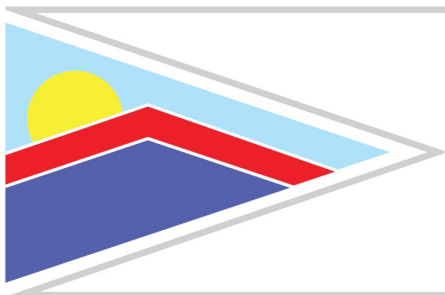


BCNRA



British Columbia Nautical Residents Association

Life Afloat

*The Official Publication of the BC Nautical
Residents Association*

Number 1, Volume 1
Summer, 2019



*Barry and Salty (**Papa Rumba**) lounge around on passage to the
Broughtons*



Who we are...

The Life Afloat is a quarterly publication of the BC Nautical Residents Association.

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Donna Sassaman, Cowichan Bay

The BC Nautical Residents Association was founded in 2010 by a group of liveaboard boaters to encourage responsible living aboard and to find solutions to issues faced by people who live on the water. We are a not-for-profit, volunteer-led organization focused on mediated and cooperative solutions and education for both the liveaboard and non-liveaboard alike.

An individual may not, on their own, be able to effect change in their community, but a united group of people can. The BCNRA's voice is strengthened through building our membership.

The BCNRA's mission statement is to:

- Preserve and support the tradition of living aboard one's vessel
- Promote environmental awareness among liveaboards
- Establish effective communications between liveaboards and non-liveaboards
- Resolve issues of concern to liveaboards
- Serve as a voice for liveaboards regarding activities that affect BC waterways

The BCNRA provides:

- A forum for exchanging information and tips and tools
- Directors who will work with you to find solutions to issues in your area
- A website that is constantly updated with news and views
- A quarterly newsletter, with contributions by members all along the BC coast
- An Annual General Meeting, where you meet other members, elect the Board of Directors, and get an update of what the BCNRA has been involved with over the past year

Membership is open to all BC liveaboards: fresh or salt water, tidal or non-tidal, sail, power, or float home.

Code of Ethics:

The Directorship of the BC Nautical Residents Association believes in the rights of all and in the events of conflict, that peaceful resolution is possible.

Subsequently, our directors are required to abide by our code of ethics, which can be found at:

<http://bcnr.org/about-us/directors-code-of-conduct-and-ethics/>

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Life Afloat Issues and Deadlines

Issue	Months	Deadline
Fall	October/Nov/Dec	September 1
Winter	Jan/Feb/March	December 1
Spring	April/May/June	March 1
Summer	July/August/September	June 1

Mailbox – Comments from readers

*Amanda Glickman, **Papa Rumba***

The periodical is designed by and for liveaboard sailors and those who support the passion to live on their vessels afloat. The Mailbox column is intended as a space to share what is happening in your community, corrections and updates to information we put here in print. At BCNR, we foster an environment of respect and courtesy. Please be respectful to readers and those you may name in your comments. The Editors reserve the right to edit or exclude material deemed inappropriate.

From the Editors' Desk

Amanda Glickman, Papa Rumba & Donna Sassaman, Alia

Welcome to Life Afloat! We are so excited to launch this iteration of the BCNRA newsletter as a vehicle for an exchange of information, views, and tips and tools for living aboard your boat or float home happily and comfortably.

This publication is by and for our members. So, please submit articles! Here's an incomplete list of possible topics: boat/float home maintenance tips; favourite equipment (technical, navigational, cooking, entertainment, etc.); galley-wise recipes; recommendations for liveaboard-friendly marinas and businesses; your favourite cruising areas and anchorages; why you became a liveaboard; what qualities/assets you looked for when searching for your liveaboard boat or float home; your biggest liveaboard challenges and how you've resolved them (lessons learned); local issues and issues' resolution (e.g., marina restrictions; anchoring restrictions, relations with land-based neighbours); etc.

Email your articles and photos as separate attachments to the editors at feedback@bcnr.org. The following guidelines for text and photos (described below) will make the editorial team's job easier. Thanks!

Text Guidelines:

1. Please do not format your story. Simple text in Word is easiest to edit. That means: single-spaced; no indentations at the beginning of paragraphs; no hard returns, except at the end of a paragraph; and no fancy word art.
2. Please include a short 'bio': your name (and partner's name, if applicable); boat name and type (e.g., Ballerina, Canoe Cove 41; Tap Dancer, Beneteau 33; Home Sweet Home, float home); your home port; and how long you've lived aboard (full or part time). We'd also appreciate an author photo!

Photo Guidelines:

Photographs enhance stories and provide detail in technical articles. We like photos!

1. Featured image (the 'cover' photo for the article) should be in a 4:3 ratio – ideally 1200x900 pixels – and minimum 800x600.
2. Author images should be square, ideally 600x600, and minimum 400x400 pixels.
3. Images within the article should be square or landscape format, not portrait, and a minimum 800 pixel width.
4. Jpeg (.jpg or .jpeg) is the preferred format for all photo submissions.
5. Please send images as separate attachments (i.e., not embedded in your article). In your article, include instructions about where to place the images.

