



Photo Contest Winner

Hans & Lydia Forssander

Leaving Newcastle Island, waiting to catch the slack through Dodds Narrows familiar voices came on the radio - Denis and Rosario on Counting Stars! Buddy-boating South we rafted in Ruxton Passage. After digging for clams and oysters, we had the rest of the day reserved for "hanging out", until both Mayaluja and Counting Stars crews literally could count the stars in the balmy night sky!



Currents

May 2022

Table Of Contents

Changes to Canadian Pleasure Craft Distress Signals (Smoke, Flare or Electronic)	
Requirements	3
VI Fleet Rendezvous at Otter Bay	7
Salish Sea Pilot and The Perfect Anchorage (and a Discount for BCA Members)	12
Extra 2022 BCA Member Directories Now Available for Sale	16
BCA VI Summer BBQ	18
Vancouver Club Night - Potluck and Swap Meet	19
Fibreglass Repair	21

Changes to Canadian Pleasure Craft Distress Signals (Smoke, Flare or Electronic) Requirements

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/changes-to-canadian-pleasure-craft-distress-signals-smoke-flare-or-electronic-requirements/>



There have been two significant changes to the Canadian Pleasure Craft (Small Vessel) Regulations that BCA members may not be aware of:

1. The reduction of the number of Pyrotechnic Distress Signals required, if certain communications gear is carried on board
2. Approval of Electronic Flares

This article introduces these changes and discusses some of the pros and cons of the Electronic Flare option.

READERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE VESSEL OPERATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT ALL REQUIRED SAFETY GEAR IS ON BOARD AND MEETS CURRENT REQUIREMENTS.

Pyrotechnic Distress Signals

The Small Vessel Regulations, under the Canadian Shipping Act, 2001, requires a certain number of Pyrotechnic Distress Signals (Smoke/Flare) be carried on a Vessel. The number and type are determined by the length of the Vessel. In the current version of the [Safe Boating Guide](#), the number of required Pyrotechnic Distress Signals can be reduced, as outlined in part of Note 2 on page 19, if the Vessel has one of three identified means of electronic communication:

“The number of flares required may be reduced by 50 percent (the number of smoke signals cannot exceed 50% of the number of smoke signals given in the tables above) if the boat has one of the following:

- *A means of two-way communication**
- *A 406 MHz personal locator beacon** that is worn by the boat operator; or*
- *A 406 MHz emergency position-indicating radio beacon****

** The means of two-way communication may include a Very High Frequency (VHF) marine radio, a satellite telephone or a cellular telephone (if the VHF radio or the cellular telephone is located in a coverage area.)*

*** A 406 MHz personal locator beacon (PLB) must meet the requirements under the Radio Communication Act. All Canadian coded PLBs should be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry at <https://www.cbr-rcb.ca/cbr/> or by calling 1-877-406-7671 (toll free). Registering a beacon is free of charge. Canadian-coded beacons cannot be registered elsewhere.*

**** A 406 MHz emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) must meet the requirements of the Ship Station Radio Technical Regulations and must also be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry. See above. Ensuring that your 406 MHz PLB, or EPIRB is registered, as well as updating the information regularly, will facilitate the task for search and rescue personnel in the event of a distress situation. For further information regarding VHF radios or EPIRBs please visit: <https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/oep-navigation-radiocommsfaqs-1489.htm>”*

This represents a 50% reduction in the number of flares required for many BCA members and other pleasure craft operators.

Electronic Flares

Effective November 9, 2021, the [Acceptance of Electronic Visual Distress Signals in lieu of Pyrotechnic Distress Signals \(Smoke signals or flare\) on Pleasure Craft Policy](#) was put into effect. The policy will be reviewed in five years.

In summary, the policy allows for the replacement of all Pyrotechnic Distress Signals (except one approved smoke signal), with one approved* Electronic Visual Distress Signal.

***Note:** USCG Approval is not valid in Canada. Transport Canada has only approved the two colour, plus infrared version meeting certain standards. Readers are advised to check with the retailer or manufacturer to ensure that the unit they are considering has been approved for use in Canada. At current pricing, the writer has not found a unit under \$400 CDN that has Transport Canada approval.



