



Photo Contest Winner

Tony Roberts & Karin Lenger

This incredible rainbow formed over Mayaluga after a rain shower in the SE corner of Fakarava Atoll in the Tuamotus Archipelago. Karin and I were in our dinghy on the way to Eliza's home at 16°27S and 145°21W. The dinner that evening was yet another wonderful display of French Polynesian hospitality enjoyed by us and the crew of Mabrouka in 2017.



Currents

January 2021

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A Message from Our Commodore

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/a-message-from-our-commodore/>



Wow! What a year 2020 was. Now we set sail for 2021.

I find myself extremely excited moving into 2021. Bluewater Cruising Association (BCA) members are certainly reaping the benefits of all the hard work that our volunteers have put in. All three chapters persist in their efforts to ensure that BCA grows as an Association and continues to increase its value to members.

I invite all of you to join in on our virtual club nights. Each chapter conducts their regular club night with scheduled presenters using the Zoom platform. Once a month, on a rotational basis, one of our chapters hosts a BCA-wide club night. These events have been greatly enjoyed, with in excess of a hundred members tuning in. The energy that everyone is bringing to these events can be felt straight through the screens of BCA members around the world. It is truly amazing to be able to connect with our entire membership, including those currently cruising. Come on out, meet new friends, reconnect with faces from your past and, most importantly, enjoy the company of our many like-minded sailors.

Our [website](#) has seen some changes, with more to come. Please take a moment to visit the site and have a look around. There, you will find information on upcoming events, such as education opportunities; updates to the Ocean Cruising Adventures' big night, coming up at the beginning of March; BCA's involvement in the virtual Vancouver International Boat Show at the end of February, and much more. While you are at the site, please take some time to **renew your membership and update your member profile**. BCA's Directory team is well into the process of creating this year's directory and is relying on you. The accuracy of your profile is essential to ensure the best possible BCA Annual Directory.

[Currents](#), our very own online magazine, has come out the 2021 door, stronger than ever and is sure to hold your interest. Our team is always looking for articles and you can help. If you have spent any time at all on a boat, a dock, or anywhere near a sailor, you have a story. Whether you are a dreamer, doer or doner, your experiences are valuable; please consider sharing with our family.

My thoughts and words all revolve around the incredible efforts that our volunteers put in. I thank each and every one of you for stepping up and demonstrating what an amazing group of people you are. For those of you who are wondering if there is anything that you can add, you can. Each of you has something that is your strength, passion, or joy. Your BCA community would love to see where you shine. If you have ever thought about volunteering, now is the time to step forward and join our cadre of greatly appreciated volunteers.

In closing, I thank all of our members of the Board of Directors, watch keepers, and the many other volunteers that make the Bluewater Cruising Association what it is. Further, I encourage all of you to go out of your way to learn what any one of our volunteers brings to our Association and show your appreciation.

I raise my glass to 2020, and again to 2021!

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.

Visit BCA at the Virtual Vancouver Boat Show

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/visit-bca-at-the-virtual-vancouver-boat-show/>



BLUEWATER CRUISING ASSOCIATION

EDUCATION SCHEDULE 2016

WINTER & SPRING

Recommended For Anyone Cruising Beyond The Gulf Islands

Member Price		Non Member Price		
Jan 30	65	85		• Intermediate Diesel
Jan 30	80	100		• Psychology of Voyaging
Feb 20	149	179		• Basic Radar / Mahina Offshore Cruising Seminar
Feb 27	75	105		• Advanced Radar
March 5	140	175		• Advanced Diesel
March 6	50	65		• Weather Strategies for the Inside Passage
March 12	70	95		• Sewing, Sail Repair & Canvas Work
March 19	80	105		• Emergencies On Board
April 2	70	95		• Coastal Navigation Essentials
April 2	50	65		• Basic Weather Forecasting
April 2 & 3	200	240		• Weather Forecasting Offshore
April 9	TBA	TBA		• Basic Marine Electrical for Women
April 15-17	220	N/A		• Wilderness & Remote First Aid
April 16	70	95		• Weather Forecasting Offshore

One of the highlights of [Bluewater Cruising Association's](#) (BCA) annual calendar has always been the Vancouver International Boat Show. We could always look forward to the camaraderie and energy of volunteering in the booth at BC Place, or on the BCA Offshore Boat in the Floating Show at Granville Island. Volunteers would answer questions and speak passionately about their own sailing experiences, and about the benefits of belonging to this great organization that supports so many people in realizing their cruising dreams. Hanging out at the Boat Show, bragging about our favourite club – what better to look forward to? It was always the bright spot in a long winter.

So, you can imagine how disappointing it was to receive the notice that, due to COVID-19, the Vancouver Boat Show had been cancelled, like so many other events in the past year.

And then, it was with great happiness that we received the next notice, mere weeks ago: the [Vancouver International Boat Show](#) will proceed after all! Much as our Club nights have survived and thrived by moving into the virtual world, the Boat Show will be taking place virtually this year. It's going to be different, for sure, but we are delighted that BCA will once again be an exciting part of the Vancouver International Boat Show, running from **February 24 – 27**.

Our Virtual Booth will be staffed with volunteers who will engage with the public by way of live chat (text), email, and face to face conversations over Zoom. Stay tuned for the call for volunteers! We will once again have the opportunity to promote BCA, and the benefits of membership for anyone dreaming of going offshore, and preparing for the adventure of a lifetime.

In place of the Floating Show, our Virtual Booth will feature detailed video tours of not one, but four BCA boats. Come check them out, and see what makes an offshore-capable boat different and special. Also check out our other video presentations, which will feature cruising tales from different parts of the world, stories of the friendships we make while doing so, and more.

Admission to the show is free! Everyone is invited to come by and say hello, renew your BCA membership or join for the first time. It's a great time to [join BCA](#), as we will be offering a discounted initiation fee, and we have a fabulous Welcome "goody-bag" for anyone who joins the Association during the show.

Many thanks in advance to the numerous volunteers whose time and energy will ensure that BCA has an exciting presence at the 2021 Virtual Vancouver International Boat Show! It will be a great place to "be"!

About The Author

Heather Marshall

Mischief - Catalina 27

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.

Sailing to the Edge of Time with John Kretschmer

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/sailing-to-the-edge-of-time-with-john-kretschmer/>



John Kretschmer is a sailor, writer and philosopher who has logged more than 300,000 offshore miles, including 26 transatlantic crossings and several passages in every ocean on the globe. His record-breaking voyage in a 32-foot sailboat from New York to San Francisco by way of Cape Horn, against the wind, is just one of his numerous sailing accomplishments.

A self-taught sailor, Kretschmer has been sailing nearly full-time since age 21 and has developed a successful hands-on sail training business aboard *Quetzal*, a 1987 Kaufman 47. He also teaches workshops and lectures all over the world, including the upcoming **Bluewater Cruising Association's 45th annual Ocean Cruising Adventure (OCA)**. ([Visit bluewatercruising.org for tickets](https://bluewatercruising.org)).



During his virtual OCA presentation on **March 6 at 1900h** (sponsored by [Pacific Yachting magazine](#)), John will take us *Sailing to the Edge of Time* while he shares his personal tales of offshore sailing, and the hard-won lessons about making the most of life and fulfilling dreams.

As we gear up for the OCA event, John was interviewed by Pacific Yachting, who gave permission to republish his answers:

Six Questions with John Kretschmer

1. You sailed around Cape Horn for the first time, aboard *Gigi*, a 32-foot Contessa sloop, almost 40 years ago now. Can you share a few of your most memorable moments?

This is a really hard one to answer. My sailing career has essentially had three phases. The bungling college dropout, fueled by dreams of the ocean, who finds his way—definitely the hard way—and then, somewhat amazingly, rounds Cape Horn; that was phase one. The next phase was the hard-working delivery captain, and this is where I really learned my trade, and there were definitely some adventures: Sailing into a coup in Yemen that we were very lucky to survive, the delivery of a Gulfstar 50 ketch from Fort Lauderdale to Japan and surviving Typhoon Roy near Guam and General Noriega's henchmen in Panama. Sailing wise, I think the delivery of an Ocean 71 ketch from Newport, Rhode Island to

Stockholm, was the most challenging sail of my life, because we left Newport in January and crossed the North Atlantic in February. I discovered Force 13 winds! The third phase has been the last 20 years, running training passages all over the world and it's been the best phase by far. My clients have become my best friends and the people that make their way into my floating world are amazing.

2. What is something(s) you wouldn't go sailing offshore without?

This one is easier: my sextant. Even now, when GPS has conquered the world and heavens, I still never begin a passage without my sextant, almanac, sight reduction tables and watch with known error. It sounds silly, but really, GPS could die tomorrow and it would not impact my voyaging one bit. In fact, it would make it safer as we sailed more responsibly in the celestial days. But it is more than that. GPS is part of navigation, not navigation. Navigation is a process; a way of thinking, a way of looking at the world, the sea, your life. An ocean sailor uses all of her senses to find position, confirm position and remember that position is fluid. I guess in short; celestial navigation forces you to pay attention.

3. What is your go-to non-perishable food on long passages? After all these years aboard, are there certain foods you can't even look at anymore?

This is a great question. This one has also had phases in my sailing life. In the early days, food was something to keep you alive, and we ate a lot of pasta and canned meats. We had no refrigeration on the Cape Horn passage, or on most of the early voyages. Then, during the delivery phase, the owner of a Hylas 49 that I delivered every year down to the islands, taught me a valuable lesson—a boat is not an excuse for a bad meal. George made delicious food every day, no matter the conditions. That was eye-opening and I have tended to follow his lead. Luckily, when my wife Tadjji came into my life, my culinary skills improved dramatically. So now we eat like royalty on passage; I refuse to let the ocean win. If it's blowing a gale, I head below and cook. There's something reassuring about a good meal when the ocean is really pissed off.

4. You and your partner Tadjji are preparing to depart on "The Big One", a five-year circumnavigation exploring every ocean. Has COVID-19 affected these plans?

We are really excited about this voyage, which will take us up to Greenland and back to Cape Horn, before making our way across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. But yes, definitely. COVID-19 has forced us to look closely at our plans. We really get cracking in late April, with a passage from St. Martin to Bermuda, and then up to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, one of my all-time favorite harbours and a place where *Quetzal* has many friends. As of now, we are just monitoring the situation and hoping that vaccines are effective and widely available and that people, especially in the US, become more responsible in the way they deal with the virus. It is possible that we will delay a year, but hopefully not. The leg to Greenland starts in July and we are really hopeful that the world will look different by then. At the same time, we don't want to diminish the experience by having limited opportunities ashore. So, like everyone else during these difficult times, we are just waiting to see how things unfold.

5. Do participants need prior experience to sign up for your onboard passage training?

It helps, of course, but it's not necessary. Our crews almost always have a wide range of experience and I think this makes them more interesting. Also, I have a lot of repeat crew and they know what to expect.

One of the great discoveries I've made during 20 years of training passages is that the people who come aboard always have value to add to the passage. To have the inclination, make the time, have the money; clearly, you have been making smart choices most of your life already, and also, we tend to be like-minded anyway. My job is not to bark out orders and lay down silly rules cast in stone; but instead, to find what people do best and to empower them. There's no yelling and very few rules aboard *Quetzal*. There is respect for each other, and a genuine team environment; we have shared adventures.

6. You'll be speaking at the Bluewater Cruising Association's 2021 Virtual Ocean Cruising Adventure. What can the audience expect from your presentation?

I am excited to be a speaker at the Virtual Ocean Cruising Adventure, grateful for the opportunity and I think it will be great fun. Before COVID-19, I gave talks all over the world; doing things remotely has been an adjustment, but I am getting used to it. My presentation will include stories of serious sailing, serious adventure travelling and a bit of philosophy about how to make the most of your time. I always include some funny stories; I've made a hash of things so often that I have plenty of material. Just the other day, down here in the US Virgin Islands, I crunched the finger pier coming into the slip. Afterwards, a nice guy took me aside and quietly gave me some docking insights! It was beautiful and he was right, we should have taken the stern line first.

