



Life Afloat

Fall 2022,
Issue Number 7

*The Official Newsletter of the BC Nautical
Residents Association*



Sitka Spruce II in Bamfield, en route to Port Alberni

In this issue:

Who We Are.....	2
From the Editors' Desk.....	3
Deadlines.....	4
Submission Guidelines – Text and Photos.....	4
Articles:	
Reflections on Resourceful DIY Cruising by Brent Swain, S/V <i>Easy Street</i>	5
Who Needs a Television Set? by Cathy Gilbert, M/V <i>Northern Cross</i>	6
Owned Myself Today by Gary Prebble	9
The Lonely Land by A.J.M. Smith, Contributed by Kris Samuels, S/V <i>Fantasea</i>	10
Galley Goodies Donna Sassaman, S/V <i>Alia</i>	11
Announcements.....	12
Advertisements.....	12
The Last Word (a member's concern).....	13



BC Nautical Residents Association

Who We Are...

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

Layout Editor:
Don Bruniski

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

2022 – 2023 Board of Directors:

Bill Sassaman (Cowichan Bay)
Cathy Gilbert (Cowichan Bay)
David Brand (Esquimalt/Victoria)
Don Bruniski (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

It's autumn and it's also election season! On October 15th, British Columbians will go to the polls to elect municipal councils, regional district boards, and school boards. I encourage you to vote, and to vote with discernment as to which politicians can think out of the box and include boats and floathomes in their definitions of affordable accommodation.

This fall is when British Columbia will have a new Premier. A few days ago I received an email from the David Eby election committee regarding his housing policy. I responded with this email:

I support David Eby's plan in large measure and would like to suggest an expansion to the definition of 'housing'. Many British Columbians live on boats and in float-homes. "Nautical living" is an affordable form of accommodation, and it requires no public funds to support. Another benefit is that boats and float-homes have a smaller carbon footprint than most land-based accommodation. For example, my husband and I use about 1000 litres of water per month on our 44' sailboat. The average Vancouverite uses 398 litres per day (metrovancover.org)!

However, liveaboard boaters have no protection under the law. Unlike people living in rental accommodation or in manufactured home parks, liveaboards don't have a Residential Tenancy Act or Manufactured Homes Park Act that details the rights and responsibilities of living aboard. More and more marinas, including public docks, are not allowing liveaboards, so more boats are anchored or on mooring buoys, which has its own set of challenges.

I urge David Eby as Premier to make it a high priority to recognise alternative forms of accommodation and to provide legal protection to those of us who opt not to live in a house or apartment. Again, living aboard (or in an RV) is affordable and requires no public funds to build or maintain. As housing continues to be unaffordable for many British Columbians, more people will be moving onto boats, into float-homes, or into recreational vehicles. These British Columbians need protection, not vilification.

You might want to check out bcnr.org, the website of the BC Nautical Residents Association, of which my husband and I are members.

Thank you for adding my contribution to the discussion.

Please keep writing to our elected officials to encourage them to welcome and protect nautical residents in their jurisdictions! Get out and vote!

Happy autumn, happy Thanksgiving to you and yours,

Donna Sassaman
Content Editor
S/V **Alia**

<i>Life Afloat</i> Issues and Deadlines		
Issue	Months	Deadline
Winter	January/February/March	December 1
Spring	April/May/June	March 1
Summer	July/August/September	June 1
Fall	October/November/December	September 1

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.

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:

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.

Please include a short author '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!

Featured image (the 'cover' photo for the article) should be in a 4:3 ratio – ideally 1200x900 pixels – and minimum 800x600.

Author images should be square, ideally 600x600, and minimum 400x400 pixels.

Images within the article should be square or landscape format, not portrait, and a minimum 800 pixel width.

Jpeg (.jpg or .jpeg) is the preferred format for all photo submissions.

Please insert your images where you want them to be in the article.

Please include a brief, descriptive caption under each image (who, what, where, when). For example:

Ska'ana's galley is well-equipped and bright.



Reflections on Resourceful DIY Cruising

By Brent Swain, S/V *Easy Street*

It's that time of year again, when the rich go home, and back to work, after three weeks of cruising for which they worked all year to spend that time living the lifestyle the more resourceful live year-round, and some have for years.

