



Photo Contest Winner

Shawn Wright

Callisto at anchor in Bedwell Harbour, Pender Island during our final tour of the Gulf Islands to finish off our summer cruising. Janis and I sail our C&C 35 along with our cat, and in 2022 we plan to complete our VI circumnavigation that was aborted last year. We have plans to find a boat in Mexico in the fall of 2022 and sail the Sea of Cortez.



Currents

September 2022

Table Of Contents

Can Do! Ricky T's Cruising Adage	3
Untying the Lines	12
Rendezvous Highlights	14
The Case for Boat Swapping	16
With Flying Colours	23
Crewing Brisbane to Cairns June-July 2022	25
Vancouver Club Night - Ar Seiz Avel Bluewater Homecoming	31
VI Education - Psychology of Voyaging	33
Offshore Charting and Dead Reckoning	35
Celestial Navigation	37
Burgees: BCA and Ham Radio	39

Can Do! Ricky T's Cruising Adage

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/can-do-ricky-ts-cruising-adage/>



I have often thought that retirement should be a period of time, maybe in your thirties, when you are young enough to more easily do some of the things you long for. As it is, retirement has, until more recently, been a time in your 60s. Just before we let loose of the dock and headed out on our boat for Mexico, a comment was made by a seasoned sailor that they could not believe there were people in their sixties or older heading offshore. Well, that age would certainly include us. But for many, such as ourselves, this is the age at which the opportunity finally presented itself. Better to go later than never.

Dreaming and Prepping

It isn't that we weren't planning and dreaming for years before this, it just somehow was never the "right" time earlier. I cannot say exactly when we knew this was something we had to do, but can say that for several years we searched for "the" boat. We had two sailboats prior to our current boat; both served their purposes well but they were definitely not our idea of offshore material. In 2010, we were asked to accompany someone from Pender Harbour to Maple Bay on their sailboat. The boat was going to be hauled out for maintenance, including bottom painting. We enthusiastically took the offer. Participating in

the maintenance was far more pleasure than it was work. The weather was fair and the trip was overall very relaxing. The owner of the boat wanted to sell and over the next year or so we did purchase it.

The boat was moored in Pender Harbour. Although we were still a considerable time from ready to head offshore, we used every trip to the boat (we were still living in Nelson) to expand our knowledge and move ourselves forward. We experimented with different canned and dried foods to develop a provisioning list. We worked on the boat and sailed as time away from our business allowed. We practiced our navigation skills and learned new ones. Despite being a lovely spot, Pender Harbour is not a great place to be if you are trying to work on the boat. We put our name on a waiting list to have live aboard status at a marina in Nanaimo. In 2014 things started to fall into place and we were offered live aboard moorage. At Easter in 2014 we relocated the boat to Nanaimo and over the next year we commenced living aboard. David was by this time working for a local company; I was pretty much retired.

Living aboard has its benefits and its challenges. Being on the boat allows you to work on upgrades and do maintenance. When you set off on a cruising trip you have your home with you. You need only to dock the boat upon return and you are home. No unloading of gear and food and returning to a land base. Being amidst the turmoil caused by constant change and task completion on a boat can be challenging.

Tackling Unfamiliar Jobs

As I was no longer employed, I started to take on tasks I may not otherwise have tried on my own. The two winches on the mast did not function properly. I took the attitude that I could not do harm to items that were broken. The task of fixing the winches took several days as they had a serious build up of the wrong lube. It took hours of spraying penetrating oil to soften the gunk and experimentation and purchase of a set of little picks and other tools to complete the job. Good thing it was only a few blocks walk to a very well stocked tool store. With some help as requested with parts of the job I could not quite manage on my own, the winches were removed. Maintenance parts were purchased and installed - this time with proper winch lube. Upon completion of reassembling and placement of the winches, they worked like new.

Encouraged by the positive outcome with the winches, I moved on to other projects. One of the most difficult tasks was replacement of the engine pencil zincs, which our previous boats did not have. Like many things, they had been left too long between maintenance. The old pencil zincs had softened as they should to protect from electrolysis, but of course had then hardened into a non-removable mass inside their respective spots in the engine and transmission cooling systems. It took a number of trips to hardware stores to acquire softening agents such as All Out or Iron Out, along with the trusty picks from the winch job and my own device (made from black malleable nipples smaller than the threaded engine ports).

I used the nipples to “thread” in and out of the softened zinc. Placing a vice grip on the nipple allowed me to turn it. This process slowly crumbled away the old zinc. After many days of stubborn resolve, I was able to remove the dissolved zinc without damaging the threads in the engine. I believe the worst part of this job was the tight space in which it had to be done. You really have to remember to get up from those cramped spots and move around, straightening yourself before you are permanently bent from the process! I was both pleased and amused that, due to all those years of running our hardware store,

threading pipe and ordering and selling all kinds of fittings, I had a good resource in my head of what might help with these projects.

