



Life Afloat

Spring 2022
Issue Number 5

*The Official Newsletter of the BC Nautical
Residents Association*



Boats and Grandchildren – this issue

In this issue:

Who We Are.....	2
From the Desk of the Editor.....	3
Submissions Guidelines.....	4
Meet the BCNRA Directors.....	5
ARTICLES	
Our Boat Trip with Grandchildren.....	10
Freedom 20-Something for Men <i>and</i> Women.....	14
Turning <i>Sow's Ear</i> into a Silk Purse.....	16
Dealing with Deck Hatches.....	18
Cowichan Bay Marina Is Under New Management.....	21
GALLEY GOODIES	
Chicken Tamale Pie.....	25
Healthy Banana Pumpkin Dog Cookies.....	26
Announcements.....	28
Advertisements.....	29



BC Nautical Residents Association

Who We Are...

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

Layout Editor: Don Bruneski
Copy Editor: Donna Sassaman
donna_sassaman@bcnr.org

Website: www.bcnr.org

Webmaster: Kris Samuels
kris_samuels@bcnr.org

Facebook:
British Columbia Nautical Residents Association

2021 – 2022 Board of Directors:

Bill Sassaman (Cowichan Bay)
Cathy Gilbert (Cowichan Bay)
David Brand (Esquimalt/Victoria)
Don Bruneski (Maple Bay)
Ken Lund (Nanaimo)

Supports to the Board:

Donna Sassaman (Cowichan Bay)
Kris Samuels (Esquimalt)



The BC Nautical Residents Association was founded in 2010 by a group of liveaboard boaters to encourage living aboard responsibly and to find solutions to issues faced by people who live on the water.

An individual on his/her own may not 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:

1. Preserve and support the tradition of living aboard one's vessel;
2. Promote environmental awareness among liveaboards;
3. Establish collaborative communications between liveaboards and non-liveaboards;
4. Assist in facilitating solutions to issues of concern to liveaboards;
5. Advocate for the enactment of new legislation and policies that directly and indirectly affect liveaboards.

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 regularly 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 accomplished over the year.

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

BCNR Code of Ethics: <https://bcnr.org/about-us/directors-code-of-conduct-and-ethics/>



From the Editors' Desk

Community: from classical Latin, *commūnitās*, meaning 'community; public spirit'.
(<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/community>)

From 1975 to 1983, Bill, our three children, and I lived at the north end of Kootenay Lake, in the rural settlement of Argenta. It was during those eight years that I learned much about living in a community of like-minded individuals and families. It was an amazing experience, which gave me the sense of my life being whole in terms of family life, work life, spiritual life, and social life. We moved to Victoria when our kids were in their teens because they – and we – needed a change. I missed Argenta and that sense of community for years.

And then, Bill and I discovered sailboats... and cruising... and living aboard. And another community was found because living aboard has a lot to do with friendship, mutual support, assistance with projects, dreaming, planning, socialising; all the aspects of living in community...

In this issue of LIFE AFLOAT, the theme of community runs throughout. In my interview with Steve and Astrid Fletcher, who purchased the Cowichan Bay Marina last fall, we explore – among other topics – what it means to be newcomers to, and owners of, an existing community. Brent Swain celebrates the increasing involvement of young women in the liveaboard community. And Cathy Gilbert's delightful article about cruising with grandchildren is about introducing children to the joys of cruising, nature, and the community of family.

Part of BCNRA's community is the Board of Directors. The Board meets monthly on Zoom. Directors want and need to hear from members! If you have a question, an issue with which you would like assistance, or want to volunteer with the Association, please contact the Board at feedback@bcnr.org. If you want to offer kudos to liveaboard-friendly marinas and/or other marine-related businesses, please send the information to LIFE AFLOAT at donna_sassaman@bcnr.org.

Spring is here and the cruising season is nearing. What are you doing to prepare for the summer? Bill and I, after nearly three years of being stationary due to a now-resolved (knock wood) health issue *and* COVID, are anticipating leaving our slip, first for a haul-out in Nanaimo, and then for a meander up and down the coast. *Alia* needs to know that she's a cruising boat, not just a floating home! And, oh boy, we may have to re-learn how to sail, it's been so long!

Please let us know how you're doing and what your plans are for the summer. We look forward to receiving your articles, photos, news items, etc. for the summer issue, **deadline June 1st**. Check out the revised submission guidelines on page 4.

Last but not least, putting together LIFE AFLOAT is a community endeavour. A heartfelt thank you to the contributors to this issue and to Don Bruniski, BCNRA director and our new Layout Editor!

With appreciation for our wonderful community along the BC coast,

Donna Sassaman
Copy Editor and Board Secretary

Submissions Guidelines

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. etc.

