



*Photo Contest Winner*

*Sarah Beukema*

*Camdeboo - Lavranos 50*

*This was taken on a beautiful, still evening while we were anchored in the Aitutaki Harbour, Cook Islands, July 2024.*

*We were lucky to be there as they had just dredged the 1nm passage through the reef and were in process of dredging the basin, giving us the only spot deep enough for our 7ft draft. We were also stern-tied to the temporary berm, and the fenders were in preparation for an approaching storm which would push us onto the neighbouring boat.*

*We had fun exploring the beautiful island.*



# Currents

February 2026

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## Cruiser's Guide to Transiting the Panama Canal in Your Own Boat

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/cruisers-guide-to-transiting-the-panama-canal-in-your-own-boat/>



Transiting the Panama Canal in a private yacht or pleasure craft is a bucket-list adventure that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Vessels under 125 feet (38m) LOA use the original Panama Canal locks built in 1914 (Gatun, Pedro Miguel, and Miraflores) as “handline” vessels.

Note on Duration and Direction: Transits are usually (but not always) one day from Pacific to Atlantic (Caribbean) and two days from Atlantic (Caribbean) to Pacific, with an overnight in Gatun Lake. Schedules can change mid-transit due to commercial traffic priorities – you may start a planned one day transit and end up overnighing in Gatun Lake. Plan provisions and crew flexibly for up to two days.

As of early 2026, operations are stable with normal scheduling for small craft following post-drought recovery.

## Preparation and Requirements

**Vessel Specs:** Your boat must sustain at least 5 knots under power (no sailing in the canal). Ensure your vessel is ready; mechanical failure can lead to huge fines and expensive tows. You will be under power for typically 12+ hours non-stop motoring.

**Essential Equipment:**

- Four long, strong mooring lines: At least 125 feet (38m) long, 7/8-inch (22mm) minimum diameter. Rented lines are usually rough polypropylene three-strand – gloves for line handling are highly recommended as they are hard on the hands (can cause rope burns during quick adjustments in turbulence). Ensure your deck cleats are large enough to secure these lines, and in good condition. If the deck cleats won't accept the lines, find other strong points to use (winches, etc.). Loads can be extremely high.
- Robust fenders: rent large professional ones – see below.
- VHF radio (mandatory).
- Crew: Skipper + minimum 4 line handlers (minimum total 6 people on board, including the advisor). Hire professionals if needed or recruit local cruisers, or friends/family.
- Arrival and Clearance: Stage on the Atlantic side at Shelter Bay Marina or The Flats anchorage, or on Pacific side at La Playita/Balboa.

One of the most common (and potentially costly) risks during a canal transit comes from the monkey's fists, which are weighted, knotted balls at the end of the light "heaving" or messenger lines thrown by shore-based line handlers on the lock walls to pass your heavy mooring lines ashore. These monkey's fists are heavy and can be thrown with force (sometimes inaccurately, as they're targeting a moving boat). They have shattered solar panels, hatches, windows, and even injured crew members in past transits. The Panama Canal Authority disclaims all liability for damage from them, so protection is 100% your responsibility.

## Solar Panels Are Vulnerable

Many yachts have solar arrays on arches, bimini tops, or deck-mounted frames, often directly in the flight path of thrown lines (especially at the stern or sides). A direct hit can crack cells, break frames, or cause inconvenient and expensive repairs/replacements. Even if the advisor asks handlers to throw lines forward (to safer deck areas), throws can miss due to wind, boat motion, or poor aim. Although our advisor asked lines to be thrown forward of the mast, and our crew vigorously signalled where the line should be thrown, we did get one direct hit on our aft mounted solar panels. Fortunately we had padded them and there was no damage.

**Recommended Protection Methods:**

Cover vulnerable panels (and anything else on deck that is fragile) before starting your transit. Since your engine will be running all day, you likely won't need the solar charging anyways. Best options (thick, cushioned, and secure):

- Cockpit or seat cushions (strapped or tied down—easy, effective, and already on board).
- Spare mattresses, comforters, or thick foam padding.
- Sheets of plywood (rigid and excellent protection; secure with lines or straps).
- Thick cardboard (budget-friendly alternative, layered for thickness – check local skips for recently discarded packaging material, ask cruisers coming the other way).

How to do it:

- Cover the entire panel surface.
- Secure firmly so covers don't fly off in wind or turbulence (there's often 15-20+ knots of wind in the canal). String or duct tape can usually work.
- If panels are on side extensions or bimini, consider temporarily removing and stowing them, if possible.
- Signal/ask the advisor to direct monkey's fist throws forward to open deck areas free of fragile items.
- Clear decks of loose gear to give handlers better targets and make it easier for your line handlers to chase the monkey's fists.

See the featured photo showing the crew distributed for line handling, solar panels covered, with boat and crew all ready to enter the canal.

## **The Transit Process**

1. Register and Inspect: Use an agent (strongly recommended – see below) or the new online system to submit details via the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) portal. An inspection (often virtual) determines tonnage and tolls.
2. Pay Fees: Tolls are based on length/tonnage. For yachts under 65ft: typically \$2,000 – \$4,000 USD (plus a \$500 vessel scheduling fee as of January 2025). Include a buffer deposit (~\$1,000, refunded if no delays). Agent fees: \$400 – \$750.
3. Scheduling: Small yachts cannot book fixed slots very far ahead – wait times range from days to weeks (shorter in off-peak December – January; minimal delays reported in early 2026).
4. Transit Day: An ACP advisor boards (often predawn on the Pacific coast) to direct operations (a new advisor each day for multi-day transits).
5. Common configurations: Most often rafted/nested (2-3 yachts tied together in the lock center) – the preferred method as it keeps boats away from walls. Side-tying (alongside a tug or directly to the wall) is possible but not preferred, as it is much easier to sustain damage against the rough concrete canal walls from turbulence and surging. When registering for transit you can specify you will not accept a side-tie, this ensures a center lock transit either alone or rafted.
6. Locking with large ships: When going “up” (ascending locks, e.g., Gatun from Atlantic side), yachts follow behind a large ship into the chamber (more turbulence from rising water, and prop wash from the giant ship ahead of you). When going “down” (descending locks, e.g., Miraflores to Pacific), yachts enter ahead of the large ship (turbulence is less but still noticeable, no prop wash).
7. Locks raise/lower the boat ~85 feet total amid turbulent water – secure everything. Anticipate your vessel will not respond as quickly as it normally does when you engage the engine, the

turbulent water will rob the propeller of its efficiency and make the rudder less effective. Use more throttle than usual to gain effective control.

8. Cruise calm Gatun Lake (possible overnight stay, tied to a giant buoy). Ensure your crew has adequate sun protection (hats, clothing and sunscreen).
9. Total cost for a typical 40-50ft yacht: \$3,000 – \$5,000 (tolls + agent + rentals + line handlers).



Following a cruise ship up the locks before passing it.

## Why Use an Agent?

Agents are especially worth it if problems arise. With years of experience and established relationships with canal authorities, they can expedite scheduling, resolve issues quickly (e.g., delays, paperwork errors, or last-minute changes), and often secure earlier slots during busy periods. They also handle fender/line rentals, line handlers, and logistics seamlessly. They are pros, and it shows.

While some experienced cruisers transit without one (possible via direct ACP coordination), an agent will reduce stress and risk – particularly for first-timers. We used Erick Galvez (Centenario & Co.) and his services were perfect. Unofficial “agents” (e.g., taxi drivers) lack the leverage and relationships to solve real problems and are little more than gofers.

## Crew Options: Flying In Line Handlers

Many skippers fly in friends or family as extra line handlers to meet the 4-handler requirement.

Pros:

- Shared adventure and makes the transit memorable and fun.
- Reliable, motivated crew you trust.
- Often cheaper than hiring professionals (\$100 – \$150 each + tips).
- Extra help for prep and post-transit cruising.

Cons:

- Uncertain transit dates can complicate flights (build 3 – 7 day buffers on both sides; delays are possible).
- Logistics: Tocumen Airport (PTY) to marinas is a 1 – 2 hour taxi (\$50–\$120).
- Can be extra work ‘babysitting’ inexperienced boathands in uncomfortable tropical weather.
- Potential visa or inexperience issues. Brief crew well, and closely supervise.

Alternatives: Hire experienced locals or recruit volunteers at marinas, or use a mix.

