

11 July 2012  
Wednesday  
Sequim, WA to Victoria, BC



We got underway at 1220 from the John Wayne Marina in Sequim Bay, WA to Victoria, BC, Canada to begin a circumnavigation of Vancouver Island. Mark Banus, Larry Wood and Ian Michelke are aboard with me. Mark is a retired Navy commander and A-6 Bombardier/Navigator who I met at the Rod & Reel Marina boat yard in Pensacola in 1978. He had the 31' Crocker Gull, *Siren Song*. Mark and I sailed extensively in the Gulf and east coast in *Siren Song* and with my boat at the time, the 37' Alden yawl *Brazen*. Mark made the delivery trip on *Pacific Rose* from Miami, FL to Norfolk, VA when I bought her in 1992. That was an interesting trip.

Larry Wood is a retired Marine Colonel and A-4M pilot with whom I was stationed as a professor at the Naval War College. Both Mark and Larry have sailed extensively in *Pacific Rose*. Larry sailed with me a lot in Newport and in Washington, notably on another trip up to Desolation Sound with my sister Mary's boys, Chris and Brian Cuny, in the summer of 2007.

Ian is my sister Kathy's son. He is 39 years old and has not sailed before, but is certainly interested, is hard working and great company.

The weather was sunny, with fog on the distant horizon. Outside of Sequim Bay, still somewhat in the lee of Dungeness Spit, the wind was out of the northwest at about 15 knots. Our initial course was 320 degrees M to clear the spit. Because of the numerous crab traps set in the area, we kept the engine running while we maneuvered

around them. Abeam Dungeness Spit Lighthouse we set the mizzen and working jib on a port tack and then secured the engine. Out in the Strait of Juan de Fuca the wind freshened to over 20 knots and by 1430 we were making 6.5 knots close-hauled under the jib and jigger. It was cool and we were well dressed, including hats and gloves. At Marks' suggestion, we put on our inflatable flotation gear.

The *Rose* heeled about 10 degrees and was balanced and comfortable, pitching moderately and tossing off a little spray downwind. With the tide still flooding we were being set into the Sound, but it was close to slack water and we could point no higher. I was hoping the ensuing ebb would make up the difference and get

us upwind to Victoria while still on the port tack. By 1630 the wind had lightened to a hazy 16-17 knots, with strong gusts up to 22. There was a five-foot sea running with occasional breakers but the boat rose to them without slamming – for the most part.

When speed over the ground dropped below five knots I started the engine, though in truth we should have raised the main instead. We made 5-7 knots motor-sailing heeled over to about 15 degrees, pitching moderately and tossing dollops of spray downwind.

As we were crossing the international boundary line the red mooring bumper broke its line and went by the board. We used this as a man-overboard drill. Ian kept the ball in sight, Mark furled the jib and Larry sheeted the mizzen flat in preparation for gybing. The boat came around quickly and ran

down on the ball in a quartering sea. Ian went forward and kept pointing at the ball. I slowed down as we approached it and it disappeared under the bow, and Mark managed to pick it up with a boat hook on the first pass.

By 1900 we were just outside Victoria Harbour, furling the jib and



rounding up to drop the mizzen. We followed the 'yellow brick road' into the harbour and tied up bow in/starboard side-to at the customs dock, which proved to be a little tricky with the strong crosswind holding us off the dock.

Clearing in was not a problem, though the agent was adamant that no one else on the boat should be on the dock until he cleared us in. He also insisted on knowing the exact number of beers aboard, despite the fact that there were far fewer than the limit, so Ian counted them. The Canadian Customs system recognized Mark from having been with us to Victoria in the past, but neither Larry, who has cleared in with me before at Bedwell Harbor, or Ian, who is on his first trip in on the boat.

*Victoria, BC waterfront. The famous Empress Hotel is in the background.*



We had a reservation at the Causeway Wharf, so once we were cleared in Mark called Victoria Harbor Authority on 66A and we were assigned the north side of "G" dock – the last dock in front of the Empress Hotel. This put us on the windward side, so using the bow thruster, I backed in without problem.

Once we were tied up and everything secured we walked up to Darcy's Pub and had our customary arrival beer.

**12 July 2012**  
**Thursday**  
**Victoria, BC**

Victoria was pleasant as it always is. Despite it being a weekday there were various musicians, artists and other performers on the stone wharf in front of the hotel, and a modest crowd of tourists wandering around, especially after the *Coho's* two arrivals during the day.