Email your articles and photos as *separate attachments* to the editors at feedback@bcnr.org. Following the 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:
 - a. Single-spaced;
 - b. *No* indentations at the beginning of paragraphs;
 - c. *No* hard returns, except at the end of a paragraph; and
 - d. *No* fancy word art.
 - e. Please do *not* send your article as a pdf, thanks!
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. **NEW: Please insert your images where you want them to be in the article.**
6. **NEW: Please include a brief, descriptive caption under each image (who, what, where, when). For example:**



. We were as still as statues, watching the heron fishing.

Meet the BCNRA Directors

Some of our directors have lived aboard full-time for years, some on-and-off, others part-time. All share a love of the sea and a commitment to protecting the rights of liveaboard boaters and floathome residents.

Bill Sassaman



“Crew”

Donna Sassaman

Name of boat

Alia, a customised Spencer 44 sloop

How many years as a liveaboard

34

What inspired you to help establish BCNR? (Or decide to serve on the Board of Directors?)

I helped to found the BCNR in 2010 because of some experiences we had while living anchored in False Creek, Vancouver on and off from 2000 to 2008. Liveaboards and floathome residents need to band together if our choices for how we live are to be protected.

Best thing(s) about living aboard

Both of us are explorers at heart. We love the freedom of travelling with our home, living ‘green’, and having a community all along the coast. Living aboard a sailboat is an affordable way to live, and it’s an adventure!

Biggest challenge(s) about living aboard

Other than the ‘political’ hassles? Keeping ‘stuff’ to a minimum, and having it all stowed properly—so we know where to find it—is still a challenge.

Anything else you want BCNR members to know about you

I like to work as part of a team, which is why being on the BCNR Board is a great opportunity for putting my analyzing and communication interests to work. On the family front, I’m the father of three adult children and grandfather of five young adults.



Cathy Gilbert (she/her)



“Crew”

Dave Gilbert

Name of boat

Northern Cross

How many years as a liveaboard

This time around, 1.5 years

What inspired you to help establish BCNR? (Or decide to serve on the Board of Directors?)

I have a belief that living aboard is an environmentally friendly, and sustainable way for people to live, especially valuable in a time of housing and climate crisis. I want to be involved in promoting and supporting this lifestyle.

Best thing(s) about living aboard

Almost everything. Having a home that can move to beautiful places, having possessions that I need close to hand, having a compact space, living on the water.

Biggest challenge(s) about living aboard

Laundry ... and having 25 people to dinner.

Anything else you want BCNR members to know about you

I have a large family and will have 17 grandchildren next year. Life is good!

I want to recognize that I live and work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, specifically the Quw'utsun (Cowichan) people.



David Brand

Treasurer



“Crew”

Karen Rivest

Name of boat

Ska’ana

How many years as a liveaboard

8

What inspired you to help establish BCNR? (Or decide to serve on the Board of Directors?)

Access to knowledge about Best Practices.

Like to be kept up to date. Provide feedback when I can.

Best thing(s) about living aboard

Tranquil surroundings and never out of work. Closer to natural surroundings. Much more aware of the environment and my foot print on it.

Biggest challenge(s) about living aboard

“Those that do not live aboard.”



Don Bruniski



“Crew”

Bridget (and son Paul)

Name of boat

Ex Trimaran ***Susurumba***, now floathome ***Nautilus Chambers***.

How many years as a liveaboard

5 years aboard ***Susurumba*** in False Creek, Vancouver; 10 years aboard ***Susurumba*** while circumnavigating; 30 years of floathome life aboard ***Nautilus Chambers***.

What inspired you to help establish BCNR? (Or decide to serve on the Board of Directors?)

Our association with Donna and Bill Sassaman motivated us to join BCNR. We, the Sassamans, and others briefly considered the possibility of the purchase of a marina to create a safe, legal facility specifically for liveaboards. We felt that BCNR could be the logical body to connect with government and regulators as advocates, information source, and authority on all matters relating to living aboard. We have been part of a long struggle to make floathomes legitimate in BC and I may be able to contribute, in a small way, to making all liveaboard lifestyles legitimate.

Best thing(s) about living aboard

We adopted our son as a baby. Living aboard while cruising allowed us to be full-time parents for the first nine years of his life. Our life aboard a floathome created an environment for our son to become a sensitive, caring and loving teenager and now a strong, contributing and stable human being.

Biggest challenge(s) about living aboard

Dealing with bureaucracies.

Anything else you want BCNR members to know about you

I will be advocating for and promoting a non-polluting liveaboard lifestyle, which may be hard to achieve in some situations.



Ken Lund

Board Chair, 2021 - 2022



Name of boat

Full Circle

How many years as a liveaboard

I've lived and cruised aboard ***Full Circle*** part-time for several years. Before that, I spent a lot of years aboard the motor vessel ***Viking I***. When not on ***Full Circle***, I'm home in Nanaimo.

What inspired you to help establish BCNR? (Or decide to serve on the Board of Directors?)

I first joined the Board in 2012. I had observed that it was becoming more restrictive to be a liveaboard on one's boat all along the coast, and saw the benefit of having an organisation that would challenge some of those restrictions. The liveaboard community can be a strong community if we band together to address issues as they arise.

