



Cruising with Sea Dreamer 2019

May 2019

The time for my summer cruise is fast approaching. We will leave on the 29th of May and expect to be gone until September. I am reminded that among the multitude of classes we offer includes Cruise Planning. Even after almost 20 years of summer cruising it still takes weeks of planning and preparation. Even after that we will still be missing things and things will go wrong. The classes and seminars from the Power Squadron prepare boaters and cruisers like me for many of the unexpected events that always seem to crop up.

Over the course of the next few months I will be writing about our classes and how valuable they are for all boaters no matter what their level of expertise. In the upcoming months I will report on our activities in the San Juans and Canada. This will be the last cruise like this for us, we will be putting the boat on the market when we return. That doesn't mean that I am giving up boating, I will always have salt in my blood. This will be a short column this month, lots to do, see you next month.
Cdr Mike

June 2019

Greetings from Garrison Bay, San Juan Islands.

Our trip up here from Coos Bay was probably the easiest trip we have ever had, we breezed through Seattle like the place was closed and everyone went home. We got to the boatyard about 1500 and had to search for Sea Dreamer. They had moved us to a hidden corner of the yard. I have three antennas on the bridge, two radio and one WIFI, all of them were broken out of their mounts. I guess there were some strong winds and a loose tarp involved. There was no permanent damage once I got them all remounted so no harm done. Otherwise the boat was in good condition just dirty from a long winter in the boatyard.

We arrived on Thursday and were shot for that day, Friday we did some minor shopping for the weekend. We were locked in for Saturday and Sunday so we had

the boatyard to ourselves, we did some general work getting the boat clean and ready to launch on Wednesday. That included using a device called "Fake a Lake" by the guys around here. I borrowed one to run my engines before launch. See the pictures.

Monday we did our provisioning in Mt. Vernon. There is a super-super Walmart. You could put the Coos Bay Walmart inside it and have room left over. The hardest thing about shopping is finding someplace to put the stuff when you're done. We have developed a system to get it aboard. The main deck is about 12 feet from the ground and we get aboard from a ladder or stair stand at the stern. I get up on the deck and lower a line with a hook on it while Karen attaches a bag or two for me to haul up. She gets to find places for everything.

We were ready to launch on Wednesday. Everything went fine until halfway to the marina, a total distance of about half a mile, my starboard engine overheated. I guess I didn't run them enough with the Fake a Lake. Good thing I have two. Once in the marina the engine was fine, a long time ago I ran over a plastic bag and had the same thing happen.

We left Anacortes and went by Jones Island looking for an open mooring buoy but they were all taken so we went on to Garrison Bay on San Juan Island. English Camp is located on Garrison Bay dating from 1859 it was the home of an English military garrison, hence the name. Google "Pig War 1859" for more information. The bay itself is totally enclosed and very well protected from any direction. It gets crowded in the middle of summer but early June is the perfect time. The eagles are out looking for fish, the weather is still flaky enough to be interesting and the park rangers are not too busy to talk to you. Garrison Bay has a trail of about a mile in length and circular in shape. It's fairly level and a good place to get into shape after a winter of sitting. We had a few minor things to fix or change on the boat so we are able to keep busy with plenty of time to admire the surroundings.

Today, the 15th we are in Jones Harbor for a few days, we have a Washington state mooring permit, we paid two hundred dollars for it to get unlimited moorage at any state park. A mooring buoy costs \$15 a night so it doesn't take too long over a summer to make a profit.

After three days in Jones Island State Park we are now in Fossil Bay State Park. The current was running 3 knots against us so we waited in Jones harbor until 1100, by then it was down to under 2 knots and by the time we got to Fossil bay it was almost over. It has surprised me how few boats there are out, I thought by now we would be queuing up for space. When we arrived in Fossil Bay all twelve mooring buoys were empty. As I sit here in the evening quiet the buoys are still empty. We will be here for the next three days then on to Anacortes where I will try to get this sent. We need to replace one of our engine starting batteries, I had to jumper from the house battery to get the starboard engine started. While we are in Anacortes I will have the boatyard bring one down to the marina and put it in. The battery is an 8D about 20 inches by 11 inches and weighs over a hundred pounds. I have changed them when I

was a lot younger but now I am having someone from the yard do it. I'm stubborn but not stupid.

The next week we will be in Canada for Canada Day and the lamb barbecue in Winter Cove on Saturna Island. We will spend the next month in Canada in the Desolation Sound area on the north end of Vancouver Island. I don't have an international Internet device so don't expect any updates for a while.

Here are some pictures-- <https://imgur.com/a/fl.b0o02>



SeaDreamer

Fake a Lake

Haul aboard

To store away

Good luck with everything Power Squadron.

