
BLUEWATER
CRUISING ASSOCIATION
Photo Contest Winner
Margaret Krause
Taken at Blue Lagoon, Vava'u, Tonga, on September 12, 2017 with a Phantom 4 drone. Our first time there, as it has a tricky entrance. We were treated to whales breaching just beyond the reefs and a green flash at sunset. A magical anchorage, but only in calm conditions!
Currents
March 2021

Table Of Contents

From The Commodore's Desk

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/from-the-commodores-desk-2/

Again, the Bluewater Cruising Association's volunteers have performed above and beyond all expectations!

Ocean Cruising Adventures (OCA)

This year's Ocean Cruising Adventure event was outstanding; our keynote speaker, John Kretschmer, proved to be entertaining, knowledgeable, and inspiring. He presented in a manner that had me feeling like I was sitting around a campfire, with a glass of wine, listening to my best friend tell his stories. There were over 260 members and guests from six countries who participated: Japan, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, United States, and Canada. However, the real stars were the volunteers that made this event happen. Their hard work, beginning in April 2020, through over 250 volunteer hours, culminated in an event that was, simply, amazing. My sincerest gratitude goes out to Anne Trudel and the OCA team for providing BCA members with a night full of entertainment, inspiration and connection. Thank you!

Looking Forward to Summer Cruising

With the arrival of spring, I reflect on this past year and the many changes that have been instituted by our volunteers. Our association has adapted extremely well to the strains that COVID-19 has necessitated. We are strong, connected, and engaged. However, as at the start of this pandemic, we are approaching our local cruising season. We are desperately looking forward to great adventures in our boats and have hopes of visiting with family and friends. I, for one, am truly missing the face-to-face interactions with all of you. That said, I ask that, prior to heading out, you think long and hard about what it is that you can do to aid in stopping the spread of the Corona Virus. The skies are not clear yet. As I am writing this, there are more variants and the spread is growing exponentially throughout the world. Please stay safe, be aware, and hold strong. Thank you.

May we all be rafted soon! I look forward to your stories, songs, sharing food and drink, and, mostly, your face.

Yours aye,

David Mitchell

About The Author

David Mitchell

Salt - Island Packet 40

David is a dreamer who is planning to begin his offshore adventures in 2024. However, he is no stranger to the sea. His career in the Royal Canadian Navy reaches 34 years complete come 31 March 2021. Upon retirement, David and his partner in life and adventure, Trina Holt, plan on cruising the world. Time will not be rushed for this couple as they, likely, make their way through the many local spots and up to Alaska. Eventually, SALT will carry David and Trina south and onward with the winds.

David’s volunteerism within BCA started quite quickly. He had committed himself to the position of Vancouver Island Vice Commodore prior to the end of his first year as a BCA member. After cutting his teeth in the VI Chapter he took on the role of Bluewater Cruising Association’s Commodore, where he sits today. David often states, “It is never too early to take on a position within BCA. In fact, it enhances the experience and increases your level of preparedness for offshore sailing.”

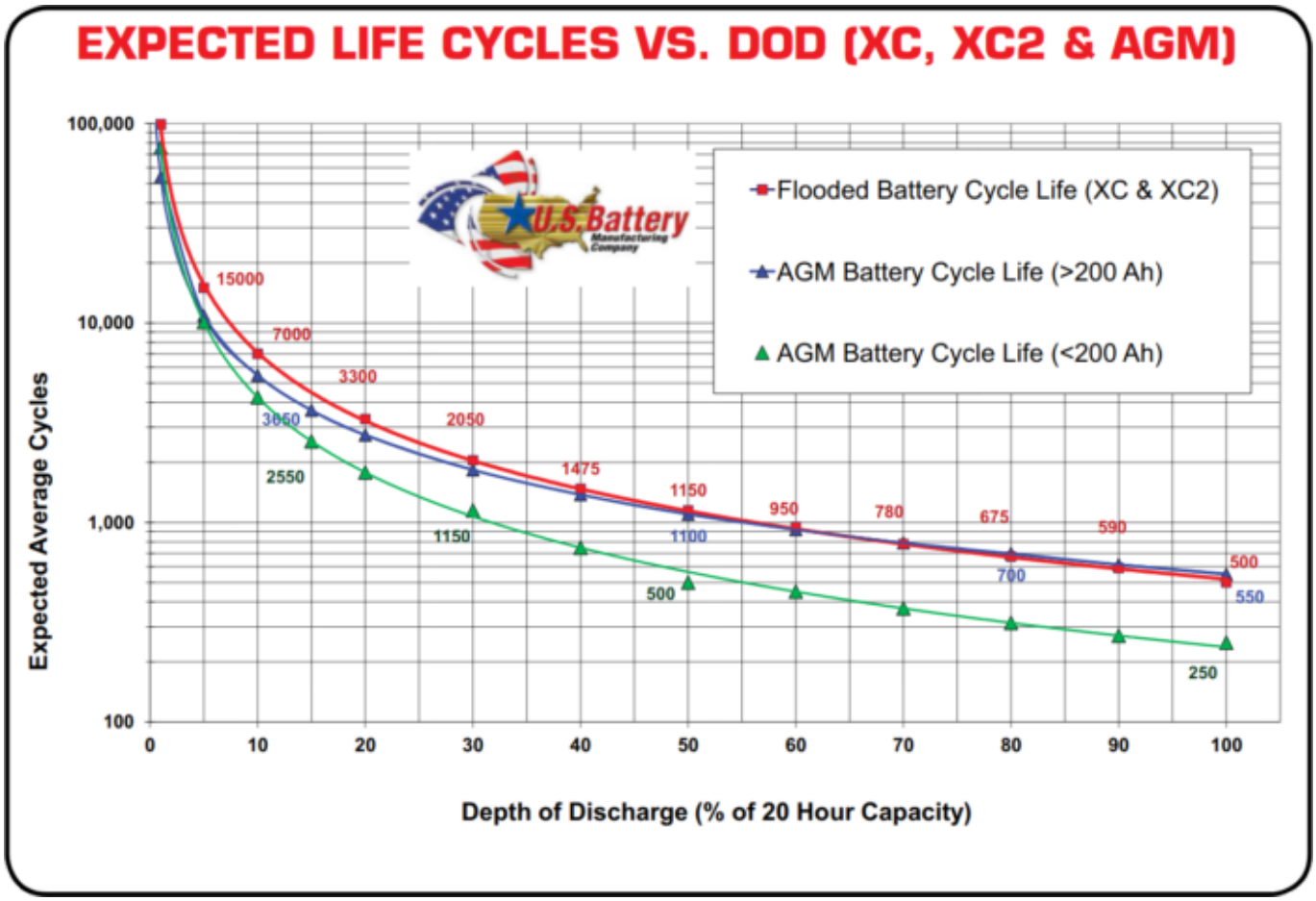
David and Trina are extremely happy living on SALT, which they purchased in February of 2020.

Lithium House Battery - Impressions After One Year

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/lithium-house-battery-impressions-after-one-year/

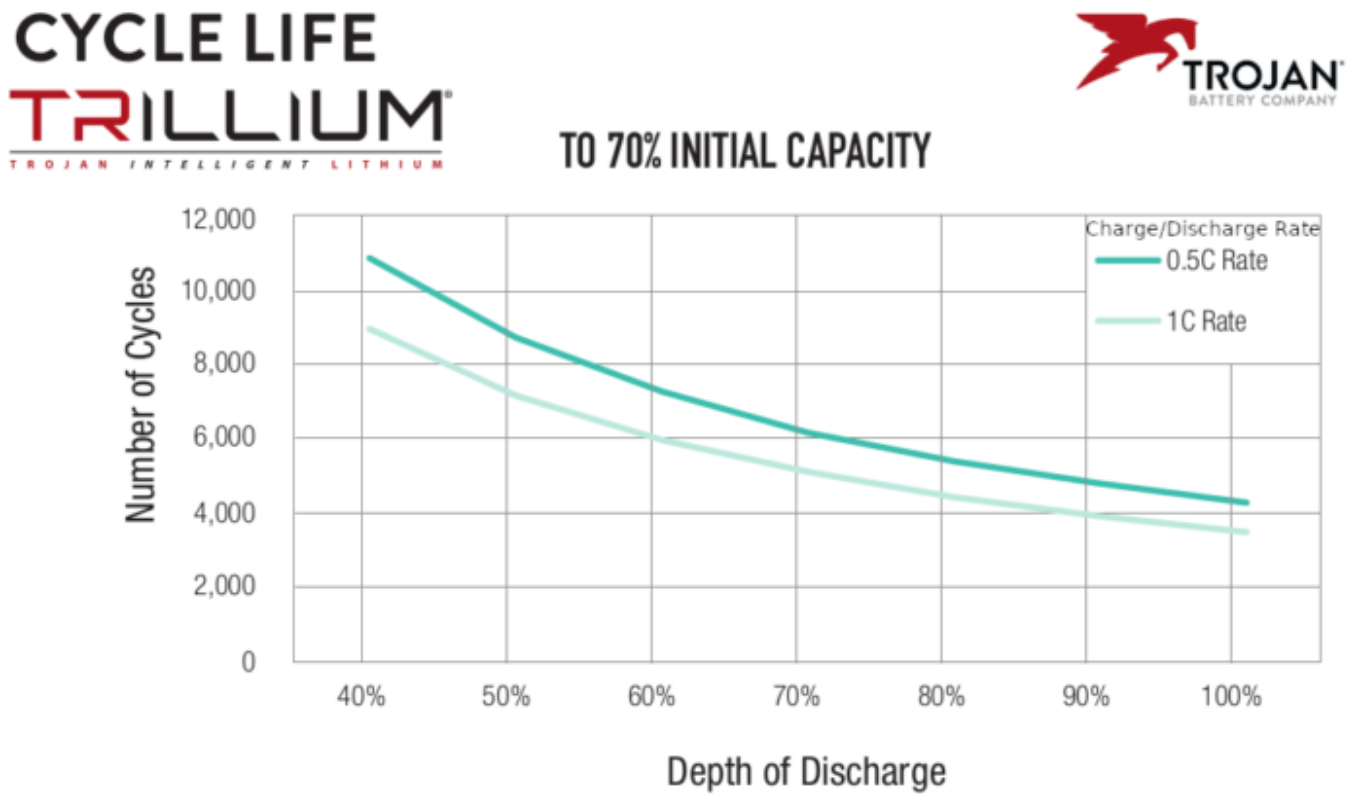
We've previously recounted our experiences using a lithium battery for our dinghy engine, and now want to share our impressions about our lithium house battery. In December 2019, we exchanged our two tired lead-acid 6 Volt golf cart batteries for a single 12 Volt lithium battery. After six months of cruising Mexican waters, followed by six months back in BC, our overall impression is positive, though with a battery there always has to be some negative too.

Golf cart batteries are popular with cruisers: chosen because they are relatively inexpensive, widely available, and intended for deep-cycle use. That last point is worth expanding upon. Lead-acid batteries contain stacks of lead plates immersed in a sulfuric acid solution. Charging and discharging transfers lead compounds between the solution and the plates. This chemical process isn't perfect; each charge/discharge cycle leaves unconverted residue, which over time builds up and diminishes the remaining battery capacity. The deeper the discharge cycle, the less able the battery is to be restored upon charging. This relationship between amount of discharge and the number of cycles is illustrated in the following graph from U.S. Battery.



The graph indicates that XC2 model batteries should last 500 cycles at a 100% depth-of-discharge (DOD) and 1150 cycles at 50% DOD. A convenient way of comparing the usefulness of a battery is to calculate how many total amp-hours can be supplied by that battery over its whole life. Let's say you have a battery with capacity of 135 A-Hr. Each 100% DOD cycle would get you 135 A-Hr (ignoring the decline in capacity as the battery ages). 500 cycles would get you 500 * 100% * 135 A-Hr = 67 500 A-Hr total from the battery. Now if you only discharged the battery to 50% DOD instead, you get 1150 cycles * 50% * 135 AHr = 77 625 A Hr, i.e. about 15% more cumulative amp-hours over the life of the battery. This is why it is commonly recommended to limit the discharge of a lead-acid battery to about 50% or less of its capacity; you will get more A-Hr over its life. Different manufacturers will have different numbers, but in general one expects about 1000 cycles of useful life at 50% DOD from a lead-acid battery that has been well cared for.

