



*Photo Contest Winner*

*Barbara Lyall & Brent Alley*

*Pegasus II anchored in Reid Inlet, Glacier Bay Alaska with the Reid Glacier in the background.*



# Currents

January 2022

## Table Of Contents

<b>From the Commodore's Desk</b> .....	3
<b>Experiencing Offshore Sailing</b> .....	6
<b>Vancouver Island Fleet Report - January 2022</b> .....	14
<b>Vancouver Fleet Report - January 2022</b> .....	16
<b>Vancouver Virtual Club Night - The Voyage of Shamata</b> .....	18
<b>Weather Strategies for the Inside Passage</b> .....	20
<b>Passage Making</b> .....	22
<b>Tides and Currents</b> .....	24

## From the Commodore's Desk

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/from-the-commodores-desk-5/>



It has been a while!

Now that we have our AGM behind us, we have celebrated the holidays, hopefully have managed to visit with our family and friends, and have moved into 2022, it is time to reflect.

The Bluewater Cruising Association's methods of supporting our members in meeting, learning, and preparing for offshore adventures has continued to morph, providing excellent opportunities to those who love to sail. I am so very proud of how our organization consistently conquers the big waves.

This past year has been extremely challenging for many of us; the BCA has not been exempt from those trials. We had another year with COVID-19 altering our normal procedures and forcing us to look outside the box. As usual, BCA's amazing team of volunteers has succeeded. We have been able to safely conduct in-person training events. Vancouver and Calgary delivered astonishing rendezvous. In fine tradition, BURPs have been outstanding. Our members have contributed many interesting articles to

Currents. The association has maintained a solid presence in the offshore sailing community. Some of our members have realized their dreams and have ventured to far-away lands via the best transportation imaginable: a sailboat.

For all of your efforts, loyalty, and just staying true to the course, I thank all of the Chapter Watches, Board of Directors (BOD), watchkeepers reporting to the BOD, and most of all, the BCA members. You have proven to be the most amazing shipmates possible.

What does 2022 look like for the Bluewater Cruising Association? Well – without a doubt, challenges remain. We have not made it through the troubled waters of COVID-19. However, I can feel the better weather approaching and my optimism is growing. Our crew of volunteers continues to adjust course when needed. As our federal and provincial health orders evolve, so will BCA. Although we have had to slow down, off on the horizon I can see the return of face-to-face happenings. As we move through 2022, BCA will strive to meet the needs of our members, while ensuring the safety of all. My ask of you is to remain kind and remember we are all family.

I thank all of you who continue to serve. To those who are new to a watch, report, or the board, I welcome and thank you. I highly encourage all of our members to visit the BCA website where our BOD, watchkeepers, and reports are listed. Take note of who they are and extend your gratitude for their hard work.

To all, I look forward to working, charting new courses, and sailing through the BCA 2022. May we soon let go lines, sail vessels, and celebrate our rendezvous!

Yours aye,

David Mitchell  
Commodore  
Bluewater Cruising Association

## **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 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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## Experiencing Offshore Sailing

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/experiencing-offshore-sailing/>



Each year for the past 6 seasons I have taken *Oh!*, my 40 Leopard Catamaran, south to spend the winter months in warm waters exploring the eastern Caribbean and Bahamas. The voyages have always been wonderful. This season Andy Den Otter and I joined forces to create an opportunity for two people to experience an ocean passage and get a bunch of hands-on training along the way. Several years ago Andy had joined *Oh!* in Norfolk, VA at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay for the initial passage leg to Bermuda. We quickly developed a comradery and mutual respect for what we can each contribute to passage making and have stayed in touch ever since. Andy has a passion for sailing and is a natural instructor. Plus, he is very intelligent but with the curiosity of a child. Complement that with his engineering training and IYT Yacht Master Instructor rating and it all creates an amazing combination – especially for problem solving on a sailboat. We were joined on the 14 day adventure by Tony (from the Foothills Association of Cruising Sailors) and Vic (from the [Bluewater Cruising Association](#)). Neither of them had any offshore experience, and for Vic, it was his first sailing experience. Why not jump right in with an ocean passage to start? After all, what’s the worst that could happen?

