

Naida bobbing quietly at anchor and enjoying a spectacular sunset in Bahia Tortuga, November 12, 2021.

Atmospheric Rivers Dominating our Lives

Hard to deny the rivers in the sky that just keep rolling along. I was shocked to read that big ones can be 1000 miles long and 400 miles wide and carry the equivalent of 25 Mississippi rivers worth of water vapour in its clutches. The last one of the three that caused mayhem here came all the way from the Philippines!

We seem to be going back to the future with Omicron circling the globe and all the new admonitions to reconsider activities and travel. *Naida*, meanwhile, has made it all the way to Mazatlan, so her travels make for great reading and a longer-than-usual newsletter. But how could I not go all the way there with them – to a place where the sun is actually shining and people, apart from Robert, can wear shorts?

Back here in wet Vancouver **Robert** has added some info to his exploration of **battery life and charging** which you can read about following his report about tying up in Cowichan, meeting up with old friends and making hundreds of new ones on the dock. **John Dixon** shares the details of well intentioned maintenance run amok and his subsequent winter project and **George Paget** ends the year with a bumper crop of articles, and we investigate one of them – lightning – in greater detail.

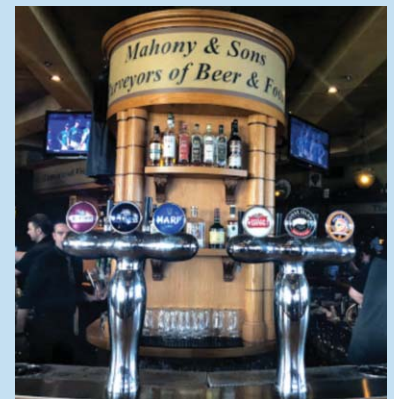
For something a teensy bit Christmasy, I have a favourite cartoon from Sarah Steenland about Christmas Spirit – take note crew of *Naida* – alongside a photo of *Tango* all dolled up with lights. And, most oddly, I have a riff on 'Twas the Night Before Christmas that is a how-to guide about winterizing your batteries (p.18). Struth! Is there no subject at this time of year that doesn't attract such treatment? Apparently not. So with I in my Tilley and Miles in his cap, We'll just sign off before taking a nap. It'll never stop raining! and Covid's still here, so I'll have a martini and say cheers to the year! Next issue in 2022.

Suzanne Walker, Editor S/V *White Wolf*



DECEMBER 13

*Christmas
at
Mahony's*



Pub Night

On December 13, the GYC is going to Mahony's at False Creek, 601 Stamp's Landing.

We'll start gathering at 18:00 and order dinner from the a la carte menu a half an hour later. The first drink is on the GYC.

More from the Staff Captain p.3

GULF SAILOR

Executive Officers 2021

Commodore: Christie Stangroom
Christie Cove

Vice Com: John Dixon
Tantramar

Fleet Captain: Robert Sinkus
Reality

Staff Captain: Doug MacLeod
Willpower

Exec. Officer: Pat Costa
Sparkle Plenty

Hon. Secretary: Ken Buckley
Naida

Hon. Treasurer: Glen Mitchell
Tucana

Hon. Signals Officer: Andreas Truckenbrodt
Beautiful Day

Past Com: Darlyne Farrell
SawLeeAh

Hon. Editor: Suzanne Walker
White Wolf
dandg@portal.ca

Commodore's Message

We've had an interesting year have we not. COVID tried to derail some of our activities for the second year in a row but we once again overcame and carried on. On top of our COVID frustration came the "Heat Dome", the "Weather Bomb" and the "Atmospheric River" with apparently more of those to come. What's next?? Sailing in Desolation Sound this past summer we enjoyed some of those weather features – the water was warm, nights were calm, and only a few rip roaring gales (one blew us up the coast at 10K).

Working with everyone on the Executive has been a wonderful learning experience for me, sometimes challenging but mostly a pleasure. We accomplished a lot this year, did some things differently (The Walkpast at Snug), and passed a new By-Law.

We are a resilient group of sailors/boaters, to say the least, and even though we are spread far and wide – north and south and east and west – we have remained a close-knit club. Thank you to all who voted to change our By-Laws so that all numbered members are now Active members, who can have a vote and be on the Executive. This change lays the groundwork for the GYC going into the future. I'm so excited we have new members who are younger than me!!! I hope to sail with you all in the New Year.

Our Past Commodore Dar has a great line-up of long term and new members stepping in for positions on next year's Executive. I can't tell you how rewarding it is to be part of the GYC Executive. I encourage everyone to consider a turn on the team:: you won't regret it for a minute. I think each of us can have an influence, bring new ideas, and have fun doing it. We've been patiently waiting to gather again in person and I'm happy to say that time has finally arrived: come on out January 12th, 2022 to the Maritime Museum and welcome your new Executive members.

I'm looking forward to our Club night on December 13 at Mahony's. In case I don't see all of you, have a safe, fun and healthy season leading up to Christmas and New Years. Sing those carols and drink that eggnog (add lots of rum)! Wear those silly reindeer antlers (*of which Chris is so fond! Chris's changing headgear 2021-2017. Ed.*)



Chris Stangroom
Commodore,
S/V Christie Cove



And may you all find some exciting bit of boat stuff in your Christmas Stocking.
Remember: when you stop believing in Santa, you get socks and underwear...

Happy Holidays everyone.

GULF SAILOR

Staff Captain's Report

Great Fall Presentations.

We were treated to two wonderful Zoom presentations this fall. On October 18 **Robert Sinkus** kicked off our fall program with a talk on marine battery usage titled, How Low Can You Go? The information was thoroughly researched and thoughtfully put together. If you missed the evening, check out Robert's article in the November Gulf Sailor.

On November 8, **Glen Mitchell** treated us to a well produced video on bilge pump alarms. Disaster struck Glen when he was sailing across the strait in a perfect breeze and his bilge started overflowing. Take a look at the video and you can prevent this happening to you. View or download it from:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/xvKd7Y1CdyfYzqEa7>

(viewing it from google is blurry but once downloaded it is perfectly shot.

Thanks, Robert and Glen, for sharing this information with us.

Hybrid Meetings Start in January

Our 2022 AGM is scheduled for January 10, 19:30, at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Protocols mandated by the public health office will be followed. **Proof of vaccination and mask wearing are required.**

We're looking forward to getting together and expect a good turnout. Those members living outside the Lower Mainland will be able take part using Zoom. This will be our first hybrid meeting, a practice we plan to continue into the future. We'll send out the link as the date gets closer.

Our normal meeting format and presentation program will resume in February. Details will follow.

Christmas at Mahony's December 13th

We can't have our usual Christmas sing-along but we can get together for food and good cheer. Don't forget that **photo ID and proof of vaccination must be shown** at the door.

The Gulf Yacht Club has a wonderful tradition of collecting **Food Bank donations** at our December meeting. This year, because our get-together is at a pub, we're restricting contributions to **cash only**. We'll have a small basket ready at the pub for your donation.

Parking is available at 600 Moberly Road, a five-minute walk from Mahony's.

Our September pub night at Mahony's was a roaring success. Don't miss out on the fun this time around. See you on December 13th. Make sure to RSVP when you are contacted.

Seating is limited to 40. To attend, you must RSVP through the survey that will be sent to all members by email.



Doug MacLeod,
Staff Captain,
S/V Willpower



Tango all gussied up before the parade of lights in Nanaimo.

A Grinchy Thought? or Just The Way It Is?

Thinking about Ken and Anne who are THERE coming back HERE.
What are they thinking? Sarah Steenland knows...



CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IS RELATIVE

GULF SAILOR

Vice Commodore's Report

This is my final report as Vice Commodore. I have been a GYC member since 2009 and served on the Executive for the last seven years. I certainly enjoyed my time working with the group but I believe it is time to give someone else an opportunity.

The duties of the Vice Commodore include filling in for the Commodore when absent, serving coffee and other beverages at the general meetings and organizing the Annual Awards Dinner. In 2021 the Commodore never missed a meeting, there were no general meetings and therefore no coffee to make and the Annual Awards Dinner was cancelled due to the Covid 19 health orders. This didn't leave me a lot to do but I absolutely enjoyed participating at the Executive meetings and helping to set the course of our club. I will miss being involved with the Executive but I hope I can contribute to our club in some other way.



John M. Dixon,
Soon-to-be-Past
Vice Commodore,
S/V Tantramar

My Winter Project

Even though *Tantramar* is under winter tarps and hibernating there is much activity below decks. I am in the process of installing new wind/depth/speed instruments...

