REALLY Dark!

TUESDAY – June 30st – Today our plan is to meet with the guys at American Tugs about some details of our new American Tug being built. Our new boat was started a few weeks ago and we are super excited to see the progress! We had a great meeting discussing all the build details and got to see the hull of our new boat in the mold.

After the meeting we had a late lunch at Nell Thorn, then at 4:30pm we decided to start our way home. On our boat (we usually cruise 8 knots, but can go 13.5 if needed) it takes about 7-8 hours to get home (Tacoma). We figured we would just stop somewhere along the way for the night then continue on the next morning.

With no particular destination in mind we just kept going. Just north of Seattle the sun was just setting and we knew we either had to find an anchorage fast or we would be cruising in the dark. We made the decision to just keep going through the dark all the way to Tacoma.

We have never really done any night passages. We have taken off super early in the morning when its still dark and stayed out until just after sunset but never when its really the dark

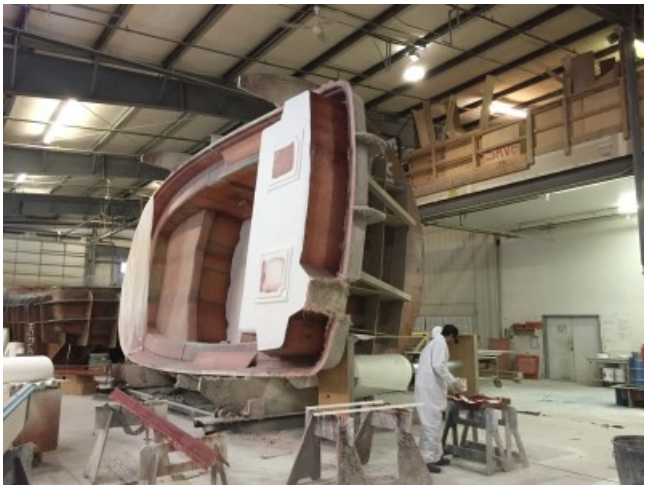
of the night. This night however it was clear and the moon was out so I figured it wouldn't be much different. I was wrong.

Luckily we got past Seattle and all the ferries before it got really dark. With the sun down we had to slow our cruise speed to about 5 knots, turn on our navigation lights (Red and green lights on port and starboard, and one white light on the mast) and really be on the lookout for logs in the water. I figured the moon would brighten things up a bit but because of our course in relation to the moon it didn't help at all. It suddenly got REALLY dark! Our radar was on and should show other boats in the area. As we ventured into Colvos passage I could see what looked like a couple tug boats towing barges on the radar. We could just barely make out their lights as we tucked in close to shore to get out of their way.

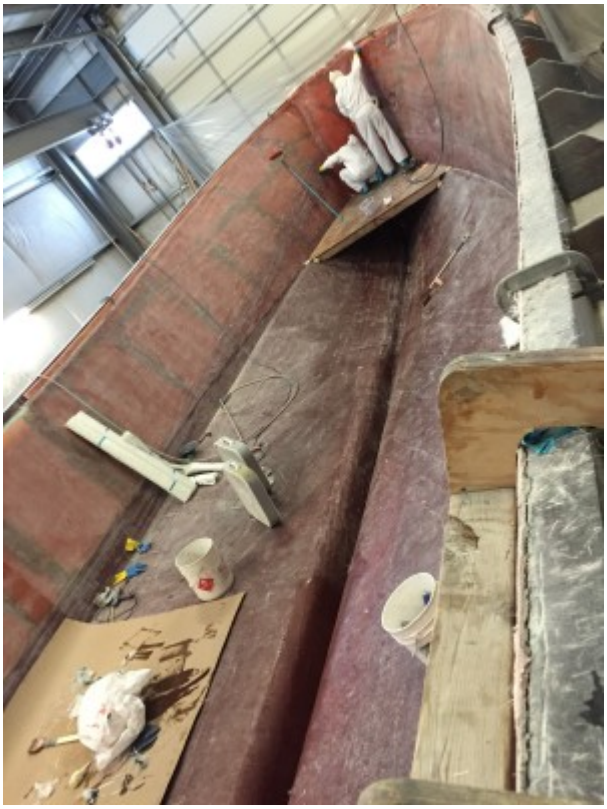
Julie asked me if I turned on the navigation lights and I said "of course I did". As we got closer to the tugs she wanted to make sure so I stuck my head out the door to confirm they were on. "Not good" I said. "The starboard light is not working". To make matters worse we were quickly approaching the tugs in tow and they were on our starboard side. Without that light they would have a hard time seeing us.

