



Photo Contest Winner

Ian Cameron

Sailing off the Turkish coast on our friends Woody and Ann's Oceania 42. One of several holiday boat swaps we've arranged with our Cal 39. Through boat swapping we have sailed in Nova Scotia, Greece, Australia and New Zealand.

Currents

October 2022

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SWIFT Gets New Lithium Batteries

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/swift-gets-new-lithium-batteries/>



As we sail into our third year of offshore cruising, we find ourselves reflecting on the places we've been, the experiences we've had, and the people we've met. It gives us perspective on where we want to go next. We also reflect on the boat, how she's standing up to the rigors of offshore sailing and the rigors of providing a full-time home for a family of four. With safety in mind, upgrades, and just plain maintenance, looking after the boat is one of the more time consuming and costly aspects of this lifestyle. Our latest upgrade: changing our house bank batteries to lithium.

Introduction

We were 600 miles from Panama, 80 miles southeast of Kingston, Jamaica, when we discovered that our fancy 1.5-year-old AGM (absorbed glass mat) house batteries had completely failed. The battery cases were warped and bulging, and the bank voltage was jumping erratically between 12.0 and 12.2 volts. After two hours of chopping towards Jamaica, we had isolated the best one of the three batteries and disconnected the others, but decided to turn back towards Panama. Four days later, we arrived in Bocas del Toro, Panama, running on a spare battery strapped to the bed frame and with nearly empty fuel tanks from repetitious engine charging to supplement our solar system.

The failure of our house batteries was looking like a major hit to our cruising budget, and to understate things, a major frustration especially given that the batteries were relatively new. However, we first put the disappointment behind us to celebrate landfall after a difficult passage, then started to wonder if this was an opportunity to try lithium batteries. Aside from two unexpected months locked down in a UK marina, we have been traveling for the last two years on our Moody 44 monohull sloop *Swift*, and we are always looking at potential safety and lifestyle upgrades. Lithium batteries as an energy storage solution is a hot topic amongst cruising boats. We had read the glossy brochures, but we didn't have any personal experience or many firsthand accounts. We wondered if these batteries really warranted the hype. Faster charging, deeper and more frequent discharge potential, better voltage consistency regardless of state of charge, and lighter weight – these were some of the of the potential benefits of a lithium system and they all sounded like wins to us.

We were quite proud of the energy system we had set up in Greece six months into our trip, with a goal of being wholly reliant on the sun for our energy needs. At that time, we increased our solar array from 350 watts to 700 watts of mono-crystalline panels installed on a custom-built arch at the back of the boat. We also swapped out our 300Ah of generic sealed lead acid batteries for those 510Ah of expensive AGMs that failed en route to Panama. Regarding our energy needs on *Swift*, we have a fridge, a separate freezer, an inverter, a DC water-maker, fans, lights, and many other devices running on 12 volts (we have our two girls with us, so at times we also require extensive device charging to keep everyone happy).

While it is a common exercise to calculate an energy budget for your boat, we tend to measure our energy requirements as the deficit between solar charging cycles. We have a Victron BMV-712 Battery Monitor to monitor both state of charge and our real-time consumption versus charge rate. Our average nightly deficit at anchor, prior to installing lithium, was 85 to 100Ah. For passages with the addition of the autopilot and navigation, it ranged from 125 to 150Ah. With the 700 watts of solar, we could often reach an indicated 100% state of charge on our AGM batteries while at anchor, but not on passage. We were very keen to see how the lithium would compare.



The

new lithium batteries finally arrive in Bocas Town, Panama

Installation

We reached out to several lithium battery suppliers, and we had a very positive response from Dragonfly Energy, the supplier for Battle Born batteries based in Nevada. They assemble their Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO₄) batteries in-house, and each comes complete with an internal battery management system (BMS). We ordered four 100Ah BB10012/H batteries to replace our defunct 3 x 170Ah AGMs. Dragonfly shipped everything promptly to a freight forwarder in Florida. Unfortunately, things slowed down after that, but eventually our batteries and supplies arrived in Bocas Town and it was finally time to get started with the install!

The batteries arrived as “drop-in” replacements, suitable for most house battery configurations. We took the opportunity to redo our battery box and reorganized all our house battery connections. We invested in new battery cables, added appropriate fuses where necessary, and installed a second shut-off switch right at the house bank. Our Victron solar MPPT charger needed reconfiguring to best support the new batteries, but this was done easily through the Bluetooth interface. The biggest change to our system was that we had to install a DC-to-DC charger to protect the engine alternator on our single alternator system – more on this later. We don’t have AC charging on our boat, so no changes or reconfiguring were

required for the AC system.



Hot work in Panama prepping for the new batteries

Battery Review

Less Weight

An immediately noticeable difference between the new lithium and the old AGMs was the weight. Our four new batteries came in at just over 100 pounds total. The dead, fused-together AGM batteries were an ugly block weighing over 300 pounds, presenting us with a very difficult and potentially dangerous challenge for removal. Fortunately, we were able to hoist them out the back hatch and onto the dock using the boom – good riddance!

Improved Battery Life Span

Lead acid batteries do not live long when subjected to regular or prolonged deep discharges (e.g., greater than 50%). They also require frequent, ideally daily, recharging to 100%. Our AGM supplier provided an estimated battery life expectancy of only 300 cycles for 100% discharge, or 1000 cycles if drawn down by 40%. Given the not-insubstantial cost, we were very concerned about damaging the AGMs and reducing their life expectancy, so we vowed never to bring them below 50%. In comparison, Dragonfly provides an amazing estimated 3000 to 5000 cycles for 100% discharge! So, although we have reduced our overall Ah rating from 510 (AGM) to 400 (lithium), we have increased our theoretical usable Ah by switching battery technologies.

Reduced Battery Anxiety

Assuming 50% usability for the AGMs, and a conservative 80% for the lithium, the available Ah increased from 255Ah to 320Ah. We have never used 100% of our lithium bank, but we have used 75% and been stuck at more than 50% used for several consecutive days. Although we have only had the lithium batteries for less than 6 months, so far there has been no noticeable change in performance. In comparison, we were so careful with those AGMs, and the deepest discharge ever was only down by 36% (still more than 50% full). We also rarely ended the day at less than 100%, but still they failed after only 1.5 years. It sure sounds like another win for the lithium. With our lead acid battery system, we suffered from a constant nagging battery anxiety. It's sad but true. Time will tell, but there is certainly less battery anxiety with the new batteries!

More Consistent Voltage

Another improvement has been the voltage consistency of the lithium batteries. When I say voltage consistency, I'm referring to the voltage available at the battery, as related to the state of charge. For the AGM batteries, at 100% state of charge the batteries were around 12.9 volts, but by 80% they were 12.5 volts and by 50% only 12.1 volts. For our lithium batteries, if the state of charge is greater than 50%, we see around 13.2 volts and for 25% to 50% state of charge, it is still over 13.0 volts. There is also less voltage drop when a draw is applied to the system. Most of our electronics, particularly the fridge, freezer and watermaker, love this consistency and work better at the higher available voltage.

Better Charge Efficiency

Decreased overall weight, improved voltage consistency, increased available Ah, improved battery longevity and reduced battery anxiety are all wins for lithium. But, in my opinion, what makes lithium such a game changer for cruising boats is the improved charge performance. LiFePO4 batteries have low internal resistance in comparison to lead acid batteries and this means that lithium will charge faster. Lithium also has a better charge profile, which is linear up to approximately the last 1% in comparison to the curved charge profile for lead acid, where charging slows noticeably as they fill. Good solar and fast charging lithium is an amazing combination. Reprogramming our solar charger for lithium increased our solar charge efficiency by 30%.



New LiFePO4 batteries ready to go

Our best charge rate from our solar for the AGMs was around 35A, but for the lithium we regularly see 50A. Living our self-sufficient and often remote lifestyle, we can't stress enough that the faster you can put Ah back into your battery bank the better. Whether from solar or some other charge source, we have seen a vast improvement in charge efficiency and charge rate after switching to lithium.

Risk of Overheating Alternator

We made one mistake when switching our system over to lithium. We have a single 115A alternator on *Swift*. It is our only other means of battery charging, but the low internal resistance of LiFePO4 can cause alternators like ours to overheat. There are three ways of approaching this problem: hope for the best; install an external temperature sensing regulator; or, install a DC-to-DC charger from the lead acid starter battery to the lithium house bank. We chose the latter option and installed a Victron Orion DC-to-DC charger. The Orion is programmable for charging lithium, but only to a maximum charge rate of 30A. When solar is insufficient for charging our batteries, this can mean long engine run times, which we really need to avoid. We suspect that a fast-charging external regulator would have been a better solution, but have not tried one. For now, we have installed a bypass switch to charge the lithium bank directly from our alternator, and in by-pass mode we have seen a big improvement in charge efficiency. However,

we have also seen high alternator temperatures, so we only use this option for short duration charging.