Best thing(s) about living aboard

As a part-time liveaboard, the best thing is the ability to cruise the BC coast during the summer and visit boaters I know.

Biggest challenge(s) about living aboard

Public awareness is big. The other challenges are Small Craft Harbours, which in recent years has come down heavy on liveaboards; upland owners who somehow feel that they have to get rid of boats anchored within their view; and the large numbers of liveaboards who want to be left alone and are not willing to join the BCNRA.

Anything else you want BCNR members to know about you

I'm a coastal cruiser based out of Nanaimo with a concern for less affluent liveaboards who are not at marinas.



ARTICLES

Our Boat Trip with Grandchildren

By Cathy Dunn-Gilbert

M/V *Northern Cross*

This past summer was very warm and sunny on the west coast where we live, which was terrible for farmers and wildlife but awesome for boaters.

One of our adult children was visiting from Toronto with her two daughters. We took them and a grandson along for a few nights of cruising. The old diesel engine started without a hitch and off we went. The destination was not far away as the crow flies, but about a three-hour trip for our chugging old vessel. We anchored at Prevost Island in a very pretty bay with only a few other boaters around. The converted Davidson dinghy was lowered to the water and we set off for shore.

The beach was rocky and covered in seaweed but no problem for our intrepid grandchildren, aged ten, nine, and seven. They waded and splashed and climbed on the rocks, discovering sea creatures and playing in nature the way kids do.



Children and nature, a healthy, happy, technology-free combo!

Seastars (which some still call starfish) had been disappearing from our coast, apparently suffering from a disease not clearly identified that had been killing them off. That has made finding them all but impossible for some time. Some species are making a partial recovery. They were there, plentifully and always a joy to behold in their brilliance.



Seastars come in a variety of colours, including purple.

The grandkids took turns learning to row, swam in the refreshing water (cold), and hiked the Island with us.



Rub-a-dub-dub, three kids in a tub.

They took a small anchor into the rowboat with them and took turns being captain and mates, lowering the anchor into the still waters and playing at being at sea.



The dinghy was the best sort of prop as the kids played being at sea.

The Davidson was used to tow small passengers on a wild ride (not really) in the smaller rowboat behind it. Screams of joy and laughter as the rowboat bounced in its own wake circling the bay.

We read stories in the evenings and enjoyed the simplest of pleasures including watching the eagles, seals and heron.



Heron were among the wildlife spotted at Prevost Island.

Our Toronto-living granddaughters rarely get to see the stars shine as brightly as they do here, away from the city lights so we enjoyed watching the expanse of night sky with them.

So many children these days don't seem to be able to entertain themselves without technology. We have found with our children and now our grandchildren that the best way to improve on this is to take them somewhere that technology is not. For us, this included camping and boating when our kids were young. Imaginations soar and we found on this trip as on others before it, that we could pretty much ignore the kids as they found numerous ways to play. We three adults lounged on the beach with the kids nearby or on the deck of the boat at the end of the day, reading and sunning. We did not hear the dreaded words "I'm bored."



Northern Cross served as the mother ship for adventures in the bay and onshore.

On the beach they made stone harbours and seaweed creations, and in the dry grass of the shoreline acted out plays of heroes and imaginary creatures. With no props and only a few buckets and nets they whiled away the days, just coming to find us when hungry, to eat whatever snacks we had brought to the shore.

On the boat itself they played hide and seek (hard to imagine, I know) and the joy of hollering at one another through the vent that went through the bow of the boat to the fo'c'sle and our v-berth. Watching the joy of boat life through the eyes of a child was sustaining for all of us.

Plans are underway for the coming summer; more cruises with grandchildren await.

Author bio: Cathy Dunn-Gilbert



Cathy Dunn-Gilbert and her husband Dave Gilbert live aboard the ***Northern Cross***, a 47' ex-Anglican Mission Boat, in Cowichan Bay, Vancouver Island. Cathy serves on the 2021-2022 BCNRA Board of Directors.

Freedom 20-Something for Men *and* Women

Brent Swain, ***Easy Street***

When I was a kid delivering papers in Saskatchewan in -40° weather, I dreamed of tropical places, and how to get there. Then I delivered a newspaper with a story of a family who ran a small logging and sawmill outfit. They built a boat, sold the mill, put the family aboard, and left to cruise the South Pacific. I thought, "Wow, it *can* be done!"

Then I read Melville's book *Typee* and the die was cast. From that point on, at age 15, much of what I did was focussed on learning and planning my escape. You can imagine what a response one would get, being a kid in the super conservative thinking prairies, talking about building my own yacht and cruising the South Pacific.

When I got to the coast, I totally focussed on getting a boat together. No bars, no night life, no dating. Of those who did, many never did anything but work, since. They are the ones in the traffic jams, with an "I'd rather be sailing" bumper sticker on their bank-owned cars, dreaming of 'Freedom 55', while attacking my posts on how I achieved 'Freedom 27'.