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Cover photo: [Vivian Vuong](#) Photo of Quetzal and Ultima along the wharf in St. George's, Bermuda

About The Author

Anne Trudel and Ken Buckley

NAIDA - Passport 40 Sloop

Anne and Ken lead the organising committee for the Ocean Cruising Adventure Series.

Waiting...

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/waiting/>



Sailors are experts at waiting. We wait for wind, tides, currents, boat parts and all manner of things as a normal part of the sport. We have a very high tolerance for uncertainty. We would not choose to travel using an obsolete and very slow form of sea transportation if this were not the case.

In 2005 we started planning, including purchasing our current boat *Marathon*, to sail to French Polynesia and beyond. After several years of preparing the boat, ourselves, etc. (including VICE), *Marathon* departed Vancouver for Mexico in October 2009 and arrived in La Paz early December. Planning, preparing and practicing for an offshore sailing adventure entails a project that is not for the faint of heart, but sailors are usually people with a high tolerance for discomfort and remarkable levels of patience. We are always prepared to wait. Jobs and family things kept us waiting for our next major voyage to French Polynesia for about 7 or 8 years.

2018 – First Attempt

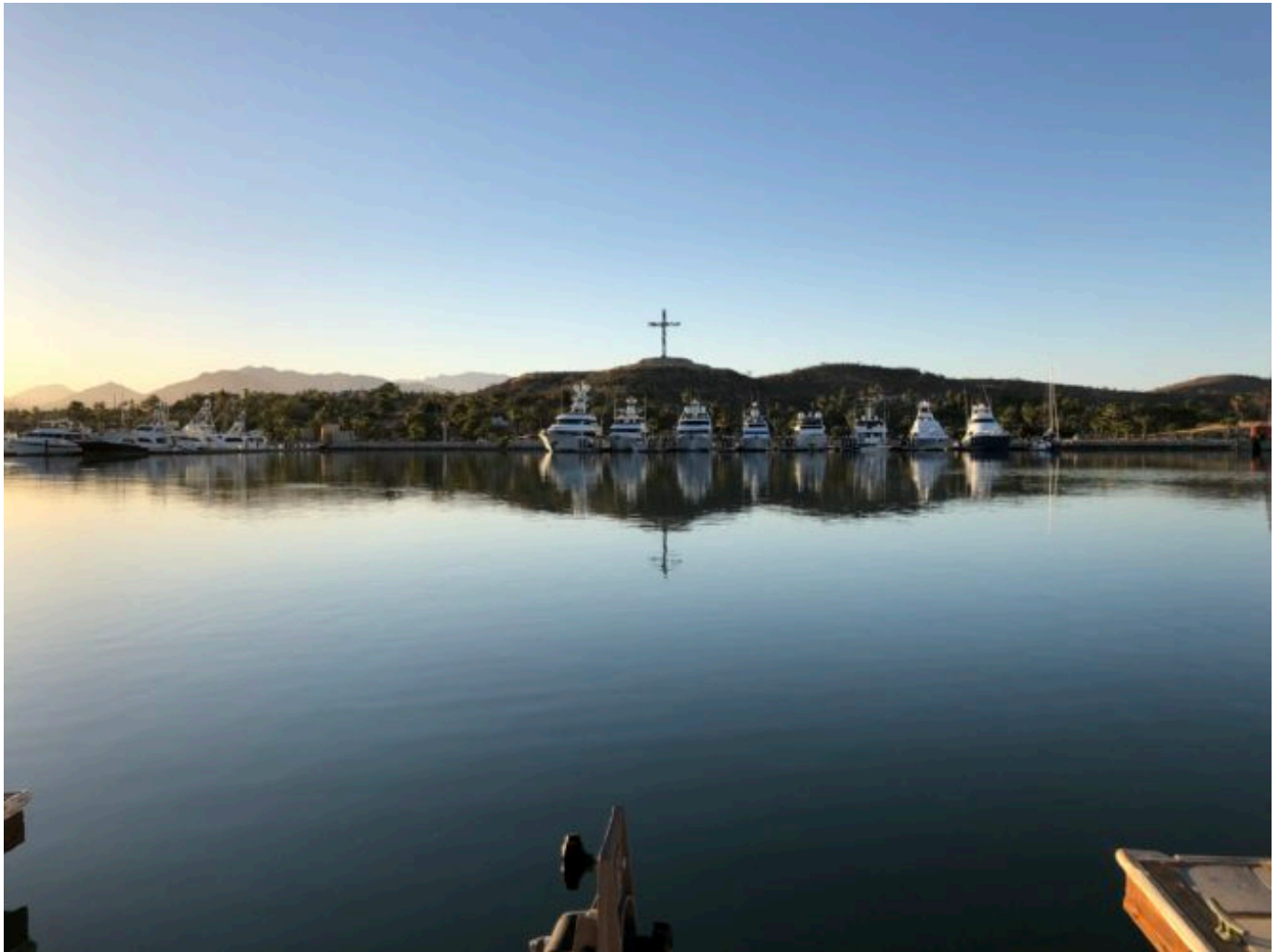
In 2018, we picked a date to depart La Paz for the Marquesas. We were part of an informal group of boats preparing and waiting in La Paz to sail to French Polynesia, self-named “the La Paz Jumpers”. The group was reasonably like-minded in terms of routing, weather tolerance and other relevant matters. The first boat left the dock on 3 March, which was only 2 days later than their long-planned 1 March departure date. Other La Paz Jumpers left soon afterwards, and we intended to be more or less in the middle of the pack with our selected date. The boat was loaded with food, water, gear and fuel to the point where we were confident that we could depart on our preferred date. Unfortunately, the First Mate fell on the dock and broke her kneecap nine days before that date (this sad story was chronicled in [this article in Currents](#)).

So our ocean crossing plans were shelved for the 2018 season – we would wait until 2019 to try again.

2019

Shakedown

In 2019, we left La Paz within a few days of our target date for a Pacific Crossing, just a little after the crack of noon. Fortunately we had not planned to go very far that day and had the anchor down in a pleasant spot just before dark. We were using the voyage from La Paz to San Jose del Cabo (SJD) as a shakedown cruise – testing various systems, including the new requirement of Latitude 38’s Pacific Puddle Jump rally for a daily check-in via email or text message. The message needed to include latitude and longitude and we relied on our IridiumGo, located in the cabin, to provide that information. We had also set up an automatic position post on our blog from the daily check-in. To our surprise, we learned from someone reading our blog in Canada that the map track had us crossing over the Baja Peninsula via land and then back again, also via land, before getting to SJD. The coordinates provided by our IridiumGo were clearly incorrect (one had us in Alaska), and this is because we were using an antenna mounted on the bimini for the Iridium signal, and that antenna does not provide a GPS signal to the IridiumGo. The GPS inside an IridiumGo uses the small flip up antenna on the unit itself, and it is therefore not reliable for GPS coordinates when the unit is inside the cabin.



San Jose del Cabo Marina, March 2019: a glassy pond.

When we left the dock in La Paz on 10 March, there were still several unknowns regarding our final departure date from Mexico out into the Pacific, but two of these unknowns topped the list – first, we wanted a suitable weather window and second, we needed confirmation of *Marathon's* offshore insurance policy renewal. Our insurance broker had told us that all would be in order by the time we arrived in SJD.

Our weather router, Bob McDavitt based in New Zealand, promised to provide a suitable departure date and route by the time we reached SJD from La Paz, so we were not yet worried about a weather window. After all, March is preferred for this crossing because of the probability of favourable winds for much of the voyage. We were counting on “average” conditions, because two years previously some boats were sailing upwind rather than downwind (an El Niño year) and in 2017, winds were very light – friends who left that year motored 167 hours between Baja and the Marquesas! We did not have enough fuel on board for such extended motoring and we were looking forward to a classic ‘coconut milk run’, which is code for ‘downwind most of the way’.

Insurance Delays

Regarding boat insurance, we had purchased an offshore policy in 2018 (as part of our pre-departure

preparations) from a broker willing to provide a policy for our “low value boat”, crewed by people that had no bluewater offshore experience, but about 70 collective years of sailing experience. The only restrictive insurance issues in the 2018 offshore policy were the age of our standing rigging and the requirement to have one bilge pump on board, capable of discharging 25 Imperial gallons per minute. Several pumps, with a combined capacity of that amount did not meet the requirement, so we bought another pump. Our rigging was precisely ten years old and as a result, the policy contained a clause specifying that any consequences of rig failure would not be covered. To avoid the rigging clause in 2019, we replaced all of the standing rigging in January 2019, using a top-notch rigging company based in La Paz. Everything should be fine, particularly because our third crew member had about 25 years of sailing experience, upping our collective experience significantly.

We had started the process of renewing our policy in January 2019 because the 2018 policy would expire on 24 March 2019, long after our planned departure date. But the broker in NZ, in response to our nagging questions, would only repeat that “it is too early”. What he didn’t say, but we learned from other brokers, is that the company that insured us in 2018 could no longer insure Canadian boats. Days slipped by as did our weather window. We called every broker in B.C., but they all responded with the same answer – there were no underwriters able to issue a policy for Canadian boats making a voyage such as ours. We then tried U.S.-based brokers recommended by other sailors, but they also could not insure a Canadian registered vessel.

We were finally offered a policy, but one which had hard-to-swallow features and restrictions, including a US\$1500 increase over 2018’s premium, and the requirement for the three of us to be on board for the duration of the voyage from Mexico to Tahiti.

The policy wording was: “Navigational Limits: Warranted that the Scheduled Vessel is confined to one trip West Coast Mexico via Marquesas and Tuamotus to Tahiti, thereafter confined to Tahiti – not to exceed 150 miles offshore when not on stated trip.”

“Additional Warranties, Terms and Conditions: Warranted that three crew members with bluewater experience must be on board the Scheduled Vessel whilst navigating during the specified trip.”

These clauses were problematic because our third crew member had planned to get off the boat in the Tuamotus and fly back to Canada, where he had some important commitments. By this time, our window for exploring the Marquesas had closed unless we could make a very speedy crossing. Our estimate was for 25-30 days based on our boat and sailing style. And there wouldn’t be much time, if any, for the Tuamotus either. At this point there were no further insurance options, so we immediately informed our weather router that we had acquired insurance, we were ready to go and needed updated weather advice.

Waiting for Weather

On 20 March, our weather router advised: “It still looks OK for a Thursday [21 March] departure, but with light winds for the first day or so (and that’s the case until next Thursday [28 March])”. Mmmm – Light winds... we asked for clarification and got this:

“Light means less than ten knots and of an unsteady direction.”

So we asked for a departure date that had a better outlook and he replied:

“Looking at Thu, Sat and Sunday, it seems that of these, SUNDAY looks “best” as the light winds for starters should be from the north. OK I’ll email you a voyage forecast on your Saturday for a SUNDAY departure, unless plans change.”

But by the next day even Sunday was looking “light”:

“The wind data isn’t 100% reliable, but it does appear that Sunday may indeed be on the light side. Monday may also be light-ish for starters, but better than Sunday. OK , let’s delay things a little and I’ll email you a voyage forecast on your Sunday for a MONDAY departure.”

We chose to accept his advice in order to avoid bobbing around on the ocean like a cork. Actually, bobbing around on a windless ocean in a sailboat is nothing like a cork. It’s awful. As one empathetic boat neighbour said, “it destroys your soul”. We arrived in SJD on 13 March 2019, and left on 25 March for French Polynesia. During that time, we ended up eating much of the carefully acquired and stored fresh provisions obtained in La Paz, but fortunately, a large and good supermarket was only a 15 minute Uber ride away.

