing it ever since. Eighteen months after our first California-Hawaii-California trip, we were off to French Polynesia, where I would later meet Moitessier and see Hiscock and Jacques Brel. Cruising was thoroughly infused in my blood.

Describe what sort of cruiser are you:

(e.g. weekender, holidays, liveaboard, single-hander, family, couple....)

We are an active live-aboard circumnavigating family with two teenage sons born in 2001 and 2003.

What type of cruising are you doing currently?

(e.g. short distances in home waters, offshore, long-distance, ocean, circumnavigation)

Leslie: RigneysKandu is circumnavigating the globe having started in Ventura, California in Feb 2015. We headed south to Mexico and jumped off from La Cruz, Banderas Bay AKA Puerto Vallarta in early April 2015 to reach the Galapagos before hurricane season. We spent one year in the Marquesas Islands, predominantly in Taiohae, Nuku Hiva, and another school year in Uturoa, Raiatea, an island near Tahiti and Bora Bora. While there, we flew to New Zealand, Australia, and Rapa Nui. From Tahiti, flights are affordable to those destinations. We left the Society Islands in May 2017 to catch the Sail Indonesia Rally starting in August from Darwin. Along the way we stopped off at Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu and arrived in Darwin just in time to refit, wash off the salt and begin our next adventure sailing Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Eric: Running out of cruising funds and wanting to get the boys back in time to start college and

their own lives, we planned to be out 5 years and it's working out that way. Two years in FP meant we'd have an accelerated return from that point on—almost a boat delivery pace but with more stops. We know many long time cruisers who shake their heads at our rate of return, but as one cruiser said, "You can't kiss all the girls." The cruising lifers have devoted their energies to this wonderful lifestyle, and as much as we'd like to saturate and immerse in additional cultures as they do, our path is different. I find our particular "talents" get us very deep into a community in a short time. After Leslie, previously a singer with Los Angeles Opera, sings in a church; and, or the boys interact with other kids; and/or I help address a community service or business development issue (entrepreneurial sensibilities); we're in deeply, adopted by the community.

What were the key reasons you selected your current boat?

Leslie: We bought "Herron's Flight" in August 2010 and changed her name to Kandu because we are the "Can Do" family. Cost, comfort, and safety were the initial reasons, along with the fact that she was reputed to be a solid ocean cruiser! She had a full keel with a skeg to protect the rudder, solar panels, furling exterior main sail accompanied by the usual furling genoa and staysail, center cockpit for aft privacy, and many other ocean cruising details that Eric was looking for. Eric: My preferences were formed in my youth by the cruising boat style of the 80's with history carried over from the 70's. I wanted a boat that could "take a lickin' and keep on tickin'." Safety, affordability, and comfort were my go-to's—within the smallest boat we could be comfortable. I bought the "Best Used Boats for Cruising" (or something like that) book, and picked this one. I think now, were I to do it again, I might contact John Neal of Mahina Expeditions to help me pick out a boat. He knows his stuff, lives it daily.

What other boats have you owned?

Eric: A 32-foot Ferro-Cement Cutter – 'Getel' – built in Uncle Bill's back yard, a Capri 14.2 called Betty Blue to sail in Marina del Rey's Capri 14.2 regatta races, and 3 sabots purchased for the boys to learn to sail.

What changes have you made to your current boat?

Eric: Added a hard dodger, refurbished nearly everything including rigging, engine, hoses, toilets, electrical, solar panels, wind generator, changed out batteries twice, etc.