I had been in Deltaville, Virginia for the past 6 weeks preparing *Oh!* for the passage and cruising in the

Bahamas. During that time the days slowly changed from warm fall days and beautiful sunshine to damp and cold, so both I and *Oh!* were more than ready to go. November and December can be very cold in the Chesapeake Bay with chilly winds and freezing temperatures at night, and *Oh!* is just not fitted out for that type of weather. Therefore, the plan was to get moving toward warm weather and blue seas as quickly as possible. There was some last minute provisioning to do, a COVID-19 Rapid Antigen test for myself, the applications for our Bahamas Tourist Visas, and an extensive walk around and safety briefing for Tony and Vic to get them aware of the gear, systems and layout of *Oh!*. That process required almost two days. Then it was a simple matter of checking the weather forecasts one more time and clearing US Customs and Immigration. We were fully loaded and ready to departed Norfolk at 1400h on December 6. I do not think I have ever seen *Oh!* sitting that close to her water line.

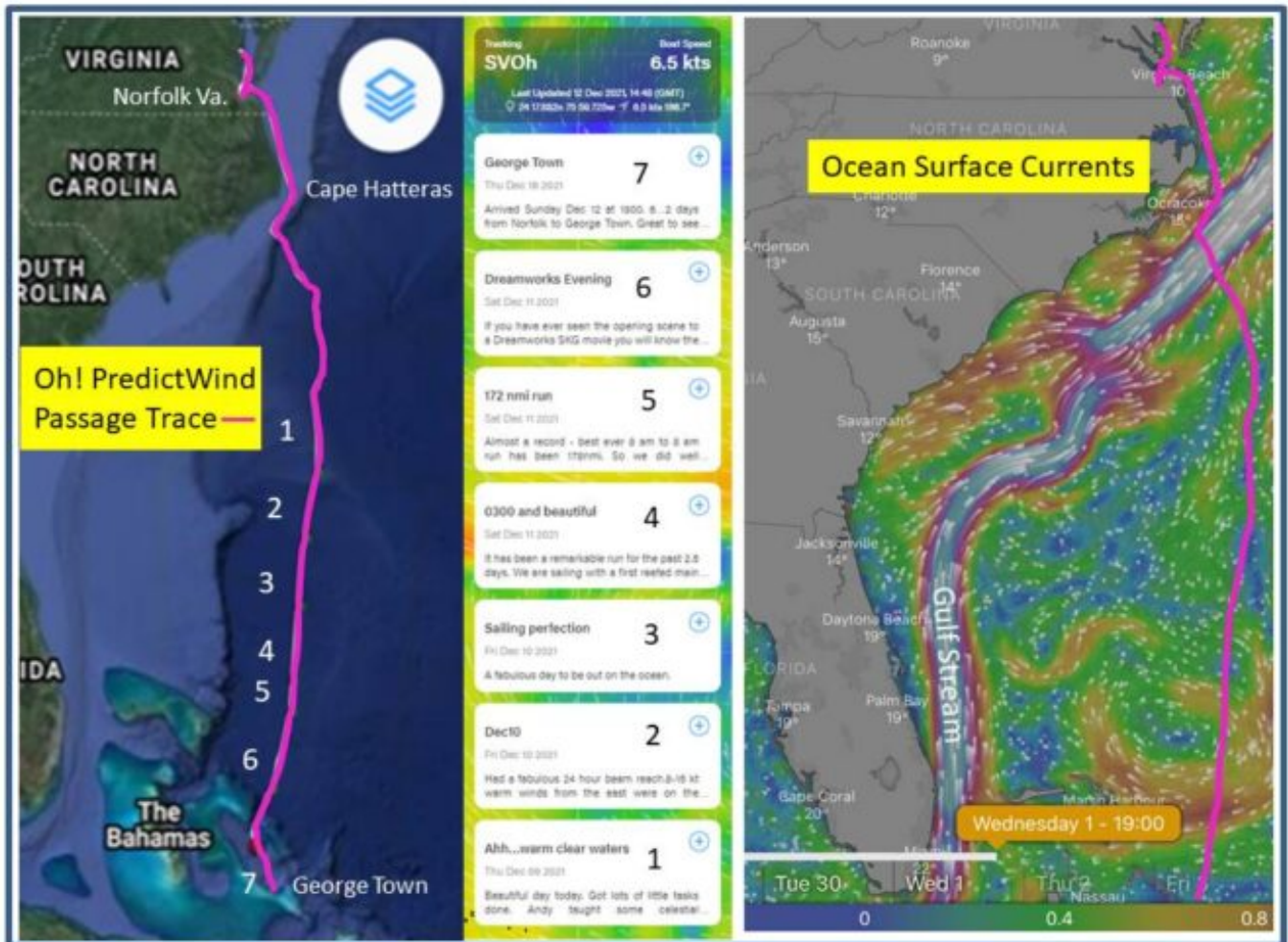


*Oh!* sits low in the water with a full crew and stores for 6 months in the Bahamas.