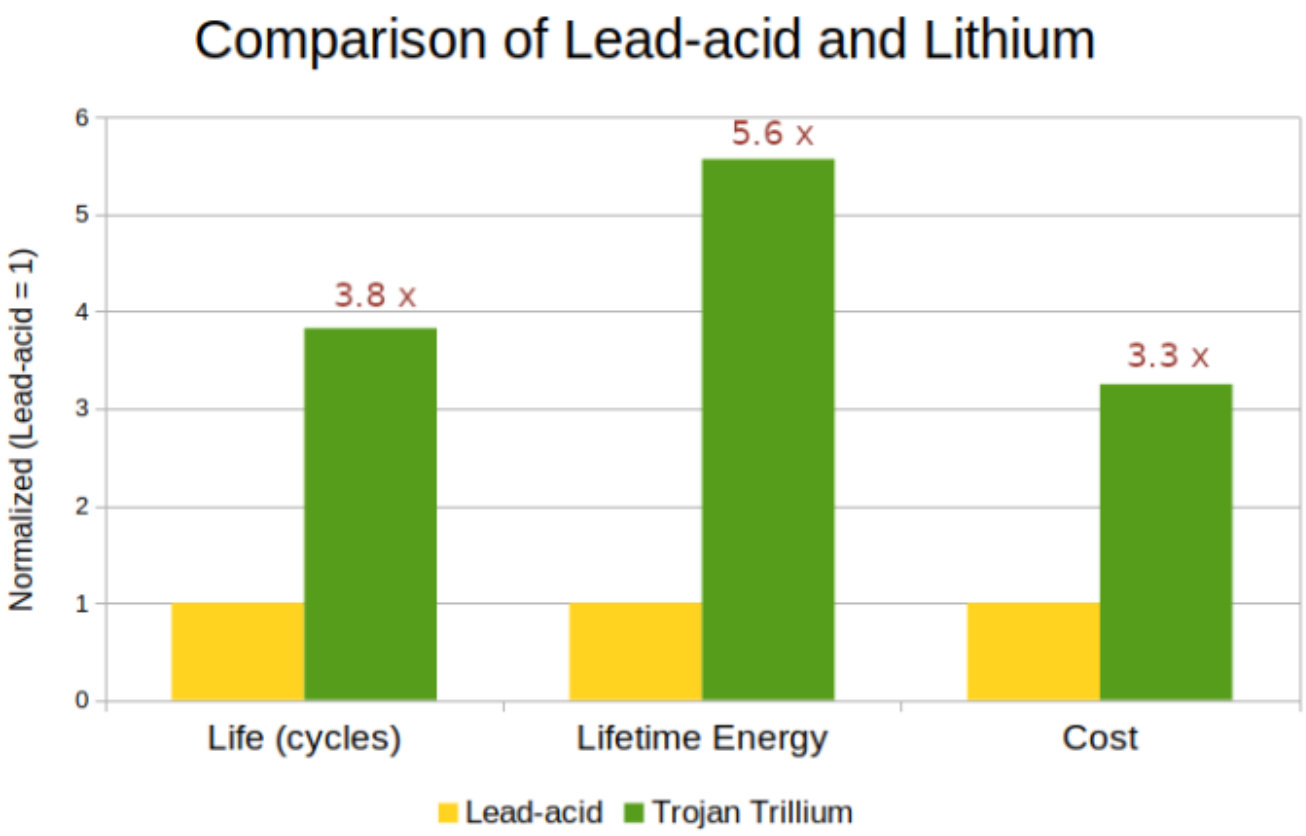
In contrast, lithium batteries deteriorate less with each charge/discharge, so their cycle life is much longer than lead-acid. Several variations on the lithium chemistry currently exist. Lithium-Polymer (LIPO) and Lithium Cobalt Oxide (abbreviated LiCoO2 or LCO) are widely used in cellphones and laptops, where the highest energy in the smallest package is paramount. Because this chemistry is subject to thermal runaway, it has been known (rarely) to spontaneously ignite when damaged or abused. Another chemistry, called Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePo4 or LFP), is not quite as energy-dense but is not subject to thermal runaway and is therefore safer. This type of battery is now available for boats in smaller and lighter packages than lead-acid, and with a longer cycle life. See this graph of Trojan's Trillium line of Lithium batteries:



At 100% DOD, the expected life is 4400 cycles: this equates to 12 years at one full discharge and charge each day. Since we are not actually daily draining our battery fully, I expect it to last 15 or 20 years.

When new, our golf cart batteries had 215 A-Hr capacity. After 5 years of use, I'd estimate their capacity had diminished to about 90 A-Hr. In trying to keep to a 50% DOD, we were left with only about 45 A-Hr of usable capacity. Our replacement lithium house battery has a capacity of 92 A-Hr and we are able to use all of that before charging. So, with this single house battery, we now have more usable capacity than from the two lead-acid batteries.

Of course, one has to pay for this extra performance. Our new battery cost $1300, compared to about $400 for two golf cart batteries (attracting extra scrutiny from the ship's purser). The following graph compares lead-acid and lithium batteries on the three characteristics discussed so far: cost, lifetime energy, and life cycles.



Battery Management System

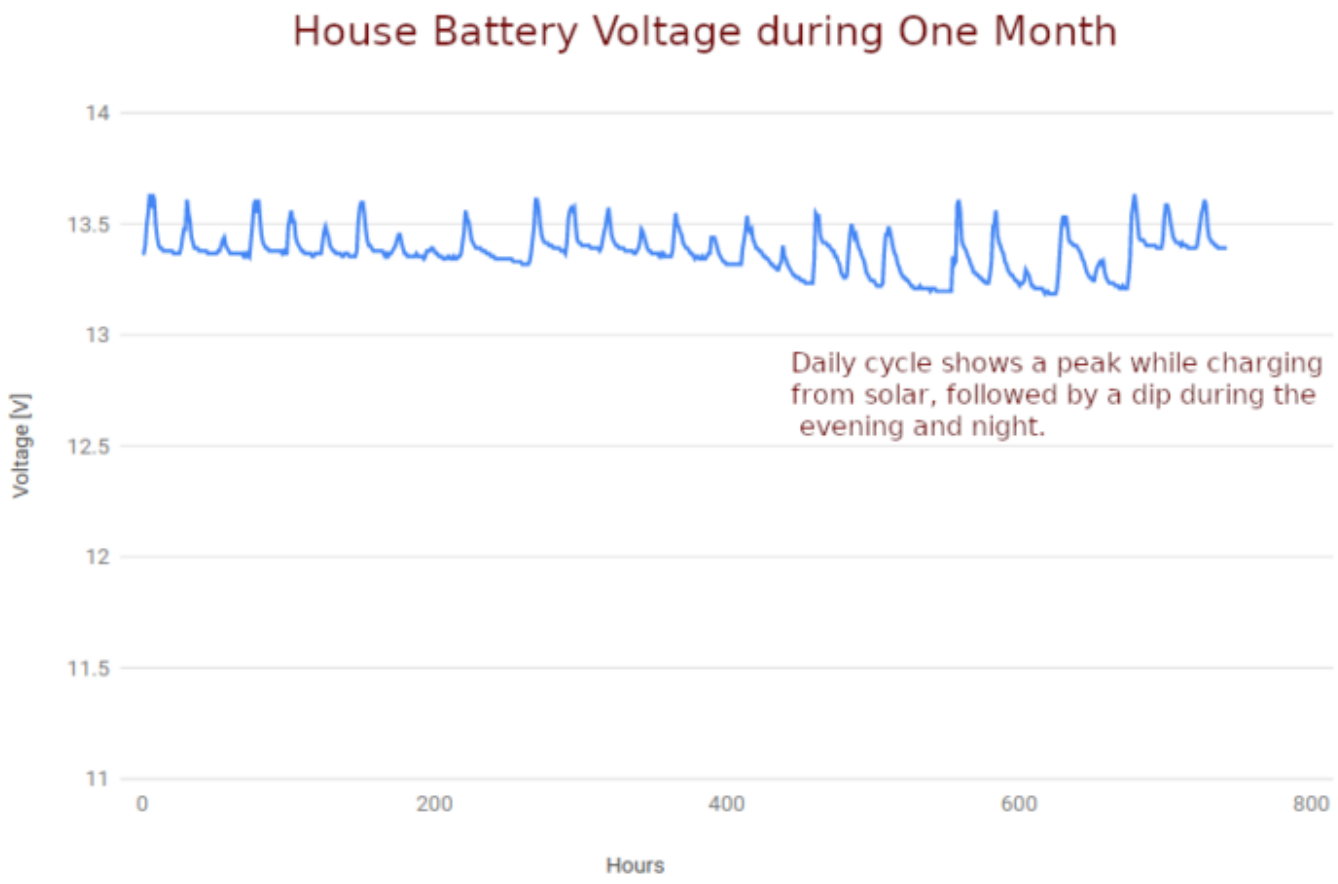
Lithium batteries need strict monitoring of temperature and charging/discharging rates to prevent damage. You may be familiar with the danger of shorting the terminals of a lead-acid battery: so much current can flow that it may melt or weld the terminals and even cause a fire. Well, the lower internal resistance of a lithium battery means that it can supply even higher surge currents than a lead-acid. This is one reason why lithium battery packages incorporate internal electronics – a Battery Management System (BMS) – to ensure that dangerous conditions don't occur. It is possible to purchase bare lithium cells and assemble your own battery, but it is much easier and safer to purchase a battery that already incorporates a BMS.

In addition to preventing excessive currents, the BMS also balances individual cell voltages and monitors battery temperature. Because the BMS is such an important component, lithium batteries should be sourced from a reputable supplier who has invested effort in selecting the right lithium cells and developing a proper BMS. Some North American manufacturers include: Lithium Battery Power, Battle-Born, and Trojan. Our lithium house battery is designed and made by Trojan, the same company that has supplied reliable lead-acid batteries for decades.

A BMS can be designed such that the lithium battery is **generally** compatible with an existing 12V electrical system. You'll see batteries advertised as "Drop-in Replacements", or "12V Compatible." As usual, the marketing department is guilty of some exaggeration. You will definitely notice some differences when switching to lithium, and it's likely you will have to make changes to your electrical system other than just dropping in your new battery.

Electrical System Changes

One change relates to the charging and resting voltages of lithium batteries. Whereas a lead-acid battery might swing from 12.2 V (significantly discharged), to 12.7 V (charged), to 14.4 V (charging), a lithium battery exhibits lower variation over its operating cycle. Our battery, for example, reads 12.9 V when at 25% charge, 13.3 V when 100% charged, and 13.7 V when charging at 10 A. The following graph shows the voltage of our house battery recorded over a one-month period.



The benefit of the smaller voltage variations is that some of your electronics (e.g. VHF radio) will be happier. The downside is that any battery monitor or automatic switch, if it relies on battery voltage to determine the battery state, will be incorrect. In our case, we have a Blue Sea Battery Combiner/Isolator that automatically connects the house battery to the engine starting battery when the voltage indicates that the batteries are charging. This threshold is set to 13.2 V, which is too low: the starting and house batteries were connected to each other even when the lithium battery was not being charged, so we needed to change our battery combiner.

The charging voltage of our alternator (like many alternators) is set to about 14.3 V. This is fine for our lithium battery, as the internal BMS can handle up to 14.8 V and it regulates the charging current to prevent overcharging. This may not be true of all lithium batteries – check the documentation and ensure the maximum charging voltage is not exceeded by your alternator, solar controllers, and other charging devices.

The lower internal resistance of lithium batteries allows them to charge at higher currents than lead-acid, as well as more efficiently. We notice that our alternator runs hotter than before, due to the about 30% higher charging current. So, if you switch to lithium batteries, ensure that your alternator has plenty of cooling airflow, that the belt(s) are in good condition, and that the electrical connections are clean and tight. Provided your alternator can deliver the current, you'll likely notice a decrease in charging time. If your present alternator is maxed-out when charging, you may benefit by upgrading to a higher-current system.

One additional note related to alternator charging: once the BMS decides that your lithium battery is full, it may quickly stop any additional current from flowing into the battery. Our Trojan battery behaves that way; we have seen the charging current drop from 10 A to zero instantly. Most stock alternators do not appreciate sudden drops in the load – it causes a voltage spike that can destroy the alternator's regulator (this is why manual battery switches may show the warning "*Do Not Switch OFF While Engine Running*"). Advanced external charge regulators should be able to handle the sudden drop in current – but check their documentation. If not, then a workaround is to ensure that you always have a lead-acid battery (e.g. engine start battery) connected to the alternator. Then there will always be a load drawing a few amps at minimum. One can also attach a surge suppressor to the alternator (as we have) to absorb the voltage spike caused by sudden load changes.

Other Battery Options

There are several options other than lithium for replacing a standard lead-acid battery. While we don't have direct experience with the following, here are two that are popular, along with points of comparison based on the manufacturers' literature.

Firefly (Carbon Foam Lead-acid) Battery

This type of battery can withstand greater depth-of-discharge (DOD) than regular lead-acid, with a published life of 1150 cycles at 80% DOD. It also supports higher charge rates, similar to lithium at temperatures > 20°C, which means shorter engine run times. At low temperatures, they can charge faster than lithium. For example, Trojan's Trillium battery can only charge at 15 A or less at temperatures between 0°C and 5°C (between 5°C and 23°C the rate is 56 A). However, most cruising boats would rarely have their batteries at temperatures less than 5°C.

Carbon foam lead-acid batteries have a similar charge profile to other lead-acids, except long-term floating is not recommended unless the float voltage is limited to 13.5 V. This may necessitate adjustment on some charge controllers. A Firefly battery rated at 116 A-Hr 12 V costs about $766, or about 60% of the cost of a Trojan Trillium for about 1/4 of the cycle life.

Jeff Cote at *Pacific Yacht Systems* (Vancouver) has informative videos about Firefly batteries (and other battery topics) on his website.

Silicon Dioxide (SiO2 or Lead Crystal) Battery

SiO2 batteries have great low-temperature performance – retaining 60% of their capacity at -30°C.

However, as noted earlier, this may not be relevant for most cruising boats. The electrolyte in SiO2 batteries is non-corrosive and not liquid, so is safer than lead-acid. They have a lifetime of about 2800 cycles at 50% DOD – a bit more than twice that of lead-acid – and while they are more expensive than regular lead-acid, the manufacturer states the per-cycle cost is lower. The charge profile is similar to lead-acids except they have a maximum charging rate between lead-acid and that of Firefly and lithium batteries; engine run times should decrease.

Conclusions

Are we happy that we swapped out our 120 lbs of lead-acid batteries for 27 lbs of lithium? Yes indeed! Based on one year of using our house battery, and 2-1/2 years of our lithium dinghy battery, we are impressed with their efficiency (i.e. faster charging), lack of needing maintenance (no topping-up of water, as with flooded lead-acids), and steady output voltage (consistent performance from voltage-sensitive devices like the dinghy motor). We have had to make some adjustments but so far this has been a good change.

About The Author

Barb Peck & Bjarne Hansen

Hoku Pa'a - Niagara 35

From 2004-2006 Barb and Bjarne sailed the South Pacific on Freya, their 30' Hunter-Vogel. Upon returning to Victoria they participated in the VI Watch and supported fleet members preparing to go offshore. After some wonderful local cruising they headed south again in 2015 on Hoku Pa’a, their Niagara 35. Once damage from an unfortunate encounter with Hurricane Newton was repaired, Barb and Bjarne continued their exploration of Mexico. Plans for French Polynesia were revised in response to the global pandemic; they sailed Hoku Pa’a back to Canada via the old clipper route and are looking forward to reconnecting with the beauty of BC.

