

TRAVEL JOURNAL

Skagit Bay Sail and Power Squadron Canadian Cruise

August 11-20, 2017

Hosted by Paul Rosetter and Donna Mason on "Time Flies"

The opening of the new Skagit Co. jail, grandchildren, European travel, and one member's shoulder surgery prevented four other boats from joining us. Our cruising group consisted of:

- Dale Libby on "Fish-N-Chicks," a 26' Bayliner Reg. #WN7084NP
- Anne and Rolf Nesse on "Mystic Knot" a 35' Finnish Motor Sailor, Reg. #WN6031SF
- Paul Rosetter and Donna Mason on "Time Flies" a 40' LOA, ACB (Aluminum Chamber Boat), Reg # WN6125NW

I've included slip costs and nautical miles for those considering doing this cruise.

Friday, August 11, 2017, Home Port to Friday Harbor, San Juan Island: At 1145 hours Paul and I arrived at Time Flies' slip at Cap Sante in Anacortes, laid out the newly cleaned companionway carpet, stored all provisions, meal plans, route plans, etc. We talked with a couple who admired our boat, live in Florida and Chicago and are members of a boating club. I had complimented her on her piano playing at the top of the dock. She played "Piano Man" at least as well as Billy Joel! Anne Nesse called me to report they have an alternator problem and are awaiting the repairman to arrive at their boat on the north-side docks at Cap Sante. They cancelled Friday Harbor slip for that night and plan to arrive Saturday afternoon. We filled our water tank and contacted Dale Libby whose boat was not yet in the water, so he would arrive later.

At 1258 hours, we left our slip. Our route was west through Guemes Channel north of Fidalgo Island, across Rosario Strait, through Thatcher Pass, northwest from Lopez Sound, around the northern tip of Lopez Island, SW down Upright Channel, across San Juan Channel, past Brown Island, into Friday Harbor. **Approximately 20 nautical miles.**

Half-way through Guemes Channel, which was quite choppy, we met pea soup fog which lasted all the way across Rosario Strait (where we would cross the big ships channel) and half-way through Thatcher Pass. Thank goodness for our radar. Mother Mason worried about Dale who does not have radar. We went slowly and looked out for other vessels and markers. (Here's why it is a good reason to chart one's course near channel markers and other navigational aids so you can see them in the fog. Fog is very disorienting; looking out the windows, you can't tell if you're going north, south, or what.

The rest of the cruise was quite nice with beautiful sunny weather. As we neared Friday Harbor, which has one of the US Customs docks, traffic was quite congested near the harbor

opening. Big cruising boats were circling around in lines awaiting their chance at the Customs Dock. We had to get through that to get to our slip. There was a lot of radio traffic so it took a while to hail the marina office on VHF 66A for our slip assignment. We circled outside the breakwater and then docked at G-15 at 1415 hours, hooked up to electricity. I registered and paid the moorage fee of \$127.50 for 40' boat and electricity for 2 nights.

Anne Nesse called to update us: when the new alternator was installed, the mechanic forgot to reset the alternator readout; hence the alarm. The alternator was fine and they went to anchor at Eagle Harbor for the night.

Dale arrived safely and Fish-N-Chicks was docked nearby at G-3. (By the way, his daughter Elisabeth came up with that boat name.)

We could hear musicians performing in the nearby park, relaxed and had happy hour on board. After looking at restaurant options, we made a reservation at Mike's Café and Wine Bar, within walking distance. Even though we had read the menu, we were surprised to find out it was a vegan restaurant. The owner produces small batches of wines. Paul and Dale opted for pizza versions which turned out to have "mozzarella cheese" made from cashew nuts. Paul didn't like his; Dale loved his. I chose the vegan Chicken Marsala (soy) with mushrooms, which was very tasty. I amused the waitress when I asked if it meant that the chickens were fed vegan-only feed; that's when we found out all the food was vegan; no meat. We all had a good laugh. We stopped for ice cream on the way back to the dock.

Saturday, August 12, Friday Harbor: It had rained overnight, but the weather was sunny the rest of the trip. This was a free day to do what one wanted. I explored around the shops, bought pasta sauce to go with my potluck dish for dinner. The Nesse's arrived in good order in time for potluck dinner because they had enjoyed sailing around all day.

I began having problems priming the switch for the Wallas Stove. I had to turn it on twice before getting the "priming click." Then suddenly, dark gray smoke and a strong electronic fire smell came out from the cabinet beneath the stove into the cabin. Everything was quickly shut down and windows opened. We didn't try to use the stove the rest of the trip; so no cooking other than what could be heated up in the confusing convection/microwave oven.

During our potluck dinner at the dock, Dale mentioned he'd like to see my customs info sheet. When he looked at it, he realized he'd forgotten to bring his passport! I suggested he catch a ferry and see if someone could pick him up at the other end, but no one was available.