## Passage to Bahamas

As is always the case with respect to ocean passages, weather is a key factor. There had been a series of cold fronts in the previous weeks that always brought strong northerly winds, which could clock 360 degrees in just 24 hours, or settle in for many days. Offshore, the northerlies would gain strength and steady 30-40 knot winds were not uncommon. That variability can make the seas around Cape Hatteras very rough. The famous Cape is where the last of the south flowing Labrador Current meets the fast

northeast flowing Gulf Stream and is legendary for its rough seas in the wrong combination of winds and current. I have been fortunate that during each of my 6 passages around the Cape, I have never seen it as anything but mild mannered... and hope to keep it that way. We were fortunate that Mother Nature wanted the passage to be a success and she made her contribution by providing a perfectly-timed weather window to sail south around Cape Hatteras and then southeast across the Gulf Stream.



*Oh!*'s route stayed close to the Virginia and North Carolina coast until the weather permitted a safe crossing of the Gulf Stream.

Just 36 hours after departing Norfolk VA, we had rounded Cape Hatteras and were half way to Cape Lookout when, right on cue, the northerlies switched to westerlies and we had our window to cross the Gulf Stream and head offshore to warm waters. The westerlies lasted just 8 hours before slowly clocking around to the north again, but that was long enough to get us well past the 30 NM wide Gulf Stream and enjoy the light winds as we sailed southeast, putting some distance between us and the Gulf Stream. It always amazes me the difference just 50 miles makes in the air and sea temperature: the multiple layers of clothing slowly got stowed and the heater was put away for the season. There was some swell left over from the variable weather patterns and, at one point, I could clearly see at least 3 sets of wave trains coming from different directions. That caused confused seas and a noisy ride as waves would rush between the hulls, or hit the bridge deck when they combined to make a sudden peak in a wave. However, it was a beautiful day despite the choppy seas and we enjoyed the warm air and bright sunshine. Just 10

hours later, a cold front coming off the continent reached *Oh!* at 2000h and we got caught with only a double reef in the main sail.

Normally I would have preferred to have no main sail up and simply run with only 30% of the genoa out. To ease pressure on the rig, I decided to furl the genoa rather than try to douse the main at night in rough seas and the 30-45 knot winds. We were on a starboard tack broad reach, and with just a double reefed main sail up, there was a lot of weather helm so we used the starboard engine to counter the turning forces of the main sail. This had the double benefit of reducing the weather helm and dampening the tendency for *Oh!* to head up as the following seas began to grow and we surfed and slowed with each passing wave. The technique worked really well, getting us through the gusts of up to 45 kn and heavy rain, which slowly dissipated overnight. We almost set a 24 hour distance record for *Oh!*, but the 173 NM was 5 NM short of my record. Not bad though considering 1/3 of that 24 hours was in pretty light winds.



A cold front catches up and gives us a free boat wash and a fast overnight ride to warm weather and fabulous sailing conditions.

By the time the sun rose, Mother Nature had morphed the fast moving cold front flowing off North America into a warm tropical breeze; we now headed almost due south toward the Bahamas. The next 4 days were spent sailing in 10-15 kn of winds on a port tack beam reach with a slight 0.5 m swell and light wind chop, blue skies and spectacular starlit evenings – tropical sailing at its best! The long pants, fleece

and jackets were replaced with shorts and t-shirts, accompanied by smiles all around.

Each day Andy gave Tony an introduction to Celestial Navigation with impressive results and surprising accuracy. They would take multiple sun shots and compare results – it wasn't long before they were both detecting and correcting each other's small errors. As the weather settled and Vic became accustomed to the boat's motion, the daily instruction expanded to include building Vic's sailing knowledge, skills and confidence. He was preparing for an upcoming charter and courses he had booked in the BVIs, so he was eager to learn as much as he could.

