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## 'South with the birds':Traveling under sail with Kalkaska grad Teresa Carey

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First Wind by Teresa Carey

NORFOLK, Va. — Teresa Carey, a 1997 Kalkaska graduate and the youngest daughter of Robert and Fran Carey, gave up her teaching position in Lake Placid to purchase a 27-foot sailboat last year and moved to Martha's Vineyard with her cat.

An apprenticeship with a sail maker paired well enough with substitute teaching to bring Carey's dream of living the simple life of a sailor into reality — the 31-year-old set sail for the Virgin Islands Oct. 1, hugging the Eastern Seaboard on her voyage south.

Her life before wind and waves was anything but simple.

A member of Blazer cross country and a straight-A student, Carey attended Hope College for two years before transferring to the University of Michigan to complete a degree in environmental studies. In the midst of college, she took a year off to attend National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Utah where she fell in love with rock climbing.

She later worked with Outward Bound, picked up a masters degree in theater design and obtained a captain's license.

"Anybody who knew her in high school would say, 'What? Teresa Carey is doing what?'" said Fran Carey. "She's the only one of my girls who it took me forever to get to wear anything but a dress."

Now Teresa wears hats, so to speak, and many of them.

"I'm a jack of all trades and a master of none," Carey said over the weekend while anchored in Norfolk, Virginia.

The sailor is quickly becoming a master of multitasking, however, pulling from a selection of five sails on a boat that flies two at a time while operating three anchors and maneuvering through the hazards of coastal waters.

And all this while taking care of Dory, a spry orange cat with sea legs.

"Mid-morning the seas began to lie down and the sail was even smoother," Carey writes in a Nov. 7 entry on her blog ([www.sailingsimplicity.com](http://www.sailingsimplicity.com)). "I boiled water for steamed veggies. It would be the first hot meal I had made underway on this voyage.

"Filling the small pot with an inch of water, I set it on the gimbaled stove and released the break that steadied it.

"Now the stove could move about freely, staying level even with the side-to-side rocking motion of the boat. Staying near the stove, I waited for the water to boil, chopped and added the veggies, and at the same time made frequent glances out the companionway hatch to check my progress.

"When the vegetables were finished and I settled into the cockpit to enjoy my meal, another ocean swell struck the boat on the side and sent my lunch spilling onto the cockpit floor.

"It's not often that Dory comes on deck while Daphne is underway, but he made a brief appearance to snack on the spilt vegetables before cozying up again in the safety of my clothing hammock."

## **FIRST WIND**

*This is the first installment of an open-ended series featuring Kalkaska's Teresa Carey as she sails solo toward the Virgin Islands.*

My father and mother took me sailing every day in the summer. A Ranger 23 named Applerush was the vessel and East Grand Traverse Bay was my playground.

Every day, when my parents returned from work, my sisters and I would pile into the station wagon.

"How about some Rock and Roll!" Dad would say and turn up the volume as we bounced toward Lake Michigan, stopping once to pick up a few sodas and Slim Jims.

On the boat, I spent my time dipping my feet in the waves, coloring, or playing with my doll. But with age came an interest in the deeper workings of a sailing vessel. Of wind and sail. Of wave and hull. Of the history, lore, and allure of the ocean.

Daddy taught me the skills and Mother encouraged me to dream big. So, years ago, dissatisfied with a conventional way of life, I took mother's advice and began dreaming big...or small rather.

I dreamed of boats and tiny spaces. I dreamed of living with few possessions and wanting even less. I lived in tents, cars, closets and canoes always with the thought that someday I would live on a NorSea 27, the boat my father began telling me about very early on.

Backpacking, rock climbing, sailing and farming were all ways I nurtured the idea that I could retreat from being encultured in one way of life, and join a movement toward a different way of life.

There was mention of a NorSea for sale on a sailor's online forum. It was a Monday in April of last year, and I inquired immediately. On Tuesday I applied for a loan. On Wednesday I purchased the boat. On Saturday I went to look at it.

And boy was it small! The pictures made it look much, much bigger. But here I was, with an ocean-crossing boat

and a lubberly job in the mountains. So, naturally, I left my job and apartment, sold my car and many of my belongings and moved myself and Dory — the cat — aboard with the plan to someday sail across the ocean.

Was it impulsive? It sure was. But so is sailing across the ocean. No amount of planning will fully inform and prepare even the most skillful sailor for a journey like that. So, in that sense, perhaps my impulsiveness is suited toward this way of life.

The life of simplicity and freedom I dreamed about was struck with a dose of reality when I suddenly found myself firmly aground in boat payments, jobless and adrift in a down-turned economy.

It isn't as perfect as I had pictured it to be. And so, until the day comes when I can truly cast my lines, bound for foreign ports, I stay close to home as I work and save with my eyes set on that larger goal. Right now, home is the entire east coast, and work comes and goes as I wander south.

Since the purchase of my NorSea 27, named Daphne after my grandmother, I've dropped my anchor in more than forty different locations.

At some I stayed only for one night. Other locations were my home for many months as I worked to pad the kitty for the next venture. I've seen the beauty and tranquility of a red sky at dusk, calm waters, and a gentle breeze. I've spent days worried over an approaching hurricane.

Where should I anchor? Will I be safe? Will it make landfall?

I've met sailors with grand stories to tell, all the while making a personal history which in time will spin a yarn full of adventure and surprise.

Today? I'll stay here in Norfolk, Virginia for a few days, wait for good weather and continue my migration south with the birds.

*For the latest updates on Carey's journey, visit [www.sailingsimplicity.com](http://www.sailingsimplicity.com) and see future issues of Leader Sports.*

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