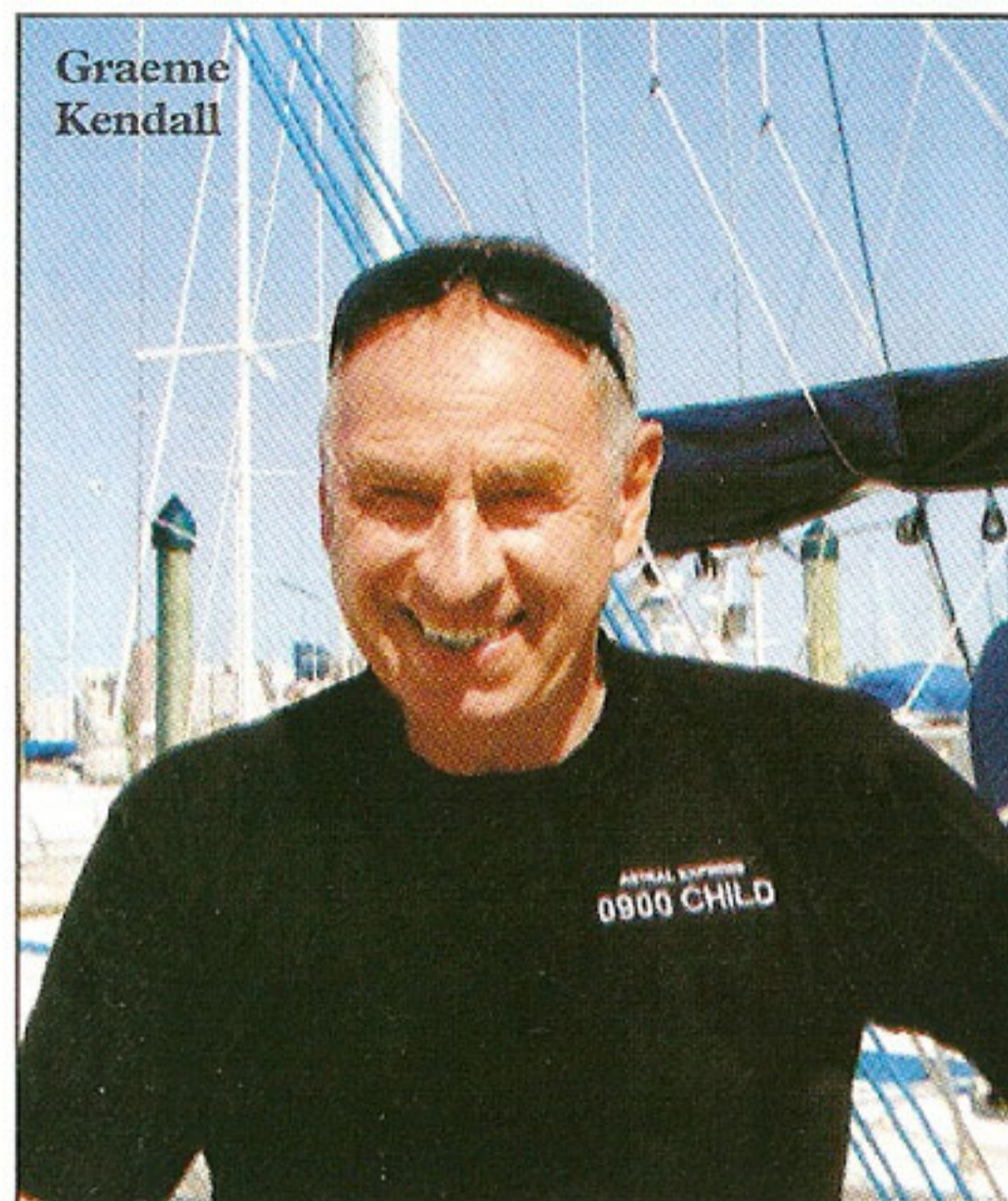


# Kiwi attempts world sailing first



Graeme Kendall

Christchurch yachtsman Graeme Kendall is setting out to achieve one of the last major world sailing records – sailing solo non-stop around the world via the Arctic Northwest Passage. He begins his voyage mid-April in Auckland in his specially



constructed yacht, *Astral Express*. Kendall plans to travel to North Cape then head westward to pass north of Australia and round the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, north across the Atlantic to the northern coast of Canada and Alaska through the Northwest Passage. Then south across the Pacific Ocean, and returning to Auckland.

It is estimated the trip will take 150 to 180 days and cover 28,000 nautical miles (40,000km), unaided with no stopovers, but relying on the latest technology available.

The Northwest Passage has only recently become a navigable reality with the aid of satellite technology, which has given sailors the ability to monitor ice flows, and therefore a safe passage, during the months of August and September. With recent navigation of the Northwest Passage by private yachts and given similar warm Arctic conditions this milestone should be achievable.

The voyage is being funded entirely by Kendall, who has secured 0900 CHILD, which will be sign-written along the side of the boat to raise money for charity. Primarily he will be raising money for Variety – The Children's Charity, 20% of money raised will also be split between Cholmondeley Home, Christchurch and The Christchurch Bone Marrow Cancer Trust. He aims to raise \$25 for each kilometer sailed through the 0900 number.

## The Astral Express

Designed by world renowned marine architect Greg Elliot, the *Astral Express* is a fast 12.5 metre cruising yacht with a deck saloon-pilot house with inside steering necessary for Arctic conditions.

Built of Kevlar to a specification stronger than alloy, it has a reinforced bow and steel retractable keel to attain a minimum four foot draft. This is a high-performance yacht developed for long distance passage making, with a small, easily-managed sail plan.

## The Northwest Passage

The Northwest Passage is a famous sea route linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was expected to provide an alternative and shorter passage from Europe to Asia, but as the sea is frozen over for most of the year, this route is not very practical.