We entered Conch Cut at the north end of Elizabeth Harbour just as the sun was about to disappear over the horizon. The winds were perfect to sail around the reefs and shallows right up to Monument Beach on Stocking Island, where we dropped our anchor without even starting the engines – a perfect ending to the passage. It was 1800h on December 12, the sun had just set and within just a few minutes it was completely dark, other than the anchor lights from the more than 30 cruisers that had arrived before us and the stars above.



Picture perfect sailing conditions made the sailing classroom at sea a delight.

The passage was 840 NM (1556 km) and took 6 days, 4 hours from start to finish. Along the way we experienced air temperatures from 0°C to 30°C, sustained winds ranging from 0-40 kn (74 km/h), gusts to

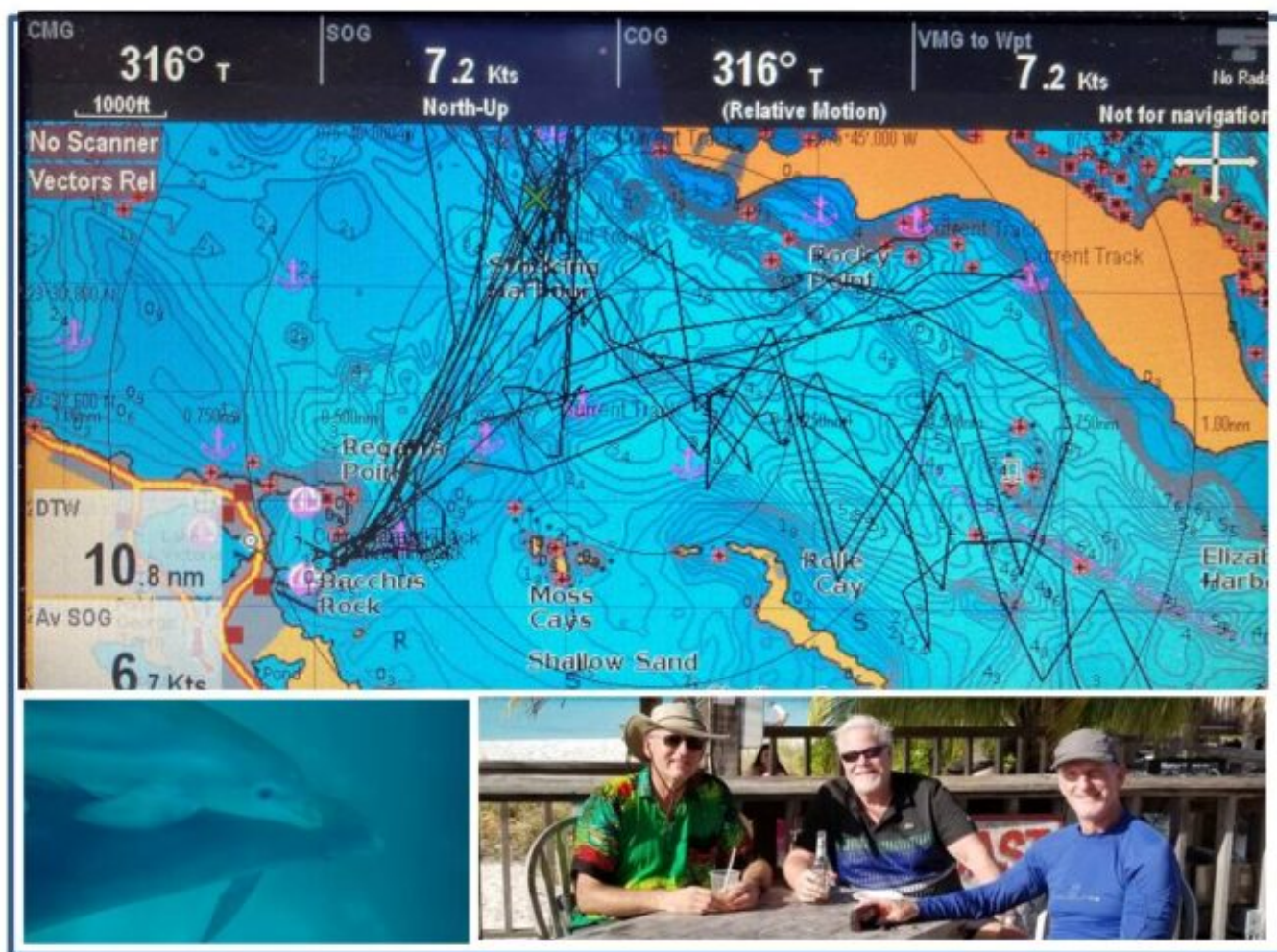
45 kn, grey to sparkling blue seas, 0-2.5 m ocean swell, a few squalls of note and one strong cold front. The final 3 days were absolutely perfect trade wind sailing conditions on a beam reach in very gentle seas. As a first time experience to give some “new to the offshore” sailors a great introduction to the variability of ocean sailing, the passage could not have been better.