And the hot showers were nice too.

Waiting Again

We arrived in Nuku Hiva after 29 days at sea. We motored for a total of 19 hours. It was great.



Marathon waiting patiently in Marina Taina, Papeete

We left the boat in Papeete, Tahiti in June 2019, and planned to return in April 2020. But now we are waiting for the Global Pandemic to subside to the point where French Polynesia, other Pacific island nations and the rest of the world return to some semblance of normal, in which voyaging by sailboat between nations is again possible.

About The Author

Nello and Sheridan Angerilli

Marathon - Beneteau Idylle 1150

Nello and Sheridan Angerilli of Marathon, crossed from Mexico to French Polynesia in March-April, 2019. They are very grateful for what they learned through being members of BCA. They are waiting in Vancouver to return to Papeete in order to continue sailing east, hopefully this year.

Haida Gwaii with the Grandkids? It's All in the Planning

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/haida-gwaii-with-the-grandkids-its-all-in-the-planning/>



As Larry and I contemplated our third trip to Haida Gwaii in August 2019, we decided it was important to bring our family too as the oldest grandchildren were at a good age to learn about indigenous culture and how to respect the ocean environment.

Our daughter, Hope, immersed in sailing as a youngster (but now living in the wilderness in Ontario), has been able to instill that love in her family. She, Darin and the three oldest kids (Ainsley now 14, Brynn 11 and Seven 10) had already joined us on two Gulf Island boating trips. And seven years ago, when the children were just 7, 4 and 3, we'd taken the boat to Kingston, Ontario, and from there travelled down the St. Lawrence to Upper Canada Village.



Seven, Brynn, Ainsley and Wolfgang

Even little Wolfgang, the fourth grandchild, who was 17 months old for the Haida Gwaii trip, had spent 10 happy days aboard when he was just 3 months old. Time was passing, and Ainsley already had a part-time summer job. So we started to plan for what would become our longest and best family trip ever. This article shares some of what we did to ensure the trip was a success for everyone.

Logistics

The first planning challenges were simple. How would we get everyone to the mandatory Gwaii Haanas Orientation Session when the family was flying in to Sandspit, on Moresby Island, the orientation would be in Skidegate, on Graham Island, and we wouldn't have a car?



Sandspit, Skidegate and Moresby Landing

Not only that, but how could we avoid taking them all through the potentially rough seas on our way around to Moresby Landing, the starting point of our holiday? The sea conditions could actually delay getting to Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site (which extends south from Moresby Landing), thus wasting several precious days.

The solution to both these dilemmas was actually quite easy. Larry attended the Urban Orientation Session in Sidney in March. We booked the tickets for the family to fly to Sandspit. On the first night, we all stayed aboard *Traversay III* at Sandspit Marina. We booked Eagle Transit Ltd to pick the seven of us up in the morning, drop us at the Alliford Bay ferry terminal, and pick us up again by 1600h. That morning and as soon as our taxi appeared, Larry motored *Traversay III* away and made a solo trip around the NE coast of Malcolm Island. Meanwhile, the rest of us took the ferry to Skidegate. We attended the orientation, had lunch and learned more about the Haida Nation and culture at the Museum; even Wolfgang had a fine time amidst the colourful exhibits.



Afterwards, we walked back onto the ferry, our driver met us at the Alliford Bay dock and then drove us on the bumpy gravel logging road to Moresby Landing, where Larry met and dinghied us out to the boat.

Provisioning

We planned for a 12-day trip. There are no grocery stores in the Park itself, but provisioning for eight was not difficult, especially with no allergies in our family, and as the baby was still nursing. Larry and I had bought a mighty load of provisions in Ganges and in Queen Charlotte City. We were lucky because even in tiny Sandspit a wonderful, small grocery carried a variety of fresh supplies. I had provisioned enough fresh foods to include some vegetables, but we also had to rely on frozen and tinned goods.

Breakfasts were hearty – we had pancakes, bacon (dried type), eggs, or French toast. For lunches, wraps with sliced meat, tuna or salmon or peanut butter and honey were popular. We tried to introduce a variety of typical BC seafood with salmon, fish and scallops as appetizers. Darin helped with cooking by barbecuing sausages and hamburgers. For desserts, the kids shared an entire bag of cookies (with an emphasis on chocolate) out on deck after dinner. Adults had the customary *Traversay III* dessert: mandarin oranges mixed with frozen blueberries and a tablespoon of orange liqueur. We ate out twice: on Day 1 and Day 12 at the excellent Lunch Bar at Sandspit Airport.

The kids were incredibly hungry all the time. Whenever the kids felt starved, they were able to make their

own honey and peanut butter wraps. Needless to say, we did run out of tortilla wraps and they had to use Ryvita crackers.

As for beverages, all of us are used to drinking lots of water (we have a water-maker onboard). We also carried almond milk and apple juice; tea, coffee, beer and wine were reserved for the adults.

Sleeping Arrangements

We had solved the space problems on our earlier trips. *Traversay III* has two cabins – the forward cabin was allocated to Hope, Darin and baby Wolfgang – Larry and I took the aft cabin with its proximity to the ‘heads’. The kids occupied the main saloon at night – using their sleeping bags and some air mattresses or the saloon benches as they saw fit. Most days everyone was tired enough to sleep through the night without disturbing anyone.

Safety

We have a set arrangement of rules with guests aboard. On our boat, the Captain is ALWAYS right! This works really well within our family. The kids know not to touch the stove or fridge, not to touch anything on the instrument panel or furnace, to close all doors and taps after they use them, to call one of us if the toilet fails; they know that no-one sleeps on the deck and they have also learned to closely watch little Wolfgang. Speaking of whom, we baby-proofed *Traversay III* by enclosing the entire deck with fishnet before the family came aboard. Everyone over the age of two is a good swimmer but, naturally, we have all the mandatory life-jackets that we need as well as safety equipment, as regulated.

Medical

We have a well-stocked emergency kit and also have a satellite phone aboard for emergencies, but had only one small accident – solved with a colourful bandaid. We had Gravol, but didn’t have to use any on this trip.

On-Board Activities

While cellphones and tablets were used to take photographs, we did not have internet and so it was important to have a variety of other items onboard for the grandkids’ entertainment.

We had lots of funny and kid-friendly movies plus the BBC series Blue Planet and Planet Earth. We also had games such as Clue, Monopoly, Bang, Spot It!, and art supplies, including face paint and beads for jewellery making. I recommend the children’s book Art Lab for Kids by Susan Schwake; we managed to get nearly all the suggested supplies at a second-hand art supply outlet.



Art supplies and books

There were many favourite books on board, but, alas, we didn't have much time for reading! A junior microscope kit and bubbles (welcome amusement but potentially dangerous after use due to slippery and unsafe residue on the deck) rounded out our entertainment "kit".

And, of course, there was my piano. However, getting the piano out only happened once (it is under the berth in the forward cabin); Wolfgang loved watching the kids play it.



We also enjoyed the Royalty for a Day rota system: Each day a name was drawn in sequence and that person was King or Queen for that day. On the first day Darin was King and he chose to have beef stroganoff for dinner and to play Monopoly. Most nights we watched movies – on the day I was Queen, my dinner was ratatouille, linked (predictably) with the kids’ movie of that name.

End Results

Our travel plan was to take the boat and anchor at each of the five primary Cultural Sites. Larry and I stayed on the boat to prepare meals, check weather forecasts and (when possible) rest up while the family took the dinghy ashore to visit each location. We were very lucky ... we did get to visit every Cultural destination, plus Burnaby Narrows. We saw whales, deer and even three mola-molas (sunfish). We had mostly beautiful weather. We even experienced one very rough night – essential for a well-rounded BC trip. The children were all awake for this, but no one was greatly disturbed, except for little Brynn who wakened while Larry was out tending the anchor, and came to me at 3 a.m. to say: “Granny ... did you know that there’s a man outside!” (Larry later wrote about this experience in *Pacific Yachting*: see ‘Safety in a Storm’ by Laurence Roberts – January 2020 issue.)



Sgang Gwaii

Visits to the various Cultural sites, the talks with the Watchpeople and the travel between sites were the main focus of this holiday. The Watchpeople treated our grandchildren wonderfully, and they always came back to report what a great time they had. They even described being given home-made brownies by Dee-Dee in Skedans and popsicles on the hot day at Hotspring Island. We sent them off in the dinghy and this gave the family – and us – valuable time to be alone. Swimming was possible, but we only managed this once!

And there was one final highlight: we had a show of everyone's best photos after dinner on the last night. I recommend this; it was a great way to bond once again, to appreciate everyone's photos and to save a memento of the trip.

About The Author

Mary Anne Unrau

Traversay III - Waterline 43', Cutter-rigged steel hull

Mary Anne and her husband Laurence have sailed over 90,000 miles in the boat since her first launch. They have crossed every meridian and reached latitudes from 65 S on the Antarctic Peninsula to 80 N at

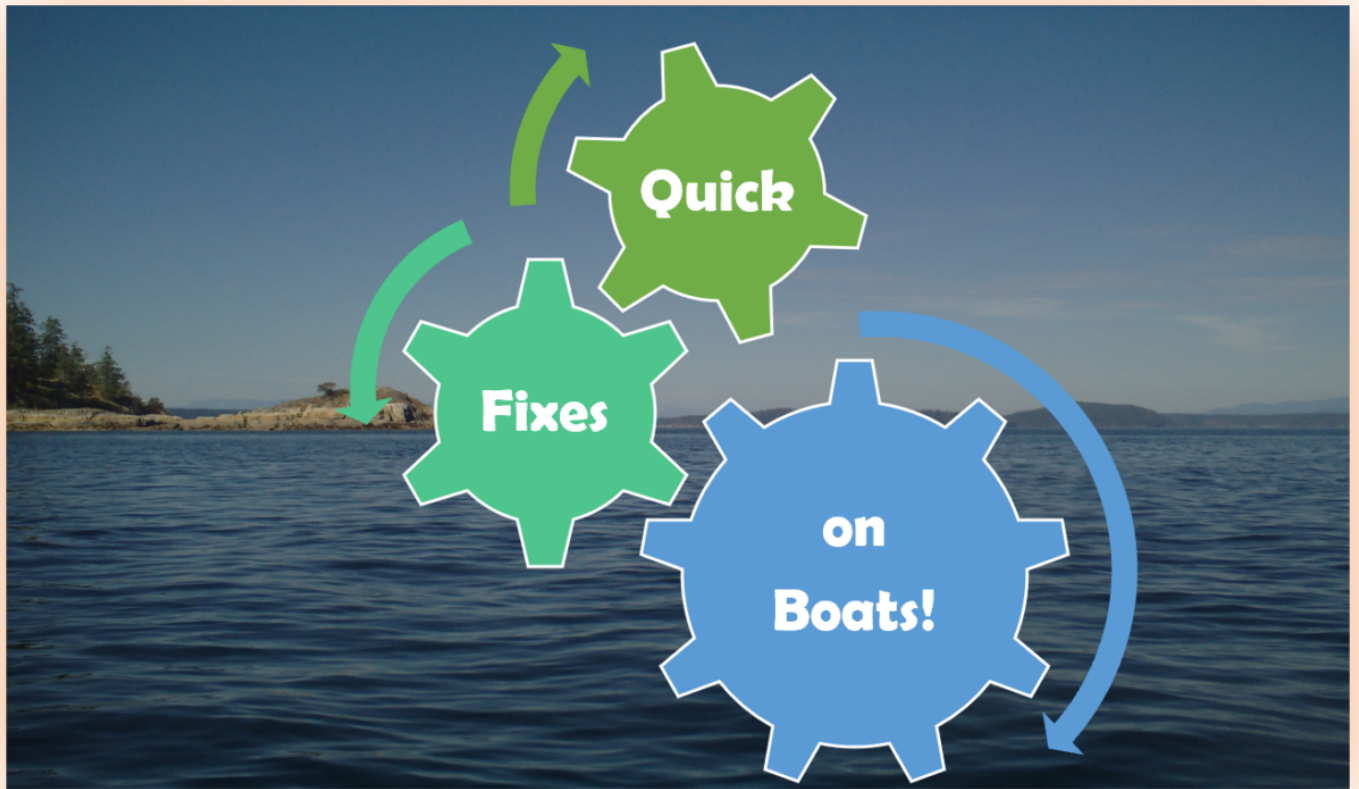
the northwest tip of Spitsbergen. Ports of Call have included such diverse spots as Pitcairn, South Georgia, Hamburg, Darwin and the Northwest Passage with lots of places between.