I quickly took the light apart and found the bulb was burned out! We needed a solution quick, so I told Skylar to grab me some duct tape and a small flashlight, STAT. I took the green lens off the light fixture, stuck the flashlight in it, turned it on and duck taped everything down. The green light shined bright once again as we passed the tugs!

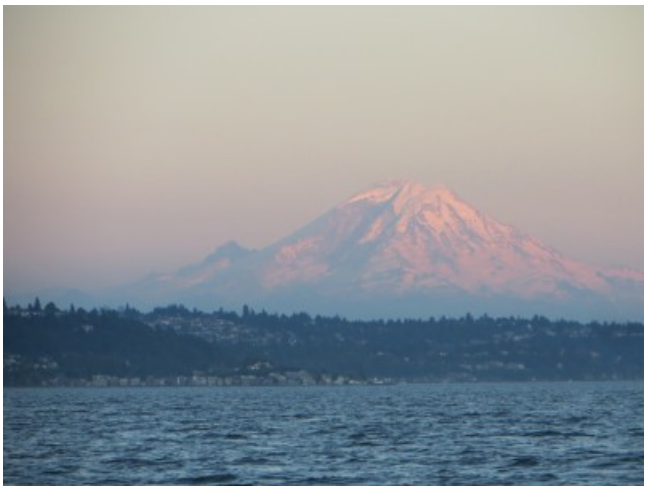
As the night went on things got a little less stressful as we got used to the darkness. We arrived at the Tacoma Yacht club docks at 11:27pm, tied up the boat and quickly went to sleep. A stressful but fun ending to an awesome trip!