...and of course most of the boat must be disassembled to run the cables to the gauges and transducers. Floorboards, headliner, upholstery and some cabinetry must be removed as well as the emptying of lockers in order to gain access.



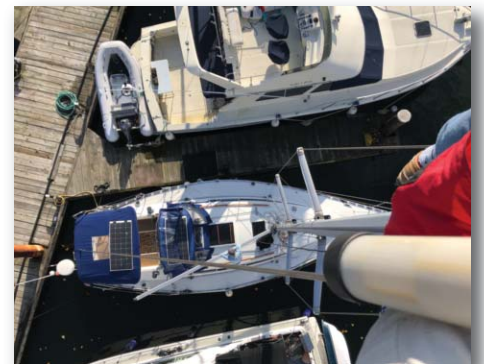
This project also required multiple visits to the mast head to install the new anemometer/wind vane. Many thanks to those (Wolf, Doug M. & Jaimie) who hoisted me up. (No small task.)

In the spring during the annual haul-out I will install the two new through-hull transducers for speed and depth. Naturally, the holes for the new transducers are a different size (larger) than the existing. This means enlarging the holes in the hull before the new transducers can be installed.

The reason for all this?

A friend and fellow GYCer suggested I use anti-fouling paint on the impellor for the speedo as I was having problems with sea creatures residing on it and preventing it from turning. He had a "special" product just for this purpose so I carefully applied some when we were in Smuggler Cove last summer for the Canada Day Rendezvous.

Worked fine until I was returning from the Broughtons about three weeks later when the speedo stopped working altogether. Upon removal and inspection of the speed transducer I discovered that ALL the vanes on the impellor were gone. Apparently, this type of anti-fouling paint is not compatible with my elderly B&G components and it dissolved the impellor blades.



It turns out that the "special" anti-fouling paint is suitable (and recommended) for Airmar impellers – but not B&G.

But wait! The story gets worse.

The impellor is no longer available. I checked with the local dealer, my regular supplier in Florida, the manufacturer in England, and distributors all over the world. No luck, as this relatively small component is no longer produced. I considered making an impellor but decided it was beyond my abilities and the magnets imbedded in it were of unknown size.

Consequently, ALL the instruments must be replaced as they are networked together and rely on each other for data.



A healthy impellor.

Moral of the story?

Beware the type of anti-fouling paint you put on your speedo impellor.



*Above: The speedo transducer
WITH the impellor and with NO impellor.*

GULF SAILOR



George Paget,
S/V Contender

And at last – my “15 seconds of fame!”

The day of the Big Blow (November 17th) I went down to the beach to offer any technical support that might have been needed. And that’s when it happened...

While inspecting the derelict wreck I was interviewed by **Mike McCardle** of CTV News. I was checking out the corroded 1/4" anchor chain without its anchor when Mr. McCardle and his camera man approached and interviewed me. Obviously I appeared to know something about sea faring. In response, I commented that this was just another storm that all seamen must be prepared for. I waxed philosophic... *this wreck was a dream, then a home and now it's on the beach. It's kind of sad but that's life.*

Then back to reality and the task at hand: getting the barge off – it will not be easy because its hull had been pierced. It appeared to have had tired old mooring lines. Heads. Will. Roll!



People on the beach hardly seemed to notice that the 16 ships anchored in the bay were *not* on the beach.

When I got home I was chided because Barb was more worried about all the cows and chickens that were drowned up the valley in the same storm.

That's weather for you.
(At my dock it was only blowing
12 knts so *Contender* was OK.)



Molluscs have Never Been so Distasteful

Or “How to spread hepatitis (or norovirus) around the world without leaving your house (or your boat).” Listen up you oyster and clam lovers. Pick your spot harvesting spot very very carefully.

With horror, I watched this video about the transmission of Hepatitis A viruses by means of shellfish (in this case mussels), made by The Eden Project in the UK funded and by the Natural Environment Research Council.

<https://youtu.be/VGJLKhsLx18>

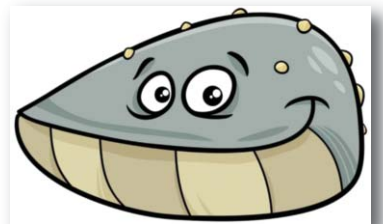
Being the saint that I am, I prefer to eat cooked shellfish. Alas, however, I will not get into heaven after all as I have not always followed the three mile guideline for holding tank discharge. Like many others, in the good old days I didn't even have a holding tank. Who knew that clams and mussels and oysters grow bigger and fatter when they're fed on sewage?!

Our happy shellfish friends love to eat sewage so if someone has someone on board who has Hepatitis A viruses on board them, those clams could possibly ingest those viruses too. In the healthy bivalve the virus can propagate. Maybe a gourmand will spot said oyster and eat it on the spot. Maybe the randy deckhand will insist that he wants his poached oysters rare: “You only have to eat one oyster that's contaminated with norovirus and then you become the epicenter for another outbreak that spreads person to person.”

That hapless gourmand might be you. Remember your last trip to Mexico.

To follow along the reasoning in the video – that if you have diarrhea from such a virus adding bleach when you use the toilet is a good idea – I just googled “adding bleach to the holding tank”. It wasn't recommended. I guess one must follow the three mile guideline after all. Anything dumped into a bay will probably slosh back and forth giving our happy aquatic friends ample opportunity to enjoy a feast.

So endith the lesson.



GULF SAILOR

Ahoy Sailors! Some grist for the mill...

Do you ever tire of arguing about anchors and anchoring? I didn't think so, but I'll put my oar in all the same. Here's a subject to engage with:

While wasting time on YouTube I started watching a cow outstanding in her field and then she wasn't. The blast of the lightning followed. I was rudely awakened from my bliss. What followed was more and more lightning strikes. Lesson learned is that I don't want to be struck by lightning. Particularly so when I'm on my boat.



I immediately consulted the sailors forum. I discovered a new venue for rancorous debate. I learned that I was wrong to ground my mast to a keel bolt. In fact I should not lead the charge inside the boat at all, where it can run amok. A forum know-it-all suggested that a copper wire should be connected to a shroud and then lead into the sea. The copper wire should have lots of spiky points which is best to disperse (or collect) the electrons. A copper jumper cable was suggested. The know-it-all also insisted that most the charge is on the water surface. That makes the keel bolts useless or even dangerous. The splayed heavy copper cable should be just below the surface. At the top of the mast is a lightning rod which looks like a metallic shaving brush, should also be fitted. Old tropic hands insist these gadgets work.

I was anchored in Manion Bay, Bowen Island. Two young ladies were about to go to sleep and their heads were close to the mast. Crack! It was more than a crack. It was a deafening explosion. Fortunately these young women didn't realize how close they came to being crispy critters. As usual a cold front had just passed over. We hadn't been hit but it was close enough for me.

So there you are lads and lassies, something new to argue about.



George Paget, S/V Contender,
Putting his oar in...

So what SHOULD you do when Lightning Threatens?

One thing we can do is learn how lightning behaves and how it affects boats and the people who sail in them. According to statistics, lightning strikes the world up to 44 times per second. The Maracaibo Lake in the northwest of Venezuela is the ultimate lightning hotspot, experiencing lightning strikes 300 days a year, on average. Luckily our PNW waters don't experience conditions like that!

How does lightning occur?

Lightning is caused by the fierce ups and downs of water and ice particles within a thundercloud. In this way, the natural electricity of the air is polarized. While the positive electrical charge increases in the upper part of the cloud, the negative charge accumulates on the bottom of the cloud. The ever-increasing electrical voltage field finally discharges in a flash – comparable to a short-circuit.

So what actually happens when lightning strikes?

Lightning shoots to the ground in less time than it takes to blink. As it nears the ground, the negatively charged particles (called a leader) are attracted to a channel of positive charge

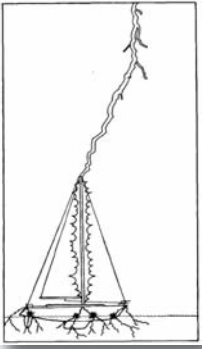


Lightning strike off Texada Island November 2020

reaching up (called a streamer), normally through something tall, such as a tree, house, telephone pole or a mast! When the oppositely-charged leader and streamer connect, a powerful electrical current begins flowing. A return stroke of bright luminosity travels about 60,000 miles per second back towards the cloud. A flash consists of one or perhaps as many as 20 return strokes.