In 2013 they sailed from St. Katharines Marina, London in late March and voyaged to Victoria, British Columbia in October via south English ports, the Irish Sea, the Hebrides, Iceland, Greenland, the Northwest Passage and Alaska.

Their most recent voyage started and ended from with a departure from the Causeway Marina, Victoria in mid-April 2014 in a North Pacific circuit with stops in Mexico, Hawaii, King Cove Alaska and a return to Victoria heading south from a Canadian landfall in Prince Rupert.

Quick Fixes

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/quick-fixes/>



Who doesn't like a quick-fix? There's a lot of satisfaction in discovering a problem, and then finding a solution almost quicker to do than to describe. Here are a couple of problems we've encountered, and how we dealt with them.

Unclogging a Through-hull

If your boat is in the water long enough, marine growth will likely clog your through-hulls, reducing or even stopping the water flow. It's annoying with your galley seawater, and potentially catastrophic when it plugs your engine intake.

Is there a solution other than hauling out, or diving down to poke out the growth? You can disconnect the hose from the through-hull and use a screwdriver to dislodge the blockage from inside the boat. However, this carries the risk of dousing yourself and your boat with seawater as soon as the through-hull is clear.



If you close the through-hull, disconnect the hose, and attach a longer hose whose end is held above water-level, then you can poke away with impunity – water won't gush in any higher than the outside water level. You'll just need a long pokey-tool: a plumber's snake works, but instead we carry several pieces of 316 stainless-steel welding filler-rod. These are usually about a meter long, come in various diameters, and are sold inexpensively by weight at welding suppliers. A 2.5 mm diameter filler-rod makes a nice long and stiff pokey-tool.



As a bonus, filler-rods are also dandy for seizing rigging turnbuckles (thanks to Brent at Blackline for showing us that tip).

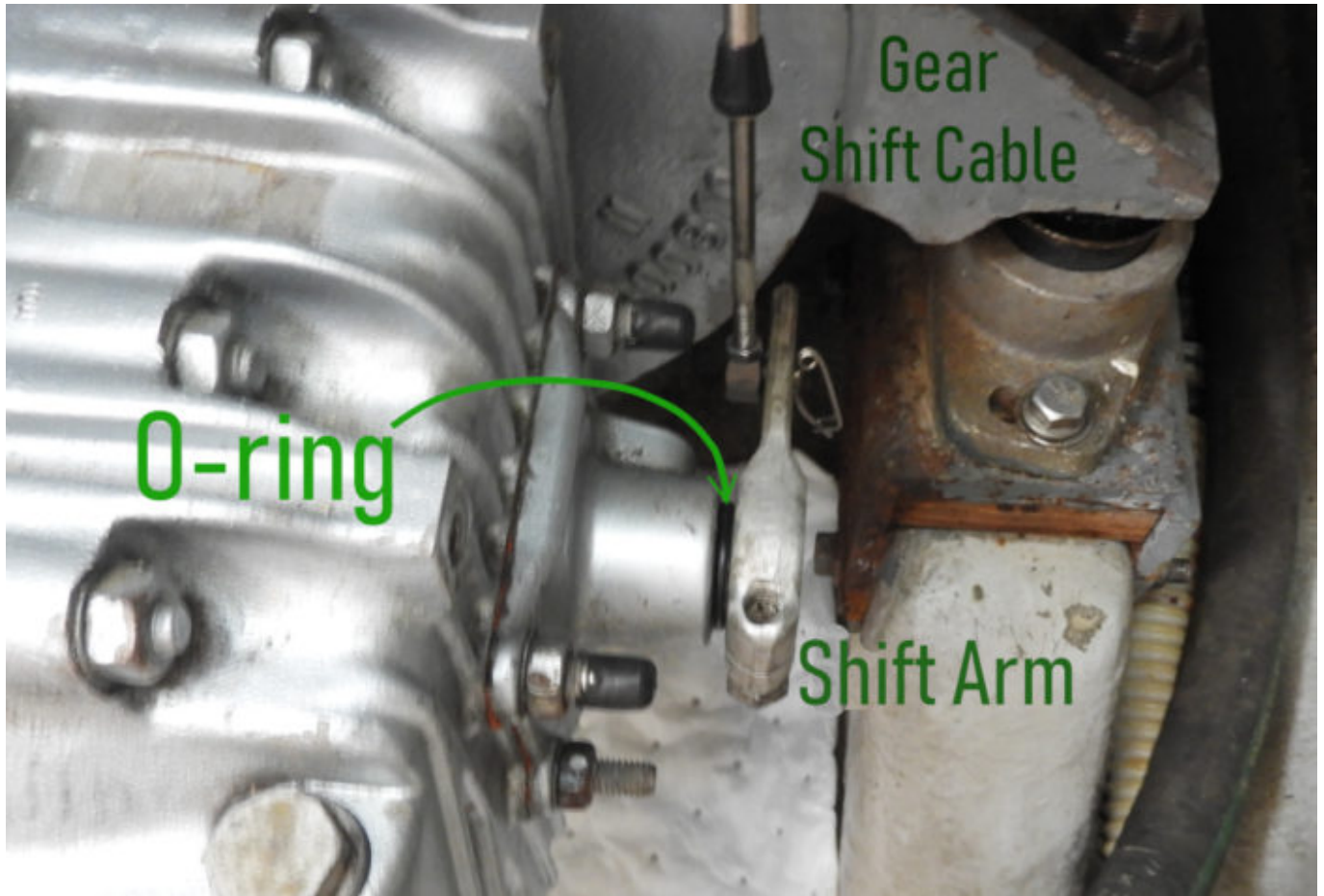
Stopping a Shaft Oil Leak

We had been monitoring for several years a slow oil drip from our transmission. The oil is conveniently red-coloured for easy identification, resembling blood. Fortunately, this wasn't a large hemorrhage, less than a teaspoon every hour of engine run time. Investigation showed that it was coming from the shaft seal of the gear-shift (not the prop shaft, happily). Since we were out cruising, it would be difficult to order, receive, and then install a new seal. So we put up with the leakage.

A month ago we had run the engine for a longer period – almost 24 hours continuously. Our daily check revealed that we were now about 100 ml low on transmission oil, so we decided something needed to be done.

Knowing that transmission oil is not under pressure (unlike the engine's lube oil), we figured that it wasn't being pushed out with a lot of force. More likely it was just oozing out after being splashed on the shaft inside the transmission housing. Our quick-fix was to slide an O-ring onto the shift-lever shaft between the transmission housing and the shift arm. The O-ring is kept compressed against the housing

by the reinstalled shift arm.



This fix has now been in place for 80 engine hours, and there has been no leakage at all. We'll keep monitoring it, but the O-ring seems so effective we'll likely postpone replacing the seal until we have some other reason to dismantle the transmission.

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.

A Kiwi Christmas

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/a-kiwi-christmas/>



Although Christmas has come and gone, we didn't want our readers to miss *Harlequin*'s account of their Christmas in Whangarei, New Zealand. Hope you enjoy the tale.

Christmas is coming. So the calendar says. Yet the sunlight is intense, sky-blue Agapanthus and creamy Calla Lilies are in full bloom; gnarled Pohutukawa trees strew their scarlet stamens over vivid green hilltops and rugged sea cliffs. We are in New Zealand still, due to COVID restrictions; while some borders have opened to sailboats, it's cyclone season in the tropics and not a good time to make a multi-day passage. Thankfully, our visas have been extended again. We are determined to make the most of this holiday season and are acutely aware of how fortunate we are to be here.

Even in the marina there are visible signs of Christmas. We liveboards have all put up lights and flags and twined the lifelines with tinsel. Plush elves are boarding the boat next door and other vessels have sprouted baubles, bows and an inflatable reindeer pulling Santa in a kayak. The local boat builder had his kids at work with him last week, as school is out for the summer holiday. I spotted a lovely young couple, with bright red and green hair, walking hand in hand on the waterfront. Santa hats, reindeer horns and tinsel tiaras adorn many a head in the long lines at the grocery checkouts. Several weeks ago, schoolchildren put bright knitted and crocheted decorations on the trees and fences around the waterfront: a yarn bombing, intended to promote laughter, curiosity and community spirit. For me it was a delightful prelude to Christmas.



The sound of Christmas is slightly different here. When we arrived this time last year, we were welcomed by children singing in Maori, “Hallelujah”, by Leonard Cohen: cultural (con)fusion! In the stores, there are pop versions of carols tinkling down the aisles and I did have the thrill of singing in a massed choir at Christ Church on Mill Road. Nothing beats the bass growl of the organ on, “O Come All Ye Faithful”, or the high note of, “O Holy Night”, sung by an operatic soprano, except possibly the sound of 800 voices singing almost anything in harmony. Today, Christmas Eve, we had an impromptu carol session in the boatyard, with a chorus of three and an audience of one. It took me back to caroling as a teen at home, although the circumstances could not have been more different.

I have maintained family and cultural culinary tradition this year and made fruitcake, which is still mainstream in New Zealand. Fruitcake is medieval trail mix, with lots of spices and a little bit of flour and egg to hold it all together, energy bars really, if you leave out the glace cherries and citrus rind. I was onto something all those years ago when I provisioned for a multi-day back country ski trip with fruitcake, cheese and chocolate only. I understand that I have lamb or ham to look forward to at the midday Barbeque in the boatyard on Christmas Day. Not a turkey in sight in the grocery stores. There are, however, stacks of large meringues. Traditional Christmas dessert here is Meringue Pavlova topped with Kiwi fruit. While everyone agrees that Kiwi fruit originated in China, New Zealand and Australia both claim to have created Pavlova in honour of ballerina Anna Pavlova.

The smell of Christmas onboard this year is the aforementioned Christmas cakes, now bathed daily in cognac, which we salvaged off a friend's ruined vessel – another tale – mixed with the unmistakable bite of iron. Our gift to each other this year is a set of new self-tailing winches that – we hope – will enable either of us, particularly me, to comfortably sail the boat singlehanded for the foreseeable future. The iron scent is due to filings from the stainless-steel bolts which held the old winches in place. In order to install the new winches, the old, seized bolts had to be cut. Not wanting to put steel filings on the newly painted deck, we chose to cut the bolts from the inside. The new winches will handle a wider range of line diameter, are stronger and the self-tailing actually works. We realized how much we needed this when we took the boat out last week and had some excitement with the spinnaker.



The touch of the breeze is chilly just now. While the sun is hot, there is a perceptible drop in temperature when a cloud passes over. It's a bit like being on the top of a mountain: either hot or cold. With higher temperatures, the ants were flying yesterday afternoon, so we screened off all the ports and the companionway. Today it's cool and blustery, with black clouds spilling over the hills. The flags we raised for the boat dressage are threatening to flap right off, so Henk has lowered them for now. He's got rye bread baking. We've finished our projects, sung our songs and made our donations. We are surrounded by a community of boating friends and we look forward to cruising the Northland coast over the austral summer. While I miss the family, I know they are all safe and well and loved. That's a blessing anywhere

and anytime, but I am especially thankful tonight. O Holy Night!

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.