After breakfast in town I walked up to an auto mechanic shop and borrowed a laser heat sensor to check the engine temperature against the gauge reading, which had been a little over 130 degrees F. The gauge proved to be accurate, matching the sensor reading that was never more than 138 F. The engine is running too cool, which is probably a thermostat problem. We cannot get one here however, and I decided to live with the temperature for the trip.

In the afternoon, we shifted the boat to a stern-in tie at the end of "E" dock after backing through a narrow corridor between a large motor yacht and a sailboat in order to be prepared to launch early in the morning.

13 July 2012

Friday

Victoria to Montague Harbour



The night was full of thunder and lightning – so unusual that I thought at first that it must be distant naval gunfire in the restricted area. We are off the dock by 0730, the sky still dark with clouds and lit by lightning underscored by thunder all around the horizon. The air was heavy with mist and light rain, the sky black, the wind light and fitful.

We had cleared Discovery Island under power by 0920 and came to a heading of 010M. Our intention was to make Montague Harbor in order to make enough northing and to be positioned near the Trincomali Channel on the morrow, in order to run Dodd Narrows at near its slack water at 1400 on the 15th; this in part because the forecast was for 15-20 knots on the nose down the Strait of Georgia for the 14th, which argued against running any pass out into the strait and circumventing the narrows. I am somewhat familiar with Montague Harbor, having sailed through one afternoon in *Little Sister*, nearly 30 years ago now.

With the light wind out of the southeast we set the jib and mizzen and motor-sailed up the US portion of Haro Strait. From the north end of San Juan Island we were approached by two large down-bound ships. One of them, an American President Lines container ship apparently bound for Seattle, was in rapidly developing fog, which lay some 60' above the surface of the water. As we watched her bridge structure that was beginning to be enveloped. She began sounding her deeply sonorous fog horn.

The other vessel, less smothered in the thickening fog, was opening on us to port. She appeared to be bound for the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Pacific. Though we were still beneath the fog and in the clear air, we doubted that the APL ship could see us and so stood well clear of her.

Very soon we too were swallowed up in near zero visibility and began blowing our own puny fog horn against both of those of the ships. I thought back to the sailing we used to do without a good radar and a GPS plotter when those fog horns and careful DR navigating were all we could do—very difficult in confined heavily traveled waters with strong currents. Now we can see in the dark. We passed easily between the ships radar blips after we'd lost sight of them. We passed Stuart Island without seeing it and entered Boundary Channel heading for Swanson Channel running up the west side of Pender Island.



In the Boundary Channel visibility improved to about a quarter mile for a time, then a half mile with sunlight burning through it. In the center of the channel visibility suddenly cleared to reveal a number of motor yachts moving at fairly high speeds, some of which we didn't pick up on radar. We had heard the engines of at least a few of them, but no fog signals. I'm afraid that there is now an assumption that every vessel has a perfect radar and a good radar reflection, so fog signals are no longer necessary. We could see the Pender Islands and the opening to Bedwell Harbor, where we have often cleared Customs into Canada.

We altered course to port to run up Swanson Channel, motor-sailing under jib and jigger in modest air. The wind built rapidly to a good sailing breeze so we rounded up alongside Pender Island and raised the main. Resuming course, we secured the engine and, running wing-on-wing on the starboard



*On a mooring ball in the evening at Montague Harbour.*

tack, set a preventer on the main boom. We had a fast sail up along Pender and Mayne Islands, passed Active Pass with its fast, large ferry traffic, then up the beginnings of Galiano Island all the way to the entrance to Montague Harbor. At one point a fluky puff of wind off Mayne Island back-winded the main, but the preventer held it until I temporarily adjusted course.

Outside the harbor entrance we rounded up and doused the main, then entered the harbour under jib and jigger with the engine running out of gear. The entrance is easy to make and the harbor large and well-marked. There were many boats moored to balls or anchored there, but clearly there was plenty of room to anchor in several well-protected areas if we so chose.

There were 24 mooring balls available and we picked up the second from the last one available – on the far west side just under a rock face and fairly close to the beach. We circled around the ball (high tide) and found no less than 23 feet of water. The mooring ball proved simple to pick up, with its large, thin ring that easily took our heavy snap shackles. At 1800 the friendly park ranger came out in his runabout and collected the \$12 overnight fee.

Mark cooked his first of many meals and we sat in the cockpit and had a drink at dusk, listening to the distant buzz of a dinghy outboard, watching the many anchor lights slowly solidify in the growing darkness.