For example:

After thoroughly researching our options, we chose a float home. Liz and I envisioned a garden afloat!

Photos Wanted!!

In search of stories and photos for Life Afloat! If you have stories, experience, knowledge, updates, or any hints and tricks to living aboard, we would love to hear from you!! Only have photos? We'd love to see them! Especially pertaining to the nautical history of this coast and how it pertains to those of us who love to live on the water.

Please send any materials to your Editors at feedback@bcnr.org.

Insert image: Float home with garden deck.jpg

6. Please include a brief, descriptive caption for each image (who, what, where, when). For example:
After thoroughly researching our options, we chose a float home. Liz and I envisioned a garden afloat!

Insert image: Float home with garden deck.jpg.

Caption: Liz and Rob's garden comprises six large containers for herbs, salad greens, squashes, root crops, and flowers.

We're looking forward to receiving your stories, articles, and photos! The deadline for the fall issue of Life Afloat is September 1st.

Fair winds,
Amanda, Editor
Donna, Assistant Editor



Buy, Sell, Trade

Have something to sell? Looking for something? Advertising free of charge for BCNR members.

For Sale: 10 foot Livingstone dinghy located in Nanaimo. \$500 obo. Contact Ken Lund at svfullcircle007@gmail.com

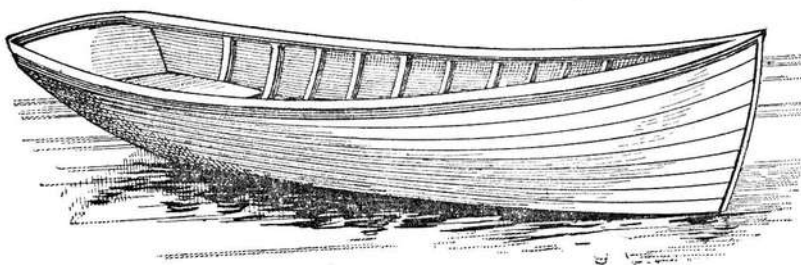
Moorage: 45' moorage available as a sublet for the months of July and August 2019.

Slip is in Cowichan Bay. Water, 30amp power, garbage, shower, parking and liveaboard fee included.

Boat must carry \$1million liability insurance. Owners who are living aboard must be BCNR (bcnr.org) members and comply with the "Liveaboard code of Ethics".

Cost is \$610.00 per month, GST included.

Contact Rick at Rick.schnurr@gmail.com

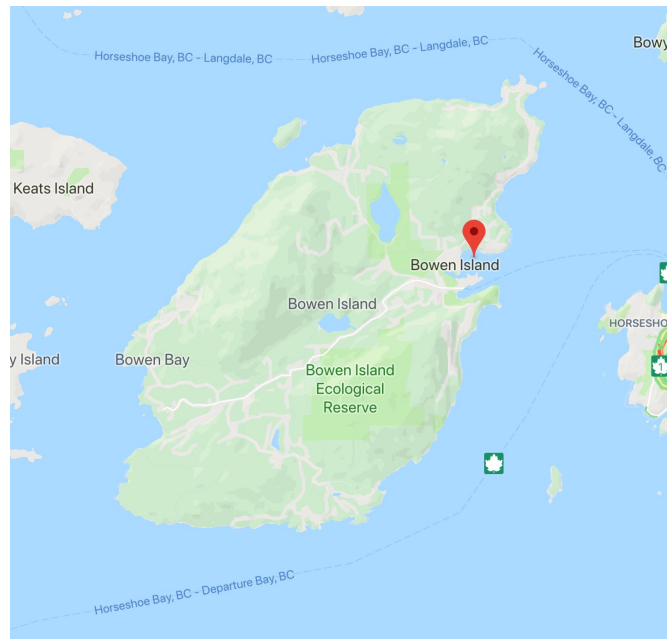


On the Coast - Bowen Island, Mannion Bay

Ken Lund, *Full Circle*

Editor's Note: This article is the first in a series that will detail what is happening in different communities along the BC coast. Please let Ken know if there are or have been issues in your community and how you are dealing or have dealt with them. You can reach Ken at ken_lund@bcnr.org.

An active group of people on Bowen Island called 'Friends of Mannion Bay', founded by Bruce Russell, has been working with Bowen Island Municipality, Transport Canada, and the Canadian Coast Guard for many years in efforts to resolve what they call the 'boat problem' in Mannion Bay. The 'Friends' have said they will continue to do so until the problem is resolved. Bruce Russell is a waterfront property owner in Mannion Bay.



The Municipality of Bowen Island Land Use Bylaw no. 57 had prohibited liveaboards in Mannion Bay but I do not believe that it was enforced or if it was enforceable. It was reported that in the summer of 2013 there were seven people living on boats in Mannion Bay and that number had fluctuated over the years and throughout the seasons. It was identified that some of the boaters had come from False Creek in Vancouver when they were evicted from there.