Sunday, August 13, Friday Harbor, Clear Customs, to Poet's Cove, Bedwell Harbor, South Pender, Island, B.C. Canada: So, at 6:30 a.m., fearing possible heavy fog, Dale in Fish-N-Chicks followed the WA State Ferry to Anacortes and continued on to tie up at LaConner, drove home, got his passport and boated all the way to South Pender Harbor. I calculated he covered about 66 miles.

We left the Port of Friday Harbor at 1105 hours and headed NW for South Pender Island, British Columbia, Canada. Our route was up San Juan Channel at about C300M direction, crossing Boundary Pass, to Bedwell Harbor on South Pender Island, BC Canada. At 1155 hours, Time Flies cleared Canadian Customs from the water because we have Nexus cards, passports, BR #s and are part of the Pre-Clearance System. Clearance # 2017 2250528. (Be sure to record your Customs Clearance Number in your boat log.) At Noon our port engine reported overheating, so Paul immediately shut it down and continued with one engine. (Engines just serviced, and both engines were “peeing.” Might just be a software glitch. No further problem for the rest of the cruise.) We were able to go straight to Poet’s Cove Resort Marina and were assigned to Slip #38, docking at 1220 hours. **(16.14 nautical miles)**

We saw Dale and the Nesses arriving at the Customs Dock at Bedwell Harbor. The Nesse’s motor stopped outside the harbor, but Rolf got it going again. All three boats were together at the docks for the two nights. Time Flies’ fee was US\$138.55. Happy hour was at 1600 hours, and then we all went to the Resort’s casual restaurant for dinner.

Monday, August 14, Poet’s Cove Resort: Relaxing day to do what one wanted, explore around the resort. Anne and I walked to the top floor of the luxury hotel for the view and information. Paul swam in the pool. We had potluck dinner on the docks. There were no mad dinghy races through the Pender Canal to Port Browning this year.

Tuesday, August 15, Bedwell Harbor to Ganges Marina, Salt Spring Island, B.C. Canada: We assisted Mystic Knot to back out from the slip. At 1115 hours, Dale assisted us in leaving our slip. We held up in the Bedwell Harbor waters waiting for Dale to follow us on our cruise to Salt Spring Island. We went northwest along the south side of North Pender Island in Swanson Channel into Captain Passage south of Prevost Island and into Ganges Marina at Salt Spring Island, off Vancouver Island, B.C. Canada **(17 nautical miles)**. Our starboard engine stopped reporting to the navigation system for this leg of the cruise, but the engines worked fine all the rest of the trip. We arrived at our 3-boat-shared long dock, between B and C docks, at 1225 hours. This was a more convenient dock than we’ve had previous years. Our three boats were lined up one after the other. We did not go to the newly rebuilt Salt Spring Marina further in toward shore because it is a longer distance to walk into Ganges. However, Ganges Marina gets more “rustic” each year.

Time Flies slip fee and electricity was Ca\$137.48 for two nights.

Earlier that morning, Paul’s elbow began bleeding and we had a hard time stemming the flow with our first aid box of supplies. We went to Salt Spring Pharmacy for their advice, and the pharmacist set us up with special bandages and cleaning advice. We bought extras just in case.

Nesse’s would arrive later, so Dale, Paul and I went to the Ganges Tuesday Farmer’s Market where finally we could get fresh vegetables (not an option at Poet’s Cove and one cannot bring such when crossing the border). No one could sell anything until the 2 p.m. starting bell rang.

We also tried a locally farmer-made chocolate ice cream. We explored shops and galleries. Thrifty Foods is a very convenient grocery store.

I discovered there was water in the cabinet under the head's newly installed sink, and water had gone to the bilge. I placed a thick towel to mop up the water, and we did not use the head sink the rest of the trip. We kept checking the bilge the rest of the trip. The bilge pump automatically works. We've never had water-in-the-bilge problems.

George and Sandy Johnson and Marlene and John Bellinger RV'd over via ferry to Fulford Harbor and stayed in an RV park. They met us in Ganges for dinner at the Oyster Catcher; there were 9 for dinner. Our waiter looked like a younger Wayne Gretzky and I told him so. It made his day!

Wednesday, August 16, Ganges Marina: Time for dreaded laundry chore. Cost C\$12 for two loads wash and dry at the rustic marina facility. We explored Ganges more and shared a chocolate chip cookie from Barb's Buns. We five boaters agreed to meet the Johnsons and Bellingers on our dock for happy hour, where we were entertained by a swan family of eight. Then eight of us walked into Ganges for dinner. We tried the Treehouse but they had no room for us, so we went back to the Oyster Catcher and our Wayne Gretzky look-alike waiter for another dinner. This time, service was slow, John complained and the waiter gave us our drinks on the house. (Thanks John!)

Thursday, August 17, Salt Spring Island to Port of Sidney, Vancouver Island, Canada: Paul wanted to go to the Treehouse for breakfast, so we two walked to town and found the Johnsons and Bellingers just finishing their breakfast before heading to the ferry and trip home.