## **Bahamas**

### **Practical Sail Training**

The rapid departure from Norfolk and swift passage also meant we could enjoy a full week of basic sail training in the warm calm waters of Elizabeth Harbour, at George Town. The first 2 days of our time in the Bahamas were spent working through the process of clearing into a foreign country by yacht. The clearance was complicated by my need to navigate the uncharted waters of obtaining a charter license under their new rules; I had a rapidly growing number of charters I had booked for the season. However, once those tasks were complete, we were ready for training. During our week we were very fortunate to have steady 15-20 kn winds, which made for perfect sailing conditions in the flat waters.

The next four days were spent going over all points of sail, boat handling, basic coastal navigation, knots, maritime rules of the road, Man Overboard (MOB) simulations (now “person” POB, or “crew” COB overboard drills), and weather forecasting. We practiced sailing on and off anchors, reefing, basic piloting with hand bearing compasses and paper charts, and sailed around patch reefs to demonstrate how the sun angle affects your ability to see them. The harbour is large, with many good anchorages and depths between 0 and 6 meters. When sailing here we frequently heard the depth alarm informing us there was less than a meter under *Oh!*'s keels. It was a good lesson in looking at water colour to gauge depths rather than the charts, which are very inaccurate with the shifting sands that are common in the Bahamas. Combine those shallow depths with lots of patch reefs, rocks, islands and plenty of harbour traffic from all the cruising boats and water taxis and it is a lively place to practice tacking, gybing and the collision regulations. There was a lack of floating docks, however, so we decided that docking skills would be replaced with engine powered piloting skills. We used an area along a steep but straight portion of the island with a deep channel all along its length to teach boat handling skills. The steep jagged limestone rock wall provided a good reference to practice along. However, I made sure that we kept a safe distance as the boat was maneuvered past the jagged rocks. As the chart plotter showed at the end of the four days, we had made good use of those perfect winds and flat waters for the practical sail training.



Elizabeth Harbor is a fabulous place to do basic sail training.

Our maneuvering exercises provided lots of amusement for the crews of the many anchored boats around us, as they wondered what the heck we were doing. It would have been fun to hear their conversations as we did forward, reverse and figure eight maneuvers, stopped, pivoted 360 degrees without fore or aft movement, and then repeated everything 2-3 times so everyone got a turn. Both Vic and Tony are looking at chartering catamarans in the near future, so the goal was to get them comfortable with maneuvering in tight quarters under power without using the rudders. Several of my cruising friends approached me later telling me of the chatter between the boats as they watched that crazy Canadian catamaran: “Were they looking for a perfect spot to anchor? No. Maybe, they dropped something and were looking for it? Or... maybe they are just nuts!”

## Time for Play

We also had time for enjoying some of the natural wonders of the Bahamas. We saw turtles, hiked the beaches, paddle boarded and even swam with a small pod of two adult and one infant dolphin for about 15 minutes. It was amazing to be in the water and have the adults nudging the infant close to us as the dolphins swam around us – a truly incredible experience that unfortunately occurred just as the sun was setting making for dim pictures. We also met other cruisers and enjoyed burgers and drinks at the Chat ‘N’ Chill grill on Stocking Island.

That second week on the boat clearly revived Vic's enthusiasm and desire to pursue further sail training. His enthusiasm had taken a bit of hit due to a somewhat uncomfortable first week getting used to "ocean motion".

I must say it was one of the most enjoyable passages I have had during the past 7 years and over 30,000 nautical miles of deep blue seas. I am looking forward to Andy re-joining *Oh!* in March for another Cruise and Learn. Cheers to all at BCA!