In 2014 Bowen Island Municipality (BIM) removed 18 mooring buoys and four vessels from the waters of Mannion Bay. The Mannion Bay Management Strategy saw Bonnie Brokenshire, Manager of Parks and Environment for BIM, recommend that they look into obtaining a License of Occupation for the bay. BIM, with the use of a Beaches and Water Areas Bylaw no. 418 from 2016, has initiated changes in Mannion Bay (also known as Deep Bay). The Municipality has obtained a 30-year License of Occupation (LOO) from the Province with the intent of "moving forward with the plan to restore environmental and community well-being to the area".

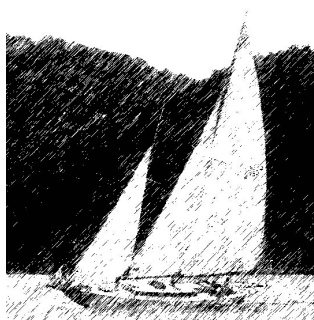
To comply with the bylaw, boat owners in Mannion Bay were required to register with the Municipality by October 1, 2017. This 'First Wave' was called Registration and Education. The Second Wave, called Enforcement, required anyone with a mooring to pay an annual fee of \$240 to the Municipality by January 1, 2018.

A contractor for BIM has installed a number of new moorings in the bay. One long-term boater there has expressed concern that the moorings are too close together and do not provide adequate swinging room and that they do not comply with Transport Canada guidelines for mooring ball placement. Some of the boaters so far have complied with Bowen Island's new plan and have paid the fee while some others are not paying the fee and have been disputing the bylaw. The Friends of Mannion Bay continue to be unhappy and are calling on more enforcement on boaters using the bay.



Author's Bio - Ken Lund, *Full Circle*

Ken was born in British Columbia and has spent the majority of his life either on or near the waters surrounding Vancouver Island. He now calls Nanaimo home. Ken has been a part time liveaboard first with the 54 foot *Viking 1*, a converted fishboat that he operated Viking Adventure Tours with along the coast for several years and currently the *Full Circle*, a 34 foot cutter rigged sloop. Ken has been a director with BCNRA since 2012 and cares about all of the many liveaboard boaters on this coast.



Library - Books for Liveaboards

Amanda Glickman, Papa Rumba

The Voyager's Handbook

A well thought out reference for living on a mobile platform in the ocean with limited space.

Recommended by: Amanda

Living Aboard: The Ultimate Guide to Life on a Boat

This is on my reading list...

Recommended by: Amanda

The Essentials of Living Aboard a Boat: The Definitive Guide for Liveaboards

Mark Nicholas

A fun book to read written by a lawyer on the East Coast of the US. Full of good bits of information

Recommended by: Amanda

How Boat Things Work: An Essential Guide

An awesome intro book, full of diagrams.

Charlie Wing

Boatowner's Mechanical and Electrical Manual

The definitive guide for the "do-it-yourself" boat owner.

Nigel Calder

From the Galley of Julie May

Jude Brooks and Rick Schnurr, Julie May

Last spring, before heading off the dock for a summer of cruising the BC coast, we discovered a new galley tool that greatly enhanced meal preparation on *Julie May*.

That tool is known as a Thermal Cooker. There are a couple of manufacturers of thermal cookers; Saratoga Jacks and Thermos. Neither unit is inexpensive, but we are really glad we bought one as it has made many meals much easier and more enjoyable to prepare.

Basically, a thermal cooker is a large thermos, similar to what has kept your coffee hot in a lunch kit and been available for decades. Here are pictures of the two most common thermal cookers.



Shuttle Chef by Thermos



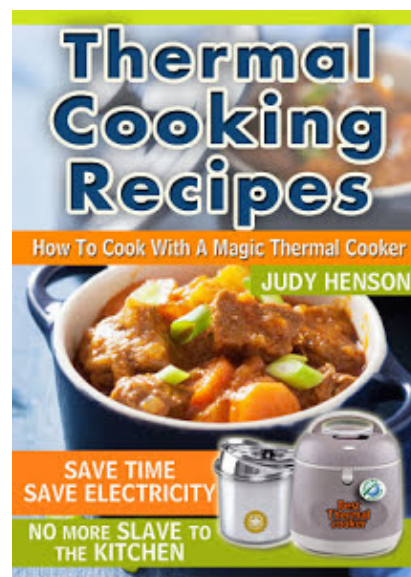
Saratoga Jack's thermal cooker with extra pot

Both of these thermal cookers are available online. The Shuttle Chef was available from Amazon and we chose it due to ease of ordering in Canada. As you can see in the pictures, the Shuttle Chef comes with one

4.5L stainless steel pot while the Saratoga Jack's product comes with one 5L pot and a smaller pot that sits in the top of the larger pot (more about this below).

There are thermal cooker cookbooks available as well.