## Provisions: Bottled Water and Feeding Requirements

You must provide for the advisor’s (and crew’s) comfort, including plenty of sealed bottled water (advisors require unbroken seals; stock 2+ cases to be safe) and hot meals. Sorry, your perfectly good watermaker water doesn’t make the grade. Plan for the entire crew (6+ people) and prepare flexibly for 1 – 2 days.

- **Bottled Water:** Required. Provide cold, sealed individual bottles. Soft drinks (e.g., Coke) are appreciated.
- **Meals:** Hot, substantial meals expected (typically with meat; pre-cook if possible). Typical: lunch/dinner Day 1, breakfast/lunch Day 2. Snacks, coffee/tea/cold drinks throughout. Choose food that is flexible on serving time in case you are transiting a lock and need to keep it warm for serving later. Lasagnas, casseroles and the like are great for this. Think simple, robust meals, not fancy.
- **Warning:** If the advisor is dissatisfied, they can order delivery (e.g., lunchbox + fast boat) at your expense. Costs can exceed \$500 – \$700, so over-provide to avoid this.
- **Tips:** Time meals around lock procedures (busy ~2 hours per lock set). Shade (at least for the advisor) and a working toilet are required, and ice is appreciated. Hired line handlers often eat like lumberjacks so be prepared.

## Critical Setup: Fenders and Lines

Fender Placement: The lock walls are rough concrete and turbulence can cause surging and pivoting. Modern agents provide large professional ball fenders (clean and more effective). Eschew tires; the protection is not as good, and they can mark your hull.

- Rent oversized fenders from agents (~\$100 – \$300 including lines, returnable; usually 8 provided). These are primarily for protection against the rough canal walls if needed.
- Place large rented fenders well forward and aft to protect bow/stern if the boat pivots or loses control, for example if a line is poorly secured or handled. If this happens, your boat will pivot quickly and the bow or stern can strike the canal wall. The load can be extreme, particularly if you are rafted as the outside boat.
- Ensure fenders are tied to a strong point (toe rails, cleats and stanchions preferred over lifelines) and hung to protect the widest point of the hull. This is usually much higher than what you would do at a dock.
- Use your own fenders in the middle for beam coverage. Use them all. Fenders left in the lockers don't help.
- For rafting: Use your own standard fenders and lines – the oversized rented ones can make aligning freeboards and secure tying more difficult. Use your own (the heaviest ones) between boats for better contact and easier adjustment. Adjust lines and secure bar-tight, so the raft will be secure in the turbulence.

## **Line Management (Especially Aft-Cockpit Boats)**

Avoid crowding the cockpit behind the wheel with skipper, advisor, and both aft line handlers amid coiling lines. Make sure you all have room to do what you need to do. The advisor typically wants to be right behind the driver, offset to one side or the other. Add two line handlers and 100' of 7/8" line snaking around your feet into to the space designed for one person and it's a nightmare.

- Lead aft mooring lines from aft chocks forward along side decks to midships/cockpit winches/cleats.
- Station aft line handlers at sheet winches for quick, safe adjustments.
- Flake excess line forward to prevent tripping hazards.
- Benefits: Spreads crew, reduces chaos (“no watusi in a tiny dance floor”), easier control in surges, easier for the skipper to see what they're doing.
- Brief crew thoroughly; follow advisor's directions precisely.



We passed the cruise ship, and they followed us down the locks – the standard regimen in the canal.

## Share the Experience: Live Webcams

Friends and family back home can watch your transit in real-time via official Panama Canal webcams. Share your approximate schedule and boat name/description – they might spot you (especially if rafted center or visible).

- [Miraflores Locks](#) (Pacific side – most popular, great views)
- [Gatun Locks](#) (Atlantic side)

Images refresh every few seconds. Small yachts are harder to spot than big ships, but it's exciting when they catch you waving! For additional real-time tracking, use [MarineTraffic](#) or similar AIS-based sites/apps (e.g., VesselFinder). These show live ship positions in the Panama Canal area via the live map – zoom to the canal (around latitude 9.12, longitude -79.71). If your vessel has AIS transmitting, you will appear on the map during transit (especially near locks/entrances). Coverage is good for the canal.

## Final Tips for a Smooth Transit

- Timing: Southbound (Atlantic to Pacific) is popular for Pacific-bound cruisers. Avoid peak February – April. Check the schedule for the main cruising rallies and try to avoid those dates.
- Safety: Secure loose gear; protect from monkey's fists. Turbulence next to ships is intense but 'thrilling'.
- Resources: [ACP website](#) for latest advisories; [Noonsite.com](#); cruising forums/guides, rallies like [www.oceanposse.com](#)

With good preparation, you'll enjoy an unforgettable experience floating alongside massive ships in the historic locks.

## About The Author

### Rob Murray

Avant -

Rob Murray and Debra Zhou are doers currently on the Caribbean coast of Panama aboard Avant, their Beneteau First 435.

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## Sailing Down the West Coast - No Picnic

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/sailing-down-the-west-coast-no-picnic/>



Getting from Victoria to Mexico (Ensenada) was just the start of our 5-year odyssey. Add to that the political situation in the US, and we were not keen to loiter for long on the west coast. In the end, though, we spent over two months transiting the US west coast, which had both its high points and lessons to be learned.

### Victoria to Eureka

Our original plan was to make this journey as quickly as possible. The aim was to take an offshore route (about 100NM offshore) with stops only in the major ports of San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, in large part to avoid tricky bar crossings. In addition, we were driven by the desire to save on moorage fees and to get this part of the journey 'out of the way'. With this plan in mind, we didn't have many US west coast cruising guides, or detailed advice for the first stage of our journey. We started early in the season, leaving in July instead of waiting for September, as we figured this would give us a good buffer if we needed to accommodate for weather, etc.

The plan, as all plans do, soon changed. We had sailed up to Ucluelet in early July, planning to spend a couple of weeks there to both unplug and get into 'cruising mode'. This was an idyllic time. It was our second visit and we experienced some great cruising around Barkley Sound, tempered only by the foreboding knowledge we were going to be heading off soon. Watching the weather in those two weeks, there were a series of systems that brought in strong winds, so it was not until July 21 that the first decent window appeared. But instead of too much wind it was now showing very little wind for our first passage. We decided to leave anyway, and headed off with our hearts in our mouths.

Two days later we had done more motoring than anticipated and with light wind forecast for the next few days, we decided to cut our losses and head into Astoria on the Columbia River. This was an unplanned stop and involved learning how to cross a bar (the Columbia River bar no less!) with no forward planning or research. Bar reports are available from the US Coast Guard, but in Astoria they will not provide any additional information/guidance (they have recently been successfully sued for giving advice that didn't help and so are mandated to not provide anything beyond the bar report information).

Once in Astoria, we were committed to an inshore route. Our next stop was Coos Bay (another bar crossing) and then onto Crescent City in California to avoid another bar. Pulling into Crescent City, the harbour was shallow and approximately 9 ft deep. We didn't find the harbour especially appealing, so we headed down to Eureka overnight.

As we were departing Crescent City Harbor, we heard a tsunami warning over the radio; you have got to be kidding – right?! As we were already leaving, we headed for deep water, as advised, to ride out the 'wave(s)' – visions of the *Perfect Storm* in our heads. In the end, when the tsunami hit at midnight, we were in 300 feet of water (incidentally apparently deep water to ride out a tsunami is considered anything greater than 150 feet) and it was a bit of a non-event with no noticeable surge. The sea state was a real mess for the rest of the night though as we motored down to Eureka. We learnt later that even if there is no major obvious surge with a tsunami, it will play havoc with the sea state for up to 48 hours after by interfering with any natural swell patterns.

Getting into Eureka was another bar crossing, however we completed this one in the early morning with reassurance from the Eureka Harbor Master that all was well inside the bar (the coast guard couldn't help as they had been evacuated for the tsunami). After a couple of days to rest, we found ourselves stuck in Eureka (there are worse places to be stuck) waiting for a weather/sea state window to get around Point Mendocino. We dropped into the NOAA office in Eureka a couple of times during our stay and they were very happy to share their knowledge and forecasts to assist with planning our exit. In the end we stayed for ten days before we got a break in the weather and left for San Francisco.

## **Eureka to Southern California**

We expected that rounding Cape Mendocino would have been the turning point for us, hoping that the weather would now improve and the sailing and harbour entrances would get easier. As we entered San Francisco we were hit by 25 knot winds, a very confused sea state and another bar crossing (note to self here – avoid crossing a bar late afternoon as the wind always builds later in the day).



