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LONGBOAT KEY'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1978

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2006

by **Kat Wingert** | Community Editor

Baby on Board



Kat Wingert

The Ginsberg-Klemmt family — **Achim**, holding **Maeva**, **Ari**, **Erika** and **Antonia** — is all aboard its 47-foot sailboat, the Pangea.

Erika Ginsberg-Klemmt and her husband, Achim, never wanted to homebirth their baby.

In fact, they sheepishly admit that they used to make fun of people who chose to have their kids at home, rather than in a hospital or midwifery.

"You are taking a risk with a homebirth that never made sense to us," Erika Ginsberg-Klemmt said. "And living the life we live, we already take enough risk."

That lifestyle is living with their children on their 47-foot sailboat, the Pangea.

After living on the boat off and on since 1992, the Ginsberg-Klemmts have learned to fend for themselves in emergencies — a must when you're at sea and miles away from help.

Yet, they never thought they'd have to use their emergency expertise to deliver their third child while docked at Longboat Moorings, with help only a few minutes away.

On Jan. 23, Ginsberg-Klemmt went into precipitous labor, an expedient form of labor in which the baby can literally come within minutes, with her third child. She was standing at the sink doing dishes having mild contractions one minute, and lying on the floor in the ship's hull giving orders to her husband to deliver their baby the next.

"He didn't even have time to get the right sheets," she said. "It was that fast."

Luckily, Achim had watched the deliveries of his other two children, and knew what to do when the time came.

And just like that, the family's newest deckhand, Maeva, was born.

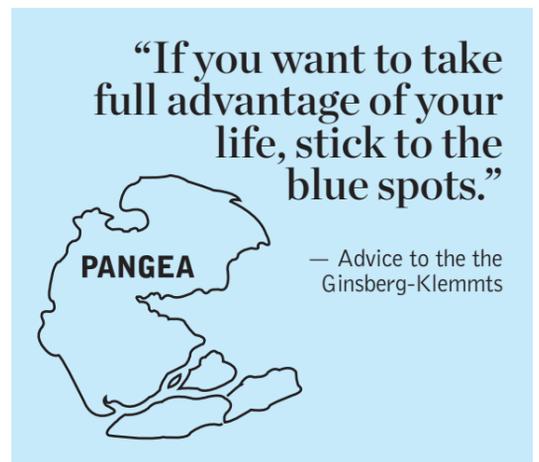
"It never occurred to either of us for even a second that we would have this baby on board," Ginsberg-Klemmt said. "Neither of us was ready at all."

Sticking to the blue spots

It was an inclination for the unexpected and a love of freedom that led the Ginsberg-Klemmts to set sail together more than 10 years ago.

When they met in southern France, she was the traveler and he was the sailor, and in 1992, they bought their first boat, the Pangea, and began on their maiden voyage.

The plan was to sail to Paris, but the reality was a large storm and a rescue by the French Coast Guard. It was an event that might have inoculated others from life at sea. For the Ginsberg-Klemmts, it was kismet.



After the storm, the couple traveled to the Caribbean on their boat, named after the hypothetical clump of all the landmasses on earth before they drifted apart into continents by the movement of the earth's plates. Three months later, they married.

In the next decade, they sailed the East Coast of the United States, crossed the waters of the South Pacific, and made their way to Hawaii. Akin to its name, the boat brought the continents together for its owners.

During their travels, they wrote articles for several publications in several languages, and made their claim to fame as the first people to have the first live updated Web site via amateur radio (winlink) on the high seas in the late '90s. In 1999, they undertook the adventure of having children and

docked in Hawaii after Ginsberg-Klemmt became pregnant with their first child, Antonia.

They sold the Pangea and took a brief respite from the water in Hawaii to have their son, Ari, until Achim Ginsberg-Klemmt enticed his wife back to the sea by having her pick out their next boat, the 47-foot aluminum Pangea.

The family of four began sailing again in 2003, when, about a year later, Achim Ginsberg-Klemmt got a job offer from Lasersoft Imaging, a software developer on Longboat Key. After only a Google search of Longboat Key and finding a rental at Seaplace, the family abandoned its boat on Isla Margarita, off the coast of Venezuela, and came to the Key in September. His employer later gave him a month off to go retrieve his boat and bring it to Longboat Key Moorings, where the family moved in mid-December.

Decision time

When the Ginsberg-Klemmts first jumped on a boat, they had no idea it would lead to sailing the world, but Erika Ginsberg-Klemmt encountered a piece of wise advice early on.

"I met this man who owned a mega-yacht, and he told me something that I will never forget," Ginsberg-Klemmt said. "He said: 'If you want to take full advantage of your life, stick to the blue spots.'"

As the ship gets smaller with another child, and the responsibilities of taking Antonia and Ari to school begin, the Ginsberg-Klemmts struggle with their next step, and what to do with their boat.

"We're not pleasure cruisers," she said. "I don't know if we'll go land-lubbing. If we did, we'd be letting go of that feeling of freedom."

On one hand, making the decision to move to land means giving up the freedom the Ginsberg-Klemmts have fought to preserve with their current lifestyle.

On the other hand, because of their love for their family and their newfound home on Longboat, the Ginsberg-Klemmts may just find that the blue spots of life aren't always on the water.