They are heading back, to pay for their teak, and high priced priorities, some after a summer of snobbily looking down their noses at those who prioritize more cruising time and freedom, than what the Joneses advocate, and guilt trip over.

Building my first boat, my friends were horrified when I used the plywood off the roof of my boat shed for decks. It was well tested, and unlikely to delaminate, unlike new from the builders supply. They used only new materials. The result? I headed for the South Pacific at the age of 23. Despite their being far more affluent, and ten years older than me, they never left. When I came home from a couple years cruising the South Pacific, they were still on land. Some had spent ten times more money than what I had already.

I have learned a lot since then about resourceful cruising.

With our beaches piled high with such beautiful, air dried, salted wood, I am embarrassed at having bought it in a lumber yard. Most of the wood in a boat's interior is very short lengths. One can cut a log across the grain, and split it to what will fit in a table saw and planer. As most shelving is small pieces, one can easily find enough plywood on beaches for most of them. Trim the edges off, sand it with a belt sander, and you have it. No need to get artsy-fartsy with something inside of locker, which will rarely be seen again.

I see huge price tags on jib furlers, mostly to pay for totally problem-prone, needless complexity. I was able to simplify it down to one moving part. Mine cost me \$80 to build, and has given me zero problems in decades, and several Pacific crossings, along with 350,000 miles of ocean cruising by my clients. Search furler problems, to see how the ones costing thousands of dollars are working.

When I look at a sheet block, I see a couple of pins, a couple of aluminum cheeks and a sheave, very simple to make up. Commercially made ones are \$40 each, and rated at 900 lbs safe working load. Mine cost me \$2 each, 20 minutes work with hand tools, and I recently used one to break a line rated at 6400 pounds breaking strength, with zero damage to the block.

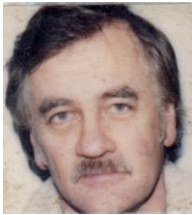
A Lavac type head is simply a common head bowl you find in dumpsters, with a diaphragm hand bilge pump hooked to the outlet and closed cell foam sealing the lid and seat airtight. I saw the composting head, grossly overpriced for a plastic bucket and a bit of stainless steel scrap. I built my own, with less than \$50 worth of materials. It has worked well for decades. Urethane foam makes a good male plug, for a mold.

For years I dreamed of having an engine driven welder aboard, and asked on a chatline. The answer I got was amazingly simple. A 100-amp alternator from the auto wreckers, driven by a belt drive off my engine by a 10-inch pulley, the field fed by the starting battery, thru a 50-watt, 12-volt light bulb. A 50-watt, 120-volt bulb between the outputs, maximized diode life time. It also runs my 120 volt power tools. I have built with it, while at anchor, everything from anchor winches, anchors, wind vanes to wood stoves, etc.

My anchor winch cost me \$75 worth of stainless steel scrap. Much simpler and more practical than commercially made ones, I could build parts for it anywhere, in my cockpit, although in decades, I have never had to.

Had I done things the "yottie way", I'd be heading back to work to pay for it all, and the Joneses wouldn't be paying a penny of it. I could have never spent 11 months a year, from my 20s, semi-retired, doing what I please, any time I please, never having a penny of bank debt in my life.

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.

Who Needs a Television Set?

By Cathy Gilbert, *M/V Northern Cross*

I don't need a television set. I have a window on the sea. I can look out a porthole, climb up to the wheelhouse, or out onto the deck of the boat and see the world. My world, my Waterworld! It changes daily. The weather, the season, the boats that come and go... Living on a boat has its advantages, especially here on the west coast of Canada. To be clear, we live in a small space. Only a few dozen books at any time. Not as many clothes or shoes as most people would like to have in their closets. Room for overnight visitors in our living room but not comfortable enough that they would want to stay for long. (We consider that a plus).

In the summer the view begins with the sunrise and ends so many hours later with incredible sunsets. And in-between, the bay surges with activity. Powerboats, sailboats, canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards go by. Indigenous canoes and paddlers swiftly cross the water, colourful and loud with their chants.



The sun sets over Cowichan Bay.

