



*Photo Contest Winner*

*Morgan & Mel Finley*

*This photo is of Swift, our Moody 44, when we arrived in the Baie des Vierges, Fatu Hiva, Marquesas on Canada Day after a 27-day, 4100 nm passage from Panama.*



# Currents

May 2023

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## The Tale of Lil' Ollie and the Broken Wheel

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/the-tale-of-lil-ollie-and-the-broken-wheel/>



Our new-to-us 1986 C&C 38 Mark III sailboat, *Lil' Ollie*, has been, and continues to be, a journey of discovery: discovering and working through the many areas of deferred maintenance that need our attention.

Last summer, after dealing with multiple engine and other issues over the winter and spring, we were anticipating sailing to Port Browning to attend the [BCA](#) Leavers' Rendezvous. It would be our longest outing with her since bringing her back from Sidney where she was purchased. A good friend of ours was among the leavers so we really wanted to attend.

Two days prior to the Rendezvous, we were out in Maple Bay with an experienced friend who was helping us to gain familiarity with maneuvering under engine. We were practicing "back and fill", where



short bursts of power forward and back can be used to turn the boat almost within its own length.

All was well until the wheel slipped out of my partner's grasp and spun to rudder stop, where upon there was a loud klunk sound followed shortly by a total loss of steering. The trick is: when you throttle up in reverse, you really need to have a firm hold of the wheel as the increasing water flow will pull at the rudder rather suddenly and with great force.

Peering in under the cockpit floor toward the rudder post with a flash light, from the back of the quarter berth, I could see a good sized chunk of metal laying near the rudder post. We managed to fit the emergency tiller and limped back to the dock.



That metal chunk turned out to be a sizable segment broken out of the radial wheel by the impact. The seeds of this destruction were planted by the previous owner years ago. It turns out that when they sailed *Lil' Ollie* on their adventures, they had fitted her out with a wind vane steering. Lots of people do – no problem, right? Well, problem yes – if you ignore Edson's very clear instructions not to attach any self steering gear to the radial wheel:

***“IN NO CASE SHOULD THE AUTOPILOT BE ATTACHED DIRECTLY TO THE QUADRANT OR RADIAL DRIVE WHEEL!”***

One would think that would be clear!

The years of unexpected point loading had created extensive cracking of the aluminum radial wheel; our incident was simply the last blow our radial wheel could endure.

This left us with a challenge: we had two days to get our boat, with no steering, ready to head to Port Browning. Armed with two fabricated steel plates and some hefty SS bolts, I crawled into the lazarette and made an “ice-cream sandwich” with a LOT of JB Weld to hold the broken segment of the wheel in place. It worked – in fact, it worked fine for the rest of the season while I ordered up a new radial wheel from Edson.

But that is not quite the end of the story. While preparing to install the new wheel over the winter, I decided it would be a good time to replace the steering cables as well. What I could observe of them looked OK, but who knows how old they were? Now, the two lengths of cable are swaged onto a length of chain that turns over a sprocket inside the steering pedestal. If you have ever looked, or attempted to look, down inside your pedestal you will know clearances are tight and you can’t really visualize where the cables join the chain. Thus, when I extracted the chain and cables up out of the pedestal I found that the steering chain was also about to break – it was holding on by only one badly twisted side plate!

The moral of the story is, I suppose, that you really won’t know your boat and have justified confidence in her until you have personally been through all her systems. The journey continues. Hopefully, soon it will continue on the water.

## **About The Author**

### **Greg Cooper**

**Lil’ Ollie - C&C 38**

Greg Cooper, now a retired Electrical Engineer, power-boated with his father as a teen but didn't get back to Vancouver Island and the ocean till 2012. Still quite new to sailing, Greg purchased a 26’ Grampian in 2017, and now owns a 1986 C&C38 III on which he is carrying out a “somewhat extensive refit”.

