



Sea Dreamer Cruise 2016

From Cdr Michael Gibbons, JN June 12 2016

It has been a good couple of weeks and I have a lot to talk about. We had guests aboard, Don and Susan Starbuck and their dog Ezri, not sure of the spelling there. Don has been a student in several of the classes I have been involved in at the Power Squadron of Coos Bay. He wanted to get a hands on feel for boating and asked if I ever took people along. He drove up from Oregon and met us at Fisherman's Bay on Lopez Island. The first day we spent tied up to the dock to get Ezri accustomed to the boat and getting on and off. She took it like a trooper and never had much trouble. I'm not saying she liked it but she did fine aboard.

We left on the 2nd, had a look into Jones Island but there were no spaces available so we went on to Roche Harbor on San Juan Island. Roche is a resort with all the trimmings. We anchored out and used the dinghy to get ashore. The first day we spent some time in the sculpture park. Don is a great walker/hiker and soon he and Ezri left us in the dust. It was a pleasant afternoon for a walk and we stopped at the ice cream shop on the way back. The rest of the day was spent walking around the resort and we got some ice cubes on the way back to the boat.

The next day, the 3rd, we went ashore to visit the McMillan family mausoleum. It's not as grim as it sounds. The McMillan's were the founding family at Roche, they built and ran the lime kilns in the 1920s and 1930s that preceded the resort. When the lime business shut down the kilns were disassembled and the bricks used to pave the roads around the hotel. In any case the mausoleum is located a mile or so out in the woods through the town cemetery and a nice walk in the forest. It is a structure based on Masonic principles which I know nothing about so we will leave it at that. Check out the photos.

On the 4th we went up to Stuart Island and around to the north side for a stop in Prevost Harbor. Stuart Island has some hiking trails rated difficult,

Don took them with ease, the rest of us trailed along behind. Ezri loved it and watched for deer along the way. We could tell if she found any by the bark/howl she let out. She was always on a lead so some of it might have been frustration. We departed from the park to make our way to the island school and museum. There are 129 steps along the way, then you hit the county road which is uphill all the rest of the way. Sure glad I got my knee fixed last year. There is a treasure chest with T-shirts, hats, and sweatshirts with island logos on them. It's an honor system, everything has an envelope and a price. Send them a check when you get home.

Next up was Canada. We left on the 5th for Bedwell Harbor and Canadian Customs. Check in is by phone on the side of the customs office that I have never seen open. It is not always so easy. While we were checking in another boat at the customs dock was being inspected by an agent. It might have been bad luck or something else. Once I was cleared by phone we got out of there ASAP Around the west side of Pender Island to Winter Cove. It was the long way around but we had favorable currents all the way. There are a lot of currents in this area and one in your favor is both a time and fuel saver. Winter Cove is an almost circular anchorage but only the west side is suitable for anchoring. The cove opens into the Straits of Georgia and on a rising tide the east side of the cove has high currents coming in through Boat Passage. While we were there some kayakers were using Boat Passage for maneuvering in strong currents and river rapids practice. I saw several turn over. The second thing you learn is how to recover from that. The first thing is not to turn over.

Don was intrigued by the currents and the fact that they were tidal in nature. We timed some hikes to the pass to coincide with maximum water flow and with slack water. Slack is the time when the tide is changing and the water reverses direction. It is quite a sight to see that much water flowing through such a small opening and then later seeing it go the other way..

Underway on the 6th for Montague Harbor on Galiano Island, and epic voyage of 10 miles. Montague Harbor is a nice park with nothing special to brag about. It is the home island of the Hummingbird Pub about a twenty minute bus ride away. The pub is good but the bus ride is hilarious. The driver kept us in stitches the whole way the last time I went. Unfortunately we were too early in the year for it this time. Montague was a staging stop for Dodd Narrows. Remember what I said about Boat Passage? Dodd Narrows is only slightly wider and timing is everything. Currents run

through at about 6 to 7 knots. Sea Dreamer can only do about 7.5 knots at full speed, as I said timing is everything..

June 7th found us on the way to Dodd Narrows with a slack water time of about 12:20. With Dons skillful boat handling we arrived at 11:30 with time to spare. We can go through with the current against us of about 3 knots max, we delayed a little and went through at 11:45. It is not a long passage so it only took a few minutes and we were heading for Nanaimo. In Nanaimo we picked up a mooring buoy provided by Parks Canada. At 14 Canadian Dollars a night and with the exchange rate as it is it only cost about 10 dollars U.S. While we were getting settled on the buoy we were passed by about 12 Indian style canoes full of middle school teenagers who were camping on their way to Victoria. I don't know what the whole story was but the island looked like it had sprouted canvas mushrooms. There were good hiking trails and a remote lake we could walk out to. We stayed there for two nights..