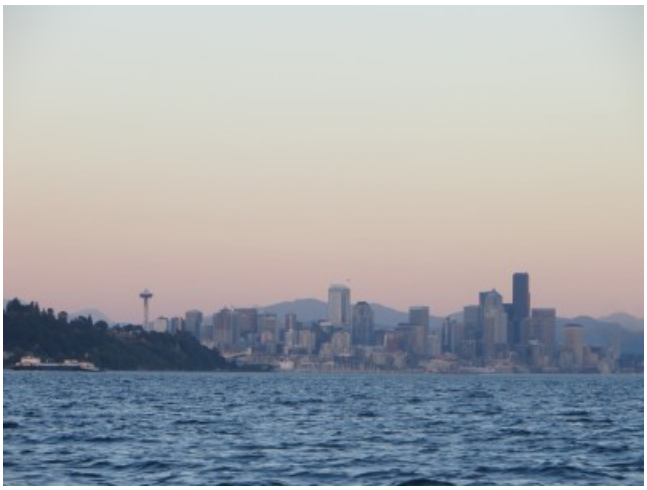


Our new boat in the mold

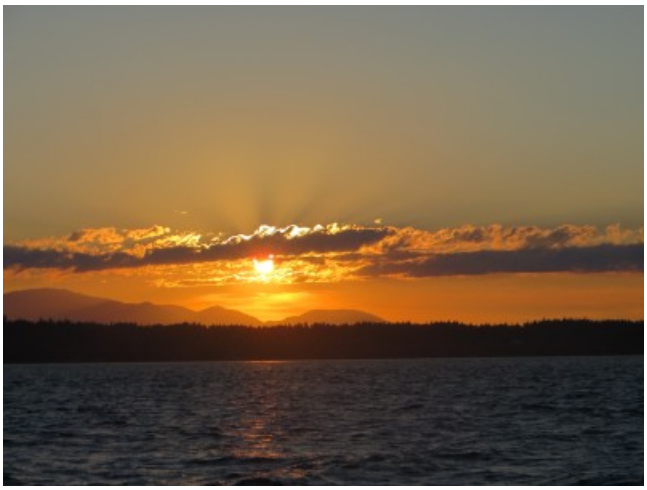


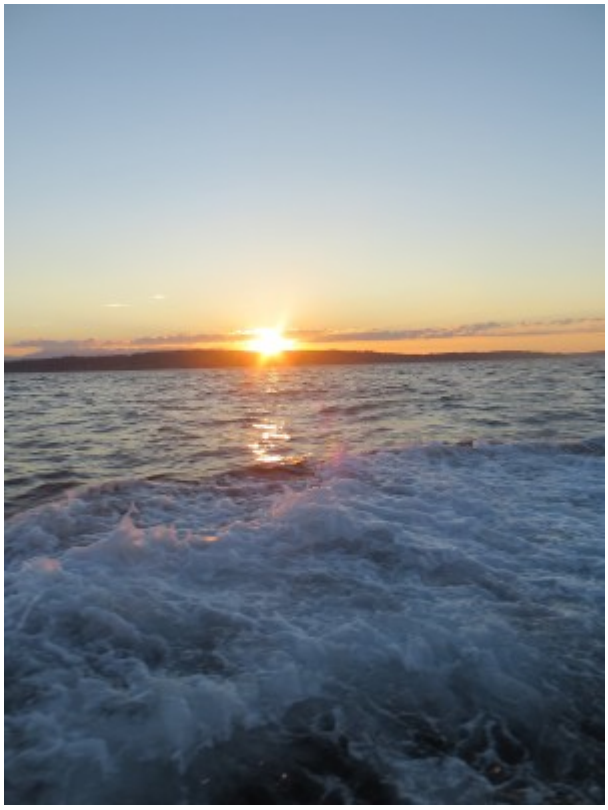
The makeshift navigation light





Sun setting as we pass Seattle





It was Dark!

View from our pilothouse. Thats Tacoma in the distance.

Steep Hike

MONDAY – June 29th – We woke up early and got ready for a steep hike up the mountain. With the dinghy securely anchored just off the beach we made our way up the trail. Skylar just cruised up and Ava did an awesome job climbing all the rocks and roots. The view from the top was incredible! We spent a lot of time just looking out across the water and all the islands.

As we continued on the ridge trail we came upon a rope swing someone had hung in a tree. It was the best rope swing we have ever been on and the setting couldn't have been better. We all took turns swinging as high as we could. Even Ava loved it.

We cruised back down the trail and had lunch at the boat. Our plan today is to cross Rosario Strait and shoot through Deception Pass so we can make our way to LaConner for a meeting with American Tugs. To be safe you should time your passage through Deception Pass for slack water. Current in the pass can run 8 knots and if wind opposes current it can create large steep waves that can be very dangerous. Our plan is to wait for slack tide, so we waited in Watmough Bay until the time was right.

We had a smooth passage through Deception Pass narrows, into the Swinomish Channel and up to LaConner – American Tugs docks. Dinner at the LaConner brewing company was great and we all had fun walking around the town.

View from the hike

Deception Pass

Oops!

They have gone crazy!

Coffee!
Thunder

Coffee!

LA CONNER
ICECREAM TOWER
BEER CAVE

Watmough Bay

SUNDAY – June 28th We left Spencer Spit with two potential destinations in mind – James Island or Watmough Bay on the south end of Lopez Island. James Island is a little tiny island on the west side of Rosario Strait. We have cruised past it many times but never stopped. This time the small dock was wide open so we decided to pull in.

After getting tied up we all took off for a hike around the island. The trail system was not clearly marked and paths seemed to go everywhere so we made our way around the island hoping we were going the right direction. Beautiful views along the way looking out toward the mainland and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Back at the boat a little fishing boat came and said they had caught some salmon just a few hundred yards from the dock. Although salmon season is closed (you have to throw them back) there was no stopping Skylar now. Catching a huge salmon was all he could think about. I had no choice but to prepare the fishing gear and dinghy to try our luck. Just as we were ready to go it started raining. It was actually kind of nice

and refreshing but it didn’t last long. We fished for just an hour or so with no luck.

After seeing the island and hanging out for a while we decided to take off and cruise to Watmough Bay, another spot we have never been to but heard it was awesome. A short cruise we arrived to snag a buoy in the bay. What a beautiful setting! Huge rock cliffs on one side that came all the way down to the water and forest on the other. We explored with a long dinghy ride and hung out on the beach for a while. Tomorrow we will take the steep hike up the mountain.