One of the paths the lightning takes is down the mast, and typically, anything that happens to be close by on the way down can be destroyed: wind instruments, TV antennas, radar, lights, and so on. Fortunately, aluminum is a very good conductor and allows the strike free passage. As a rule, the electronics are the first victim on board.

GULF SAILOR



In most cases, the complete electrical system has to be replaced after a lightning strike. But the whole boat is also in danger: lightning searches for the path with the least resistance to grounding potential. If it encounters resistance, rudder blades can be split, masts can burst and hull or keel casings can be blown away. In order to minimise these risks, use of a lightning protection system is strongly recommended."

What can be done to protect your boat?

When lightning strikes your boat, the electrical current is searching for any route to ground. If a boat is grounded, the lightning current is diverted through a predetermined path. This hopefully will avoid the lightning making its own path which can be through fiberglass, teak, or an unsuspecting crew member.

The **lightning protection system** does not prevent lightning strikes, but it does allow for the impact point and path of the lightning current to be better controlled. The enormous current of a lightning bolt, which can reach between 20,000 and 100,000 amperes, must be conducted into the water in the fastest and easiest way.

Lightning protection on a sailboat means diverting the lightning current into the water without its causing any hull damage, personal injury, or electronics damage. This involves providing a continuous, mainly vertical, conducting path from above any vulnerable masthead transducers to grounding conductors immersed in the water (the grounding system) and a network of mainly horizontal interconnected conductors attached to large metal fittings, including the grounding system (the bonding system). Transient suppressors are needed on each piece of electronics equipment, and wiring should all be twisted pair for protection of electronics.

Although lightning protection is best designed on a boat-by-boat basis and ideally installed during manufacture, there are three major considerations in a good protection system: 1. grounding, 2. bonding, and 3. electronics protection.

The **grounding system** is intended to provide an adequate conducting path from the point of lightning attachment, usually the masthead, to a system of conductors in the water, without producing sideflashes. The **bonding system** protects the crew and consists of conductors that short out large metal fittings so that large voltages cannot develop between them. **Electronics protection** limits power supply and transducer voltages through a combination of transient protection devices and careful wiring techniques.

But what if you're caught out in a storm?

If you are caught on the water during a thunderstorm and cannot get to shore, NOAA (US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) recommends the following guidelines:

- Go to the center of your boat's cabin if it has one. If no cabin is available, crouch down in the center of the boat and stay as low as possible.
- Do not touch anything metal.
- Do not fish, water ski, or swim. Keep arms and legs in the boat, do not dangle them in the water. Divers should get out of the water and into a sturdy shelter or boat. If that is not possible, dive as deep as possible for the duration of the storm.
- Wear a life jacket at all times. A victim struck by lightning can be rendered unconscious.
- Disconnect and do not use or touch electrical equipment, including the radio.
- Lower, remove, or tie down radio antennas and other protruding devices unless they are part of a lightning protection system.
- If your boat has a lightning protection system, avoid making contact with any device connected to that system. NEVER be in contact with two components connected to the system at once. Should you have a hand on both when lightning strikes, the lightning could travel through your body.
- After the last flash of lightning, wait 30 minutes before leaving your shelter.

It is a common misconception that motor yachts are less affected than sailing yachts. It is equally common to assume that lightning will strike at the highest point. Research has shown, however, that the direction a lightning strikes depends mainly on the distribution of electric charge in the clouds and the air. The surface structure on the sea or in the harbour still plays a certain role for the point of impact, as lightning will naturally be more likely to connect with high points rather than low on its last hundred or so metres to earth. Not always, however, must it be a direct hit.

Lightning can strike the water, jumping over yachts or causing damage to yachts in the immediate surrounding area through induction: "In summary, there is no way to prevent the lightning strike itself.

"When thunder roars, go indoors!"

If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning – so says Canada Weather Services. There is no safe place outside in a thunderstorm. So take cover if you can and stay there for 30 minutes until after the last rumble of thunder is heard.

How do you calculate how far away the lightning is?

Light travels at 300,000 km/sec whereas sound travels at 0.3 km/sec. After the flash of lightning, begin counting off the seconds until the thunder is heard. Divide the seconds by three to arrive at the distance in km.

For example: 15 seconds/3 = 5 km away.

Most authoritative articles on lightning damage to boats, are, not surprisingly, written by boat insurers – they have to fix the damage so they know whereof they speak. This information was cobbled together from many diverse sources, including Canada Weather Services and NOAA. (Ed.)

GULF SAILOR

Fleet Captain's Report



Book your slip for
New Year's Eve.

Pack your firecrackers, party hats, Bubbly and snacks, and book your slip at Bowen.

We had a great time there last year, and with Covid still in the air, this might be one of the best ways to spend your New Year's. Just bring a spare pair of dry shoes or boots if you want to hike across the section of Crippen Park that floods in about four spots (the trail to the lake and back did not).

We have four spots pre-booked on A- dock, and can raft four more to us.

WANTED!

Your Input on Club Cruises for next year (both formal and informal)

I was contacted last month by some of our traditional marinas to confirm our bookings for 2022. So at the risk of sounding over confident that I will retain my seat as Fleet Captain next year, I have begun putting a list of times, dates and destinations together. Current considerations are the usual **traditional cruises**, with the following notes:

Family Day Cruise: Weather dependent to Howe Sound or across the Strait

Ladysmith Easter Weekend: over Easter as per usual

Weeklong Spring Spectacular: immediately following the Ladysmith Easter Weekend

June Cruise: to Bedwell Bay in Indian Arm – currents are still favourable, but worth looking at

Canada Day: to Smuggler Cove

BC Day Cruise (August): North hopefully to **Comox** for the Filberg and Nautical festivals; South: still at **Montague**

Weeklong Fall Cruise: late September, ending with at the...

Weekend Fall Cruise: to Bowen

Then there are the **unofficial trips** which could include a flotilla to **Barkley Sound**, our usual July / August trip to **Desolation** after Smuggler Cove, and possibly even the wet, cold, but beautiful and uncrowded **Broughtons**. Details on these are posted on the WhatsApp Chat as plans are firmed up by those going and in the newsletter if decisions are made by June. But this is all still quite flexible, so post your thoughts, ideas and suggestions on our WhatsApp or forward them to our editor to include in our winter newsletters. Also feel free to grab my attention at our upcoming Pub night December 13 at Mahony's.

PS some of you may notice that I have a bias for the Gulf Islands for weeklong trips. That's mainly because if there is wind, you can usually sail across in either direction. The Sunshine coast often needs a day or two of motoring.



Robert Sinkus,
Fleet Captain,
S/V Reality



ACT NOW!

If you're thinking you might want to spend New Year's with other GYC'ers at Bowen, you **need to reserve with the marina by December 15th**. Call: 604-947-0707.

GULF SAILOR

Naida's Journey from Ensenada to Cabo

Last we read about *Naida* her crew was happily busy assessing where they could get the best tacos and planning for their next passage. We pick up the story as they check out of the marina in Ensenada and wind up in Bahia los Frailes.

You can follow them on their adventure here:

<https://forecast.predictwind.com/tracking/display/Naida>

And here are the next lot of posts on their journey:

Ensenada - a melting pot of cruisers: Sun Nov 07 2021

Apologies for the late post. We've dated this the 7th to reflect the location but actually uploaded it on the 13th. An unrealistic attempt to complete boat jobs and an approaching weather window for departure made for very busy days. As Ken said, retirement is not without its stresses, but these are largely self-imposed and in principle, controllable.

We spent our two and a half weeks in Ensenada at ECV Marina, the first week on D-dock and the remainder of the time on C-dock. Along with our buddy boat *Vortice*, on B-dock, we met many other live-aboard and transient boaters. We met up for a few happy-hours and as we all know, doing boat jobs always provides opportunities to meet dock neighbours. Anne was able to pick up some sunbrella that matches *Naida's* from the *tapeceria* and ground cloth from the *ferreteria* to use as patterning fabric in order to make dinghy chaps. These protect the dinghy fabric from excessive UV.



Most of the transient boaters in the marina were like us, biding their time for good weather before heading further south. Many of these people were virtual acquaintances from the Facebook group Southbound POW Cruisers but it was only at ECV where we were able to connect in person. A definite plus putting faces to these names and connecting with like-minded sailors as we all head

south. Of course the usual exchange of boat cards and contact information occurred. Most SPNW Cruisers were all planning to leave within the second week of November.