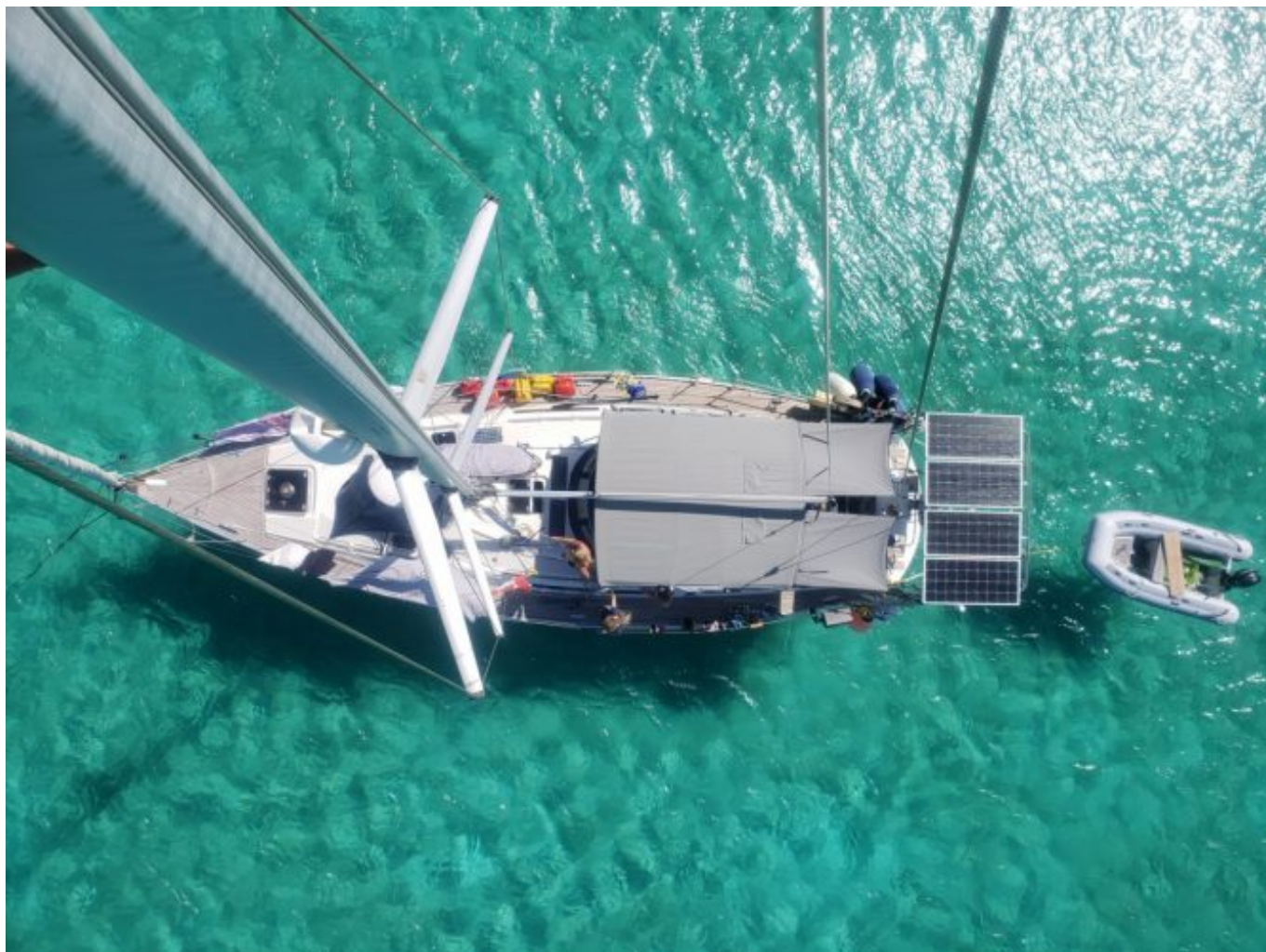
Costs

Some final words on switching to a lithium house bank. It is important to understand that lithium batteries are only the energy storage component of a larger electrical system. Before making the switch, review your electrical system, assess your energy needs, and consider your charging options. Be prepared to incur costs beyond the batteries themselves, e.g., possibly new battery leads, a smart alternator regulator, or a new AC charger. Solar and lithium make an amazing combination, but for those days when the sun isn't shining, you will need an alternative charge source that is lithium compatible and makes the most of the lithium's rapid charge potential. The initial cost of the batteries will also be higher than lead acid batteries. However, if you factor in the differences in battery lifespan and consider the potential reduction in engine or AC charging due to the fast-charging characteristics of lithium, a lithium bank should be cheaper in the long run.

Conclusion

While working on some of this article, we were drifting along under spinnaker between the Marquesas and the Tuamotus. The skies were clear, the batteries were full, and I was feeling no battery anxiety, although I was feeling some kind of awkward obligation to eat bananas, as the entire stalk rapidly ripened behind me. I reflected on having done this same route with my family when I was growing up. Back then we didn't have roller furling, electronic charts, AIS, or even a GPS. We now take those "upgrades" for granted, and while a boat could do without, we wouldn't want to. Is the comparison between the newer lithium battery technology and the traditional lead acid analogous with those other innovative changes to cruising? Perhaps. Regardless, the switch to lithium is, as far as we are concerned, a definite upgrade and should be considered by any boater looking to improve their cruising experience.

If you have questions or want to know more about our system on *Swift*, feel free to contact us through email or message us on Instagram @sailing.swift. We'll do our best to respond!



700 watts of solar charging our new lithium batteries

About The Author

Melanie and Morgan Finley

Swift - Moody 44

Morgan and Melanie along with their crew, Isla and Pippa are now in the South Pacific. They bought the boat in the UK in 2019 and had a slow start with COVID-19 lockdowns, traveling the European canals to the Med and eventually crossing the Atlantic. They share pictures on Instagram @sailing.swift and they have a blog which they update from time to time: <https://www.sailblogs.com/member/sailingswift/>.

On the Move!

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/on-the-move/>



Five years with [Bluewater Cruising](#) (BCA) prepared us for this trip: *Fortitude X* is on the move! We bid farewell to Canada on August 3, leaving Causeway Marina in downtown Victoria to cross the Strait of Juan de Fuca in moderate winds. After clearing into customs in Port Angeles and hoisting “The Stars and Stripes” courtesy flag, we moored at our assigned spot on the transient dock.

A walk through town, combined with grocery shopping, had us stocking up on all of our favourite items to refill the fridge. We spent another day for laundry and, most importantly, signing up for a US Mobile plan to stay connected.

Taking off in the wee hours of August 5, a beautiful sunrise welcomed us and promised a fantastic day at sea – and it was, at least for the first part of our 50+ NM trip until fog crept in. We dropped anchor in Neah Bay with almost zero visibility, and it took until the next morning before we could fully appreciate our surroundings.



Sunrise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Big day! With a slight delay, we aimed for Cape Flattery, THE point to turn left to go south. We had the sails up and were planning to stop at La Push or farther south, Grays Harbour, but had so much fun that we just kept going! We crossed “The Graveyard of the North Pacific”, the Columbia River bar in perfect conditions and moored in Astoria at 1100h on August 7. Tired but happy, we went for a first exploration tour of this quaint little town, picked up some junk food, and enjoyed a lazy evening, filling our bellies with beer and chips without a hint of guilt.

Rather than rushing down the coast, we stuck around, worked on some boat maintenance projects, visited the brilliant Maritime Museum, and enjoyed some fabulous seafood. Any “lost” time was made up by opting for another 24 hours sail, skipping Garibaldi and going directly for Newport. Tied up between hundreds of fishing boats, we bought a whole tuna fresh off the trawler and enjoyed some of it the same night.

We spent two nights and crossed the Yaquina River bar, again at 0600h – together with at least half of the fishing fleet in the harbour – and enjoyed a beautiful day of sailing to Winchester. The Umpqua River bar made for a somewhat challenging approach. We were happy to see two seamen on the dock taking our lines, as the tide was not in our favour. It’s then that we found out that Dan and Gary had been watching us from the jetty for the last few hours as we were approaching the bay and crossing the bar. Both

lifelong sailors, they were just so happy to see a boat like *Fortitude X* coming into their little community, and we spent a delightful hour sharing stories on board. Our departure the next morning had us heading for Charleston in Coos Bay.

A knock on the boat interrupted breakfast. Sticking our heads out of the companionway, we found our two new friends from Winchester on the dock, inviting us to a day of sightseeing with them. They truly gave a new meaning to “Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” Needless to say, we spent a terrific day with these truly interesting local gentlemen and couldn’t have hoped for better tour guides.

Rather than just waiting for a weather window, we rented a car for two days and explored central Oregon down to Northern California.



Beautiful scenery on the road trip along the Oregon coast and into California.

Two early morning departures and over-nighters eventually took us to Bodega Bay: the first 26 hour trip in the thickest fog to Eureka was uneventful and cold; the second trip, from Eureka around Cape Mendocino, had us motoring through very confusing seas and a stormy night, but without any real excitement. We enjoyed the tranquility and the slightly warmer temperatures of this little fishing town of Bodega Bay before getting ready for our leg to San Francisco.

San Francisco Bay welcomed us with sunshine and moderate winds. Moorage was found at South Beach Harbour, where we made new friends with some of the yacht club members, who graciously invited us for a jazz night at the club house.



Made it to San Francisco!

We are now anchored at Aquatic Park, surrounded by the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, Coil Tower, the Maritime Museum, and Ghiradelli chocolate factory. We totally forgot to take pictures, but of the five boats in the bay, four were Canadian flagged, including some from BCA! That made it a BURP (a Bluewater Unofficial Rendezvous Place) and called for an impromptu Happy Hour with the boat crews of *R-Therapy 2* and *Palomita* on board of *Fortitude X*.

About The Author

Stefanie Schulz

Fortitude X - Beneteau 42

Stefanie got introduced to sailing as an adult, cruising in Germany and Denmark on a friend's boat. After moving to Canada, she spent the summer months on Lake Wabamun in Alberta enjoying her MacGregor 26. Her sailing experience when living in Australia was reduced to charter vacations in the Whitsunday

Islands. Stefanie and her husband bought a Beneteau 432 after moving to Vancouver in 2016 and are now on their way south.

Crewing Brisbane to Cairns June-July 2022

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/crewing-brisbane-to-cairns-june-july-2022/>



In the “before times”, I sailed from Hawaii throughout the South Pacific out of Victoria BC, aboard *Sonsie*, a Southern Cross (SC) 39, hull #12. The pandemic put an end to all that, and *Sonsie* sat forlorn in Brisbane, stranded but safe.

As soon as borders opened, I flew down to see her, give her a hug, and grab all my belongings. She is to be imported into Australia now and listed for sale, due to changed circumstances. The Australian Border Force (ABF), as is its wont, has said, “time’s up” for all foreign-flagged vessels that have been in Australia since... what seems like forever.

While there, I talk to a Seattle sailor who needs crew across the Indian Ocean. A tempter, but not a runner for me at this juncture. He tells me he knows of another SC39. There were only 13 ever made, so that’s interesting.

There’s a phone message waiting for me from the other SC39 owner when I get home to BC. His SC39 is hull #3, *Philiosophy*. He sends me a photo from his anchorage in Rushcutters Bay, Sydney. I recognized

it immediately from when I was there in 2015! He's picking up two trial transducers from Raymarine, as his depth sounder has failed.

Having not met another SC39 owner, we fill our phone calls with talk of the amazing beauty and prowess of these craft, our parallel but differing rigs, mods, gear, preferred sail configs, past adventures and current plans. Turns out he's a retired offshore tugboat captain from Portland, Oregon, and has been stranded in Hobart, Tasmania for the past 2+ years. *Philiosophy* is facing a more pressing ABF deadline than *Sonsie*, so he is solo sailing up Australia's eastern shore to Thursday Island, at the northern tip, up to Indonesia.