Nanaimo was our most northern stop on the trip so we headed south for Ganges on Saltspring Island next. After a very early start we were through Dodd Narrows at 06:45 on the 9th. The run to Ganges was pretty routine. By this time Don was a very good boat driver and got us to Ganges by 11:00. Ganges is the last holdout for hippies from the 1960s. It has matured some in the last 10 years since I have been there and it was good to walk around a city for a change. We bought some goodies to eat and I wasted two water filters trying to fill my water tanks. The reservoirs had gotten low in the drought and there was so much sediment in the water my filters plugged up and my tanks were only half full. Don told me that I wasn't supposed to be filling my tanks so I guess I deserved it..

Ganges was our last stop in Canada so we headed for Roche Harbor again, this time to check in with customs. As always the agent was polite and professional and we were soon in Garrison Bay just around the corner from Roche. I think by this time we were ready to head back to Fisherman's Bay and call it a good trip. We were tied up yesterday the 11th by noon. We came in with a 20 knot wind and I wanted to back in to the docks. It was kind of an exciting landing but we all walked away unhurt. Don, Susan, and Ezri left early on the 12th to catch the ferry for Anacortes..

It was a good trip, we all had a good time even Ezri. Don is an excellent Cribbage player and cleaned my clock a few times. I think he came away with a better picture of what boating is all about and got to put the classes

he has taken into practical use..

Karen is leaving tomorrow to visit her brother, I am going to Garrison Bay with Finnegan to put my feet up for a week.

Pictures, in no particular order. As always read the captions for more info.

<http://imgur.com/a/cj8QZ>

July 3

We are underway for Dodd Narrows. A narrow channel that has high tidal currents running through it. Slack water occurs four times a day. You don't want to miss it. As I like to say, timing is everything, we had to get there by about 12:20 to get through in less than 3 knots of current. With a tide against us and a 20 knot wind from ahead we couldn't make it. We went into Telegraph Harbor to wait for better conditions. Telegraph Harbor is a narrow channel between two islands and is very well protected but with no room to anchor. We took a slip for the night. They have a water desalination plant at this particular marina but supplies are limited. They gave us ten minutes to get as much water as we could through their hose into our water tanks. Every little bit helps.

July 4

We were up early again for Dodd Narrows. No wind this time so we actually got there too early and had to idle the last few miles. In Nanaimo for a couple days to meet with old friends Tom and Jean. They have a house on Protection Island and were working on their boat in one of the local boatyards. After that we were looking at heading north to Desolation Sound. We had a great couple of days with Tom & Jean. We visited the boatyard and watched them work. My hands do"t fit a paintbrush any more so we took them to dinner instead. They took us the next day and we visited their house on the island. All in all a great time and it was very nice to see them again. I had no cash so I was trying to find a bank or ATM, couldn't find either so I ended up borrowing \$20 CAD from them. We have to go up again so I can repay them.

The weather was just not cooperating for a trip through the Straits of Georgia so we put off the Desolation Sound trip until August.

July 6

Underway for Dodd Narrows again, from Nanaimo it is a slam dunk to get there on time, it's only about an hour trip. We went through Clam Bay on the way south just to look for future reference. Looks pretty good if you can get in to the right place.

From there we had a long trip to Horton Bay. It is right next to Winter Cove but we had never been there. It has a narrow entrance channel with a rock in it, what I didn't realize at the time is that it empties into the Straits of Georgia so the current was raging through the entrance and once in it was too narrow to turn around in. We were basically swept into the bay by the current. Luckily I missed the rock. When we got in it looked like a nice harbor but there were no boats anchored in it. There were private mooring buoys and plenty of room but no boats at anchor. In a place with high currents the bottom is swept clean leaving nothing for the anchor to dig in to. We turned around and left. Going out against the current was much easier. It takes more fuel but you have much better control over your boat. Once out, we went over to Winter Cove for a few days.

July 10

Tod Inlet is on Vancouver Island in the Saanich Inlet and is northwest of Victoria. It is also the home of Butchart Gardens, a re-purposed quarry turned into a very beautiful flower and herb garden. It is kind of spendy and having been there a couple of times we didn't go this time.

For scenery Tod Inlet is one of the best. A long entrance channel that winds around to open into an enclosed bay with steep hills covered with trees right down to the waterline. Good anchorage and not too many boats. One oddity this year was literally thousands of jellyfish. Moon jellies, I don't know why they were there but this is the first time I have seen so many in one spot.

July 22

After spending a few days in Garrison Bay we were getting short of water and groceries so a return to Fisherman's Bay was required. We hauled anchor on the July 18 and headed out. On the way I vaguely noticed a dinghy over near the shore with nobody in it. There was a line hanging in the water so I assumed it was anchored there. About ten minutes later I overheard a call on the radio about a lost dinghy. I turned around to find it again and check if it was as described in the call. It was so I got on the radio and reported it. The dinghy was recovered so, good deed for the day.