A few of the other transient boaters were on a longer time scale for various reasons. One Canadian couple, Phyllis and Gary on *Apolima* needs special mention. They are likely 15 years older than us and were in ECV Marina for a month to get some much needed rest after a 51 day passage from the Marshall Islands to Mexico. They had hoped to get to BC but their weather router advised against it as the weather systems were relentless in the northern Pacific this fall. We younger cruisers decided that they were certainly heroes. It turns out that they

are seasoned offshore cruisers having spent 10 years in the Sea of Cortez, and during the off-season, doing road trips. For a while they each drove transport trucks during the summer to earn a few dollars for their cruising kitty.



The last group of dock neighbours that needs special mention are the permanent residents. These were all retired men who for various reasons ended up in Ensenada (recall that Ensenada is the most southerly location in North America where there are no hurricanes) for several years with possible eventual plans to move on but not in the near future. They were all very friendly and chatty, and all had their daily routine which included feeding/training/exercising the pigeons (yes exercising), going for long walks to run errands and sitting up at the top in the marina plaza to listen to news connected to the marina internet. Some were colorful characters and had plenty of stories and advice about cruising the Mexican coast. The most noteworthy is a retired minister who was a biblical scholar who felt it was important on our first meeting to caution us against using fluoride toothpaste as it is part of a government mind-control plot. (You've been warned.) Needless to say Ken stayed out of sight while the conspiracy theorist bent my ear on the topic. This particular fellow was also nursing a rescued pigeon back to health that had lost many of its wing and tail feathers in a vulture attack. Certainly a kind-hearted and well-intentioned soul with a chipper upbeat greeting every time we crossed paths, which was several times a day as he was moored at the top of the dock.

On the 6th, our second buddy boat arrived, *Azura Kai*. We had crossed into the US with them at the beginning of the trip but differing schedules separated us for awhile. The crews of *Azura Kai*, *Vortice*, and *Naida* celebrated the reunion with margaritas and a shared meal. On the 8th we all set off for Bahia Tortuga. 🌞

Ensenada to Bahia Tortugas: Sat Nov 13 2021

With the Baja-Haha cruising rally having left the week prior, the next weather window with sufficient wind for sailing to Bahia Tortugas was a departure on Tuesday morning Nov. 9th.

Unfinished boat projects were set aside on Sunday and the usual preparations for departure made. This included doing laundry, provisioning, and the

Naida continued on p.10

GULF SAILOR



Naida continued from p.9

mandatory visit to the Port Captain to check out of Ensenada. The latter was new for us and only appreciated when our buddy boat *Vortice* had an impromptu chat with a fellow cruiser early Monday morning and promptly texted us. As with check-in we again benefitted from ECV marina staff assistance including a drive in an air-conditioned van to the Sercives Integral to complete the paperwork. A process which still took a couple of hours.

The weather forecast promised a brisk two-day sail with NW winds 20-25 knts gusting to 35 knts, and it was accurate as our instruments registered a maximum of 37.5 knts true wind by the end of the passage. We probably should have taken more



note of the predicted swells, at times 2 - 2.5 m with a period of only 6 - 8 seconds. The sailing started out great and we were all really happy to be off the dock and underway. The seas quickly built as forecast but we had great boat speed and when the boat rolled on the waves the sails didn't flog around. However we pretty quickly grew tired of the boat lurching around and anything that required two hands to do was super

frustrating to accomplish. We all agreed to adjust our intended route to take advantage of some protection behind Isla Cedros, even if it meant having to motor rather than sail. It was a pretty long day and a half under those conditions until things settled for the last quarter of the trip. We were all happy to drop anchor in the protected Bahia Tortuga around 8 in the morning of the 11th and have a nap. We later agreed that we might set a new lower threshold for max wind and sea state conditions in the forecast!

As often happens when cruising, as we arrived in Bahia Tortuga we were hailed on the VHF by *SV Dawn Flight*, a couple we met in Bligh Cove on the outside of Vancouver Island in the summer. We knew they left Ensenada ahead of us as we had heard them on the Chubasco Net on the ham radio but didn't expect to run into them here. We were a bit surprised they left Ensenada when they did as we thought there wasn't enough wind forecast. Geoff knowingly chuckled when I commented that the sail had been a bit more exciting that

anticipated. They have been going between Mexico and BC on their sailboat for five years and have clearly learned what constitutes a good forecast for them. Geoff then said they were hauling anchor and departing for a 700 nm run to Puerto Vallarta. We were too tired to consider continuing on and just hoped we'd have a favourable forecast when we were ready to depart Bahia Tortuga. ☀

☀ Bahia Asunción - Part 1: Tue Nov 16 2021

Blogs and FB groups on Baja cruising all had indicated that Asunción was a water centered village that is friendly to cruisers. So after a few days of rest in Bahia Tortugas and having explored Puerto San Bartolome and picked up a few provisions from the well-stocked tienda we made the decision to do a day-hop to Asunción. As with all these 50 nm passages, we got an early start at first light (Nov 14th) The trip was an uneventful wind-assisted motor passage with little swell. We even put the gennaker up early on when there was wind but that was short-lived.

We've appreciated the fresher air of small village anchorages after our two weeks in urban Ensenada with cruiseships docked every 2-3 days, spewing lowgrade fuel exhaust. We buddy boated with our usual duo *Vortice* and *Azura Kai* and met up with another PNW boat *Sweet Adeline* in Bahia Tortugas and then Asunción.



The seaside community of Bahia Asunción has around 3,000 inhabitants that depend on fishing cooperatives that harvest abalone, lobster, clams, giant sea snails and many species of fish.

We arrived at sundown on a Sunday and could hear much music and cars driving throughout the evening. The next day we dinghied into shore to explore the town. Being a Monday everything was pretty quiet even in the early afternoon, as we walked west following the road to the point. We passed one little electronics shop and eventually a road sign for Hotel La Bufadora 1 mile further. Lori on *Vortice* follows the TalkBaja FB group and recalled hearing of La Bufadora, and our friend Irma had texted us about it as well and that it was run by a Mexican Canadian. With the sun beating down on us (town folks likely know better than to venture out at this time of day) and low expectations of finding it open we persevered. Our efforts were suitably rewarded when our gang of eight ambled up and knocked at the back door. Shari *Naida continued on p.11*

GULF SAILOR



Naida continued from p.10

Bondy, the owner, greeted us with an offer of cold beers and we seated ourselves on her shaded patio.

That was the start to what turned into a four hour visit and a meal of delicious freshly caught yellow-tail fish tacos prepared by Shari and her daughter Sirena. This entailed Sirena hopping in the truck to fetch a few

more beers and ingredients at the store, but with lots of time on our hands we whiled away the time chatting and exchanging stories and local knowledge with Shari.

Shari is originally from Vancouver Island and has been in Mexico for 30+ years. She's been around sailboats most of her life and raised her daughter aboard her boat when she was younger. As a young woman she had a life-changing experience which lead to a life-long interest in, and academic study of whales. She bought the land on the point where La Bufadora overlooks the ocean 20 years ago and built the hotel/inn. The location is about 30nm south of a lagoon that is a calving ground for humpback whales in the winter. She runs whale watching/study camps for a few months in the winter, the camps are booked up well in advance. ☀

Her website is whalemagictours.com if you're interested in more information. Every trip is different depending on the time of year, weather and mood of the whales. There can be up to 2,000 mothers and babies in the lagoon at the peak of the season after mid February. The gray whales are birthing and mating in January. They nurse and teach their calves skills to prepare them for the long migration north.

☀ Bahia Asunción - Part 2:

Tue Nov 16 2021

The following day we explored Isla Asunción bays at the north of the islands where Shari had mentioned young sea lions can be found. We were entertained (and were likely entertainment for them) by sea lions diving under the dinghy and cavorting in and out of the seaweed. Although we'd brought our snorkeling gear, neither we nor our *Vortice* friends got into the water. In our defense, the swell did not provide ready access to landing or mooring the dinghy either.

After exploring we decided we'd attempt a beach landing on Shari's beach. She had mentioned that kayaks beach there but told us later we were the first dinghies to do so. The sand was a bit soft for our dinghy wheels but otherwise it was a straightforward landing. The beach is bracketed by rocky outcrops extending seaward on each side which helps reduce the surge of the swell.