What Flag to Fly in Quarantine?

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/what-flag-to-fly-in-quarantine/

The word ‘quarantine’ does not appear in the current International Code of Signals (ICOS). While older versions had codified signals for various quarantine messages (from the prosaic ‘my rats are dying’ in the earliest codes in the 1700s, to ‘I have or have had a contagious disease aboard’ in the editions of 100 years ago), that practice was dropped when the code was overhauled in the 1960s. It was the golden age of vaccines and medical triumph over epidemics: polio was beat, smallpox long gone, yellow fever and cholera could be treated, public vaccination programs were in broad swing, etc. There was no need for such a code anymore!

However, the world has changed and quarantine is the word these days. Therefore, to signal ‘quarantine’ today, a vessel could use either one of the following:

1. Q (Quebec)

"My vessel is 'healthy' and I request free pratique"

SINGLE LETTER SIGNALS

May be made by any method of signaling.

See Note 1 for those marked by an asterisk (*)

A	I have a diver down; keep well clear at slow speed.
***B**	I am taking in, or discharging, or carrying dangerous goods.
***C**	Yes (affirmative or "The significance of the previous group should be read in the affirmative").
***D**	Keep clear of me; I am maneuvering with difficulty.
***E**	I am altering my course to starboard.
F	I am disabled; communicate with me.
***G**	I require a pilot. When made by fishing vessels operating in close proximity on the fishing grounds it means: "I am hauling nets".
***H**	I have a pilot on board.
***I**	I am altering my course to port.
J	I am on fire and have dangerous cargo on board: keep well clear of me, or I am leaking dangerous cargo.
K	I wish to communicate with you.
L	You should stop your vessel instantly.
M	My vessel is stopped and making no way through the water.
N	No (negative or "The significance of the previous group should be read in the negative"). This signal may be given only visually or by sound. For voice or radio transmission the signal should be **"NO"**.
O	Man overboard.
P	**In harbor.**—All persons should report on board as the vessel is about to proceed to sea. **At sea.**—It may be used by fishing vessels to mean: "My nets have come fast upon an obstruction". It may also be used as a sound to mean: "I require a pilot".
Q	My vessel is "healthy" and I request free pratique.
***S**	I am operating astern propulsion.
***T**	Keep clear of me; I am engaged in pair trawling.

(from the page for single letter symbols from the ICOS)

2. Q Q (Quebec Quebec)

"I require health clearance"

SECTION 9: INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS

Code	*Meaning*	*Cross Reference*
	PRATIQUE MESSAGES	
ZS	My vessel is "healthy" and I request free pratique	**Q**
	*I require health clearance	**QQ**
ZT	My Maritime Declaration of Health has negative answers to the six Health Questions.	

(from the page for pratique messages from the ICOS)

Probably the second is the most accurate for a vessel in quarantine, but either will do.

If you don't happen to have two **Q** flags lying around, you should use the '**Quebec Repeater**' combination.

How I Fixed the Internet (really!)

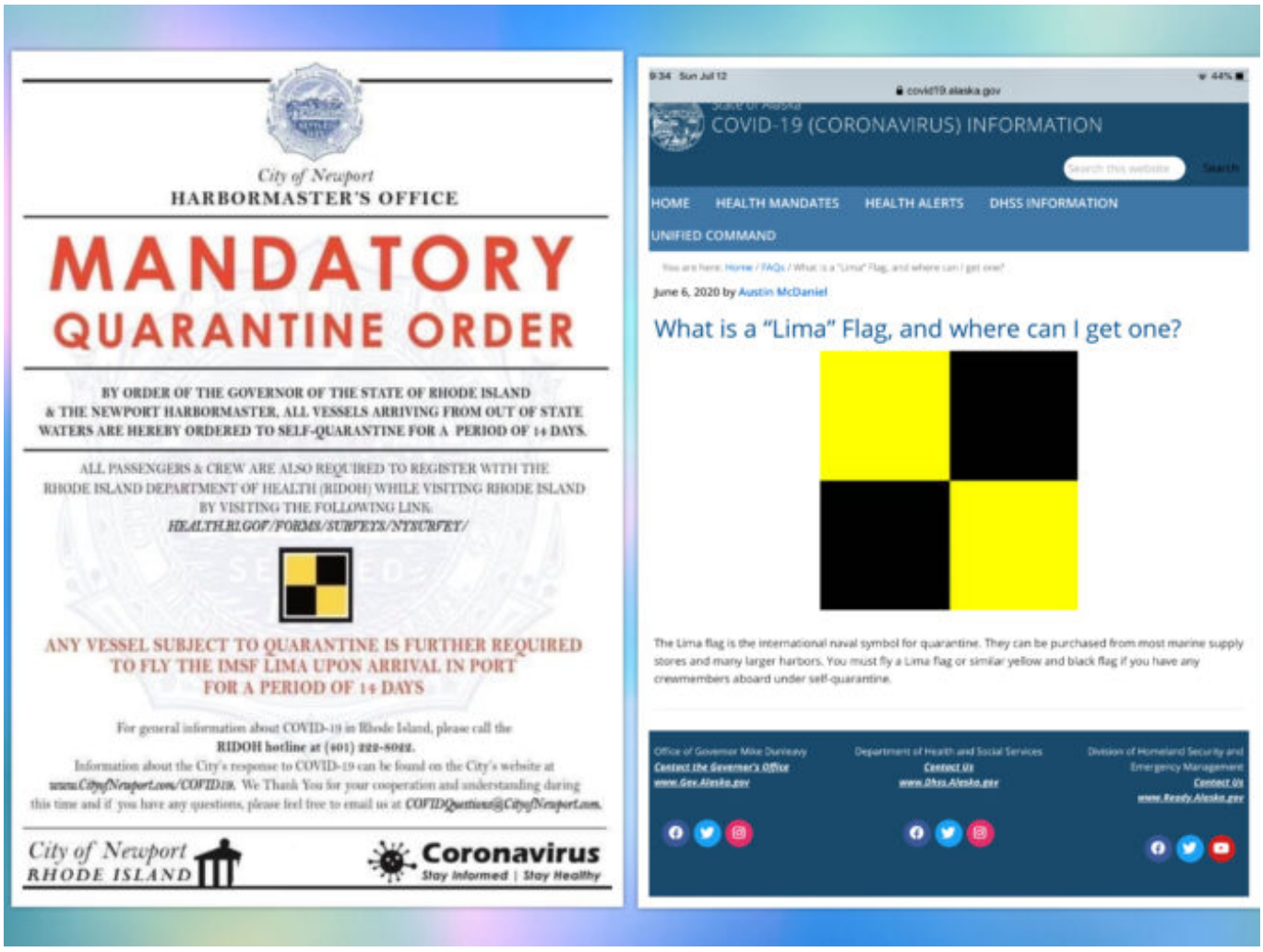
When the pandemic of COVID-19 began in 2020 the Internet scrambled to find out what signal flag should be used for vessels in quarantine. Scores of blog authors, Facebook posters, Twitter tweeters, maritime information sites and others, sought the correct symbol for this new and novel vessel status.

And they all descended on Wikipedia, where the corresponding entry read:

Sadly, none seemed to note the footnote shown above and only seized on the **L**-for-Lima flag as the

symbol for quarantine, unsupported by international custom since the 1950s.

The state of Alaska proclaimed the Lima flag as the appropriate international naval symbol and the town and Harbormaster in Newport Rhode Island jumped on board:



I began a personal campaign to fix the Internet. I corrected the Wikipedia entries and footnotes (Wikipedia is indeed 'the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit') with the appropriate footnotes and citations, created a form email I began sending to pages all over the world that had the wrong information, and shared the correct protocol via Twitter tweets and Facebook posts.

Informed of the error, most were thankful for the updated information and corrected their posts within a day or two.

All is well in the world now. The Internet has been fixed (somewhat).

About The Author

Rob Murray

Avant - Beneteau First 435 Sloop

Rob Murray and Debra Zhou are doers currently in El Salvador, Central America.

Sailing Circus

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/sailing-circus/

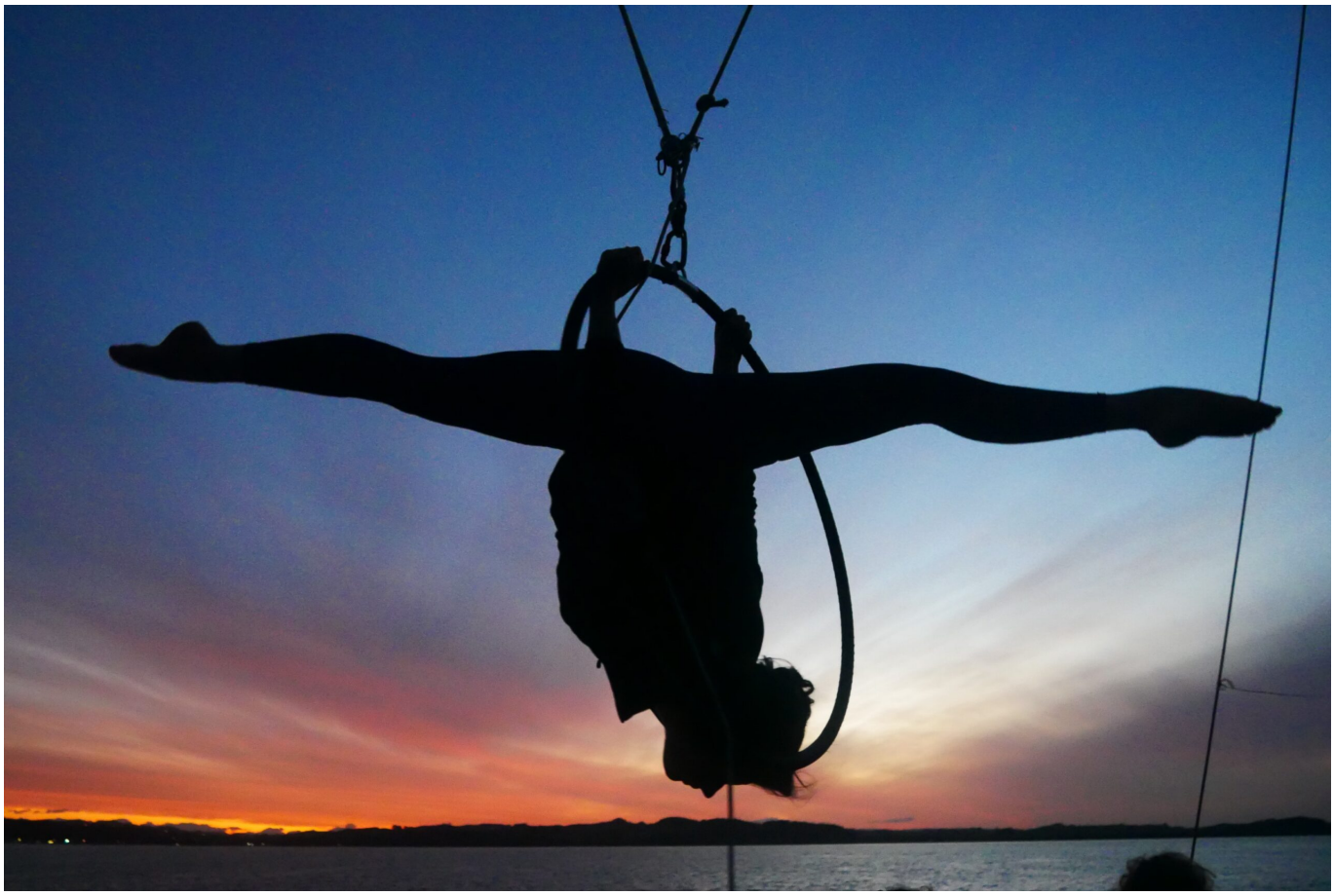
Sea Stewardship's Creative Approach to Cruising and Conservation

Acrobats in the rigging, clowns and jugglers on deck – 70 foot ***Rosalie Clare*** is a sailing circus! Designed and built by John Lidgard, this 1980 wooden ketch is currently the platform for a unique combination of conservation, cruising and now Cirque Lemuria. Owner Ari Vanderschoot bought the vessel in Washington in 2010 and, with her partner, engineer Ben Vroom, sailed her to the South Pacific to enjoy their shared passion for the ocean. Determined to contribute to the effort to save tropical coral reefs, they had planned to run a series of Sea Stewardship coral planting training sessions in Tuvalu in 2020. COVID-19 travel restrictions have put those plans on hold. Stuck in New Zealand, the pair hosted an impromptu circus onboard for the month of June and toured the Northland coast from the Bay of Islands to Aukland. The tour was such a success that a second is planned to Coromandel, Great Barrier Island, Waiheke and beyond. I took in the show at 116 Bank Street in Whangarei, and spoke with them backstage.

Rosalie Clare under way.

How did the Circus Happen?

“We had a new crew member who was a circus performer stranded by the pandemic. We asked her if she knew any others and she put it out on social media,” explains Ari. Within a week, they had assembled a group of ten artists and put together a show and a tour plan. The eclectic troupe includes professional acrobats, jugglers, clowns and musicians, who hail from Spain, France, Austria, Netherlands, Bahamas, Canada, USA, Australia, and New Zealand. Onboard they share cooking, cleaning, watch duties, equal parts in the tour proceeds and “lots of laughter”. Performing in a variety of venues, including coastal town halls and waterfront fields, Cirque Lemuria puts on a delightful performance that marries poetry, music and professional circus artistry with a timely conservation message. See this article from New Zealand’s 1 News.



Aerialist Rumah silhouetted in the rigging (Photo: Jorge Rodriguez Roda).