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## "Do You Anchor at Night?" and Other Passage Queries

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/do-you-anchor-at-night-and-other-passage-queries/>



People often wonder what a sailing passage is. Our definition of a sailing passage is where you sail non-stop day and night to your destination. That might be one night or thirty or more! Here are some fun questions we have been asked about doing sailing passages:

### **Do you anchor at night?**

On a passage the waters are too deep to anchor. For example, on our biggest passage across the South Pacific we were in waters over 1000' deep for almost one month. We carry 300' of 3/8" chain which would not go too far in those depths. So, passages require us to sail non-stop day and night, 24/7.

### **How do you carry enough food?**

I calculate how many days we will be on passage and then add "emergency" rations after that. Things like dried beans and rice, cans of chili, chicken, tuna etc that would last us 1-2 months after the calculated passage time if needed. It's a safeguard against boat breakdowns or other emergencies. We might carry



100 eggs for a 2-3 week passage, 6 rolls of paper towel and 10 rolls of toilet paper. Fresh produce and meat usually last a week or two, depending on the temperature (less time in the tropics). I find citrus lasts longer as does romaine lettuce and cabbage, carrots, onions and potatoes. Fortunately, we have a fridge and a small freezer so we can carry more than we did when we sailed in 1998. We have a lot of lockers as we built the boat and put storage everywhere possible. It's a necessity to track all the non-perishable food. I keep a laminated list and use a dry erase marker to mark how much of a particular item we have, where it is located, and how much we have used. Otherwise we would never find that bottle of ketchup!

### **What do you eat on a passage?**

On passage, breakfast is help yourself. A typical breakfast might be yogourt, granola and the local fruit of the country we are leaving, bacon and eggs, or cereal and fruit. Lunch can be leftovers, salad in a jar (you build the salad ahead of time in a mason jar), bean or other salads, sandwiches, cheese, pickles, olives and crackers. If the weather cooperates, I might make nachos, Kraft Dinner, hot dogs or soup. In the heat, salads are often a favourite lunch fare.



Salad in a jar for lunch

Dinners are usually one pot (two maximum). The weather dictates dinner options. One-pot meals are a must when the seas are rough. I always provide warm meals unless the conditions (read high winds and

rough seas) say otherwise. Normal dinners are like home, but simpler. Meat plus veggies or salad, or pasta or casseroles. I'll make pasta, quiche, Shepard's pie, soups, meatloaf, chicken or roasts for dinner. Again, the wave and wind conditions dictate what I cook. I do all the cooking and Dave does the dishes. Coming down the coast of Oregon I was able to make Cornish game hens! Off of Los Frailes in Mexico, dinner was a can of chili warmed up as conditions were so rough.

I often cook a few things before we leave port as I can be sea sick for the first few days and we may have rough waters. Also, being at anchor or a dock, we lose our sea legs so we need to get used to being out again. I will also look for prepared food in the grocery stores before we leave. Recently we had 7 for dinner unexpectedly so I was able to bring out pulled-pork that was pre-prepared and served it with salad and bread.

Food, drinks and snacks are an important part of a passage. The crew always looks forward to meals and snacks. I always pack away special treats to mark milestones like when we crossed the equator or celebrations like 1000 days at sea or a birthday. On our South Pacific passage everyone got to choose their juice one day in the week. I'd put it in the freezer and serve it very cold for dinner. Everyone looked forward to that. Simple pleasures are what's important on a passage.

### **Do you cook underway?**

Definitely! Some people only like to cook when they are doing day trips (where they stop each night). On a passage that's impossible. Dave would starve! I'm responsible for all the provisioning (shopping and planning for food and sundries) and cooking. So, yes, I prepare 3 meals a day, plus snacks.

### **What's the longest passage you have done?**

Our longest passage was from La Paz, Mexico to the Marquesas Islands in 1999 with our girls. It took 28.5 days.

### **How do you stay awake that long?**

Ha, ha... you don't. We are very careful to keep watches 24/7 on passages. When we had the kids with us we did 2 hours on and 2 hours off for Dave and I. During the day our daughter Leah would do a watch to give us both a break.