## **About The Author**

### **Rod Morris**

#### **Oh! - 2006 Robertson and Caine Leopard 40' Catamaran**

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

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## Vancouver Island Fleet Report - January 2022

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-island-fleet-report-january-2022/>

**VI FLEET GROUP**  
**January 2022**

Presentations by:  
**Sean Thompson, Dolphin Insurance**  
**Glen Wilson, BCA Circumnavigator**

**Many types of cruisers out there**

- Taped and wired together
- New boats and unrealistically hopeful
- Know their boat and its systems, and are equipped to manage unexpected breakages
- Able to continue their cruising plans with few delays

Our meeting this month started with a lengthy list of announcements as the group sorts out several activities targeting the cruising season this year. Philip and Michelle Cook volunteered to present February’s Show and Tell before Werner Kurz and Sarah Beukema told us about the many advantages of having their Motorola T600 “Talk About” walkie talkies.

Offshore Insurance has been a topic of great interest to many of us lately and on January 12th the Vancouver Island Fleet heard from Sean Thompson of Dolphin Insurance regarding the various regions of offshore insurance and the underwriters who are now happily covering these areas. Developing a resume of education and experience by cruisers is key. We learned that many traditional requirements have been rescinded and the underwriters targeting this market are finding it a worthwhile pursuit.

Returned circumnavigator Glen Wilson then discussed his approach to the need for offshore cruisers to ensure they have all the spare parts they can imagine they will need for their travels. He also highlighted the advantages of having the tools and training / experience to be able to affect the required repairs and maintenance yourself. A recurring theme in his presentation was that many foreign ports will have skilled people to do the work for you, but they are much less likely to have access to the required parts.

The year is shaping up to be an exciting adventure for our now 22 boat Fleet and with a little cooperation

from the Gods of Viruses we'll see a sizable cohort head south this summer. It continues to be a pleasure for Daragh and I to play our part in preparing these fine sailors in pursuit of their dreams.

## **About The Author**

### **Al Kitchen - VI Fleet Coordinator**

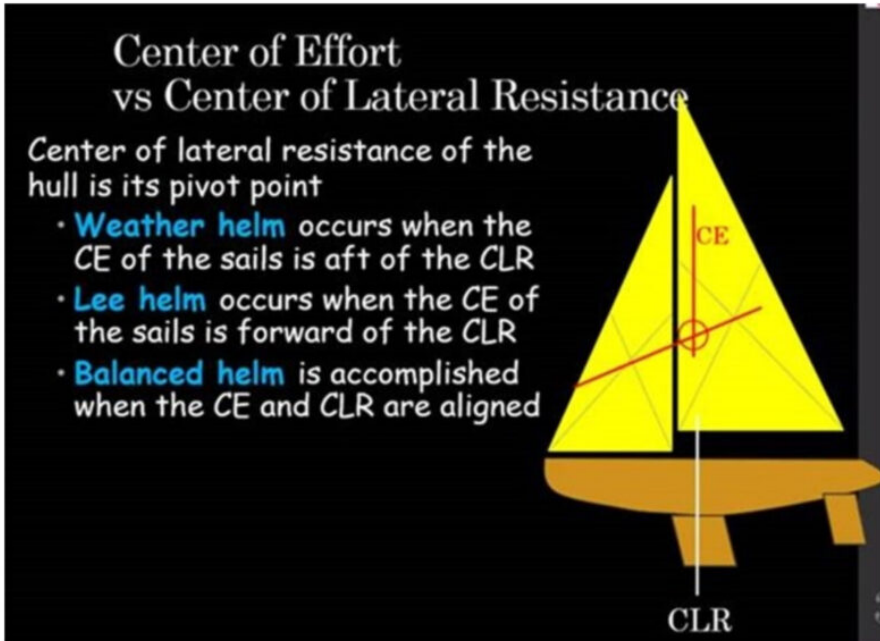
#### **Wyndspree - Huntingford 53 Ketch**

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.

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## Vancouver Fleet Report - January 2022

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-fleet-report-january-2022/>



The December meeting of the Vancouver Fleet, attended by ten people, was held over dinner at a restaurant in Stamps Landing . It was in the spirit of the Christmas Potluck suppers we used to have at the McLeans' house. New members Mary and Dave Kruger, *Synchronicity*, were welcomed to the Fleet.