We arrange to meet in Brisbane in a few week's time. I have to return anyhow to follow what ABF dictates and arrange the haul out, survey, appraisal, importation, and listing of *Sonsie*. We are keen to admire each other's SCs. I'm sure everyone is convinced that they have the best sort of yacht, but I'm sorry, we SC39 owners are the worst sort of snobs, considering them the *crème de la crème*, the peachiest of them all!

Our Boats

Sonsie

Hull #3's skipper comes aboard and sits in awe. "This is the most beautiful boat in the world," he says. She is. Her rod rigging runs down inboard of standard, sinking into the coach house, right behind the settees. Solid. A work of art. The snug shrouds permit the genoa to be sheeted in tightly, permitting her to point admirably into the wind. She won the 2010 Vic Maui in her Class, and came in an impressive 4th or 5th overall, skippered by Chris Hui. She's an able performer, a trustworthy craft, and pretty to boot: turtles on her bow and the prettiest name ever – *Sonsie* is Gaelic for nice lines, pleasing to the eye, happy, lucky.

Philiosophy

Hull #3 was built in 1980, so is five years older, with traditional shrouds stretching down to the outer hull. She's sturdy and very practically set up, with the basics emphasized in almost tugboat fashion. She's lovely, but all in all, a very bloke boat. *Phili's* got the same dreamy SC canoe stern – such an attractive, sea-kindly bum!

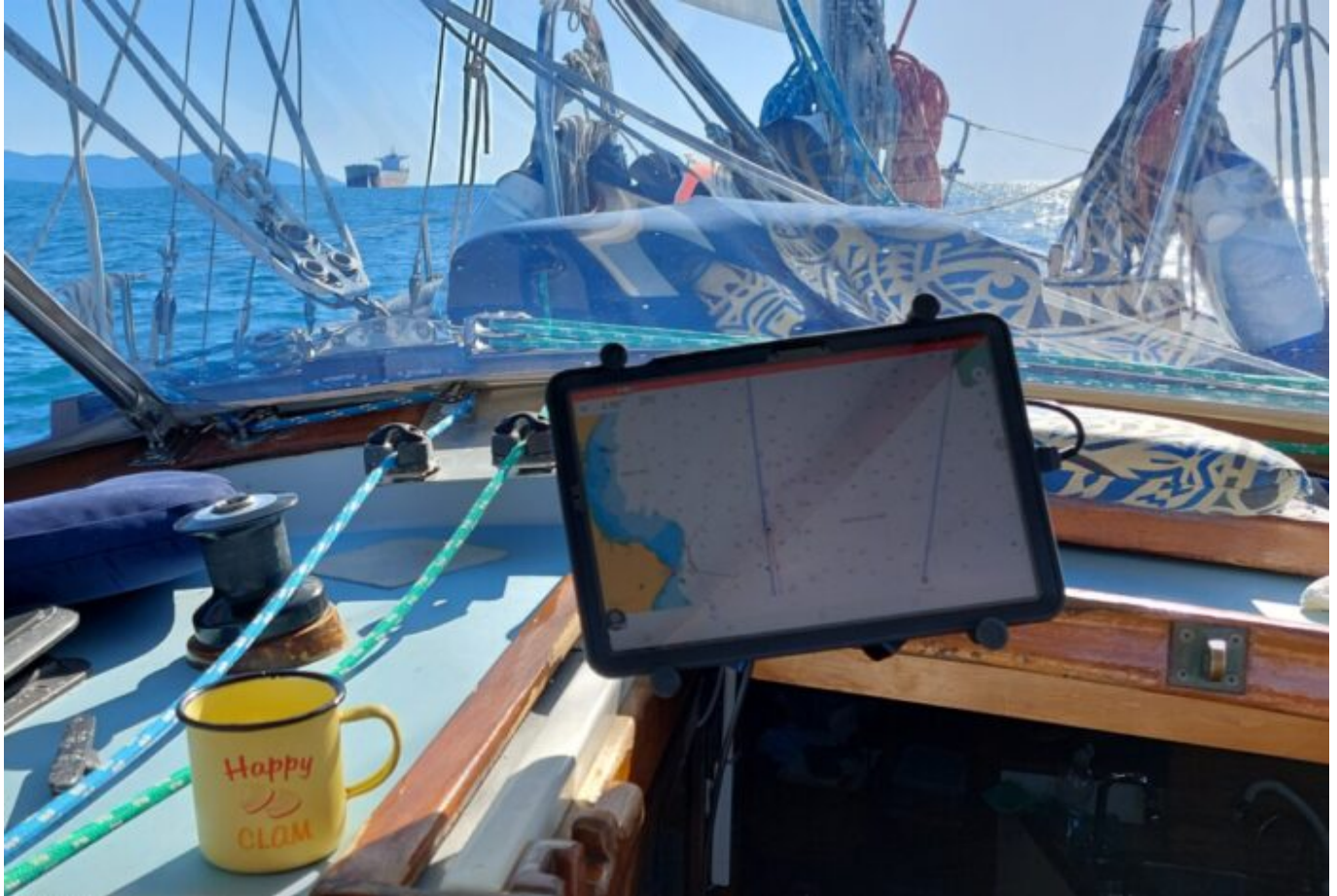
I sign on as crew. What are the chances of being able to sail on two of these perfect creatures?

Passage to Cairns

June 28 we pull up *Phili's* hook and set sail from Southport, Brisbane. The initial, ridiculously boisterous 48 hours' sail northbound makes me wonder if I still have it in me! The motion!

The depth sounder ceases to work. The first trial transducer, strapped to the bottom of the jackstay, has vanished, knocked off in the waves. We pull into Gladstone Marina. Among the chores and errands, we find propylene glycol for the second transducer.

After two still nights at dock, we set out expecting the forecast 15-20 knots of wind. Instead we get sucked into a storm. Thanks, BOM (Bureau of Meteorology)! The weather is more Alaskan than Australian in both temperature and temperament – not what we expected of the Great Barrier Reef. In sustained winds of 35-45 knots and soaking rain, we take turns threading our way through reefs and ships at anchor in the dark, merciless night.



Threading our way through a ship anchor field

Most annoyingly, I cannot find my good waterproof pants that I brought onboard with me, so we have to share the skipper's pair. Boats eat things! He sleeps while I helm into the thick, unpleasant night. I get soaked. Stay off the reefs. Avoid ships. His watch, and I go down to sleep in the quarter berth. Normally, I'm in the V-berth, but we're hot bunking it for the duration of the storm so as to be at the ready if needed.

I'm thankful to be dry, I'm drifting off to sleep. A particularly vicious wave slaps *Phili* and I hear foul, angry words flung like foam, futile and impotent, out into the night, spat at the elements by someone who is used to talking to the sea as a living being. The Alaskan tug captain curses, a toothless fury, hurling epithets into the teeth of the storm whenever boxing waves punch, fists of wind slam, and knives of rain drench.

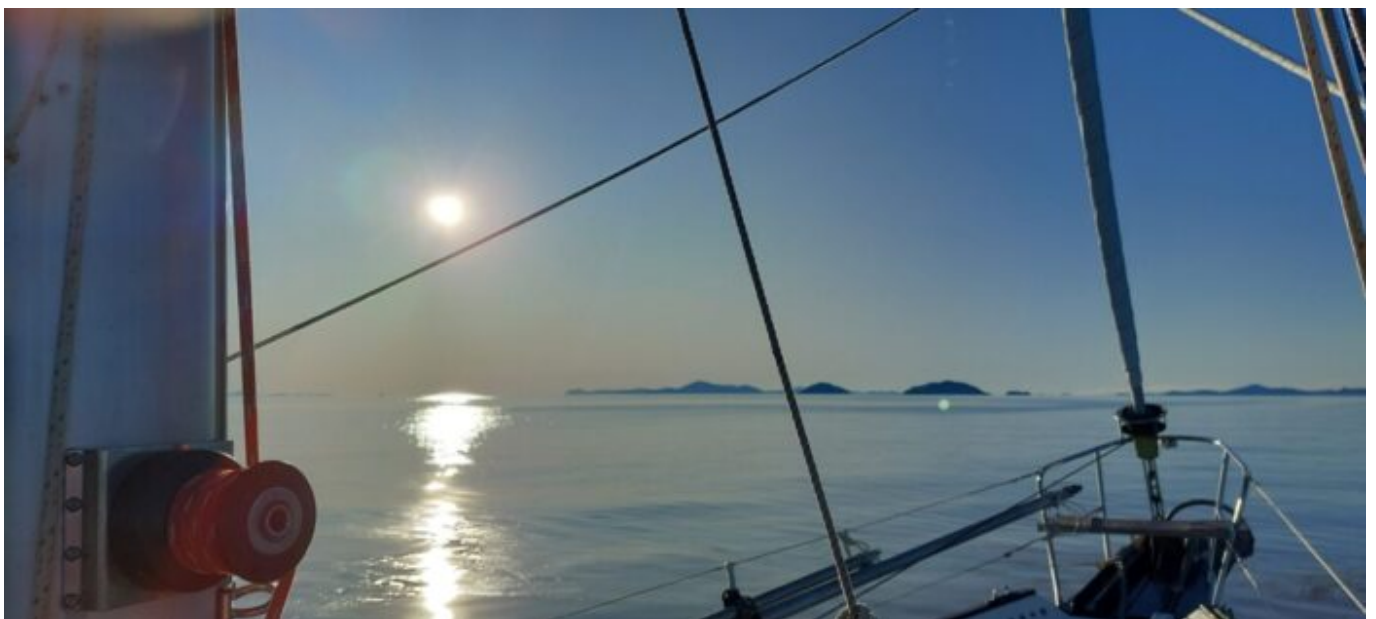
CMaps fails. No WiFi signals mean it won't restart without being signed into again. Luckily the old Raymarine system is running dependably, and I have trusty Navionics installed on my Samsung phone as back up.



Rough sea, salty day

Daylight does nothing to diminish the weather, so we seek shelter in the aptly named Refuge Bay, Scawfell Island. “Head to Scawfell when the weather is awful.” We drop the hook and sleep for two days while it pours and wind gusts up to 50 knots. There’s ample time to install the second of the two temporary transducers – the in-hull one in a bag of propylene glycol.