Shari promptly came down and met us on the beach and lent a



Surf fishing for halibut (*lenguado*) and yellowfin croaker (*boca dulce*)

hand hauling the dinghies further up the beach. She mentioned that she had lobster burritos on the menu, and we happily took her up on the offer. Even for cruisers on a budget, meals out in Mexico are very affordable. A meal

of burritos and a couple of beers would set you back \$7. We waited for our friends on *Azura Kai* who we'd radioed and then headed up for another wonderful meal and visit at La Bufadora. A couple of other cruisers were visiting and we quickly established that one of them, Tom the skipper of *Aphrodite*, had 12-15 years ago buddy-boated down the coast of Mexico with *S/V Canik* sailed by good friends of John and Barb, previous owners of *Naida*. What a small world!

We felt fortunate to have met and benefitted from Shari's warmth and hospitality. If we're through this way again, we'll definitely make La Bufadora in Asunción a stop on the way. (P.S. La Bufadora refers to the blowhole on the rocky shoreline just north of the point where the hotel is located.)

On our dinghy ride back to our boat we were buzzed by half a dozen flying fish that were skimming the water. The zipped around us and one even flew between us in the dinghy. Our first real sighting of these creatures, and they sure do fly. ☀

☀ Margarita Sailing: Sun Nov 21 2021

It was difficult to leave Asunción, but the weather window looked good for a two-step hop down to Bahia Santa Maria with an overnight stop at Punta Abreojos (translates to "eyes wide open") so named because of the minefield of rocks and reefs there. And by good weather window, we mean 10-15 knots of wind from behind and swell of less than 1 meter. We were able to sail nearly all the way to Abreojos and arrived at dusk. The calm seas and gentle sailing are conducive to napping which helps with the long day passage of 54 nm. When we arrived at sundown Ken got busy doing a few boat fixes (rerouting the extension line on the whisker pole that was being pinched by the halyard support; and splicing in a Dyneema replacement for the outhaul cable which gave way when attempting to flatten the foot of the sail, due to a conflict with the preventer attachment. Anne made beef stir fry (Mike Golding's beef stir fry from Fiona Sims' *The Boat Cookbook*) and we turned in about 10pm as we had a 7am departure planned the next day. That day we also had attempted unsuccessfully to use the windvane steering.

We suspected that it may have been

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Naida continued from p.11

contributing to weatherhelm on a starboard tack and leehelm on a port tack even with the windvane rudder in neutral. The windvane rudder is offset to starboard by about 30cm. When the wind was over 13 knots apparent with a reef in the main the autopilot had not been able to consistently hold our course and we'd hand steered. We

made the decision to remove the windvane rudder. We obviously should have spent more time learning to use the self steering gear before!

We left Abreojos at sunrise and set the sails with 10 knots of wind. The wind diminished and with 1-2 foot swell abeam we started up the iron genny and took the sails down to limit wear and tear from flogging. After lunch of left over niçoise salad, the wind picked up to 11-12 knots from behind and we were able to pole out the genoa and cruise wing-on-wing. It's 27C in the boat and the gentle breeze and shade from the canvas are keeping us cool in the cockpit. A perfect champagne (or margarita) sailing afternoon! It's an overnight sail to Bahia Santa Maria so we will be bundling up for the night shift, enjoying the clear sky with full moon, and looking forward to steady wind for the duration. ☀

Mangrove Exploring in Bahia Santa Maria:

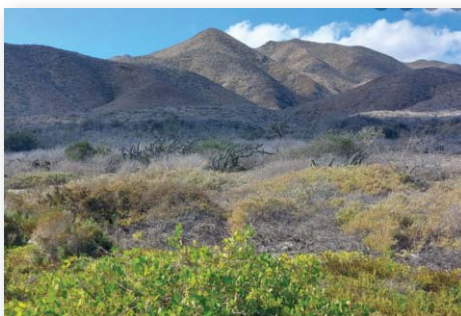
Tue Nov 23 2021

The village on the coast of Bahia Santa Maria barely warrants the title village with only a dozen houses and small fishing



huts dotting the rugged sand-dusted rocky landscape. Or, I should say moonscape since there wasn't a single tree in sight. We also did not see any of the usual village activity and there were no lights on at any of the houses. The only greenery to be had was a thin ribbon along the shore at the entrance to the mangroves. A definite destination for exploration.

As cruisers, we're



getting more experience with landing our dinghies through the surf, and this should be easier as we only had to cross the breaking waves to get into the entrance channel. We looked to take all factors into account when planning our exploration. High tide was at 8:30 am Nov 20th and we planned for an



entrance shortly after that to allow time to tour what Navi-onics and our satellite image charts showed as 3-4 nm long channels in the

mangroves. The tide change was about 5 feet. That morning, when purchasing some spiny lobsters from the fisherman who came by in his panga, we had asked about the entrance to the mangroves.

There is a long sand bar that runs for several hundred metres, parallel to, and just off the beach, which one has to enter upstream of to not hit bottom. With the directions from the fisherman, and also watching a few of the pangas enter at the time we were preparing to go in, we rode on the back of the two+ foot surf into the mangrove channel. Once inside, the channel took a sharp right and we found ourselves in a 100 foot wide calm water expanse.

We slowed the dinghy motor right down and meandered our way along. As we rounded the corner up ahead, a series of rudimentary huts appeared on the left hand shore. Some



on higher ground were four-sided with corrugated metal sloped roof and a few had satellite dishes. Most huts closer to the water front were three-sided and there were many pangas with sizeable motors beached all along the shore in front of the huts. There were two groups of huts separated by a bend in the mangrove, with the first larger one having about 15-20 huts. The three-sided huts with corrugated tin roofs close to the water had fishing nets and floats hanging outside and motor repair hardware on shelving 3-4 feet high inside to keep it above the high water line. There were fisherman in hipwaders busy at work on their boats, kids playing who were keen to wave at us as we drifted by, and one of the three-sided huts had tables and chairs and appeared to be used as a dining area for the community. There were also a few trucks and when we looked carefully we could see a dirt road behind the huts. A closer look at the geography of the area revealed that the road lead up the outer sandy outcrop

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GULF SAILOR



Naida continued from p.12

that forms an estuary north of Bahia Santa Maria, to a point across the estuary from Puerto San Carlos which is on the Baja mainland. We presume that given there is no bridge across, that supplies are ferried across the estuary and picked up by truck to take to the mangrove and village. Anyway, it was clear that the shores within the mangroves

was where village life happened. We wondered whether they settled there seasonally or permanently? We were glad we'd taken the time to visit the mangroves to see this hidden community.

It had been a fun surf ride into the entrance channel coming with the waves but we approached the exit with some trepidation as this would be against the waves. Everyone donned their life jackets which had been shed in the calm shallow waters and we carefully watched the breaking waves at the mouth. We slowly approached while trying to judge when to accelerate through the surf. In the end though it was pretty anticlimactic, we bobbed over a few small waves, accelerated, and we were out. Time to head back to the boat and cook those lobster. 🌞

Wrapping up Baja West Coast Cruising:

Tue Nov 23 2021

As we wrap up this stretch of our trip with a 1.5 day hop down to Cabo San Lucas, we want to acknowledge the difficult weather that our friends and family in British Columbia have been experiencing these last few weeks. The floods, washed-out roads, land slides and high winds have impacted the supply chain for most goods and consumables, necessitated emergency response measures, and required rationing of gas and limits on travel to essential purposes only. Our thoughts are with you and we hope that life can return to some normalcy soon.



A great gennaker run down to Bahia Magdalena. Azura Kai in the distance.

What a time it's been, cruising south to sunnier and warmer climes on this rugged west coast! We have made the most of sampling fish tacos as we went. The best were from Tacos Corona in Ensenada and Hotel La Burford in Asuncion. We're now swimming in 27C water – Ken more than Anne, likely because the desire to swim is directly proportional to degree of sweating – and we all know women don't sweat, they glow :wink:

We've met up again along the

Baja Westcoast with many of the southbound boats that we crossed paths with along the US west coast. It's been fun getting to know them better and exchanging cruising tips and stories along the way. We're sure to cross paths again in the Sea of Cortez or the Pacific coast of Mexico.

We got an early start (5am) on this last leg of our journey. Although it was a full hour and a half before sunrise, the air was warm and dry with no condensation on deck and we were in T-shirts in the cockpit. Of course the warmer mornings mean hot afternoons and we have taken to covering the hatches and sometimes turning on the fans if we have to be down below when at anchor. We're making good use of the phifertex panels that came with the boat for shading the cockpit when at anchor.