Sea Stewardship

Ben is originally from the Netherlands and trained as a mechanical and electrical engineer. In 2014, he worked on the ***Kwai***, a sailing cargo ship servicing the remote Islands of Kiribati, Tuvalu and other island groups. “I was so often asked for help,” explains Ben. “‘Can you fix the washing machine, the generator, the solar panels…?’ In a few hours I could only do so much! Now (with ***Rosalie Clare***), we have time and we can ask these remote villages what they need. We can help them with electronics and engines, but also composting, organic farming and now coral planting. It all depends on the skills of the current crew. Sometimes our crew roster includes doctors and nurses, sometimes marine biologists and ecologists.”

Cirque Lemuria clown performing at Russell, Bay of Islands (photo: Jorge Rodriguez Roda).

Ari elaborates, “Our purpose in Sea Stewardship is to train Islanders in Tuvalu to build coral nurseries and rebuild coral reefs with heat resistant corals. I want to do something to help the ocean and the reefs.” Born in the Bahamas and having spent much of her adult life in Hawaii, she is a diver and surfer as well as an artist. “The ideas just keep coming,” she laughs. Building on the model of *Oceans Watch*, a yacht-based environmental organization founded in 2007 by Chris Bone of New Zealand, Sea Stewardship is a registered charity in Tuvalu. Reef restoration fits into the Tuvalu government’s Ridge to Reef program, which promotes community-based biodiversity conservation and restoration projects, and development of sustainable livelihood.

Ari and Ben went to see Dr. Austin Bowden Kerby, an American marine biologist and coral planting expert based in Fiji, to learn about reef restoration. He promotes resort-based coral planting programs and has raised awareness of coral reef devastation through TED talks. He ran a training seminar for 23 NGO and resort staff from all over Fiji in May 2019, on Malolo Island. Bowden-Kerby sees a need for resorts to hire trained coral gardeners to protect and restore the reefs, which draw tourists in the first place. He recognizes that untrained coral gardeners likely do as much harm as good!

Coral planting programs, going back to 2006 and led by Victor Bonito of the Coral Coast Conservation Center and Reef Explorer, have shown that, with informed scientific guidance, reef restoration can be done at low cost by community workers or volunteers. Heat resistant corals are propagated in nurseries made with three ply nylon lines on metal frames. In less than a year, fast growing Acropora fragments extend out in all directions and can be planted out on damaged reefs. Slower growing coral species can be

propagated on cement disks. In 2019, Reef Explorer reported annual planting of 7,000 corals. Over a period of 13 years, “over 50,000 corals, consisting of more than 50 species, have been propagated and transplanted back to the reef in village MPAs (marine protected areas), and village youth have received basic training in cost-effective coral propagation techniques, reef ecology and fauna, and integrating this work into guided snorkelling tours.” (Fiji – Ecological Restoration) The same article notes key best practices for coral planting.

Coral reefs are often described as the rain forests of the sea, providing habitat to approximately 25% of marine fish species at some point in their life cycle. Worldwide, over 5 million people depend directly on reef fisheries. Reefs provide protection from erosion of marine coastlines and they contribute to the oxygen produced by the ocean. According to some estimates, the ocean has absorbed 90% of the heat generated by the burning of fossil fuels and this has triggered increased frequency of coral bleaching events.

Coral planting projects are underway in various parts of the globe: Fiji, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, the Caribbean, the Maldives and Mauritius to name a few. During the pandemic, dive tour operators have teamed up with researchers to propagate heat resistant corals and restore Australia’s Great Barrier Reef. With ***Rosalie Clare***, Sea Stewardship is poised to bring coral nurseries and reef restoration to the remote atolls of Tuvalu once pandemic travel restrictions are lifted.


Ari and crew prepping dinner for the troupe onboard ***Rosalie Clare*** (photo Jorge Rodriguez Roda).

Backstage at 116 Bank Street in Whangarei, the performers of Cirque Lemuria gather their props and prepare to return to the ***Rosalie Clare*** in the, dark but mild, austral winter. They have performed for donations and put out a request for fresh vegetables and an outboard motor for the ship's tender. The outboard need not be in good repair as "Bengineer" can fix anything. The ***Rosalie Clare*** will ride the 0300h tide downriver and sail on to the next town where, no doubt, Cirque Lemuria will educate and enchant another audience.

Additional Resources

If you are interested in reading more about coral conservation, here are a few additional links:

- National Geographic
- Mission Blue
- Reef Resilience Network
- The Nature Conservancy

About The Author

Henk and Lisa Benckhuysen

Harlequin - Express 37 Sloop

Lisa and Henk Benckhuysen have just completed a passage to Fiji on SV Harlequin. Lisa is a Canadian educator and freelance writer sailing around the world, slowly, with her husband, sharing music and stories. Her articles have also appeared in Latitude 38 and Sailworld online magazines.
Currently in Whangarei, New Zealand, she is exploring how international cruisers are adapting to restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

How Much Battery Power Is Enough?

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/how-much-battery-power-is-enough/

Growing up in my house, it was quite common to hear “turn the lights off when you leave the room,” or “who left the lights on? Do you think we are made of money?” Now that I have my own house, I get it. But what about on the boat? Many marinas have replaced the flat cost per day or cost per month with metered power, so it makes sense to know how much your boat draws when you are not there. Are you using an efficient fan or a heater with a thermostat that turns off when the weather warms up? These are easy things to do and don’t affect the way you use your boat; however, what about when you are at anchor or tied up at an outstation without power? How much power is enough?

Many evenings I have been visiting friends on their boat and find myself chatting by the light of a single candle or a small, yellowish light bulb in an older bulkhead fixture. It’s not flattering, and it’s not right. Since working with Jeff at Pacific Yacht Systems, I have learned a few things about electrical systems. I never really understood amps (A), amp-hours (Ah) or volts (V), and I couldn’t figure out the battery monitor to save my life. After sitting through many presentations, editing articles and listening to Jeff speak with hundreds of clients, there are three simple things I would tell my younger boater self.

How Many Amps Do You Use?

The first thing is to decide what is “electrically” important to you and your crew. How much energy or amp-hours do you use per day? The biggest draw on my boat is an older Nova Kool fridge; no way around it – that beast sucks up 40 – 50 Ah per day. I try to reduce the number of times I open and close

the fridge so that the compressor does not have to come on, which saves energy. A great tip is to keep all your beverages in a cooler and use the fridge for food. I make ice blocks in Tupperware containers while the boat is plugged into shore power and then drop them in the cooler for the weekend.

I have an older Bayliner, and the galley was dark and dingy before I installed Lunasea LED lights, so I want to use them. I have a tablet but prefer a keyboard, so I want to use my laptop whenever I have the urge to google. I try to charge it completely when the generator is running and use the laptop battery for the rest of the day. I was surprised to learn that my older Xantrex Freedom 2500W inverter/charger onboard still draws 2 – 3 A even when I am not using it, so I have made a conscious effort to turn it off. Ironically, now I hear, "who left the inverter on?" Turning the inverter off at night will save 8 hours X 3 A = 24 Ah for doing nothing! However, the cell phones have to stay charged, so I installed a cigarette lighter / USB charger on the dash – this draws directly from the battery, and I can keep the main inverter off. The dinner hour on my boat is much later in the summer, so I installed a dimmer LED light on the back deck. I also like to play my music for a few hours a day and during the evening. Add this to the 50 Ah my fridge draws, and my total usage is 80 Ah per day.

I enjoy boating and openly admit that I am not a camper. It is nice to wake up in the morning to a good cup of coffee. On a rainy night, it is fun to watch a movie on a real TV, with popcorn. And yes, I dry my hair. Add in a warm crab dip with toasted pita at happy hour and my daily usage can be as high as 200 Ah.

How Much Battery Power Do You Have?

That brings us to the second thing I would tell my younger self: figure out how much battery power you have on board. My house bank has six flooded lead-acid golf cart batteries that store 660 Ah of battery power at 12 VDC. Remember, to extend the life of your lead-acid batteries, you should only deplete them to 50%, which means I have 330 usable amp-hours. Therefore, 330 Ah divided by 200Ah = 1.65 days of power. This means that I have to run my generator every two days. I don't have room to add more batteries, so I decided to add a 100 W solar panel. On a sunny day in Howe Sound, the panel starts working at 0600h and is still putting in power until the sun goes down at 2100h – that's 15 hours of sunlight. The panel I installed averages 3 amps per hour X 10 hours = 30 Ah/day. This helps offset my fridge, which uses 40 – 50 Ah/day, and I get an extra day without running the generator — game changer.

Battery Monitors

Now that you know how much power you use and how much power you have available, the third thing is to install a **battery monitor,** or learn how to use the one you have installed. It truly is a gas gauge for your batteries. Stay with me here and don't get overwhelmed by all of the details. There are typically four screens, and #2 and #3 are the ones to look at:

1. **V = Volts**. Voltage is used to assess the approximate state-of-charge and to check for proper charging. For example, an at-rest, fully charged 12 V battery bank will show about 12.6 V to 12.8 V. A 12 V battery is 100% discharged when it reaches 10.5 V under load. A 12 V battery that is being charged with an appropriately sized charger or alternator will read above 13 VDC to 14.6 VDC.

2. **A = Amps**. Amps is the flow of current in or out of the battery. Current is analogous to speed: it's the rate at which electricity is flowing. While driving a boat, you would say I'm doing 10 knots, and you would convert 10 NM if you traveled for one hour. Amps are similar to boat speed. For example, I am drawing ten amps and, if the current was constant for one hour, you would say I used ten amp-hours (more information on amp-hours below). Your fridge may draw six amps of current and this is displayed as -6.0 A. Discharge is shown as a negative number and shows the number of amps that are being consumed. This is an important function to teach your crew as it serves as an excellent reminder to turn off unused lights, navigation equipment, etc. If you had no loads on your batteries, any charge going into the batteries (e.g. solar, alternator, charger, etc.) would show up as a positive number.
3. **Ah = Amp-Hours**. This shows the amount of energy stored or removed from the battery. If you run a 10 A load for one hour, then 10 Ah are consumed. The battery monitor will show -10 in the Ah display. During charging, the battery monitor will compensate for charging efficiency and count back up toward zero. A full battery is displayed as zero amp-hours or 0 Ah. Any draw from the battery is reflected as negative amp-hours, e.g. – 47.9Ah, and recharging will bring the number back to 0Ah.
4. **H or t = Time**. Don't worry about this one as "hours" left is calculated on the last four minutes of use, which doesn't give you any practical information. If this screen reads CCC, then you know that the batteries are charging (e.g., the generator is running).

[*Editor's note: data may display differently depending on the models of battery monitors.*]

Another note to remember, your hot water tank should not run off your batteries. On my boat, the hot water tank stays warm enough for two days of showers and dishes, then I have to run the generator. If you plan on being in a busy anchorage and don't want to run the generator, one option is to buy a solar shower bag for quick rinses on the back deck. Also, I have a small electric kettle in the galley that I use to boil water for a single sink of dishes.

I did not understand the electricity use on my boat when I started boating, and I didn't know where to start or what questions to ask. When I did start asking questions, the answers were way over my head, and, in many cases, the people I was asking did not have a complete understanding either. Don't be afraid to raise your hand. Knowledge is 12 V or 110 V power.

About The Author

Melissa "Missy" Gervais

As You Wish - Bayliner Avanti 34

Missy is a local cruiser in the Pacific Northwest and writes a blog called missygoesboating.com that looks at "everything cool for women who boat". She also writes for a number of boating magazines and has a feature column called "Missy Recommends" with Waggoner on-line. She has been working with Jeff Cote at Pacific Yacht Systems for the past seven years.

Running from COVID

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/running-from-covid/

In 2016 we made a three year plan to buy a boat, sell everything and sail away from Vancouver, Canada. In May 2019, we moved onto our 1982 Cooper Seabird Pilothouse ***Galene***, fulfilling that retirement dream, which we had spent the last three years diligently planning and working so hard to achieve! The first leg of our aggressive schedule was a couple of weeks visiting Gwaii Haanas National Park, a large protected archipelago off the West Coast of British Columbia and ancestral home of the world famous Haida First Nations peoples. Next up, we sailed north to Petersburg, Alaska to make iced tea with bergy bits of the Conte tidal glacier. Then came some relaxation time with friends anchored in Desolation Sound, BC. Leg four was the big challenge: open ocean. We traveled down the Pacific Coast of the United States, taking in some sights and sailing under the iconic Golden Gate Bridge. Our voyage culminated with the Baja Ha Ha Rally southward to the Sea of Cortes, Mexico in the fall. In late November we arrived in La Paz and fell in love with this vibrant, beautiful, low-key Mexican city. Time to relax, our plan was complete, life was grand!

We began planning the next phase of our new life. Laurie's father was turning 90 in early May, so we intended to fly back to Canada for a couple of weeks. As part of that trip, we made an appointment with the Mexican Consulate in Toronto to apply for Mexican Residency just a couple of days before our Visitor Visas would expire. We had heard about the tortuously hot, humid Mexican summers, so we had originally thought that we would spend our first summer trekking across Canada visiting friends and family, taking time to do things we previously didn't have the time for in our rushed career-driven lives. In between time, with a couple of months to kill, we planned to meet up with a Vancouver boating friend in Bahía Concepción for most of April, and continue on to explore the Baja side of the Sea of Cortes. So on March 11, after almost four fabulous months in La Paz, we began our new adventure.