Moon rise... and squid on the deck following a night watch going from Huatulco, Mexico to Bahia del Sol, El Salvador

Now that it is just the two of us we have decided to do 3 hour watches. That means one of us is always on watch for 3 hours, then the other person takes over. All day and all night. I have the 2100h to midnight watch if anyone wants to message me then! And then the 0300h. to 0600h watch.

### **What happens on a watch?**

During our watches our first responsibilities are to not hit another boat and to stay on course! Sounds easy in a big ocean but you would be surprised how many boats you see. Technology has greatly improved since we sailed offshore previously. We now have AIS – Automatic Identification System. If a boat has AIS we can see them being tracked by their unique transceivers onboard. Fortunately, ships (freighters, cruise ships) are required to have AIS. We can normally see the name of the ship, how big it is, its speed and compass course, how close to us it is (when it could possibly hit us) and where its final destination is. Other pleasure boats are not required to have AIS. We have found that fishing boats rarely have AIS. Most sailboats do carry it.



Off of Mexico had some great current

With our navigation system and AIS we can see the relationship between other boats and us which helps inform if we are safe or need to change course. As well, we watch every 10-15 minutes with our eyes for boats or other obstructions (fish nets, for e.g.). We also have radar which will show thunderstorms as well as boats.

Next, we check that we are staying on course. If the wind changes direction or speed we may have to change the sail configuration, or in the case of no wind, fire up the Iron Genny (motor!).

**What do you do besides watch for other boats, change sails and navigate? Do you have anything to entertain you?**

Passages are a great time to read. On our circumnavigation our 11 year old daughter Leah read 17 books on the 28 day passage. With technology now Dave and I have Kindles as well as iPads. With Starlink we can even occasionally watch a downloaded movie or YouTube if we have internet. Star and moon gazing is also a favourite pastime. Watching the ocean wildlife is probably one of the most memorable pastimes. Since leaving Canada in September we have seen many turtles, dolphins (my favourite), rays, fish, whales and all kinds of birds. We even had a bat sleep over one passage night off of El Salvador.



I never tire of seeing dolphins

### **What happens off watch?**

Off watch activities depend on the time of day. We often will nap. I will cook the meals and provide the snacks. Sometimes it's catching up with each other – usually in the day. During the night we definitely sleep for our 3 hours off watch.

So, as you can see, passage making has a lot of moving pieces and we are never bored!

### **About The Author**

**Mary Kruger**

**Synchronicity - Fraser 41**

Dave and Mary did a world circumnavigation with their two daughters, visiting 37 countries from 1998-2002. Now 20 years later they have set sail again, this time without their girls, for ports in North and South America.



## Poetry at Poets Cove - Another Great Rendezvous

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/poetry-at-poets-cove-another-great-rendezvous/>



After a four year absence, BCA Vancouver Island returned to Poets Cove on Pender Island for the May 2023 Rendezvous. The turnout of almost 80 people, 49 boats, numerous sea-going dogs and cats suggests that this is definitely a most popular rendezvous venue for BCA, with attendees from all three chapters and a few guests. As in the past, we occupied the breakwater dock which is still undergoing repairs after



four years of degradation but as the resourceful sailors that we are, we made it work and ‘walking the plank’ became an ongoing joke.



Rendezvous in full swing for all attendees

Weekend events included an ocean microscopy session facilitated by Prof. Elaine Humphries, a well attended hike in Beaumont Park with an intrepid few reaching the Mt Norman lookout, a great deal of visiting on each others' boats, three Leaver Package presentations, a couple of tasty potlucks, a group photo under the BCA spinnaker, and a silent auction coordinated by Barrie Letts with a variety of items generously donated by [Trotac Marine](#) that raised \$203 for the [Marine Parks Forever Society](#).