Wednesday, July 6, brings brilliant, welcome, cheering sunshine! We dry everything, motor out, and haul up the main, only to see that one sail slide has popped out. The track is getting worn. Doesn’t every boat owner have job security?! It’s an hour long fiddle to convince the pin to go back in, but there’s plenty of room in the bay to spin about and do the job.



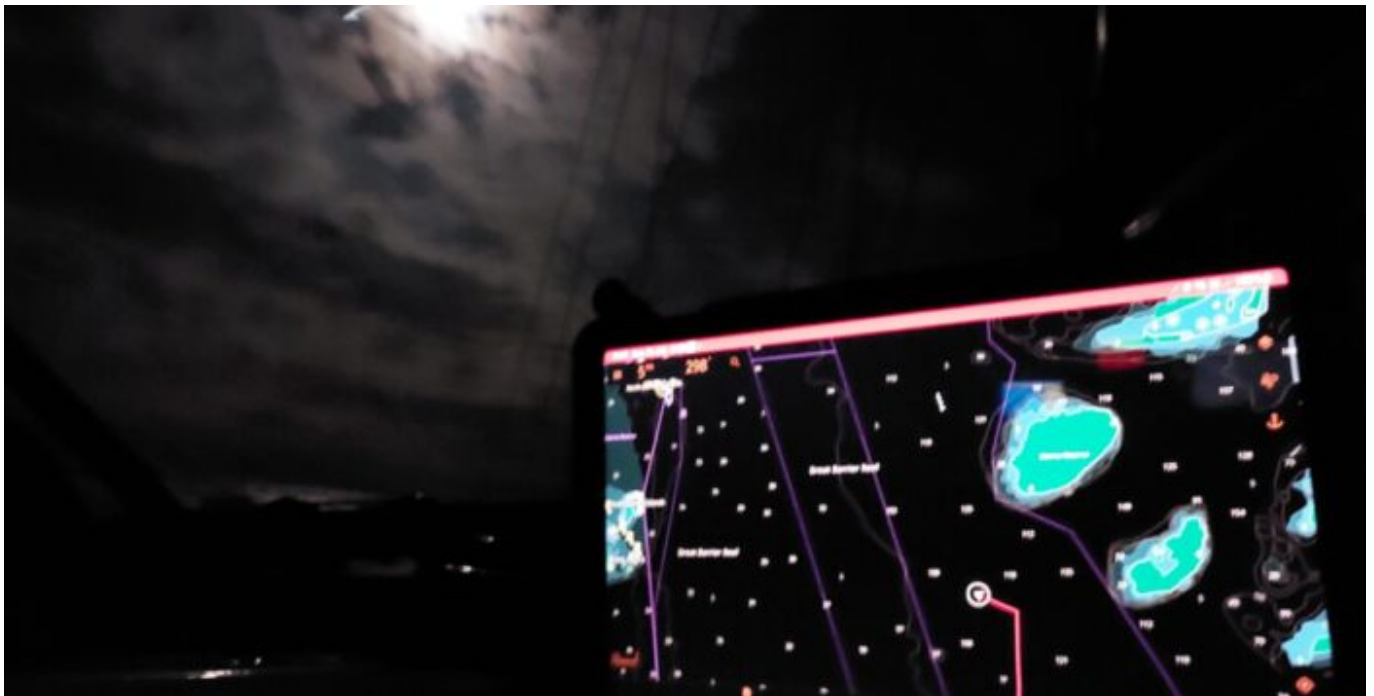
Time to go sit at the bow!

En route again and there’s finally enough of a signal to reboot CMaps. But it’s not long before it bellies

up once more. An online techie advises, guess what: uninstall, reinstall, then re-download all two dozen sections of chart for offline use. Rubbish program as far as I'm concerned. Navionics is far more reliable and user-friendly!

A few windless days mean we need to use the "donk" (Australian for engine, aka donkey), stopping at night to anchor and sleep. Beautiful anchorages, but there's no getting off with a deflated turtle of a dinghy on the foredeck and ABF's command that *Phili* make her northing posthaste, with stops only allowed for fuel, rest, repairs, or re-provisioning.

Next we catch a steady SE trade wind. *Phili* is happy sailing along at 5-6 knots on a starboard broad reach. I'm on 12-6 watch when we sail through the night. There's the occasional lull in the trades, and when that lull combines with a larger than average swell, all goes to hell for a bit as *Phili* flops and her sails flag. But soon enough, the wind steadies up, filling both main and genoa, and all is charming again. We're off to the races.



The satisfaction of a perfect gybe in the moonlight

What do you love about sailing? One of the things I love most about it is feeling, not only part of the sea, but also part of the sky. The moon is high. A fin keel of a cloud sails by it. Off to the right, the east, Jupiter shines, beneficent. The small dot of Saturn is next, then bright Venus rises, followed by the sun. To be part of this grand tableau is worth all the sleep disruption and deprivation.

The Austral moon in particular is a funny thing to observe. At 16°S latitude, the quarter moon's shadow line lies parallel to the surface of the Earth, so its bright face appears to be staring into the sea. From down here in the Great Barrier Reef, it looks like a bright pimple poking out of the dark firmament. A Lite-Brite, stuck in the heavens. A delight. She eventually sinks face down into the water.

"What is there in thee, Moon!"

*That thou should'st move
My heart so potently?"*
– John Keats

Before pulling into Cairns for repairs, we drop the main in the beamy fetch of shallow Mission Bay. The skipper informs ABF that, over the next few weeks, *Phili* will be requiring professional installation of an in-hull transducer, a new mainsail slide track, a stronger goose neck, oil changes, etc.

As for me, time's run out, and I fly back home to the Salish Sea.

About The Author

Isabel Bliss

Philosophy - Southern Cross 39

I've sailed many lakes and seas in various craft and still haven't had enough!



PFD Safety Upgrades

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/pfd-safety-upgrades/>



Aboard *Avant*, we're bullish on PFDs. We wear them whenever on deck while underway, and have upgraded them with a few additional gewgaws to help them (pretty much) match ORC safety guidelines and increase their effectiveness. We regularly (annually) look over the [Offshore Racing Congress \(ORC\) guidelines](#) and update our safety gear accordingly.

Your PFD is your primary piece of personal safety gear, and is what will keep you afloat should you slip overboard. Being rescued by the short-handed crew you leave aboard might not be instant, so being prepared to signal and help them find you is likely to be very useful. Having your PFD kitted out to make it more effective than what comes off the shelf is easy, and (we think) worthwhile. Having a few of the nice-to-have-at-hand items on your person is good too, so we add those as well.

We follow the '[one is none, two is one](#)' ethos in equipment – if something is important, we like to have a spare or alternate item immediately at hand.

We start with a basic, automatic inflatable PFD with an integrated harness for offshore use. If you're

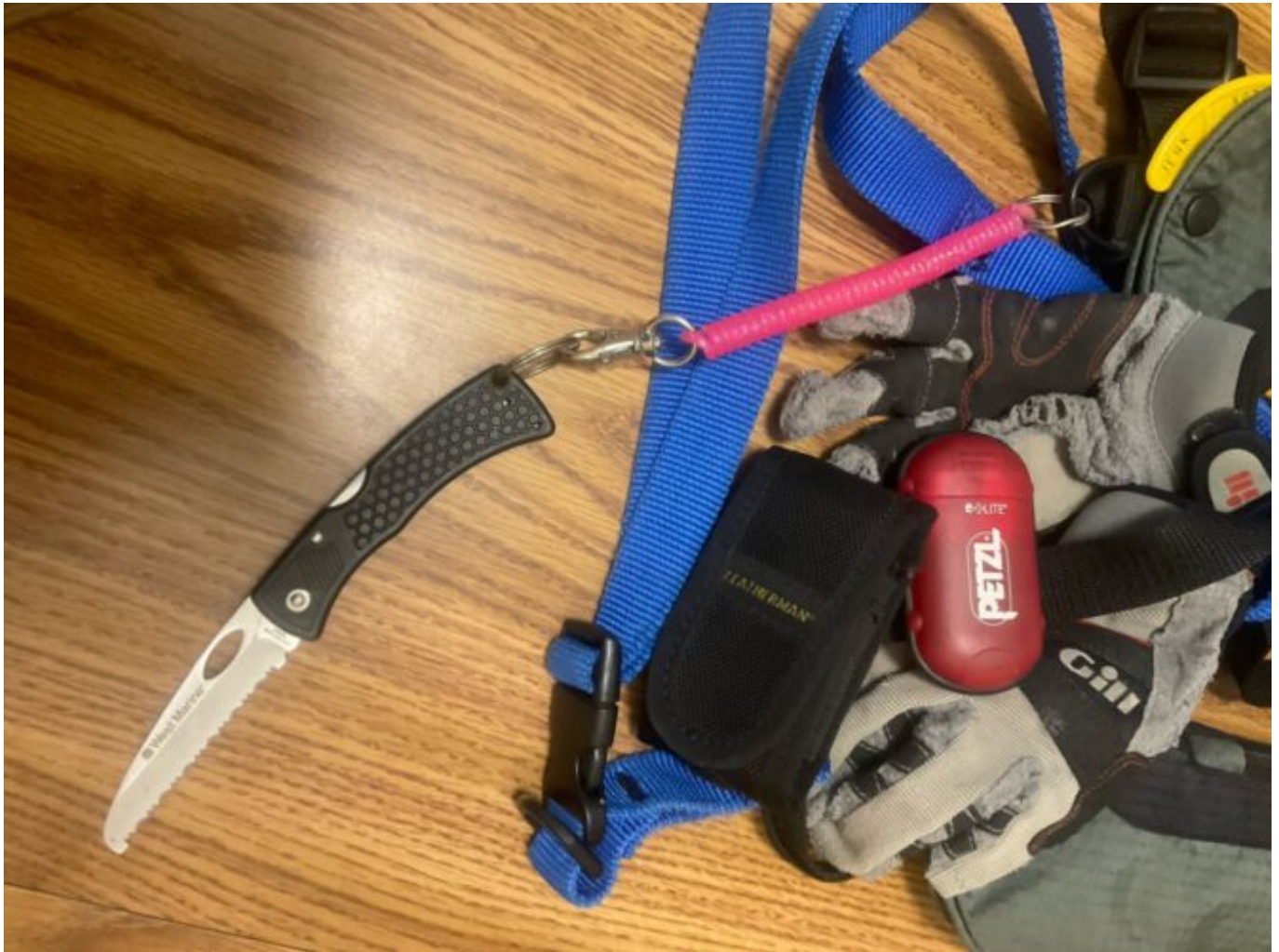
sailing in your home jurisdiction and want to use it to meet safety regulations, you need to pay attention to local government approvals, but if you're offshore or going offshore, we feel any approval is good enough to meet the use case (Canadian Coast Guard, US Coast Guard, UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency, European CE, etc.). There are a lot of manufacturers (Crewsaver, Mustang Survival, Revere, Spinlock, Stearns, and many others) and when you look them over, they're much of a sameness in features and approvals. We buy what's on sale.