Then came COVID-19. At first people seemed to think the Baja Peninsula was isolated enough from the rest of the world, but infected tourists continued to arrive in the Baja despite World governments suggesting not to travel. The situation changed daily. Many of the cruisers, people just like us, were taking things in stride. Living on a boat is like that. You "go where the wind blows", even if you mostly travel when it doesn't. But as the virus impact progressed faster than in a bad fiction movie, airlines were ceasing international travel and governments were recalling all of their citizens. Many cruisers battened down their vessels to return home indefinitely. Most seemed very unsettled and cited "health insurance" or "grandchildren" as their incentive to evacuate. We could not do that because ***Galene*** is our only home. Wherever ***Galene*** is becomes our home. '*Mi casa es mi barco*'. We were in the process of applying for

residency in Mexico. Bashing back up the coast to Canada just didn't make sense. If we returned to Canada by air, we would have to quarantine in a hotel for two weeks prior to visiting any friends or family. Little was known about the virus and we didn't want to gamble with infecting our elderly family members. So our best-informed decision at the time was to ride this out "sheltered in place". Now what?

With so many cruisers repatriated and local tourism shut down, we found ourselves sharing pristine anchorages with only a few other vessels. We enjoyed walking the beaches and hiking trails with only an occasional interaction with fellow cruisers. The weather was spectacular for cruising and anchoring. Over the next couple of days, our world evolved quickly as word trickled down that all beaches were now closed, no camping, no hiking…no fun. We now knew we were not going back to Canada for the birthday celebration, our Consulate appointment or our summer trek. Maybe we could move slowly north through the many islands and settle in Bahía de Los Ángeles to enjoy a more tolerable summer climate?

March 17 we pulled into the beautiful, isolated and well-protected Puerto Escondido Marina. This seemed like a great location but things were developing so swiftly. Our only news came through sketchy internet and the morning VHF Net each day. Soon enough came mask wearing and social distancing. Within a few days, the village of Mulege near Bahía Concepción closed to visitors and boats were not welcome in Bahía de Los Ángeles or many of the other small coastal towns. The Marina worked hard to service their stranded guests. The excellent restaurant was mandated to offer only take-out, but the quality and service did not suffer. The small store kept good supplies and began to offer custom grocery orders. They stationed full-time attendants at the washrooms to assure a clean and virus-free environment. There were lots of local hiking trails, a swimming pool and spectacular mountain views – this seemed like a good spot to shelter in place. The only downfall was the lack of cellular coverage and a broken marina WiFi system they could not seem to fix.

At the time we could still enjoy nature in the area, island-hopping and even re-provisioning on a calm day, anchored off the shore of Loreto. We took advantage of the situation by visiting Isla Coronados (or Corona Dose as I began calling it) and Isla Carmen, where we met new friends at a distance, and discovered the National Park Islands at their uncrowded best. A provisioning trip into the picturesque but now barren town of Loreto was disheartening, as the locals were desperate for business. The push and pull was evident: tourism money keeps families fed, but it is the tourists bringing in the virus. As cruisers, we feel we are the least likely to spread COVID, living a quarantine type lifestyle. This was a little like being sentenced to an island dream vacation. The weather was awesome and anchorages very quiet.

Galene at anchor in the secret plan D bay of mainland Mexico. If everyone knew about this place, they would all be here!

Then the belt tightened a little more. Authorities dictated no moving around, no anchoring, parks closed and transit allowed only port to port. It looked as if we may be stranded in the remote off-line Puerto Escondido moorage for months. A few fellow cruisers we know were sheltering in place on the mainland and badgered us to cross over. "It is so much better here," they said. So on April 16, a good weather window opened up and we motored 22 hours overnight to join them. Now plan "D" is to stay here, sheltered in place. The anchorage is well-protected, has excellent cellular coverage and there is a morning VHF Cruisers Net. We are welcome at the marina dingy dock and allowed to travel through town to access a variety of well-stocked grocery stores and shops. There is no problem swimming off the boat and we have access to a nearby hiking trail, if we can withstand the sweaty climb. We do wish we could explore the surrounding communities a little more, but are grateful for the freedoms we have. Some days we get a bit melancholy and have to give our heads a good shake. We are much better off than the majority of cruisers: we just have to avoid worrying about tomorrow and be thankful for what we have today. As one VHF Net controller put it, "just be glad you're here, cause you could be there."

We are part running and hiding and part living the dream. Uncertainty is high because we are in uncertain times, in unfamiliar places and living an unfamiliar lifestyle. But we are embracing all of it!

About The Author

Greg Yellenik

Galene - 1982 Cooper Seabird 37 Pilothouse

Greg caught the bug for sailing at age 16 when he left home in Montreal to live with his aunt and uncle in Vancouver for a summer. He spent the next ten years taking opportunities further West until finally ending up back in Vancouver. Greg owned his own Windward 30 sloop for 11 years prior to landing Galene, a 37’ Cooper Seabird Pilothouse where he and his partner of 26 years Laurie live aboard full time. Presently in Mexico after completing the 2019 Baja Ha Ha and placing second in their division with plans to slow way down and smell the roses, or whatever flowers they see.

The French Canals: Part 1 - Decisions

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/the-french-canals-part-1-decisions/

*The French Canals will be a series of three articles recounting Morgan and Melanie Finley's passage from the English Channel through rivers and canals of France to the Mediterranean in July and August of 2020 aboard **Swift**, their Moody 44 sailboat. They bought the boat in the UK and had a slow start with COVID-19 lockdowns. With four on board (Morgan, Melanie, Isla (12) and Pippa (9) Finley) their adventures are never boring. Part 1 sees the family go through their first lock, arriving in Paris and continuing through the Canal Lateral a la Marne. You can follow them on Instagram @sailing.swift.*

It's 0530h and we've already been in Cherbourg, France for a week, waiting for a chance to head south through the Bay of Biscay to get to the Mediterranean. This looks like it may be the best day for the next week to make a 90-mile run southwest, but the wind is still blowing 15 knots and will be right on the nose. The Channel Islands are still closed from COVID-19 travel restrictions, so we can't shorten our day. We're up early in order to catch a lift from the huge currents in the Alderney Race.

Needless to say, there is no excitement for this morning's adventure. We know Pippa (age 9) will suffer from the *mal de mer*. I'm suffering from the *mal de bierre*. What are we doing? We hate beating to

weather.

However, we've just heard the French canals are open again – Paris, vineyards, pastoral countryside, no slogging to windward and no crossing the Bay of Biscay! And so the decision is obvious; the next day we change course 180 degrees and sail at 7 knots with the wind at our backs as we slip eastward toward Le Havre and the entrance to the Seine River.

It was easy to make arrangements to proceed through the middle of France by contacting the Voies Navigable de France (VNF) and paying for the permit. Permit costs are calculated based on the length of the boat and the amount of time you plan to be in the canals. We paid 155 Euro for ***Swift*** for one month.

Using our folding bikes to collect supplies to support the mast on deck.

The Seine River

A week later we've pulled the mast in Le Havre, and we arrive in beautiful Honfleur at the mouth of the Seine River. We aren't going into this completely blind. It was always the plan to use the French waterways to travel to the Mediterranean when we found a Moody 44 in the UK with a shallow draft of 1.5 meters. However, the COVID-19 lockdown in the UK derailed our plans and itinerary, and the

uncertainties from a slowly reopening Europe suggested we might be better transiting the Bay of Biscay.

Pippa showing off and using her gymnastic skills to walk the mast.

We had also planned to make this trip in May when, historically, the water levels in the canals are higher and the traffic is lighter. It was now July 2020, and, although we could still picture the worst with ***Swift*** grounding in a drying canal until the fall rains, we were also very excited to be finally heading in the right direction and going somewhere we really want to go!

In the first 30 minutes of Day 1, July 8, we run aground at low tide outside the Honfleur lock with two other sailboats. I hang my head in shame – at least it is soft mud. ***Swift*** has the shallowest draft of all three boats, and we are soon off to catch the tidal surge for the run up the Seine to Rouen. We pass medium-sized freighters and dockyards, but also long stretches of muddy banks with riverside vegetation and very little else.

The first lock on the Seine is 40 km past Rouen. The lock is huge – sized to accommodate commercial barge traffic. Our first transit is a near disaster because we have moored far up the lock nearest to the turbulence from the flooding process. We swing all over, and the mast swings in close to the wall. We emerge shaken but unscathed, and moor for the night at a quiet wall by a sleepy neighbourhood. A

friendly canal traveler provides advice for future lock transits. We celebrate our successes and look forward to tomorrow.

The next morning is amazing. We are up early and mist swirls over the river as we motor away from our mooring. The remainder of our run to Paris transitions from the lowlands of the Seine estuary to more scenic landscapes with farmland, pretty villages, and even the odd castle. We transit the locks without mishap and with much less stress.

A castle along the way.

Paris

We reach Paris on July 12, two days before Bastille Day. It is surreal to arrive in one of the more beautiful and vibrant cities in the world on your own boat. You motor right past the Eiffel Tower! That thing is so very impressive and very huge! An eclectic mix of canal barge conversions line the riverbanks. We motor under spectacular bridges and eventually moor in the Arsenal Marina basin at the base of the Bastille monument.

In Paris!

Our experiences of Paris and the Bastille Day celebrations are of social distancing but nonetheless great. We travel on foot or rent electric scooters. We walk around the Eiffel Tower but don’t go up. We see the Louvre but only from the outside. We eat ice cream near the fire gutted Notre Dame Cathedral. We drink French beer outside Parisian brasseries. We stumble across military horse guards and their accompanying band, who parade unannounced through the streets to avoid drawing a crowd. Our view of the fireworks is distant, but how great is it to be sitting on the banks of the Seine River listening to musicians and the chatter of groups of friends enjoying a few beverages? Paris doesn’t disappoint, and visiting Paris was one of the adventures that Isla (age 12) was most looking forward to.

Our only negative to date, and it is certainly enough to dampen our enthusiasm for our waterway adventure, resulted from meeting another sailing boat – the first and only one we see. Unfortunately, they were on their way back to the English Channel, having encountered excessive weed on the canal route they chose south of Paris. We spend an extra day in Paris trying to get answers from VNF, the agency responsible for the waterway system in France. There is only the one route through France available to us due to our draft. They confirm that there are weeds but that it is open for now. For now? That sounded ominous. We decide to push on or we would have to head back to the English Channel and face the Bay of Biscay.

The Marne River System

We depart Paris nice and early and head west along the Marne River system. On Day 1 we get to take our ocean-going sailboat through two tunnels. They are narrow and low, but we get a rush out of the novelty.

That first night we arrive in the city of Meaux. There is an excellent *Halte Nautique* (a public stopover) with pontoons for a dozen boats. We have one neighbour, and the cost to moor is only 10 Euro with power and water. The town is pretty, and the kids stay on the boat while we sneak off to drink a couple of beers in the town square at a vibrant little bar.

As our journey continues down the Marne, the scenery transitions to hillsides covered in vines. We tie up to the bank in the middle of nowhere beside corn fields. The swimming is great as are the views. We stay up in the cockpit until well past dark, enjoying the peace and beauty of the French countryside.

We travel on through the Champagne region where we stumble upon a Champagne tasting room and leave with a few more bottles to add to the bilge! We are loving it! This is exactly what we wanted. This stretch of the Marne has been really beautiful, with lots of interesting stopping places. People are friendly. The Marne is clean and provides some excellent swimming breaks. The weather is warm and sunny. Aside from the regret that comes from eating my body weight in cheese and consuming the same in wine on a daily basis, we are feeling pretty good.

We start to encounter more weed when we continue on through the Canal Lateral a la Marne. The Canal narrows and the locks are sized down accordingly. It is possible to push through the weed, but the size of the floating rafts at the entrance to some of the locks is concerning. We start emptying our raw water strainer every morning.

Two days later we enter the outskirts of the city of Vitry-le-Francois, and we don’t feel the love for canal life anymore. The Canal is a narrow dirty ditch alongside aging industrial buildings. Weeds choke the edges. I skim past a shopping cart. We turn past the boat harbour we originally thought we might stop at. There are a few small commercial barges and some pleasure craft. Most look like they got this far only to die a slow rusting death. A barge pumps dirty brown bilge water into the Canal in front of us – no swimming here!

The entrance into the first lock of the Canal entre Champagne et Bourgogne is no better. It is under a train staging area, which makes a low flat-ceilinged tunnel. There is nowhere to wait and no room to maneuver. Finally, the gate opens and we squeeze in. It's a taller lock than any we've had in a while, making it feel even more tight. But we go up and the sunlight is shining on us again. The lock keeper is friendly and hands us our remote to operate the locks. He also informs us that the weed isn't bad and the water levels are OK. We leave the lock feeling like we just won a prize. Things are looking up!

Stay tuned for next month's *Currents* to read *French Canals Part 2*!

About The Author

Melanie and Morgan Finley

Swift - Moody 44

Morgan and Melanie along with their crew, Isla (12) and Pippa (9) are traveling the European canals. They bought the boat in the UK and had a slow start with Covid-19 lockdowns. They share pictures on Instagram @sailing.swift and they have a blog which they update from time to time: https://www.sailblogs.com/member/sailingswift/

Dealing with Pandemic Lockdowns - Spring of 2020

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/dealing-with-pandemic-lockdowns-spring-of-2020/

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic had a huge impact on the sailing and cruising community for almost everyone who was cruising in 2020. My intent is to write several articles that document my experiences, the choices I made and the reasoning behind those decisions. There is also a great deal to share about the ongoing impact the pandemic is having and what I am seeing as the winter of 2021 evolves. My experiences throughout 2020 were mostly very positive, despite many of the challenges that had to be confronted. Hopefully, anyone who is dreaming and hoping to go cruising in the near future will learn that it is not all gloom and doom. Cruising can still be attainable and very rewarding. However, it really does depend upon where you go – and more importantly as individuals, the restrictions and limits we place upon ourselves. Just as Henry Ford said, “whether you think you can, or think you can’t…you’re right.”