I had learned to live very resourcefully so was able to head for the South Pacific in my own boat at age 23. I have been a debt-free home owner since age 22, something which would have been impossible on land. Not owning a car, never becoming addicted to owning a car, helped a lot. Thus, I never paid a penny of bank interest in my life.

I dreamed of sharing my cruising life style with an enthusiastic young lady, but back then, they were all brainwashed and guilt-tripped into believing that buying real estate and making babies was their only 'moral' option. None was interested in cruising the South Pacific in one's own yacht. Many told me that they believed if a woman was not married with several kids, and a husband paying the mortgage on a house, by the time they were 30, they had blown their whole life. They railed against gender stereotypes, but clung tenaciously to them in their own lifestyle decisions.

Things have changed. Radically.

It's such a breath of fresh air to see so many young people, especially young women, with their own boats, enjoying the freedom of the cruising liveaboard life. Some have been homeless. Boat living

amazes them. They could never own their own home in any other way. They think, "My own home? No debt? No rules, no landlord or bankers? I don't have to come up with rent or mortgage money every month, or get kicked out, and be made homeless again? Amazing!"

I told one 22-year-old liveaboard, getting a bit down, "Look at yourself! You are a 22-year-old, debt-free homeowner. You are doing OK." A week later, I was talking to her friend, asking, "How are you doing?" She replied, "I'm a 22-year-old debt-free home owner. I'm doing great!" They have no plans to go years into debt to buy a house, no plans to have kids in an overcrowded world with a shaky future.

Those women who choose the liveaboard lifestyle first have a life of freedom, travelling and living the good life, and only have kids in their mid or late 30s. They learn to repair and maintain their own boats, engines, etc. – anything they depend on – with total self-reliance, independent of anyone. They have boyfriends, but now it's his and hers boats, not one boat, one skipper, and one galley slave. They would never put up with that anymore.

They learned the trades, where the money is. Of my female friends, some are commercial divers, some construction workers, commercial boat highly qualified crew and skippers, welders and fabricators, electricians, etc., etc.

What a breath of fresh air! In my 20s, I had. nothing in common with them, now I have everything in common with them, and a great place to pass on what I have learned in a half century of boat building, cruising, and living aboard. A true pleasure.

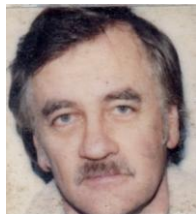
I met a young male dinosaur not long ago, a guy who said, "I took a job to a welding shop, and the welder was a woman. Amazed me!" I replied, "I thought the dinosaurs were extinct. How did your gene line survive the asteroid hit?"

Gender stereotypes may suit guys who seek a stereotypical lifestyle, but are a millstone around the necks of those who don't. A young cruising lady recently told me that it is nearing 50% women cruising on their own boats. I think women may be in the majority now. Wunnerful!!

I recently read on a cruising site someone complaining that youth are not into boats as much, as most yacht clubs are mostly older people. I replied that youth would not put up with the childish snobbery one finds yacht clubs. You find them out cruising, not into the one-upmanship, drinking and snobbery culture of yacht clubs. They would not tolerate such childishness for a second.

Thankfully, things have changed, wonderfull

Author Bio:



Brent Swain is a retired steel boat designer with more than three dozen boats to his credit. His designs have been built by a number of boat builders, including Evan Shaler, Ken Splett, and Suzie Resansoff. He estimates that between 150 and 200 of his designs have been built all over the world. Brent has lived aboard since 1971 and made nine singlehanded Pacific crossings. He has cruised mostly full-time since his mid-20s. Brent is the author of Origami Metal Boatbuilding – A Heretic's Guide. For further information about Brent Swain boats, check out his new website, origamiboats@groups.io.

.....

Turning *Sow's Ear* into a Silk Purse

Pauline Scott

I have been a live-aboard since July 2011 and will move back to land when my boat sinks or they drag me kicking and screaming from it. My boat is *Sow's Ear* and I know there are more than a few people who have spent time partying or working on her. I would be happy to have more of her history if anyone wants to share their stories.

Sow's Ear was not in very good shape when I bought her. Leaky windows, leaky roof, poor insulation, an open 1'x2' hole in the wall above the shower, rotten floor beams, electrical issues, plumbing issues... even her issues had issues. I spent a couple of years working on her myself and made some good progress. Then I met Bob and over the course of the next couple of years, he convinced me to let him fix a thing or two. He did them so well that he's worked himself into a seemingly permanent position - something he's pleased with and not so pleased with, LOL.

With his help we have done some fantastic things. Bob looked after the electrical and plumbing issues and was glad he didn't need to use his skills on any engine issues because *Sow's Ear* doesn't have one. We've replaced the floor beams and most of the sole because without firm footing, everything else was a house of cards.



Pauline and Bob replaced the floor beams in 2017.