Getting Help When Needed

For some of the upgrades to the boat, we hired people. We had a larger alternator installed, along with an upgrade to the charging system in the boat. The house batteries were replaced and a watering system for the harder-to-access batteries was added. We had new, taller stanchions built and new lifelines made based on our own measurements. When we showed up with the measurements and handed them to the technician, he couldn't believe we had downloaded a form from the Internet and followed the instructions on it to measure and fill out the form.

Electronics

The electronics upgrade was done by ourselves, although not without a lot of necessary advice from the supplier of the instruments and cables. David certainly has far more expertise in electronics than I do and he also possesses more of the strength needed for some of these tasks. However, he is also a larger person and does not fit in some of the small places where things had to be installed. I therefore was very much involved in the placement of much of the instrumentation and the required wires.

Autopilot

Another project was adding an autopilot. Because we have hydraulic steering and two helms, this required cutting into the existing copper lines and teeing off to allow installation of a new pump for the autohelm. We did the tee portion ourselves (cut and flared the pipes) but had the hoses custom made to allow easier installation of the pump. It took some fiddling for a while after installation to purge all of the air from the pump and lines. The autohelm was definitely one of the nicest upgrades to the boat for the trip south from BC to Mexico. Although it is somewhat of a power glutton, it worked flawlessly at keeping us on course.



Tight spot, contains newly installed electronic equipment.

Rigging

We had our rigging professionally upgraded. All of the standing rigging, with the exception of the mast and boom, were replaced. We added moveable running backs and a furler for the Genoa - wow, nice improvement from the former hank on sail! The mast and boom had been painted years ago and the paint was in rough shape. It took us days to remove the paint and polish up the mast and boom. Again, the result was well worth the effort. Our boat design does not lend itself to a manufactured boom brake, so we had a manual gybe preventer made. It is a little fiddly but seems to function as we wanted.



Mast, freshly sanded and polished with new rigging ready to reinstall on boat.

Sewing Projects

The purchase of a suitable sewing machine allowed us to make new and alter old covers for the sails, winches, life raft, generator, dinghy outboard motor, and cooler boxes. The machine also let us repair and replace bunk cloths, add lee cloths and improve other valuable items. Our jack lines (webbing) were modified to fit the boat before we installed them, we made up and altered existing tethers, and we also added crotch straps to our life jackets. An additional benefit of the machine is that we could use it to do projects for others as trade for their skills.



Trimming damaged parts of a piece of shade cloth gifted to us, repurposed.

Cruising (aka Boat Work in Exotic Locations)

More Sewing

The sewing machine accompanied us to Mexico. The sun cover for the boat was custom fabricated by a local company in Guaymas. It has taken some wear and tear over the summers but, with the machine, we could mend and reinforce the cover. I acquired some extra fabric and made sun covers for the ends of the running backs, the furler, the outboard motor, fuel containers, winches and more, in hopes that they would be better protected from the harsh Mexican summer. I was certainly glad I did, since the pandemic meant we were away from the boat for 20 rather than 6 months!

Working on the Boat in Mexico

One difficulty in working on a boat in Mexico is acquiring products and supplies for projects. Some items are very hard to find and some are simply not available. Throw in a lack of understanding of and ability to speak the language and progress is slow. We brought a lot of what we needed from Canada and the United States. There was a heavy import fee we were assessed upon entry to Mexico, but it seemed the better option than spending countless days searching for these items.

The weather in the Sea of Cortez area is warmer and drier by far than in Canada, and there are advantages for hull work, painting and the like. There are also the challenges of days or parts of them when it is too warm to work, along with the limits of aging bodies that no longer can work at the pace nor the hours they used to. Many of the businesses, including favourite restaurants, did not survive the hardships of the

pandemic. Bus service to the area of the yard from the downtown area is sporadic. The roads around Guaymas are riddled with pot holes, speed bumps and rough spots. Traffic can be heavy. Directions to businesses often include, "turn left at the gas station" and "right at the pink building", rather than actual street addresses.

Food in Mexico

Generally, groceries are less expensive and plentiful with the exception of some foods we are accustomed to having. We did have turkey dinner for Christmas. Our onboard oven is a decent size. Cranberries were one item that had to be altered. We had dried cranberries rather than our favoured fresh cooked ones. Dill pickles I have seen nowhere here. Olives can be found, although the selection seems less than pre-pandemic. I have made pastry using lard purchased here - the crust was almost like shortbread. The lard is, I think, richer and next time I will need to alter the recipe a little. Finding bread yeast was also a little more difficult this year, but I did find it and the bread turned out great. A couple of neighbours were more than happy to accept loaves. The first trip we made here after bringing the boat south was in an old motor home. That certainly was handy for bringing along lots of favourite foods, like peanut butter, cheese, pickles, cranberries, etc. The van used for the second drive south did not have the same amenities, but it was better on fuel and driving was easier.

