
BLUEWATER
CRUISING ASSOCIATION
Photo Contest Winner
Stefanie & Torsten Schulz
Fortitude X - Beneteau 423
Fortitude X leaving the Pacific Ocean for new adventures in Caribbean waters.
Transiting Panama Canal ♫"with a little help from our friends" ♫ Lisa & Ralph Herten, who flew in from Vancouver to join us for this memorable venture.
Currents
October 2026

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Five Reasons Not to Live on a Boat? How We Did It

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/five-reasons-not-to-live-on-a-boat-how-we-did-it/



On August 30, 2025, *Practical Sailor*, the *Consumer Reports* of sailing, published a video called Top 5 Reasons NOT to Live on a Sailboat. The aim was not to put you off living on a boat, but to encourage you to take time to assess what living on a boat means before you take any irrevocable steps.

In summary, the five reasons *Practical Sailor* lists are these:

1. Everything breaks constantly.
2. Boats are expensive to buy, to maintain, and to dock.
3. Boats force you to make compromises for daily comforts, such as having a car, reliable internet, and hot showers.
4. Cooking and sleeping are harder on boats.
5. Your life revolves around weather.

We, Stephen and I, spent 15 years on ***Fairwyn***, a 42-foot wooden S&S yawl built in Scotland in 1957. We crossed the Atlantic twice, once in 2008 from Chester, NS, to the Azores, and again in 2013, from the

Canary Islands to Antigua. On both Atlantic crossings, our friend Chris Boulsbee travelled with us. Having lived on a boat for all of those years, I can agree with *Practical Sailor*'s cautions. However, I don't regret a minute of those years.

Here are how the five reasons worked out for ***Fairwyn***.

1. Everything Breaks Constantly

Yes, we had lots of breakage. The alternator quit in the middle of a calm in the Gulf of Panama. Stephen replaced it with a spare as I slowly tacked back and forth with only the genoa. He stupidly kept his watch on while doing the work and ended up with the stainless steel band seriously burning his wrist when it encountered a hot wire.

Other electrical problems kept us in Bahia Caracas in Ecuador, so we almost missed our haul-out date in Santa Lucia further down the coast.

Our autopilot quit just one day out of Tenerife at the beginning of our passage to Antigua. Three of us hand-steered for 21 days.



Nancy hand-steering

When we arrived in Antigua, we managed to get the autopilot repaired because the motor was full of carbon. As other people have noted, it’s always good to know how to repair things that go wrong at sea!

At one point, we discovered a leak in one of our under-berth 35-gallon water tanks. Actually, that proved not very difficult to fix because the tank could be disconnected and the leak made available without our having to take the tank out of the boat. Water in those tanks was always potable. We did put the water through filters when we put more in the tanks. The tanks were usually connected, but when we were heading upwind and heeling we disconnected them to ensure that the water in the tank on the windward side did not overfill the lee side.



Top left: leaky water tank; Top right: wear on shackles; Bottom: Stephen repairing the key in the steering wheel.

2. Expense

Before we set off in 1998, we wanted to race to Hawaii in the Vic-Maui race. However, Surveyor Ken Rorrison discovered rot behind the bronze strapping of the hull: we could have been certified for coastal cruising, but not to go offshore. We also could have replaced the planking just under the straps, but that

would have made the hull very ugly. Instead, we opted to have the entire double-planked hull beneath the waterline replaced.

We had a party to celebrate the last plank, including Scotch, of course, because ***Fairwyn*** was built in Scotland.



Left: Stripping the old double-planking, with one of the bronze strappings hanging down; Right: the End Plank of the boat.

The cost was more than we paid for the boat in the first place in 1982, but the boat ended up with a beautiful hull and we were cleared for offshore sailing.

Moorage

Knowing moorage is expensive, once we began our supposedly five-year cruise (turned out to be 15 years) in 1999, we tried to anchor as much as we could to avoid paying for moorage. Anchoring worked off and on in California, in the Caribbean, on the east coast of the US, and in the Maritimes and Newfoundland. In Mexico we mainly anchored except during the summer in Puerto Vallarta and Colima, when we left the boat on its own.

We anchored in most of Central America, Ecuador, and the Galapagos. In Panama, we took a mooring off the Panama City Yacht Club, which is no longer in existence.

We paid the most for moorage in the Mediterranean, where it turns out that no one cruises in the winter because there is either no wind or too much wind. We were in marinas one winter in Sardinia, two winters in Malta, and one winter in Sicily. Winter fees were reasonable, though fees in the same marinas in summer were outrageous. We found places to anchor in the Mediterranean in summer, though some bays that looked good on the charts had buoyed swim areas which meant we had to anchor further out with less protection.



Left: Triple moorings in Malta during an Adriatic winter storm that came right into the Manuel Island marina; Right: Isola Vulcano, north of Sicily – keeping costs down by anchoring out.

Haul-outs

Most of the time we did fairly quick haul-outs to paint the bottom and change zincs. However, in Nova Scotia, we spent some time on the hard preparing for crossing the Atlantic. We took both masts out for sanding and re-varnishing.

In Gold River, the bronze manufactured centreboard came out to have the screws tightened or replaced.

Five years later, that centreboard broke off when we were re-crossing the Atlantic; it was not replaced until we arrived back in BC.



Left: New centreboard made of fibreglass with lead inserted by Eric Jespersen in 2015; Right: the old metal centreboard after it was removed from the boat in Florida in 2014 after we had crossed the Atlantic.

3. Compromises for Daily Comforts

Yes, we had no car to run errands from wherever the boat was anchored or moored. We used a cart to provision and get fuel if there was no fuel dock. We could get three 20-litre yellow Diesel tanks on the cart at once. In Cartagena, Columbia, Stephen hired a taxi to take him to all the marine supply and tool places.

Fairwyn has no shower, so we managed with what my mother used to call sponge baths, sun showers in warm weather, and lovely hot showers in marinas. Stephen was known to leave his shampoo bottle in marina showers, so he was “required” to take a small amount in an old pill bottle so it didn’t matter if he forgot to bring it back to the boat.



Left: Chris showering on the deck while crossing the Atlantic; Right: Chris on the cabin sole in the forward cabin, working on getting his foul weather gear on.