You are able to cook a surprising range of meals in a thermal cooker, from soups and stews to bread. We use ours for making yogurt, all kinds of soups and stews, ribs, chili, pre-soaked beans, pulled pork and even have cooked a roast. Speaking of beans, I don't use canned beans. I always want some beans (kidney, black and garbanzo) in the freezer and ready to use. So, I pre-soak any beans overnight. After rinsing thoroughly, I then bring the beans, in an adequate amount of water, to a boil in the SS pot and cook for 15 minutes. After that, I transfer them to the thermos of the thermal cooker and leave for 6 hours. They come out cooked and ready to be frozen in 2-cup packages, ready for use.



One example of available thermal cooker cookbooks

The genius of a thermal cooker and what makes them so great for boaters is that they use no excess power or propane to cook your dinner. You can simply prepare your meal following your favourite recipe, heating it (bring to a boil) in the stainless steel pot for 15 minutes on top of your stove, then place the stainless steel pot into the “thermos,” close the lid and let it cook for 6 to 8 hours while you go about your day. As you are cruising to your next anchorage, dinner is cooking without using electricity or having the propane galley stove operating. (In the cooler months this greatly cuts down on moisture in the boat; in the warmer weather, you are not heating up the boat by cooking all day.) When you are about ready to eat, pull the pot out of the thermos. It will still be quite hot, but you will likely want to bring it back up to a hotter temperature (especially for soups and stews) by placing it back on the galley stove for a few minutes before serving. This reheating to boiling is very important in the interests of food safety, especially if you have had to leave the food too long and your dinner has cooled down too much.

As mentioned above, the Saratoga Jack’s cooker comes with a second smaller pot that fits into the top of the larger SS pot under the lid. The advantage of this is that you are able to cook a second dinner item, such as rice, at the same time as the main dish.

It is so great to end a long crossing in cool weather, rain, and challenging seas and sit down to a hearty meal that is ready and waiting for you and your family. All that is left to do is open the wine.

Here is a favourite recipe. You can easily add meat to this dish, too. I prefer lamb.

Black Bean Veggie (or not) Soup

Ingredients

- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 small onion (diced)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 small sweet potatoes (peeled and chopped)
- 2 medium carrots (slice)
- 1/2 red bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes (or tomato sauce)
- 1 can or cup of frozen corn
- 1/2 cup water (or vegetable broth)
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne (or to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Steps to Make It

- In the stainless steel pot, sauté the onions and garlic in olive oil for a minute or two.
- Add the chopped sweet potatoes, sliced carrots, and chopped bell pepper to the pan and cook until the onions are soft, about 5 to 6 minutes.
- Reduce the heat to simmer and add in the all of the remaining ingredients, stirring to combine well

- Bring all the ingredients to a boil on the stove top and simmer for 15 minutes. Then place the pot into the thermos portion of the thermal cooker and let it “cook” for about 5 hours.
- If you have the Saratoga Jack’s cooker with the second smaller pot, bring rice to a boil in the usual manner, and then place the smaller pot into the top of the larger pot at the same time.

Serve in a bowl topped with your favourite chili toppings and enjoy.

Consider a toppings bar for your black bean chili, including salsa, chopped cilantro, sliced green onions, diced avocado, and crushed gluten-free corn tortilla chips. Sour cream, shredded cheese, or vegan substitutes might also be offered (checking labels if gluten-free foods are necessary).

For other recipes, such as baking bread, please consult the cookbooks.



Author’s Bio - Judy Brooks and Rick Schnurr

Judy Brooks and Rick Schnurr liveaboard the *Julie May*, a converted 42’ troller, ex commercial fish boat since 2008. Their home port is currently Canoe Cove Marina in North Saanich, BC. Rick has been a BCNRA director, and Judy has served as the Board’s chairperson, since 2010.



Resources and Websites

Bluewater Cruising Association, www.bluewatercruising.org

An organisation dedicated to helping cruisers to prepare for offshore sailing. The organisation’s online publication, Currents, is available to the public.

Recommended by: Donna

Online Tide and Current Predictions.

<https://tides.mobilegeographics.com/>

Recommended by: Rick

TELUS High Speed Internet with Smart Hub is an ideal rural home internet solution.

<https://www.telus.com/en/internet/smart-hub>

Recommended by: Rick, Donna and Bill

Wind Alert

<https://www.windalert.com/>

Recommended by: Rick



Living Aboard in the British Columbia Winter

By the crew of Julie May

Julie May is a 50-year-old, 42' converted west coast troller that has been owned and lived aboard by Jude and Rick for the past eleven years in Victoria, BC waters. We have always chosen to berth JM in a marina during the fall, winter, and spring seasons, and cruise the west coast of BC during the summer months. We also use JM extensively in the winter months, with weekly short overnight trips to nearby Piers Island to babysit our two grandchildren and other short trips to visit friends or to just anchor out for the joy of it.