Heading under the Golden Gate Bridge

San Francisco was a great experience but not anchor-friendly (either very shallow or not protected) and, for us, not that relaxing. The combination of constant wind and rolling anchorages was very wearing. Pushing on to Half Moon Bay, Monterey Bay and Carmel-by-the-Sea, the conditions did start to improve but we were definitely not in the sunny, comfortable cruising weather we expected. This was confirmed by the locals all down the coast who said we were early for their summer, which is typically in September/October.

The next big step took us to Ventura and Los Angeles via Point Conception. We passed the Point, again in the late afternoon, and were met with the worst seas we had encountered since leaving Victoria: very confused, steep and choppy with 25+ knots of wind. Once past the Point we finally made it to sunny California.

From here on most of the challenges of the North American west coast were now behind us. Our ongoing sails down to Los Angeles, San Diego and Ensenada had less drama (apart from a fuel problem around Ensenada), and we finally found ourselves enjoying the good weather we had hoped for.



Berthed among the palm trees in Southern California.

## Key Takeaways

In summary, the US west coast was definitely a challenge for us, with a steep learning curve. If we were heading off again the following would be our key takeaways:

- Even if you don't plan on crossing bars, do the research so that if you need to, you can with confidence.
- Cape Mendocino is hard to get around but you are not out of the woods until you round Point Conception, some way south.
- Avoid pinch points and headlands mid-afternoon – local knowledge (borne out on our journey) is that the wind always picks up and can make things very uncomfortable with confused sea states.
- Even if you plan on few stops and long offshore runs, be prepared to take your time if the weather doesn't cooperate.
- Leaving earlier in the season does not necessarily mean the weather will be better. The traditional plan of leaving in September seems to hit a sweet spot for covering this journey with more consistent winds and better weather inland.
- Think how you would manage in the event of a tsunami – you never know!

## **About The Author**

### **Charles and Heidi Aram**

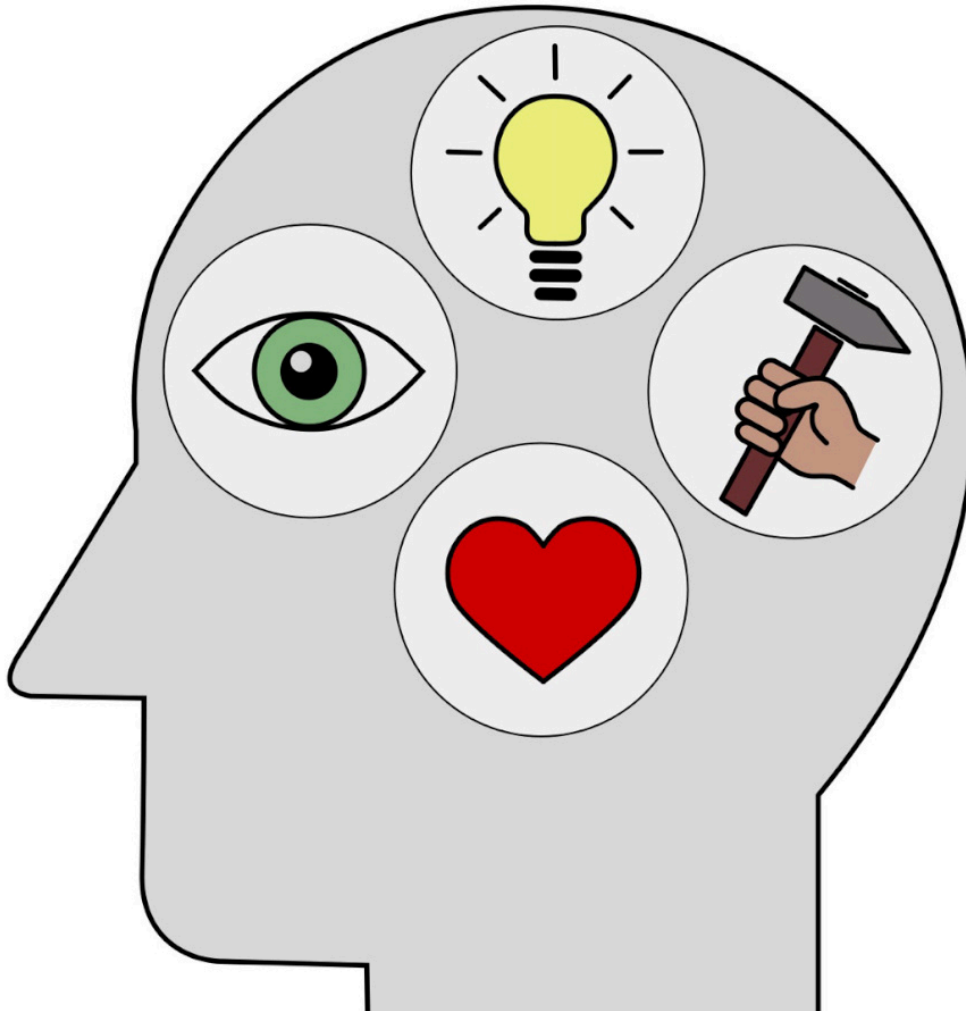
#### **SV BeTrue 2 -**

Charlie and Heidi have set off on a 5-year journey to go “half way round the world and back again” aiming to see North and Central America, The Caribbean and Europe. You can follow their adventures (from the start of their sailing experience in 2020) at [svbetrue.com](http://svbetrue.com)

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## **Intangibles for Successful Offshore Cruising: Mindset Matters**

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/intangibles-for-successful-offshore-cruising-mindset-matters/>



Vancouver Fleet recently held a panel discussion with doers and doners and asked for their top five recommendations for preparing to go offshore. There was a lot of back and forth, and a huge amount of useful information was shared. Overall, recommendations for specific gear lagged far behind discussions of the mental preparation required, and discussion about the relatively mundane tasks that consume most of your time on passage (e.g., eating, sleeping, watchkeeping).

Offshore cruising isn't just about the boat, the gear, or the route — experienced cruisers often say it's the intangibles that make the real difference for long-term success and enjoyment. The hardware gets you moving, but resilience, adaptability, and good decision making keep you out there happily. Here are five key human factors, illustrated with real stories shared by BCA members in past issues of *Currents*.

### **1. A Resilient, Positive Attitude**

Embrace (okay, tolerate with appropriate stoicism) periods of discomfort, uncertainty, and setbacks:

rough weather, breakdowns, isolation. Manage fear realistically; know when to push on and when to heave-to. Patience is huge. Passages and anchorages can be boring, frustrating, or exhilarating, and sometimes all three in turn. Cultivate gratitude. Many cruisers say a good attitude turns potential misery into adventure. It also makes for great stories to share at potlucks.

Ann Lange shared her advice in her February 2022 *Currents* article, [“Lessons Learned: How Cruising Changed My Life”, February 2022](#). During a major blow far from land on their Fast Passage 40, Ann and her partner prepared meticulously and endured without whining or excessive worry. She reflects: “We learned that worry cripples decisions... [we] endured without worry.” This mindset of acceptance and gratitude carried them through, building resilience that turned potential misery into calm endurance. Another lesson came from a 20-day windless passage with limited fuel. Patience was essential: no rushing, just adapting to the uncontrollable.

Similarly, Roger Friesen shared that on an Atlantic crossing he confronted mortality mid-ocean: “There was a point at which I was literally beyond help... I had to accept the fact that something beyond our control might happen and that a series of events could possibly lead to my death. And I had to be okay with that.” This acceptance brought lasting peace and clearer thinking in adversity. ([“Psychological and Emotional Preparation for Offshore Sailing,” June 2015](#)).

## **2. Adaptability & Self-Reliance**

Be ready to improvise fixes, change plans (weather, gear failure, crew dynamics), and live simply. Offshore sailing demands resourcefulness, with no marina, chandlers, or certified technicians nearby. Humility to learn from mistakes and ask advice (from locals or other cruisers) is key. Often, the best chandlery is a local ferretería (hardware store). I once made a masthead base for a Windex out of JB Weld steel epoxy, a Coke bottle for a mold, and crayons for mold release.

In 2015, Norm Cooper described how in the Gulf Islands, a pre-departure check revealed a broken engine dip stick tube, caused by vibration fatigue. They improvised a temporary fix with “a pencil wrapped with rigging tape as a plug,” which held for a week until a replacement arrived — fresh eyes and resourcefulness in crisis. ([“Lessons Learned the Hard Way – Thorough Boat inspections”, November 2015](#)).