At 1100 hours we left Ganges, with Fish-N-Chicks nearby as a buddy boat, for Port of Sidney Marina on the east side of Vancouver Island. Our route took us out Ganges Harbor, Captain Passage, down Swanson channel, Moresby Passage, Sidney Channel into Sidney Harbor (**21 nautical miles**). We hailed the marina on VHF 66A before the breakwater, and requested docking assistance. This is another quite busy traffic marina and it has a Canadian Customs dock just inside the breakwater. Wow, our dock was all the way into D dock near the inland end. Paul maneuvered very well, the wind cooperated much better than last time we were here, and all went well. PHEW! We arrived at our slip at 1240 hours. Our slip fee and electricity for the one night was C\$75.60.

We all five wanted to have dinner again at Bistro Suisse, so I walked over and made a reservation for 6:15 p.m. Our three boats were scattered over the marina, Dale at A dock, us at D dock and the Nesses at G dock. They travel with their dog "YoYo" (named after YoYo Ma), and had a long walk to get to doggie grass area.

Walking the Beacon Street shops, I succumbed to an English book I probably wouldn't find in the States and a Vancouver Island map (for a future driving trip) at Tanner's Books. I bumped into the Nesses who were on their way to Tanners for nautical charts. Paul and I walked along

the shoreline to Glass Beach where I collected some beach glass. Happy hour was at the dock at 4 p.m., but we didn't want to nibble much so we'd have room for hearty food at Bistro Suisse. We love their Suisse cowbell menus. Paul and I enjoyed French onion soup, wine, Paul had duck breast, and I had Jaeger Schnitzel with Rosti (brought most of it back for lunch the next day). Yummmmm!

Friday, August 18, Port of Sidney, Clear Customs, to Deer Harbor Marina, Orcas Island, USA: It was time to say goodbye to the Nesses and YoYo who had to leave for home, an anticipated seven-hour cruise, and their five relatives coming to their Gresham, OR house to view the eclipse. They had been advised to shop for five days' food supplies due to the hordes of people expected.

At 1045 hours, with assistance from Dale, we left the Marina, waited for Dale's boat to come out of the breakwater, and headed east across Sidney Channel over the sandy tip of Sidney Island, across Miners Channel, Haro Strait. Below the southwest end of Stuart Island, after turning around to find cell phone coverage, I cleared Customs on the water. US Release #305520170818143831. Since we didn't have to go into Roche Harbor to clear Customs (which Dale had to), we parted with Dale and continued through Spieden Channel, across San Juan Channel through North Pass to Deer Harbor Marina on Orcas Island. **(20 nautical miles)** We arrived at the pump-out at 1230 hours. At 1250 hours we were backed into our favorite slip next to the store ramp, slip C-1. Dale came in alongside us at C-2, but just as he backed in the wind came up and he sidled into our boat, just touching the rail. The less-experienced dockhand had held onto the stern line when she should have let up a bit. Another dock hand jumped onto our boat and nearly knocked me out of the way as I was clamping a towel to the rail to dry. No damage to either boat, but Dale was quite upset. Our slip fee, electricity, and 4 shower tokens was \$156 for two nights.

We three enjoyed happy hour at the dock before walking up to Deer Harbor Inn for a delicious dinner. The elderly pianist was playing, and we enjoyed talking with him.

Saturday, August 19: The weather was beautiful and we all decided to relax around the marina and not try to get to East Sound. Low tide was -1.4' in the morning. Paul and I took a walk along the upper path, photographed a huge log boom and tug near the entrance to Deer Harbor, and bought some squash at a farm stand. Dale found some beach glass exploring along the marina shore. One lady commented that she had seen Paul in two different types of hammocks on our back deck. This trip Paul used his hammocks at South Pender Island, Sidney and Deer Harbor. I read a good book, trying to find space for my chair among the hammocks. Dinner was potluck at our boat. Dale grilled crab cakes.

Sunday, August 20: Time to cruise home to our respective home ports. We left the marina at 1110 hours and arrived at Cap Sante at 1255 hours with Fish-N-Chicks within our sight for much of the trip. **(21 nautical miles)**. No fog. Our motors had been in use about 10 hours for the whole cruise. Dale later called to let us know he'd arrived safely. Paul and I took a break from cleaning and unloading by having a late lunch at Anthony's Cabana where we spotted an empty spot in the burgees line-up. Anthony's

agreed for us to supply them with our squadron burgee. We hauled three cartloads to the car and headed home for happy hour at our lake dock.

The Nesse's report that they "had an uneventful 6 hour push to Anacortes, easy, we caught favorable currents all the way, Thanks to good current tables! We docked and loaded the truck and dog, and drove another 6 hours home, and were tucked into our own beds in Gresham that night before midnight. I will note that the boat trip was the easy part, the freeway not so much. The eclipse was good, we got 99% at our house, our family did drive south to totality about 30 miles, but we had done enough driving and stuck at home and played with pinholes and shadows, which was much fun.. We did see the ripples and felt to coldness of the loss of our sun during the minutes up to and though and after the totality."

All in all, an enjoyable trip with perfect weather after the one night rain at Friday Harbor.

Total Cruise Miles = 99 except for Dale who covered about 165!