



NEIGHBOR

Susan Genett

Owner, Susan Genett's RealWeather Ltd., weather forecaster/weather-router, delivers custom-tailored weather forecasts; home: Newport

My clients cruise and race yachts across oceans, make movies, plan expeditions. I also advise competitors in balloon races and pilots of private airplanes in cross-country races. They need detailed weather information — wind direction, velocity, precipitation, currents, light values — forecasted over the ocean or high in the air. When thousands of dollars are invested in a project, it's critical to have the most accurate forecasts possible.

Over the last year, I forecasted weather for film crews producing two sequels to Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*, filmed in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. My forecasts guided the *Sloop Providence* and *HMS Bounty* as they sailed 8,000 miles. I provided forecasts, sometimes hour to hour. I did it all by computer and telephone, and sometimes with a little hand-holding.

I grew up in Syracuse, N.Y. My mother was fascinated with hot-air balloons, and my dad had been a World War II pilot and loved sailing. When I was ten, my parents took me to a balloon festival. I was captivated. I grew up with all of these influences, and after I joined the Air Force at eighteen, I realized that weather was the common connection. Later on, I trained in Utah for my hot-air balloon pilot's license. I studied meteorology at Lyndon State College in Vermont, and spent the summers forecasting for the National Weather Service in Alaska, briefing firefighters. Seven years ago, I came to Newport to start RealWeather, not knowing a soul, only knowing the potential.

About 90 percent of my work is with yachts, and each year my client list has grown. It's a kick to get calls from yacht captains in the Seychelles or New Zealand, and it turns out they live right here in Newport. Helping them sail halfway around the globe to get home is a great way to get to know your neighbor! —*Mary Grady*