

Jakolof Bay Oyster Co

By Margo Reveil

My husband Frank and I sailed with our two sons past Jakolof Bay and into Homer the summer of 2012. After three years voyaging a figure-8 path through the Pacific, we were ready to settle close to family here in Alaska. We needed careers and we didn't want to stray far from the water. We met and worked with Mike Nakada for a season, and fell in love with the farm and Jakolof Bay. Frank, a native of Brittany France and also a commercial fisherman, took one slurp of Mike Nakada's finest, and decided on the spot to become an oyster farmer.



Frank Reveil and son, Logan

That's the short version of our story. There have been many moments of doubt, serendipity, fear and pure luck that have played out in the short 6 months since we decided to do this. But like most of life, once you've got it by the horns, it's best to hang on tight, make the most out of the ride, and see where you land.

This is a third or fourth career for both of us (depending on how you count). Frank was a commercial fisherman all over the Pacific, while I practiced architecture in Southern California in the 80s and 90s. When the economy slowed in the mid- 90s, and construction and fishing stagnated, we met and settled in Los Angeles for another 15 years - I shifted careers to information technology management, and Frank to househusband. When the economy slowed again in 2008, we realized that the kids were growing too fast, and our time with them at home was running out. Despite my stable job, it was taking too much from my family time, and the promise of retirement and a good education was not seeming like a promise the state of California would be able to keep. So rather than put dreams on hold, we shed the golden fleece and went on an epic voyage, homeschooling our preteens along the way, ultimately setting a course for Alaska.

There is nothing like big change to make you realize how much can be achieved with very little, and nothing like sailing to teach you that necessity is the mother of invention. When your diesel engine breaks down 1000 miles from land, or weather chases you out of an anchorage, or you run out of eggs 10 days from any store, you just figure it out and make things work - creative problem solving is required for survival. We see many similarities to a cruiser's life and remote oyster farming in these extreme conditions. Despite the hardships and challenges, or maybe because of them, there is an unequalled feeling of fulfillment living life at the extremes, living it fully, treating it all as a new adventure.

For us this is our next big adventure. We are humbled and honored by this new opportunity in our lives, knowing full well that we'll be working harder than ever, but we'll be doing that work surrounded by scenery as beautiful as any we've seen anywhere, and nature as wild as it comes.