For communication, we used VHF, SSB, Sailmail, and shore-based internet—long before today's availability of onboard connections. The only time that was a problem was when my university roommate died and I did not know about it until we landed in Los Angeles and found out that the funeral had already occurred.

4. Cooking and Sleeping

We had a kerosene three-burner stove with an oven. Although it required pre-heating with alcohol, it worked very well, including for baking bread. At times we considered changing the stove to propane, but that would have required reconstruction of a lazarette to create a locker with outboard ventilation. Instead, we had a copper kerosene tank in the cockpit locker attached to the stove that did not require filling very often through a deck pipe. And we found that kerosene was available everywhere – although this is perhaps not true today. (Note: the new owner of ***Fairwyn*** [since 2017], Richard Leland, did turn a lazarette into a propane locker and installed a propane stove.)

To make meals easy to eat at sea, I served them in what were originally Scandinavian water scoops, bowls with handles that you could hold in one hand while you ate with the other.



Another gourmet meal served in Scandinavian water scoop bowls – Stephen's without the carrots. (Photo by Chris Boulsbee.)

At anchor we slept in the V-berth, but, at sea we slept in the main cabin berths that had both leeboards and attached lee cloths that prevented falling out. When three of us were aboard for long passages, we hot-bunked.

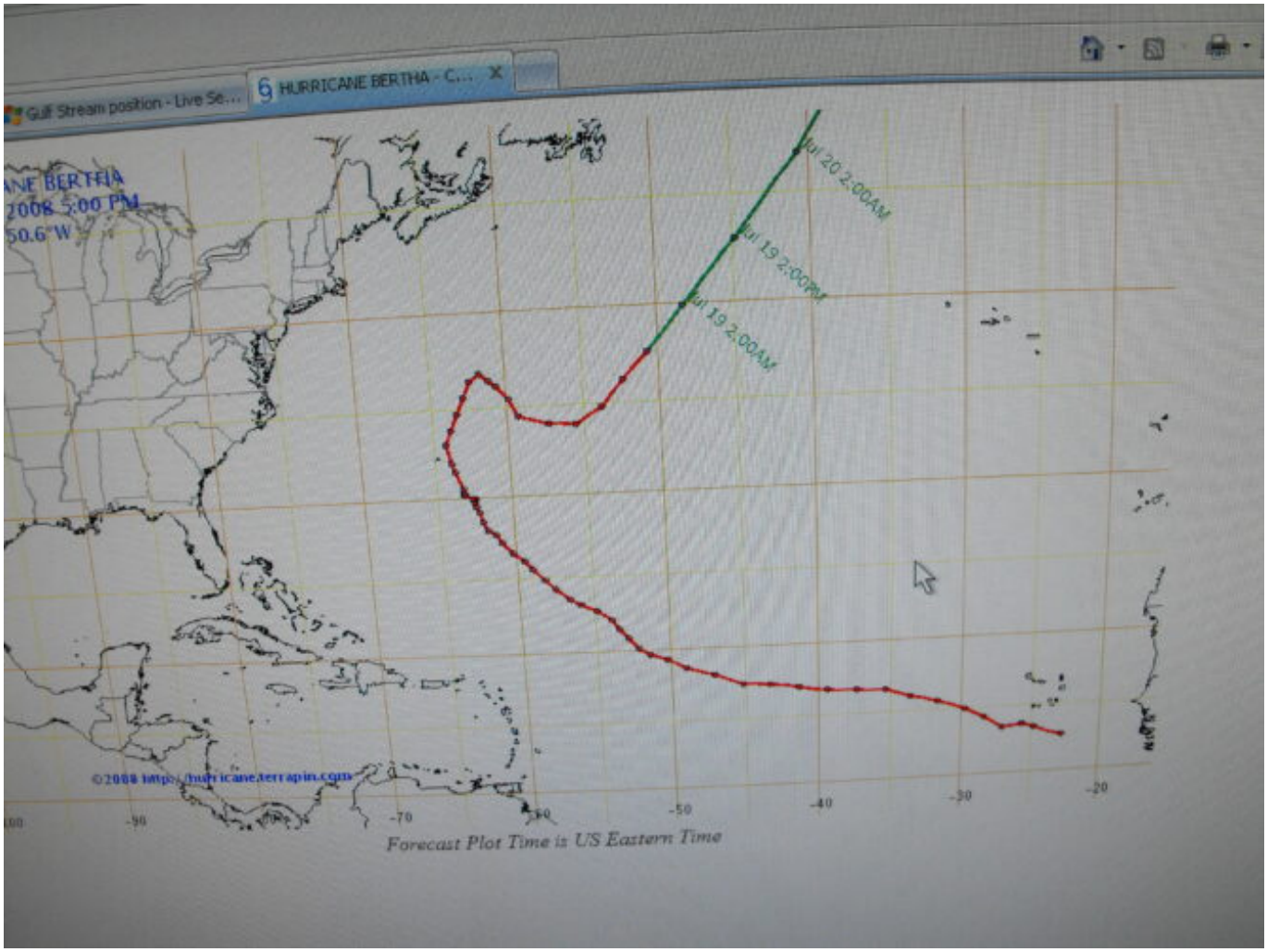
In hot areas, we could open hatches and portlights because they had screens to prevent insect access. We also had small electric fans above our berths. Because ***Fairwyn*** is a wooden boat, it did not suffer from condensation.

5. Life Revolves Around the Weather

Yes, it definitely does. We never gave friends who planned to visit us on the boat a date when we would be at a specific place. Instead, we said we would let them know when we have arrived at Acapulco or Siracusa or Cartagena, and then they could make plans to join us. Obviously, that meant that friends could not take advantage of cheap airfares bought a long time in advance, but we could never guarantee when we might arrive at a destination.

We postponed our departure to cross the Atlantic from Chester, NS, twice to avoid the tropical storms

related to Atlantic hurricanes in July 2008, and again when fog enclosed the harbour.