Close up of label

Advantages and Disadvantages of Electronic Visual Dress Signals

Potential advantages include:

- One time purchase. No fixed expiration date.
- Reduced risk of fire. Pyrotechnic signals are classed as explosives.
- Reduced environmental risk. Pyrotechnic signals must be replaced every 4 years and expired ones disposed of as a dangerous good. (Somewhat offset by the need to replace and dispose batteries in Electronic signals.)
- More compact than numerous flares.
- Less onerous storage requirements. (Somewhat reduced by the requirement to maintain an approved smoke signal.)
- Less dangerous to operate. No blinding light, heat or fumes.
- Reduced training to operate.

Potential disadvantages include:

- Range is line of sight at or near sea level, similar to a hand held Pyrotechnic signal. Parachute, Twin Star and pistol flares would generally have a greater visual range.
- Cost: The approved Electronic Flares cost between \$400 and \$700. For boaters requiring 6 Pyrotechnic signals, the replacement cost of the five extra (remember one smoke signal is still required with the Electronic flare) at say \$100, every 4 years (pistol or twin star) it will take 12 to 28 years to offset the purchase cost; assuming the cost of Pyrotechnic disposal and Electronic battery replacement/disposal would offset each other.

Conclusions

The reduction in Visual Distress Signal requirements recognizes the reliability of electronic communications and their increased role in search and rescue operations. This is a welcome change for most boaters from an environmental, safety and cost perspective. Electronic Visual Distress Signals are a potential replacement for hand-held flares; regrettably, the current cost will be considered excessive for many boaters.

Cover Image: Permission to use from SiriusSignal.com

About The Author

K. Barrie Letts

Nearchus - Saturna 37 Sloop

Barrie and Sandra joined BCA Feb 2006, were part of the Fleet of 2007, and have received Coastal 999 and Offshore Awards. They spent 7 of 12 years offshore aboard SV Passat II, cruising the west and east coasts of North and Central America; transiting the Atlantic Ocean and cruising the North Sea, Atlantic, Biscay and Mediterranean coasts of Europe and North Africa. Now they cruise the BC coast aboard SV Nearchus.

VI Fleet Rendezvous at Otter Bay

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/vi-fleet-rendezvous-at-otter-bay/>



On the weekend of April 22-24, 2022 ten vessels from the BCA VI Fleet gathered at Otter Bay, Pender Island to meet (in person!) for a couple of days of opportunities to share plans, information, boat layouts, beverages, and good food.

Though cruising safely on the coast of British Columbia in the sailing season requires the acquisition of many navigation and boating skills, “heaving-to” is not one of them. It is, however, a vital offshore skill and that is why the participants attending the 2022 VI Fleet Rendezvous were requested to perform this maneuver on their way to the outing and be prepared to describe what they learned from the attempt.

As most winds experienced by the group were in the low single digits there was some allowance made for creative writing as the adventures were shared with the group. In the end the prize for best story had to go to Rob, Marina, and crew aboard *Andromeda* as their operation included a double reefed main. The effort bagged them the coveted prize of a copy of Randal Reeve’s book highlighting his adventures in pursuit of the “Figure 8 voyage” solo double circumnavigation.

A tradition at our rendezvous: each morning began with an offshore tradition for many sailors, a radio NET. Then breakfast options were available courtesy of Chuck and Jillian at the cafe? including

croissants to die for and several choices of muffins.



Life raft deployment exercise

The group activities included:

- Marine First Aid course set up by Philip & Michele Cook
- 4-man life raft deployment
- Mast climbing adventures
- Examination of options for downwind preventers / boom brakes
- Demo of HF radio & Pactor modem/Iridium Go/InReach

The overall highlight of the weekend may have been the boat tours as we saw the great preparations each set of sailors had executed to ready their vessel for offshore passages. A close second in the highlight department would have to be the potluck meal on Saturday evening. Need I say more?



Saturday evening potluck dinner

The VI Fleet extends a huge shout out to Dan from Otter Bay Marina for making the group so welcome to this wonderful facility on Pender Island.



Al Kitchen and Daragh Nagle, VI Fleet Coordinators

Any VI members who are interested in joining Fleet of 2022/23 are invited to contact [Fleet Coordinators](#), Al Kitchen and Daragh Nagle and/or [sign up online](#). The “new year” usually begins in late September or early October.