Henk and Lisa Benckhuysen had a gennaker furling fail one night off Baja. They shadowed it behind the main and took it down by hand. They also rebuilt toilets (twice!) and cleared filters using onboard spares — relying on deep boat knowledge from pre-departure overhauls. ([“Harlequin Cruises the Sea of Cortez”, December 2017](#)).



All kinds of things can break while offshore. Will you be able to make the repairs

### 3. Strong Decision Making Under Pressure

Quick, calm judgment amid fatigue, bad weather, or emergencies is important. Practice scenario planning: “What if the autopilot fails?” or “Heavy squall incoming”. Mental rehearsals build confidence. Preparation opens options without obstacles to execution.

Norm Cooper detailed an event in another *Currents* piece: during a stormy 325 NM passage from Niue to Tonga, the alternator failed to charge the 800 Ah battery bank. They adapted by first shutting down refrigeration and other non-essentials to conserve power, then had the time to troubleshoot a corroded spade connector and crimp a new one on to restore the system. ([“Lessons Learned the Hard Way – Electrical Failure”, August 2016](#)).

### 4. Goal Setting & Realistic Planning

Break the dream into steps; use weather windows carefully. Set flexible milestones (e.g., “Depart Juan de Fuca by X date”) with big buffers. Track progress for motivation but adjust since rigid goals cause burnout or risk. Cruisers’ plans are truly “written in the sand at low tide.”

Ann Lange had a 20-day windless passage which tested their patience: rigid expectations would have led to frustration, but embracing the delays built motivation through small milestones like aligning days with sunrises. Bureaucratic delays in foreign ports further reinforced flexibility: it took hours or days for customs, but adjusting to the delays kept things enjoyable. ([“Lessons Learned: How Cruising Changed My Life”, February 2022](#)).

This echoes other sailors' weather delays in Neah Bay, Mexico, or the Canaries, or even full passage reroutes — adherence to overly rigid plans can lead to bad decisions.

## 5. Teamwork & Communication Amongst Crew

Have clear roles, honest talks about fears and expectations, and quick conflict resolution. Even solo, make daily self-checks on energy, morale, and risk. Manage watches and nutrition to avoid exhaustion: you don't make good decisions when tired, dehydrated, or 'hangry'. Stay connected to other cruisers and home.

Stefa Katamay described how intense boat prep in a remote Mexican marina put a strain on the couple's relationship. As the only liveaboards in the marina, they really felt the lack of community. Their solution was to take a break back home in Victoria to rebuild individually and socially, joining groups for "synthetic extended family." Stefa stresses the need for honest discussions to avoid resentment from loneliness, quoting Vonnegut on gender differences in social needs. (["Caution – Rough Emotional Seas Ahead!", November 2018](#)).



Stefa's boat, *Mazu*, on the hard in Mexico.

These intangibles aren't abstract: they have been proven in high-stakes situations shared by BCA cruisers. As members, sharing stories helps us all prepare better. What's your biggest mindset lesson from time on the water?

*Featured image from Wikipedia 'mind' entry – CC0 1.0 Universal (no copyright). Additional photos were drawn from the articles referenced in this discussion.*

## **About The Author**

### **Rob Murray**

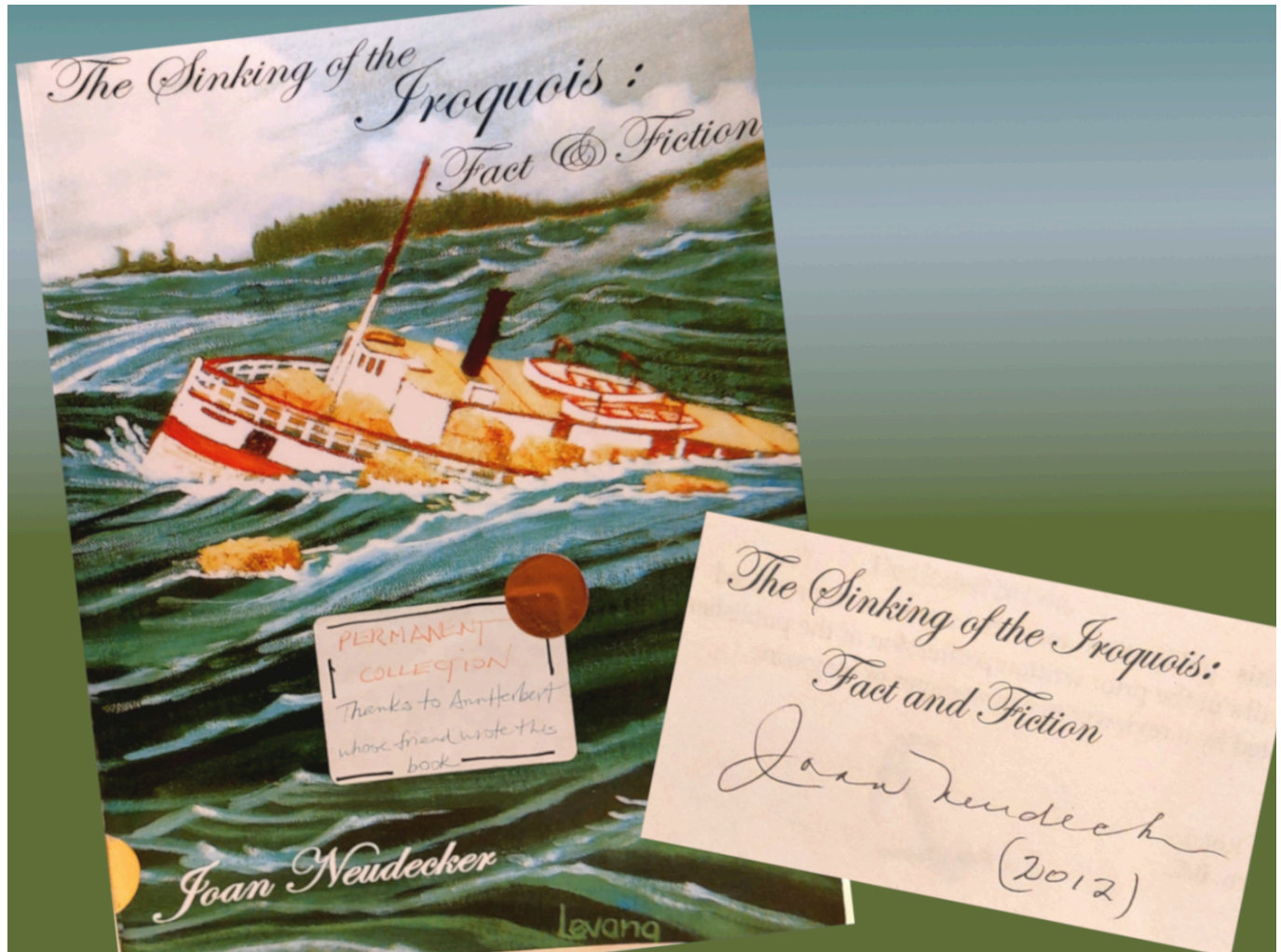
**Avant -**

Rob Murray and Debra Zhou are doers currently on the Caribbean coast of Panama aboard Avant, their Beneteau First 435.

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## The Sinking of the Iroquois: Fact & Fiction - Book Review

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/the-sinking-of-the-iroquois-fact-fiction-book-review/>



*The Sinking of the Iroquois: Fact & Fiction*, Joan Neudecker, Kolibri Press, 2011

Why was Canoe Pass renamed Iroquois Pass? The Iroquois nation, or Haudenosaunee, is far away on the other side of the continent in southeastern Ontario, southwestern Quebec, and upper New York State. I turned to local history to find out, and read *The Sinking of the Iroquois: Fact & Fiction*. It was after this tragedy, which occurred just south of the pass, that the pass was renamed.

Author Joan Neudecker weaves the true story of the ship's foundering on April 10, 1911 with a fictional account of a young girl who takes the Victoria and Sidney (V&S) Railway up to Sidney dock at the start of the Easter holidays. I learnt quite a lot of local history and gained an understanding of some place names along the way. As for the *Iroquois*, it was due to steam over to Fulford Harbour, Saltspring Island on that fateful day. The weather was foul with winds that Captain A.A. Sears later told the subsequent inquest he estimated to be blowing at 50-60 mph. That's strong gale to storm force! And it was blowing stiffly against a swift running ebb tide. Yet still he headed out, against all common sense and to the unease of onlookers.

We, as mariners, all know that a schedule is the worst thing to have on a vessel as it forces you to look at the calendar or clock instead of conditions, and take chances that shouldn't be taken. Whenever someone wants to join you on some distant shore for a fun boating adventure, remember to tell them that they get to pick the time or the place, never both.

