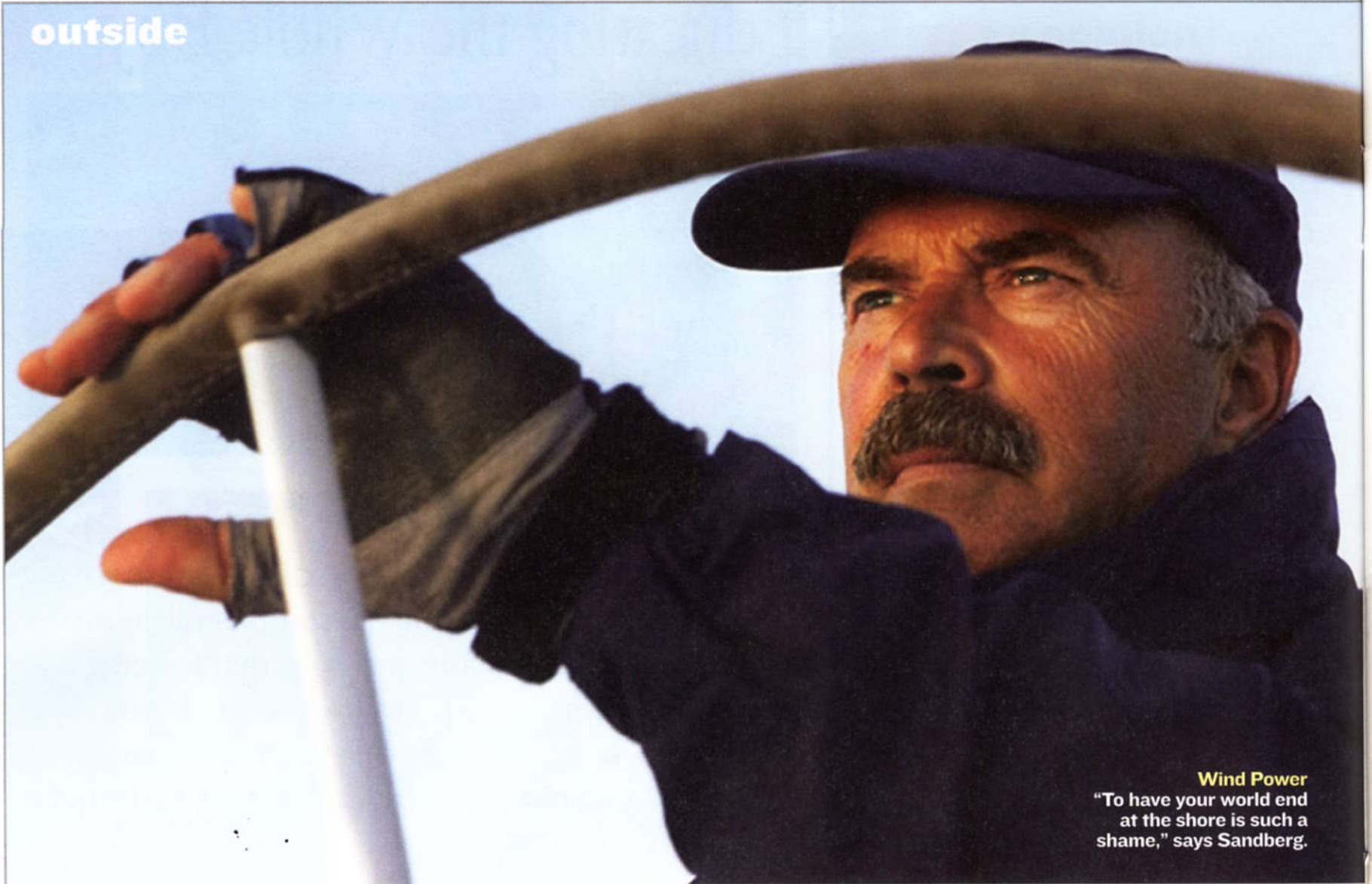


outside



**Wind Power**  
 "To have your world end  
 at the shore is such a  
 shame," says Sandberg.

# The Skipper

At the helm of his San Francisco sailing school, Anthony Sandberg '71 charts a new course for would-be sailors. BY SARAH TUFF

ON SAN FRANCISCO BAY WINDS REGULARLY BLOW 25 KNOTS AND SWIRLING tides create a chop that can turn even high-tech mega-yachts into floundering bathtub boats. This 400-square-mile inland sea has been called the Mount Everest of sailing—which makes it the perfect place for Anthony Sandberg to operate a sailing school.

"If you were going to start a ski school, well, you could do it where there's just a rope tow," he says, "but that's not as much fun."

Ever since he founded the Olympic Circle Sailing Club (OCSC) in 1979 with a single borrowed J/24 sailboat, Sandberg has helped to redefine what it means to confidently harness the wind, safely experience the freedom of the water—and have a whole lot of fun. In 30 years OCSC has grown into one of the world's premier sailing schools, with a fleet of 50 boats based in Berkeley. OCSC now has a staff of 80 who have taught more than 25,000 adults how to sail. Along the way Sandberg has also imparted some lessons on the importance of adventure, the preciousness of the planet and the value of existentialism.

