



## Crank it up!

Day 28 – Arriving in La Conner the night before, we were now ready for our 1:30pm haul out to replace the rudder shaft seal. With some time in the morning we called our friend Steve who now sells American Tugs factory direct. At some point we want a boat with 2 staterooms, so Steve was going to show us some options in their lineup. We had a great time looking and dreaming about boats. Nothing we are serious about now, but in a couple years these kids will be too big. Exactly what we want they don't have, but their new 48 set to come out in the next few months could fit the bill with some changes. We had a great time discussing boats and having lunch with Steve.

The haul out and repair went smooth but now it was 3pm. Our plan was to leave La Conner just after what should have been an 11am haul out, bound for Seattle, 55 miles away. At 8 knots (our usual cruising speed) we would never make it before dark, so we cranked it up to the fuel sucking 13.5 knots. The computer showed an arrival time of just before 8pm so we set off at the blistering pace. The kids start school in just over a week, so Seattle will provide some much needed back to school shopping.

Upon arrival in Bell Harbor we were all pretty tired. Ava went straight to bed while the 3 of us were soon to follow.

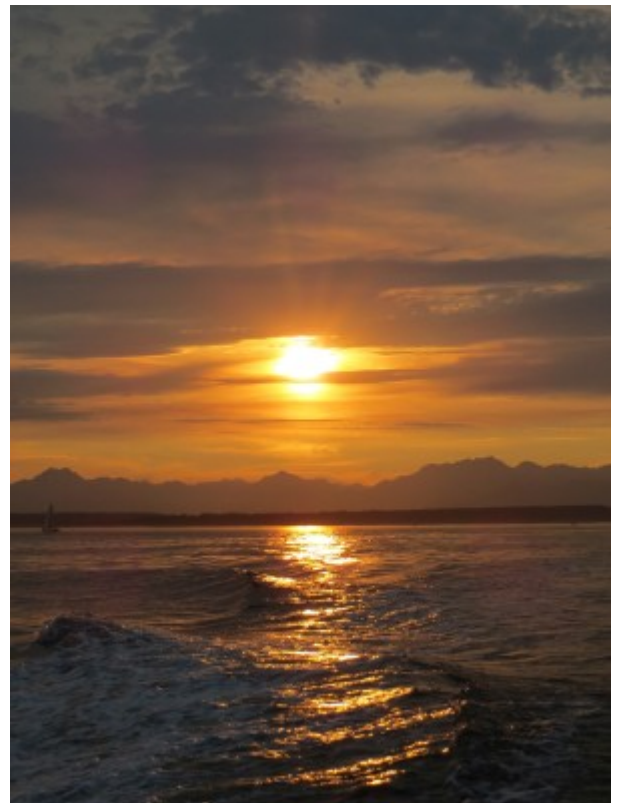
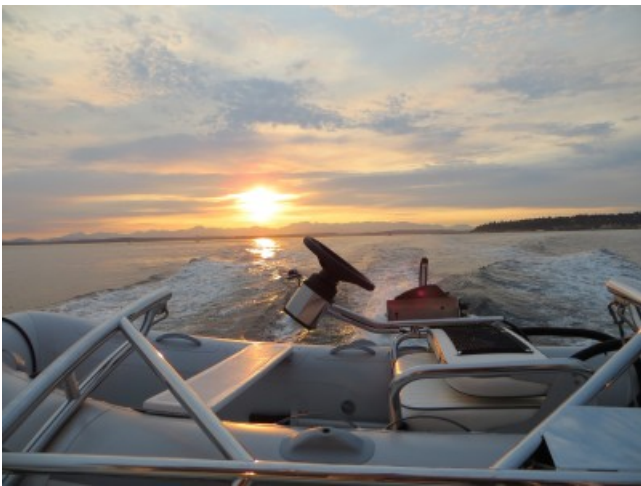
Tomorrow will be a big day for Ava walking all around the city doing what she hates, retail.













## FISH ON!

Just Northwest of Sucia Islands Shallow Bay, is an island called Patos. Every year we pull into its small anchorage trying to find a spot to anchor, with no luck. We have never stayed the night on this island so exposed to the Strait of Georgia its wind beaten sandstone cliffs and trees are extremely ragged.

The weather was nice and calm. We decided our best shot of exploring Patos Island would be to make the 3 mile run across fairly exposed open water from our anchorage on Sucia to Patos, using our dinghy. Our dinghy will run at about 20mph (with the 4 of us) and is actually more stable and seaworthy than you might think but even though, its still only 10.5 feet long.