Tracking hurricane Bertha in July 2008

We always paid attention to weather forecasts and local knowledge and never left a safe anchorage or marina if bad weather threatened. On the night before we intended to enter the Rio Dulce in Guatemala, we were anchored in a bay across from the entrance. During dinner, a westerly wind came up making the anchorage dangerous. We pulled up the anchor and motored into a nearby sheltered bay to re-anchor and postpone our river entrance for a day until the wind subsided.

And even in Sicily, in the summer time, we once had a hail storm in May.



Hail on the deck in Sicily

So, even though there are many new ways of communicating now, you still have to pay full attention to the weather: starting early, rescheduling, postponing, and never telling visitors when you will meet them until you are where you plan to be.

That is how ***Fairwyn*** coped with *Practical Sailor*‘s reasons for not living on a boat. Although we had some challenges, we had no regrets.

About The Author

Nancy Carlman

-

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

Clearing Into Mexico

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/clearing-into-mexico/



I’ve written this for the benefit of anyone planning to clear into Mexico with their boat and wondering what they need to do before leaving Canada, and what it might look like once they arrive in the country. It’s an account of our experience clearing in after sailing directly from Canada to Ensenada, where we then used the marina staff to assist with our customs and immigration process. It might not be exactly what you will experience, but you might find a nugget or two that will help reduce the paperwork anxiety, or prevent a snag at the immigration office.

The Clearing In Process

Documentation needed:

- Passports
- Boat registration
- Insurance that specifically states coverage in Mexico

- Recent photo of boat
- Recent survey
- Proof of ownership of tender
- Serial number for inboard engine(s)
- Serial number for outboard engine(s)

Office staff at Cruiseport Village Marina in Ensenada will assist you with clearing both the humans and the vessel into the country. We sat down with Octavio, whom we had contacted before we arrived. We made our reservations in August, not knowing when we'd arrive. To make the reservations, Octavio asked for copies of our passports, our insurance showing that we had insurance in Mexico specifically (we had to contact our insurance company to get the wording just right), a recent photo, and our last survey.

The TIP

Before arriving in Ensenada, we had a lot of confusing and conflicting information. Let me talk first about the TIP.

Mexico requires every foreign boat and vehicle to have a permit allowing it to be in the country without paying import taxes. They do this to prevent yachts being sold on the black market, and to ensure that the proper taxes are paid. This permit is called a Temporary Import Permit, or TIP. A vehicle's TIP is good for about 6 months, but a boat's TIP is good for 5 years and is renewable. The TIP is connected to the vessel's Hull Information Number (HIN). Boats older than 1972 will not have a HIN. Don't ask me what they do in those cases.

A boat with a valid TIP is allowed to come and go from Mexico as many times as you want in that 10-year period without having to get a new permit. However, because the TIP is connected to the boat's HIN, not the human owner, if the previous owner had a TIP and sold the boat without cancelling it, when you bring the boat in, the paperwork will have conflicting information and that's not a good thing to have in a customs office. In my past personal experience, it's excruciatingly painful. The penalty for entering Mexico with an outstanding TIP can be anything from denial of a new TIP, denial of a Zarpe (an exit document when you leave Mexico), to having the boat impounded, or worst case, seized forever.

Our boat, ***Salt***, was built in Florida in 1998, purchased at some point by someone in California, sold to someone in Canada, and then sold to us. We've owned her for 6.5 years. This told us that A) since it once lived close to Mexico, there was a good chance there was a TIP on it at some point, B) the TIP was not necessarily going to show up in the digital database since the database only goes back to 2005. If the boat had a TIP before that, it could be on actual paper and would need to be checked by hand.

I wondered if the check would automatically be done when we ordered our new TIP, but of course it doesn't work that way. The system does automatically check for old TIPs before issuing new ones, but they don't do the hand-check. And, if you accidentally end up with two TIPs, you will be *sooo* flagged and life will be miserable for you.

I wondered if the marina could do this manual check for me, but no, they couldn't.

For boats younger than 2005, go to the Banjercito website and run a check for an outstanding TIP.* The Banjercito is short for Banco Nacional del Ejército, Fuerza Aérea y Armada. It operates as a commercial and development bank for members of the Mexican Army, Air Force, and Navy. It is the sole agency authorized to issue, track, and process TIPs for all foreign vehicles and vessels entering Mexico. If you find an outstanding TIP, you must have it cancelled. That will involve some hoops and take about a month, so don't leave this until the last minute. If your boat is 2005 or older, keep digging.

We used a company called Clip to run a physical check. It cost us 54 USD to find out there was no outstanding TIP – a bargain for that peace of mind. Had there been a TIP, that company could have helped us deal with it – for a tidy sum, no doubt.

Okay, that TIP issue was sorted. Were we good to go? Not quite.

Proof of Ownership for the Tender

A few months before we left, we just happened to trip over a comment made by someone somewhere about needing to be able to prove ownership of your tender. Without that, the authorities are free to deny it entry, impound, or seize it. Yeah, these guys have a lot of power.

We bought our dinghy from the same people we bought ***Salt*** from, but the dinghy wasn't included in the sale. We had to negotiate with them to buy it separately, but sadly it was long before I was wise to the world of yacht sales and international travel. I failed to acquire a Bill of Sale for the dinghy. Communication challenges with the previous owners meant we could not get one retroactively. As such, we took the Bill of Sale for the sailboat that showed the previous owners' names, the confirmation email from the bank showing the transfer and acceptance of payment for the dinghy, and took it to a Notary Public where David swore an oath of ownership. Unfortunately, the Mexican authorities did not recognize this. We were free to leave the marina, but we could not get our TIP until the dinghy issue had been sorted. They gave us 72 hours (working days) before there were…consequences. Happily, we managed to get it sorted the following day and now had everything in order.



We were required to provide proof of ownership for the dinghy before we were granted a TIP.

Back to Clearing In

The process when we arrived at the marina was delightfully straightforward, and not even that time consuming compared to other experiences I've had at various borders. The staff at the marina are extremely experienced and efficient. It was clearly not their first rodeo. I had put all the documents I could think of into a binder and made six copies of everything. They didn't need everything I had, but I had everything they needed. I didn't need to make copies because they made their own. They notated some of them, knowing what the agents would ask.