"The loneliest thing is to be that person looking in the mirror and wondering who you are," says Sandberg, 60. "And the most expansive thing is to be looking so far out into the universe so as to be looking at everything. As a sailor, that's what I'm doing."

ANTHONY SANDBERG NEVER TOOK A FORMAL SAILING LESSON, BUT HE WAS, from his earliest memory, immersed in the culture of the ocean off Waikiki Beach

in Honolulu, where his father was a chef at the Royal Hawaiian hotel. "I grew up as a water baby," says Sandberg, whose dad would wake him for a bodysurfing session and a plate of eggs and rice from a Chinese lean-to before elementary school, where no shoes were required. Later they'd walk the docks and talk with Dutch and Irish sailors or go to parties for the Transpacific Yacht Race. "I remember, at 4 or 5," says Sandberg, "having an intuitive sense about sailing."

Sandberg's junior high and high school years, however, were spent in the Lake Tahoe area, where his father thought he would receive a better education. This is partly how Sandberg ended up at Dartmouth in 1967. "Because I was a skier and I loved the outdoors it was kind of a natural choice," he says. "I also

like green—it's my favorite color."

A political science major, Sandberg became embroiled in war protests. When he wasn't harnessing the wind on Lake Mascoma as a member of the sailing team, rowing as a crew member, skiing around Hanover or traveling abroad—Costa Rica, Turkey, Greece—he was marching in Washington, D.C., and other cities. Sandberg, in fact, did not officially graduate, having missed a class due to antiwar work during the 1970 U.S. invasion of Cambodia. For the next seven years he sailed in Europe, served in the Peace Corps in Nepal, applied to

he enjoys life—squeezing every moment out of it—and develops relationships."

Larry Ledgerwood, a former OCSC client who is now a member and part-time instructor, chose the club over several others in the Bay Area as a place to learn sailing because of the way he was treated when he first walked through the door. "Other places would launch into how great *they* were," he says. "[The OCSC staff] said, 'Why are *you* interested in sailing?'" Sandberg, says Ledgerwood—and a host of other former OCSC students—exudes the exact sort of confidence necessary to

## Sandberg believes the responsibility of the sailing industry is to foster an eco-minded culture.

law and business schools, was offered Lloyd's of London training and started several companies (sporting goods, solar installation, leather) before his father told the 29-year-old to choose one thing about which to be truly passionate.

Sandberg went camping on California's north coast for a couple of weeks to mull it over. "I thought about sailing," he says. "I thought, 'I can reinvent sailing. I can change this from a sport where only rich people have access. It's too good to be kept secret.'"

The result was OCSC, which shuns the elitism common to sailing. In May 2008 *Outside* magazine called the organization one of the 10 best medium-sized companies to work for in the country. "It's really powerful to work here," says club manager David Lang, who, once a landlubber, was inspired by the *Outside* article to ditch his real-estate job in Los Angeles and seek employment from Sandberg. "He follows his dreams,

become a competent sailor.

"He believes that the responsibility of the skipper is to make a climate where people can feel safe," says Ledgerwood, who has traveled to the British Virgin Islands, Greece and Antarctica with Sandberg. Thanks to Sandberg's belief in stepping outside his comfort zone to go heli-hiking in the Canadian Rockies or kayaking in the Galapagos, OCSC now organizes adventures around the world.

Sandberg says it's actually pretty easy to leave his business behind and partake in these adventures—his business partner Rich Jepsen and the rest of the OCSC staff have the confidence and talent to keep things running. "We share the same values of our personal health and balance and having fun," says Sandberg. "It's a happy place here, and it's a mark of a good business with enough momentum that we can trust each other and leave."

"Sandberg truly sees the bigger picture," says Angelique Belluomini, a former OCSC student and current member of the club. "He has a proactive approach about getting people out into the world and all its splendor."

It's apparent that Sandberg also believes the responsibility of the sailing industry is to foster an eco-minded culture that gives back to this splendor. It is a wind-driven activity, after all, and Sandberg helps to ensure that sailors' impact on the environment is even softer through using nontoxic paints, banning overboard pumping and joining with Seacology, the Bay Institute and other conservation organizations to promote the protection of the world's oceans. "There are ways to sail and there are ways to sail even cleaner," says Sandberg. "I look at our mission as educating people about that."

Sandberg also promotes green values by sharing his toys. The 50 OCSC yachts see far more use than nearly every other at the Berkeley marina, and Sandberg also lets nonprofit groups such as a local women's shelter and food bank use OCSC facilities for meetings. Though Sandberg has no children or grandchildren of his own, he has helped to teach hundreds of inner-city kids to sail through his work with the nonprofit Treasure Island Sailing Center and a partnership with the YMCA that aims to teach swimming to 4,500 third-graders in the East Bay. "If you can swim or sail or row you now get to be playful and expand your universe," says Sandberg. "To have your world end at the shore is such a shame." ■

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