We replace PFDs every 5-6 years and rotate the used ones to spare status, and after 10+ years, they're binned. We inspect them when they come into inventory as new, and annually thereafter. Annual inspection is visually checking for wear spots, frayed stitches, etc., cleaning and servicing the stuff attached to them, changing batteries in battery powered accessories, and then inflating the life vests and leaving them inflated overnight to check for loss of pressure (leaks) before refolding them for use.

Our Upgrades

Start with a basic, integral harness, self-inflating PFD.

We add what the ORC calls 'ride up prevention system (RUPS)'. These can be either thigh straps or a crotch strap. We use crotch straps as we have found them easier to use, they have lower drag, and are cheaper than thigh straps. These prevent you from slipping down in the life vest (or the life vest slipping up on you) and make it easier to keep your head above water. If you've ever tried your life vest in the water, you will know the importance of having a RUPS.



Knife with tether and serrated sheepsfoot blade (note stylish tether, pink with sparkles); blue strap is crotch strap / anti ride up system

We add a knife. The knife should be easy to open (and close), and somehow attached to the PFD so it won't be lost. A belt clip allows it to be clipped to the PFD waist strap for storage. You can make a string lanyard, but we prefer elastic tethers, which we get at the Dollar store (our fave chandlery). These tethers last a few years before needing replacement. The knife should be at least ½ serrated (for fast cutting) and have a blunt tip or sheepsfoot blade (so it's harder to inadvertently puncture the PFD bladder with it). A cheap West Marine rigging knife works fine, or a Spiderco Salt if you want an upgrade. If you get a sharp-tipped knife, grind off the pointy tip. Any knife will rust, so we brush ours liberally with wax (like we use on the hull) using a toothbrush and wipe the excess off, which seems to keep rust at bay.

Many PFDs come with a whistle stowed inside the folded bladder. If not provided, add a whistle there. We add a second one outside on a coiled elastic strap around the bladder so it can be used to call up off-watch crew, or signal a nearby boat instantly, without opening the life jacket. The low profile Fox whistles are good for this.

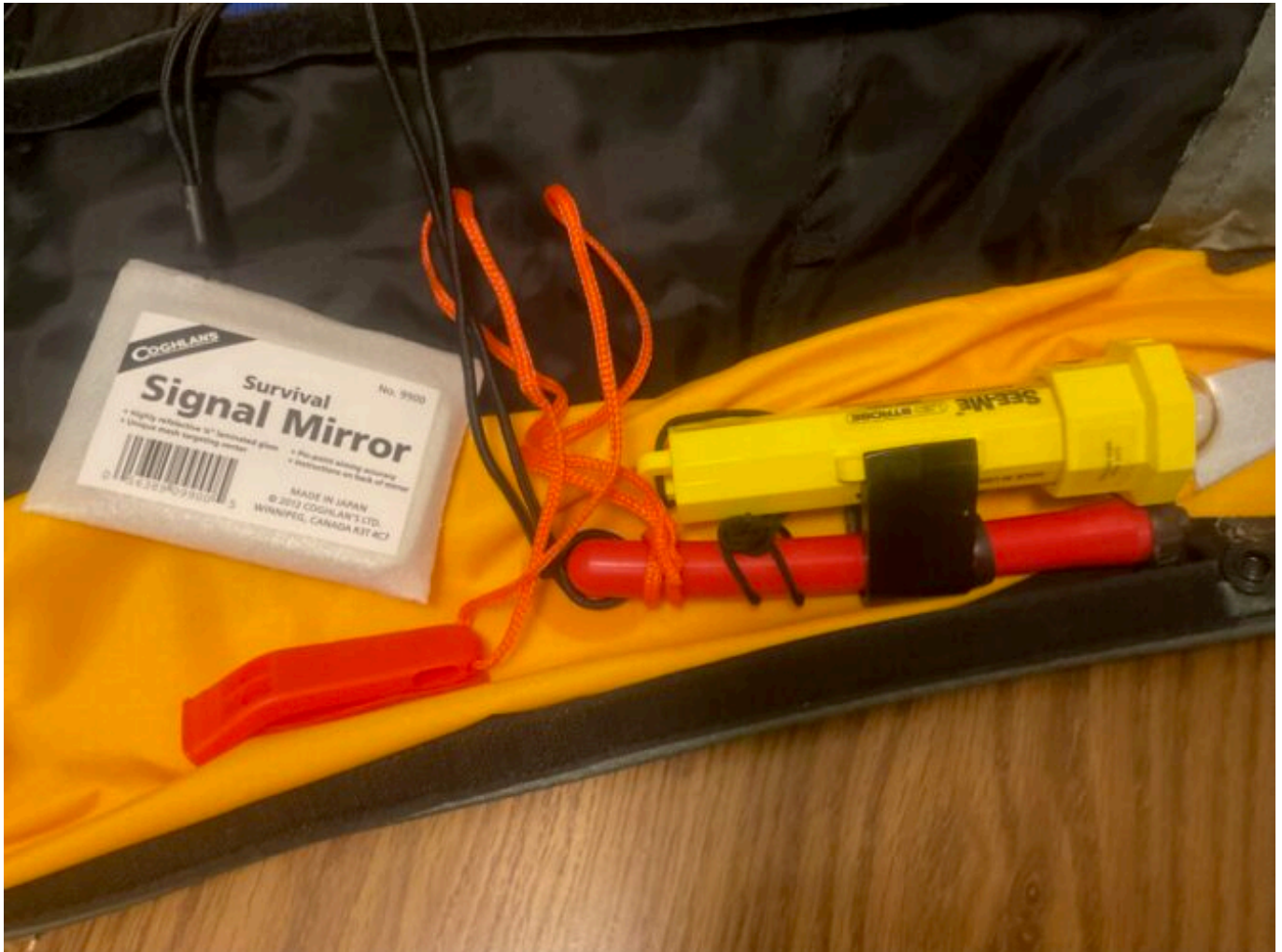


Light and whistle on the exterior, attached to a coil from the Dollar store

We think you should have a light (minimum 1). We have two (three counting the headlamp). We have one automatic light inside on the inflation tube, and a second one outside on the same coil elastic as the exterior whistle. The interior stowed light is a water-activated strobe. The exterior light is a simple, pocket LED powered by 2032 lithium coin batteries; these are often sold as bike lights. It provides enough light for tasks right at hand, can light your way forward on deck, help you find that thing you dropped, etc. They're usually available in white or red, and we choose red to try to preserve night vision. We rub a bit of Vaseline on the o-rings when we change the batteries every year. For devices that use AA, AAA, or similar batteries, we use lithium batteries for longer life, better cold weather performance, and less chance of a leaking battery.

For our offshore jackets, we upgraded and use [McMurdo MOB-1 Beacons](#). These have a light, a DSC-VHF alert with an AIS transmitter, and are rigged to go off when the jacket inflates. The beacons alert the mother ship and nearby vessels of a crew overboard situation via both DSC-VHF and AIS. There are other devices that have AIS transmitters without the DSC, and also PLBs (personal satellite beacons). We chose the DSC-VHF+AIS beacons because not everyone has AIS, but DSC-VHF is becoming ubiquitous. PLBs are great but take longer to alert anyone, and they send their alert to a coast guard station thousands of miles away, not to boats on the scene (if single handing, the PLB would be the way to go, though).

Our previous generation alerting devices were McMurdo Smartfind S20 AIS MOB Beacons (which seem to be discontinued now). These transmitted a GPS location on AIS and were good, but we prefer the dual DSC(VHF) and AIS functions the new beacons offer. The old ones are relegated to our backup systems now. These all need periodic servicing just like an EPIRB does.



Mirror, whistle and light attached to inflation tube inside PFD

We also add a signal mirror. These are inexpensive, and provide an alternative long range (up to 20 miles) signalling capability. You can get them in outdoor camping shops. We attached them to the inflation tubes with simple string neck lanyards for cell phones from those fave chandlers, the Dollar store.



Simple headlamp

We like a headlamp right at hand (it does get dark, pretty much every night), so we add one to a pouch on the belt. If the pouch is zippered, we treat the zipper with wax (like lip balm, also from the Dollar store) to keep it working. Our preference is for waterproof ones with variable output and red light capabilities. You don't need much light working on deck at night, and bright white ones will ruin your night vision. These can be used to signal as well, should you need to.