It seems women's lib hasn't quite reached Mexico yet, however. David and I agreed that I'd be the "Captain" for the purposes of paperwork since I'm the one who handles the paperwork. In reality, we're co-owners and co-captains. He has his jobs, I have mine, some we share. Octavio never asked and automatically built his own paperwork assuming David was the captain. It shocked me in the way one is shocked by getting slapped in the face with a live fish – but we rolled with it. We're not in Canada anymore.

Everything was in order when Victor drove us to the immigration office. Since the day before was a holiday, the place was hopping. Dozens of people were lined up at four separate plexiglass-protected counters. There were a dozen mismatched chairs lined up and back-to-back in the middle of the grubby room. The floor was broken and dirty tile, boosting the cacophony of travellers and agents shouting at

each other through plexi, and the screeching of packing tape getting rolled onto box after box. If I didn't already have a headache from the two beers I had the night before, I would have gained one here. We sat while Victor stood in the line for us. When ready, we came to the counter where David, the male, signed papers and paid fees.

Money

Bring both a credit card and some US cash when you come. One of the fees could only be paid in cash, while the other two could only be paid by card.

Fees:

- 974.37 MXN for the TIP (credit card, about 80 CAD)
- 1,966 MXN for two people's visas (180 days) (credit card, about 160 CAD)
- 416 MXN Port Captain fee for David and me (cash, 34 CAD for both of us)

As we didn't have the pesos yet to pay the Port Captain's fee, we had Victor stop at an ATM on the way to the immigration office. I converted US cash into pesos at 14.6% – or, 14.6 pesos to one US dollar. As of this writing, that's a little high. It would have been better for me to have used my debit (not credit) card to take it out. We have Scotiabank accounts (debit and credit cards) that do not incur fees to exchange money from any other currency. It's one of the main reasons we changed our banking to them a few years ago. Most banks charge a fee on top of the exchange rate. Right now, the bank would have given me about 17.29 pesos for a US dollar.

Okay, almost there.

Liability Insurance

We've heard from two very reliable sources that as we travel through Mexico, we must have liability insurance issued by a Mexican insurance company, that it's not good enough to show liability in Mexico from your own non-Mexican company. As I understand it, this is kind of like the cost of paying a Mexican lawyer to make sure your Canadian insurer pays out. However, we don't need it here in Ensenada, so I question the need for it. It seems like a cash-grab to me, so I looked up the so-called law that they're citing to justify it. Given, I read the translation, but the legality of it didn't really track, so I remain sceptical. However, legally required or not, if we want moorage and they require it, we'll have to get it. When that day comes, I will use a company that was recommended to me by one of the above sources: Novamar. It will cost around 120-170 USD or 169-240 CAD and can be purchased online.

Going Forward

We've jumped through all the hoops and paid all the bills. Moving forward, when we leave this port and enter the next large one, we need to present our papers to the local Port Captain for a new stamp in, then another stamp when we leave, rinse and repeat. If we only anchor, we must call in on VHF 16 to let them know we're there, but we don't need to present the papers. We're still allowed to land with our dinghy. When we want to leave the country, we must "check out" of the country by going into a customs office

and getting a Zarpe (ZAR-pa). This is an important document because without it, you might not be allowed to enter some other countries, and you'll have a heck of a time getting back into Mexico again, should you so desire. The northernmost customs office where you can get a Zarpe is here in Ensenada (not Tijuana). The southernmost office is Puerto Chiapas.

And that's it! That's all I got!



Former Commodore David gets ready to hoist the BCA burgee as ***Salt*** nears land.

Caveat – all I've written here is simply a representation of our own lived experience and what we've encountered or gleaned from the Internet. It may or may not apply to you, it might differ from port to port or day to day. It's been a journey getting all this information together, so I hope it's helpful to someone.

Happy travels and long may your big jib draw!

**Addendum: It has come to my attention that the Banjercito website does not look the same as it did when I wrote the article. After a bit more digging, it looks like the Mexican government has pulled public access to the raw database search due to severe automated scraping, data security changes, and scams involving stolen HIN numbers. You can do a work-around by beginning the process of applying for a TIP. The system will do a quick check during that process, but the problem there is that it can't check on TIPs*

that haven’t been digitized.

The most reliable way of checking is to hire a company to investigate it for you, or email the Banjercito *department for submitting vehicle documents and copy to the* Banjercito Temporary Vehicle Import System.

About The Author

Trina Holt

Salt -

Whether working, playing, or living on them, boats have been the focus of most of Trina’s adult life. She’s managed several marinas and worked aboard elegant cruise ships, a grungy research vessel and with the Coast Guard. After living aboard a Cal 2-29 for 7 years, Trina now lives on a beautiful Island Packet 40 with her husband. The plan is to go offshore; in the meantime they enjoy exploring their backyard, the spectacular Salish Sea.

Ranger Bands: Free Strength, Zero Drama

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/article/ranger-bands-free-strength-zero-drama/



Let’s be honest. Ordinary rubber bands on a boat have the life expectancy of a bottle of rum in a bar full of sailors. A few weeks of tropical sun, a splash of salt water, and they turn into sad little crumbs that leave marks on everything. Bungee cords aren’t much better, often losing their snap after less than a season, becoming sad, limp spaghetti that can’t meet their original purpose, yet somehow manage to snag on everything. Ranger Bands, on the other hand, are their tough, rough-around-the-edges cousins made from inner tubes. They laugh at tropical heat, humidity and UV, shrug off salt, and keep working long after you’ve forgotten you put them there.

They’re generally known as Ranger Bands, supposedly because the US Army Rangers adopted them for securing their gear. Whether the Rangers invented them is another question; inner tubes considerably predate Special Forces. Best part? They cost almost nothing, require tools you already own, and can be made in less time than it takes to read this article.

The Budget Reality Check

A new pack or two of fancy commercial office elastics and a fistful of bungee cords can set you back more than a marina coffee and will still fail you. A used bicycle inner tube? Free if you ask nicely at a bike shop (they throw them out by the dozen). Even a brand-new tube is cheap. One tube will yield scores of usable bands. Do the math and you’ll start feeling smug every time you reach for one instead of

watching another office-grade rubber band or tired bungee self-destruct. The only real downside is limited stretch. Ordinary rubber bands stretch much farther; Ranger bands are happier with roughly twice their relaxed diameter and shouldn't be expected to perform gymnastics.

