



Pegasus (my thirty foot fiberglass yawl) was ready to set sail. She was just waiting for her captain and crew to get over their hangover from the party the night before ...

Belle and I decided to have a “bon voyage” party on the docks, then slip the lines and sail out the “Gate” to far-off lands. Sounds romantic, true, but not with a splitting headache. The live-aboard community at the Alameda Marina all wanted to party as everyone knew we were sailing out. I purchased beer, tequila, food, and had a jeroboam of red wine that I bought ten years earlier for this dream I had and was now coming to fruition. My niece, nephew, sister and her boyfriend also attended. Belle invited her brother, girlfriend and her sister. It was 1993 - a beautiful September day on the island city of Alameda. I inflated the dingy so people could row around the estuary if they desired. We set up tables. Everyone brought a pot luck item. One of my neighbors brought over a gigantic mound of quartered limes. I supplied the salt and tequila. We were ready to party.

The music played from my “boom box.” Everyone was doing shooters and sucking on the limes. The hell with beer. People were dancing on the docks, on the boat, in the boat, falling into the water, falling on the docks. One hell of a party. I gathered my composure about an hour later and bade all to “gather ‘round.” Glasses (plastic of course) were dispersed and as I opened the jeroboam and poured the wine for all our guests, I gave a little speech thanking all for their participation in this celebration. We all toasted and sipped the wine.

After that, things became a little blurred. Someone brought out the grain alcohol. I do remember sitting on the docks with my sister, future brother-in-law and this gentleman with the bottle of grain. Everyone else dispersed to their boats or residences. Belle passed out below on Pegasus. Finally, as the sun set and night approached, my niece was named designated driver and took my family home. I tumbled “below decks” and joined my “first mate” in the forward berth.



It's noon when we stagger out into the sunlight. Mouth dry, head pounding, we start to clean up the docks. A few neighbors join in. Realizing there is no way we are departing today, we tell those people who wanted to accompany us on their crafts to bid us "adieu" at the Golden Gate Bridge, that we will leave tomorrow at 9 AM. Belle and I need to make Pegasus shipshape for the journey.

The time arrives. Finally, the dock lines are cast off and stowed in one of the lockers. Pegasus and her crew motor out of the marina. Everyone who is not sailing behind us are on the docks waving and sounding their air horns. The armada of vessels head up the estuary to where it joins the San Francisco Bay. I go forward, while Belle handles the helm, and set sail. We motor sail under the Bay Bridge, past Alcatraz, and to the Golden Gate Bridge.

At that point, the small fleet of vessels accompanying Pegasus, all sound their air horns and turn back. We wave farewell and head out into the great Pacific.

As tradition has it, I take all my keys and toss them into the sea. ***We are sailing to adventure ...***