We have purposely opted for the convenience and amenities of a marina. To us it's worth the cost of moorage fees to have immediate access to shore and the larger community, fresh water, laundry, and electrical power. In the colder winter months this becomes especially true when heating with electricity is almost constant. In the coldest below-freezing weather, we augment electric heat with the additional



Goldie and the Convectair electric heater

warmth from our Sig-Mar diesel heater, 'Goldie'. We manage to keep the temperature inside the living areas of the boat between 19 and 21 degrees Celsius.

For a while, we researched the possibility and costs of installing a hydronic heating system on JM. However, the high cost (\$10,000 plus) scared us away from this option. We would have needed it



Jude Warms her feet

only in the coldest weather and then, only when away from the 30-amp power at the marina. One day it dawned on me that we had a perfectly good 7Kw generator on board that could easily provide all the power we needed for heaters and hot water. Why not just run it when we needed to? Duh! Now we do just that anytime we need the extra power and are very comfortable.

One advantage of the colder months for us is that *Julie May's* fish hold doubles as a cold room, functioning much the same as your grandmother's basement cold cellar. We can store fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, wine and, most importantly, beer at drinking temperature!

In the summer cruising season we are often alone when seeking out those cherished secluded anchorages. It can be weeks between trips to a dock for provisions and fuel. We find that the winter months in the marina offer a more sociable space for us to reconnect with fellow liveaboard boaters, family, and friends in the larger community. Our marina is blessed with access to public transit service that runs every 30 minutes and affords us access to both Sidney and Victoria. As we have not owned a car for the past seven years, this is essential. And not having the expense of car ownership outweighs the added costs of moorage.

There are a few extra precautions to take into account in the winter months when living aboard. Make certain that the marina you choose is well protected from winter storms. Almost every winter there are news stories of marinas and docks being blown out by strong winds. Boats tied up at the pier in White Rock, BC were destroyed this winter in the December 20th storm. Years ago, when we owned a float home and were tied to Seascope Marina in Gowlland Harbour on Quadra Island, a freak December westerly 'bomb' broke all the pilings from three-quarters of the marina docks and blew the boats and our home ashore.

In the cold season, frost on the docks and slip-fingers turns them into skating rinks. It's easy to be unaware of this, especially when stepping off the boat to secure mooring lines upon returning to the dock. My neighbor, Michel, and I each purchased 40' of 36" x 1/2" hardware cloth (galvanized wire mesh) and, with the marina's permission, stapled this to the decking on our slip finger. Now our finger is no longer slippery and our footing is secure. One does not want to accidentally fall into the water in any season.

Another precaution, thought of by Jude, was to put our boarding ladder over the side of the boat while tied up at the dock. All of our marina docks ride too high above the water to be able to climb out on in the event that someone slipped and fell in the water. And there are no convenient dock ladders nearby, so having the boarding ladder in the water greatly enhances our safety in the event of an accidental fall.

Snow is also a consideration in the winter. This past week we have had a lot of snow on the BC coast. I always keep a small plastic snow



Rick and Jude on their Floathome



Julie May

shovel stored away in the hold. While the snow may look pretty when it first covers your boat, in a marine environment it quickly becomes heavy and wet. This is especially true if it starts to rain. Weight aloft is very dangerous for boats, often causing them to roll over. So, get the snow off of your boat while it is still light and fluffy. If your boat is kept in a boat house, there isn't much you can do to remove the snow from the roof if the boat houses

are packed close together, as they are in most marinas. But be aware that boat houses do not guarantee safety in case of snow. This week, four boat houses collapsed in our marina, due to snow melting off the sunny side of the roof and not the shady side.

Another consideration in cold months is to keep fresh water tanks topped up. It does not take very much cold wind (wind chill factor) to quickly freeze marina water lines solid. And if the marina has not drained the water system in advance of the freezing weather, it also takes many days of warm weather to thaw them out again. When this occurs, as is the case as I write this article, the crew of JM goes into 'summer cruising water conservation mode'. We restrict our fresh water usage to making coffee, washing dishes in the bare minimum of water, and sponge baths on the boat. Long ago, I installed a salt water pump and faucet at the galley sink, used for rinsing dirty dishes prior to washing.

When considering the right boat to live aboard, one question that likely never gets asked by the buyer is, "Is the boat insulated?" I didn't ask it. But we are fortunate that the person who did the conversion of JM thought to insulate the entire house structure.

Most cruising boats, sail or power, are not insulated and this results in a colder and wetter home. Wetter because, unlike in the summer when the boat is more opened up, in the winter, condensation forms quickly and abundantly on all cold surfaces and can lead to discomfort, black mould, and rot in the boat. This can be reduced by doing what you can to insulate the boat. My daughter and son-in-law used 1/2" closed cell foam sheeting throughout their 37' fibreglass sailboat and it eliminated the condensation they were experiencing. On JM we still get condensation behind some of the cushions and a lot on the windows (single pane glass, of course). I discovered a K'A'RCHER squeegee vacuum that works wonders to remove the condensation from windows, often collecting 2 cups of water!