Tools Required: (Spoiler: Almost None)

- A pair of sharp scissors (kitchen scissors work fine; surgical precision is optional).
- A damp cloth or rag for wiping. (Soap and water optional)
- That's it. No power tools, no sewing machine, no marine-grade epoxy nonsense. If you can open a can of beer, you have the required skill set.

Technique: So Simple It's Almost Embarrassing

1. Acquire tube(s). Bike shops are the go-to. Wider mountain-bike or hybrid tubes are ideal; motorcycle tubes make heavier-duty monsters if you want to get fancy. If available for the asking, get a few different diameters.
2. Wipe it down. Remove the worst of the talc and road grime. A quick rinse never hurts. Soap is optional (if you're one of *those* people).
3. Cut. Cut away and discard any old patches and the bit with the stem. Flatten the tube and cut across it to make rings. Width is your only real decision:

    Skinny (~¼ inch / 6 mm) for light duty
    Medium (~?–½ inch / 10–12 mm) for everyday heroics
    Fat (~¾–1 inch / 20–25 mm) for when you really mean business

Scissors usually give cleaner edges than a knife and reduce the chance of creating nicks that can later turn into a dramatic tear. A single, sharp, decisive cut without pause gives the best result. (Note: Using someone else's sacred sewing scissors without permission can result in personal injury or worse. Choose your tools wisely.) Cut a selection of widths you think will be useful and leave about half of each tube intact so you can make whatever size you need later. One tube becomes a cheerful pile of multi-purpose rubber in minutes. At this point you should feel slightly ridiculous about how cheap and easy this is. Store them in a ziplock, mesh bag, or any container that isn't already full of mystery shackles. They take up less space than the frustration they prevent.

Why They Survive the Tropics (and Your Neglect)

Inner-tube rubber was designed to be flexed, heated, cooled, and generally abused while being ignored. It tolerates tropical heat, humidity, salt and UV surprisingly well, and in our experience lasts vastly longer aboard than ordinary rubber bands or bungees. The crew on ***Avant*** can report the same bands still working after several seasons. Just keep using them until they give up, which takes a surprisingly long time. Replacing them is a snap.

Uses Aboard:

- Keep spare lines from turning into chaotic rats' nests.

- Bundle tools so the Allen keys stay together and don’t try to mate with the box wrenches.
- Stop charts from unrolling, corral batteries, or temporarily lash a hose that has displayed an irritating inclination to wander.
- Use a ring hitch or lark’s head to attach a toggle and create quick loops for securing hoses and shore power cords.
- Daisy-chain them to make bungee-cord replacements. Use 316 stainless ‘S’ hooks or reuse the hooks from recently deceased (RIP) bungees for the ends. Link several bands end-to-end (loop them through each other with ring hitches or Lark’s heads) to create a custom-length, adjustable bungee-like elastic fastener.

They stretch, they grip, and they last. Perfect for one-handed operation while the boat is doing its usual impression of a washing machine.

Next time you’re near a bike shop, cadge a couple of tubes, spend five minutes with the scissors, and stock your boat up. Your future self – standing on a hot foredeck in the tropics, reaching for a band that still works while the last bungee cord quietly expires in the locker – will silently thank you.

About The Author

Rob Murray

Avant -

Rob Murray and Debra Zhou are doers currently on the Caribbean coast of Panama aboard Avant, their Beneteau First 435.

Currents Cover Photo Contest 2026 and a New Voting Process

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/currents-cover-photo-contest-2026-and-a-new-voting-process/



It is time for the annual *Currents* Cover Photo Contest. Our monthly "PDF" publication needs great photos to grace its covers for 2027! (You can see last year's winners here.)

Your photos should be clearly related to what BCA is all about; thus, although we are keen to see boats, your image may reflect the BCA vision, mission, or values without actually showing a vessel.

Our organization exists to encourage people to voyage afar, so we are happy to see photos of exotic places – but photos taken in any location are welcome.

In addition to the chance to show off great photography skills, winners will receive *Currents* credits towards their membership fees. So, if you are a BCA member in good standing, please submit the best **recent** (within the last 18 months or so) photos you have that reflect some of the many wonderful aspects of blue water cruising and BCA.

New This Year: Voting by All!