Things Changed Quickly

For everyone cruising on a yacht in the spring of 2020, it was a very challenging time. I had a family that

had booked to join ***Oh!*** in the Bahamas in mid-March. To meet their plans I needed to reposition ***Oh!*** from the British Virgin Islands (BVIs) to the Bahamas at the end of February. This was just as countries from around the world were starting to really react to the growing concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. Normally I would have stayed in the Caribbean until early April – sometimes fate, or just plain and simple good fortune is a sailor's best friend. On March 7, after the 6 day passage, I arrived in the Bahamas as many countries were starting to lock down their borders. By March 13, as I was preparing to file the required Bahamian documents and pay the fees for a charter permit, it all came to an end. My guests were packed and waiting for the cab that would have taken them to their flights when the decision to cancel was made. The pressure from work, family and the Canadian government was overwhelming – their much anticipated sailing adventure was not to be. Over the next 24 hours, four other potential groups that had plans to come spend time on ***Oh!*** during the next 2 months also terminated their trips. What a difference just 24 hours made. However, as events unfolded over the next two months, it became clear how very fortunate I was: of all the places in the Caribbean (or even the world) to be locked down while on a yacht, the Bahamas was clearly the best. Sometimes a person just gets very lucky.

The Exuma Cays in the Bahamas was a very fortunate place to be when the world closed its doors. Weather in the Bahamas during the spring has many moods and can change rapidly.

During the last two weeks of March, virtually every country around the Atlantic and Caribbean slowly but surely closed their borders. The only exception was the United States. A confusing new world of

restrictions and regulations evolved almost daily. Some blatantly ignored centuries of maritime laws regarding safe harbour and rights of innocent passage. Others just seemed to be mean spirited and simply bizarre over-reactions. Access to internet became paramount, as the only possible way to try and keep up with the flurry of rules and regulations that appeared daily. Noonsite.com had an excellent reference page that organized the latest news on countries around the world. It became a regular destination for my daily checks trying to keep up with it all. The pace of change and uncertainty surrounding almost every aspect of sailing that was needed to make good decisions was unsettling. It seemed the only thing you could count on was “change”. However, by late May, most of the islands and countries around the Caribbean and North Atlantic were starting to reveal their plans for emerging from their closures and lockdowns. The magic date in the Atlantic and Caribbean was June 1st, the official start of hurricane season. The reason is not only the potential for pretty nasty storms, but that it has a big impact upon most insurance policies, and mine was no exception. Staying put in the Bahamas would have been very nice but not possible, especially after seeing the destruction Hurricane Dorian unleashed on the Abaco Islands along the north side of the Bahamas.

Weighing Options in Uncertain Times

As I looked at the various options for hurricane season and each country’s plans, it became very clear that re-opening links for airline travel would be the last item on their priority list. That meant running cruising experiences on ***Oh!*** during the summer months was virtually impossible. It also ruled out any reasonable assurance of being welcomed over the next few months, or able to fly home from Bermuda, The Azores, Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, the Madeira Islands, or Canary Islands. So, my hoped for second Atlantic circuit was clearly not viable. There were also credible forecasts that this situation would extend for at least the next 3-6 months, or more. Then there were the early, long range forecasts that the 2020 hurricane season would be “more active than usual”. Keeping track of all the variables was like looking at a lottery ball machine and trying to predict which ball would drop and when. The most pressing concern as May rolled on became “where could I take ***Oh!*** for hurricane season?” I wanted a location which would:

1. Welcome me and allow ***Oh!*** to be stored;
2. Have a reasonable assurance that flights would be available for me to return to Canada; and,
3. Not place me in a difficult position geographically for whenever I could return to ***Oh!*** – most likely in the Fall of 2020.

The list of possible destinations shortened with each passing day. The four primary contenders were Grenada, the Azores, the USA and Canada. Eventually, the only viable options came down to Nova Scotia, Canada or the United States. Canada was finally ruled out due to being in an area with potentially severe fall weather. The eastern United States offered plenty of options, but figuring out all the different regulations and restrictions in the various individual states was confusing. Some parts of Florida would not allow even other US flagged vessels into their harbours. The farther you went north, the less restrictive things became until you reached Maryland, which has the northern part of the Chesapeake Bay. In Maryland and north there were increasing regulations. Many marinas and boatyards were closed and recreational cruising was banned. Even the canals through New York were closed, so many Canadians could not even return home via them. Through a long drawn-out process of elimination, the decision was finalized in mid-May. ***Oh!*** was headed for the Virginia end of the Chesapeake Bay to be hauled and stored for the summer and I would be returning by air to Calgary. I had identified three yards that could

haul ***Oh!***, although each had warned me that their ability to operate was subject to change at the stroke of a pen from the Governor. There were also no firm assurances that foreign vessels would still be allowed to enter the USA by the time I reached the Chesapeake.
It is often said that “the only things guaranteed in one’s life are taxes and death” – maybe we should add to that quote, “and unexpected change”.

Worldwide Cruising Restrictions

Over the past two months, I had watched in splendid isolation as the world of sailing and cruising was slowly strangled, with ever tightening restrictions and eventually total lock downs and border closures. One by one, all the normal options for extended ocean cruising disappeared. In many countries the restrictions placed on foreign yachts were so tight you could not even swim off the back of your boat, let alone go ashore. Unfortunately, the rules in many countries appear to have been made by bureaucrats with little or no boating or cruising knowledge and experience. Seriously, would going for a swim off the back of a boat at anchor in anyway affect the transmission of the COVID virus? The only thing ridiculous rules such as these did was create a great deal of uncertainty and unnecessary hardship for many cruising sailors. Marina groups and cruising associations were left scrambling to try and work with local governments to find a way to keep their businesses alive, and help ease the restrictions on transiting yachts that needed supplies or a safe harbour. The reality is that the chance of COVID-19 being transmitted from cruising yachts has to be extremely remote. Despite that, arriving cruisers were often treated as if they carried the plague.

Sun heats a fresh batch of yogurt made from whole UHT milk. Masks were mandatory if you were going ashore, but you could not buy any – multiple layers of a 400 thread count cotton pillow case and a little creativity made a pretty good mask.

Bahama's Response to COVID-19

Fortunately, I was in the semi-remote Exuma Islands of the Bahamas during the time these restrictions evolved. The Bahamian government placed some reasonable restrictions on movement between islands, but otherwise the rules were pretty accommodating. Given the large and sparsely populated area the Bahamas encompasses, it was a beautiful place to cruise. I was physically isolated and very safe from the virus spreading around the world. There were many days when the news that greeted me each morning from my iPad seemed like something from a science fiction movie. During this time, I rotated anchorages in several shallow bays off deserted islands. I enjoyed the stunningly beautiful world around me and the tranquility it offered. The Bahamian government was very reasonable and required transiting and visiting yachts currently cleared into the Bahamas to do three things:

1. Submit their movement history since arriving in the Bahamas;
2. Submit a plan for isolating while remaining in the Bahamas during their curfew and lockdown periods; and,
3. Submit a plan and time frame for transiting the Bahamas when you exit the country.

The challenge was the third point – when and where would I go? Fortunately, in my case the Bahamian government was supportive and reasonable in their expectations. They approved my cruising plans as long as it respected their rules and the spirit of what they were trying to achieve. Their objectives were to protect their citizens and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 between the islands of the Bahamas. Throughout late April and the first two weeks in May, I had been waiting for news regarding the lifting of restrictions on sailing yachts caught in ports all over the world. Unfortunately, with each passing day, the news was not good. Most islands and countries were remaining closed, or imposing more even stricter rules governing all visiting yachts. Some required lengthy quarantines ashore in hotels that would be expensive (and an invitation for your yacht to be broken into while left unattended). Others required lengthy quarantines and no guarantee of being cleared in after the quarantine ended. Some would only allow yachts in that had confirmed reservations at boat yards, or expensive marinas. Some would allow yachts to stop, provision and repair, but would not allow a yacht to clear in and you were expected to leave as soon as weather permitted. Finally, even if you could find a country that might allow you to clear in for a longer term, or to store or haul your boat, there was no assured way to get home to Canada, or for others to get to you.

Delightful Dallying and a Decision

From mid-March to early May, I spent my time exploring deserted islands with friends I had met in February while sailing in the BVIs. Miake and Axel had taken a year off to cross the Atlantic and cruise the Caribbean in their beautiful Pago 9.9 meter sloop. It was a light performance boat with a swing keel that was a delight to sail. They had been fortunate to arrive in the Bahamas just 24 hours before the borders were closed and we all looked forward to meeting again. We agreed to rendezvous in the Exumas and together we enjoyed many weeks of great cruising, friendship and shared meals. Our conversations around the breakfast and dinner tables would inevitably come around to – “where to next?” The equally inevitable answer of, “I don’t know” was the usual conclusion. However, we enjoyed some of the best cruising experiences I have ever had, with beautiful weather, plenty to explore and splendid isolation from the madness going on in the world beyond. Unfortunately, they had to depart in late April for Florida where they would ship their sloop back to Germany. After April 20th, I was again solo-sailing until wherever and whenever ***Oh!*** would ultimately get hauled out.

Company is coming for dinner, getting some exercise while having fun at the same time, a refreshing natural bubble bath at Rachel's Bubbles, enjoying friendship in the shade on a deserted beach with incredible scenery.

After Miake and Axel departed, I spent my time between two beautiful anchorages at Pipe Cay and Compass Cay while I waited for a weather window to head north to the USA. There was also a single day trip to the designated provisioning point of Staniel Cay, where I could pick up some fresh veggies and fruit for the pending passage. Even though I was alone and physically isolated, I was still connected via the internet. The experience was wonderful and I am very grateful for having the good fortunate to have been in the Bahamas during that time. Especially when compared to the situations many of my cruising colleagues and friends were having while trapped in other countries. In the end, the only viable option for ***Oh!*** for hurricane season was the USA, north of Cape Hatteras. The logical first step was to sail to the Chesapeake Bay where a final decision would be made on where to store ***Oh!***.

The stunning clear waters near Pipe Cay provided a great playground. I miss downhill skiing, so my Fitter First Ski Trainer is the closest I can get in the tropics. One of the Gulls that regularly visited – note the turquoise water color reflecting on the underside of the wings.

Departure

On my last evening in the Bahamas, I made time for one last extra-long swim and snorkel. I also enjoyed an extended beach yoga session and one final, long, sunset paddle board around the islets and rocks before packing everything away. The next morning on May 18 at 0800h, ***Oh!***'s anchor was raised from the soft white sand bottom off Pipe Cay. It was a stunning bay that I had called home for most of the past two weeks. As ***Oh!*** headed out of the bay, I bid farewell to the pair of gulls that had been my sole companions during most of that time. For whatever reason, these two curious birds would come by twice a day to soar effortlessly around the back of ***Oh!***. They were so close I could watch their eyes adjust angle to keep focused on me as they floated back and forth in the breeze. Maybe the anchorage I was enjoying was so rarely used by other yachts that ***Oh!*** was simply the new oddity they had to keep checking out. They are beautiful birds and the white underside of their wings always reflects the colour of the sea below. On a beautiful sunny day, the underside of their wings are light aqua green colours. Anyway, they arrived for one last flyby as ***Oh!*** pointed her bow out of the bay. We squawked a mutual "goodbye" and went our separate ways.

One last beautiful sunset paddle before departure. Baking cookies for the passage to the Chesapeake Bay. A wonderful start in flat waters sailing at 7 – 8 kts as ***Oh!*** heads east to clear the southern end of Eleuthera Island.

The first leg of the passage was due east around the southern end of Eleuthera Island, then north to the Abacos and beyond. With light southerly winds ***Oh!*** was in her element. Under full sails and clear skies, she averaged 7.8 kts in just 10-12 kt winds off the beam. The 34 NM crossing of Exuma Sound was an amazing sail. By 1300h, ***Oh!*** was turned north and progress slowed to 4-6 kts in the light following winds. However, it was velvet smooth sailing in flat seas with no swell. A wonderful opportunity to catch multiple naps to prepare for the night watches, and bake cookies between naps; after all, there can never be too many cookies onboard.

As the sun set, the sky filled with stars. The smooth seas and warm light winds made for a beautiful evening of stargazing while reclining on the trampoline. During the night, I follow a simple watch routine of 25-40 minute naps with 5 minute boat and situation checks. During solo passages, I live in the galley where there are a multi-function display and separate AIS, as well as a comfortable place to sleep. It makes it very easy to keep a lookout and hear any unusual noises that seem to wake me from even the soundest sleep. My companions are my iPhone timer that ensures that regular watches are performed, as well as the various alarms that are set to notify me of approaching ships, or changes in weather, or my course.

At the 0300h watch on May 19, a glow on the horizon to the west of a long line of distant lightning bursts was noted. There was a weather front that I needed to keep an eye on. By 0330h, the subsequent check noted the bursts had grown in intensity and frequency. Checking the radar revealed a long line of squalls that had formed to the west, just 6 miles away. After 15 minutes of tracking a few menacing yellow blobs on the radar, it became clear that my beautiful starlit skies, warm breeze and smooth seas were coming to an end. Weather fronts can move very fast, so despite only 8-10 kt winds, I decided to put a first reef in the mainsail and also reduced the genoa. There was a slight chance the front would pass north of me. By 0415h, as the reefing was completed, the first light rain drops arrived and 15-20 minutes later, a wall of wind hit that packed gusts to 43 kts. It all happened so fast that any attempt to further shorten the mainsail would have been very risky, especially solo. Instead, the genoa was furled and I turned into the wind. With both engines running, it then became a simple exercise of holding the nose at 25-30 degrees to the apparent wind and riding it out. That way, the lateral forces on the rig were minimal and the mainsail was not heavily flogging. Fortunately, there was no swell and I had open sea for 20 miles in all directions so it was a surprisingly effective solution.

My passage took me close to the eastern edge of the Abacos, where I could get one last internet access before heading offshore for 5 days. Yellow blobs of massive squalls up to 12 NM long formed a trap from which there was no escape. Then clearing skies ahead after the massive squalls pass. Home sweet home while at sea is the well-equipped salon and galley area.