Having described living aboard a boat in the winter, many of you may offer the observation that to do so in the banana belt of Canada is really not so difficult. I can only agree with you. Choosing where to be a liveaboard has to be the prime consideration. I know that there are people living aboard in Toronto Harbour right now. With Ontario temperatures in the -30C range, I cannot imagine how they are surviving. Hopefully

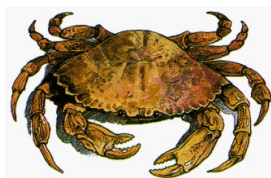


Squeegee Vacuum

this article will find its way to some of them and they can let us know about living aboard in 'real' winter.

In the meantime, we are certainly enjoying this wonderful liveaboard life in all seasons.

Rick Schnurr and Jude Brooks
Aboard *Julie May*



Author's Bio - Judy Brooks and Rick Schnurr

Judy Brooks and Rick Schnurr liveaboard the *Julie May*, a converted 42' troller, ex commercial fish boat since 2008. Their home port is currently Canoe Cove Marina in North Saanich, BC. Rick has been a BCNRA director, and Judy has served as the Board's chairperson, since 2010.



Musings – Observations from a Longtime Liveaboard

Brent Swain, Easy Street

Some use the issue of environmentalism as an excuse to harass liveaboards.

I read about the electricity consumption of the average house and calculated mine to be 1/10,000th of that amount. That was before LEDs reduced it another tenfold. Mine is made by solar panels and occasional use of a wind generator. No tanker oil spills feeding my electricity needs. No tax-funded infrastructure.

I read a couple of Octobers ago, in National Geographic, that the average house in the western US uses 350 gallons of fresh water a day. My 17-gallon tank lasts me a couple of weeks. I catch much of my water on my wheelhouse top. No huge expensive bureaucratic infrastructure required there.

I heat with a wood stove, sometimes feeding it with the 100-yard diet. A piece of wood, left to rot, has the same greenhouse gas effect as burning it, making my heat source carbon neutral.

I use a composting head, as more and more liveaboards are doing. No overboard discharge. Easy for anyone to build, for about \$50 in materials.

Who Me? A Liveaboard Sailor?

Donna Sassaman, *Alia*, Spencer 44 Sloop

I can state categorically that as a child growing up in suburban Connecticut, I did not see a liveaboard lifestyle in my future. I envisioned living in a big house with a husband and twin boys, a girl, a dog, and a cat. Other than perhaps a speedboat on Long Island Sound, boats were not on my must-have list.

As a university student, I sailed with a ‘Captain Bligh’. I served as ballast on a 23’ wooden sailboat and was able to recite, “Halyards hoist the sails, sheets secure the sails; port is left and starboard right.” However, I never did learn the rudiments of sailing, beyond keeping my head low when the boom swung from port to starboard and back again. When Captain Bligh and I went our separate ways, I vowed never, ever to climb aboard a boat again.

As a young woman, I lived at the north end of Kootenay Lake with my mountain-climbing husband, one son, and two daughters, a dog, a couple of cats, a horse, and a cow. Bill and I were homesteaders and teachers, involved with our rural community, and interested in building a log house and honing our gardening skills. Boats weren’t even on the radar, so to speak.

It wasn’t until we moved to Victoria in the summer of 1983 that boats became an issue. A Kootenay friend, Ron, had returned to his hometown of Sidney and was living aboard a 22’ LOD wooden sailboat, *Water Rat* (‘Ratty’). Bill went to visit Ron and begged for a ride. Off they went to Sidney Spit, where Bill experienced boats at anchor, a full moon rising behind Sidney Spit with the sun setting behind Sidney, pods of Orcas jumping in front of the boat on its way back to Sidney... Yes, it was the Universe conspiring to get us on a boat. Home from Sidney, Bill burst into the kitchen and declared, “I have to have a boat! I just have to have a boat!”

With Captain Bligh still a painful memory, I was unenthusiastic about Bill’s boating plans. I reminded him that his one experience on the high seas had rendered him so seasick that he’d vowed never to repeat the experience. I suggested that we could buy a small cabin up-Island as a get-away; or he could renew his private pilot’s licence and we’d buy a plane; or we could go mountain-climbing in exotic locations! It was a resounding “no thanks” to all these alternatives; Bill was smitten with sailboats, and that was that.

Our first boat was *Avatar*, a beautiful 27’ wooden sloop built in England in 1938. On her, we started to learn to sail, first venturing out of Victoria’s Inner Harbour and then, as we learned more and got braver, exploring as far north as Desolation Sound and as far south as Port Townsend, WA. I still was a reluctant sailor but I felt that Bill and I were learning together. And, thankfully, he wasn’t – and isn’t – a Captain Bligh.

During the two years that we owned *Avatar*, Bill discovered the marine section of the Victoria Public Library. He read all the offshore cruising books, including books written by couples who’d crossed oceans: the Smeeton, Pardeys, Roths, and others. Bill started to lobby for an offshore adventure. “Here,



*Bill fell in love with sailing when he fell in love with **Water Rat***

read this!” he’d say, passing me a book by one of the cruising couples. “We could do this!”