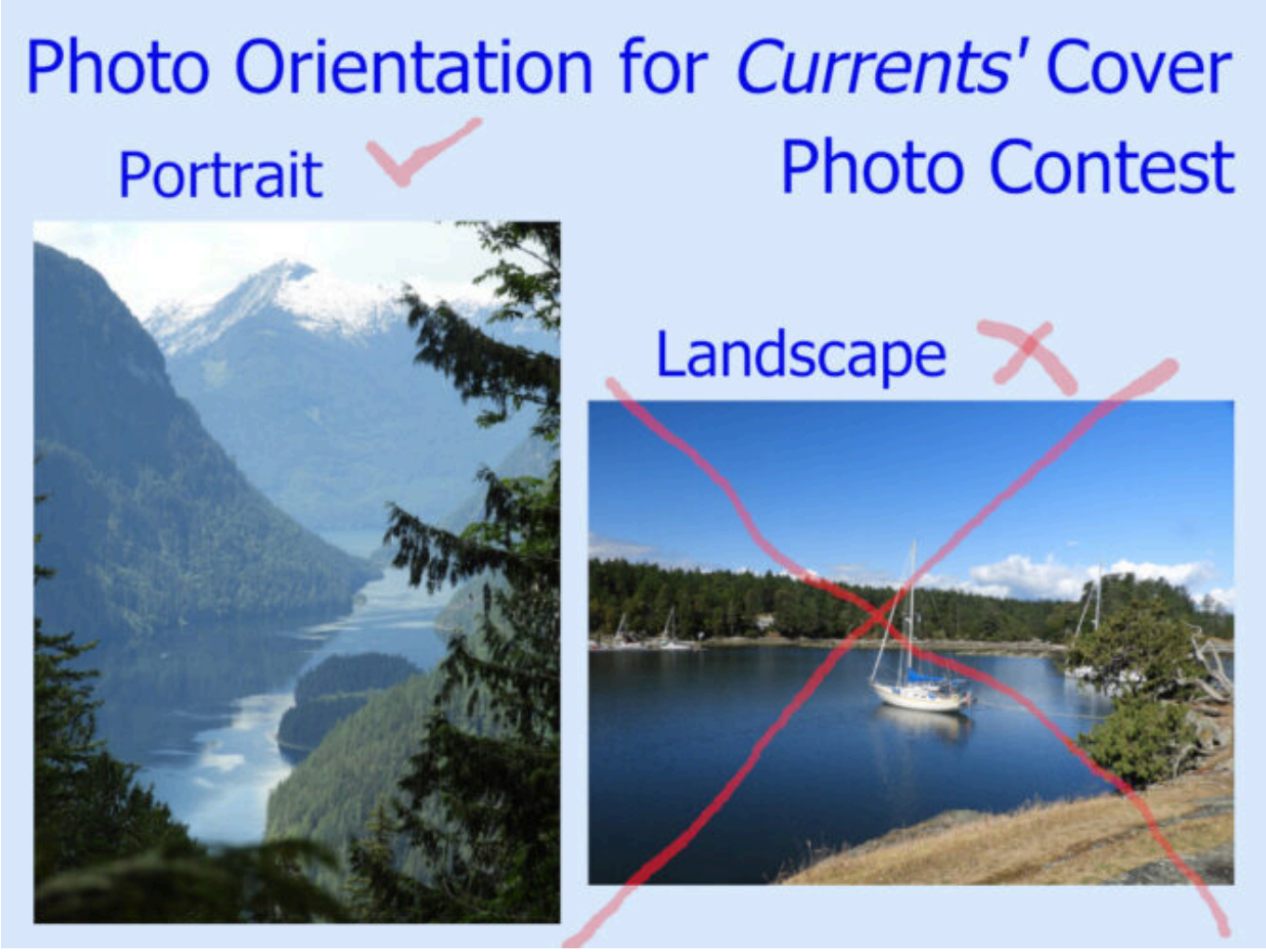
This year, we are allowing all *Currents* readers to vote. Voting will take place from November 24 – December 6, 2026. From that feedback, we will select the 12 winning shots that will make the monthly covers of *Currents* in 2027.

Contest Rules and Instructions

Please read carefully! It is important that you follow these rules and instructions for submission or we will not be able to include your photo in the contest:

- You must be a BCA member in good standing to submit photos
- Deadline for submissions: **November 23, 2026** (midnight)
- You can submit up to **three photos**
    - There will be 12 different photos selected; no individual will have more than two of their three photos selected
- Photo requirements:
    - Orientation: **Portrait** (longest side in vertical direction – see image below)

    - Resolution: **900×1200 pixels** or higher resolution
    - Format: **JPEG**
- How to submit your photo(s):
    - Click on this link to access the contest site, or scan the QR code in the image at the top of this article
    - You will be prompted to provide a title, your name, and your email address for each photo you upload
    - Please do not email your photo to *Currents*
- How to vote:
    - Voting starts **November 24**
    - Go to the link, or scan the QR code above, then rate each photo, from 1 to 9 stars
    - Voting closes **December 6, 2026** (midnight)



The pdf cover needs a photo that is taller than wide, i.e. portrait.

Winners will:

- Receive notification later in December that their photo has been chosen
- 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.
    - If winners do not complete this step, their photo(s) will not be used

Contest results will be announced in the January issue of *Currents*.

So, dig through your recent photos (taken within the past 18 months or so) or go out and take a great shot of your boat! We look forward to seeing your entries.

About The Author

Barb Peck

Hoku Pa'a -

Barb Peck was introduced to sailing as a teenager when she joined the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets. Later, she and partner Bjarne honed their boating skills together, taking courses and gaining experiences on sailboats of gradually increasing sizes. Their first extended cruising was in Ontario’s beautiful North Channel on Summer Fling, a Mirage 26. From 2004-2006 Barb and Bjarne sailed the South Pacific on Freya, their 30' Hunter-Vogel. More recently, they enjoyed cruising in Mexico on Hoku Pa’a, their Niagara 35. Barb is part of the BCA mentor program, has been a participant on several panel presentations through BCA, helped to organize the first Women on Water conference, and is now Managing Editor for Currents.

Vancouver Fleet Report - September 2026

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/news_post/vancouver-fleet-report-september-2026/



The Vancouver Fleet launched on September 30 to an enthusiastic bunch. We had a comfortably full house at Spruce Harbour Marina, with the Scottish Cultural Centre closed for a holiday, with one couple joining in on Zoom. This year's Fleet will run again as a hybrid group, thanks primarily to the tech support offered by Kevin Swanson.

Rhonda Schuller is the coordinator of this year's Fleet which offers monthly meetings featuring club business, show and tell time and featured program speakers. December and June are socials – yes, parties! The group will meet monthly, on the final Wednesday of the month, at the Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson Street. Doors and Zoom open at 7; meetings begin at 7:30.

This season's Fleet features new members as well as continuing members. We are fortunate to have members who have been offshore and can add voices of experience to our discussions. As is typical, we have dreamers with a 3-5 year plan, some ready to head out next year and a few interested in sailing around Vancouver Island next year.

Our October 28 program features Rick Ellis sharing his focused and careful research on Climate Change, updated to offer the latest data on the developing El Ni?o. Rick's presentation will offer sailors

information to help them as they plan cruising seasons and routes, equipment and processes. Rick's Climate Change presentation is open to all interested Fleet and BCA members.

Trina Holt, now in Ensenada aboard ***Salt*** with husband David Mitchell, will again offer an online course on weather continuing through the Fleet season. Trina's Weather Group will start up in November.

We are excited about what we can learn and share this year; from presentations on sail plans and repair, rigging and inspections, safety at sea and responding to medical disasters, to provisioning of spare parts and food the Program Team will work to help us find what we need as we prepare ourselves and our boats for time on the water.

Welcome aboard! If you are interested in joining us or would like more information, please contact Rhonda Schuller.