Cruising Christmases

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/cruising-christmases/>



Perhaps the title conjures images of huge passenger ships cruising through turquoise waters to sun-drenched islands — something far removed from our rain-drenched British Columbia in 2020 and our inability to cruise on our own boats as the Pandemic prevents easy movement among countries.

What a different Christmas we all had here in 2020! People stayed home, communicated online with family and friends, played games, had smaller turkeys, put up additional Christmas lights outside, sent more real Christmas cards than usual, watched old Christmas movies, and tried to stay safe.

As we have stayed at home in our own bubbles, I'm reminded of unusual Christmases we enjoyed while cruising for fifteen years on *Fairwyn* from 1999-2014. Several other BCA members have also contributed their Christmas experiences.

Christmases Aboard Fairwyn

Some holidays we were alone on the boat, some we were with cruising friends, and for others we were in Vancouver, the UK, or once in Hawaii while the boat was safely moored.

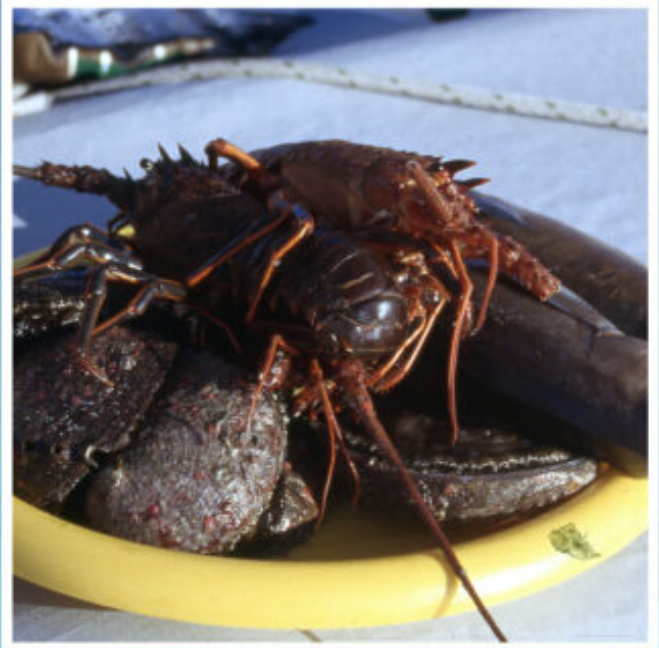


Fairwyn under sail.

Our first cruising Christmas in 1999 was definitely unusual. We left British Columbia in September, then entered Mexico at Ensenada, after sailing south from San Diego in mid-December. On Christmas Eve we left Ensenada for Isla Guadalupe, a Mexican island 185 nautical miles SW of Ensenada, populated by only a few fishermen.

We were at sea all of Christmas but anchored at the south end of the Island on the morning of December 26. Once we were anchored off the barren cliffs of the Island, we were approached by some fishermen who asked if we liked lobster and abalone. Of course, we said “yes” and the next day they turned up with both. When we asked them what they wanted in return; they asked for canned goods and chocolate.

We enjoyed the lobster on Boxing Day and put the abalone over the stern of the boat in a bucket for the next day. Unfortunately, something got into that bucket overnight. It was empty in the morning.



Lobster and abalone, off the cliffs of Isla Guadalupe.

Work on the boat never stops when you are cruising. In 2000, low oil pressure caused us to postpone a trip south from Puerto Vallarta, so we spent Christmas anchored in La Cruz, changing oil and cleaning the waterline. The upside of that decision was that we saw the fireworks displays all around Banderas Bay on New Year's Eve.

In 2001 we "followed the turkey." Several boats had been in the Barillas Marina in El Salvador, but decided to head south in early December. As Christmas approached, we were in northern Costa Rica. *Lady Tamora*, crewed by Barb and Ernie Taylor, had a big turkey and a big oven. Several of us decided to "follow the turkey" to Playa Iguanita, an uninhabited bay just west of Playa del Coco, for Christmas. Crews of *Tackless II* from St. Thomas, *Sandi Lee* from Alaska, *Örnen* from Oregon, and *Lady Tamora* from Victoria had a potluck Christmas Eve dinner aboard *Fairwyn* and then a proper Christmas dinner with all the fixings aboard *Lady Tamora* the next day.



Ernie and Barb aboard their boat, *Lady Tamora*.

Twice we enjoyed potluck Christmas dinners with other cruisers, the first at the Puerto Lucia Yacht Club in Ecuador. We put some tables up between two boats on the hard and all brought special dishes from our countries. Some French cruisers had never been to a potluck, but enjoyed themselves immensely trying the different dishes, including a dessert featuring Canadian maple syrup.



Christmas at the boatyard.

The second Christmas potluck was at Club Nautico in Cartagena, Colombia, again with a variety of nations represented.

When we were cruising in Central and South America, we spent Christmases on the boat, but once we had crossed the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, we tended to travel ashore during the holiday season. No one sails in the Med in winter.

However, one Christmas we were in Malta, enjoying a party at the Royal Malta Yacht Club and then more Christmas celebration with smoked salmon aboard *Fairwyn*.



Smoked salmon and Christmas tree made of lighted balls in Valetta.

When we sailed back to the Western Hemisphere during the winter, the easterly trade wind season of 2013-2014, we were rolling, rolling, rolling on December 25. I had filled warm sailing socks, standing in for Christmas stockings, for Stephen and our friend Chris, that they had to open in the cockpit while I steered since our autopilot had quit.



Christmas stockings!

We later had a Christmas dinner of turkey breast cooked in a pressure cooker. A friend on *Meredith* from Ontario, whom we met originally in Tunisia but again in Santa Cruz, Tenerife, Canary Islands, gave me the recipe.

Here is the recipe, in case you are ever at sea at Christmas.

Christmas Turkey Breast

Brown the thawed turkey breast in oil and butter in the pressure cooker.
Liberally coat the breast with thyme, rosemary, and black pepper.
Add a cup of chicken broth.
Pressure cook for 15 minutes

Note: Potatoes take longer than 15 minutes to cook with the turkey breast, so either cut them into small pieces or cook them separately. The broth the turkey breast is cooked in makes excellent gravy.

Other Cruising Christmas Stories

Other BCA members have shared their Christmas experiences while cruising.

Heather Marshall:

“In 2010, I crossed the Atlantic, from the Canary Islands to St. Lucia, with my then husband, Jonas, and crew member, Pam. We had originally planned to leave the Canaries early enough to arrive in time for Christmas, but our weather window stubbornly refused to materialize until much too late. We were Mid-Atlantic on Christmas Day (and New Year’s, too).

Jonas had refused to allocate storage space for Christmas decorations, so we didn’t do any decorating. Knowing we would be at sea for Christmas, and likely New Year’s as well, we had at least provisioned for a couple of special meals: Christmas had a vacuum-packed rolled chicken roast, mashed potatoes and gravy (as well as some sort of vegetable and a dessert, but I can’t remember what they were). Pam surprised us with chocolate Santas that she had smuggled aboard, as well as bottles of Spanish Cava (sparkling wine). It felt incredibly touching and special that she had thought of those details!

Our day was quiet, spent in the sun, being pulled along by our asymmetric spinnaker. We all treated ourselves to calls home on the satellite phone, and otherwise had a relaxing, low key day.”

Rosario Passos:

*“December 25, 2017, aboard **Sea Rover II**, 5 degrees north latitude on the way to the Galapagos Islands.*

Skipper: Gary Peacock. Crew: Tanya VanGinkel, Denis Heinrichs and Rosario Passos

In preparation for Christmas at sea, I purchased Christmas themed ties for the guys, head gear and nail stickers for the girls, and Xmas crackers. On December 25, the guys proudly donned their Christmas ties over their bare chests, and the girls wore their headgear. The nail stickers made it to the guys’ toes, and the girls’ middle fingers!



Christmas morning on the way to Galapagos Islands.

*In the morning, we opened presents that friends had packed for us, wrapped in paper that clearly said: Do not open before Christmas. We were happy to find two Christmas flasks: one with scotch and one with Fireball. See, **Sea Rover II** was a dry boat, but we were allowed to drink what was in the flasks as it came from Santa!*



Christmas dinner aboard *Sea Rover II*.

Gary cooked a special meal of carbonara — mmm bacon! In spite of the rolling seas, we sat at the cockpit table with our bowls, cracked open the Christmas crackers and everybody reluctantly wore the silly hats. It was a day filled with laughter and fun with good friends.”

Ernst Schneider:

Reporting from aboard *Patience* in the Philippines in 2020:

“Sorry, can’t much report on Christmas activities here. I was sailing in my new little sailing dinghy on Christmas Day, 28 degrees, 6 kts wind, 3.4 kts SOG, grin on my face, and for the rest of the day, I played the guitar. In the evening, I got together with some other boaters for a chat and dinner.

I am still here in the Philippines, Cebu area, at the dock in a boatyard finishing off some boat upgrades. I’ve been stuck in the Philippines for a year now. I had a couple of good weeks out in Busuanga/Palawan before the pandemic hit. It’s not really my country here – least favourite of my cruising journey so far. I made it back here in May to Cebu from Palawan for boat work and to get out of the rainy west and have been here since. It’s a mixed bag here: cheap labour of, at times, doubtful quality; incredibly difficult to get parts; dismal hygienic conditions in the boat yard; terrible air pollution from neighbouring big ship

sandblasting; and the most bland food I have ever experienced in my life.

The COVID situation here is not too bad. People are generally good with wearing masks, and for malls and public transport, face shields are mandatory, too. COVID numbers are low, and the new variants haven't arrived here yet, but life still is very much affected by COVID, with various restrictions in place.

I am planning to head out to Indonesia in the next couple of weeks and then up to Thailand for the next Indian Ocean crossing window. If things clog up again, I'll bash back to Canada, but I think the cruising situation will get easier from here on and I can proceed west. At least I hope so. Indonesia had just opened up, but they closed for January 1-15 again and are currently debating extending that to the end of month. I'll be on standby to slip out as soon as I can from Davao/Mindanao to Bitung/Sulawesi. I can't wait, really chomping at the bit."



Sailing dinghy.

Price Powell:

And here's a very different take on Christmas 2020 from ***Panache***.

"We are in New Zealand. There has been no COVID here for eight months. So, the main difference

between Christmas here and Christmas in Vancouver (in pre-COVID days) is that it's summer in NZ. No social distancing, no masks, no limitations on gatherings. No restrictions whatsoever. To give you an idea, today we put six people in our van and drove to a winery for lunch and Rosé while watching tall ship races. It's like the virus never happened."

It's nice to end these Christmas experiences on a high note. We look forward to a COVID-free Christmas 2021 at sea or at anchor.

About The Author

Stephen and Nancy Carlman

Fairwyn - Sparkman & Stephens, 42 Yawl

Stephen and Nancy Carlman first joined BCA in the very early days--1979 we think--but let our membership lapse until 1993. In 1999 we sailed away from Vancouver and ended up cruising for 15 years mainly to the Mediterranean and back, with long stops in Mexico, Ecuador, Cartagena, the Rio Dulce, Louisiana, Virginia, Halifax, the Azores, Sardinia, Malta, and Sicily.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner - Revisited

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/the-rime-of-the-ancient-mariner-revisited/>



*“Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.*

*Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.”*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge gave life to the doldrums, embedded in his magnificent poem of 1798, “[The Rime of the Ancient Mariner](#)“. These stanzas furthered the genre of great sea voyages. The mariner survived, but was plagued with a pressure of speech to tell all his tale.

The Ancient Mariner has been analyzed by countless literary experts, explaining his words on many

levels, evoking the sanctity of all life.

*“He prayeth well, who liveth well
Both man and bird and beast.*

*He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”*

In other words, it does not pay to kill Albatrosses, for they be angels. During *Pixie’s* sojourn in the Southern Ocean, she encountered both dragons... and angels.