Getting back to the *Iroquois*, it was laden that day with heavy, bulky cargo like steel bars and hay bales up on deck, none of which was tied down. He was a seasoned captain so it's surprising he didn't have the cargo secured. Regulations weren't what they are now, but even so, since days of yore sailors have tied gear down and battened down the hatches. Making sure everything is shipshape and tethered before untying the lines just seems like basic seamanship! Moreover, it is unknown exactly how much ballast the *Iroquois* had. Again, regulations of the day must not have specified the need to know a vessel's weight and balance limits. (Personally I've never liked to see too many gas, fuel, and water cans tied on monohull decks along lifelines, as they bring far too much weight up high, affecting their center of gravity.)

The Captain struggled to maintain control even before the *Iroquois* was untied, with the bowline snapping under the force of the wind. Fewer than 20 minutes after leaving Sidney dock, her cargo irrevocably shifted, rapidly destabilizing her. Rolling in the rough seas, she keeled over and sank in unforgivingly cold dark water. Believe it or not, there was no passenger manifest, so no one knew for sure exactly how many were on board. To this day it is not certain how many died. There is even some ambiguity about how many survived. The best guess was that some 20 poor folks perished. They either drowned or died of exposure when they were not rescued promptly. Of all the women who were onboard, only one survived – Miss M. Barton, a teacher at St. Margaret's School in Victoria. All the rest went down like stones due to the weight of their long sodden skirts and petticoats. There is a cairn on the school grounds in memory of two teachers who perished.

## **Heros and Heels**

Of the dozen survivors, a shameful eight were crew. The Captain infamously made a beeline to shore in one of the two lifeboats, passing and ignoring passengers calling for help. The other lifeboat turtled. A. Ollason, one of the deckhands who did what he could to save others, is buried at Holy Trinity on Mills Road, corner of West Saanich Road. The heroes of the day were three Indigenous men in a dugout canoe who had been digging for clams on Piers Island (now home to some BCA members!). William Tzouhalem, Donat Charlie, and Bob Klutwhalem paddled over to and rescued three people, plucking them in turn from the freezing waters and taking them to shore, where locals had gathered to help. For their bravery they were later awarded gold medals.

There was a dive on the *Iroquois* some decades ago, and the vessel's anchor now lies in Bevan Park, Sidney, while its propeller is in Iroquois Park, Sidney. These lumps of metal speak silently of the terror of that day.

Reading this book left me with a renewed appreciation for how safe both marine transportation — and women's clothing — have become in the century since this tragedy!

## **About The Author**

### **Isabel Bliss**

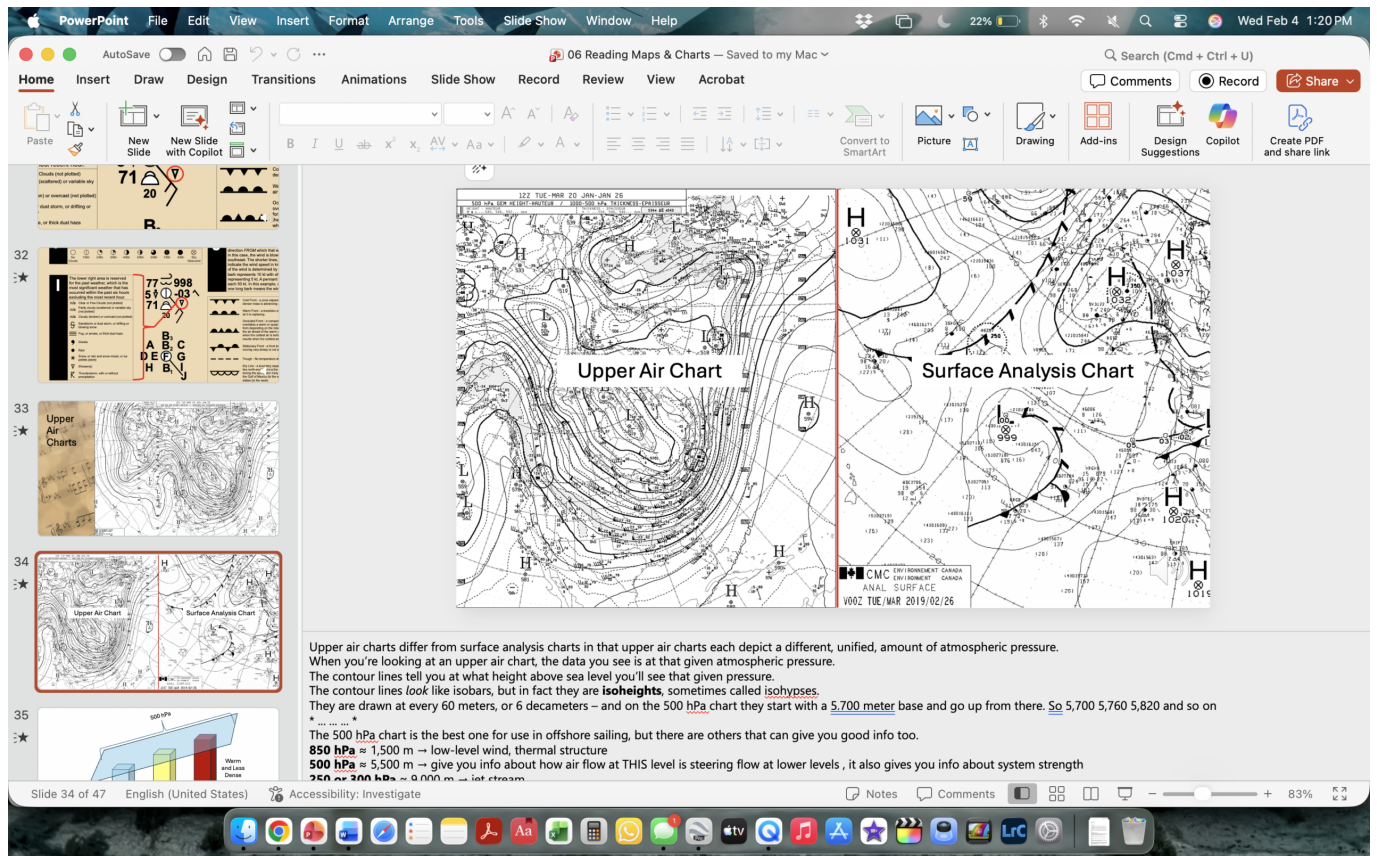
-

Isabel was born in a house in front of the sea and has been dreaming of venturing on it ever since. After sailing 25,000nm she is technically a Doner but she's still dreaming!

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# Vancouver Fleet and Weather - January 2026

[https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news\\_post/vancouver-fleet-and-weather-january-2026/](https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/vancouver-fleet-and-weather-january-2026/)



## Fleet Meeting

The January Vancouver Fleet meeting brought together eight current and former BCA members who have been—or are currently—offshore. The group was enthusiastic, generous with their insights, and represented a wide range of offshore cruising experience.

Moderated by Dugg Steary, the meeting featured a lively panel discussion on key takeaways for preparing to go offshore, drawing on the real-world experience of “doers”: Bjarne Hansen and Barb Peck, Alex Kao, Rob Murray, Ken Robertson, Rhonda Schuller, Kristen Steary, and Sue Peck. With that depth of experience in the room, there was no shortage of knowledge or practical advice.

Dugg introduced five discussion topics to guide the conversation, but as anyone who has spent time in a room full of passionate sailors knows, the discussion quickly took on a life of its own. The discussion ranged from broader themes, such as the importance of a positive attitude and flexibility, to practical considerations including equipment choices, essential documentation, and strategies for managing fatigue on passage. Key takeaways from the discussion included:

- Don't skip the shakedown.
- Be flexible—sail when conditions are right rather than to a rigid timetable.

- Share experiences with the community and cultivate memories.
- Avoid “must-have” expectations.
- Ken emphasized the value of a reliable self-steering system and reducing crew stress.
- Kristen highlighted the importance of preparing meals in advance, noting that logistics below deck can be challenging underway.
- Bjarne and others shared tips on bringing useful items to trade with local communities.
- Everyone emphasized the importance of gaining experience.
- Self-steering systems were generally preferred over autopilots.
- Maintain a well-organized inventory of parts and tools onboard, with a dependable way to locate what you need—this is especially important when under stress.

Several stories underscored the cost, inconvenience, and stress of arriving at a Mexican destination without a Temporary Import Permit (TIP). Members are encouraged to check out [this related article](#) in *Currents* for more details.