BCA: Dreamers, Leavers, Doers, Doners, Hikers and Watchkeepers

That said, the overall theme of the weekend was a poetry writing contest; prizes included books provided by the VI Chapter and a set of online guides donated by [Salish Sea Pilot](#), one of BCA's advertisers. The poems were recited by their authors, including a sonnet generated by ChatGPT, throughout the musical evenings on both Saturday and Sunday. BCA now has an appointed Poet Laureate, Pamela Holley, with her very own "Poet Laureate kit" – perhaps a new tradition kicked off this year. Prizes were awarded on Sunday evening just before the group retired in haste to their boats before the clouds burst and rained on us for the rest of the night (no critical leaks were reported).





Poetry winners with Rendezvous Coordinator Nancy Hancock from top left: Pamela Holley, Alan Crabtree, Bethanny Brooks, LEEANNE TOWERS

## Winning Poems

1st Place – “Tillikum’s Adventure With the 2017 VICE Fleet” by Pamela Holley, *Tillikum*

*Halfway out Ucluelet Harbour, our instruments went down,  
The Captain cursed, “This is the worst! We’ll have to turn around!”  
But the Admiral spat, “To hell with that! We’ll steer the course by hand!  
We’ve crew enough to carry on as planned.”*

*We motored to the red can, and met up with the Fleet.  
At fourteen bells we hit the swells and trimmed the old mainsheet.  
As we passed the light at Amphritite, and turned towards the west,  
The **Tillikum** grew ready for her quest!*

*Sail Away! Through the day, with **Shamata**, **Mazu** and **Carpe Ventus**, too.  
Throughout the night, ‘til morning’s light, and onward through the day,  
Keep your watch o’er Bluewater, Sail Away!*

*Without our autopilot, we depended on the crew  
To steer the course through every wave, the best that they could do.  
As day grew dim, Pacific Rim sank silently behind.  
The crews of VICE were of an equal mind.*

*“Just follow **Carpe Ventus!**” The Captain made it clear.  
“**Shamata** and **Mazu** will surely follow at the rear!”  
We dodged a pod of orcas, (or maybe they were greys)  
A wayward cruise ship crossed our path, chugging through the haze.  
What happened in the darkness, we’ll ponder all our days.  
Keep your watch o’er Bluewater, Sail Away!*

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**2nd Place – “The Ocean Blue” by Alan Crabtree, guest aboard *Noon Ocean***

*From the maps that I knew  
The ocean always was blue  
But the sea is not set  
By any one palette*

*What you see as you cruise  
Are the wild, varied hues  
Indigo, red, diamond, green  
Dance while the sun and the clouds preen*

*So, yes, set the globe in a spin  
And gaze over it’s watery skin  
For the ocean wears the blush  
Painted by nature’s magnificent brush*

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**3rd place – “Maybe the Sea” by Bethanny Cooper, *Lil’ Ollie***

*Aw, the sea,  
Such a mystery.  
It beckons me,  
And I don’t know why.*

*A part of me,  
Wants to sail away,  
Far beyond  
What I know.*

*Out where water,  
Meets more water.  
Out where my thoughts,  
Are free!*

*I love the sea,  
I love the water.  
We can do this,  
Let us see!*

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**4th place – by Leeanne Towers, *Syntropy***

*There once was a man with a dream  
To sail on the wide open seas  
He met a young lass(ie)  
40 years or so past  
Who had only the land in her ass.*

*The wedding was quite the affair  
But the honeymoon didn't compare  
He taught her to sail  
The gulf islands they hailed  
And the ocean was firmly impaled.*

*3 kids 7 dogs and careers  
Took over the next 40 years  
But the dream was still there  
And retirement came  
And the ocean was calling their name.*

*So now they sit drinking their tea (/wine)  
On their retirement plan Syntropy  
Still dreaming of feats  
To sail into the heat  
Of the southern most parts of the seas.*

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A collection of Rendezvous photos [can be found here](#) for those who wish to see what they missed and/or to relive the weekend. If you have photos you would like to add to the gallery, please contact [Jennifer](#).

Thanks from the VI Chapter to all who were able to get to the Rendezvous; look forward to seeing you



next year! Best wishes to all BCA members for a great summer!