*“With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.*

*...He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.”*

The literary critics say it was this violence that doomed the Mariner to tell his tale – forever. Surprisingly, Coleridge never went to sea, nor ever saw an Albatross in flight (nor did most of his critics, I suspect). How did Coleridge know to focus on the Albatross, the quintessential life force of the Southern Ocean?

One explanation could be that Coleridge’s childhood school master, William Wales, was previously Captain Cook’s astronomer on his second voyage in 1772. This voyage was also the World’s first East-about circumnavigation, which probed the Southern Ocean in search of *Terra Australis*, and was blocked several times with ice.

I wonder if Master Wales was, in fact, Coleridge’s true Ancient Mariner who was a changed man, as are all who venture to the Southern Ocean, awed by that immense cold grey sea where Wandering Albatrosses abound?



Literary minds expound on the Mariner's symbolism, archetypes, themes, allegories and supernatural elements within. But they miss out and overlook the reality described, as do all who have never ventured to the forlorn and majestic Southern Ocean and seen its quintessential life form – the Wandering Albatross.

Coleridge's lyrical ballad captures the awe of the Southern Ocean, the Doldrums, and the greatest of birds. Prose is not the best medium to do this job; verse captures the spirit. The Ancient Mariner is doomed forever to tell his tale of the Southern Ocean, as are all who sail there.

The Southern Ocean is best experienced in one's own vessel. Whether one sails there or not, reading "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is recommended.

About The Author

Bill Norrie

Pixie - Bristol Channel Cutter

Bill is a keen sailor and after he and his co-skipper and wife, Cathy Norrie, completed their first circumnavigation in June 2016 they often think about and talk about the lessons they learned during those

five years of sailing around the world. Their boat SV Terrwyn, a Pacific Seacraft Crealock 37, was perfect for the job. They currently sail SV Pixie, a 28' Bristol Channel Cutter, and are having her refit for another go sailing over the horizon.

Quick Guide To Interesting Mexico Destinations

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/quick-guide-to-interesting-mexico-destinations/>



Mexico, like Canada, boasts a long coastline: about 7500 km on the Pacific side. It is more than one can explore in a cruising season; it might take a dozen or more to make a dent in it. So, how to prioritize your upcoming cruise to Mexico? We'll share our impressions collected during the winters of 2015 – 2020 while we cruised Mexico's Pacific and Gulf of California coastlines, and mention a few particular favourite spots.

First, a few disclaimers. This is certainly not an exhaustive survey (though we were tired at times ?). We have not seen every location and done all possible activities. Also, our observations are limited to the winter cruising season (roughly November to April). Since our interests focus on hiking, wildlife viewing, scenic landscapes, and underwater life, we judge our anchorages on that basis. We are less excited by activities associated with marinas and large concentrations of cruisers. Your preferences and favourite spots will probably differ, so season our suggestions with your own salt.

We roughly divide the parts of Mexico we've seen into three regions:

- Outside Baja
- Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez)
- Mainland (Pacific) Mexico



We haven't been to the extreme north of the Sea, nor south past Banderas Bay.

Generalizations

Let's start with some broad generalizations before getting into specific locations. Outside Baja is beautiful and sparsely visited. Exposed to the full Pacific waves and wind, it can present challenging sailing conditions. Several cruisers we've spoken with have expressed regret that they hurried down around the corner of Cabo San Lucas into the Gulf of California and didn't spend enough time on the outside Baja. Fortunately, some of the spots you might miss can be visited by leaving the boat in the Sea and striking across land in a car or bus to reach towns on the Pacific side.

The Sea provides great cruising. Generally free from Pacific swell, its waters can still build considerable wind-waves over the 600 miles of fetch. Winter winds align with the main axis of the Sea, and tend to consist of several days of 20 – 30 knot northwest winds (called Nortes), alternating with several days of light or no winds. Southeast winds are rare in the winter. Skies are mostly clear and precipitation is minimal; most of the land surrounding the Sea has a desert climate.

Mainland Mexico south of the Sea is exposed to Pacific swell, which affects many of the anchorages but provides great surfing. There also tends to be farther distances between anchorages along the coast. In

compensation, winter water temperatures are warmer than in the Sea: low to mid-20s C as compared to 16 to 20 C. This is one major reason for the popularity amongst snowbirds of places like Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlán.

Outside Baja

We found fishing was better along the outside Pacific side than in the Sea – possibly because calmer conditions in the Sea allow for a higher concentration of ‘pangas’ competing for a catch. With the exception of events like the Baja HaHa and Cubar Rally, there are fewer cruisers to rub shoulders with, and the ones you do encounter are generally on the move; folks are less likely to stay in one anchorage for weeks at a time.



**Dorado caught near
Bahia Santa Maria**



**Camarón from
Bahia Magdalena**

Our two favourite locations on the outside of the Baja were Bahia Santa Maria and Bahia Magdalena. Both featured good anchoring off long beaches, swimmingly-warm water, and plenty of seafood of either the catch-your-own or trade-with-locals kind.



For land exploring, Isla San Martin (north of Bahia de Tortuga – Turtle Bay) had very cool lava tubes that one could clamber into. For wildlife viewing, getting close to Gray Whale mothers and babies is popular January to March in San Ignacio and Bahia Magdalena, though we haven't yet experienced it.



Gulf of California (the Sea)

Overall, we preferred cruising this area. However, bear in mind that it stretches over 600 miles from the bottom (at Cabo San Lucas) to the top near San Felipe and Puerto Peñasco, so there is a large variety of cruising destinations. With cold winter winds (the Nortes) funneling from the Arizona plains, night time temperatures can dip into single-digits, especially in the less populated upper reaches of the Sea.

However, the sun still has power to raise daytime temperatures to the mid 20s. Most cruisers stick to the bottom (southern) half of the Sea in winter, and only migrate up to the northern half in the summer. This leaves many of the northern anchorages empty in the winter, and if you like solitude and space, you will find it here.



Animas Slot is in the northern third of the Sea, about 10 miles south of Bahia de Los Angeles

The cooler water is a bit challenging to hop into, but is warmer than most of the ocean around British Columbia, and one can wear a 2 to 4 mm wet suit to ease the chill. The reward is some quite good snorkeling in places. Water visibility varies between 1 and 20 meters, depending on currents and plankton life cycles. In contrast, snorkeling along the mainland coast of Mexico can be more challenging due to swell (which can be uncomfortable to swim in for some folks), and poorer visibility from runoff and populated areas. Our top three Baja snorkeling spots are: Los Gatos, San Juanico, and Los Islotes.



With fewer cruisers and towns in the northern Sea, one tends to see more wildlife, and when you do meet other people, conversations may strike up quicker than in more crowded locations. A disadvantage to the scant population is that if assistance is needed, it may take a while to get the attention of another cruiser

or local fisher, and even longer to reach a location with medical and other facilities.



Distances between anchorages are usually less than 50 miles, and often less than 15 miles, so nighttime passages can be avoided. Bays and islands are plentiful, but very few anchorages would be considered all-weather. Two exceptions are Puerto Escondido (mid-Sea) and Puerto Don Juan (northern-Sea), both of which are almost landlocked and protect against wind and waves from any direction. Many others are fine in the prevailing Nortes and a few boats remain there for several weeks, but the more marginal anchorages have turnover every few days in sync with the wind patterns.



Sparses population on the Baja means that cell phone coverage is spotty. One generally needs to be near a larger city (e.g. La Paz, Loreto, Santa Rosalia) or near the highway that runs the length of the Baja. In some places we combine hiking with bringing our phone to the top of a hill in order to call home. One can see some great sights while conversing, like whales passing by. Some nice cruising places that lack phone coverage (e.g. Bahia Concepción, Agua Verde) do have small tiendas or restaurants offering WiFi internet via satellite.



If you enjoy exploring towns, then La Paz, Loreto, and Santa Rosalia all have good features to offer. La Paz is well-equipped with the stores and skills to service boats. Loreto is a charming and clean town that has a great selection of Mexican handiwork such as blankets, ceramics, and art. Both La Paz and Loreto are good places to take on / let off visitors, and there are good anchorages nearby to cruise to for one or two week holidays. We enjoyed Santa Rosalia for its well-run Fonatur marina, good restaurants, and the abandoned mine shafts (some with Made-In-Canada mining gear) in the surrounding hills that one can explore.

With so many anchorages to choose from, it's difficult to list just the top three. Several that we return to over and over again are: Isla San Francisco for its beauty and good hiking; Isla Coronados for its scenic and challenging hiking, neat geology, and proximity to Loreto; and Caleta San Juanico for good snorkeling, and a nearby ranch with burro rides and fresh vegetables. All three of these are away from towns.



Mainland Mexico

Mexico's coastline south of the Gulf of California has some large towns (e.g. Mazatlán, Puerto Vallarta) great for filling up on fleshpot experiences. Mazatlán, for instance, features the world's 3rd-largest Carnival, with fantastic fireworks and a wonderful parade. The smaller towns (e.g. San Blas, Chacala) feel more authentically Mexican as they have a larger percentage of Mexican tourists than in the well-known gringo resort towns.



Travelling south, the climate changes from desert to lush tropical. Consequently fruits and vegetables are widely available in any of the towns. We found ourselves over-stocking on fresh provisions here, after having cruised the Baja for several years and becoming accustomed to having to go several weeks between access to produce (remember, we like the remote places). You'll also notice different wildlife here: iguanas and crocodiles replace coyotes and roadrunners. Both the temperature and humidity are higher, so you'll probably sleep without a blanket, but your laundry takes longer to dry.



We acquired the impression that cruisers on Mainland Mexico tend to be less likely to greet and engage one in conversation. This may be due to the larger number of cruisers in Mainland Mexico, or just closer proximity to large population centres. Having said that, in Banderas Bay (La Cruz and Nuevo Vallarta) there is a very active cruisers' community with plenty of activities both recreational and educational,

including talks similar to BCA fleet groups. If you have friends or family wanting to rendezvous with you, there are many places for them to join you and options for staying ashore near the mainland resort towns. The greater number of towns means that cell phone coverage is available in the majority of anchorages.

The wind is more variable in direction near mainland Mexico: rather than alternating NW and calms, it seems more driven by diurnal land/sea breezes and occasional squalls. Some of the southern mainland anchorages are not sheltered from Pacific Ocean swell, so even in quieter wind periods they can be roly (and can make for interesting dinghy landings!). Cursed swell for one person can be really swell for another – surfing is a very popular activity in places like Punta de Mita.



Warmer ocean water is pleasant for swimming in, but generally we found the snorkeling to be inferior to the Baja area due to less visibility and variety of sea life. Other swimming deterrents were crocodiles(!) and panga traffic. One exception was Isla Isabel – a national park about 40 miles NW of San Blas – which is fantastic above and below its clear waters. Three more offshore islands (the Tres Marietas, currently off-limits) may be opening up soon as cruising destinations, and we suspect they will also feature wonderful wildlife.



We haven't traveled south of Puerto Vallarta, and we hear there are some great spots farther down the coast. Of the places we have seen, we liked Puerto Vallarta, even though one has to stay at a marina. It had crocodiles, a long beach with whimsical statues, people-watching, and good food. We also enjoyed Mazatlán for its clean downtown, attractive architecture, and the Carnaval, plus the fact that one has two anchoring choices close to the action. We observed, however, that most cruisers stayed north of Mazatlán town, in the marinas. Chacala has a fun atmosphere with its cozy-sized beach and lack of gringo tourists.



We hope this summary of our impressions from cruising Mexico is useful for planning your own voyages. Happy dreaming and doing!

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.