Most useful equipment fitted, and reasons for this choice:

Eric and Leslie: Note: Americans are notorious in the cruising community for carrying loads (excessive?) of spare parts and tools. One German cruiser said that Americans leave their home port full and arrive with nothing whereas French leave with nothing and arrive full (. . . accusing them of boat theft!) Many view other boaters as a greater threat of theft than that of locals. Ok, equipment favorites: Garmin InReach Satellite Texting for communication with family and friends, for weather and for safety. The hard dodger adds tremendous comfort. Cruise RO Water & Power De-salineator at 30 gallons per hour for fresh water, and unbeatable service, keeps us drinking with less labor, trouble, and worry. We like our B&G Navigation and Radar system but the wind indicator dies too often and is expensive to replace. Our Monitor

Windvane steers us very well, but place cork between the bottom control line sheaves and the outer tubing to prevent chafing which we experienced 3 times at bad moments, of course! The newest device, an AIS transponder is now a must have. Can't forget our West Marine Hypalon RIB dinghy and two outboard motors: 10 and 3.3 horse, but a 15hp 2-stroke would be better for planning, weight, and parts. 15hp'd RIB are the most common dinghy out here. That said, we used the 10hp OBM twice to push us to safety when our engine failed – in Anaho, Marquesas and once near Komodo, Indonesia. Love my Mantus anchor, swivel, and bridal. Set it and forget it. (Note: French and Aussies only set 3:1 scope as compared to Americans who tend to go 5:1, and 7:1 if it blows). There are lots of little things that make me smile when I use them, like 6-quart oil extractor, water guard fuel funnel, shop vac, 2" PVC pipe cutters for hose, heat gun, ratcheted spanners, etc. Too many to list here. I love my gadgets that make work so much easier.

Equipment regrets, or things you would do differently:

Eric: Knowing what we know today, based on our current expertise on boat refurbishing (more than I knew 7 yrs ago), we might have bought a newer boat, perhaps in or near Malaysia, refitted her in Pangkor Marina, and taken advantage of the location and cheap flights to travel by airplane from and around Southeast Asia while fixing the boat. Then used Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as our two-year proving ground before circumnavigating, eventually ending the trip in Australia. I don't recommend this to anyone. For those at home, live on your boat disconnected from the dock, at anchor preferably, for at least 2-4 continuous months, to get a true hold on your power consumption. Use all your gear as much as is practical to hone and fine-tune it and your skills. Ideally, do this in a location near affordable support and access to parts. Take your time. It will actually go faster. The minute you see a small issue, address it as soon as practicable. Small issues, like a tiny water drip, can get large fast if left for when you'll have more time - you can expect to pay a much higher price. Took me awhile to learn this.

List the countries you have cruised:

Mexico, Galapagos, French Polynesia (Marquesas, Tua Motus, Society Islands), Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Darwin, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia. We visited Easter Island, New Zealand and Sydney by plane from Tahiti, much less expensive and time consuming.

Future cruising plans:

Feb 22 2018 : Cochin, India, Indian Ocean. End of Feb: Gulf of Aden into Red Sea. March 2018: Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt and Suez Canal into Mediterranean. April 1, 2018: Easter in Israel, Turkey, Greece, Croatia, Italy, France, Spain. Sept 2018: Straits of Gibraltar, maybe Morocco, Portugal (Madeira), Canary Islands. Late Nov 2018 cross the Atlantic Ocean, Dec 2018 Caribbean. March 2019: Panama Canal. Possibly cross Pacific Ocean to Hawaii or motor sail up Central America and Mexico making California sometime in the summer of 2019. TBA.

List the oceans/seas you have crossed:

We have sailed the Pacific Ocean, South Pacific Ocean, Coral Sea, Torres Strait, Arafura Sea, Timor Sea, Flores Sea, Java Sea, and the Straits of Melacca.

Approximate sea miles:

15,000 miles

Scariest day on the water:

Leslie: Our most stressful period was the two-day approach to the Galapagos in 2015 with multiple system failures and depleted fuel reserves in poor weather. In 2017, we experienced a bit of harsh weather sailing the Torres Strait when the windvane jammed and we took on water in the cockpit dousing our Honda generator with saltwater (thank goodness our companionway was closed). The swell was large accompanied by solid 25-knot winds with bigger gusts. Kandu was getting pounded, our wind generator broke due to desperate birds trying to land, and other smaller things were breaking (breakage is expensive), so we called the Australian Border Force and asked if we could anchor in the lee of a nearby island to wait for the weather to pass. They agreed. We stayed two days fixing nearly everything that had broken, except the wind generator. That has since been replaced with a D400 eclectic energy wind generator (<http://eclectic-energy.co.uk>) ordered into Langkawi, Malaysia from the United States.