On to Fisherman's Bay for water and food. Our water tanks hold 180 gallons of water and will last about three weeks with careful use. I've never had them go dry so maybe a little longer in a pinch. Karen left to visit her brother for a week so Finnegan and I went back to Garrison Bay to kick back and do more nothing for a week.

July 29th

Back in Fisherman's bay to pick up Karen and then back to Garrison for the annual encampment. Every year a group of people dress up in costume and live life as if it was 1850. Sounds like some Republicans I know. Oops, no politics! They are a great bunch of people and spend the entire weekend talking to people and doing pre-civil war stuff. Saturday night they held a dance in one of the buildings. Contra style dancing, kind of early square dancing. We went over to watch for a while.

August 3rd

We haven't been to Sucia Island for a couple years so we left for Sucia. On the way we looked into Jones island and found an empty mooring. Jones is a very small island with a very small harbor on the north end and an even smaller harbor on the south end. We went in and grabbed the buoy and ended up staying for two days. The harbor is too small to anchor in and only has four buoys and a small dock. There was even space at the dock but I think we take up too much valuable dock space to tie up there. We spent a couple days there before going on, it was nice but we kind of rolled a lot, there seemed to be a lot of traffic going by the entrance.

On the way to Sucia we changed our mind and stopped in Blind Bay on Shaw Island. We have been here several times, there is nothing but a ferry dock with a small general store. A nice anchorage with different scenery.

August 6th

Finally we are on our way to Sucia. The island was purchased in the 60s by a group of yacht clubs in the area and donated to the Washington park service to be used for boating and camping activities. There are a good number of hiking trails, I am pretty sure that there is more uphill than down. While there I got an email from Tom and Jean our friends from the local yacht club in Coos Bay. They divide their time between Ashland and Canada. You will recall that I owed Jean \$20 from our last trip to Canada. Anyway, the email said they were in Fox Cove on Sucia Island. We were in Fossil Bay about half a mile from Fox Cove. Communications were very rudimentary in the area so I could not return their email or get through by phone. We finally piled into the dinghy and just went around to find them. It was only about 3/4 of a mile by water and took about ten minutes. They were surprised to see us, we had a nice visit and I repaid my debt to Jean. They were on their way to a mechanic near Van Isle on Vancouver Island but were waiting for a call to confirm their appointment for Monday. They needed a good place to anchor and wait for a call so naturally I suggested

Garrison Bay. It is right across Haro Straits from Van Isle.

August 7th

Back to Garrison Bay with Tom and Jean. Uneventful trip, we went down the back side of Spiden Island just because I could and haven't been that way for years. August 8th Had a nice walk around Bell Point trail with Tom and Jean. They got their call and departed late Monday for their appointment on Tuesday. I heard later that they were able to get the engine fixed and were happy with the results. August 11th We are getting tired of all this paradise and decided to return to Fisherman's Bay for water and supplies and blow off the rest of our time here by finishing some of the painting we had to do. We are (guess where) in Garrison Bay painting the bridge deck. Raising the dinghy I discovered that the steel cable in the winch was worn and had two out of six strands parted. We will get it repaired at the boat yard when we haul out but in the meantime we will tow it behind Sea Dreamer.

To top everything off, taking Finnegan ashore a couple nights ago we got into the dinghy like we always do, started up the engine, cast off the line and could not put the engine in gear. No forward or reverse and we are drifting away with the tide. After a few futile attempts to get moving we got out the oars and started rowing. We have no oarlocks so we are paddling like a canoe. Eventually we got back to the boat and discovered the shifter cable was broken. I took the cover off the engine and could shift manually so we got Finnegan ashore. I now have a piece of wire sticking out of the engine cover that I use to shift with. We will have the boat yard fix this also. They will have the boat all winter and by spring everything will be ready when we come back for another go-round.

That's about it for now. I will let everyone know when we get back to Coos Bay. We are hauling the boat out on the 29th will do a little work that can only be done out of water and are planning on driving home on the first of September. Even with the weather and other problems it has been a great year and I am looking forward to next time.

A few photos just to make all the reading worth it.

<http://imgur.com/a/ki68z>

I will let you know when we get home.

This will be the last update for the 2016 cruise. We had a great time with no major problems.

Since I last updated we got some painting done and I replaced the raw water

pump impeller on the generator. I found the impeller in a bin at Island Marine Center that had been there since before the parts guy started. Lucky find.

We are back in Coos Bay, everything was fine when we got here except for a minor mouse problem, something you don't usually have on a boat.

In case anyone missed some photos I am sending all the URLs again.

We are already looking forward to next year.

<http://imgur.com/a/TEGZr>

<http://imgur.com/a/XbzHB>

<http://imgur.com/a/rm3GB>

<http://imgur.com/a/cj8QZ>

<http://imgur.com/a/zxS3K>

<http://imgur.com/a/ki68z>

Michael

[Top of page](#) [Cruising page](#) [Whistler index page](#)

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