Choosing to live on a boat is a lifestyle choice. There is, of course, freedom, which means we can untie and leave the dock. For us, there was also the financial incentive of lower costs than maintaining our house. Retirement and keeping our land home were not compatible. Renting an apartment would have been the next cheapest option but we far prefer the boat to what we

would have been able to afford. You see we've had a life well-lived, just not in regards to finances. Raising a large family well came before making good decisions about retirement funds. And we are content.

We live here with our two dogs, boat neighbours that form some of the best community we've ever lived in, and in an area that hosts farms from which we can source local food.

The dogs watch the local activities too and rouse themselves to bark at passing vessels that have pets on board. They also watch for seals in the water and otters on the dock. They consider it their mission to deter the otters from playing in what they consider to be their backyard.



"Hey, you otters! Get out of here!"

Cowichan Bay, where we live, is rich with working boats, too: Tugs and fishing vessels, the Coast Guard, RCMP, and even the Navy appear in our harbour. There is always something going on, some action to watch. Our very own Baywatch taking place before our eyes!



Watching the working boats is better than TV.

In the fall the sea lions arrive and lounge on the dock nearby, disrupting our sleep and entertaining us with their carousing both in and out of the water. They stay a couple of months and then move on to their next destination, leaving the bay quieter and giving the salmon a reprieve.



Sea lions are temporary residents in the fall.

We walk down to the shore every day, greeting the swans and whoever else swims up to say hello.



Dave and Rover and two resident swans check one another out.

Life of all kinds abounds. We are surrounded by eagles, herons, seagulls, and numerous other birds as well as the creatures of the sea. Occasionally we even have whales in our bay.

And sometimes, when the weather is nice (and there is no snow) we head out into the bay in our rowboat for a closer look at all the happenings around us. It's an amazing life.



The government dock in Cowichan Bay provides good bay watching.

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." — Kenneth Grahame

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 has served on the BCNRA Board of Directors since 2021.

Owned Myself Today

by Gary Prebble

Arrived this mornings day
from a place once seemed so far away
could stand again to see
a lost man's mirror facing me
as though a door opened to belief
as the mirror introduced
what cold time had scratched too deep
I sensed from within
I could own myself again

And so I'll turn to see that old tricks
will have to seek some other place to be
I can never sink, my breath is back in me
The winds will always greet from
the headlands around the last beach
cast off, these spirits say
take your ships sails from their ties
Fears die but the winds will set you free

The great spirit sets us free

Author Bio – Gary Prebble



Gary Prebble became acquainted with the steel boat concept after a solo kayak trip to the Brooks Peninsula in 1992. He decided that a mother ship anchored offshore was a less nerve-wracking way to both kayak and hoist a mainsail. While looking for a used sailboat, he read an article about an insulated, tough-as-nails, woodstove-friendly, steel-hulled 'Origami' boat. Shortly after meeting Brent Swain in Courtenay, Gary, along with Evan Shaler, began to build a Brent Swain boat near Coombs. After a financial setback that sent him back to Ontario to earn money for a few years, Gary and Evan completed the boat and launched her in 2005.

The Lonely Land by A.J.M. Smith
Contributed by Kris Samuels, S/V *Fantasea*

Although fall seems far away, there are signs that it's coming with the dewy mornings and cool evenings of late August and September. It starts to get a little harder to go for an ocean swim and the once busy harbours return to their tranquil peace as visitors go home and businesses wind down another season. I enjoy cruising and exploring this time of year - dragging my feet in the yellow and orange blanket of leaves that fill narrow paths. As I think forward to the storms of November, the following poem comes to mind, one of my absolute favourites by A.J.M. Smith.

Cedar and jagged fir
uplift sharp barbs
against the gray
and cloud-piled sky;
and in the bay
blown spume and windrift
and thin, bitter spray snap
at the whirling sky;
and the pine trees
lean one way.

A wild duck calls
to her mate,
and the ragged
and passionate tones
stagger and fall,
and recover,
and stagger and fall,
on these stones - are lost
in the lapping of water
on smooth, flat stones.

This is a beauty
of dissonance,
this resonance
of stony strand,
this smoky cry
curled over a black pine
like a broken
and wind-battered branch
when the wind
bends the tops of the pines
and curdles the sky
from the north.
This is the beauty
of strength
broken by strength
and still strong.