We researched products for a new roofing material and tore the whole roof off before lunch the day we started that job. After replacing all the rotten bits and strengthening the structure, we laid a new plywood roof and gave it a few inches of overhang. The roofing material we used is from Ames and requires layers and layers and days and days to do. Our neighbour, Stan, thought we would never finish but we did.



*Also in 2017, Bob and Pauline re-roofed **Sow's Ear**.*

The next day I put the last bit of paint on the exterior to finish the job. Then we got dressed and went to my son's wedding!

Storage isn't the problem it used to be because the dry bilges are stuffed as are the huge storage drawers under the sofa. The roll-out or pull-out storage that I designed for the new galley was tweaked to be even better while we were building it and it would be the envy of every Tiny Home owner for its efficiency. One of my favourite things is that my microwave/convection oven is off the counter and in the 'oven' position.



Another major project was upgrading the galley in 2019. Lots of storage!

We're halfway through the renovation of the head but Bob and I have taken on a new enterprise and the head will have to wait until we have time off. Right now we are 'Messin Around With Boats' and if you need canvas work done, new sail covers, or upholstery work for your own demanding diva of the deep, we're here to get it done for you.

Author's Bio:



Pauline and Bob at Mt. St. Helens

Pauline Scott has lived aboard ***Sow's Ear*** in Victoria's Inner Harbour since 2011. Her partner, Bob Goth, was one of the original BCNRA directors, serving on the Board from 2010 through 2012. Pauline and Bob are 'Messing Around With Boats'.

Dealing with Deck Hatches

By John and Rebecca Evans

S/V Seaka, Stan Huntingford 37' pilothouse sloop



*John and Rebecca's Stan Huntingford 37 pilothouse sloop, S/V **Seaka**, with DIY insulated windows and hatches.*

Winter is almost gone for us on the west coast and the days are lengthening quickly. We still may get some frosty nights and for those who have endured single pane windows, John has a simpler and quicker solution for those who wish to try. Same type of windows from the previous article but done from the inside.

The two deck hatches on *Seaka* are the same type of aluminum frames with an inside frame screwed to the outside with sheet metal screws, pretty standard '70s stuff and of course the frames sweat and glass is hidden under condensation.



The first step is to remove the inside frame and clean it.

The solution is to carefully remove the inside frame, clean it and place narrow (1/4") double-sided tape to frame track where the screws go to secure to the outside frame. Make sure to clamp or have a helper keep the frame closed so both ends are touching when applying the tape. The frame will now stay tight.



Double-sided tape will keep the frame tight.

Place some clear vinyl carefully onto the frame and push down. Using a sharp exacta or utility knife, cut the vinyl to the edge of the channel. Press down firmly all around edge. Carefully clean both sides of vinyl. Sometimes there is space around the outside frame where it meets with the hatch frame or if a window space around the window frame where you can tuck 1/4"- 1/2" round draft seal to insulate a bit.



Tucking round draft seal around the window frame will insulate the window to some degree.

Now carefully place the inner frame back on the outer frame. The screws are quite sharp but if you have difficulty puncturing the vinyl through the hole use a needle. As the screws are tightened alternately, the vinyl sitting on the tape will be clamped down nicely. The tape and vinyl create a thermal break and the glass and metal frame become moisture-free. It took about an hour to complete the project.



Voilà! A clear and condensation-free hatch!

Author Bio:



John and Rebecca Evans have lived aboard boats for ten years and love it. John retired from flying 10 years ago and Rebecca retired from healthcare in 2019. They are based in Victoria.



Cowichan Bay Marina Is Under New Management!

By Donna Sassaman, S/V *Alia*

Bill and I have lived at the Cowichan Bay Marina since 2012 and really appreciated the community-focussed management style of the long-time owners, Gary Marshall and Richard Parker. Last fall they retired after selling the marina to Steve and Astrid Fletcher. Of course, the marina tenants were concerned about what the change in ownership would mean. As it turned out, Steve and Astrid are also community-minded.



Steve and Astrid Fletcher, owners of the Cowichan Bay Marina.

Recently I sat down with the Fletchers to let them know a bit about the BC Nautical Residents Association and to ask them about their dreams, plans, and the realities of purchasing and managing the marina. Following is our conversation.

DS: What interested you in buying a marina?

SF: Retirement came a little earlier than anticipated. We had an opportunity to sell shares in a company and we needed to do something with the money. We were looking at real estate of various sorts and just didn't have a whole lot of interest in running a 20-unit apartment building in Edmonton, which is kind of where our money was taking us. So, we were looking for other business opportunities that weren't completely passive and didn't demand going back to the grind for 60-hours a week. We're boaters and so we had a real interest in the marina.

AF: It seemed to fit very well. Steve has a real passion for boats and living on the water...and he needed something to keep him busy, and out from under my feet. So here we are, working together!

DS: Working together and under each other's feet!