Ongoing Pandemic Effects

When we arrived in the boatyard in the spring of 2019, we had no idea we would end up here for so long. The work on the hull morphed into a bigger job than we expected (don't the projects always do that?). The pandemic restricted what we could do here and, like a lot of people, it made return to the boat in the winter of 2020-2021 unrealistic for us. Arriving in Mexico in November of 2021 seemed almost surreal. There were some remaining restrictions due to the pandemic. Mexico did not ask for proof of vaccination for entry, but most stores test temperature before you enter, hand sanitizer is mandatory and masks are required. Many of the stores continue to sanitize carts. It was still great to be there again.

. We have met people this year who were halfway across to French Polynesia and had to turn back to Mexico as boats were not welcome there. Many offshore cruising sailors are in their 60s, 70s and even their 80s. Changes to world conditions has been an end to many sailors' dreams.



A friend made this instrument box, a trade for me making him a cover for dinghy outboard. Great bartering!

Joys and Pains

For many people, the sailing for days and nights without being on land is a challenge. Some have told us they did not enjoy the experience and would not do it again. I am not among those. I loved the sailing and challenges of night watches. The need to see land at all times is not me either. A couple hundred porpoises swimming about for an hour or more is definitely adequate compensation for the lack of land in sight. I think though, that one of the things most people are never prepared for is the severe wear and tear on the boat from it sitting in the extreme temperatures. The added time many have been absent from their boats during the pandemic has been a costly and often heart wrenching experience. Batteries, paint, woodwork, canvas and stainless show the harsh reality of neglect. Without a doubt, the pandemic altered many plans. We have met people this year who were halfway across to French Polynesia and had to turn back to Mexico as boats were not welcome. Many offshore cruising sailors are in their 60s, 70s and even their 80s. Changes to world conditions has been an end to many sailors' dreams.

It was, as I said, great to be back working on the boat. However, it was not perfect. Some days it seems the tasks are endless and insurmountable. To keep going, you have to be prepared to constantly remind yourself of progress being made toward being back on the water sailing, anchoring, swimming and

enjoying the work you have done to make your dream a reality. You also need to stop now and then to relax and enjoy what is here: warm sunny days and new and old friends.

Doing What You Can

There is a huge sense of accomplishment in learning new skills to maintain and upgrade a boat. I think it is important, though, to pick and choose your projects. Most manufacturers of paint and epoxy products (among others) are very helpful in answering questions about their products, pointing out the better way of doing things at times. Although the advice does not necessarily reduce the amount of actual labour or cost to complete a project, the knowledge they share definitely adds to the overall confidence required for these projects, which is a huge plus. When you add the shared experience of fellow cruisers, it creates another level of knowledge and pleasure to the tasks at hand. I am a firm believer that the more of the work you can do on your boat, the better your chances of noticing when things need maintenance, and of performing that maintenance under less than perfect conditions.

About The Author

Diane Cherry

Ricky T - Constellation

I started sailing in 1980 with my husband David and sons Ben and David (then 3 and 1). From 1980 until 2005 we sailed a 24 foot Bayliner Buccaneer. In 2005 we bought a Catalina 30 in Nanaimo, sailed it to Vancouver and had it trucked to Kootenay Lake. We have planned for many years to go offshore and in 2011 finally found the boat we wanted. In 2014 we closed our business in Nelson, relocated to Nanaimo, lived aboard and worked readying our boat for offshore. In October 2018, we left Victoria and headed down the US coast to the Sea of Cortez. After spending summer at home, winter 2019-2020 was spent in Guaymas on the hard. Due to COVID, we drove back to Canada in April 2020. When the Canada/USA border opened to allow entry by vehicle in November 2021, we drove back to Guaymas where we worked throughout the winter on Ricky T. The long time away had only increased the to do list. Back in Canada in May 2022, our plan is to return to the boat in the fall and complete readying for the big splash. Where we go next is somewhat dependent on world climate post pandemic. As French Polynesia is still unsettled due to COVID, we will likely spend at least one more winter in the Sea of Cortez.

Untying the Lines

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/untying-the-lines/>



Here we are at Neah Bay, the day before our BIG left turn. There is thick fog and silence in the world. Our journey to this place entailed accomplishments and potholes.

My earliest memories are filled with sailboats, huge light blue sails, and happy sunny days on lakes with my family. Each summer, camping and sailing were intertwined; I participated more as my strength increased and as a growing understanding of my limits with the wind set in. Pushing past terrifying moments and finding happiness in calm moments became more and more rewarding.

Waiting for this Pandemic to become manageable in the world, we watched in awe of the doctors and other health providers, appreciating how they cared for and treated suffering patients, and we listened to podcasts and news stories about the changing virus strains, each becoming blocks in our cruising plans.

These last few days, I reflected on the long list of boat projects and improvements completed. I would never have been able to finish all the big and small jobs without the help of my wife Karen. I also have to acknowledge the many other people we met along the way, who have helped and guided us, sharing their

stories and memories: they shaped our plans for the future.