14 July 2012  
Saturday  
Montague Harbour to Nanaimo



We were up early for breakfast in the cockpit. At 0900 we cast off the mooring ball to be sure to be able to make the 20 nautical miles to Dodd Narrows at or before 1330, when the north-going flood was to begin to go slack. Beyond that time, we would not be able to stem the tide and would be forced to find an overnight anchorage to await the next slack water.

After the narrows, we would only be a couple hours from the city of Nanaimo itself. We cleared the Montague Harbour easily, weaving amongst the many boats anchored or moored there, and taking the north passage out to the strait. The wind was light and on the nose, but we set the mizzen as a back-up with the easily unfurling jib in case of an engine problem, and motored north in the pleasant bright sunshine.

It was a simple passage up Trincomali Channel. We arrived at Dodd Narrows at 1300 for the 1344 slack water. Just before we pushed into the narrows a southbound tug-and-barge appeared at the north end of it and we waited for it to transit before starting into it ourselves.

Our concern, as always, was being made to wait so long for commercial traffic to clear that the tide had begun to turn; or to start the passage and suddenly be confronted by a tug-and-barge turning around the point at the other end.

Usually commercial traffic makes a "securite" call on channel 16 prior to entering the narrows, though I'm not sure it's always

made prior to having committed to entering the Narrows. Passage that day was uneventful, however. As is the norm, there was a little turbulence at the narrowest point and that posed no problem.

Clearing the narrows, we turned to port to head around to Nanaimo, standing in close to shore to point up and set the jib, planning to tack our way in against the wind

funneling down the channel. The wind proved to be too fluky off the trees and the bending waterway, however, and we were constantly headed. After trying for a while we furled the jib and put the engine back in gear.

Approaching the marina, I called the Nanaimo Port Authority and eventually arranged moorage with them on "S" dock (the long-gated pier across the marina opposite the fuel dock). Just outside the breakwater, amidst the crisscrossing wakes of small boats, seaplanes and ferry traffic, we dropped the dinghy in the water and secured it to the port side, then rigged for a starboard side-to tie up.

The approach to the pier was easy, as there was plenty of room to make a 180 to lay starboard side-to the dock, pointing outbound. There was a comfortable amount of room between boats for us to parallel park between them, and the marina had a hand down there to take a line.

We spent the remainder of the day securing the boat and getting cleaned up and organized. That evening we walked into town and had dinner on the sidewalk.



Mark



**15 July 2012**  
**Sunday**  
**Nanaimo**

Brian, my sister Mary's son, and his new wife Marie came down to the boat in the morning. Brian is 19 years old; Marie is somewhat older. Marie was very pregnant. Brian is in Nanaimo to attend the "Nanaimo School of Nutritional Medicine" in September.

Brian and Marie are living outside of town in a local's unfinished cabin. In place of paying rent Brian is working with his neighbor to finish the place and make it livable before winter. They said they have no electricity and use river water hand-pumped up to a gravity-feed day tank. Brian is working hard at it all and appears to be making a life out of it.

It was the first time that Ian got to meet his cousin. We spent the day talking in the cockpit, then wandered around the town park. We all had dinner at the seafood restaurant on there off the waterfront walk. Marie's due date is before this trip is finished, so we hoped we'd be able see the baby before it's over if it's possible to get back to Nanaimo in some manner.

In the evening after Brian and Marie

had left, I found a note on the boat saying that Brian Martz and his son, Kevin, had caught up with us in his 52-foot sloop *Miterne*. They wanted to travel with us around the island. I was not overly enthusiastic about this idea, but Brian was new to sailing and wanted to sail around the island, but lacked the confidence yet to do it alone.



*4.9 of us: Ian, Marie and TBA Cuny, Brian and Jack in Nanaimo.*



*Miterne and Pacific Rose at Nanaimo.*

He is about 68 or so, large-framed and intelligent, a retired veterinarian. He used to be an NFO in EA-3s during the height of the Cold War and the Viet Nam War. He is an adventurous sort and has done a lot of outdoor sports, including mountain climbing. I like him a good deal or I wouldn't have agreed to doing this trip as a flight of two. His son Kevin is 35 years old. He's tall and muscular, and given to working out. He's trying to get a job as a college coach anywhere in the country. He had never been sailing before.

*Miterne* is a large and fairly modern sailing yacht, with a reverse transom and an extremely tall rig. The mainsail, for good reason, is furled electro-hydraulically in the mast. The jib is standard roller furling, and the boat has a staysail on a breakdown staysail stay. The cockpit is completely enclosed in a tall cloth and aluminum structure that, to my eye, must make it difficult to see the rig under sail.