Some of the things we've learned along the way so far:

1. Use **ding.com** to renew your TelCel phone plan that is month-to-month. Ding.com was faster and more reliable than the actual TelCel website, especially when we only had a slow connection on the coast.
2. Every tienda (grocery store) sells fresh homemade tortillas which can be found in a cooler by the cash. They come wrapped in bundles of 10-20 and can be flour or corn. Best stored at room temperature, they will keep for 10-12 days.
3. When tensioning a line on a winch, it's always good to look for feedback to make sure it's having the desired effect. If it's not, it's best to stop and check where the line may be caught (see earlier blog on broken outhaul) We knew this, didn't need to be in Mexico to learn it again, it's just been refreshed because of the many hours of sailing that we've been doing getting to Mexico!
4. Brush up on your Spanish to ease transactions with local fisherman. Both Ken and I were pretty sure, afterwards that when we asked *cuanto cuesta* for one lobster he said *cinquenta* (50) pesos, but then he switched to English and said 80. It was only afterward that we realized that he may not have known his numbers in English. We might have given him more than he expected but he likely needs the pesos more than we do.
5. Mexicans use Controy in making margaritas. It's a knock-off of the orange brandy Cointreau and much cheaper. And it makes good margaritas! We use *Vórtice's* recipe: 3 parts tequila, 2 parts Controy, 2 parts lime, 1/2 part sweetener (agave syrup or maple syrup in our case since that's what we have...)
6. And the most important thing we've learned is the fun of cruising with one or two buddy/bungee boat(s). We aren't always in the same anchorage, but when we are it's always great to share the experience with others. We've also each benefitted from sharing know-how and tools when one of us has had a fix or repair to do in harbour after a passage. *Azura Kai* and *Vórtice* have been superb buddy boats! We'll miss them when we inevitably split

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GULF SAILOR



And a cruiseship arrived overnight to obscure our view of the cape from the anchorage. We enjoyed a morning swim in 30.7C water!!

Naida continued from p.13

up due to differing schedules in December.

We are psyching ourselves up for the shock of civilization in Cabo San Lucas and at least one of us might be looking forward to a good latte. ☀️



A perfect start to a day of chores - the usual laundry and provisioning upon arrival in a larger port. The plan is to leave tomorrow before the throngs of holidayers for American Thanksgiving weekend. Our destination will be Bahia Los Frailes.

☞ Cabo San Lucas and Cell Network Blues:

Wed Dec 01 2021

We anchored in the bay along the sandy beaches a little ways outside the breakwater. Again we met up with a couple of boats we'd met cruising down the coast. And whenever that happens we do the usual dinghy ride over to say hello, usually the next day after arriving when we've had a chance to rest and get the boat back together from the passage. CSL was a hive of activity, with jetski rentals buzzing back and forth across the bay, water taxis zipping everywhere, and the constant traffic of cruise ships tenders delivering people ashore, it made for a lot of rocking and rolling during the day.

One evening we were treated to the amped-up music and show from the pirate boat that makes its rounds just outside the harbour. It confirmed for us our decision to leave early the following morning. We treated ourselves to dinner out at Doña Lolitas the first night joined by the crew of Azura Kai and Vórtice. The large margaritas were nursed slowly over Mexican entrees as we celebrated the completion of our Pacific Baja cruising! We were about a 15 min walk off the main tourist area, but prices were comparable to Vancouver. We consoled ourselves knowing that the inexpensive meals we'd consumed for the previous two weeks would cost-average this one down.



The lime basket at Doña Lolita's.



The best margaritas. Enchiladas with pollo.

Keeping our eye on the weather and also knowing that we do need to be in La Cruz by December 13th, we decided that Nov 26th, the Friday of the American Thanksgiving weekend, would be a good day to leave the hustle and bustle of Cabo and head around the cape to go north. This meant that we had to get our laundry and provisioning done on the Thursday. We made good use of Uber rides and got our errands completed by late afternoon. There were, however, the other tasks to complete that required network access which took up another several hours into the evening after the boat had been readied for sailing.

We had renewed our month-to-month Mexican TelCel plan at the MagBay eatery where there was wifi a few days earlier. That process had necessitated using a third party (ding.com) since multiple previous attempts on the TelCel website had failed. Ken did the renewal for both phones but in fact the renewal for Anne's required her to send an additional text to have the plan activated. Not appreciating this at the time meant that use of her phone proceeded using a much higher fixed rate for data.

Unbeknownst to us it was this more expensive data she was using when hot-spotting her phone that evening in Cabo to set up two-factor authentication (TFA) for access to the UBC pension plan. Although the website indicated that she could set up multiple telephone numbers for text confirmation, she unfortunately entered her BC number first to which it promptly sent a text without letting her enter the second Mexican number which is currently active. (Our BC SIM cards are not currently in our phones.) Anyways, she managed to get locked out of the pension plan website that evening, and may or may not have used up her allotted data. It was only the next morning as we were motoring out, that she had the idea to hotspot through Ken's phone and was able to start the process of TFA again and this time entered her Mexican TelCel number and received the confirmation code.

All that got sorted out just as we left the Cabo cell network coverage and she made her first annual pension withdrawal – the party can continue! Getting Anne's TelCel plan renewed will have to wait until we have decent wifi or network access, which may not happen until we cross the Sea of Cortez to Mazatlan. It was a brief two days in Cabo and if we'd only appreciated the TelCel confusion then, we could have made use of good cell network access to straighten things out...with a few more pesos of course.

While we are not exactly cruising with S/V Sweet Adeline we have shared many anchorages with them since Santa Catalina. They are a Pacific Northwest couple and their 15 year old daughter along with one crew traveling on a one year timeline bound for the South Pacific. This time though we left them with engine troubles in CSL while they tried to find a mechanic that could help repair their issues. As much advice as other boaters offer, at some point things need to come out to get fixed and CSL is a bad place to have engine troubles on

GULF SAILOR



Naida continued from p.14

a sailboat. The marinas are full of power boats but somehow no mechanic in the area admits to knowing how to fix a sailboat engine. They finally had a mechanic from La Paz lined up to come the day we were departing so we hope things are fixed or on the way to be fixed. With no good network access we are in the dark on their status and

keep hoping to see them arrive here in the anchorage at Los Frailes, which we are loving. ☀️

☀️ Bahia Los Frailes - Beach and Reef Exploring: Thu Dec 02 2021



It'll be a week tomorrow since our arrival in Bahia Los Frailes. We traveled up with our two buddy boats *Vórtice* and *Azura Kai*.

AK had moorage booked at San José del Cabo but decided to bypass that stop and brave the conditions –

wind of 20-25 knots on the nose and choppy seas for a significant portion of the 7 hour, 47nm trip. We'd forgotten what beating can be and had not put in the extra side panels that would have limited green water ingress over the combing. On the plus side it was warm and shorts and T-shirts were all that was required.

Bahia Los Frailes (the Friars in reference to the two peaks on the promontory to the north of the bay) is well sheltered from the constant Sea of Cortez northerners at this time of year, and we haven't seen winds much in excess of 15 knots at anchor. It is a little bit roly but the flopper-stopper dampens the motion nicely. There is a beach fishing community which has come to life over the last few days with about 10-15 pangas heading out at dusk. Their navigation lights are visible to the south about 2-3 nm away.

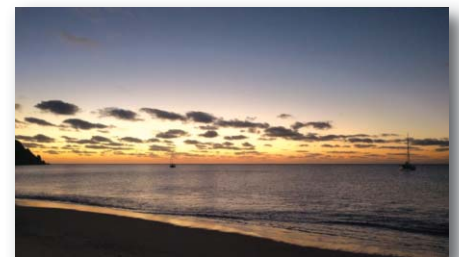


We've explored the small reef at the point snorkeling and have seen the usual inhabitants - damsel, butterfly, box, and big-eyed jack fish amongst the coral. Around the point a few nm to the north is Cabo Pulmo which has the only coral reef present in the Sea of Cortez and is a protected marine park. Our friends Cory and Lori on *Vórtice* had dived here in the past and

contacted a guide whom they've used before. We did two dives with them Wednesday morning. The first on the reef

took us to a depth of 40 feet and we saw a moray eel, some sting rays, lots of colorful reef fish including the distinguished moorish idol. This was a good first dive for us as we felt a little rusty even with the previous day's gear trial around the boat. After this successful first dive, our guide Claudio and panga driver Luis took us about 2 nm out for our second dive to a depth of about 65 feet where we swam with large schools of big-eyed jacks. We're not sure how they find the schools but it was phenomenal. Not long after descending and swimming at a depth of 60 feet for about 30-40 metres, we saw thousands of jacks (about 20-40cm long) appear in the distance. We proceeded to swim along side them as the wall of them meandered and turned back on itself. At one point our guide Claudio stopped us near the sandy bottom and the jacks swam in a vortex around us. Looking up one could see different ribbons of fish swimming above the vortex. It was spectacular, and sounds of distant whales were also heard, likely the same ones we saw later on our way back to Los Frailes.