SF: The story of this exact marina is that we were attracted initially because of the area. We love boating in the Gulf Islands and so it was super attractive from that perspective. The numbers looked good at first glance. We actually came close to closing on another marina; it was newer, a little more modern, and it was a lot more money. Doing the due diligence, we found some stuff we weren't comfortable with. And so we took a second look at Cowichan Bay and are really glad we came back to it.

DS: Now that you've had several months' experience owning and managing the marina, how does your vision when you bought the marina compare to the reality?

AF: That's a really good question! To be perfectly honest with you, I came in with no idea of what it would be like so I have nothing to compare it to. It's been a day-to-day learning experience for me. I'm actually really enjoying it. The people are so good, so appreciative of what we've done so far.

SF: What has caught me off-guard? The people aspect is a lot more than we anticipated. We sort of thought "marina, boats, water, docks". It turns out that it's 90% people, but the people thing has been positive. One thing we came to realise is that it's a happy spot for people, who go to their boats to be happy. We've only dealt with one or two mildly disgruntled people. Generally, people are really happy here!

DS: There are a number of liveaboard boats at the marina. What do you see as benefits of having liveaboards here?

AF: Well, the major one is that we have people here 24/7 who are genuinely interested in the security and safety of the property and the boats. So it's nice to have someone hands-on here when we can't be here. Someone is watching the docks, the parking lot, and the buildings. That's really, really important to us.

SF: It's funny because the first marina we looked at didn't have liveaboards and at first that was kind of appealing. It just seemed cleaner; the business model was a lot simpler, easier to understand. But when we were going through the due diligence, we started to question that. And it became really apparent after we bought here. I remember the first storm and not sleeping very well in Surrey. I think I texted you, actually, the following day: 'how's everything there?' And then I realised I didn't have to lay awake at night; there are people here that are paying attention and who care.

DS: You don't have to worry. We'll definitely call you in the middle of the night if the docks are washing away!

SF: That's been a really big thing. Another thing of real value is that the non-liveaboards have the liveaboards checking their boats when they can't be here. That takes the load off us. I rarely get a phone call asking, "Can you check on our boat?"

DS: What are some of the challenges you've experienced with having liveaboards here?

SF: Hmmmm, I think if we had the wrong liveaboard, it could be really difficult. It's a really small community. The next time we have a liveaboard spot open, we'll pay a lot of attention interviewing. We'll be welcoming and we'll want to fill the slip with a liveaboard but we'll be careful.

AF: What you don't want is someone who 'stirs the pot' and causes the other liveaboards distress.

DS: If you had a people problem, liveaboard or not, would you have a process for trying to resolve the conflict before eviction?

SF: We're still trying to figure that out. Our policy is open dialogue. "Here's the issue. How do we solve it?" That's certainly the preferable route because every other way I know is messy. But sometimes if you have a complete personality miss, I don't know how; you're always in conflict. We haven't had it. May that continue!

It's funny, as we're talking here, I'm thinking of another benefit we get from the liveaboards – we've done it without even thinking; it's just happened. When we talk about the marina and we talk about changes to the marina – what we want to do, it's always with the liveaboards in mind. It's a small group of people who care passionately and deeply about the marina so it's really easy to think in those terms. For example, we ran a survey, sending it to the liveaboards, because it's a small control group. You can't meet the needs of 65 boaters, half we haven't met yet.

DS: For the liveaboards, the marina is our *home*. It's our community. So we have more of an emotional investment in it and want to see it remain a welcoming community.

DS: Many liveaboard boaters live on fixed or modest incomes. How do you see keeping moorage rates affordable for these boaters? There's always a concern about moorage rates increasing past the point of affordability.

SF: Our strategy – and we're open to discussion about this – which we perceive to be the fairest approach is to do a once-a-year review and try to announce the rates as early in the new year as possible, aiming for April. That's the experience we've had at other marinas and it feels fair; it gives you time to assimilate the information and make decisions. In catastrophic circumstances, we might have to revisit it again in the same year, but I really don't think that would be helpful for anybody. With respect to the rates, inflation is our single biggest concern. At the time we bought [the marina], the numbers made sense – they worked, they looked good. What's scary is when you have to throw a half-million dollars at something you weren't anticipating. If not being blindsided, inflation is the thing that can hurt the most.

DS: One of the things the Association has been advocating for – unsuccessfully to date – is for the provincial government to provide legal protection to liveaboards. Many of us pay a liveaboard fee; this is recognition that this is our community and this is the way we live, but unlike renters protected by the Manufactured Homes Park Act or Residential Tenancy Act, liveaboard boaters don't have legislated protection. Many liveaboards are concerned that moorage increases can be open-ended, that liveaboard spaces can be eliminated from marinas if the management changes the policy.