Michael Gibbons
Cdr Michael Gibbons, JN

Good luck with everything Power Squadron.

Mike

July 11 2019

Take notice of the positions of all the other vessels then look for a spot big enough to swing in. Does that sound kinky? I am talking about anchoring of course. It never ceases to amaze me when I see a boat setting an anchor in the opposite direction from everyone else. The boat is going to swing around anyway and possibly upset the anchor doing it. Why go to all the trouble to set your hook and then have it pull out before it is properly set. It takes time for a modern anchor to "dig in" enough to hold well.

I made that very basic mistake when picking up a mooring, I was alone, brought the bow up to the mooring and grabbed it with my boat hook. I had put the shifters in neutral but the boat kept turning and pulling until I thought my arm would pull out. I finally let go and came around again the right way.

All boats swing to either the wind or tide usually both. Not all boats swing the same way. It is good to leave some room between yourself and other boats. I have only had one encounter with another anchored boat. I could see he was too close but I thought we would be OK. About three am I found out differently. He had gone ashore so there was only me. I got underway and anchored somewhere else.

We left Winter Cove Saturna Island British Columbia after nine days anchored.

Every time the wind or tide shifts, the boat swings around the anchor. Every time it does it puts a kink in the chain. Pulling up a kinked chain causes it to Jump the Gypsy. If that doesn't sound kinky I don't know what does. We were in Winter Cove for the annual Lamb Barbecue. It is the main fund raiser for the island of Saturna. If you are squeamish you might want to skip the next part. The butchered lamb

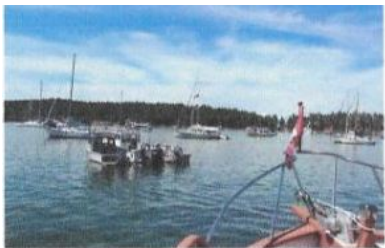
carcasses are staked out on wooden frames around a bonfire which is lit about sunrise and burned down to a massive pile of coals. The carcasses are roasted for about six hours. They announced during the day that they had sold 1200 meal tickets. We got there after they had been open for an hour and we got number 471 and 472.

By Monday the day of the barbecue there were probably 50 to 60 boats anchored in a place that normally sees ten or twelve.

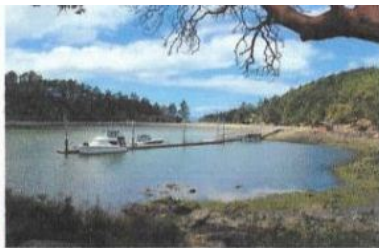
The gypsy is the wheel on the windlass that the chain runs over and is shaped for a specific chain size. Jumping the gypsy means that the chain comes out of the grooves that hold and pull it in. Usually it pops out until the twist comes out then drops back down into the grooves. Once I had it come completely off the gypsy and it had to be picked up and put back on.

Leaving Winter Cove we made for Montague Harbor, a run of only about 90 minutes. We took a mooring buoy and stayed for two nights. I don't have a park permit for Canada so the moorings cost \$14 a night converting to US it was about \$12. We dropped the mooring in time to make it to Dodd Narrows for the slack, the current through the narrows can get up to 9 knots. There is usually a queue of boats waiting at the entrance. We got there a little early so we were the first there, we circled around for a bit waiting. The current was against us but when it got down to about 3 knots I went ahead. It was kind of an exciting ride but we got through unscathed.

Technology has passed us by. Our phones no longer work in Canada. We went north to Nanaimo, a large city on Vancouver island and could not get a cell signal. In Winter cove we were out in the boonies so I didn't think too much about it. No signal in Nanimo is a crisis. I can get by with no Internet but Karen needs to call her brother on a regular basis. I contacted the phone company and they said how old is your phone? In any case we are heading south again for a week or so to see what we can sort out. Probably a few days in Garrison Bay and some at Jones Island with a quick stop in Friday Harbor then back to Canada



Winter Cove BC



Fossil Bay



Garrison Bay

More pictures at, <https://imgur.com/a/dtUKPK6>

August report

Watch your step also applies to boats. I awoke one morning in Prevost Harbor on Stuart Island, to find a boat aground with her side on the sand. Not mine, I am happy

to report. We had an unusually low tide, -2.5 feet. The high tide was +9 feet so we had an 11.5 foot drop overnight. That's a lot of water, always be aware of the tide when anchoring.

We had just checked in at Bedwell Harbor Canada on the way to Winter Cove when a RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) boat going the other way turned on their lights and "pulled me over". Nice as could be, they inquired where I was going and where had I come from. We talked for a few minutes and they went on their way. The first time I had been stopped in Canada. They didn't even come aboard. I have talked in this column about there being three types of people, Captains, Crews, and Passengers. Passengers are people who are easy going and get along without getting involved, going through life making as little fuss as possible. Crews are people who get involved, lend a hand, and work together to make a difference. Captains are those who step up to do what is necessary and right, lead the way and take charge when needed. Everyone has traits that qualify for all of those descriptions at one time or another, and all of them are necessary in life. Most of the time I am a happy passenger.