At the end of our 50 minute dive, both Claudio and friends Cory and Lori were quick to point out that we'd experienced some of the best diving with big-eyed jacks to be had. They wanted to be sure that we moderated expectations for future dives! It was an excellent day scuba-diving with friends, and the first for us diving from a boat rather than shore. We thoroughly enjoyed the warm water diving where we only needed 16-18 pounds to compensate buoyancy, about half of what we'd worn cold water dry-suit diving! We haven't done as much exploring ashore as we might like – too many boat jobs and not getting going early enough when the sun is low in the sky and temperatures cooler. We did have a couple of beach dinners and campfires with *Vórtice* and *Azura Kai* crew, which brought back fond memories of our Vancouver summer beach dinners.



One of the evenings we met the conservation officer who stopped to chat and make sure we would be covering the embers once we were done. He is a volunteer who spends his evenings at this time of the year collecting turtle eggs and moving them to a safe, predator-free, fenced off area until they hatch when he ferries them to the ocean for release under the cover of darkness. He and his wife were on an ATV, and they had about a dozen new hatchlings in a sand-lined bin, each about 1-2 inches long, ready for release.

It's been great fun connecting with the natural world here in Bahia Los Frailes and we could easily spend another week. However it's time to be making the most of a good weather window for crossing Golfo de California (aka Sea of Cortez) as we are due to travel back to Vancouver in mid-December. ☀️

GULF SAILOR

A Well Timed Reunion in Cobble Hill

The Remembrance Day weekend was the perfect time to get together with old friends. And get close up and personal with a colony of boisterous sea lions.

For almost 15 years, I had been a different kind of a boater. I was still sailing mostly on dinghies and loving the Hobie 20 and 29ers in the Co-op clubs at Jericho. But I was also a very active white water kayaker. BC has many wonderful rivers and you can pretty much paddle year round, with some forays into Washington. With great local winter paddling on the Capilano, Lynne, and Seymour, as well as the year round Chilliwack.

As a member of the Vancouver Kayak Club, I made many great friendships, and had many wonderful trips but about 20 years ago, I traded my white water paddle in for the joys of cruising on sailboats. First: unlimited use of a friend's Cal-25, and then my current Beneteau First 325.

Jacque and Lloyd from this group had purchased a house on the water on Piers Island – less than a nautical Mile North of the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal. And they had a dock! So I got to visit them several times, enjoying free moorage, great crabbing, amazing sunset views and their wonderful company. Much to my chagrin, they moved to Cobble Hill – on the main part of Vancouver Island due west of Sidney. I discovered that Cowichan Bay Fisherman's Wharf only charges \$1.00 per foot year round, and it is about an 8 minute drive from their home. The Wharfinger also told me they did have some sea lions on their breakwater this time of year.

So this past Remembrance Day weekend, my friend James and I slept onboard Thursday, and crossed the Strait, leaving Friday morning a little after 5 am. Our other friends left later on a much larger and faster craft – the *Queen* of something or other.

English Bay was mirror smooth and as we entered the Strait headed for Porlier, we started to encounter the occasional wave. The sky had beautiful colours just before the sun rose, the wind filled in and we were able to motor sail. About halfway across, the wind got up in the high 20's, but the waves were just beginning to form and show whitecaps, so we had a nice smooth trip. An hour from Porlier, the wind shifted to be on our nose, still blowing hard, but because it was an offshore breeze with little fetch, the wave size gradually subsided, and a half hour away, the seas were

quite smooth despite the strong winds.

At 10 am we went into Porlier against a 3.5 knot current. Having wind with the tide, the waves were quite small. I was a little concerned that an approaching sailboat kept turning towards us, until almost on a collision course. I realized they were being turned around in the swirlies, and they finally regained control of their course and passed us well to starboard. I noticed a very large number of cormorants in the water on the other side. I guess the current brings those fish.

We motor sailed between Hall and Reid Islands as if headed for Clam Bay, but then turned southwest towards Stuart Channel and Sansum Narrows. The wind filled in nicely, and we were able to tack our way south, still in calm seas, but making 5-6 knots over water.

Approaching Cowichan Bay, I called the Wharfinger who gave me a wonderful spot about 30 m from the breakwater with a great view of the sea lions who happily regaled us with their calls. We had intended to barbecue en route, but with the strong winds, and fun sail, we had forgotten to, and lit up the barbecue for some truly delicious hamburgers while our host drove over to join us for lunch and then take us to his place.

It was great to catch up with friends. I spent Friday and Saturday night on the boat. I could hear the sea lions while below, but it was quiet enough to easily fall asleep peacefully listening to their sounds.

The Steller sea lions, with males topping out at 2,500 lbs, are a real tourist draw for the marina, and many people came to the wharf to watch

and photograph them. There were hundreds – truly something to see. Departing, we got quite close to them and the breakwater.

The original forecast had been for both a massive 3-4" rain warning (so I chose to wear long warm socks and



Robert Sinkus,
Fleet Captain,
S/V Reality



GULF SAILOR

waterproof shoes with my shorts, and actually wore my foul weather top with my hood covering a fleece Sherpa hat over a baseball cap). More importantly, the early forecasts were for a wonderful southerly wind blowing close to 30 knots, so I had planned on returning via Active Pass, and having a fun, fast easy sail home (*Reality* likes to sail wing on wing without even a pole – I think the tiller really helps). The wind had been predicted to veer from the NW later in the day, and by Saturday night, the forecast southerly was no longer going to happen, with a light NW in the Strait. So we motored north under heavy rain with the bimini up, reversing our original route there. After coming out of Samsun Narrows, we noticed there was fog limiting visibility to about 5 miles on top of the heavy rain. We went through Porlier on a 3.3 knot flood with James happily sleeping down below on the settee in the warm cabin as we bounced around in the waves and current. As we crossed the Strait, the light NW winds built enough that we dropped the bimini and raised the sails to assist our motor sailing, and James came up top to brave the rain.

The 3-4" of forecasted rain had delivered. James had to squeeze the water out of his fleece gloves every few minutes.

Visibility in the Strait was about 1.5 nm. I was glad for the AIS targets on my radio, but after we were halfway across, the fog lifted somewhat, and we had much better visibility.

About 5 nm from Point Grey, I saw something big and white off our starboard bow. It turned out to be the tail of one of two humpback whales. We slowed and watched them as they circled us for about an hour, treating us to views of their huge size, several times getting close, I pulled out my 40X zoom camera, and tried to take pictures, but in the heavy rain, the camera didn't function. I remember one coming towards us from our starboard quarter,

and as it went under, we could see the bulge in its body where the two easy to see blowholes were. It was a real treat. After giving up on the camera, I took some pics with my cell phone, but the whales were no longer as close. I wished I had captured some of the fantastic earlier viewings.

We headed for home, and I pointed out the three large barges tied to their large mooring ball about a nautical mile west of False Creek. Having James aboard helping out meant the boat was pretty much ready to go when we got to the dock. I was very happy to have the dehumidifier on board, so the boat and all our gear could dry out.

The Barge on the Beach

The next day was the day of the big winds and I visited Vanier Park – where I had often gone to see Bard on the Beach, I now saw Barge on the Beach. One of the three barges from the day before had broken free and was stuck on the rocks off Sunset

Beach. Looking at the waves in the bay, I wondered what it would be like to be out in those conditions – would the boat even turn into the wind under power, what would the trip across the Strait have been like: very fast, but would we be concerned with burying our bow? How big would the waves in the Strait have been? I was glad that we had only had to contend with 3-4" of rain the day before, and not the crazy winds for an entire crossing. The docks at Burrard Civic Marina were heaving and groaning and all the boats were bouncing around.

The next day, I went back to check on my boat, and once again went to look at the bay from above the Maritime Museum, I noticed a boat that had used a technique intended to prevent dragging at anchor had sunk with only the top quarter or so of the mast and one stay visible and upright. Another boat at anchor had been dismantled. Those were strong winds indeed!



How Low Can You Go? Addendum

In doing some follow up reading after the presentation, I found that a couple of battery brands are regarded as able to withstand a low State of Charge.

