Captain Robert Kupps was already living the so-called dream as the owner of Captain Kupps’ Ocean Adventures—Mexico, an ASA sailing school in Puerto Vallarta where he and his family have been for the past 25-years. Through the decades Kupps built the school located in Banderas Bay where "the jungle meets the sea" while at the same time never letting his own thirst for adventure go dormant. But, as satisfying as a life in scenic PV can be, the adventurous Captain has always had eyes to sail to the South Pacific and this past year he did just that. It was always a dream of his to make this 4,000 mile crossing and arrive in the incredibly beautiful turquoise waters of French Polynesia, but he would go one better than just making the trip, Kupps would also hang a sign on a shingle and start a second school in a little speck of paradise near Tahiti.

So one day, a little later in the season than they would have liked, Kupps and a good friend jumped in his S2-26 and began a 31-day trek across the Pacific. Immediately, while still in the bay, the self-steering broke and they had to decide whether to turn around or tough it out for an entire month without such a crucial component. They both knew that postponing the trip could result in it never being rescheduled so they did it the hard way – they steered the boat by hand for the entire journey.

Through a month of freeze dried food and more than their fair share of tedious doldrums, Kupps arrived on the shores of French Polynesia calling it the sail of a lifetime and a "game changer."

"It was more than I could ever have dreamt of," he said of the voyage. "Sailing that far and long in a small boat is not for everyone but we're a couple of old tough guys and we've been knocked around pretty good through life, so we did alright."

Once Kupps arrived, he set up camp and began a small ASA school and realized he indeed had a plot in paradise.

"For a sailor/diver, there is no better," Kupps said. "Being here has given me a heightened sense of awareness—new language, new culture, different navigation. It's kept me on my game and that's a good thing."

At 58, Captain Kupps is mindful of not allowing what should be a dream job turn into something monotonous. He seems to understand that he's been dealt a special hand and has no intention of squandering it.

"I think a lot of people lose sight of what the dream is," said Kupps. "They start a sailing school, but they fall into that same rut that you might fall into if you were an accountant going to work every day. Every year you buy a new and nicer car so your ride to the office is better. I think the thing for me is to keep pushing myself and not fall into a sense of security."

To start your own ASA school email ash@asa.com
The holidays are coming up fast so here's a couple of ideas for excellent stocking stuffers from the ASA store for your favorite or even second favorite sailor.

1. Textbooks: It may sound a little dry when you say the word "textbook" out loud, but our ASA books are laid out in a very fun and easy-to-read kind of way. They're full of pictures that illustrate important concepts and the language is conversational. Coastal Cruising Made Easy and Bareboat Cruising Made Easy are two best selling books that address both the broad and finer points of real-life sailing situations. They are both excellent reference books to keep on your boat. And for cruising cat sailors the new Cruising Catamarans Made Easy is the perfect gift for those looking to demystify the idea of chartering or buying a cruising catamaran.

2. Sailors Grab Bag: We've assembled a really nice little collection of ASA goodies that make for a perfect holiday gift. The ASA "Grab Bag" includes a rugged duffel bag that's sized for an overnight getaway or an extended adventure, a stylish long sleeve wicking tee shirt that has a big compass rose graphic on the back, a good looking moisture wicking cap and a pair of high quality sailing gloves that are both flexible and durable. Separately all of this retails for over $130 but it's only $99 for all this gear!

Or, if there's something else you may be interested in from the wide selection of ASA gear, check out asa.com/store. There are PFDs, mugs, backpacks, splash bags, jackets—all kinds of useful stuff! Sport your ASA colors and let 'em know you know how to sail the right way!

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The Numbers Are In! Good News For Sailing

We're not precisely sure of the reasons why but the numbers are in and it appears more folks are getting into sailing!

Through the years, the graph on 101 students has continually slanted north, but this year we've experienced a significant rise. Whether it's the product of a stronger economy or a successful social media effort, the bottom line is there are more people finding ASA schools and becoming part of our family.

"I'm not completely surprised," said Lenny Shabes, Chairman of the American Sailing Association. "We developed and released sailing's #1 mobile game/training aid, Sailing Challenge, and we have worked hard to support the GO SAILING networking app, and I think with all of our efforts, more people are signing up."

Shabes also credits ASA's growth to its increased social media outreach.

"We really started to focus on connecting more with all the sailors out there," Shabes said. "It's been rewarding to see what contemporary sailors are saying and thinking in real time and then making decisions based on these conversations and reactions."

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Tip from the teach! Adjusting Fairleads

Q: Hi Ash! Can you give me some quick advice on how to adjust jib fairleads?

Ash: Moving the fairlead forward has the effect of loosening the foot of the sail and giving the lower part of the sail more "draft" or curve. At the same time it tightens the leech all the way to the top, which pulls it inboard. The net effect is a tall rounded airfoil that provides more power and efficiency in lighter air. Conversely, moving the fairlead aft tightens the foot of the sail and loosens the leech.

This has the effect of flattening the sail while adding "twist" at the top. This flatter, twisted shape is most efficient for higher wind speed.

Check out ASA.com for cool tutorials!