About The Author

Rhonda Schuller

Brine -

Rhonda lives aboard her 39ft Hans Christian, Brine, at Spruce Harbour Marina. In 2017 she crewed aboard Shamata, a Discovery 47' Sloop, sailing from Mexico into the South Pacific. She later rejoined Shamata in Tahiti, crewing back home to Vancouver. Rhonda started sailing on a 35ft Panda. During COVID she circumnavigated Vancouver Island with a friend. A few years later she upgraded to BRINE, which she often single hands. Rhonda has been an active member of Bluewater Cruising Association and has worked to support Fleet, Education and other programs over the years. She brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and common sense to Fleet.

VI South Hybrid Club Night: RCMSAR - Volunteers Assisting BC Boaters

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vi-south-hybrid-club-night-rcmsar-volunteers-assisting-bc-boaters/



Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCMSAR) is a not-for-profit volunteer-based organization that operates 29 marine rescue stations along the coast of British Columbia from Vancouver's busy harbour to the remote waters of the North Coast. With over 900 volunteers, professionally trained rescue crews are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, ready to immediately respond to marine emergencies at a moment's notice.

From Mayday to Rescue, Mike Ervin and Max Shaw will share a story or two from their personal experiences with RCMSAR. This promises to be an informative and potentially life-saving presentation!

About the Presenters

Michael ("Mike") Ervin's affiliation with RCMSAR began in 2019, first as a crew member of the SAR36 rescue station based in Sidney/North Saanich, and later as a member of RCMSAR's board of directors (currently as its Chair), which provides oversight to a full-time CEO and staff, with 29 associated rescue stations along BC's coastline, and 900 volunteer personnel.

Max Shaw is a Coxswain and Media Liaison with RCMSAR Station 36 in Sidney. He is also a Certified Professional Yacht Broker (CPYB) and RYA Yachtmaster Ocean, working locally as a yacht broker with

Yacht Sales West. Max has been a BCA member since 2020.

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Hybrid Meeting Format: October 20, 2026

In-Person Attendees (Check-in and pay **cash** at the door):

- Doors open: 7:00 pm, meeting starts at 7:30 pm, presentation to follow
- Cost: $5/Members, $10/Non-Members

Virtual Attendees: via ZOOM

- After you register, you will receive the Zoom meeting invitation by email. If you don’t receive it in a few minutes, please check your SPAM/JUNK folder. If you still don’t see it, please contact us.
- Members – $5 per connected device (if signed in)
- Non-Members – $10 per connected device.
- If you have any questions, please contact us.

Note to Zoom Attendees: Due to the small cost of virtual tickets, and an equal or greater cost to BCA of issuing refunds, no refunds will be issued unless VI Chapter is unable to deliver the Club Night via Zoom. The Zoom room opens at 7 pm for social time, with the meeting at 7:30 pm and the presentation to follow.

VI Mid Island Club Night: Wrong Way Across the Pacific - Now October 15

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vi-mid-island-club-night-wrong-way-across-the-pacific/



Is it the wrong way across the Pacific or is it the most beautiful way? Artist Andrea England sailed this route and documented the weather, the wildlife, the sailing and the beauty in her sketchbooks. This body of art shows a Pacific crossing with humour, big waves and winds, and real actual weather conditions.

The in-person club night presentation is given by Jim Shortreed, sailing master of the voyage and ***Island Prism***, studio assistant to the Andrea England Art Studio, and story-teller to the sketchbooks. Jim invites you to an evening of art and sailing, with the Andrea England Sketchbooks.

(Thanks to Jim for stepping in at the last minute when our scheduled presenters had to postpone due to illness.)

Vancouver Hybrid Club Night: The Wrong Way Across the Pacific

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/vancouver-hybrid-club-night-the-wrong-way-across-the-pacific/



Is it the wrong way or the most beautiful way? Artist Andrea England sailed this route and documented the weather, the wildlife, the sailing and the beauty in her sketchbooks. This body of art shows a Pacific crossing with humour, big waves and winds, and real actual weather conditions.

Please don't expect any photography, this presentation is all about the art and the beauty. We see what the artist sees and feels during this 11 month voyage from New Zealand to Ucluelet. The weather routing decisions, the safety equipment decisions, the colour palette decisions, all explained in the sketchbooks in detail.

The first leg out of Marsden Cove to Raivavae has a lot of waves, a bit of wave humour and a bit of wave frustration. Not many voyages document specific waves that give specific results, the camera is never handy. But the artists eye is there and specific memories are preserved and appreciated. The second leg through French Polynesia is simply an art collection of wildlife. Frigate birds, dolphins, humpbacks, rays, they all glow in Polynesian colours and curves. There is even a cruisers chart of Bora Bora. But

beware the passage to the Marquesas, more waves and more wind.

Hawaii is also a wildlife bonanza with adventures to volcanos and rainbows as well. From Hawaii, it's north to the North Pacific and Vancouver Island. Here the Artist begins her journey towards her own style, her own vision of sea and sky, and her own vision of Vancouver Island.

This presentation certainly shows ocean cruising from an artist brush, but it is also an inspirational journey by Andrea. She said 'yes, I will go sailing with you' to solo sailor Jim in the romantic South Pacific. She said 'I will be an artist now', on the Wild Pacific Trail in Ucluelet. Andrea charted her own course, and her beautiful art shows her way.

This presentation is given by Jim Shortreed, fellow sailor and widower of Andrea England, studio assistant to the Andrea England Art Studio, and story-teller to the sketchbooks. Jim invites you to an evening of art, sailing, adventure and romance with the Andrea England Sketchbooks.

Note: Payment is required for virtual attendance via Zoom – see below

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Hybrid Meeting Format

In-Person Attendees: Doors open at 7:00 and meeting starts at 7:30.

Cost: $5/Members, $10/Non-Members, payable at the door only.

Virtual Attendees: Virtual doors open at 7:00 and meeting starts at 7:30. **Register using the button on our website posting.**

Cost: Members – $5.00 per connected device; Non-Members, $10 per connected device, payable online using the registration button above. Please note that you must be signed in to the BCA website to get the member price.