“No, no, no!” was my reaction. I liked my job, we were living in a great housing co-op, I was settled in Victoria. Although I was now okay with coastal sailing, I was certain I couldn’t/wouldn’t sail out of sight of land. I resigned myself to Bill sailing off to tropical isles and me flying to join him from time to time. Until...

One December night in 1985, I went to bed thinking I couldn’t possibly sail offshore. The next morning I woke up thinking that perhaps I could. After living with the possibility for a couple of days, I told Bill about my change of heart. We prepared to sell *Avatar* and look for an offshore-capable boat. Several months later, we found *Emrys*, a 34’ steel-hulled, cutter-rigged ketch in Nanaimo. She was a basic boat, e.g., no pressure water and no shower, but she was strong and friendly-feeling.

We joined Bluewater Cruising Association in 1986, an organisation that prepares members to cruise offshore. We moved aboard *Emrys* in 1987, living at the Wharf Street dock in Victoria’s Inner Harbour. Our jobs were a short walk away and we sold our car, relying on feet, bikes, and public transit to get around. In 1987, the winter moorage rate for all sizes and types of boats at Victoria’s government docks was \$48.94/month, which included hydro! We generously fed our voracious cruising fund, ‘Kitty’, and we pared down our stuff to what was needed and could fit on our small boat. All the rest was sold or given away.

Three years later, we were ready to untie the lines. On August 1, 1990, we said goodbye to family and friends and set sail for Port Angeles, where we obtained our U.S. cruising permit. Our cruising adventures took us down the U.S. west coast to Mexico, where we spent two winters exploring the Sea of Cortes. In the spring of 1992, we set our course for French Polynesia.

Ocean passages can be magic, especially the night skies. One of my favourite memories of that first passage was being becalmed one moonless night. The reflection of the sky on the water gave us a sense that we were floating in a starry bubble.

Twenty-seven days after leaving Puerto Vallarta, we arrived in the Marquesa Islands, French Polynesia. We harbour-hopped through the Marquesas, the Tuamotus, and the Society Islands for six months, being welcomed by very hospitable local people and enjoying the traditional singing, drumming, and dancing competitions leading up to the month-long Fête in Papeete.

Another 27-day passage took us to Hawaii, where we explored five of the six main islands and spent several months at the Ala Wai Boat Harbor in Honolulu. We left Hawaii in May, 1993 and sailed home to Victoria, arriving on June 18th after a 24½-day passage.

So many memories, so many stories to tell!

Bill and I had gone offshore thinking that once we returned to Victoria, we’d sell the boat and buy a house. But, by the time we returned, we’d lived aboard for six years and concluded that we weren’t ready to move ashore yet. Nearly 32 years after moving aboard *Emrys*, we’re still not ready to move



Bill and Donna home in 1993 after three years of offshore adventures

ashore! For the past 16 years, we've lived aboard *Alia*, a customised Spencer 44. She's a comfortable liveaboard and good cruising boat. Someday we'll have to consider moving off the boat, but not today. We continue to enjoy living in our floating home and feeling very connected to our friends in the boating community.



*Bill and Donna live aboard **Alia** in Cowichan Bay, and cruise the BC coast during the summers*

Author's Bio - Donna and Bill Sassaman

Donna and Bill Sassaman have lived aboard for nearly 32 years, half of those years aboard *Alia*, a customised Spencer 44 sloop. Their home port is Cowichan Bay, BC. Bill has been a BCNRA director since the Association's founding in 2010. Donna has served as Board Secretary since 2010.



Got a story to tell? Please share with us!

They say the best way of learning is from experience... here's a chance to share all those tidbits of knowledge you've gained over the years, living aboard, messing with boats, fixing and playing. Our main goal is to share knowledge, experience and current events. Photos appreciated along with a short biographical so we all know who you are!!

Galley Goodies

Donna Sassaman, Alia

Glenora's Salt Water Bread

In the summer of 1987, Bill and I, newly living aboard, met a cruising family – Peter, Glenora, and their two children, also newly living aboard – while anchored in False Bay, Lasqueti Island.

We shared a meal of clams (dug by us) and freshly-baked salt water bread (made by Glenora). Bill and I enjoyed the taste of the bread so much that I asked Glenora for the recipe.

The bread is easy to make – you don't need an oven, just a heavy, straight-sided pot, a flame diffuser (optional but helpful), and a stovetop – and it's tasty! Another benefit of this bread recipe is that it requires no fresh water!