I discovered that the Trojan Flooded Golf Cart Batteries have a reputation as being particularly hardy at withstanding low State of Charge. There is another brand that also seems to have a similar reputation: Rolls. So if you have Trojan or Rolls Golf Cart batteries, have no fear in going down to 20-3% SOC routinely.

If your batteries are not Trojan or Rolls then, occasionally going a bit below 50% SOC is not likely to be horrible, but you don't want to make going too low a habit. Best to check with

your battery manufacturer – and let me know what they tell you.

Just remember to top their charge up fully ASAP and for flooded, keep them watered.

Author's note: I was originally thinking of changing out my batteries when they die in 7 to 10 years with something like the Firefly Oasis Carbon Foam, but am now thinking that my flooded golf carts (with a watering system) is a pretty good solution after all.

GULF SAILOR

Ask Andrew...What to do about Batteries?

How fortuitous (and weird) to find this Xmassy poem all about taking care of your batteries in the winter!

I include it here to complement Robert's original notes and addendum and anticipate his critique.

Twas the night before Christmas and all 'cross the land
Boats were left to slumber, exactly as planned.
Engines were winterized and tarps were tied tight
But batteries – and what to do – give many a fright.

Disconnect or remove, which shall it be?
An expensive replacement for under the tree!
So let's do it right, with most careful care.
There are many opinions, and many who'll share.

Lets start with the science, the theory besides:
A charged batt'ry holds acid, not water inside
But when it runs low, the acid is changed
Some molecules swap, leaving water (like rain).

The water can freeze, but the acid, not so
So trust in the science, don't fret to and fro
They must be left charged, before the boat is left hinter
Don't leave the volts low, when being safe for the winter

Charge them full-up, and leave them aboard
Lithium ion, lead acid or glass mat (absorbed)
If they've been taken offboard, and home to your shed
That's just fine, too – don't go worrying your head

The key is in the charging – should be done right and true
Don't let them drop below Twelve point two.
Check them monthly or else charge on a trickle
Ignoring them now, could put you in a pickle,

Speak not a word, head straight to your work
Remove negative cables – carefully, don't jerk.
And lay your fingers caref'ly, you don't want a mark
A tool between terminals can cause quite a spark.

Removing this now, will stop excess discharge
Leaving them longer, with a full tip-top charge
Take off those black cables, the ones running to ground
So that the electrical system will stay safe and sound

So spring now from your boat, lowly blowing a whistle
And step down that ladder like the down of a thistle
All will hear you exclaim, ere you drive out of sight

Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a good-night.

*Adaptation by Andrew McDonald,
owner of Lakeside Marine Services
for Canadian Yachting.ca Dec. 17, 2020*



June Virtual General Meeting Minutes Cont. from p.19

Hon. Signals Officer and Council of BC Yacht Clubs –

- The Council of BC Yacht Clubs meeting is next week. The Council is looking for members for the executive. If anyone is interested please contact Andreas.
- Andreas, Doug, and Glen tested the equipment at the Maritime Museum to hold hybrid in-person and Zoom meetings. All went well and this will be done starting with the January meeting. Please come to the meetings in person if you can, it is always better to see each other.

2nd Door Prize Draw

- Glen drew *Beautiful Day*. Andreas chose the Baileys and Glen drank it down.

Secretary – • No report.

Vice Commodore –

- John thanked the committee that worked on the by-law amendment.

Past Commodore

- Dar reported that she has recruited a slate for next year's executive and thanked the membership for voting on the by-law change.

3rd Door Prize Draw

- Glen drew *Knotsure* who were not present, then *Sparkle Plenty*. Since only the vodka was left, Glen drank that.

Gulf Sailor Editor –

- Suzanne asked for any year-end reports by Dec 2. This will be the last Gulf Sailor of the year.

- Suzanne borrowed one of the Arrow books by Joel Scott that she wrote about in the last issue of the Gulf Sailor and will let us know what she thinks of it.

Commodore – • No report.

Business Arising from the Reports

- Geoff Stevenson encouraged the Fleet Captain to make one of the week long cruises coincide with one of the big three cruises of the year; Victoria Day, Canada Day, or Labour Day. Robert reported that he hopes a Barkley Cruise will occur in 2022 after the Victoria Day cruise and would like to talk to Geoff about his experience cruising Barkley Sound.

NEW BUSINESS – • None

Motion to Adjourn by Miles Walker. Carried.

Meeting adjourned 20:10 hrs.

Presentations:

- Glen Mitchell presented a video that he made about adding a bilge alarm to his previous boat *Tucana*.

Minutes prepared and respectfully submitted by Ken Buckley, Hon. Secretary, *S/V Naida*.



GULF SAILOR



Minutes

of the Virtual General Meeting,
November 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 19:36 hrs by Commodore Chris Stangroom.

COMMODORE COMMENTS AND WELCOME

- Commodore Stangroom hopes everyone survived the time change and the rains. This is an important and busy meeting tonight. Chris congratulated Paul and Julia on their new boat, 47 feet of spacious beauty. Paul and Julia thanked Chris and said they were grinning ear to ear to be on the boat. Chris also welcomed Ken and Anne, joining from Ensenada.

Motion and Second for The Minutes of the previous meeting

- Moved by Robert Sinkus and seconded by John Dixon. Carried.

Business arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting

- Change to the member definition by-law.
- Commodore Stangroom stated the current Executive has worked together this past year to revise the membership By-Laws. This is in order to maintain unity in the Club, to make sure we remain a sailing club at heart, and to allow more members to vote and be on the Executive. The proposed change will collapse Resident, Non-Resident and Associate membership categories into one Active Membership category. Interim, Non-Active, Honorary and Honorary Life membership categories will remain as they are.
- The proposed changes and revisions were published in the June Gulf Sailor (and again in the Gulf Sailor that you just received.) At our last General Meeting in October we reviewed the proposed changes and members were given the opportunity to discuss them.
- Making a change to our By-laws requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority by a special resolution at a General Meeting at which a motion is made to adopt the proposed changes. This is that meeting.
- Commodore Stangroom moved *that the membership By-Laws be revised according to the changes published in the June Gulf Sailor.* John Dixon seconded the motion. The floor was opened for discussion but there was none. A vote was held: 2 against, 3 abstained, 36 in favour. Motion Carried.

1st Door Prize Draw

- Glen changed things up this time. He drew *Showtime*, Doug Ramsay and Judy Lynam, and proceeded to point to three glasses, one of tequila, one of Baileys, one of vodka. Glen asked them to choose one, they chose tequila which Glen then drank.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Executive Officer –

- Pat reported 41 members present. She has collected the

Executive Officers Present:

Commodore	Christie Stangroom
Vice-Commodore	John Dixon
Fleet Captain	Robert Sinkus
Staff Captain	Doug MacLeod
Hon. Secretary	Ken Buckley
Hon. Treasurer	Glen Mitchell
Executive Officer	Pat Costa
Signals Officer	Andreas Truckenbrodt
Past Commodore	Darlyne Farrell

Other Officers:

Gulf Sailor Editor Suzanne Walker

Absent: None

trophies for engraving with the 2021 winners in preparation for an awards presentation. Pat welcomed Doug and Judy and new members Ernie and Yvonne. Their new member package has been mailed to them.

Treasurer –

- Glen reported \$4,124 in the savings account and \$12,259 in the chequing account for a total of \$16,382.

Staff Captain –

- Doug reported the sing-along is cancelled this year due to restrictions of singing indoors. In place of the sing-along will be a pub night since members love to get together and socialize. Mahony's is booked for December 13 at 6pm. We are expecting 30-40 people. The club will buy everyone one drink. Chris and Doug visited the proposed space at Mahony's and determined that the bar in the middle of the space prevents holding a program as the lines of sight and sound are obstructed. There is a minimum spend of \$1000 for the group for the evening and it is anticipated that enough members will attend to reach this. If not, the club will make up the difference. More details will be coming.
- Chris noted that everyone can wear their ugly sweaters and reindeer hats.

Fleet Captain –

- Robert reported the last cruise of the year is the New Year's cruise to Snug Cove. There are four slips being held, please reserve by December 15 if you plan to come.
- Marinas have become very cautious about reservations for group events due to the difficult financial times and have asked the club to provide dates and numbers for the 2022 cruises. Robert has provided interim dates until the new executive finalizes dates in the new year. Robert asked about the fall cruise and heard that about 14 boats are interested in spending two nights at Snug Cove, September 30 and October 1.
- Robert reported he anticipates two one-week long cruises next year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Details will come out in January.
- Robert thanked everyone for attending the cruises this past year and making it a great year.