After about 20-30 minutes, a break between two massive squall cells appeared, and for the next 20-25 minutes I kept ***Oh!*** positioned in the calmer area between them until the big squalls blew past. By 0600h, the front was in the rear view mirror, ***Oh!*** had received a power wash and life was back to sailing in light airs on calm seas. I could now retrieve my iPad and iPhone from the microwave oven and resume my naps.

Plans for 2021

My thoughts for the next season were already starting to firm up. Rather than risk the challenges of dealing with multiple independent island states and the complex and inconsistent rules that evolved in the eastern Caribbean, I decided to limit my cruising for 2021 to the Bahamas. That way there is only one governing body for the hundreds of beautiful islands that would be waiting for me to explore. There are also deep ocean sounds where guests can get multi-day open ocean sailing experiences and a chance to explore the cruising lifestyle. The Bahamas are also serviced by direct flights from Canada, which makes getting to ***Oh!*** much simpler for my guests.

However, first…the world needed to define its “new normal”. As I write this seven months later, whatever “new normal” is still remains a work in progress. At least the Bahamas seem to have a very workable solution.

About The Author

Rod Morris

Oh! - 2006 Robertson and Caine Leopard 40’ Catamaran

Rod Morris sails on Oh!, a 40’ Leopard Catamaran, throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic. He offers people the opportunity to discover the joys and realities of cruising by sailboat, the magic of ocean passage making and the chance to sample your dreams. He can be reached through his website at www.cloudstocoral.com

Making Informed Choices

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/making-informed-choices/

In the planning process for tossing the lines to the dock and heading out for our initial voyage away from Canada, we attended many courses and presentations put on by Bluewater Cruising Association. I don't think there was a single one that did not add knowledge and give cause for thought about how we typically do and have done things aboard the sailboats we have owned. The debates about what is the correct way of doing many things are always interesting, and often the opinions of people who have tens of thousands of miles of offshore sailing experience and many years of knowledge can be quite different from each other. In my (much less experienced) opinion, no one is necessarily completely right nor wrong. The discussion and thoughts provoked by each presentation or course we participate in are in themselves valuable tools. Whether you agree or not with their method of doing things, you cannot help but gain as you will either agree wholeheartedly, or have to think about the reasons you do not. Even if your decision is not the correct one, you will have added to your knowledge base of the possibilities of how to do things.

Regular Trips Forward

One of the things we have always done, and with which I am very comfortable, is moving about on the foredeck during much less than ideal conditions. The lines on our boats have never been led back to the cockpit, with the exception of furling lines and sheet lines for the foresail. I have never had the discussion with people who do have their lines aft as to how often they go forward to do inspections of rigging, etc. In our years of sailing, we have had a number of situations where being comfortable with movement on the deck in all types of conditions has allowed some big repairs to be done while underway. One such event happened to us while sailing down the coast of the Baja in Mexico. We had torn our foresail; the sail was old so the damage was neither terribly surprising nor tragic – more of an inconvenience. The three of us aboard went forward to drop the sail from the furling track and assess the damage. Once the sail had been successfully lowered, I was walking back to the cockpit. I found a large washer on the deck off to the side of the mast. I had a feeling of dread as I looked up and wondered just what above me had such a large washer, and more importantly how we were going to determine that and then replace it. I then found a nut the same size and continued to check everything near the mast. I realized that the eye bolt that drops down through the boom to attach it to the mast was where the washer and nut had come from. The bolt had wiggled its way upward and there was less than ½” of the 4” long bolt remaining where it belonged. The boom was now in danger of becoming detached. There was no positive outcome possible should that happen. The boom was, however, at an angle that meant the bolt could not merely be dropped into place. After assessing the situation and discussing our options, we all agreed that it was neither the time nor place to repair this. We opted to immobilize the boom by lashing it with tie-downs to the mast. The lashing held and once we were able to anchor hours later, we set about repositioning the boom so that the bolt could be put back in its proper place and secured with the washer and nut.

I kept recalling a presentation by BCA at the Nanaimo Yacht Club a few years back: Rob Dodge was the presenter. He was most adamant that he did not like lines being led to the cockpit. To paraphrase, his belief is that lines led aft remove the need to go forward on the deck, thus perhaps reducing the frequency of inspections and leading to a complacency regarding these inspections. I agreed with his thinking then and my opinion has not changed since. We have had many circumstances over the years where going forward during far less than ideal conditions was made less formidable by the familiarity created by all the trips made there for more routine sailing.

Learning at Anchor

In spring of 2018, we made arrangements to head to Canoe Cove to have our rigging redone. We were intending to leave for Mexico in the fall, so it seemed logical to give up our marina berth to save the duplication of moorage costs, as we knew we would be in Canoe Cove for the best part of the month of June. As would be the norm, we did not leave for Mexico until later than originally planned, so the months of July through September were spent in various anchorages. The month of August in particular was a rough one. We were anchored in English Bay. Most of September we were anchored in Mark Bay in Nanaimo. There were many nasty days of weather and for most of August, we were immersed in smoke. North Vancouver was only an illusion – it was not visible many of the days.

Other than the cost savings, there were several positive results of all of this anchoring. There were many days when we never left the boat; there were also days where the boat was tossing and sleep was broken at best. Although we were not actually standing watches, we were definitely in the ready mode for what may come next. And come it did: the broken anchor snubber line; and the boat who dragged anchor, hitting us and rolling down our side (that one of no damage, as I was restless so sitting up on deck, noticed the boat coming, and had time to blast the air horn to alert the other boat owner and then drop a fender between us). I believe living aboard for a long period gives you a familiarity that is extremely helpful when things start to go wrong. Anchoring for extended periods is the next step to that familiarity, including less than perfect conditions.

Doing it Yourself

The boat we own now is an older boat. It required a lot of things be upgraded or redone altogether. We have certainly hired professionals to do those parts we felt were beyond our skills, but have also done much of the work ourselves. We rebuilt the old manual windlass, and did a lot of the disassembly of the mast and boom prior to the refit. We sanded and stripped the mast and boom of the failed paint. We installed the new electronics, including a new hydraulic pump for the auto helm. This alone took many tries before we got all of the air purged from the lines, including the air from the new pump. We removed the hydraulic cylinder, sent off for a rebuild and then reinstalled it. We even traded work we could do on other peoples' boats for work they could do on ours. Although this is certainly not the most time efficient way of getting things done, it does make you more aware of the components of your boat.

Teamwork

Our boat, as I said, is an older boat; it also has a unique layout. Many of the areas of the boat are only accessible to a smaller person. This meant for us that the person more knowledgeable and with more physical strength did not fit into the places where electronic or mechanical items had to be either added or maintained! Thus, team work was required. Often, I was in these tight quarters using my hands and eyes to install items that David definitely had more understanding of. The functionality of these items that seemed to follow our work, speaks to good teamwork in accomplishing things as a crew.

Whether it be working on all parts of your boat, making yourself comfortable with being on the fore deck, or anchoring so you know how you respond to rough conditions, being as comfortable with your boat as you can is, I think, crucial to a safer and more enjoyable journey wherever you cruise. The courses we take and the fellow cruisers we look to for knowledge and encouragement are very valuable as a foundation for the experience. As we enjoy our second Mexican winter, this time on the hard, working on the boat readying it for a new on-water adventure, I feel a gratitude for the people who have taught us along the way. I will let you know how the latest upgrades turn out!

About The Author

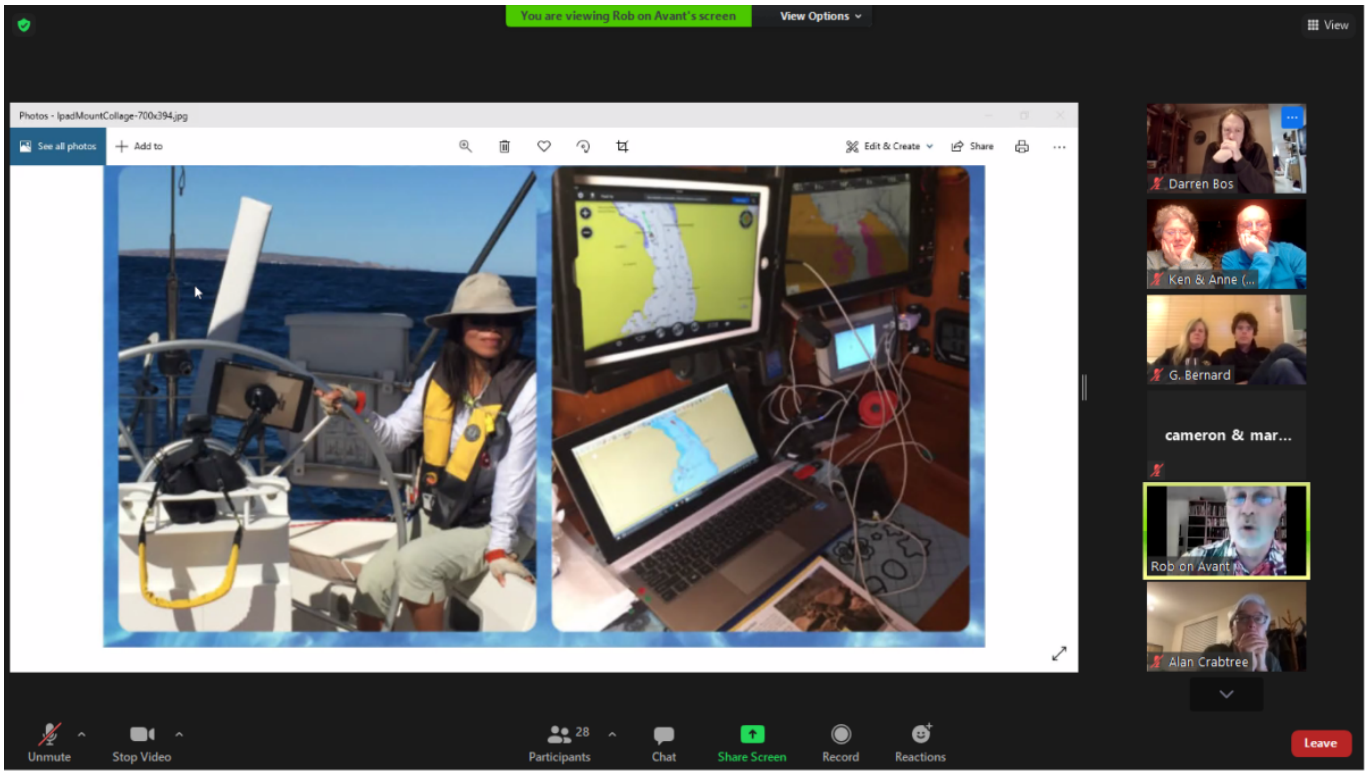
Diane Cherry

Ricky T - Constellation

I started sailing in 1980 with my husband David and sons Ben and David (then 3 and 1). In 2005 we bought a Catalina 30 in Nanaimo, sailed it to Vancouver and had it trucked to Kootenay Lake. We have planned for many years to do the offshore experience and in 2011 finally found the boat we wanted. In 2014 we closed our business in Nelson, relocated to Nanaimo and started the preparations to leave. In October 2018, we left Victoria and started our journey down the coast of the US and Mexico. The boat is now in the Sea of Cortez. The crew is back for Summer in Canada but will return to Mexico in the Fall 2019 to continue the adventure.

Vancouver Fleet Report - March 2021

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-fleet-report-march-2021/



The Vancouver Fleet of 2021 held the third meeting of the year via Zoom on March 30. The usual Show and Tell session featured a few items:

- Hypervent
- Shark drogue
- Coligo line terminators
- Ocean Signal MOB – AIS beacons

The Board of Directors has approved the distribution of leaver packages, therefore, the Leavers' Package Fleet Committee is now working hard at getting the packages ready.

The program for the evening covered the topic of Electronic Navigation. The conversation got started with the sharing of the results of the Electronic Navigation survey carried out by the Fleet group.

Once there was an idea of the electronic navigation systems that were being used, the crews from five boats, recently returned from offshore, shared their respective set-ups and discussed what worked well for each one of them and their cruising style. The presenters were:

- Gary Peacock – ***Sea Rover II***
- Glen Wilson – ***Danica***
- Rob Murray – ***Avant***
- Max Shaw – ***Fluenta***
- Paul Guenette – ***Aramis***

Vancouver Fleet Weather Group

The Fleet's weather program continues on April 17 with presentations from members on weather topics.

The next regular Fleet meeting will be **April 27 starting at 1900 hours**. The topic for the evening is yet to be determined.