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,

Currents

The Official Magazine of the Bluewater Cruising Association

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.

Salish Sea Pilot and The Perfect Anchorage (and a Discount for BCA Members)

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/advertorial-salish-sea-pilot-and-the-perfect-anchorage/>



This is the first of a brief series of advertorials that highlight the products and services offered by a select group of vendors who have supported the Bluewater Cruising Association in 2022 by purchasing advertising in either the BCA Member Directory and/or Currents. This month’s advertorial introduces Currents’ subscribers to Salish Sea Pilot. BCA is grateful for their support and appreciates the discount offered to our members (see details below).

We sailed into Singapore Harbour with no chart plotter, no cruising guides, nothing except a tattered paper chart that did not seem to match the real world. The shoreline was not remotely like what the chart promised. A closer inspection, by and by, revealed the chart was printed in the 1930s. I had purchased **Quiver**, a tiny cutter, seven years before in Thailand and discovering the browned chart in a locker, I thought: “Well, got that place covered, don’t have to worry about Singapore again until we get there.”

You are unlikely to be surprised to learn that Singapore has been incredibly transformed since the 30s, with vast stretches of sea reclaimed and filled by the tiny city state, very little unchanged.

And Lynne’s look of disgust, for me and my chart, is also not going to surprise you. While we sailed many miles around to find The Sisters, the islands where small vessels check in, she threatened to go below and have nothing to do with this leg of the journey, the stress was too much.

So I learned some things, in time, maybe about the resilience of Lynne, who did not disappear below decks, but helped me find The Sisters and so much else along the way. I also learned about the importance of preparation and the value of stress relief.

After we sailed home from Asia, friends we had met along the way wrote to ask about the Salish Sea, and what they would find when they sailed there. So we put together an e-book with some of our favourite anchorages and gave it to friends. It was the sort of guide we liked, hand-drawn illustrations, with words and photos kept to a bare minimum. Just the facts. And with an aim to relieve as much stress as we could.



Looking east from Sidney Spit Marine Park across Haro Strait to Mount Baker.

We decided to build a more-polished guide or two and offer them as free downloads. Our little company, [Salish Sea Pilot](#), started with the Gulf and San Juan Islands. We figured if an advertiser got on board, that would be great. A couple did.

The foreign friends who promised to sail here never arrived, but it was fun to meet many interesting people and explore places we had previously sailed past. Our free guides were downloaded 17,000 times, according to our tracking software. We didn't know there were that many sailors in the Salish Sea. Maybe it was just some bot programmed to download them, again and again.

But it took over our lives. We spent months at sea doing the research and months more in front of computers and on the phone with marina contacts. And every year we added new anchorages and updated the rates and facilities information at marinas, parks and public docks in the e-books, something that is so difficult and expensive with paper guides. The e-book guides are fully interactive, everything just a click

away. They work on every computer, smartphone or tablet.



Our view from a mooring buoy as the sun sets over Saysutshun in Nanaimo Harbour.

We often tell the story of our banker, who patiently heard our story, then asked: “What part of ‘unsustainable’ don’t you understand?” So we started to charge a bit for them. Each guide is CA\$17 each, with a package of seven costing CA\$59. Anyone who has previously bought a full set can buy an annually updated and expanded package for CA\$24.99.

The bots did not like the new price structure at all, and downloads slowed. But revenues ticked up some. Not exactly windfall profits, but enough to keep diesel in the tank.

Salish Sea Pilot has guides to the [Gulf Islands](#), [Sunshine Coast](#), [Desolation Sound](#), [Broughton Archipelago](#) and [West Coast of Vancouver Island](#) in BC, as well as the San Juan Islands and Puget Sound in Washington. Each new guide we think is the last, but sailors we meet ask if we have thought about Haida Gwaii or Glacier Bay... In fact, we have. Time will tell.

Then some boaters and sailors over at the [Bluewater Cruising Association](#) said they liked our guides and wondered if we would like to be partners. They would trade some online advertising space in exchange for a discount on our guides for their members and a share of sales revenue. It was win-win. To us, it was

like the perfect anchorage. Well-sheltered, with a bottom of firm, sticky mud. Stress free.