Ingredients

- Salt water from a clean source
- 1 package dry yeast
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 4 – 6 cups flour (white or mixed white-whole wheat or gluten-free)
- Oil or shortening for greasing the pot

Process

1. Set 1½ cups sea water in the sun to heat up or, if in a hurry, heat to warm (not hot) on the stove.
2. In a large pot (Dutch oven or pressure cooker) with straight sides, combine the warm sea water with 1 package yeast and 1 tsp. sugar.
3. Stir in 4 to 6 cups flour until the dough forms into a firm ball.
4. Knead on floured countertop for 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Generously grease the sides and bottom of the same pan with shortening or oil.
6. Flatten the dough ball into bottom of pan until it reaches the sides.
7. Flip over when the first side is greased, so both sides are greased.
8. Cover the pot and place in a sunny spot to let rise until doubled. (Opt.: For lighter bread, punch down, re-form, and let rise again).
9. Bake on the stove top over medium heat (use a flame diffuser under the pot) for about 15 to 20 minutes
or until the sides and bottom are golden brown.
10. Flip the bread over. (This is tricky. One way to do it is to place a plate on top of the pot and turn the pot upside-down, so that the bread falls topside-down onto the plate; then slide it back into the pot from the plate. Needless to say, a regular pancake lifter is insufficient.)
11. When the other side is golden brown (another 15 minutes or so), turn it out on a plate, slice into pie-shaped wedges, add lots of butter, jam, cheese, or whatever and enjoy!



The Hole Has It Out For Me

By Robert Mckenzie, *Scott Free*

It was the summer of 2013. We had been cruising the BC coast with our friend Kris Samuels and some other ne'er-do-wells from West Bay Marina. After having a great time, we bid them farewell and left the Octopus Islands to head north. *Scott Free* was purring along in her usual reliable way and as we entered Hole in the Wall, I remarked to my wife Sylvia how it was such a beautiful day and how everything was going so well and so unlike my last trip through the Hole. As I went below for a routine check of the vitals, I was astounded to see the temperature gauge pegged to its maximum. Engine full stop. Was this going to be another horror show?



Scott Free in False Creek

Memories of my last trip through the Hole came flooding back as vividly as if it were only days ago... I was running a small tug towing a pile driving barge out of Salt Spring Island that had just completed some maintenance on the government dock in Owen Bay. The crew had left the night before and we planned to catch the early morning flood tide through the Hole in the Wall.

It was a cold December morning in 2007. We departed 04:10 slack water by Owen Bay tide charts and idled down Okisollo towards the Hole. The visibility was poor in the pitch black, with light rain and scattered fog. Looking at the GPS, I noticed our speed was considerably faster than it should be on idle... Somehow our timing was out. I attempted to change our heading and turned on the spotlight, trying to get a better take on the conditions. In seconds the light died. Now it was strictly navigating by radar. As we were pulled into the narrows, I could feel the turbulence and watched our speed as it approached eight knots. Our normal towing speed is six knots and we were still at idle. I turned on the floods, trying to gain some visibility and at that moment saw the barge rushing by us on the port side. The tug had obviously been caught in a back eddy and we were about to be girded. The only thing to do was to try and get ahead of the tow in order to prevent a rollover. Hammer down, we surged up the starboard side of the barge and began a turn in front to regain control. Suddenly the current turned the tug enough for the barge to grab our stern, throwing us broadside to the tow. With great impact, the barge hit and we began to roll under its bow. I yelled at the deckhand to jump on the barge and jumped myself.

We watched the tug slipping under, her lights shining through the cold green water when all of a sudden, like a breaching whale, she shot to the surface and continued on, full throttle and full starboard wheel. We stood on the barge, dumbfounded. Here we were in the middle of the Hole doing donuts and being pulled by a crewless tug, her floodlights giving an eerie glow in the inky darkness.

After our first full circle, it was obvious the circles would become larger and we'd soon be crashing into the steep sides of the Hole. It was no option to shimmy the tow line dipping and snapping taut in the frigid water. We quickly started the barge generator for lights and soon had the onboard punt in the water, engine running. Just as I jumped into the punt, we completed our third circle and the barge gave off a groan that can



Tow by Cortes Island SAR into Herriot Bay

only be described as tortured steel as we slid by the steep-sided cliffs.

I raced to catch the tug, jumped onto the aft deck, leaving the punt to drift, and then ran to the controls and throttled back. After that, it was a matter of pulling the barge out of the current, sorting ourselves out, and continuing on with the tow.

What had I done wrong? A stupid mistake. Although Owen Bay and Hole in the Wall are next to each other, the slacks are quite different. Instead of transiting the Hole at slack, I was about an hour late. Given the poor

visibility, the danger of running into trouble was greatly magnified. We were incredibly lucky to have survived with nothing more than a large dent in the house of the tug, some dents in the barge, and one severely bruised ego.

Fortunately, our mishap with **Scott Free** was not so dire. It was a clear day and, with the help of a whale watcher, we were able to anchor in a safe spot until the Cortes Island SAR arrived. They took us in tow and brought us to Herriot Bay, where we met up with Kris and his companions. There Kris helped us replace our water pump and a rollicking evening was had by all as we settled our nerves and recounted both stories at the pub.

As to the Hole in the Wall, I have not been that way since.



All's well that ends well



Raft up with Kris Samuels and other friends

Author's Bio - After many wonderful years exploring the BC Coast, Robert (Robin) McKenzie and his wife, Sylvia, sold **Scott Free** and now live on Saltspring Island in their lovely tiny home.