We all hopped in the dinghy for the early morning run. A smooth crossing all the way landed us on a sandstone beach off the beaten path. Exploring where not many go is our favorite, and this was just that . After about 30 minutes or so I started to see the wind kick up and tide rips forming in the distance. Not a good sign. We didnt want to be stuck on Patos so I told Julie its time to go! What already? We just got here, she said. Pack it up, Im not risking the crossing in anything but perfect conditions, I said.

We piled back on the dinghy. Weaving around some of the larger tide rips that were creating some white cap waves we rode through some building lumpy seas. Probably nothing that would have gotten much worse but Im not taking that chance!

It was time to get the boat down to the American Tug factory in La Conner. Our rudder shaft seal has been leaking a little bit for the last year, so it was time to get it replaced. To replace it though, they need to pull the boat out of the water. Our haul out appointment was for 11am the next day, so the plan was to stay the night in La Conner tonight to be ready for our appointment tomorrow. As we were getting ready to leave Sucia, about 10:30am I got a text from the factory asking if we were close. Close? We were 35 miles north; and our appointment is not until tomorrow, I thought. I figured they must have the date mixed up, so I went to my email to confirm what I told them. Sure enough, that's exactly what I told them, today at 11am. How could I have got that so screwed up! After lots of apologies I got a new appointment for 1:30pm the next day.

Nothing we can do now, lets go fishing! We pulled out of Shallow bay and got the downrigger in the water. After an hour or so of fishing, Skylar asked, "how will we know if there is a fish on"? I explained how the downrigger worked then just said, "you'll know". Within a few minutes Julie and Skylar start screaming "FISH ON, FISH ON". I was in the pilothouse and came running back to a zinging line. All right, finally a salmon, I thought. It fought pretty hard for a minute or so, then not so much. As I got it close to the boat I could tell it wasn't a salmon, then the huge mouth of a lingcod lurked up out from below. It was a beautiful fish, but this time of year you can't keep them. It was extremely difficult to let him free!

We realed up, then southbound for a nice cruise to LaConner. We tied up for the night at the American Tug docks for an early to bed.









## Family Favorite

Day 25 & 26 – We left Roche to time our arrival at Jones Island for 11:00 – 11:30. We figure this is about the best time to get a spot in those crowded anchorages. Jones Island isn't crowded so much as it's just super small. This is one

of our favorite spots in the San Juan's but it's hard to find space. We wanted dock space but there's only room for about 4 boats on the dock. Pulling in we could see the dock was full, so we hovered around for a while hoping someone would leave or tell us they were leaving soon. No such luck, so we moved on through the rain squalls to Sucia Island, Shallow Bay.

There's no dock in Shallow Bay but we were able to snag the last mooring buoy. This bay has absolutely the best sunset view in all of the San Juan's. This island is our family favorite. We figured we'd spend 2 nights here then head south to LaConner for some repair on our boat. After lunch we cruised off in the dinghy to a little islet off Sucia called Little Sucia. Exploring the island we started walking along the beach getting further and further away from the dinghy. Soon we figured it would be faster to just keep going around the whole island than turn back but we were not sure if that was possible. It got a little dicey with the rising tide but we made it. It was a real adventure!

After dinner the weather really improved. We cruised the dinghy all the way over to Fossil bay then slowly back during the incredible sunset.

The next day it was time for long hike. We packed the backpack, anchored the dinghy in a rising tide and set off on a beautiful trail. It was about a 4 mile hike along the waters edge then through the mid island forest. We all had a great time getting some exercise.

After dinner we packed up the dinghy with everything we needed to build a fire, roast marshmallows and cook the crab. The crab we caught at Roche have been in their jail for the last 2 days. The jail is a 5-gallon bucket with lots of holes drilled in it and a lid. You tie a rope to the handle and lower them down in the water to keep them alive.

Skylar and I got to the beach and found a nice campsite to

build the fire. We gathered and chopped some wood, got the crab cooking and got the fire going. After everything was rolling, Julie and Ava kayaked in to take advantage of our labor. As the sun went down the moon came up. It was the brightest, largest moon we have ever seen, it was absolutely incredible. The pictures do nothing for what it really looked like. The fire was great, crab awesome and fun to see the kids having so much fun in the outdoors. Ava was crazed for finding firewood. You would have thought she was in a survival situation with the way she searched all night for firewood. She loved the hunt!