Cameras on Board

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/cameras-on-board/>



One of the popular trends we have seen recently in the recreational boating market is onboard cameras that integrate easily with modern chartplotters. In the past, it was quite common to view camera feeds; however, in this traditional configuration, camera feeds were only easily available in one location. For example, you could see camera feeds at the lower helm but not the upper. With modern chartplotters, it is now straightforward to interconnect both analog and IP cameras to be viewed in multiple locations. The advantage with IP cameras is that, in many cases, you only need to run one ethernet cable per camera location for the video feed and the power (called Power Over Ethernet or POE). Originally installed onboard for security, cameras are now providing an extra set of eyes for cruisers, night vision for inclement conditions, and remote vessel monitoring.

To get a good idea of all the different options onboard cameras can provide, we are going to look at a recent installation for a boater who wanted the ability to see around and inside the boat from the flybridge, which has limited visibility. We installed a total of five different cameras, but because the multifunction display (MFD) only had two camera inputs, we added a video switcher that allows him to choose which view he would like on either MFD. His main goal was to feel comfortable taking the boat out by himself. We installed two Iris cameras aft, looking down at the port and starboard stern of the boat, allowing for close quarter docking when single-handing or a view of the crew as he approached the dock. Being able to view the crew getting off or on the boat makes docking safer.

We used the same camera in the salon, so he could see what his young grandkids were up to, as well as one in the engine room to quickly glance at the engine compartment in the case of an alarm. This is a great camera for the engine room because it has good low light visibility. We also installed a wide-view aft-looking camera (commonly called a fish-eye), on top of the anchor light looking aft at the horizon to give a better perspective of the boats following him or so he could check on his tender in tow. Many power boaters have limited visibility aft of their boats from the pilothouse, and installing a reverse-image fish-eye camera reduces the blind spot.

The client also chose to integrate a FLIR thermal night vision camera. On a few occasions, he found

himself arriving at his destination later than anticipated and wanted to reduce the associated risks of low-light or night navigation. We chose a FLIR model that allows for full pan, tilt, and zoom capability, and the image can be directly displayed on the MFD.

Last year, Raymarine announced its ClearCruise Augmented Reality technology, which uses a camera to overlay high definition video directly on the Raymarine Axiom MFDs. AIS-equipped vessels and charted navigation aids are identified with rich graphics on a live, dynamic video image. It combines all the traditional aids to navigation over a real-world image directly on the MFD.

Another easy way to get onboard monitoring, if you already have Wi-Fi onboard, is to install a Nest or Arlo camera system that allows remote monitoring. The camera can be directed towards the DC panel to view the shore power or battery status and can be displayed directly on your smartphone.

With modern chartplotters easily displaying video images, more boaters are taking advantage of installing cameras. The safety features and peace of mind provided by onboard cameras are well worth the investment.

If you aren't ready to permanently install a camera on your boat but would like to enjoy some action footage of your adventures, you could try the Garmin VIRB Ultra 30 or VIRB 360 Action cameras. They are waterproof, ultra-high quality 4K, live streaming and compact.

About The Author

Melissa "Missy" Gervais

As You Wish - Bayliner Avanti 34

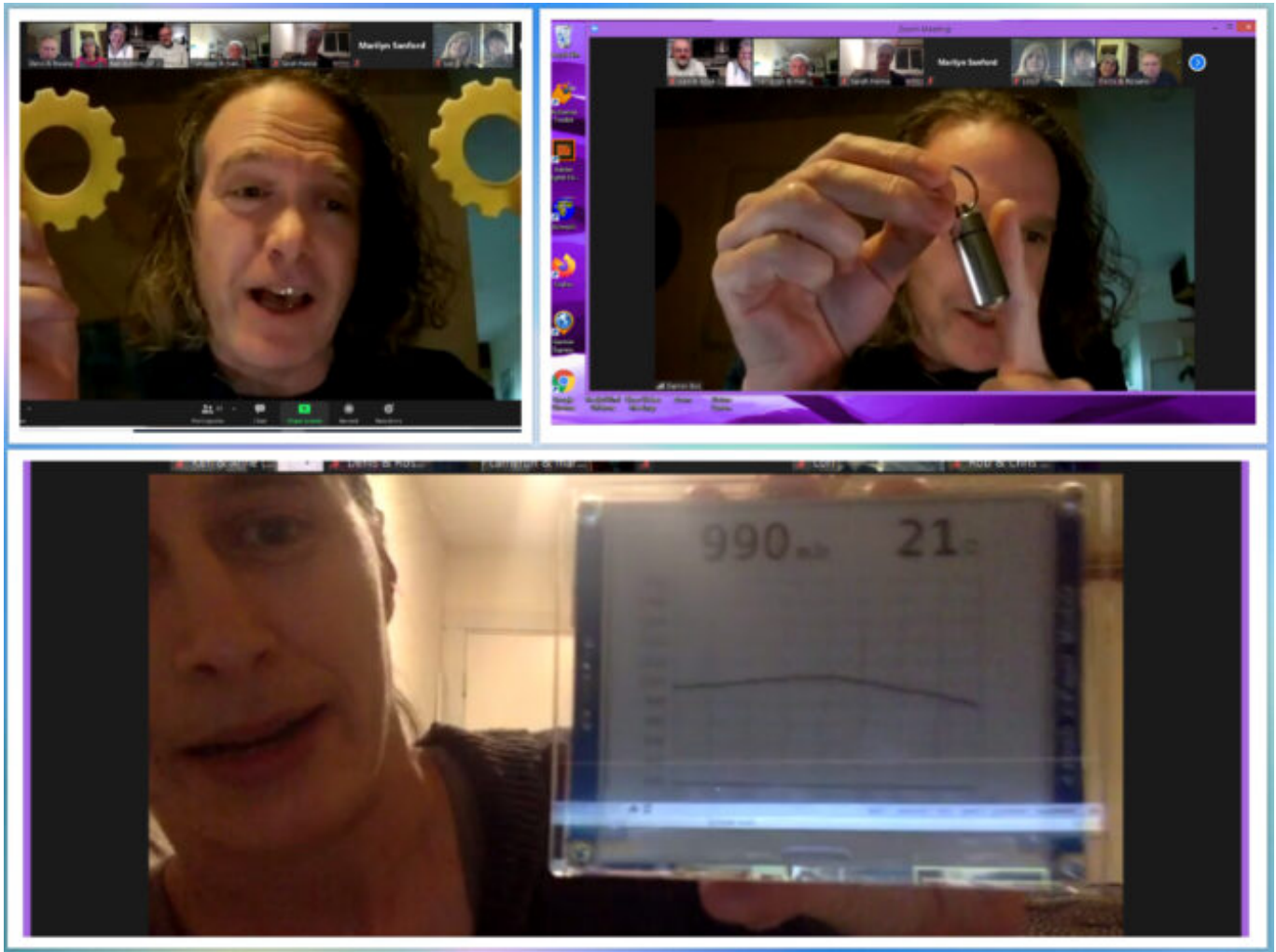
Missy is a local cruiser in the Pacific Northwest and writes a blog called missygoesboating.com that looks at "everything cool for women who boat". She also writes for a number of boating magazines and has a feature column called "Missy Recommends" with Waggoner on-line. She has been working with Jeff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

Vancouver Fleet Report - January 2021

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-fleet-report-january-2021/>

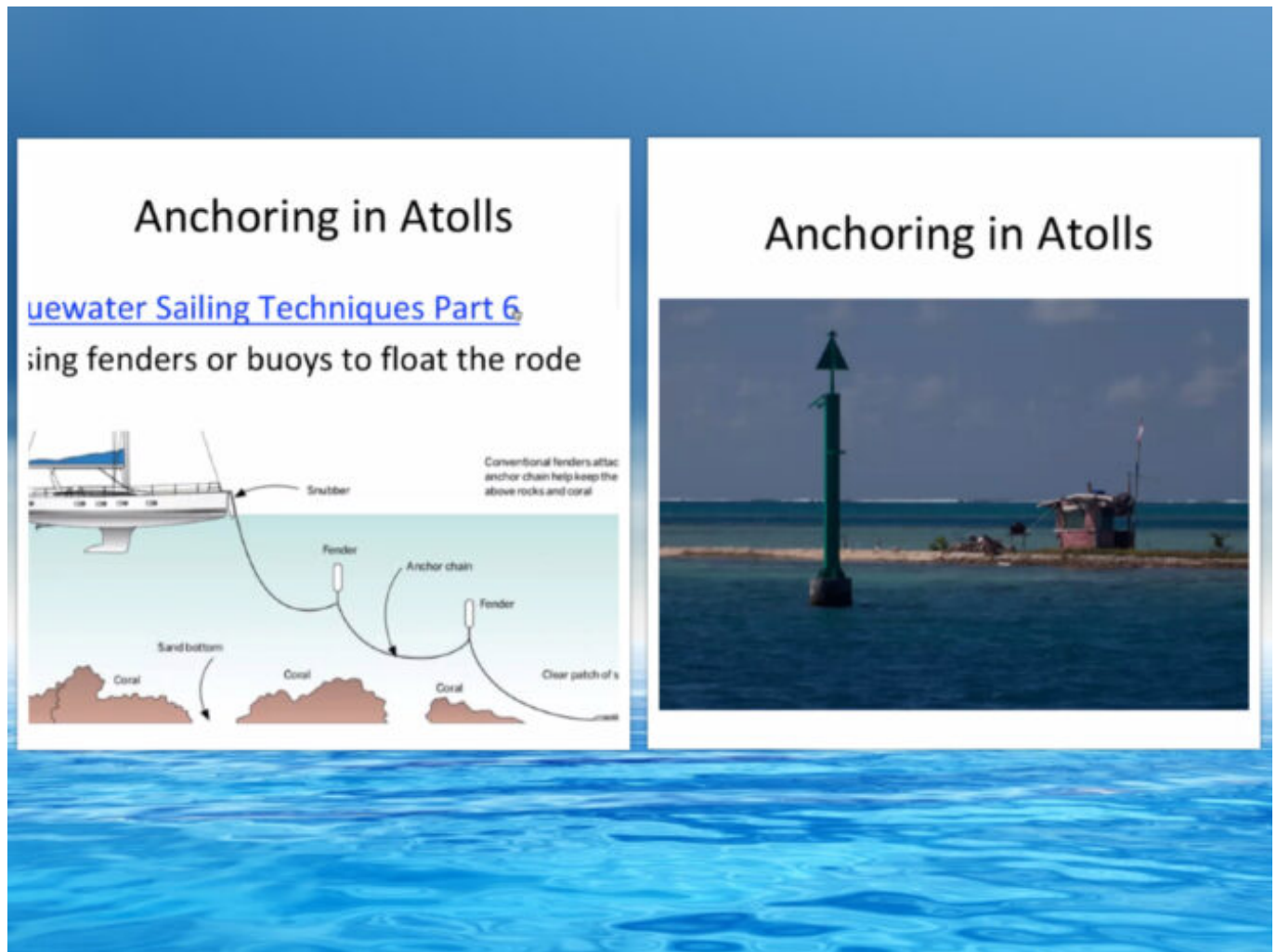


The Fleet of 2021 held its first meeting of the new year via Zoom on January 26. The usual Show and Tell session featured a home-built barometer, waterproof USB stick containers, Omega sewing machine clutch grip, warnings regarding cheap multimeters and fishing equipment.



Show and tell items shared during the meeting.

The program topic was Navigating Atolls and Coral Reefs presented by long time BCA member Jean Baillargeon, from *Shamata*, tuning in from New Zealand, where he is currently cruising... waiting out COVID-19.



Jean Baillargeon sharing his experiences, tips and trick for anchoring in atolls.

This was followed by Fleet member Darren Bos describing how Raspberry Pi can be used as a ship's computer.

Vancouver Fleet Weather Group

Fleet's weather group participants continue to use real time weather information to plan a virtual voyage. As they plan their trips, they analyse weather patterns and discuss weather topics.

Vancouver Fleet's weather group will meet again on **February 9** with presentations from members on weather topics.

The next regular Fleet meeting will be **February 23 starting at 1900 hours**. The meeting will feature a presenter panel addressing the issue of Insurance.