Thank you [Bluewater Cruising Association](#) for welcoming and including us. Over the years, Karen and I attended a few events held for cruisers to talk about their experiences while travelling. At the May and August Rendezvous in Montague Harbour and Port Browning, we were all asked to contribute a story for *Currents*: ours is just beginning.

Setting off on our adventure, *Dakota* finds that currents push us quickly south to Port Angeles. Sun filled skies, endless conversations about Predictwind and possible weather we will find on our trip to California are framing our journey. To be continued...

About The Author

Karen and Dave Richards

Dakota - Bayfield 40

Karen was an acute care nurse for 35 years. She served in the first Gulf war and ended her career working at Victoria General Hospital in the Post Anesthetic recovery ward. Dave was raised in Victoria and was a ambulance attendant in BC for 25 years. They both lived in Cobble Hill for many years and are now on their way south.

Rendezvous Highlights

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/rendezvous-highlights/>



We had hoped to sail *Alia* to the Rendezvous but an overheating engine issue dictated otherwise. Thanks to our friends Glen Wilson and Cheryl Crowther, Bill and I arrived at the August Rendezvous as crew aboard *Indigo Wave*. Spending time with Glen and Cheryl is always fun and working alongside Cheryl in the galley is a treat. I am constantly inspired by her regarding new menu ideas.

Bill calls our dock at Cowichan Bay Marina ‘The Talk’ (and the parking lot ‘The Talking Lot’) and it was the same at Port Browning Marina! Being at the dock meant that there were all sorts of impromptu visits with other BCA members. We came back to *Alia* with some good ideas, e.g., greenhouse shade cloth over the cockpit to cut down on sun glare and heat and still allow a view.

The Rendezvous was so much fun! Some of the highlights – not in order of occurrence – were:

- The potluck appies hour Saturday and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.
- The potluck dinner Sunday – such an array of delicious food! Perhaps BCA should be designated a food club with a cruising habit?!

- Don Hutchinson presenting Leaver Packages and hearing from those soon-to-be Doers about their cruising plans.
- The blindfold dinghy race – the goofiest event ever! Cheryl and I laughed our way around the ‘bumper car’ course and came in third (and it should be pointed out that we came in 1st – and only – in the all-women crew category)!
- Wine tasting at the Sea Star Winery with Cheryl and Glen, and then a tour of Guylain Roy-MacHabée and Katrina Archer’s gorgeous house with its amazing view of sea, mountains, and sky.
- The sea shanties (and other songs) sing-along after Sunday’s potluck.
- The hot and sunny weather – perfect for activities on and around the water.

Thank you to the Vancouver Rendezvous team for organising a great event. Here’s to next year’s Rendezvous!

About The Author

Donna Sassaman

Alia - Spencer 44

Donna Sassaman and her husband Bill first joined BCA in 1986 and cruised offshore from 1990 to 1993. They took a sabbatical from BCA for a while and rejoined in 2002. Donna has served in a variety of volunteer capacities with BCA, including Currents Editor, Board Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and since 2009 as part of the annual directory team.

The Case for Boat Swapping

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/the-case-for-boat-swapping/>



Want to sail the world without crossing oceans or paying a king's ransom for chartering? Then consider a 'boat swapping' holiday. Katherine and I have arranged several of these holidays over the past two decades and I'd like to pass on what we have learned.

Voyage One: Corfu, a Stone's Throw from Albania

Our first adventure began with a classified ad in a British sailing monthly. "Canadian couple with 36 foot sloop seeks exchange this summer". Bill answered that his family kept a sturdy 35 foot sloop in Greece. We agreed to meet up in Corfu and after a day's orientation, he flew home and we set sail through the Ionian Sea.

We enjoyed lots of pretty anchorages looking out at turquoise seas and lush olive groves. After a month of gunkholing, we dropped anchor in a circular bay surrounded by steep hills. Bill's friends on a sister ship took us sightseeing in a jeep. Upon returning to what we thought was a protected anchorage, our boat had vanished. Horrified, we saw it almost aground on a beach! All the boats had dragged anchor that afternoon due to the katabatic wind, but people on board other boats had managed to reset.

Using our friend's dinghy, I climbed aboard and powered off to deeper water. Suddenly, the local fishers

on the shore were gesturing and screaming. My anchor chain had fouled theirs and was pulling skiffs along with us. Bill, a smart sailor, had inserted a short rope link in the middle of the chain. I cut it away, attached a float and retrieved the anchor later. Early the next morning, Bill flew in. I sheepishly explained the few scratches to the keel and left money for a touch up.

The following June, Bill and his wife took their turn on our Cascade 36. It was a bitterly cold and wet stay at Granville Island marina before they gave up sailing and rented a car. Our first voyage was a good introduction to the trials and tribulations of boat swapping.

Lesson learned: leave plenty of scope and check the weather when leaving the boat.

