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Cruising Club of America

Thies Matzen and Kicki Ericson Presented with the 2011 Blue Water Medal

New York, N.Y., USA (January 30, 2011) – The Cruising Club of America (CCA) has awarded its esteemed 2011 Blue Water Medal to Thies Matzen and Kicki Ericson for a commendable 24 years and 135,000 miles of sailing the oceans of the world with a focus in the high latitudes of the Southern Ocean. The first Blue Water Medal was awarded in 1923; and is given to “the most meritorious example of seamanship.” Its recipient is selected from among amateurs of all the nations.” The medal will be presented by Commodore Daniel P. Dyer, III at the annual Awards Dinner on March 2, 2012 at New York Yacht Club in Manhattan.

Matzen was born in Germany in 1956 and grew up to be a wooden boat builder. In 1981, Matzen purchased *Wanderer III*, a 30-foot wooden sloop, built in 1952 for Eric and Susan Hiscock who made two circumnavigations with it and received the Blue Water Medal in 1955. Matzen sailed *Wanderer III* to Scandinavia where he cruised extensively, including to the Lofoten Islands (Norway), and then crossed the Atlantic Ocean. In 1989, while sailing in the Caribbean, he met Swedish-born (1964) Ericson, and the two have lived on *Wanderer III* ever since.

After leaving the Caribbean, the duo sailed through the Panama Canal and into the Pacific Ocean where they spent seven years traveling from site to site. After that, Ericson and Matzen sailed to Indonesia, explored the Indian Ocean, and sailed around the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa).

From 1997 to 1999, Matzen and Ericson did two circuits of the South Atlantic, starting in Cape Town (South Africa) and visiting Argentina, The Falkland Islands, and South Georgia before heading back to Cape Town (South Africa) and South America, where they rounded Cape Horn before returning to the Pacific. The couple’s last twelve years have been comprised of exploring sites in the Southern Ocean, including Tasmania, The Auckland Islands, Antarctica and the Falkland Islands. Recently the two spent 26 months in South Georgia.

Currently, Matzen and Ericson are in Brazil and plan to do some work on *Wanderer III*, which has been kept in its original condition with no electronics onboard except a VHF radio and handheld GPS (added in 2007). The vessel has a 16 horsepower diesel engine and the hull, rigging and gear have been self-maintained using traditional methods.

About the Cruising Club of America

The Cruising Club of America is dedicated to offshore cruising, voyaging and the “adventurous use of the sea” through efforts to improve seamanship, the design of seaworthy yachts, safe yachting procedures

and environmental awareness. Now in its 90th year, the club has 11 stations throughout the U.S., Canada and Bermuda, with approximately 1200 members who are qualified by their experience in offshore passage making. In even-numbered years, the CCA organizes the Newport to Bermuda Race in conjunction with the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club. Through the club's Bonnell Cove Foundation, grants are made to 501 C3 organizations for safety at sea and environment of the sea projects. For more information on the CCA, go to <http://www.cruisingclub.org>.