SF: The sword goes both ways. One of the things that makes liveaboards attractive to us versus the apartments, the residents here, is that very thing, and recognising that the liveaboards are vulnerable, it still makes the business attractive for us to want to get into. Whereas, with the residential apartments, we're going, "How do we get out of it?" It's so controlled; we can raise the rents on residential apartments 1.5% while inflation is 5.7%, in the news today. We're losing money so there's no desire to invest or grow that. Yeah, it's kind of a double-edged sword.

DS: That's why, when I asked about the rates going up, how do you balance it so that your financial needs are met while maintaining affordability for your liveaboards? Yes, let's hope that inflation settles down.

DS: You've been doing some great renovations to the marina, such as the new laundry and washrooms, and repairs to the foundation of one of the buildings. Lots of kudos regarding the laundry and washroom facilities! Do you have other capital projects planned for the next year?

AF: Yes, we have a few in the works. We have a stretch of dock on A-dock that needs looking after fairly quickly. The concrete section that joins the parking lot to the A-dock ramp needs attention, and one of the boat houses is on the to-do list this year. It depends on how much the repairs to the east building will cost.

SF: The two apartments – the one we want to move into, and [deceased tenant's], need a good overhaul. We've danced around – we haven't gotten quotes – putting internet on the docks. We've got the backbone – that switch and everything will support it. Oh, and the power pole outside the Rumours shop, is rotten and has to be craned out and a new one craned in. Unfortunately, it's not Hydro's responsibility to replace the pole.

DS: What is your vision for the marina for the next five years or so?

AF: We love being here. When we get off the ferry and start driving here, well, Steve's mentioned it already: it's a happy spot. It's a lot of work right now, there's a lot of stuff that needs doing, but our long-term vision is to enjoy running the marina, just enjoy. Living here...what needs fixing gets fixed...to keep it going as it is. It doesn't need to be changed into something really high-end and gorgeous, you know, like some of the marinas we've stayed in.

DS: As Richard Parker was fond of saying, the marina is funky, not junky!

SF: That's a good way to describe it. We'd like it to be the nicest marina in Cowichan Bay so there are always people who want to be here. We'd like a big waiting list. But we're not interested in changing it, the culture or identity of what it is. We want to enjoy the people, the boating, and the business aspect. We see it as a long-term thing.

DS: Speaking for Bill and myself, we'd enjoyed Gary and Richard's tenure and had worried about what a new owner might be like. I have to say that I think Gary and Richard did a really good job in finding their replacements.

DS: Is there anything you'd like to add at this time?

SF: We're excited to be here, part of the community. We're looking forward to making more friends and getting to know people.

AF: We really appreciate the way we've been welcomed. Everyone we've met, without exception, has been kind, warm and welcoming. We recognise that this was a big change for you. You have someone you know nothing about coming in. That was a lot of unknowns from both ends. People have taken us in their stride and welcomed us into their lives; I'm a people person, and to me, that's really important. It makes doing business with all of you a lot easier.

SF: I look forward to understanding the Association a little better. It makes sense that you have a voice, pool your resources and knowledge.

DS: Thank you both.

Members, are you living at a marina that you would like to feature in a future Life Afloat? Please consider interviewing the owners/managers or describe its features, both physical and 'community',

in an article. And remember: photos are welcomed! Thank you.

Galley Goodies

Galley Goodies – Chicken Tamale Pie

By Donna Sassaman
S/V *Alia*



Chicken Tamale Pie, featured in the cookbook, Chicken, by James McNair, page 72-73.

This easy-to-make and delicious chicken ‘pie’ was introduced to us by our daughter, Heather. It is from the cookbook, *Chicken*, by James McNair. Pre-pandemic, it was one of our favourite dinner entrées whenever we visited Heather and her family in North Vancouver.

Chicken Tamale Pie

Ingredients

- 4 cups chopped fresh ripe tomatoes, or one 28-ounce tin of Italian-style plum tomatoes, with their juices
- 1 16-ounce tin of cream-style corn
- 3 to 4 tsp. salt (*dss note: or to taste*)
- 1 medium-sized onion, chopped
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1½ tbsp. chili powder, or to taste
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup yellow cornmeal (*dss note: I use 2/3 to ¾ cup to make the pie thicker*)
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup pitted, sliced black olives
- 2 cups coarsely chopped cooked chicken (*dss note: I use meat from a deli BBQ’d chicken, OR 4± cooked, lightly seasoned boneless, skinless chicken thighs*)
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese, mixed with 1 cup sharp Cheddar cheese
- Olive oil for drizzling

Directions

Combine tomatoes, corn, salt, onion, olive oil, and chili powder in a large saucepan and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes.

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a mixing bowl, stir together the milk, cornmeal, and eggs; add to the tomato mixture and cook, stirring constantly to prevent scorching, until thick, about 15 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in the olives and chicken.
4. Pour into a lightly greased shallow ovenproof dish. Top with the cheeses and drizzle with the olive oil.
5. Bake until the pie is firm and the cheese is crusty, 35 to 45 minutes.
6. Serve piping hot.

Serves 6.