Best cruising moment:

Eric: Comfortable, trouble-free sailing in the intended direction, scenery greater than any cinematic moment, lifelong friendships forged of people more wonderful, generous, kind, and helpful than can be imagined, getting off the boat and touring inland, touring with a rally through Indonesia, etc. We've had many wonderful moments for sure, but as a family we concur that ... in short, living a land life sometimes feels a bit like you're watching a movie, whereas when cruising, you feel like you're living a life.

Favourite cruising area and why:

Leslie: Indonesia. It was the most different from our own culture and the people were unbelievably friendly, courteous and helpful along the way. So many of our lifelong dreams (seeing Komodo Dragons, witnessing Bali culture & surfing Bali's world famous Padang Padang Beach, touring Central Java's breathtaking Buddhist and Hindu temples, plus the most incredible scuba diving) were fulfilled during those three months. We joined the Sail Indonesia Rally 2017 most importantly to help us with customs and visa paperwork, but also because we knew very little about Indonesia. We needed a helping hand and wanted to meet other sailors. It was a most fabulous experience sailing along their chosen routes and being spoiled rotten at the rally stops by the local rally committees. Because our experience was so wonderful, we decided to join the Sail Malaysia Rally 2017 too for more great adventures. Bryce: Raiatea, Indonesia, Easter Island (we flew there).

Favourite anchorage:

Leslie: North and South Fakarava, Tua Motus, French Polynesia – Stunningly beautiful, incredibly clear and warm lagoon waters, the boys became scuba certified and we dove with hundreds of sharks, the boys surfed, we toured, we ate well and generally had a vacation.

Kandu and our equipment were in good shape. Bryce's favorite anchorage was Rote Island, Nembrala Bay, Indonesia for the fabulous surf, plus it was gorgeous. Trent's favorite was the southwest corner of Huahine, French Polynesia. The lagoon water was aqua clear, flat, warm, and the boys scurfed for 2 full days. Eric cannot choose there are so many.

Favourite cruising apps:

iNavX for Navigation and route planning, Earthmate Garmin InReach (recently sold by Delorme to Garmin) for satellite texting (our entertainment on long passages, and most reliable method of being in contact with friends, family and sailing support) – plus it's affordable, Open CPN with GE2KAP, Airmail3 – for SSB and HAM email and weather. AyeTides for tide charts. Windy for wind. Cannot forget Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp!

Favourite cruising websites:

Leslie: Noonsite.com – is our most useful for customs, visas, and clearance procedures for countries. Jacarandajourney.com by Chuck Hoolihan & Linda Edeiken – longstanding cruisers very generous with their advice and help. Mahina.com – John and Amanda Neal – we attended their cruising seminar in Oakland, California a year before we left to great satisfaction. Their advice has come in very handy. Svsoggyaws.com by Sherry (Beckett) McCampbell & Dave McCampbell – excellent cruising guides. Svocelot.com by Jon and Sue Hacking – they are life-time cruisers with extensive knowledge about electronics and cruising Indonesia - extremely generous with their help and guidance – their website details Open CPN and KAP files.