## **About The Author**

### **Nancy Hancock**

#### **Golden Girl - Ontario 32 sloop**

Nancy has been a member of BCA since 2004. She started sailing in 1997, experienced her first offshore sailing in 2004, then sailed 10,000 miles on various vessels working towards her commercial RYA Offshore Captain's License. In 2008, Nancy and her partner sailed her 42' ketch MoondancerX from BC to the Med where they were based for 3 years, cruising to Italy, Turkey, Greece, Ukraine, Russia, Tunisia. From Europe, it was back across the Atlantic to the Caribbean where she worked as a Charter Captain and Sailing Instructor in the Grenadines. After more cruising in the Caribbean, MoondancerX went through the Panama Canal, turned north to Mexico, from where she was shipped home in 2018. Nancy is now the proud owner of an Ontario 32; she's a mother of four, grandmother of 3, with one more grandchild due imminently.

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## Vancouver Club Night - Potluck and Swap Meet

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-club-night-potluck-and-swap-meet-2/>



You are invited to the Vancouver June Social Potluck and Swap Meet.

Once again, the Vancouver Chapter will be holding a social club night, on June 14th. What more time-honoured way to socialize, than to eat and drink together? Please bring an appy, main dish, salad, or dessert to share. The bar will be OPEN!

After the success of last year's swap meet, it has been decided to do it again! 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 served basis. You could take your chances when you arrive, but better yet, let us know you're coming and reserve a table in advance, or half a table, by emailing Heather Marshall at [vanspeakers@bluewatercruising.org](mailto:vanspeakers@bluewatercruising.org).

And that's not all! In addition, we will also enjoy a brief presentation by Marine Trails BC, describing their Coastal Caretaker program, and a related contest sponsored by Mustang Survival.

We hope to see you there!

### 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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## Vancouver Island Fleet Rendezvous Report

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



The 2023 V.I. Fleet Rendezvous was a huge success and it all started on Friday, April 21 with the seven vessels able to attend heading for Port Browning on Pender Island. All were given explicit instructions that they were to heave-to en-route. Ever tried herding cats? Not all had the opportunity; Daragh and I did with enough wind to actually perform the manoeuvre effectively but I'm pretty certain many of them spent the time instead honing their story to be told on Saturday night at the Potluck meal. The quality of the tales certainly indicated they had been carefully crafted, but more on that later. Friday afternoon and evening saw a wonderful mixing of the crews from the Fleet over boat visits and meals at the Pub.



Daragh and Al hove-to! Look at the speed indicator!

## Getting Going

Saturday morning started with a radio check-in that also included a surprise appearance by James Graham and Sue Morin on *Hounds Hollow* (fellow BCA members) who had been welcomed into the group at the pub. These morning check-ins are typical of offshore sailors and we have always included them as a staple of the dreamers' preparation. Muffins were made available at the Port Browning Bistro and with caffeine in hand we began our day's events. First on the agenda was life raft deployment and this year we had a 6-person and a 4-person model to test courtesy of Scott and Janette Brown on *Whale Song* and Chris Stask, our bosun, who joined Daragh and I on *Chantey V* for the weekend.

The morning activities continued with mast climbing on *Whale Song* as Charles demonstrated the use of several pieces of gear from the group and safety precautions were discussed.

After a break for lunch, we toured the decks of all boats present to discuss accidental jibe prevention, whisker pole and a Gale Sail deployment, and various other points as they arose.



All the activity ensured appetites were up for the fabulous assortment of meal items available at the Potluck in the bistro. The gang had to wait for dessert until we were all well entertained with those stories that were crafted to compensate for the avoidance of performing a heave-to. The judges (Campbell, Daragh, and I) struggled with the final decision and in the end had to post an honorable mention for Trina's tale of her different sort of *heaving-to* producing a magical midnight display of phosphorescence courtesy of mal-de-mere. The award for best tale went to Scott Brown for another late-night experience off the Bunsby Islands north of Kyuquot where he discovered, accidentally, the value of being able to park a vessel on the water when a time out is needed for any purpose. He received a Davis Sextant that the fleet group has had in its possession for some time and hopefully he'll have the opportunity to test his skills with it on the V.I.C.E. trip this summer. The "Passing the Tiller" dessert (see photo) ensured everyone had their sweet tooth cravings satisfied.