Galley Goodies – Healthy Banana Pumpkin Dog Cookies

By Donna Sassaman

S/V *Alia*



The Dogs' Cookie Jar

Here's a recipe for healthy treats for your canine crew. These cookies were taste-tested by our grandpuppies in North Vancouver and found to be very acceptable!

On board *Alia*, I have a bone-shaped cookie cutter. At our daughter and son-in-law's home, I used a large heart-shaped cutter for the two big dogs and a small heart-shaped cutter for the two small dogs.



Dog Treat Production.

Yes, there are four dogs in the household...a story for another time!



Come and Get Em!

Healthy Banana Pumpkin Dog Cookies

Ingredients

- 3 cups whole wheat flour + extra for dusting the counter
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 ripe banana, mashed

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix eggs, banana, and pumpkin together. Add flour and mix until all the flour is incorporated.
3. Lightly dust the counter and a rolling pin with flour, then roll out dough to approximately 1/8" and cut out treats.
4. Place on a baking sheet and bake for approximately 20 minutes. Cool completely before giving to your pup!

Yields approximately 4 dozen cookies, depending on the size of the cookie cutter(s) you use.

Announcements

Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be scheduled for an April weekend. The BCNRA directors will meet again on March 23rd and decide whether the AGM will be hybrid (Zoom, in-person) or Zoom only. They'll also identify the date and time.

Let the directors know if you have a preference for date(s) by emailing feedback@bcnr.org. Thank you.

The AGM notice will be emailed to all members a minimum of two weeks before the meeting is held.



New Facebook BCNRA Group! The directors recently set up a new BCNRA group on Facebook. Directors Cathy Dunn-Gilbert and Ken Lund are the administrators. If you're on Facebook and wish to join, the name of the group is British Columbia Nautical Residents Association.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/472937451040281/>



.....

Advertisements

If your item sells, or request is filled, please email feedback@bcnr.org to let us know. We'll then remove your item from this list. Thank you!

BCNRA Burgees for Sale

Does your burgee look like this?
Order a brand new, high quality burgee from our website while quantities last: <http://bcnr.org/about-us/buy-a-burgee/>. Just in time for the summer cruising season!



10 Aluminum Stanchions.

40" tall when installed; 4 rings on each to carry lines; complete with bolts and nuts; I have some corner bracing sections that I will throw in.



View photos at <https://www.usedvictoria.com/boat-parts/39367612>. \$300 .

Email: paulinescott32@gmail.com

Teak and Aluminum Chair.

Multi position from full upright (30" tall) to full recline (45" long) by 25" wide; stowed position 35" tall x 5". In very good shape but teak could take a pressure wash or light sanding and it needs to be tightened all around. Online prices for similar are not under \$350. View photos at (<https://www.usedvictoria.com/boat-parts/39367670>).

\$200

Email: paulinescott32@gmail.com

Messin Around With Boats.

Canvas, brightwork, upholstery done by local liveaboards. Pricing by contract. with photos of the work you would like done and your contact information.

Email mlpscott59@gmail.com

Retro Simplex 650 watt oil-filled heater with a beautiful bronzed finish.

"Big Ben" is 32" long x 22" tall and has an 8.5 inch wide footprint. All electricals cleaned and updated ... just in time for me to find an electric fireplace that makes Ben redundant. Loyal and steadfast heater looking for a new forever home. \$100 obo.



Email: : paulinescott32@gmail.com



For Sale – *Dulcinea II* (Built 2003)



LOD: 34'0", **Beam:** 10'10", **Draft:** 5'5", **Ballast** 5,000 lbs.

Hull material: Wood/Epoxy/WEST System

Decking/Superstructure: Plywood epoxy and finish cloth fibreglass reinforced plastic

Ribs: Sawn White Oak

Planking: Wedge-seamed Red Cedar

Mast: 46' Sitka Spruce epoxy and glassed

Boom: Sitka Spruce epoxy and glassed

Engine: Sabb diesel, 10hp

Propeller: 2-blade variable pitch

Tender: Custom-built epoxy plywood tender. 10'0". Excellent rowing dinghy c/w oars

If you are looking for a sturdy coastal or offshore cruiser, *Dulcinea II* offers comfort, reliability, and easy-to-maintain systems. There is a spec sheet available. Also a full survey report dated October 10, 2020. Asking \$39,000 CDN.

For more information or to view, phone Bill, 250.661.2021

For Sale: Sturdy 8' fibreglass rowing dinghy with positive flotation.

The custom keel ensures that the dinghy tracks well. Asking \$600.



For more information or to view, phone Donna, 250.661.7751 or Bill, 250.661.2021

Summer 2022 *Life Afloat*

The deadline for submission is June 1st.

The editors are looking for:

- Articles on summer plans
- Do-it-yourself projects (like Pauline Scott's *Sow's Ear* renovations)
- Galley Goodies stories and recipes
- Announcements about events in your area
- And anything else you think would be of interest to BCNRA members



Thank you!