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: January 2021

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-island-fleet-report-january-2021/>



Any doubts about the effectiveness of a virtual platform to host a tri-chapter Fleet meeting were thoroughly dispelled Thursday, January 14. The topic of navigation device choices was addressed with special attention to Open CPN, a mature, open-source Chart Plotter Navigation program. After Daragh Nagle discussed the broader topic of devices and systems available to the offshore sailor with their advantages and limitations Darren Bos and Ken Russell dove into Open CPN. They shared their understanding of the program and its various applications to the task of route planning and navigation including downloading weather assets.

The prelude to this very informative discussion was Sarah Hanna's Show & Tell item: her home-made recording barometer. This device was a cool demonstration of what can be done with some of the high-tech ingredients available to those of us who have the inclination to tinker with them.

Seeing what Sarah accomplished and hearing how Open CPN has improved over the last few years, becoming a valuable tool all sailors can take advantage of, gave the group an appreciation of the possibilities available to us in our preparation to pursue our dreams.

To remind us to maintain our humility Daragh did a little bragging about his Bent Mast Award.

About The Author

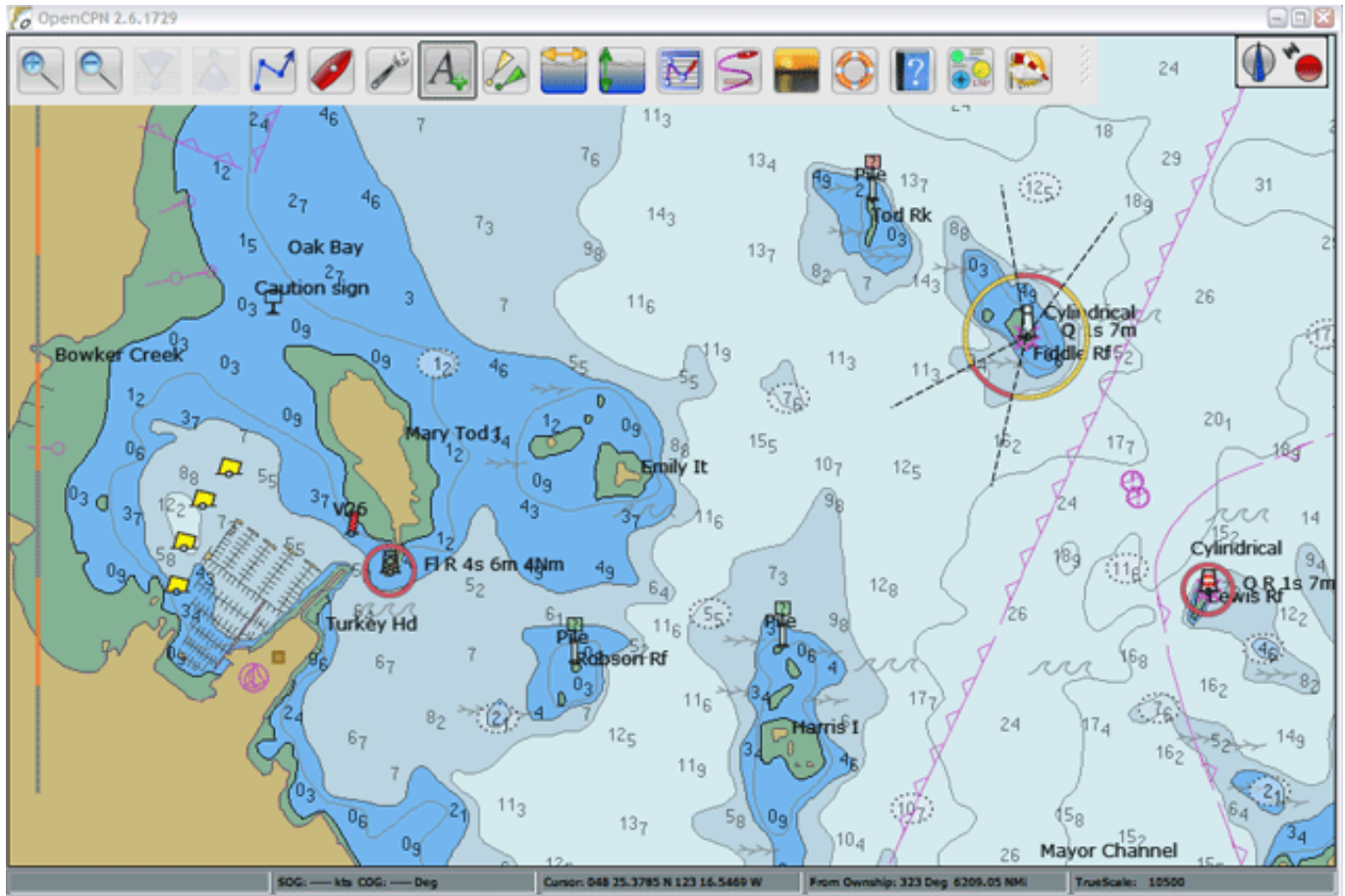
Al Kitchen - VI Fleet Coordinator

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.

Vancouver Fleet Report - December 2020

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-fleet-report-december-2020/>



The Fleet of 2021 held its fourth meeting via Zoom on December 22. In this virtual potluck meeting members showed off a favourite meal while describing some of their sailing and cruising adventures.

On November 24, members of the Vancouver Island Fleet joined us for a presentation by Rob Murray from *Avant* on importing Satellite Charts into OpenCPN. Rob covered topics such as using SASPlanet to download satellite images and exporting them into Mbtile charts which can then be imported into OpenCPN.

There was a second shared meeting with the other Fleets with a presentation on OpenCPN on January 14.

Vancouver Fleet Weather Group

The Fleet's weather program continued on December 15 and again on January 12 with presentations each time from two of the members. Participants will be using real time weather information to plan a virtual voyage.

Vancouver Fleet's weather group will meet again on February 9.

The next regular Fleet meeting will be **January 26 starting at 1900 hours**. The meeting topic will be Navigating Coral Reefs presented by BCA member Jean Baillargeon.

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.

BCA-Wide Virtual Club Night - Bill Norrie: Around the World via the Southern Oceans

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/bca-wide-virtual-club-night-bill-norrie-around-the-world-via-the-southern-oceans/>



Batten down the Hatches!

All aboard with Bill Norrie, on his amazing, solo, around the world voyage with **Pixie**. No doubt a tight ship, but what do you do when your keel points to the stars? Ever considered waking up with a sodden bunk, fire on board, no electronics and a great view where the dodger once stood? Well wonder no more. A special bonus for all on deck as Bill shares his secret recipe for cooking Ichiban in 30 foot seas and novel applications of Duct tape. Tonight we learn the ropes from a veteran of the Southern Oceans.

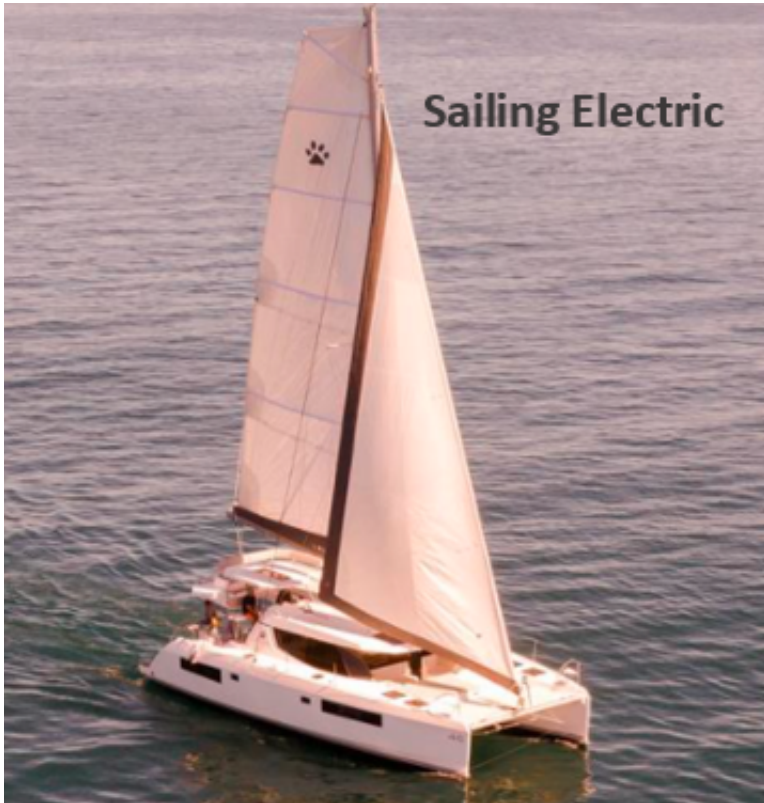
The Calgary Chapter looks forward to welcoming all members to this BCA-wide February Club Night!

This club night is open to all BCA members, and an email with Zoom link will be sent to all members. Non-members are also welcome to attend; please send an email to [Pam & Ted](#) to receive an invitation.

The Zoom room opens at 6pm MT, with meeting at 7:30 and presentation immediately to follow.

Sailing Electric

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/sailing-electric/>



In October 2021, Dave and Ruth Noble will be purchasing a Leopard 45 sailing catamaran and refitting it with all-electric propulsion and house systems. This 45 minute presentation examines the current state and future of Sailing Electric and provides lessons learned in the pursuit of a no-holds-barred approach to electric propulsion, electric systems, and electric living.

Topics include:

- Generation (wind, solar, hydro)
- Batteries
- Navigation systems
- Electric 'budget'; and
- Systems design

Following the presentation there will be time for questions and discussion.

The session is free but requires a simple registration in advance. If there is enough interest, a second session with more detailed information will be provided at a later date.

Vancouver Virtual Club Night - Traversay III Visits Norway and Svalbard

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-virtual-club-night-traversay-iii-visits-norway-and-svalbard/>



Come sail away with us as we join Mary Anne Unrau and Larry Roberts on another one of *Traversay III's* outstanding voyages.

As part of their nine year circumnavigation, Larry and Mary Anne decided to spend two winters in Larry's birthplace of London, England. But what to do in the summer between the two winters? Their friend, Rune, who they had met in Cocos Keeling, provided the perfect solution when he invited them to visit his home country of Norway.

About the Speakers

Larry Roberts and Mary Anne Unrau have been sailing their Waterline 43 cutter all over the world since they first launched her 20 years ago. They have sailed more than 120,000 miles, they have crossed every

meridian, sailed south to Antarctica, north to Spitzbergen, squeezed through the ice in the Northwest Passage and sailed to Townsville, Australia non-stop from Victoria so they could do some scuba diving and continue to explore the islands around Australia. Their Pacific circuit took them out to the Coral Sea and over to New Zealand before heading across to Valdivia and Puerto Natales, Chile and home to Victoria via Honolulu. Mary Anne is the author of a book about their voyages: [Around the World with Traversay III](#).

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 please send an email to [Heather](#) to receive an invitation.

Optimal Sail Power

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/optimal-sail-power/>



A relevant and informative evening that may challenge your thinking about ‘Sail Optimization’, this course, offered by the Vancouver Chapter, will address critical elements in sail configuration, and adjustments that guide optimal sail power given changes in wind applicable to your vessel’s design.

Instructor Nicole Foster will break the presentation into four areas:

1. Optimizing sail plan for windward sailing in 10 – 55 kts Apparent
2. How and when to alter sail area, and shape, for changing conditions
3. Recommended rig types for maximum efficiency; essentially and effectively changing gears

4. Questions and clarification

A native of Vancouver who has been sailing 1968, Nicole is a veteran sailor, racer and sail maker. Currently working for [Evolution Sails](#), Nicole is committed, knowledgeable and brings decades of experience and knowledge to this course.

This online course is open to all BCA members, as well as non-members.

Currents Bluewater Cruising

The Bluewater Cruising Association

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