Voyage Two: Shelburne to Halifax in a Leaky

Racer

I sent an inquiry to yacht clubs in Nova Scotia and received an invitation from Joe to swap his Peterson 35. He was a commercial fisher and farmer who had won many trophies in the Marblehead to Halifax race. Joe pointed out his boat from a parking lot, handed us the key and said cheerfully, "Leave it at the Halifax club bar. They know me there." With that he drove off, leaving us shaking our heads.



On a racing legend in Nova Scotia.

For two weeks, we enjoyed a brisk wind on our backs, pushing north to wonderful historic seaports like Liverpool, Lunenburg and Chester. His boat was a true racer with paper plates to eat off of, a feeble alcohol stove and rainwater seeping through hatches onto our bunk. Good charts were nowhere to be found. Without GPS, some of the remote anchorages were, to say the least, hair-raising. But, oh, what a great sail! Despite our many invitations, Joe never came west.

Lesson learned: politely insist upon a boat orientation, including charts.

Voyage Three: the Turkish Coast and Beyond

The Internet has replaced those quaint printed ads. Woodie and Ann from England replied to our posting on Sailum.com, one of several boat exchange sites. It turned out to be the most successful of our swaps to date. After an intriguing few days in Istanbul (our favourite city), we took a train and bus south to Izmir, gateway to the country's best cruising grounds. Woodie and Ann met us at a swank marina in Bodrum for an orientation on their late model Oceanis 423.

We discovered Turkey offers two boating experiences - marina hop at US \$100 per night (sometimes with free disco blaring) or tie up in a secluded bay to a seafood restaurant announcing "Free Docking, Free Showers, Free Water and Free WiFi". Staff even jump aboard and help dock your boat Med-style with anchor out and boat stern to the dock. Who could resist? Much as we wanted to explore the nearby Greek Islands, I didn't relish the bureaucratic hassle of crossing the border in a borrowed vessel.



Med docking at a restaurant in Turkey.

Turkey offered pleasant sailing with no trauma, and quaint villages, some with spectacular Roman ruins and amphitheaters. En route, we noticed a large Zodiac half submerged. I called in to the Turkish Coast Guard. No reply. Perhaps it was lost in translation or they were indifferent to yet another smuggler's raft ditched at sea. Once back at the dock, we rented a car inland to Cappadocia, famous for its fantastical landscape and hot air balloon rides. We ventured east to a cosmopolitan city of a million, whose name now escapes me. It was fun escaping the tourist track with the challenge of communicating only through gestures.

For three weeks the following summer, Woody and Ann, with two Australian friends, explored the Gulf Islands aboard our Cal 39 and said they loved it.

Lesson learned: leave plenty of time to explore your host country's interior.

Voyage 4: Sydney to Pittwater, Australia during Christmas madness

Again, Sailum came through with an offer from John and Karen in Sydney to swap their Swan 45.

They had already explored the Med for a year with their two kids and Karen wrote a book about their adventures. John took us north on a day trip to Pittwater, an inlet with anchorages very similar to the Gulf Islands. After he returned home, we slowly learned how to navigate the systems aboard and handle its 20 tons. As John said, "She's a big lady". Our biggest challenge was finding a spot to drop the hook at Christmas break, their high season. Most anchorages were clogged with permanent buoys. Our hosts owned one in a popular bay, but we gave up looking for it after counting more than 70 numbered floats.



Australia mishap.

At first the only issue we had was the leaky dinghy, which forced us to dock our behemoth in a crowded marina to buy a patch kit. A few days later, we picked up a government buoy. The first run was a disaster, as a 30 knot wind caught the bow and forced us onto a neighbouring 40 foot Beneteau. As I vainly tried to push off, losing the fending pole, my PFD blew up around my face - comical if our bow hadn't bent their pulpit. Rowing over to deliver my apologies, the oar lock broke and the wind blew the dinghy toward shore. A nimble teenager from a nearby boat jumped into his runabout and towed me to the Beneteau. The owner was quite understanding, saying insurance would cover it. We ended up paying for a new pulpit rather than hurt John and Karen's blemish-free record. I gave a bottle of wine to the astonished youngster, for his crew mate (Dad), of course.

Lesson learned: agree on a Memorandum of Understanding for both parties to cover any misfortunes.

Voyage 5: Tasmania...to be continued

Daniel and Sophie planned to come to Vancouver for a conference, so offered us their 35 foot sailboat via Sailum. They were wonderful hosts, showing us the sights of Hobart and we looked forward to sailing the rugged coastline.



First and only anchorage in Tasmania before our sick mutt called us home.

We were staying at a marina aboard their center-cockpit sloop when bad news came. One of our dogs was at death's door with pancreatitis in a pet ICU. So we flew home. Naturally, he started recovering the day we landed and is now happy and healthy. Daniel and Sophie's trip here was cancelled due to COVID, but we all hope to resume this swap soon.

Lesson learned: prepare for the unexpected.