About The Author

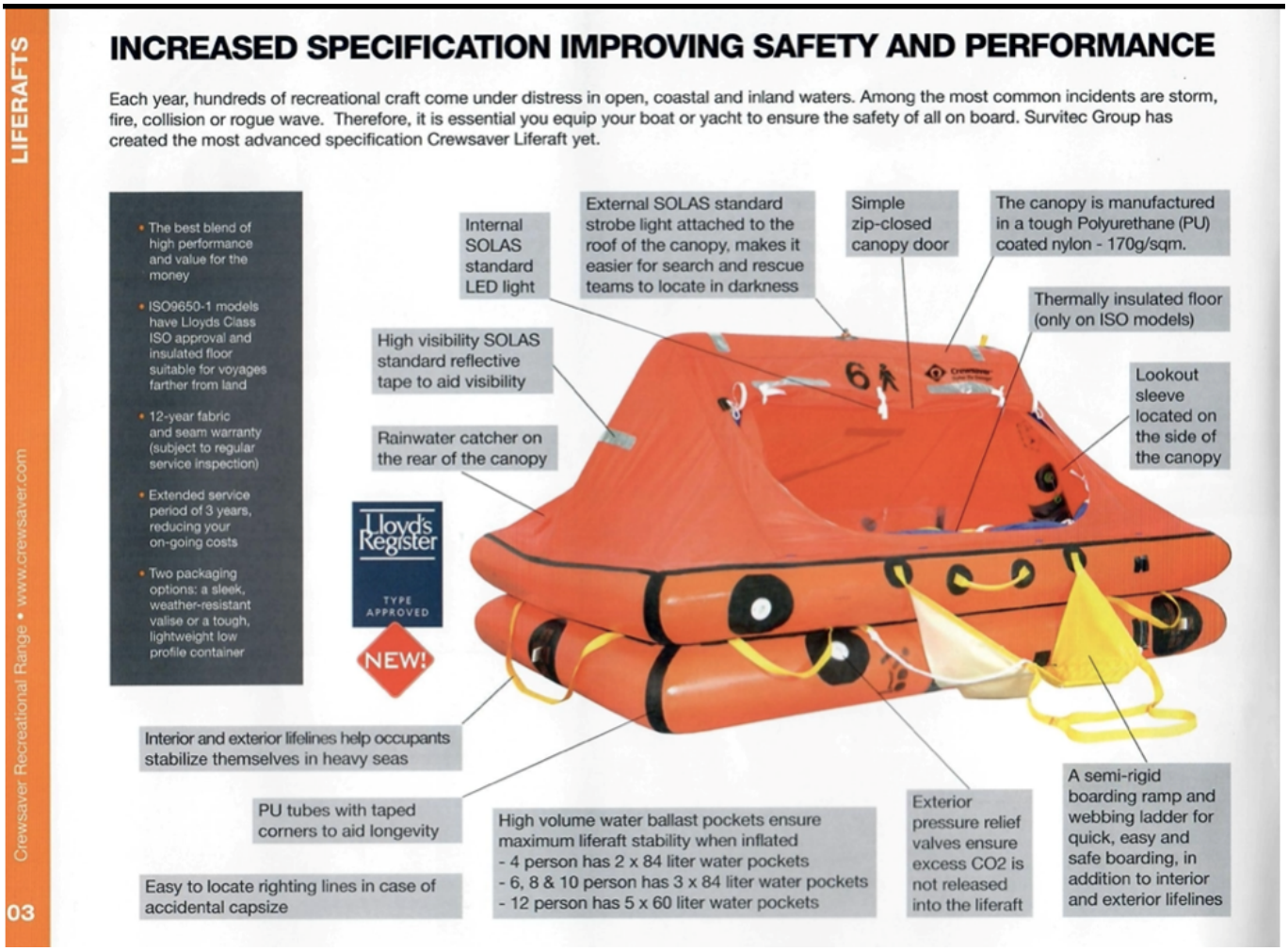
Cameron and Marianne McLean, Vancouver Fleet Coordinators

Mayknot - Seabird 37

Cam and Marianne McLean have been BCA members since 1987, cruised offshore, and have served as the Vancouver Fleet Coordinators for many years.

Vancouver Island Fleet Report: March 2021

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-island-fleet-report-march-2021/



On March 11, the Zoom meeting of the Vancouver Island Fleet group focussed on safety devices with a presentation and discussion lead by Dan Bieller from Pacific Coast Liferaft. Prior to this James Graham presented the Heylo heat retention cooking bag as a Show & Tell item. Dan then discussed the appropriate sizing and style of a raft as well as other devices including Man Overboard locators. He also volunteered to make an expired raft available for an in-water demonstration which, due to the current protocols, won't occur until the fall. Al highlighted other devices available for crew safety.

We were then finally able to complete our look at Sail Trim for Offshore (part 2) and closed the night with a list of Checklists to help organize several processes involved in preparation and execution for offshore sailing.

Our last V.I. Fleet meeting of the 2020-21 year will be on April 14. The meeting will be lead by Max Shaw with a presentation about his experiences with Predict Wind weather modelling on ***Fluenta*** offshore in the Pacific. Fleet members please note that the 2021 V.I. Fleet Rendezvous has been cancelled.

About The Author

Al Kitchen - VI Fleet Coordinator

Wyndspree - Huntingford 53 Ketch

Al Kitchen has been a BCA member since 2005. Al and his wife Gaye lived aboard Wyndspree (53? ketch) from 1996 until 2007 and cruised the BC coast throughout this time. Between 2006 and the present, Al crewed on different boats with fellow Bluewater members, including voyages from Victoria, BC to San Francisco; Gladstone, Australia to Fiji; New Zealand to Victoria, B.C.; and San Jose del Cabo to Hilo, HI. Al is now co-coordinating the V.I. Fleet group with Daragh Nagle.

Tides and Currents

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/tides-and-currents/

Spend two mornings online with instructor-extraordinaire, Kevin Monahan, learning just how much you *don't* know about tides and currents! Just when you thought you might have it all figured out, along comes Kevin to show you what it's *really* all about. As it turns out, there's a lot more to it than just reading a tide table.

- The most reliable sources of information, and why they're the best
- What forces raise the tides
- Predict tides and currents even when none are given
- How and why tidal currents form and how they affect the boater
- How wind, waves, and currents interact
- Local tide and current effects: Juan de Fuca, Georgia Strait, Johnstone Strait, Queen Charlotte Strait, Central and North Coasts

Course Format

Each two hour presentation will be followed by ½ hour of questions. There is no need to subscribe to Zoom, just register for Tides and Currents and we'll send a link to you a couple of days before the

course.

About the Instructor

Kevin Monahan is a retired Canadian Coast Guard officer with more than 20 years navigating the British Columbia coast as a patrol vessel captain. He has also worked on fishing boats, ferries, and coastal transports. Retiring from public service in 2012, Kevin now splits his time between publishing (*Ports and Passes*, *The Radar Book*, etc.) and teaching nautical subjects to commercial and recreational mariners. In 2013 he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Working with Weather

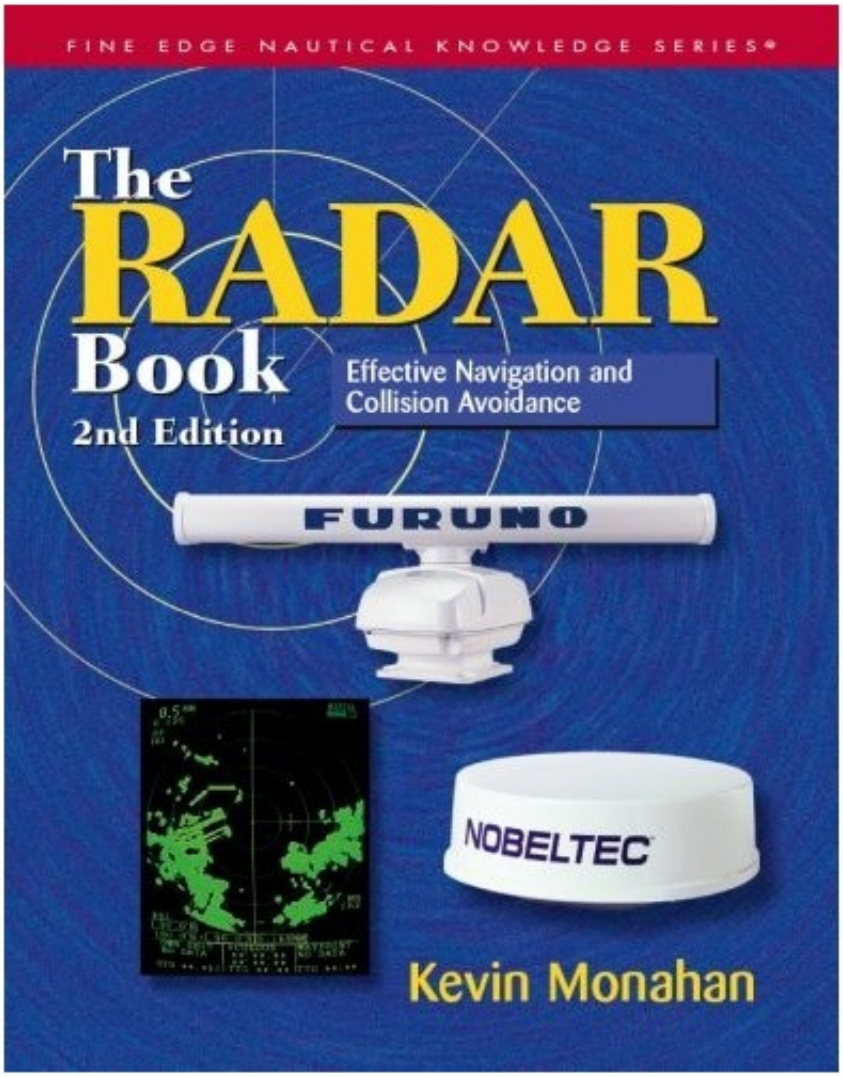
https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/working-with-weather/

Norman Miller is an experienced meteorologist. Norman will share his knowledge in a 90 minute presentation, followed by an open question and answer forum to ensure you have clarity and understanding. His talk will cover general atmospheric circulation systems, season variability and weather systems, as well as weather forecasting and OpenCPN and Grib files. Whatever your level of knowledge is, this course will give you the opportunity to better understand, deepen or refresh as well as engage in valuable discussions about a subject that impacts all sailors!

About the Presenter: Norm Miller has a BSc in Engineering Science and an MSc and PhD in Meteorology. He is a professor in the Geography Department at the University of California – Berkeley. He specializes in hydro meteorology and has written over 100 peer reviewed journal papers, book chapters and is a co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, along as a co-author of the International Panel for Climate Change Assessment Reports.

Basic Marine Radar with Kevin Monahan

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/basic-marine-radar-with-kevin-monahan/



Due to immediate sell-out of this course in March 2021, VI Mid-Island is pleased to offer a second opportunity to learn to use radar from the guy that *literally* wrote the book: Kevin Monahan.

After completion of this seminar, participants will be able to set up their radar for maximum results and interpret the display under a variety of conditions. Participants will learn simple techniques to:

- identify landmasses, other vessels, and transient targets
- use radar effectively for collision avoidance

- understand the new generation of AIS and integrated radar systems which combine chart and radar technology
- manage and understand the issues inherent in modern integrated navigation systems; and
- recognize and compensate for rain and sea clutter, interference, and side-lobe echoes

About the Instructor

Kevin Monahan is an experienced captain, retired Canadian Coast Guard officer, and author of “The Radar Book: Effective Navigation and Collision Avoidance.”

Course Materials

Registration includes The Radar Book: Effective Navigation and Collision Avoidance.

Calgary Virtual Club Night - Alice Arm or Bust!

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/calgary-virtual-club-night-alice-arm-or-bust/

Join the Kortbeeks, John & Vici, Frank & Judy aboard *Bear North*, a Hans Christian 48T as they throw Cape Caution to the wind and venture to Canada's most northerly Pacific waters. A 2000 nautical mile odyssey to Alice Arm, Haida Gwaii and back. Whales, eagles, bears and more.

Follow in the path of Captain Vancouver and explore thousands of years of Indigenous history and century old Ghost Towns. Learn how to bail and fix leaks simultaneously. Ride out a gale at anchor. Discover the best place to dine on Schnitzel in BC. Learn Judy and Vici's secret fishing techniques. It is all here in our own amazing backyard.

Great sites, nature, culture and history. Our North has it all.

Please note that the start of the meeting is 1900 Mountain Time and adjust accordingly based on your geographic location.

This will be a Virtual Club Night, on the Zoom platform. An invitation with links to the Zoom meeting and login details will be sent to all BCA members. Non-members are also welcome to attend. If you would like to attend or did not receive an email invitation please send an email to calspeakers@bluewatercruising.org.

Vancouver Virtual Club Night - 8000 Nautical Miles “Due to Covid-19”

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-virtual-club-night-8000-nautical-miles-due-to-covid-19/

In early 2020, the voyage from Puerto Vallarta to the Marquesas was to have marked a new beginning for the vessel ***Full & By*** and her crew, Dick Towson and Anne Woodson. After ten years of cruising in Mexico, they were finally saying goodbye to the North American shore and embarking on their grand Pacific Ocean adventure.

Things did not work out as planned. Dick, along with crew members Roger Bragg and Ken Robertson, set sail for French Polynesia. Anne was to join them, to continue their adventure of a lifetime. While enroute to the Marquesas, the world changed, as Covid took hold and borders closed. Instead of being a leisurely cruise in the South Pacific, this adventure of a lifetime became an 8000nm voyage of necessity, to return home to Canada.

Dick Towson was a CYA sailing instructor and Anne Woodson has her CYA offshore certification. They joined BCA in 1996 as dreamers. Roger Bragg is an experienced ocean sailor, as is Ken Robertson, who has solo sailed his own boat to New Zealand and back.

All BCA members should have received an email containing the Zoom link for this club night. If you are not a member and would like to attend please email Heather Marshall for details.

VI Virtual Club Night - Single Handing Mexico to Victoria

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vi-virtual-club-night-single-handing-mexico-to-victoria/

After a couple of seasons enjoying the Sea of Cortez, it was time to come home. But how? Bashing up the coast or freighting were options, but Hawaii beckoned, just in time to get out of Dodge as COVID lockdowns threatened.

Follow Brian Short as he single-hands his way over 5200 miles to Victoria on ***Carpe Ventus***, a Beneteau Oceanis 445. The choice to single hand was not made lightly and he will expound on his reasons for doing so. Peace and tranquility or nail-biting excursions? Both happened. This presentation picks up from where Brian left us in May 2018.

?Brian is a retired electrical engineer and former VI Mid-Island Rep on the VI Watch. He and his wife Glenda made many Salish Sea trips, circumnavigated VI, and managed a trip to Alaska in preparation for the trip to Mexico. When not on the boat, he can be found with his family (COVID notwithstanding), singing in a choir, exercising or trying to reverse the present climate crisis.

This will be a Virtual Club Night, on the Zoom platform. An invitation with links to the Zoom meeting and login details will be sent to all BCA members. Non-members are also welcome to attend. If you would like to attend or did not receive an email invitation please request one by sending an email to nanaimo@bluewatercruising.org.

Currents Bluewater Cruising

The Bluewater Cruising Association

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