Note: *Due to the small cost of virtual tickets, and an equal or greater cost to BCA of issuing refunds, no refunds will be issued unless Vancouver Chapter is unable to deliver the Club Night via Zoom.*

Zoom meeting invitation: After you register, you will receive the Zoom meeting invitation by email which will arrive pretty well right away. **If you don't receive it within a few minutes, please check your SPAM/JUNK folder. If you still don't see it, please** contact us **as soon as possible, prior to the start of the meeting.**

About The Author

Heather Marshall

Mischief -

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.

Rigging Inspection and Maintenance

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/rigging-inspection-and-maintenance-5/



Ever look up and wonder at all that gear? Gain a better understanding of how to inspect and maintain your boat's standing and running rigging. This course is intended for people who own and maintain their own sailboat, or those who want to gain a better understanding of standing and running rigging, including proper inspection and maintenance, as well as offshore cruising preparation.

Topics Covered Include

- Going aloft safely
- Standing rigging
- Running rigging
- Seasonal maintenance

Participants will also explore the differences between keel-stepped and deck-stepped masts, learn about anti-corrosive compounds, and review maintenance for spreaders, shrouds, halyards, and chain plates. The course also dives into running rigging, covering line types, strength, maintenance, replacement schedules, and inspection of systems like jib cars and cockpit adjustables.

Instructor

Brent Jacobi has over 25 years of industry experience and a lifetime of sailing. He is a highly experienced and knowledgeable rigging specialist. After retiring from managing the Rigging and the Metal Fabrication divisions of Blackline Marine, Brent now looks forward to more cruising and racing time out on the water.

Photo Credit: Brent Alley

About The Author

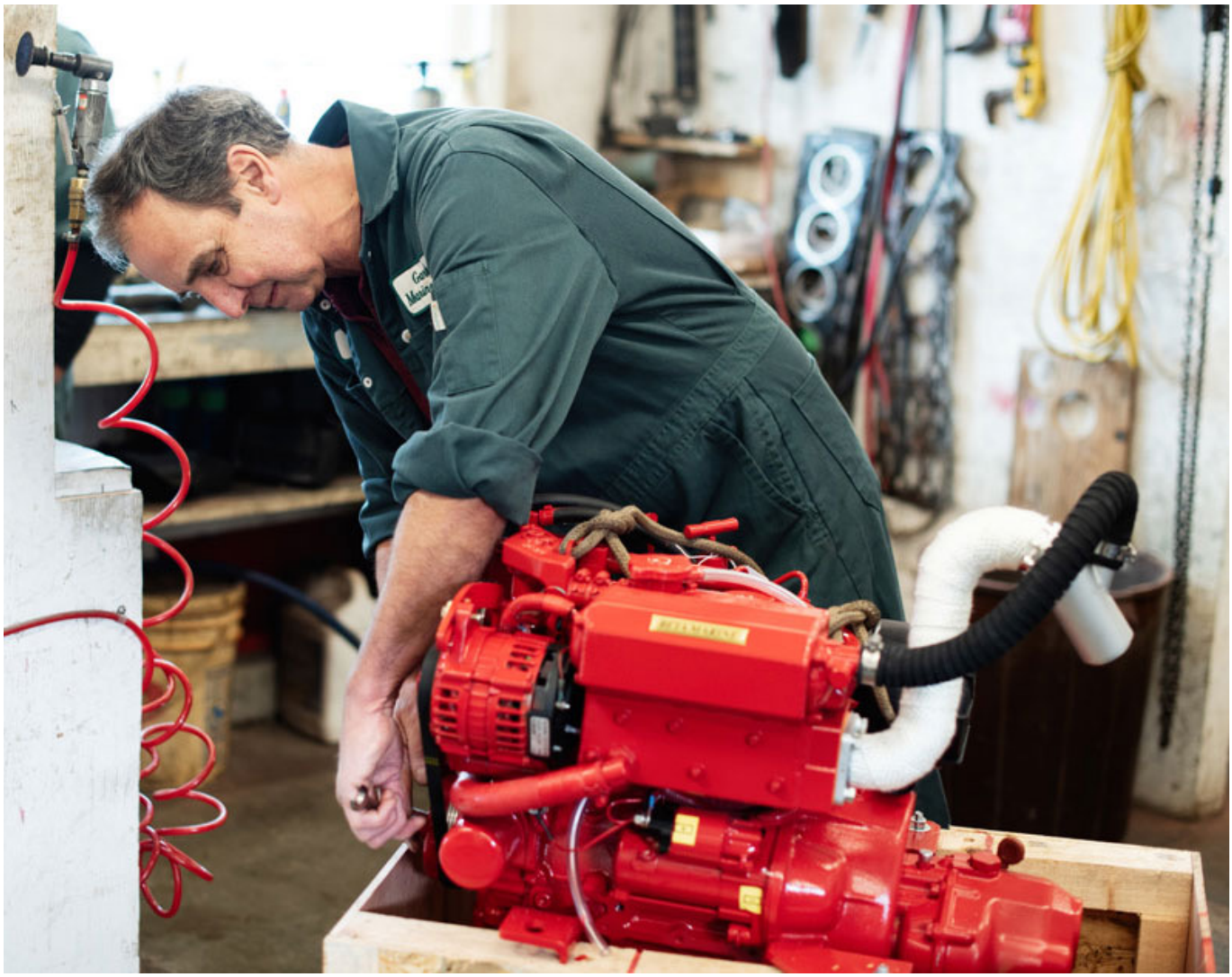
Brent Alley

Pegasus II -

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.

Diesel Engine Maintenance & Servicing

https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/event/diesel-engine-maintenance-servicing-3/



Join Ben Gartside for a two-day workshop on marine diesel engine maintenance and servicing. The workshop will address key systems- including cooling, exhaust and ventilation, fuel, electrical, transmission, and stern gear-along with regular maintenance requirements. Mornings will feature classroom instruction, while afternoons will provide hands-on demonstrations at the Gartside Marine Workshop in Sidney.

About the Instructor

Instructor Ben Gartside, President of Gartside Marine Engines, brings a lifetime of experience as a mechanical technician specializing in small marine diesel engines and inboard installations for pleasure craft and light commercial vessels.

About The Author

Brent Alley

Pegasus II -

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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