Voyage 6: New Zealand awaiting

Garth and Susan's boat on Sailum caught my attention. It's a 40 foot racer converted for cruising comforts in New Zealand's North Island. They arrived in Vancouver and enjoyed three weeks exploring the islands and Sunshine Coast on *Corra Jane*. Garth is an expert sailor, docking and handling our boat with ease, so they needed little orientation.



A new adventure in New Zealand awaits.

COVID crushed our hopes of cruising on their boat in the Bay of Islands. Perhaps next winter.

Lesson learned: patience, patience.

As you can see, swapping boats is a gamble, but well worth it. Interestingly, insurance companies don't seem to care who's "driving". It's the boat that's covered. We still inform them before embarking. You get a feel of your partners through e-mails, Facetime and photos, but an MOU would be wise. Go ahead and take a chance. You'll be glad you did.

About The Author

Ian Cameron

Cora Jane - Cal 39

I got the bug as a teenager learning to sail in my dad's homemade dinghy. In my twenties, I crewed on a Nicholson 35 in the Asian leg of a round the world voyage. Recently, we've swapped our 1990 Cal 39 for yacht holidays in Nova Scotia, Greece, Turkey, Australia and New Zealand. My dream is to sail Corra Jane to the South Pacific.

With Flying Colours

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/with-flying-colours/>



In times when certain politicians use over the top patriotic slogans for their own obscene reasons of power, it feels almost indecent to talk about national pride. German by birth and new Canadian by choice, I feel fortunate to embrace values important to both countries. Germany's recent history didn't really teach us to be proud to be German; developing some kind of loyalty and gratitude for my country truly started after moving to Canada. I instantly felt in love with the beauty of the Great White North and its people. And while I am not your typical "play by the rule" individual, I respect traditions and customs of the country I call home - and those of countries I visit.

We recently spent a few days at Causeway Marina in Victoria, saying our farewells to Canada before starting our journey south, en route to Mexico. We were one of just a few Canadian-flagged boats at the marina, where we were joined by mostly American vessels, a majority of them belonging to a yacht club from Washington. I know it shouldn't have bothered me, although it obviously did (or I wouldn't have drafted this article), but not even a handful of boat owners, out of more than two dozens skippers, had the good manners to fly the Canadian courtesy flag. On the contrary, some boats showcased different sizes of "The Stars and Stripes" in various locations on the bow, stern, and stacked on top of each other at the outboard signal halyard of the main starboard spreader.

It's international etiquette to display a courtesy flag when visiting foreign waters and I wish our own Canadian politeness would not have prevented us from educating these visiting cruisers right on the spot. In retrospect, I should have been more German.

We left for Port Angeles two days later, flying the Q flag in international waters before Customs cleared us for entry. After clearing, we replaced the Q flag with the correctly-sized American flag to show our respect. That's how we do it when we are from Canada, eh!

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/?post_type=article&p=15090



In the "Before Times", I sailed from Hawaii throughout the South Pacific out of Victoria B.C., 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 B.C. 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.

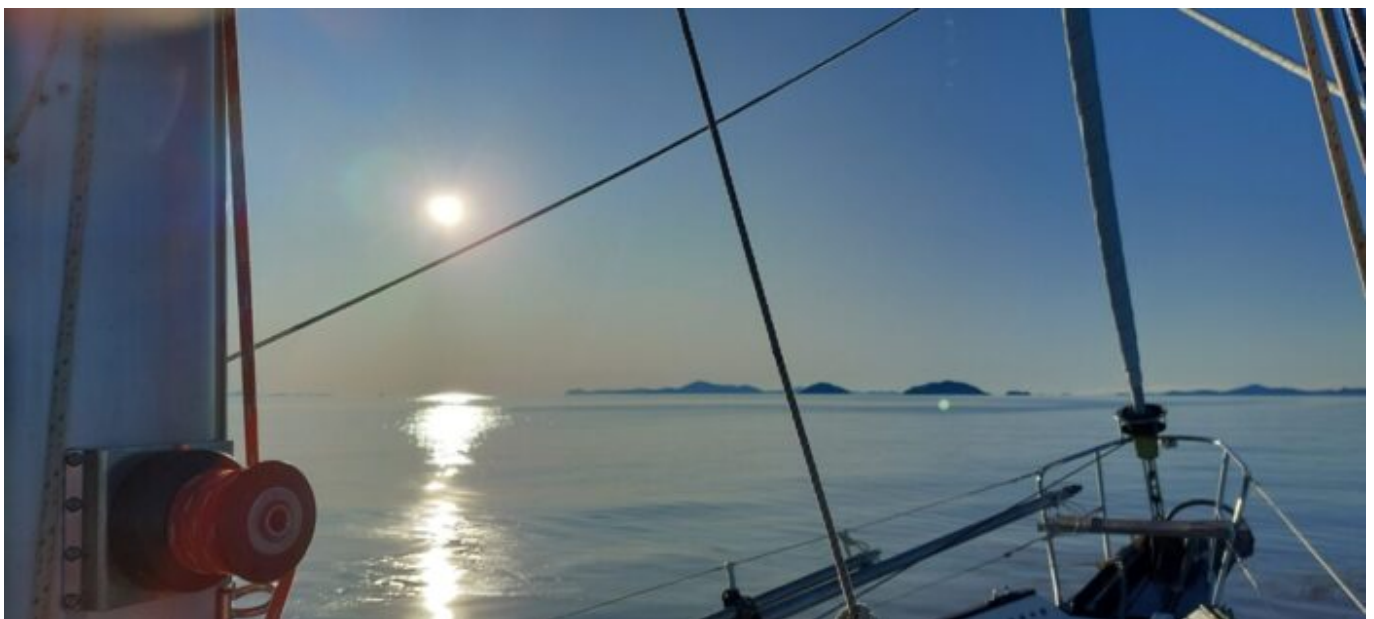
CMaps fails. No Wifi signals mean it won't restart without being signed into again. Luckily the old Raymarine system is running dependably, and I have trusty Navionics installed on my Samsung phone as back up.