Multi tool

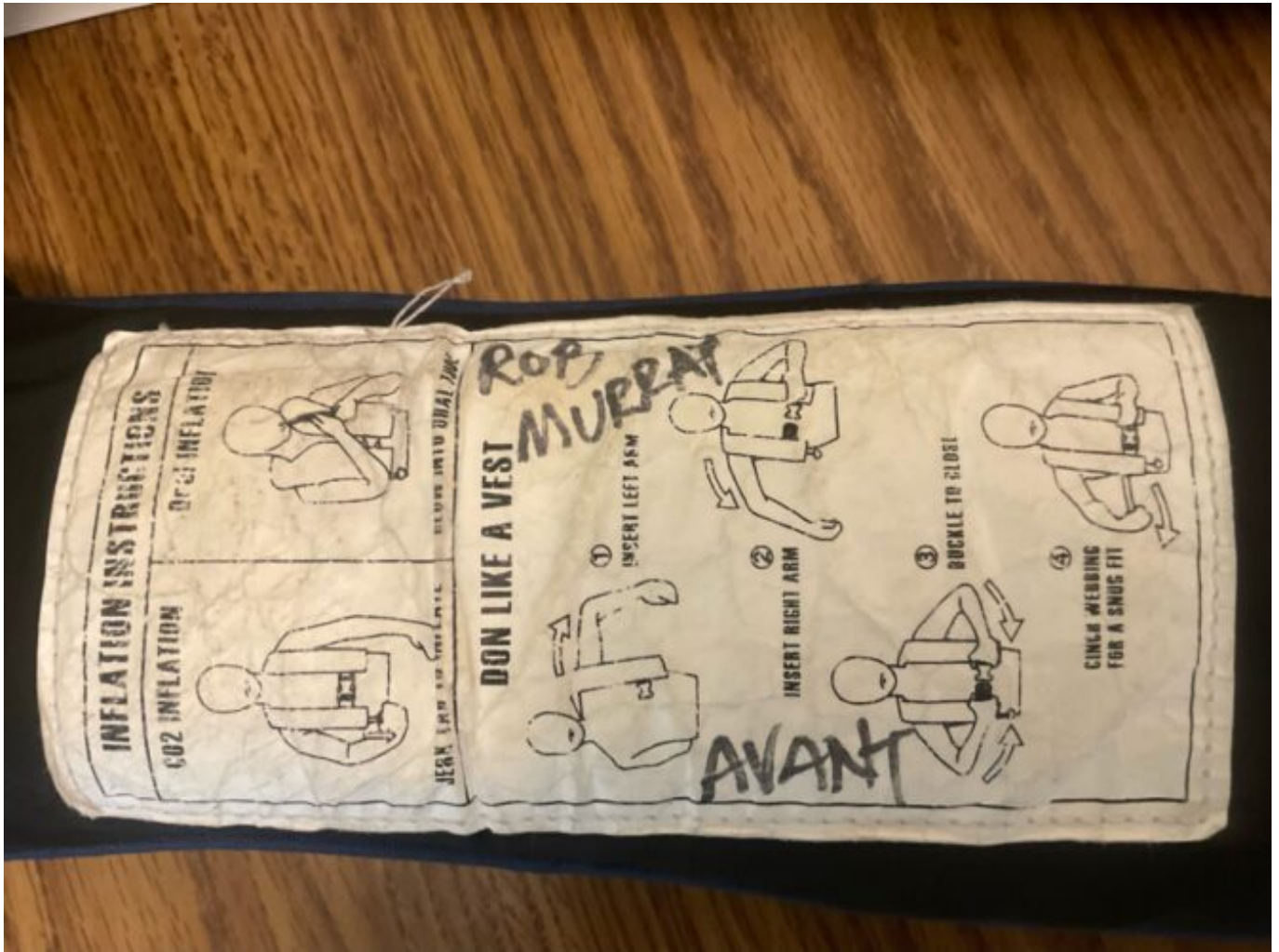
(Leatherman™). Stowed in black pouch. A headlamp goes in the red container, also on the PFD belt

We like to have a multi tool at hand at all times – a Leatherman™ (or similar) with pliers, screwdriver bits, and so on. We keep it in a pouch on the PFD belt. If you find something loose and want to tighten it up, it's convenient to have the means at hand when you discover the issue and save a trip downstairs to grab a tool. The multi tools are also prone to rust, so we treat them the same way as the knife, with an annual liberal brushing of wax, wiping off the excess.



Meager reflective tape is upgraded with three more strips on the front, and an extra strip added in the back.

We like to upgrade the reflective tape(s) on the PFD's bladder. They usually come with a couple of meager-meets-minimum strips of reflective tape, so we add three or five more around the upper edges to increase visibility. If you're buying reflective tape, get a roll so you can upgrade your LifeSling, Man Overboard pole float, life ring, and other safety gear too.



Write your name and vessel name on the PFD with waterproof marker

ORC rules also call for each PFD to be marked clearly with the wearer's or boat's name: a few seconds with a Sharpie™ and that's crossed off the list as well.

With a few changes in how you add, stow and use safety gear on your PFDs, along with a bit of attention, you can make any PFD a more useful survival aid, and the additional weight isn't really noticeable when in use.

About The Author

Rob Murray

Avant - Beneteau First 435 Sloop

Rob Murray and Debra Zhou are doers currently in El Salvador, Central America.

Currents Cover Photo Contest 2022

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/currents-cover-photo-contest-2022/>



I am delighted to announce that the popular *Currents* Cover Photo Contest is happening again this year. Our monthly [“PDF” publication](#) needs the best photos of your boats to grace its covers for 2023! Here’s the scoop:

If you are a BCA member in good standing, please submit the best, recent photos of your boat to the [Currents Editor](#) and then the *Currents* team will select the 12 best shots that will make the monthly cover of *Currents* in 2023.

For the first time in two years, many BCA members are offshore, enjoying bluewater cruising and we look forward to seeing some of those exotic photos again.

Contest Rules

It is important that you follow these rules and guidelines for submission because if you don’t, we may not be able to use your photo. For example: we cannot use photos in landscape orientation for the cover of *Currents*, so, it is extremely important that you submit **portrait only photos**. See the rules and guidelines below:

- Deadline for submission of photos: **December 3, 2022**
- You can submit more than one photo
- Photo submission guidelines:
 - Orientation: **Portrait** (vertical)
 - Resolution: Minimum **900×1200 pixels** or higher resolution
 - File format: **.jpg**
- Winners will receive *Currents* credits towards their membership fees
- Winners will be asked to provide a brief description of the boat and where the photo was taken. They will also be asked to give permission to publish that information as well as their name.

So, dig into your photo archives or go out and take a great shot of your boat and keep those submissions coming! I am really looking forward to seeing the entries come in!

Photo Attribution: ([License: CC0](#))

About The Author

Rosario Passos

Counting Stars - Whitby 42 Ketch

Rosario is a dreamer who wants to sail the South Pacific.... so far she sails the local waters of the Salish Sea to get as much experience as possible.

Vancouver Island Fleet Reports - September and October 2022

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/vancouver-island-fleet-reports-september-and-october-2022/>

B.C.A. V.I. FLEET PANEL

Yan Jullien, Bill & Cathy Norrie, Max Shaw

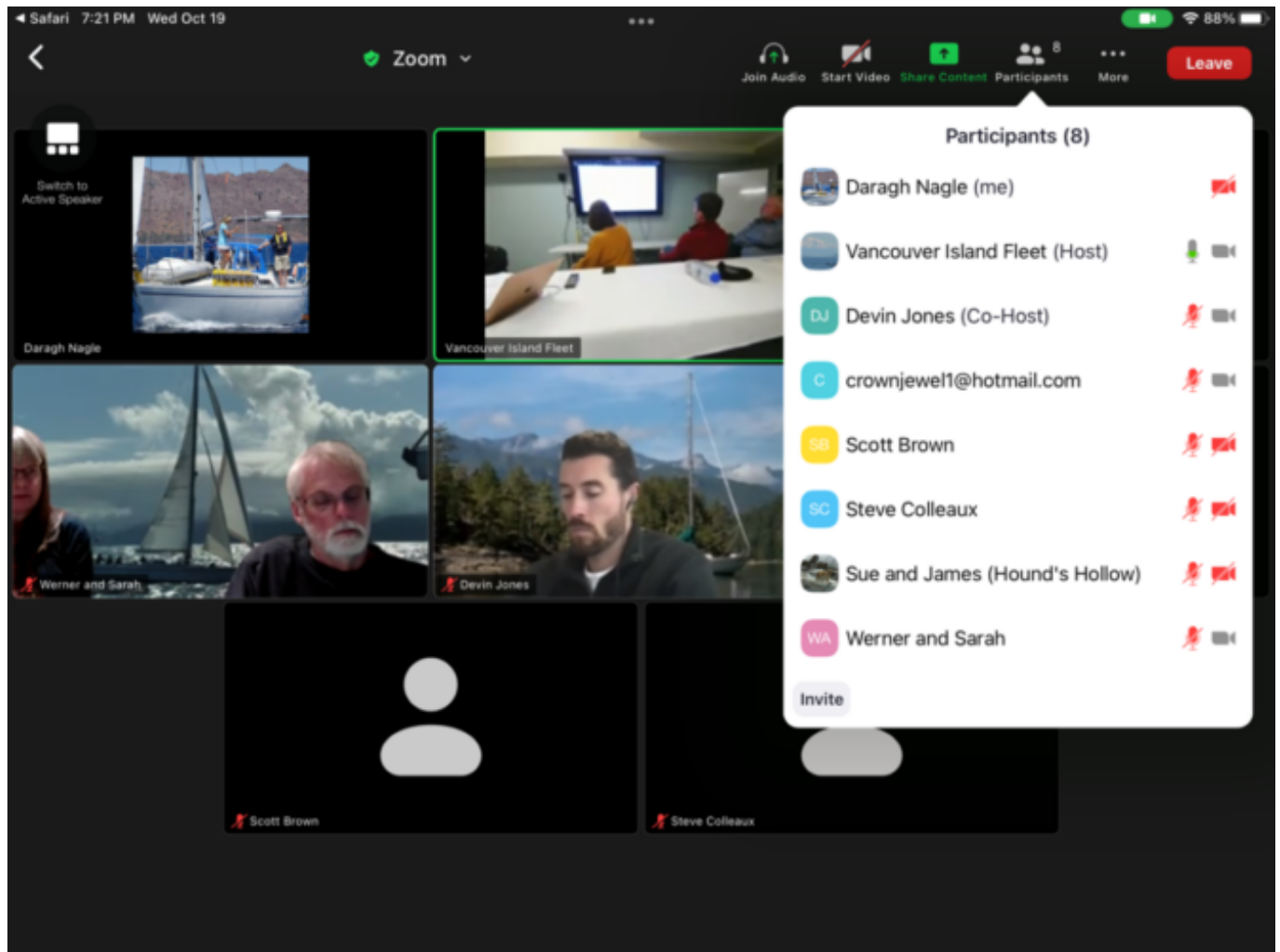


On September 15, sailors from 8 boats met at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club with 9 sailors from 6 boats via Zoom for the first session of the 2022-23 BCA VI Fleet. Fleet coordinators Daragh Nagle and Al Kitchen and weather facilitator Max Shaw introduced themselves to the group, described the typical operating process of our meetings, and highlighted important opportunities for the coming year. These included the [Vancouver Boat Show](#), the VI Fleet Rendezvous, and [VICE](#). They also informed the Fleet of other assets available to them including the [BCA Fleet Map](#) and the Fleet and Weather Google Drives where this year's digital information will be shared.

