

## Update on Endurance Sailor, Jennifer Mooney

**2 July, 2012, Off the Coast of California ~ Nothing stopping Jen Mooney**

"I finally get to sail to Kauai on Saturday...well I start on Saturday. My plan changed along the way due to an accident but I'm still going. I had a bit of a wreck on my qualifying run that left me knocked out on deck...alone and adrift out there is a bit scary! Anyway, I did wake up and got the boat back on course but was having a hard time staying awake and was really dizzy so ended up turning around and coming back to safe harbour. After a few days of being really tired and feeling really sore I started to get back to normal...still getting the odd headache but will be fine."

"Since I didn't finish my qualifier I am not allowed to race and can't be over at the Corinthian Yacht Club for the start on Saturday. My plan however since I am stubborn and really want to get publicity for my charity is to start from Sausalito and do the race anyway. I have partnered up with another lady who also was unable to do the race this year. We are trying to get the most publicity for **Plan** and the **Because I am a Girl campaign**, and she is also a very strong willed woman."

**-Editor's note- More to come on the voyage to Kauai.**

**3 February, 2012, San Francisco, California~ Jennifer Mooney**, horse lover and erstwhile endurance rider, will trade her saddle for sails this June when she heads out on her first bluewater cruise, and she's doing it solo. She's entered into the Singlehanded Transpac race, which will take her on a 2,100+ mile ocean sail from San Francisco Bay to Hawaii.

Mooney, 40, lives near Edmonton in the Province of Alberta in Canada where she and husband, Curtis, a Royal Canadian Mounty (RCMP), have a 10 horse boarding stable and 200 head of sheep.

Having ridden since she was 12 years old, Mooney started competing on hunters and jumpers. After entering a Competitive Trail Ride with her Appaloosa stallion she found that she enjoyed being out in the bush with her horse and set her sites on a long distance goal, to join Team Canada in endurance riding.

### **From Land to Shining Sea**

"Indy, the horse I was conditioning for the Canadian endurance team, had gotten hurt and she kept re-injuring herself," Mooney said in her quiet way as we talked aboard her new boat. "I got another

horse, Shadow, a big Russian 16 hand Arabian, then he was injured.”

“I kept having horse issues and I got frustrated, so I went online and found an instructor for sailing. I found information about the Transpac online, and this was a sail that I could do myself.”

The petite blond, and she emphatically reminds me, “I’m 5 foot and one half inch,” was raised in a military family. There were two boys and two girls in the family, and Mooney said her father included the girls in all of the sports and outings, many times reserved only for males. “He always took us with him,” she reflected. “I’ve always been competitive.”

### **Testing Survival Skills**

Mooney was quietly confident about her skills for the new adventure. “I have a good deal of survival and navigation experience on land. I’m hoping they will translate. We were always in the bush, and Dad taught us how to survive in the bush since we were kids.”

“He taught me how to use maps, a compass, to use the sun’s position for reference, how to find shelter, make a fire. He wanted to make sure we could handle ourselves. The main thing we learned was, ‘Don’t panic, calm down, assess the situation, and you can get through it.’”

She also quotes Christy Janzen, the Canadian FEI rider who sold her Indy and rode with her one long and exhausting night. “We’re going forward, one foot in front of the other”.

Mooney’s family is excited about her adventure. “Every time I have self doubts, my father says, ‘You know what to do, you just have to believe in yourself’.”

Recently Mooney took delivery of her new sailboat, a 1979 -27 ft. Erickson, located now in a marina in the San Francisco Bay.

“It’s not the fastest boat but one that should be easy for me to handle by myself. We’ve had all new rigging installed and some new sails and a spinnaker.” While she is expecting to use her sails for the trip, she will need the engine, a rebuilt Yanmar diesel, to charge batteries and negotiate in and out of harbors. While gazing wistfully at the engine, she admits she has a lot to learn about repairs.

For now, Mooney is connecting with the other racers through gatherings and via the internet, and so far, she is the only woman registered for the 2012 race.

### **The Race**

Heading out on June 30 from San Francisco Bay, the first boats are expected to drop the hook in Hanalei Bay in 14 days or less. The race allows 21.

“I have a lot of strategy to learn,” Mooney admitted. To check on work progress and get familiar with her boat, she will fly back and forth from Edmonton to San Francisco every six weeks.

“I want to put on a wind vane that will steer without using the batteries, and get a generator and maybe solar panels. I’m looking into foul weather gear. I’ll have to get used to being in a harness (typical when sailing alone) and being attached all the time.” In the not too distant future, Mooney will do her required qualifying sail. “You must get 100 miles offshore and travel 400 miles total, all under sail, all verified via a daily log of the trip.”

“There is so much to do and think about, I feel overwhelmed at times,” Mooney admits. Besides navigational knowledge, there are the practical issues of what to bring and how to store those provisions in the meager boat lockers. A vegetarian, she will have to organize food for two plus weeks without a trip to the grocery store. How then to prepare and eat the food, while staying alert and on watch day after day, is just one item on her list.

“The one thing I’m not worried about is the solitude, she mused. “I think I’ll be relieved to get way out there.”

Mooney will sail with a banner on the boat for Plan Canada, a division of Plan International, an International charity that empowers women in developing nations to help break the cycle of poverty and gender discrimination. She welcomes contributions towards the sailing adventure and to the charity.

“I was looking for something that would help girls,” she said. “I’ve always had people to encourage me. I would love to help.”

**Because I Am A Girl Website:** <http://becauseiamagirl.ca/>

**Follow Jen Mooney’s adventure here at** [www.horsereporter.com](http://www.horsereporter.com)

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