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.



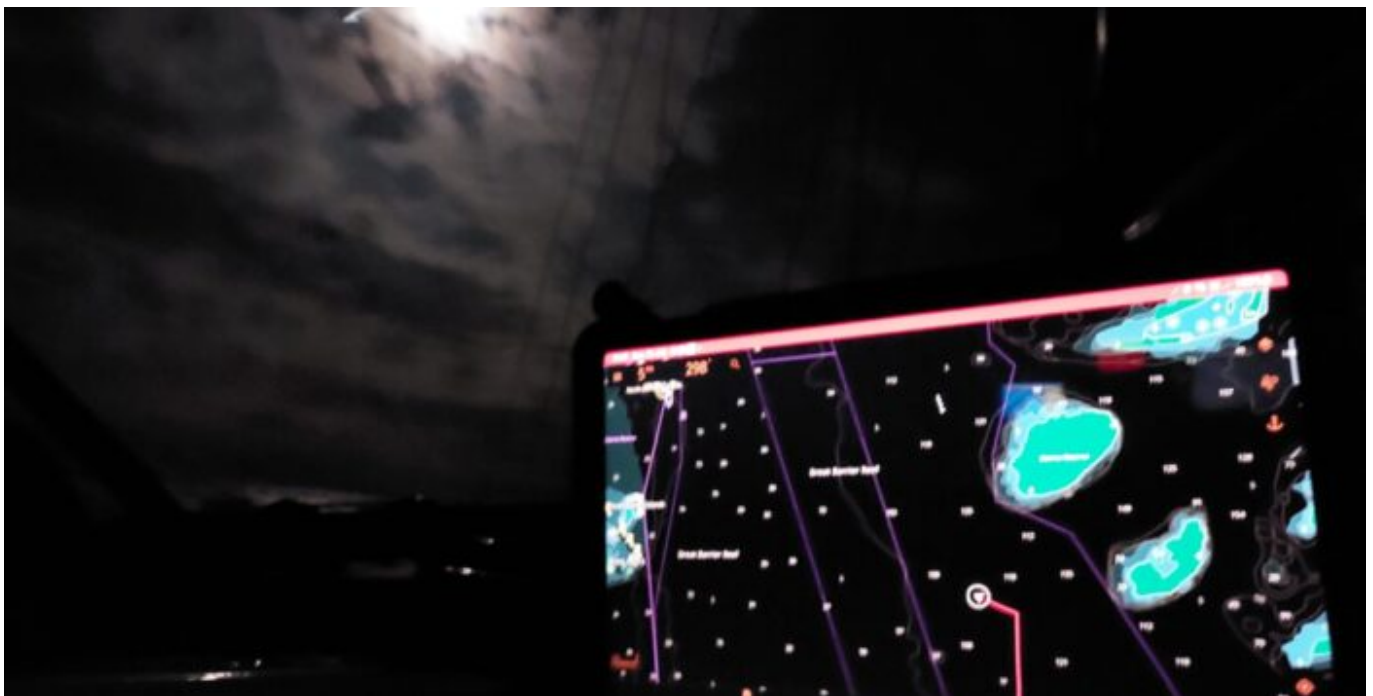
Time to go sit at the bow!

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!



Vancouver Club Night - Ar Seiz Avel Bluewater Homecoming

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vancouver-club-night-ar-seiz-avel-bluewater-homecoming/>



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. See meeting format details below.

Eleven years after leaving the crisp and clear waters of British Columbia, *Ar Seiz Avel* made her homecoming journey this spring from the Island of Curacao deep in the Caribbean to the North Atlantic and the shores of Nova Scotia. This club night presentation is a documentary about that 2022 passage back to Canada. Paul Mulder will describe the elements of preparation, safety and provisioning and then share his expertise in sail handling, log keeping, navigation and celestial navigation.