The discussion also touched on topics that may not always appear on a departure checklist, including onboard security measures such as bear spray, pepper ball guns, and customized equipment to deter theft. Throughout the conversation, there was strong agreement on the importance of adaptability, community sharing, and—above all—enjoying the cruising experience.

A fitting closing thought came from Ken: “Keep it simple and go now.”

The next Fleet meeting will be held on February 25, with a focus on Offshore Insurance.

## Weather Group

The Vancouver Fleet Weather Group held its third session of a five-part marine weather course on January 21, continuing to build on topics introduced earlier in the series.

This session focused on waves, swell, and sea state, as well as interpreting weather maps and charts. Sixteen participants logged in, and the evening followed a relaxed, highly interactive format. Activities included a review of homework, two half-hour presentations, and ample time for discussion, both as a full group and in breakout rooms. Engagement was strong throughout, with one dedicated member even staying up until 0100h (Caribbean time) to attend, something he has done for every session so far.

Weather is a vast subject and impossible to cover comprehensively in just a few hours. The goal of this session was to reinforce a solid understanding of the fundamentals, highlight what matters most for sailors, and encourage continued learning beyond the course.

The weather program is being led by Trina Holt, with three sessions still to come, including more hands-on activities to bring all the elements together. The final session is scheduled for April.

The next Weather meeting will be held February 18 on Zoom.

## About The Author

**Marilyn Sanford**

**Windrose -**

Marilyn retired from a career as an entrepreneur in the Custom Electronics Industry. She has lived on the coast all her life, always on the water, and currently lives in False Creek on her vessel in Spruce Harbour Marina, a liveaboard community.

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## BCA Members Receive Environmental Award from Ocean Cruising Club

[https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news\\_post/bca-members-receive-environmental-award-from-ocean-cruising-club/](https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/bca-members-receive-environmental-award-from-ocean-cruising-club/)



Every now and then we learn about someone who is making a difference while at the same time pursuing a life changing adventure. Meet *Freeranger's* crew: Duncan Copeland and Larissa Clark, along with their two children, Eden and Skye. Aboard *Freeranger*, you'll find both adventure and citizen science. Since launching in 2023, the family has turned their 50-foot Beneteau into a mobile platform for conservation, contributing open-ocean data across the Pacific while helping others do the same. In the past 18 months they have sailed over 13,500nm, with their children (now 9 and 7) aboard, from BC to New Zealand via USA, Mexico, Pitcairn Islands, French Polynesia, American Samoa, Samoa, Wallis and Fiji, arriving in early 2026 in Auckland. You can read more about these BCA members here: "[Cruising](#)

[Update from \*Freeranger\*](#)” and “[Citizen Science Adventures at Sea](#)“.

Because of their citizen science work, the family is being presented the Ocean Cruising Club’s (OCC) 2025 Environment Award. This recognition is for the work the family has undertaken to set-up an Ocean Citizen Science Directory, an open-access platform connecting sailors and ocean users with credible marine science projects worldwide. Though it is still uncertain where the award will be presented, plans are in place for Northlands, New Zealand, in May 2026, before *Freeranger* casts off for the 2026 South Pacific season.

As noted in the [OCC press release](#) on February 6, 2026, the Copeland/Clark mission “centres on ‘Adventure Science,’ utilising their global voyages from the Pacific Northwest to French Polynesia and New Zealand to collect vital data for multi-institutional researchers. On a recent 3,900 nautical mile transpacific crossing, they contributed to over half a dozen citizen science initiatives, focusing on ocean plastic tracking, marine mammal observations, and coral reef health.” Larissa states, “The OCC has long championed seamanship, curiosity and responsible voyaging. To be acknowledged for environmental leadership within that circle means a great deal — particularly because sailors are uniquely placed to witness the health of our ocean first-hand.”

From towing neuston nets offshore to reporting sightings of marine mammals, seabirds and fisheries activity, the *Freeranger* crew hopes to demonstrate how everyday voyagers can meaningfully support marine research. Their free, open-access Ocean Citizen Science Directory makes it simple for cruising sailors, coastal communities and recreational ocean users to participate in practical, marine research initiatives wherever they are.

To learn more and to track *Freeranger’s* progress, check their [website](#), and for more information on OCC and the Copeland/Clark presentation, check out the [OCC website](#).

**Photo credit: Krista Harries**

## **About The Author**

### **Environmentally and Socially Responsible Cruising Working Group**

-

The role of the Environmentally and Socially Responsible (ESRC) Working Group is to develop and implement BCA's ESRC Pledge, through a variety of initiatives, projects, publications, talks and workshops. Working Group Members are: Deb Bryant, Don Chandler, Rick Ellis, Connie Morahan, Marilyn Sanford, and Patrick O'Hara.



## Vancouver Island Fleet - February 2026

[https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news\\_post/vancouver-island-fleet-february-2026/](https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/vancouver-island-fleet-february-2026/)



This month's Vancouver Island Fleet meeting was at the home of Werner and Sarah, *Camdeboo*, with 13 members attending. As we have found with other meetings, the social aspect is really important and appreciated, but we also covered more technical topics such as:

- Issues with Victron Super Cycle batteries
- Anchor swivels
- Fire systems
- Fire at Van Isle Marina

Our next meeting will be from 1300-1600h on Sunday, March 15. Please contact the [VI Fleet coordinators](#) if you have any questions about or would like to join the VI Fleet.

### About The Author

**Campbell Good and Cathy Norrie, VI Fleet Coordinators**

**AKIRA (Grand Banks 36); PIXIE (BCC 28) -**

Campbell has extensive offshore experience, sailing to the South Pacific in 2006 - 2011 aboard his previous boat CAMDEBOO. He has since crewed for and/or mentored other BCA members in the Mediterranean, Caribbean and Mexico. A BCA member since 2003, Campbell became VI Fleet co-coordinator in September 2023. Cathy and her co-skipper and husband, Bill Norrie, completed their circumnavigation on their previous boat TERRWYN in June 2016. Since returning she has volunteered for BCA as the Vice Commodore of the Calgary Chapter, is a member of the BCA Member Directory team and as of December 2025 is also VI Fleet co-coordinator.

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## Bluewater Cruising Association Awards 2025

[https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news\\_post/bluewater-cruising-association-awards-2025/](https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/bluewater-cruising-association-awards-2025/)



In my new role as Past Commodore, I have the pleasure of organizing and presenting awards to our deserving members. This is a task that I have very much enjoyed. I learned more about the Bluewater Cruising Association’s history through familiarizing myself with the past recipients and some of our new awardees. However, most importantly, I was filled with a greater motivation to get offshore with Trina and our *Salt*.

I would like to stress how important it is to ensure that the accomplishments of our members are recognized. Public recognition is not just a tool for honouring those who are Doners and in many cases Doers. It is a motivator for Dreamers. It stops time for a moment and highlights what we can do. It emphasizes that our dreams are within reach, and that there are many fellow members to draw support from.

### Cruising Awards

In 2025 we saw a few boats carry their captains and crew to the realization of their dreams. It was exciting to present BCA members with the following cruising awards:

**Offshore Crew Award – Michael Terides**



Offshore crew award: Micheal Terides

*For members who complete an offshore passage outside Canadian territorial waters while actively engaged in the ongoing operation of the vessel as unpaid crew, where the shortest straight-line charted distance between the starting and ending port is a minimum of 999 nautical miles without putting into port prior to completion of the 999 miles.*

Michael’s voyage commenced on August 18th and concluded on August 30th, approximately 2,700 nautical miles from Honolulu to Victoria aboard ***Mach II***, an Andrews 77 that had participated in the TransPac from LA to Honolulu.

**(Owner’s) Offshore Award**



Offshore award recipients 2025: Heather & Alex Kao, Rob & Sharlene Cormack, Tara Donley & Owen Popplestone.

*For members who complete an offshore passage outside Canadian territorial waters on their own non-commercial vessel, where the shortest straight-line charted distance between the starting and ending port is a minimum of 999 nautical miles without putting into port prior to completion of the 999 miles. The member will also be recognized with a Bluewater membership status and receive a Doner badge.*

To find out more about these members' cruising achievements, check out their blogs: [Cambria](#), [Inscrutable](#), and [Solstice Tide](#).