Kris Samuels, ketch Fantasea



Born to Vancouver Island I've been around boats all my life. I lived aboard the 38' ketch "Fantasea" in Victoria Harbour for 10 years. I still have her but now live on land with my wife and young son, I believe it's important that this way of life be available now and for future generations.

Galley Goodies

Donna Sassaman, S/V *Alia*

Growing up, I loved watching old movies on television and one of my favourite actors was Katharine Hepburn. She was a smart, funny, and fiercely independent woman. Not only was she an accomplished actor, it turns out that she was also an accomplished baker. Following is her recipe for brownies, which I've adapted to 2-bite brownies to take to potlucks (see Note 2). This recipe is another reason to love Katharine Hepburn!



Two-bite brownies.

Katharine Hepburn's Fudge Brownies

Ingredients

- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter
- 2 squares unsweetened chocolate (I like mine very chocolaty so also add an extra tablespoon of cocoa powder and a teaspoon of instant espresso coffee)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour (or gluten-free)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional). (I use 1/2 cup chopped pecans or slivered almonds and 1/2 cup chocolate chips.)

Directions

1. Melt butter with the cocoa and/or chocolate together in a heavy saucepan over medium low, whisking constantly till blended. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar.
2. Whisk in the eggs and vanilla.
3. Stir in flour, salt and nuts (and chocolate chips). Mix well.
4. Pour into a well-buttered 8-inch square baking pan.
5. Bake at 325° F for 30 - 40 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool *completely* and cut into squares.

Notes:

1. These brownies are very fudgy and may be somewhat difficult to slice cleanly; use a sharp knife and a spatula to help them loosen from the baking dish.
2. Lining the pan with parchment paper, and buttering the paper, can make cutting and removing brownies easier. Cut two pieces of parchment paper just wide enough to lie flat and up the sides of the pan, with a bit of overlap to serve as handles. Lay them perpendicular to one another. After baking and cooling completely, lift the brownies out of the pan by the parchment paper handles, gently peel the paper off the sides of the brownies, and cut into squares.
3. For “2-bite brownies”, place mini cupcake liners in mini cupcake tins. Lightly brush the liners with oil or melted butter. Fill the liners about 2/3rds full. Bake for approximately 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool completely. You’ll get a couple dozen mini-brownies from one recipe.

Announcements

This is one example of why the BCNRA is advocating for legal protection for liveaboards and floathome residents: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/angle-float-home-eviction-1.6578618>

This is another example of why we in the nautical residents community need legal protection: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-island-man-builds-boat-from-recycling-as-alternative-housing-1.6595947>

Decibel Coalition Newsletter August 2022: <https://conta.cc/3zjZMKF>

Advertisements

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/>.



Marine Ham Radio Burgees for Sale

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

The burgees are strong, with a reinforced leading edge to reduce fraying.

The burgees are offered at \$30 plus postage. Contact Jay at Jay.Vinden @ outlook.com to order yours.



The Last Word

One of our members responded to our summer's issue editorial questions:

I am in Richmond at Shelter Island. I have been here close to 7 years and share facilities with many other boaters. Apart from one toilet to service so many people I have no complaints. I have access to laundry, showers, mail, garbage collection, good parking, shore power, potable water, and night security for a reasonable moorage fee.

I don't sense, however, any representation for or by us, and one minds his/her opinion as there are few other options. The demographic here is largely senior and we have limited alternative options. My concern is we are at the mercy of commercial interests with little ability to advocate for ourselves.

For the most part boaters are respectful, responsible people. However we need representation and legislative protection for a way of life that has been part of British Columbia since its inception. My long term plan for retirement remains living aboard on our beautiful coast. With that in mind, my biggest concern is the seemingly reduced live aboard slips in BC.

I get the impression that there is no government support for BC residents who pay their taxes and live on the water. This creates some anxiety for the long term as I cannot afford the astronomical real estate prices, I am independent, and refuse to pay exorbitant rents. We need to make our voices heard as a sense of reduced opportunities always hovers in the background.

Thanks to C.S. for sharing their perspective.