Ar Seiz Avel was constructed in 1975 at Jespersen Boat Builders by designer Michel Gaudin, the name

meaning “the seven winds” in Paul's native language of Breton. He purchased this beauty in 1988 and has since built a career of “Sail and Learn” offshore voyages which have taken him and *Ar Seiz Avel* around the world. Completing his first circumnavigation 2002, he has shared his experience with many wonderful sailors along the way.

In the spring of 2012, Paul and Barbara Ann Schoemaker made an Atlantic crossing together from Colon, Panama to Vigo, Spain over 4 legs and 3 months, over 6000 nm. Together they have explored many locations from the San Blas Islands in Panama to the coastal waters of Nova Scotia, including Mahone Bay and Lunenburg.

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 meeting starts at 7:30, 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 make it to the SCC, the Vancouver Watchkeepers have been working hard to assemble the technology to broadcast the meeting over Zoom. A word of warning however, the October club night will be our second attempt at a hybrid meeting format, so please have some patience as we continue to work through the technology and logistics.

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.

VI Education - Psychology of Voyaging

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/vi-education-psychology-of-voyaging/>



As we pursue the challenge to explore the oceans and cultures of the world, inevitably we explore ourselves through our responses to the situations we encounter. Part of preparing for voyaging is preparing ourselves psychologically, and part of voyaging is becoming the adventurer we dream to be. In this course, you will address what motivates you and your cruising partner(s) to take this challenge on, recognize how you tend to make decisions, understand your learning styles, kick your fears and anxieties out of the shadows, and bust some cruising myths. This is one of BCA's signature courses. It's always a sell-out, so if you're serious about it, book quickly.

About the Facilitator

Rick Ellis is a BCA lifetime member who brings his years of boating experience and professional facilitation expertise to this popular, must-do course.

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.

Offshore Charting and Dead Reckoning

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/offshore-charting-and-dead-reckoning/>



The Vancouver Chapter is pleased to offer this one day course on Offshore Charting and Dead Reckoning at Jericho Sailing Centre, instructed by veteran offshore sailor, Malcolm Wilkinson. Practical knowledge of chart usage and position updating is essential for offshore sailing.

Instructor:

Malcolm Wilkinson has been sailing for over 65 years and has been using Celestial Navigation for over 50 years. Malcolm raced sailboats successfully for many years, both locally and offshore before sailing with his wife Darcy, some 16,000 nautical miles to the South Pacific and return aboard their 44ft sloop *Meridian Passage II*. He is passionate about and has taught many celestial navigation courses to BCA members.

Photo credit: The image is released free of copyrights under Creative Commons CC0.

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.

Celestial Navigation

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/events/celestial-navigation/>



The Vancouver Chapter is pleased to offer a seven-week celestial navigation course instructed by Malcolm Wilkinson

To quote Wikipedia, here's the benefit:

"The sextant is not dependent upon electricity (unlike many forms of modern navigation) or for that matter anything reliant on human-controlled signals (such as GPS satellites). For these reasons it is considered to be an eminently practical back-up navigation tool for ships. The sextant allows celestial objects to be measured relative to the horizon, rather than relative to the instrument. This allows excellent precision — day or night."

Please join us in this easy-to-follow course where the assumed complexities are made clear.

Instructor:

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Burgees: BCA and Ham Radio

<https://currents.bluewatercruising.org/articles/burgees-bca-and-ham-radio/>



According to Wikipedia:

*“A **burgee** is a distinguishing [flag](#), regardless of its shape, of a recreational boating organization. In most cases, they have the shape of a [pennant](#).”*

The [Bluewater Cruising Association’s](#) pennant-shaped burgee has remained unchanged throughout BCA’s history. Designed by founding members David and Teresa Lucas, it features a blue sky with the sun on the horizon of a deep blue sea - so evocative of adventuring offshore. For a number of years, member Lana Wong has done a fabulous job keeping us supplied with burgees.



BCA Burgee

Recently, one of my ham radio colleagues learned about the existence of a marine ham radio burgee and thought there might be enough cruising hams to warrant ordering new burgees. The designer loaned his only copy of the burgee to my colleague, who asked me if I knew someone who could make them. Lana immediately sprang to mind!

If you have a valid ham radio call sign, consider adding the marine ham burgee to your burgee halyard. Flying your ham radio marine burgee will let other ham operators on the water know that you're in the area!

Lana has made them strong and reinforced the leading edge with netting to reduce fraying.



Marine Ham Burgee

The burgees are offered at \$30 plus postage. [Send Jay an email](#) to order yours.

About The Author

Donna Sassaman

Alia - Spencer 44

Donna Sassaman and her husband Bill first joined BCA in 1986 and cruised offshore from 1990 to 1993. They took a sabbatical from BCA for a while and rejoined in 2002. Donna has served in a variety of volunteer capacities with BCA, including Currents Editor, Board Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and since 2009 as part of the annual directory team.

Currents Bluewater Cruising

The Bluewater Cruising Association

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