Devin Jones volunteered a Show & Tell item the group will likely be interested in, soft shackles. Marina and Rob volunteered to present next month's Show & Tell.

Members of the group then introduced themselves and briefly shared their sailing experiences and dreams.

Al presented a short Power Point highlighting the Weather Routing plugin on Open CPN as an aid for those planning to participate in the Weather Group who hadn't used a Weather Routing program yet. After a short break Scott Crawshaw presented the first unit of the Weather curriculum to those interested in attending.



Zoom attendees

In October, group numbers swelled to 27 sailors at RVYC and 7 attending via Zoom, for the perpetual favourite presentation – a panel discussion by returned cruisers. Each “boat” of returnees is given the basic topic outline that goes something like:

The main topic for the panel is “If you had known then what you know now, what would you have done differently in preparing yourselves and your boat to go offshore”. For example, what would you have changed on the boat, what equipment would you have bought or left behind, what information would have been helpful, what other preparations should you have made? The format will be a 20–25-minute presentation by each boat (total of 3 presentations) followed by questions.

This year’s presenters were Bill & Cathy Norrie, Yan Jullien (a non-BCA solo offshore sailor Dave & Dianne Cherry met in Mexico), and Max Shaw. After the usual, though abbreviated, announcements, Marina Steele brilliantly filled the Show & Tell portion of our meeting with her tales (also abbreviated) of her 12 day all women’s cruise and learn voyaging experience across the North Sea. Stay tuned as this story deserves a Club night presentation!

Brent Alley updated us on the Education offerings available and planned before the panel went to work. Cathy’s detailed and very organized opening set the stage for Bill to inject his always boisterous

enthusiasm on his outlook to offshore cruising and preparation. Yan then took the helm and though he had a tough act to follow showed how adaptable and responsive he could be as he nurtured the excitement infused by Bill. In the last few years we have had a growing number of families heading offshore and so it was fitting that Max add his input from his Pacific circumnavigation that included an addition to his family.

Next month Catherine Ascah will present to the group on Medical preparations for offshore.

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.

2022 BCA Strategic Plan: Opportunity for Member Input

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news/2022-bca-strategic-plan-opportunity-for-member-input/>

What Will the Future Bring?



Are you a BCA member? Are you interested in BCA's future? If so, please read on!

In November 2022, a group of BCA directors and watchkeepers will come together to look at what the coming years may bring and to update BCA's Strategic Plan.

In preparation for this planning exercise, we are looking for feedback from BCA members. Your input will make a significant difference and will help guide BCA activities in future years.

Answering the brief questions below will help us understand how BCA and its programs have helped you in the past and what advantages BCA might provide in the future as you prepare for new adventures:

- What is/was the most important challenge BCA helped prepare you for, or the most important benefit BCA has provided to you?
- If you were leaving to start your offshore cruising next year, what would be the most significant challenge BCA could help you address more effectively?

Using [this link](#) to create an email response, please send your reply (and your name) to David Mitchell, BCA Commodore, by **Nov 4, 2022**.

If you are interested in sending a short 1-2 minute video message of your thoughts to the planning session, let us know in your [email](#) and we will get in touch to discuss how to do so.

Thank you, from your Board of Directors and Chapter Watchkeepers

About The Author

Leslie Hansen

Saracen - Martin 32

Leslie has been sailing with Don for a while now. After meeting him on the water in a kayak taking surfing lessons, they found a common interest in sailing and bought the Martin 32 Saracen. They have been following Plan A the past six years: leave when the boat is ready, sail north, turn around before the fog. So far Plan A has gotten them to Glacier Bay, Haida Gwaii and the mid coast most years.

Sails: Inspection, Maintenance, Design and Repairs

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/sails-inspection-maintenance-design-and-repairs-2/>



Evolution Sailmakers

Sails are beautiful! As works of art, craft, and science, they are rich in history yet evolving with modern materials and our understanding of fluid dynamics. This is an informative and hands-on workshop presented by the knowledgeable staff in the [Evolution Sails Vancouver](#) sail loft.

About The Author

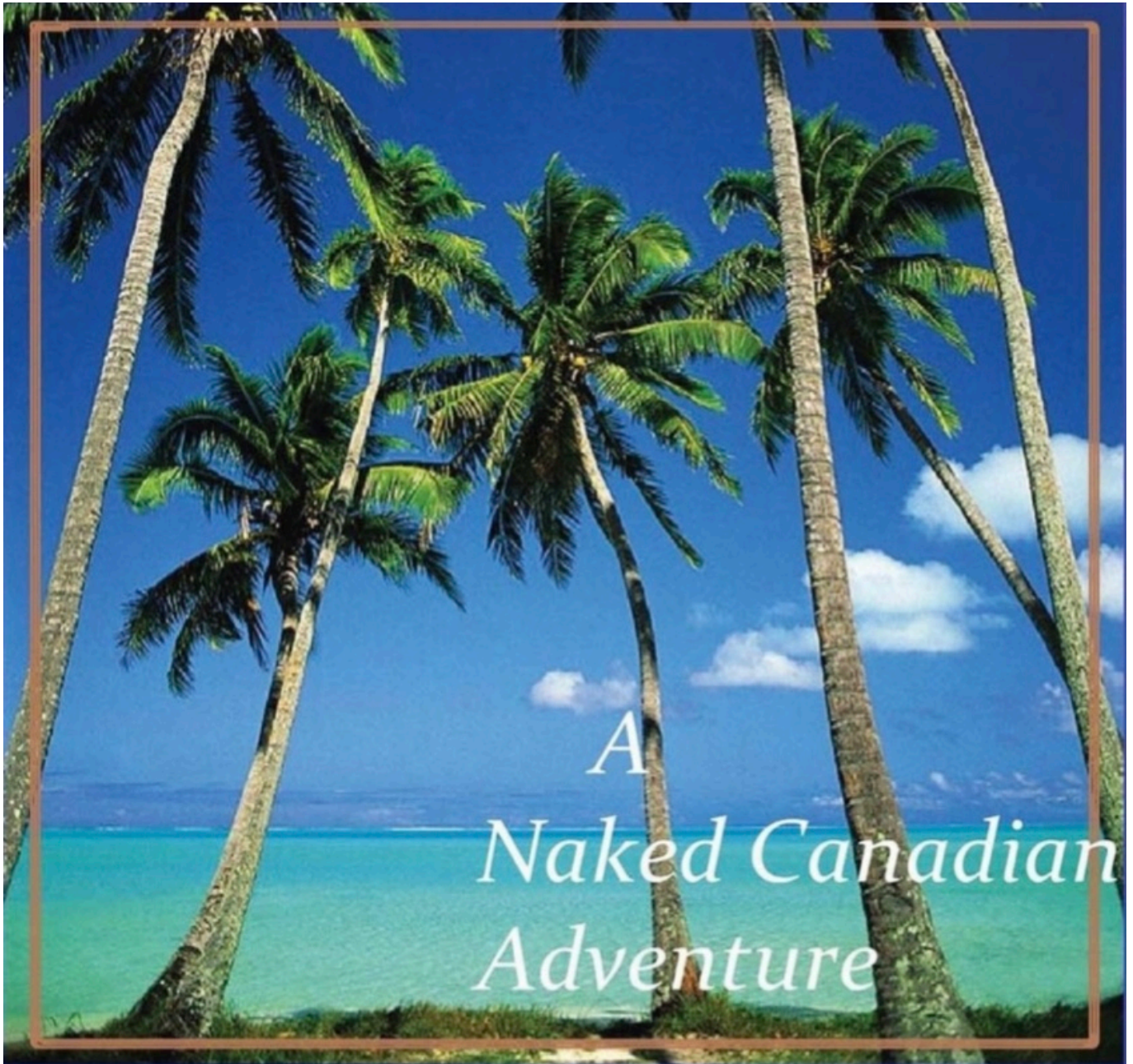
Kit Griffin

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.

Vancouver Club Night - The Tahiti Syndrome, Hawaiian Style

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-club-night-the-tahiti-syndrome-hawaiian-style/>



With easing of COVID restrictions, BCA Vancouver Chapter is excited to get back to in-person club nights at the Scottish Cultural Centre, and it's about time. Over the last two and a half years we have been proud to be able to offer virtual meetings, but it has been no substitute for face to face get-togethers. These Zoom meeting have, however, allowed members and non-members from afar to join in on the meetings and we would like to continue to offer this option.

Going forward, the Vancouver Chapter would like to present a hybrid club night, that is, a simultaneous in-person and virtual meeting. Most club nights will feature an in-person speaker, but some will feature a

remote speaker coming to us via Zoom. See meeting format details below.

Andrew Gunson grew up in and around boats on the Great Lakes, and always dreamed of following the paths of such intrepid sailors as Joshua Slocum, and Eric and Susan Hiscock. A Canadian National sailing champion at fourteen, he raced aboard some of the fastest yachts then afloat, competing against the very best at the World championship level. At the age of eighteen, he moved to Canada’s west coast and discovered a completely new world of sailing. Leaving the hi-tech racing yachts behind, he began to follow his dream of becoming a “cruiser.” Together with his father, he purchased his first cruising sailboat, a Columbia 36’, and never looked back.

After a series of life-altering events, that included a brush with a deadly skin cancer, a pair of automobile accidents that almost claimed Andrew’s life and being accidentally shot while bear hunting, Andrew and his partner decided it was time to stop dreaming. The Gunson’s started planning their escape before it was too late. Andrew will be joining us via Zoom, from Rio Dulce, Guatemala, to share his voyage to, and time in, Hawaii.

Hybrid Meeting Format

In-Person Attendees: For those attending in-person, the format will be very much the same as “normal”. Doors open at 7:00 and the meeting starts at 7:30, but keep in mind that it is still necessary to have a few COVID protocols in place (below). The cost for this option is \$5/member and \$10/nonmember.

Covid Protocol: BCA has suspended Covid protocols until further notice, per the notice [here](#).

Virtual Attendees: For those who are unable to make it to the SCC, the Zoom meeting will open at 7:00, to allow time for socializing online. Despite an announcement to the contrary at our last club night, there is currently no cost to attend the Virtual meeting, as we are still working out the payment system and harmonizing with the other chapters. We hope that you enjoy the meeting and the presentation!