### **Peterson Cup Award – Shannon and Doran Jones**



Shannon & Doran Jones

*Peterson Cup Award honours former Commodore Lex Peterson, once a worthy competitor, awarded to the winner of BCA's annual Peterson Cup Cruising Rally. A list of award recipients can be found [here](#).*

Shannon and Doran were awarded the Peterson Cup over this past summer in recognition of their solid participation in all events throughout the rally. The couple were up to all challenges presented and consistently demonstrated the true spirit of the Peterson Cup in supporting other participants through struggles and equipment failures.

**Hill-Padwick Award (aka Bent Mast) – John Green**



John & Marg Green

*Hill-Padwick Award is awarded by popular vote during Awards Night, as determined by the most raucous applause from the raconteur's nomination. A list of award recipients can be found [here](#).*

Here is John's story:

*The next nice trip going south was around Brooks Peninsula. We started again in light air with Weather Canada talking about increased wind in the early afternoon south of the Peninsula. It was lovely. Screecher and main in a straight line again to the top of Brooks. I assumed south of Brooks Peninsula meant maybe 20 or 30 miles south. We weren't 100 meters past the turn when the wind picked up. Marg rolled in the screecher planning to go to jib, but before we could the wind picked up to 20, then 30. Then a bit more. We had no chance to douse the main so were caught going almost dead downwind with a full main. This is definitely not a good thing to do in a multihull. It is an overpowered main that can trip you. There was so much weather helm (pressure on the tiller to keep the boat from rounding up) that I was worried it would break. But the guy who built it did a good job, and it held up (PS: I built it!). The problem was that without turning right we would hit land in a couple of miles. We had no option but to gybe. I told Marg to hang on, as this could be messy. When I headed more downwind, and the boom came across, there was an almighty BANG! I looked up and the sail had a terrible shape to it. I asked Marg, "What the*

hell happened?” *She had a look and said “John, you don’t have a clew.” She was right, the clew of the mainsail had exploded, and the two loose reef lines were all that was keeping it attached badly to the boom. But we missed the landfall which would have wrecked us. Once we got into the lee of the Peninsula the wind dropped and we were able to take the main down and limp into a safe anchorage.*

## Service Awards

### Rudi Seifert, Keeper of the Light – Stephen Carlman



Nancy Carlman accepting Keeper of the Light award for Stephen

*Rudi Seifert Keeper of the Light Award recognizes significant contributions to BCA that reflect and support the spirit, vision and/or values of the Association. A list of award recipients can be found [here](#).*

Stephen was recognized for his significant contributions to the Vancouver Watch and to BCA as a whole. Not only did he shine in leadership roles he was very active in support roles, providing guidance,

mentorship, and many hours of hard work ensuring that BCA met our many financial and legal obligations. Stephen was awarded the Keeper of the Light posthumously, with his wife Nancy Carlman accepting on his behalf. He will be remembered.

### **Ted Long Award – Muriel and Heinz Cienciala**



Heinz & Muriel Cienciala

*Ted Long Award for outstanding personal contributions to BCA. Recipients of this award are granted Lifetime Membership in BCA. A list of award recipients can be found [here](#).*

Muriel and Heinz are long, long-time members of BCA. In fact, they are part of the original crew that created the Vancouver Island Chapter. Their efforts in those early days were monumental. As there was no established chapter or watch, they arranged speakers, venues, did the advertising that eventually led to what we now appreciate as an extremely active and valued chapter of the BCA.

### **Congratulations to all BCA 2025 Awards Recipients!!**

It truly has been an honour to present the 2025 recipients with their awards! These sailors' excitement shone as they spoke of their journeys, and that pride and joy shows the importance and value of following

your dreams. I look forward to hearing about many more adventures. Please let your successes be known – they fuel the fire in every Dreamer’s heart, build camaraderie among Doers, and remind Doners of their own triumphs.

The BCA website contains full descriptions of the awards and their criteria. Have a browse and nominate a fellow member or yourself. There is no need to wait until our AGM and Awards Ceremony. I am happy to receive nominations at any time throughout the year. Nominations can be sent to me [here](#).

## **About The Author**

### **David Mitchell**

#### **Salt -**

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 reached 34 years in 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.

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## Calgary Hybrid Club Night - Sailing in the UK

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/calgary-hybrid-club-night-sailing-in-the-uk/>



The Calgary Chapter welcomes everyone on Tuesday March 10, 2026 for their third club night of the year, held in partnership with CanBoat.

Ever wonder about sailing in the UK? David Evans & Bertha Fischer did and rented a charter boat to find out what it would be like. Their presentation will be all about their adventures and Bertha, who had never been on a sailboat, will talk about what that experience was like too.

This will be a hybrid meeting; if you would like to attend via Zoom, please register by clicking the register button above. Everyone attending in person is also welcome to come to a quick dinner at the Legion between 17:30 and 19:00.

The Club Night will commence at 19:00 sharp.

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## **Hybrid Meeting Format**

**In-Person Attendees:** The meeting starts at 7:00pm MST sharp.

Cost: \$5/Members, \$10/Non-Members, payable at the door.

**Virtual (Zoom) Attendees:**

Cost: Members – \$5.00 per connected device; Non-Members, \$10 per connected device, payable online.

*Note: Due to the small cost of virtual tickets, and an equal or greater cost to BCA of issuing refunds, no refunds will be issued.*

Please note that you must be signed in to the BCA website to get the member price.

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## VI Mid Island Club Night - The Inside Passage with Salish Sea Pilot

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vi-mid-island-club-night-the-inside-passage-with-salish-sea-pilot/>



Join *Salish Sea Pilot* authors Lynne Picard and Jim Burgoyne on a remarkable journey through the Inside Passage to Southeast Alaska, reaching as far as Juneau and Glacier Bay. Through stories and images, they will share their experiences navigating fog-shrouded waters, witnessing the northern lights, and discovering the profound solitude and unmatched beauty of the region. From secluded anchorages to dramatic fjords and ancient glaciers, this presentation highlights the places that have drawn mariners of all ages for generations. The evening will trace the routes and highlights of their three-month voyage in 2024—an adventure that exceeded all expectations and left them eager to return, knowing there is still so much more to explore.

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# VI South Hybrid Club Night: Cormack on Cambria - Our Milk Run

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vi-south-hybrid-club-night-cormack-on-cambria-our-milk-run/>



After successful international teaching careers, Rob and Sharlene Cormack still had places they wanted to explore—but they were tired of long flights and jet lag. They wanted to reach destinations that were difficult to visit via airplanes. They sailed down the west coast to Mexico, across the South Pacific to New Zealand, back to the tropics, onward to Australia, and eventually shipped *Cambria* back to Mexico. From there, they made their way home, visiting places they had missed on their way south.

Join Rob and Sharlene as they share stories and photos of the places and remarkable people they encountered over the next three years.

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## Hybrid Meeting Format

### In-Person Attendees (Check-in and Pay Cash at the door):

- **Doors open:** 7:00 pm, meeting starts at 7:30 pm, presentation to follow
- **Cost:** \$5/Members, \$10/Non-Members

**Virtual Attendees: via ZOOM**

- After you register, you will receive the Zoom meeting invitation by email.
- **Members** – \$5 per connected device (**if signed in**)
- **Non-Members** – \$10 per connected device.
- If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

**Note to Zoom Attendees:** Due to the small cost of virtual tickets, and an equal or greater cost to BCA of issuing refunds, no refunds will be issued unless VI Chapter is unable to deliver the Club Night via Zoom. The Zoom room opens at 7 pm for social time, with the meeting at 7:30 pm and the presentation to follow.



## WOW! 2026 (Women On Water)

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/wow-2026-women-on-water/>



The banner features a sailboat on the water. On the left is the Bluewater Cruising Association logo. In the center is the WOW! Women On Water logo. On the right, an orange box contains the text: "Bluewater Cruising Association Presents WOMEN ON WATER (WOW) A practical boating seminar for women Sidney BC | March 14 + 15, 2026". Below this is a blue banner with white anchor icons and the word "FEATURING:". Underneath are ten circular portraits of the speakers, each with their name below: Elizabeth Brown Shaw, Liza Copeland, Elaine Humphrey, Sarah White, Stefa Katamay, Agathe Gaulin, Missy Gervais, Tracy Sarich, Larissa Clark, and Marla Hedman. At the bottom is a dark blue banner with the website "BLUEWATERCRUISING.ORG" in white.

WOW! 2026 is a boating seminar for women. The intention for this special day is not to exclude men, but to create a safe and respectful learning environment for women boaters, both power and sail. A variety of workshops will be offered to address different levels of experience, from novice to more advanced boaters. The philosophy of WOW is that women who enjoy cruising will be more confident, independent, and safer through knowledge and learning.