The January meeting featured Ken Gillstrom presenting Heavy Weather Tactics. Show and Tell covered nylon hydraulic hose webbing for anti-chafe from Princess Auto. It allows water to go through it which

prevents overheating of the line. Also described were heavy duty 5-6mm zip lock bags, in a variety of sizes for storing items on board. The Fleet also was given a recommendation for the movie 'In the Heart of the Sea.'

We have a volunteer to start the process for VICE 2022 and information will be sent out soon. We also have volunteers for Offshore Leaver Packages. A request for information from this year's leavers will also be sent out soon.

Plans for the February 22nd meeting are in flux pending arrangements for availability for Zoom meetings.

## **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.

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## Vancouver Virtual Club Night - The Voyage of Shamata

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-virtual-club-night-the-voyage-of-shamata/>



Helen Roberts and Jean Baillargeon have been members at BCA for over 10 years. After 5 years prepping *Shamata*, their 47ft Discovery sloop, they made their way down the US west coast in August 2017, on their way to what would be a 4 year journey across the South Pacific and back to Vancouver in August 2021. Theirs was a straightforward trip along the well travelled route known as the Coconut Milk Run.

Helen was a leadership consultant and coach at Providence Health Care for 17 years. She learned to sail in her teens while her family lived in Nova Scotia.

Jean was a film and TV picture editor and director for 35 years working freelance across Canada. He came to sailing late in life, at 40 years old.

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*This will be a Virtual Club Night, on the Zoom platform. All BCA members will receive an invitation with*

*links to the Zoom meeting and login details. If you are not a member (or if you did not receive the email) and would like to attend, please email Heather Marshall, [Vancouver Speakers Watchkeeper](#), for details.*

## **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.

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## **Weather Strategies for the Inside Passage**

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/weather-strategies-for-the-inside-passage-2/>



Spend two mornings with Kevin Monahan, learning about the unique weather patterns of the west coast and how to make decisions based on weather forecasts. BC coastal weather patterns are confusing if you don't understand the basic forces that shape the local weather in the Juan de Fuca Strait, Georgia Strait, Johnstone Strait and the North Coast. Once you understand the dynamics of the most common weather patterns that occur in the region, you can develop strategies that take advantage of them, thus having a more comfortable and less stressful cruise.

### **Course Format**

Each two hour Zoom presentation will be followed by ½ hour of questions. Register for the course and we'll send the Zoom link to you a couple of days ahead of time.

### **About the Instructor**

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

## **About The Author**

### **Kathryn Swangard**

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Kate and her husband Michael joined BCA in 2003 to take advantage of their offshore education courses before heading off on their 5+ year journey around the Mediterranean, Atlantic and Caribbean. Kate currently leads the Mid-Island Group within Vancouver Island Chapter, organizing club nights and education courses.

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## Passage Making

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/passage-making-2/>



This is a multi-topic, two day, online seminar presented by Ken and Carol Gillstrom of [Voyageur Sailing](#).

With practical knowledge and deep experience, Ken and Carol will bring you closer to your own successful passages, whether within local waters or across oceans. With knowledge comes confidence, allowing you to better understand how to mitigate risk and more confidently extend your cruising world.

Some of the topics covered include: the psychology of passage making, pros and cons of hull shapes, deck layouts, sail plans & rigs as well as navigational aids, electronics, communications systems, safety & survival, sail dynamics. Over the two days you will also learn about weather basics such as air movement, global patterns, highs and lows and forecasting as well as tides and currents.

This is a fun, engaging and comprehensive two days that will make you a better sailor and prepare you to extend your sailing reach. Have questions related to your individual situation and needs? Ken and Carol will be available for Q&A at both lunch hours and at the end of each day.

## **About the Presenters**

Ken and Carol Gillstrom have prepared for, and executed, hundreds of successful passages over the past 25 years ranging from a few days to weeks at sea, across the Atlantic and Pacific, from Vancouver to Alaska, from Panama to Newfoundland. Every passage brings different challenges. Even the same passage at a different time of year will present new challenges. Experienced presenters with a wealth of knowledge, they are engaging and informative.

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## Tides and Currents

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/tides-and-currents-2/>



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

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

### Course Format

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

### About the Instructor

Kevin Monahan is a retired Canadian Coast Guard officer with more than 20 years navigating the British

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

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**Currents Bluewater Cruising**

**The Bluewater Cruising Association**

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