## Day 2

Sunday started again with a radio check-in, caffeine, and muffins on the dock, then boat visits. This time focused on the below deck preparations our fine group of sailors had to display. By noon most were ready to head for home ports after a thoroughly enjoyable rendezvous.

Huge thanks go out to the crews from *Camdeboo*, *Whale Song*, *Lunetta*, *Dreamer*, *Elu*, and *Salt* for



helping make this years V.I. Fleet Rendezvous a great success from the crew of *Chantey V*.

You can see all the photos from this great event in [this photo album](#).

## **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 - May 2023

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-fleet-report-may-2023/>



**OFFSHORE  
INSURANCE**

### Vancouver Fleet Presentation May 30, 2023

Sean Thompson, Dolphin Insurance

[https://www.dolphininsurance.com/  
offshore-yacht-insurance](https://www.dolphininsurance.com/offshore-yacht-insurance)

⊞

The May meeting of the Vancouver Fleet took place on May 30. Zoom opened early at 1900h to provide an opportunity for informal chat among members. This was an occasion for Fleet members to catch up on how others were dealing with the last minute stages of getting boats ready for offshore and exchanging news of Fleet members of former years.

The main topic of the meeting was Boat Insurance with Sean Thompson of [Dolphin Insurance](https://www.dolphininsurance.com/). Sean dealt with a number of questions re insurance costs in various cruising areas. He emphasized the importance of making claims before starting repairs or recovery.

The next meeting will be the Watchkeepers' **Farewell to the Fleet Barbecue** at **1800h** on **June 27** at **Spruce Harbour Marina**. As well as those from the Vancouver Chapter, this traditional barbecue welcomes Leavers, Fleet members, Watch members and donors from all BCA chapters if they happen to be in town. Even though some of the leavers may already have received their offshore packages it will be a second opportunity for us to wish them well. Details will be sent out closer to the date.

### 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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## VI South June BBQ

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vi-south-june-bbq/>



We have had a fantastic year of presentations, education courses, Fleet, and Club nights. In the past three months our in-person numbers are up, and it is starting to feel more normal after the past three years of navigating this pandemic.

The upcoming weekend's forecast looks like summer may be arriving early, and with that will come people's desires to get out on the water. Vancouver Island has three more events coming up before the summer cruising season begins: 16 May Club night; the 19-22 May Rendezvous; and the 13 June BBQ.

This year's BBQ will be held at the CFB Esquimalt "Gunroom" which is located at Work Point, in the vicinity of West Bay Marina. The event will take place on Tue, 13 June 1800–2200. VI volunteers, most from your Watch, will be BBQing a choice of meat/fish and vegetarian dishes, and a selection of salads and desserts will be offered. The cost will be \$15 per person (non-refundable) and we ask that you [register online prior to June 6](#) and select whether you wish to have a meat/fish option, or a vegetarian option. If you would like to volunteer setting up or cleaning up, please [let any of the Watchkeepers know](#), your help is greatly appreciated.

To get to the "Gunroom", the following Google Map link will guide you: <https://goo.gl/maps/s6ww4d7MUqxb9ujc7>

Note that Google may take you to a back gate, very near the West Bay marina entrance, which will be CLOSED. Please ensure that Google is taking you up PETERS Street and left onto Malvern Street where the main gate is. There will be a guard at the gate, and you only need to show your driver's license and indicate that you are there for an event at the Gunroom.

CFB Esquimalt no longer has a mask and vaccine policy in place; however, if you wish to wear a mask, please feel free to do so. If the weather is good, there will be plenty of seating inside and out.

The VI Watch looks forward to seeing you on Tuesday, 13 June.

–Scott Crawshaw, VI Vice Commodore

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**Currents Bluewater Cruising**

**The Bluewater Cruising Association**

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