To take advantage of the Salish Sea Pilot [discount](#), be sure to use the Promo Code (BCA123) in the Salish Sea shopping cart.

About The Author

Jim Burgoyne

Silom - Tayana 37 cutter

Jim and Lynne knew each other when they were kids in Winnipeg, but did not hook up until many years later when they were both working in Thailand, he as a journalist, she as a teacher. They sailed back to BC in his Vancouver 27, deciding then to get a bigger boat and to tell the world about the Salish Sea.

Extra 2022 BCA Member Directories Now Available for Sale

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/extra-2022-bca-member-directories-now-available-for-sale/>



All BCA members in good standing will have received their annual Member Directory at the beginning of May, but if you have ever wished you had an extra copy to keep on your boat or at home, now is your chance!

A limited supply of Directories is now available for sale online – for the low, low price of \$20 plus shipping and handling – and at certain BCA in-person events.

If you would like to purchase a Directory, log in and go to the [Online Store](#) to place your order.

About The Author

Jennifer Handley

Jennifer and her husband, Campbell Good, sailed Camdeboo to the South Pacific in 2006 with their two daughters, a niece, nephew and Jennifer's brother. By the time Camdeboo returned to Victoria in 2011, she had 25,000nm under her keel, visited 14 countries and 27 people had come aboard as crew. Jennifer served as BCA Commodore 2014-2016 and Past Commodore from 2017-2019.

BCA VI Summer BBQ

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/bca-vi-summer-bbq/>



VI Vice Commodore, Scott Crawshaw, and the VI Watch invite Vancouver Island Chapter members to attend a celebratory, in-person BBQ to be held at CFB Esquimalt on June 14. Space is limited and registration is required prior to **June 2**.

Please note that CFB Esquimalt still has a mask and vaccine policy in place, therefore all attendees will have to show proof of double vaccination and will have to wear masks when standing (but not required when seated).

It has been far too long since the VI Chapter has been able to get together in person and the Watch looks forward to seeing members other than via a computer screen. If you are a VI Chapter member and did not receive a written invitation to attend, please contact admin@bluewatercruising.org.

Vancouver Club Night - Potluck and Swap Meet

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-club-night-potluck-and-swap-meet/>



It has been far too long since the BCA has been able to hold an in person club night, but that is about to end! On June 8, the Vancouver Chapter will be holding its first in-person social since the beginning of the pandemic, at the Scottish Cultural Centre.

What more time honoured way to socialize, than to eat together, so we're going to have a potluck: bring your choice of an appy, a salad, a main dish or a dessert, to share. The bar will be open!

We will also have five certificates for one night of reciprocal moorage at the Saltspring Island Sailing Club, to be given out to Vancouver members, by random draw.

But that's not all! It has also been far too long since BCA has held a swap meet, so why not do that too?

There will be 10 tables set up along the outside of our Hall in the Scottish Cultural Centre. Tables will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. You could take your chances when you arrive, but better yet, let us know you're coming and reserve a table (or half a table) in advance by emailing Heather Marshall, [Vancouver Speakers Watchkeeper](#), for details.

Note: There will be some Covid protocols in place. In particular, because this is an indoor event, vaccine passports will be required, as will masks, except when eating or drinking.

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.

Fibreglass Repair

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/fibreglass-repair/>



BCA's Vancouver Chapter is pleased to present this first time, day-long, unique course addressing fiberglass repair. Participants will learn how to do minor composite and gelcoat boat repairs, with an emphasis on good technique with a professional's eye to detail. Instructor, Erik Steinkey, will address your questions and provide both instruction and feedback that will set you up for effective completion of minor glass repairs.

About the Instructor

Erik Steinkey, founder and owner of [Nordmanner Marine Services](#), was introduced to sailing in his early twenties while stationed in Germany with the Canadian Military. He has since become an avid sailor and has been a member of several one- design sailing teams. He has taken naval architecture courses with the Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology, has apprenticed with several shipwrights and has current certificates from the Advanced Composite Training a division of Renaissance Aeronautics Associates Inc. Boats are Erik's passion.

About The Author

Kit Griffin

SWAN - Pacific Seacraft 34

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

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The Bluewater Cruising Association

PDF generated June 03, 2022 at 5:31 PM