In 2026, WOW returns to the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney, but this year a second half-day workshop has been added! Participants are able to choose three seminars for day one from a wide selection including knots, docking, boat systems, weather, and more, alongside two keynote sessions, lunch, and social time.

Day Two is a 3-hour morning workshop focused on decision-making that will put into practice the lessons learned on Day One.

This 1.5 day workshop is open to all women who are interested in learning more about boats and all the things that influence your safety and enjoyment when out on the water. DID YOU ATTEND IN 2025? If you felt you missed out on some great seminars (as you can only choose 3 of the 6 offered), please come again—you may even want to attend a seminar a second time! And you will get to participate in the decision-making workshop!

Full details, seminar descriptions, speaker bios, and sign up are all on the website, linked immediately below.



## Vancouver Hybrid Club Night - Living Islands: Coping with Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vancouver-hybrid-club-night-living-islands-coping-with-climate-change-and-sea-level-rise/>



Pacific Island countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands are existentially threatened by climate change and sea-level rise. Yet the people and the islands themselves are also more resilient than the bold-faced headlines about disappearing islands may have you think. In this presentation, [Dr. Simon Donner](#), a climate scientist and professor at the University of British Columbia, will discuss the science of ocean warming and sea level rise, what it means for coral reef islands, and the opportunities and challenges facing local people.

Simon has been conducting field work in the Pacific region with local collaborators for the past 20 years. He was also a lead author on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s recent Sixth Assessment Report and, until recently, co-chair of Canada’s [Net-Zero Advisory Body](#), which advises the federal government on pathways to eliminating climate-warming emissions.

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## Hybrid Meeting Format

### **In-Person Attendees (Check-in and Pay Cash at the door):**

- **Doors open:** 7:00 pm, meeting starts at 7:30 pm.
- **Cost:** \$5/Members, \$10/Non-Members.

### **Virtual Attendees via ZOOM:**

Click [here](#) to register for and purchase your virtual meeting ticket and receive the Zoom meeting invitation. Please note that you must be signed in to the BCA website to get the member price.

- **Virtual doors open:** 7:00 and meeting starts at 7:30.
- **Cost:** Members – \$5.00 per connected device; Non-Members, \$10 per connected device, payable online (see link above).
- **Note:** Due to the small cost of virtual tickets, and an equal or greater cost to BCA of issuing refunds, no refunds will be issued unless Vancouver Chapter is unable to deliver the Club Night via Zoom.

## About The Author

### **Heather Marshall**

#### **Mischief -**

Bluewater BCA member Heather Marshall first fell in love with sailing as a teenager. She sailed to the Mediterranean and back aboard a Bavaria 38 sloop, 'Sea Otter of Canada', with her former husband. Heather single-hands 'Mischief' to destinations in the Salish Sea.

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## Sail Selection, Maintenance and Repair

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/sail-selection-maintenance-and-repair-2/>



This one day course will focus on sail selection, maintenance and repair. Selecting the right sails for your offshore journey is just the beginning. Proper sail maintenance is easy and takes little time, but it can make a big difference in the life and performance of your sails.

Instructor Paul Betts is the owner, designer and senior sailmaker at [Leitch and McBride Sails](#). Leitch and McBride Sails has been designing and building custom sails in Sidney, BC since 1975. Paul notes that

“it’s best not to have to undertake sail repairs while underway”.

Topics include:

- Sail Types & Their Use
- Sail Material
- Sail Handling Systems
- Sail Maintenance
- Sail Repair
- 

## **About The Author**

### **Brent Alley**

#### **Pegasus II -**

Brent has been member of Bluewater Cruising Association since 2014. Since joining BCA he and Barbara have sailed to Desolation Sound, Alaska, Haida Gwaii and most recently to Mexico.

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## Psychology of Voyaging

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/psychology-of-voyaging-2-day-workshop/>



Dreaming of setting sail on a long-distance voyage? Preparing for offshore cruising is about more than navigation and boat systems — it's also about mindset, resilience, and relationships at sea. *Psychology of Voyaging* is an interactive two-day workshop that explores the human side of long-term sailing, helping participants develop the mental and emotional readiness to meet the challenges and rewards of life offshore.

Through guided discussion and small-group learning, you'll examine the emotional arc of a voyage, motivations for voyaging, seamanship and risk management, and how to build trust, teamwork, and effective communication with crew or partners. You'll also learn strategies to strengthen resilience in the face of stress and uncertainty, and explore how life transitions unfold as you leave familiar shores behind. This signature BCA course focuses on putting *people* back at the center of the passage, leaving you with greater self-awareness, confidence, and readiness for your own journey.

### About the Instructor

Elizabeth Shaw brings both professional expertise and deep lived experience to the course. After a 23-year career as an engineering officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force, she and her husband, Max, embarked on a 36,000-nautical-mile, seven-year voyage through the South Pacific, Micronesia, and Alaska with their three children. Now completing a master's degree in Psychotherapy and Spirituality, Elizabeth combines seamanship, psychological insight, and real-world voyaging wisdom to help sailors prepare for the technical and human dimensions of cruising.

## **About The Author**

### **Brent Alley**

#### **Pegasus II -**

Brent has been member of Bluewater Cruising Association since 2014. Since joining BCA he and Barbara have sailed to Desolation Sound, Alaska, Haida Gwaii and most recently to Mexico.

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## Sailboat Rigging Essentials

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/sailboat-rigging-essentials-2/>



Steve, owner of [Steve White Rigging](#), shares years of experience in this evening presentation. He will cover preparing your vessel for leaving, maintenance and repairs. As well, he will take an in-depth look at standing and running rigging and winches. This will include a discussion about rigging options and applications.

Steve has been sailing, inspecting, recommending and installing rigging on the coast for 40 years. His easy manner and deep experience will make this an informative course that gives you the breathing room to ask questions, and delve into detail. During this evening presentation, Steve will cover how to prepare for a long cruise, including inspections (what to look for and how to be proactive), upgrades needed to ensure smooth sailing, and repair supplies that are essential to handle the unexpected. He will also address maintenance on your rigging, including furling, standing and running rigging, as well as winches. Though we all try to prevent the unexpected, Steve will also guide you in repair techniques on the fly.

### About The Author

**Kit Griffin**

**SWAN -**

Christopher "Kit" Griffin is a retired adventure equipment consultant and photographer living in Vancouver, Canada. He's lived in Australia for most of his life, however his childhood was spent on Vancouver Island as his grandfather (and father) worked for Cable and Wireless until the Cable Station closed in 1959. Kit credits his family and Bamfield for a deep affection for the ocean, diving, and sailing. At the start of 2020 Kit bought SWAN, a Pacific Seacraft 34, in Tahiti which he'll be sailing back to Canada in April 2022 COVID-19 permitting. In the meantime, Kit volunteers for Bluewater Cruising Association in Vancouver Education Watch and sails a Catalina 28 locally.

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## Inside Passage Weather Strategies

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/inside-passage-weather-strategies-3/>



Spend two mornings online with instructor-extraordinaire, Kevin Monahan, learning just how much you *don't* know about weather strategies for the Inside Passage.

This seminar focuses on the unique weather patterns of the west coast, and how to make decisions based on weather forecasts. It will introduce participants to key concepts of mid-latitude depressions, offshore highs, and inflow and outflow winds, and their interactions with the geography of the Inside Passage. Once you understand the dynamics of the most common weather patterns that occur in the region, you can develop strategies that take advantage of the weather patterns for a more comfortable and more enjoyable cruise. Open to BCA members and non-members.

**Note:** The seminar is not intended to teach actual forecasting of large scale weather patterns. Participants will be shown how to apply the information in weather forecasts and local weather reports to better understand actual conditions in specific locations on the water.

### 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 Inside Passage Weather Strategies and we'll send a link to you a couple of days before the course.

## **Instructor**

Kevin Monahan is a retired Canadian Coast Guard officer with more than 20 years experience 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 split his time between publishing (*Ports and Passes*, *The Radar Book*, etc.) and teaching nautical subjects to commercial and recreational mariners. In 2022 he retired from publishing but continues to teach nautical subjects and is working on a second edition of his popular *Local Knowledge*. In 2013 he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal.

## **About The Author**

### **Brent Alley**

#### **Pegasus II -**

Brent has been member of Bluewater Cruising Association since 2014. Since joining BCA he and Barbara have sailed to Desolation Sound, Alaska, Haida Gwaii and most recently to Mexico.

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**Currents Bluewater Cruising**

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