A Zoom meeting invitation has been sent to BCA members via email. If you are a non-member and would like to attend virtually please contact [Heather Marshall](#).

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.

Calgary Club Night - Turning Left (and Other Things)

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/calgary-club-night-turning-left-and-other-things/>



The Calgary Chapter invites you to their November in-person (hybrid) club night. Joel and Cole Fox, with the assistance of Mike Gregory, will be talking about their recent trip down the West Coast from Ladysmith to Mazatlán, Mexico, successfully avoiding submarines, squid boats and storms. Jump aboard *Celestina*, their Pacific Seacraft 44, for the adventure!

Hybrid Meeting Format

In-Person Attendees: For those attending in-person, the format will be very much the same as “normal”. Doors open at 6:30 MST, but keep in mind that it is still necessary to have a few COVID protocols in place (below).

Covid Protocol: Because this is an indoor event, wearing a protective mask is encouraged (except when eating or drinking). Please see the BCA Covid-19 protocol [here](#).

Virtual Attendees: For those who are unable to attend, the club night will also be broadcast over Zoom. All BCA members will have received an email invite; for those who did not, please contact [John Kortbeek](#) if you would would like to attend virtually .

VI Mid-Island Club Night - Haida Gwaii - Gwaii Haanas: A World Away

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vi-mid-island-club-night-haida-gwaii-gwaii-haanas-a-world-away/>



To say that this was a “*bucket list*” item for Guy and Valerie would not be far from the truth, especially since they both saw their “window of opportunity” closing in this regard. This was not a highly planned adventure, and Guy and Valerie relied heavily on the recommendations of experienced members of the Schooner Cove Yacht Club to quickly cobble together an itinerary that would take them to Haida Gwaii safely, and once there, give them enough time to explore Moresby Island and do justice to the uniqueness of Gwaii Haanas.

Welcome aboard *Wind Chaser*, our 1990 Island Packet 35, as we navigate the Broughtons, the North Coast and cross Hecate Strait to Queen Charlotte City. From there we will visit several Haida cultural sites on Moresby Island as we wind our way south through intimidating narrows, eventually leading us to Rose Harbour (a whaling station until 1943) and ultimately SGAang Gwaii (aka Ninstints), the crown jewel of Gwaii Haanas. To miss SGAang Gwaii would have immediately rendered us “*persona non grata*” at home.

We will discuss our return route, the choices we made and the weather we encountered along the way.

Presenters

Guy Gauvin has sailed across the Equator (Huahine, FP, to Hilo, Hawaii), to San Diego and he has also done the Baha Ha-Ha. Guy and his wife, Valerie, have circumnavigated Vancouver Island twice and motorsailed as far north as Khutzeymateen Inlet, (north of Prince Rupert) to view Grizzly bears, but Haida Gwaii somehow always eluded them until the summer of 2022.

With the easing of COVID restrictions, BCA VI Mid-Island Group is excited to get back to in-person club nights at Nanaimo Yacht Club. Note that this club night will NOT be available via Zoom, but this presentation may be repeated later in the season in a hybrid (Zoom and in-person) format. On October 20, we would like to celebrate coming together face-to-face. We will continue to follow all BCA and Nanaimo Yacht Club COVID policies. As this is an indoor event, we recommend a protective mask when not eating or drinking. The full BCA COVID policy can be accessed [here](#).

Doors open at 7:00 pm and the presentation will begin at 7:45 pm. Bar will be open – come early to enjoy conversation and camaraderie.

About The Author

Kathryn Swangard

-

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.



VI South Club Night - Sextant to AIS, Two Voyages, Two Boats, Bridging Two Cruising Styles

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vi-south-club-night-sextant-to-ais-two-voyages-two-boats-bridging-two-cruising-styles/>



Tony Gibb and Connie McCann of Victoria, BC, circumnavigated the Pacific Ocean via the Aleutian Islands from 1983–1990 in a home-built Vancouver 27, *Hejira* of Victoria, with a sextant, one battery, no refrigeration and no head.

They departed again in 2010 in *Sage*, a Wauquiez 38, with a sextant, numerous GPS, a head, refrigeration and no AIS.

The British sailor Pete Goss said Tony and Connie have bridged two different cruising worlds. The world of the Hiscock's and sextants and the SV Delos social media world and AIS.

Please join us for VI South's October club night as we learn about their two varied voyages and experiences, and their unique ways of experiencing the ocean.

Once again, this will be a hybrid club night, with the in-person portion taking place at Royal Victoria Yacht Club (in the Main Lounge), and the online portion taking place on Zoom. BCA members will receive the link to join the Zoom meeting via email; if you do not receive the link and believe you should have, or would like to attend, please contact the [VI Communications Watchkeeper, Dani, via email.](#)

—
Doors/Zoom room open at 7pm (PST)

Brief meeting: 7:30

Presentation to follow

In-Person Attendees: For those attending in-person, the format will be very much the same as “normal” as we return to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club’s main lounge.

We will continue to follow all BC and Royal Victoria Yacht Club mandates and regulations in regards to COVID. The current BCA COVID policy (effective September 22, 2022) is as follows:

- BCA Covid-19 Protocols are suspended until further notice.
 - All BCA participants are welcome to wear face masks at BCA events to protect the health & safety of self and other participants.
 - BCA Board of Directors will continue to review BCA COVID-19 Protocols each month until it is satisfied that prior protocols can be suspended permanently.
 - Concerns regarding protocols may be addressed to your local Chapter Vice Commodore.
-

Intermediate Marine Weather

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/intermediate-marine-weather/>



Forecasting weather conditions are major aspects of cruising under sail and power.

This intermediate course, which begins with (and includes) the ½ day [Basic Marine Weather](#) and shows how weather satellites and technology have transformed forecasting to show cruisers the best way to combine their own observations with technology, is aimed at the cruiser who aspires to head offshore. Building on the lessons learned, it focuses on:

- Anti-Cyclones
- Swell & Sea Waves
- Surface Water Circulation
- Upper Air Charts & Satellite Imagery
- Gap & Promontory Winds
- Tropical & Sub-Tropical Weather

- Tropical Cyclone Formation & Avoidance
- Voyage Planning

Note: Participants registering for this course *should not* register for **Basic Marine Weather** as the **Intermediate Marine Weather** course fee covers both.

Instructor

Scott Crawshaw has sailed for over 40 years and has over 50,000 miles of ocean water experience. This includes skippering the Royal Canadian Navy's Tall Ship, *HMCS Oriole* and four years of offshore sailing with his family aboard *Peregrinata*. His qualifications include a Transport Canada Master Mariner, unlimited tonnage; a Navy Surface Command Qualification, unlimited tonnage; an ISPA instructor, a CYA Yachtmaster, and a CRYA Ocean Yachtmaster Instructor.

He has sailed extensively in the Pacific, twice to Australia and five times to and from Hawaii. He has participated in a number of international yacht races including four Victoria to Maui International Yacht Races where he was the winning skipper of the 2000 race and is the corrected time record holder. In addition, he has competed in numerous Swiftsure races and a Van-Isle 360. From 2002-2006 he cruised with his wife and two daughters down the coast of the Americas and across the South Pacific, including the Galapagos, to Australia.

Scott has a degree in Physics and Physical Oceanography from Royal Roads Military College. He lives in Victoria, with his wife Sonia, and, recently retired from the RCN, has become a full time grandpa.

About The Author

Brent Alley

Pegasus II - Nordic 44

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

Basic Marine Weather

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/basic-marine-weather-2/>



If you are a cruiser who will be sailing in internal waters, have access to VHF radio broadcasts (and/or the internet) and are interested in knowing about the weather in your local area, then this course is for you! Build your confidence. Learn how to look at the environment around you, combine that with the weather report, and apply it to your immediate situation.

If this sounds like a tall order for a 3-hour course, that's because you've probably never taken a course from Scott Crawshaw before. He not only knows his stuff, he knows how to teach it.

Course participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of weather, which includes:

- Air Circulation Patterns
- Pressure, Temperature and Moisture
- Air Masses; Fronts and Cyclogenesis
- Fog, Clouds and Precipitation; and
- Interpreting Weather Maps

Note: Do *not* register for this course if you have already signed up for or intend to take Scott's [Intermediate Weather Course](#) since **Basic Marine Weather** is included as part of that course.

Instructor

Scott Crawshaw has sailed for over 40 years and has over 50,000 miles of ocean water experience. This includes skippering the Royal Canadian Navy's Tall Ship, *HMCS Oriole* and four years of offshore sailing with his family aboard *Peregrinata*. His qualifications include a Transport Canada Master Mariner, unlimited tonnage; a Navy Surface Command Qualification, unlimited tonnage; an ISPA instructor, a CYA Yachtmaster, and a CRYA Ocean Yachtmaster Instructor.

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About The Author

Brent Alley

Pegasus II - Nordic 44

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Electrical Skills for Cruisers

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/electrical-skills-for-cruisers-5/>



Spend a day with electrical engineer, Bjarne Hansen, in an interactive session about all things boat electrical.

Bjarne is a popular instructor who's taught sell-out courses in the past. He has the remarkable ability to both do and teach. Learn about the theory behind electricity, how to safely use electrical equipment, repair techniques, avoid problems, troubleshoot, and how to stay safe when mucking about with electricity.

The course will focus on how to fix common electrical problems with hands-on exercises to reinforce learning and improve your skills. Bjarne is very knowledgeable, approachable, and an easy-to-understand instructor.

Course Information

This course is intended for any cruising member, not just the skipper, who wants to learn more about

electricity and electronics in the boating environment. A non-intimidating lecture with lots of examples will be followed by practical exercises to help reinforce the materials and improve skills.

Prerequisites and Materials

An interest in electricity and boats. Some practical exercises will employ basic tools that you can purchase prior to the course, or you may already have; a list of these will be provided before the course. A limited number of loaner tools will be available.

About the Instructor

Bjarne Hansen trained as an electrical engineer and early in his career worked with radar, radio, and other airfield equipment in the RCAF. More recently, he has been designing medical equipment at a local engineering firm. A BCA member since 2003, Bjarne cruised the South Pacific for two years in 2004 – 2006 and spent winters 2015 – 2019 sailing with Barb in Mexico.

About The Author

Brent Alley

Pegasus II - Nordic 44

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

Currents Bluewater Cruising

The Bluewater Cruising Association

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