Favourite cruising books:

Leslie: 'An Astronaut's Guide to Life On Earth' by Chris Hadfield – for the best mind frame to have for cruising on your own ocean going 'spaceship.' 'Cruising for Cowards' by Copeland – Leslie's favored book for down-to-earth explanations of various boat equipment, provisioning, frame of mind and other important ideas and things to consider before sailing away. 'The Boat Galley Cookbook' by Carolyn Shearlock and Jan Irons – Leslie's all-time most used book on the boat – great recipes for items typically stocked on a boat and suggestions throughout for substitutions. 'Why Didn't I Think of That?' by John & Susan Roberts – Eric used this extensively before we left. 'Outboard Engines' by Ed Sherman – absolutely necessary as our outboards are in constant use and need servicing regularly. All of Jimmy Cornell's books are stocked onboard, but Eric and I have extensively referred to: 'World Cruising Routes' and 'Cornell's Ocean Atlas: Pilot Charts for All Oceans of the World.' As the ship's nurse, I regularly refer to: 'The PDR Pocket Guide to Prescription Drugs,' 'The American Medical Association Family Medical Guide' by Random House, and 'A Comprehensive Guide to Marine Medicine' by Eric Weiss & Michael Jacobs. While traveling Indonesia, 'Cruising Guide to Indonesia: A Pilot Guide to Indonesian Waters' by Andy Scott was invaluable. Also "Lonely Planet" travel guides for in-depth detail of even the smallest cities and seemingly 'insignificant regions' plus the historical write-ups and current politics of the country are amazing. We also try to get "EyeWitness" Travel Guides of each country we visit, which have colorful pictures – better 'tourist site' coverage and a bit more 'kid' friendly. The two guides compliment each other well...however, it can get

expensive. We tried the pdf e-book versions, but they are rather awkward to navigate and not as quick to resource.

What advice or message would you want to pass on to anyone new to cruising or thinking about casting off the dock lines?

Leslie: Buy as new a boat as you can afford. Not too large. Our family of four does just fine in our 42- footer. It's small but manageable. The bigger the boat, the more expensive the marina fees and especially the equipment – it's exponential. I find that 3/5 of our monthly expense is spent on boat maintenance. The more the boat moves, the more wear and tear, thus the more repairs and the higher the expense. That's why we decided to stay in French Polynesia for two years. We needed to stop moving and take a break from working on the boat. To live a little.

Eric: Landlubbers think we live in a constant state of vacation, a perpetual Corona beer commercial, dressed in white and navy blue; when in actuality, we look like mechanics in sun-protective campground walking gear. Cruising around the world, in motion, is way more expensive and trying than anticipated. Anchoring or mooring a lot, for prolonged periods, lessens this burden, as a stationary boat has fewer problems than a boat in motion. I recommend getting as close to the experience as possible before buying a boat, to see if it's truly for you, and before incurring the major expenses. Try cruising with a friend if you can, sign up with Mahina Expeditions, or crew in a rally. Unless you've a lot of money, or a hyper simple boat (small, no head, no fridge, one mast, etc.), best if you're one who enjoys the challenge of repairing and maintaining boat stuff. The age of a boat doesn't vaccinate you against repairs, they all breakdown, even the youngest ones. Every boat owner is in the process of fixing something. If you just want to travel, to see the world, there're easier/cheaper ways (Airbnb, UBER, couchsurf, etc.). If you're still not scared away, then really live on your boat for at least a year, away from the dock, before setting off. Sail, motor, anchor, repair—rinse, repeat. If you're still into it, know that after four years of cruising, many systems will need to be refurbished. That's when most sailors, according to veteran cruiser Chuck Houlihan on Jacaranda, hit a wall. If you can get past that, and get used to the rhythm of maintenance and repair, the world is yours. Unlike any other form of global travel and cultural immersion, at the end of each excursion, you get to come "home" to your little cozy spaceship. It's great, very rewarding, profound, ultimately life-changing.

Why cruise? In a few sentences, what is it that inspires you to keep cruising?