I had a Captain moment a few days ago. Sitting in Winter Cove, Canada one afternoon I heard a call on the radio "Mayday, Mayday, Kayakers in the water in Boat Passage" Boat passage is a narrow 50 foot cut that connects Winter Cove and the inside passage with the Straits of Georgia. At any tide level there is water flowing swiftly through it, up to 7-8 knots. With rocks on either side there is about 20 feet of clear FAST moving turbulent water. The kayakers could not get back aboard their kayak and were in trouble. I had seen boat passage many times and never considered going through, Sea Dreamer would never have made it. Boats going through need to be fast enough to plane above the water surface out of the current. The only response to the Mayday was Victoria Coast Guard requesting more information. I thought about it and finally said to myself "If not you, who." I got in my dinghy an 11 foot vessel with a 30 horse motor on it that would easily get on plane and went for it. It was a white knuckle ride out with the current and a worse ride back against the current. I got out and found the kayakers swimming and pushing their inflatable kayak toward the shore. By the time I got there they were in the rocks and climbing ashore so I was not needed and couldn't get my dinghy close enough to do them any good. I later heard that a RCMP boat had picked them up and they were OK.

Being a Captain is not what you do as much as your attitude about it. I was scared to death to go through that passage but there were people in trouble that needed help. Even if I didn't, in the end, do anything it was the attitude that something needed doing, and I could do it, that made it a Captain moment.

We are now at Sydney Spit about three miles offshore from the town of Sydney on Vancouver Island. Sydney Spit so named because a spit of land sticks out of the northern end of Sydney Island and forms a protected spot that now contains mooring buoys. We got the last buoy and sat back to enjoy a couple days in peace. Sorry, bad

timing. It was a Canadian holiday and the place was slammed. There is a very nice sand beach and ferry service from the mainland. All of the camping spots were taken and every buoy was occupied. The ferry ran about every hour and the route was right outside my door. We spent two days rolling around and finally decided we had enough. Sydney Spit is usually a lovely quiet spot with good walking trails and calm moorings. Timing is everything.

Todd Inlet is on the other side of the peninsula that the town of Sydney is on and is best known as the water entrance to Buchart Gardens, a place well worth anyone's time to visit and enjoy the landscaped gardens and vistas. Todd Inlet actually has nothing to do with Buchart Gardens but is a very nice provincial park. The anchorage is about 10 acres surrounded by steep mountains covered with trees down to the waters edge. An area about the size of a average lawn is an artificial beach with sand over a gravel base. Originally the beach was hazardous waste from an old cement factory but was redone within the last year or two, this is the first time I have seen it, and it is quite nice. The park is small with some steep trails, no campsites. Todd Inlet is long and narrow with high sides, most of the time it is calm and peaceful, except when the wind changes. If the wind comes up in certain directions it can be strong, blowing down between the mountains. Anchoring in Todd Inlet can be dicey if your anchor is not properly set. I witnessed a boat dragging it's anchor today in winds of about 18-20 knots. The owners were probably over in the Gardens. The boat was big, probably over 60 feet and was dragging the length of the inlet. It came to rest against a catamaran that was occupied. The cats owners were able to get some lines on it and everything came out OK. The boat could have landed on the rocks at the edge of the channel and suffered major damage. The catamaran was properly anchored and held both boats until the owners came back.

We have returned to Garrison Bay for the last time. It is mid August we are scheduled to haul out on the 28th of the month.

We had our own anchor drag last night. The wind shifted and blew in the 15 to 20 knot range. Anchors will sometimes upset when the pull comes from a different direction. Most of the time they will rotate and stay set. If it upsets it will have to reset and that sometimes takes 20 to 30 feet to happen. With a GPS anchor watch that shows your position down to the foot it is a nervous time until it sets again, and there is no guarantee that it will.

I just witnessed true dedication. I was taking Finnegan ashore, there was a young man on the dock filling a pool float type inner tube. From ashore I heard a loud splash and watched the young man swim out on his inner tube float to retrieve a crab pot about 30 yards offshore. You have to be young.

This will be the last report and the last time I am underway in Sea Dreamer. After 20 years of fishing and cruising and living aboard we are selling the boat. It was a good run and I will always have fond memories but the time has come to give it up.



More pictures from Mike's final cruise of the "Sea Dreamer" <https://imgur.com/a/lkTxhZF>

Cdr *Michael Gillen*

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