Eric: The constant learning on multiple levels, the spiritual pruning, the deep social interactions and sharing with fascinating people, both sailors and locals, experiencing firsthand some of the wonders of our world both natural and cultural, making childhood dreams come true, watching my sons become kind, hard-working, courageous, creative men, and hopefully, I can become a better me along the way. We're hoping our boys will leave resourceful, big-picture, tolerant kind of go-getters. It seems nothing worth doing comes easy. Some life lessons cruising taught me: 1) Sail the wind you have, not the wind you want. 2) With any task, large or small, taking your time (think for 2 minutes minimum prior to doing anything), taking small, smart steps, to affect a repair ultimately results in a quicker, longer lasting resolution. 3) Problems are actually gifts, introducing you to wonderful people you'd otherwise not have



met, and learning things that make your boat better and you a better captain, thus, the bigger the problem, the bigger the gift. 4) You have everything you need to solve your problem. Be simple and clever, like a Marquesan.

Any other comments:

Eric: This trip was born of a goal I envisioned as a 14-yr-old sailing from Hawaii to California aboard my uncle's home-built 32-foot ferro-cement cutter in 1974. Forty years later, I was on my way. Stepping away from the lives we loved, that we'd worked so hard to build, was a significant part of the journey. Careers, friends and family, and pastimes were set-aside like the boxes of possessions we placed in storage. This part of the experience alone had a profound affect on all four of us. Am I doing the right thing? I'm not the right person to ask because I'm an optimist. So much so, I run, walk, and crawl if I must to find the bright side of a circumstance. So whether the experience is worth the effort, the changes, is not fair for me to say. Still, I think it fair to say that the experience has made me a better me. More patient, more effectively able to manage circumstances as they arise, no matter the size, with a better, longer-term solution, and I am more forgiving of others and myself. Better to win a friend than an argument. I've made many new longtime friends that motivate me to reach for greater objectives. As for the boys, they've avoided a lot, but not all of the sex, drugs, peer-pressure, and electronics that exist in American and other modern cities, where teenagers raise themselves in schools and extra-curricular activities predominately populated with kids their own age. Our sons appreciate much more, on many levels, the many advantages they have as Americans. This list is too long to mention in this interview, but they've learned it doesn't take a lot of money for a person to be happy. It's attitude, friends and family, and a willingness to learn. When asked what he looked forward to mostly, having been away from modern conveniences for over a year, Trent replied, "Electricity." Ultimately, I think this cruising experience has given our boys a great foundation upon which to create their own remarkable lives, more mature and wise than many of their peers. We believe the boys will move forward from here with self-realized purpose and determination, and confidence to modify as needed. Questions to the boys: How has the cruising experience shaped you? Bryce: It has taught me to be more grateful for the things I have. Trent: The slower you go, the longer life seems, but when you're a kid, you never think you're going to die. Q: How do you think your life has changed compared to if you had stayed home in the US. Trent: If I had stayed in America, I might not have developed as great a taste for adventure. You go into a place knowing nothing, and within a couple days, learn so much about the place, you miss it when you leave. Bryce: I think I would have been like most other kids – playing video games, going to school, doing homework, and I might not have found my favorite hobby: surfing. There is so much that I've experienced and seen that I would not have been exposed to had my crazy parents not pursued their dream. Q: What advice would you give to a teenager from 13 to 17 about to embark on traveling the world? Bryce: Don't be shy. Make friends quickly. Bring a drone, GoPro, and editing software. You need to know how to swim well! Skateboarding and surfing are often available, and be ready to play soccer, volleyball, ping-pong and other sports if you want to meet people. Trent: Get the best [electronic] tablet, fastest with the most RAM that you can get with cell data to prepare for social media and games. Load up a Kindle with





favorite books. And make sure to bring as many “Spicy Hot Cheetos” as you can ‘cause you don’t always find what you like here’ – in other words – you have to learn to not be picky. Be open to trying stuff; food, music, sports, language, and what you wear. Eric: I don’t recommend cruising for most. It’s not for everyone. But if you’re prepared for a myriad of challenges and know that people important to you don’t understand your motivations - then you open yourself up to amazing experiences, both internal and external. You get to see the world up close and personal...zero degrees of separation. You get to see more of a place than even locals get to see. And the world becomes your friend, typically, wonderful, generous and welcoming, although on occasion frustratingly annoying.