



## Desolation

Day 8. We will finally reach Desolation Sound! However we have a 6 hour cruise ahead of us under a grey sky and 15-20 knots of wind. As we poked out into the open, the water was a little lumpy but at least now we will have following seas. It ended up a fairly smooth ride and only got better further north. We cruised past Powel River and Lund then up through the inside of the Copeland Islands. Rounding Sarah Point the high peaks surrounding Desolation should have come into view but the cloud cover was too thick.

Grace Harbor was our first stop in Desolation. This is truly a beautiful and rugged place. The water drops off deep just a few feet from the waterline making passages in tight waterways possible. Stern tying is the norm here. This is a method of anchoring where you drop your anchor, back up toward shore, then take a line from your boat to shore. You wrap the line around something and pull the end back to the boat making a loop. It's harder than it sounds because your boat wants to blow down wind while you are trying to tie it off. The great thing about it is your boat doesn't swing and you can get the stern of your boat really close to shore due to the steep drop off in this area.

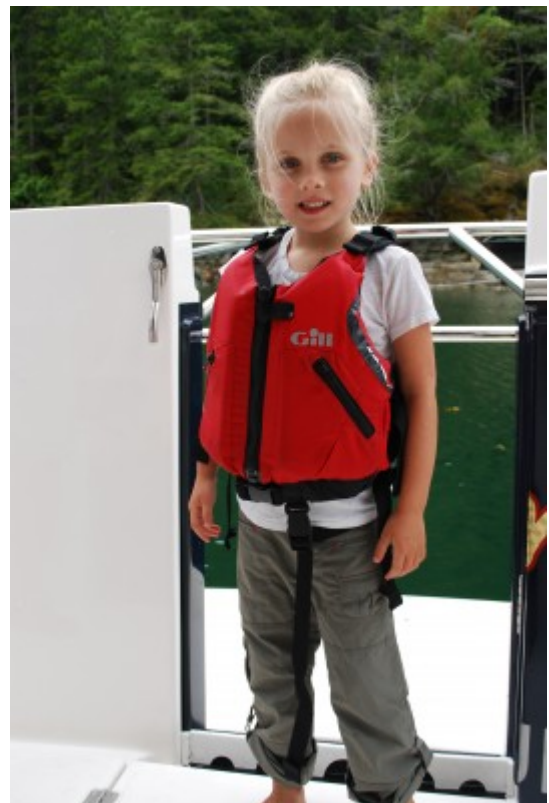
We have stern tied a few times before but by no means have it mastered. This time we got the anchor down, backed to shore

but not close enough. As I got in the dinghy to take the line to shore it became apparent I would not have enough line to bring it all the way back, so I just tied it off. The problem with tying it off is when your ready to leave you have to go back to shore to untie. I came back to the boat, tightened the line and we seemed to be in place. Julie says all I do is fiddle with things when I'm on the boat. I can't seem to just relax, I need to have everything just the way I want it. Of course I couldn't just leave it alone. I let more anchor rode out so we could get closer to shore then dinged in to grab the end of the line and pull it back to the boat. I quickly grabbed the end (the boat is loose now) and tried to pull the line back to the boat. Problem is the friction on the line from trying to pull it around the tree made driving the dinghy while holding the line extremely difficult. I would give it some gas and get yanked all over the place almost running over the line with the outboard several times. It was a real show! I was determined though so I gave it one final goose of the throttle, almost getting yanked out of the dinghy but made it back to the boat. Julie and I laughed for an hour at the sight of me pulling the line. There is an easy solution, all I needed to do is pull a bunch of line while on shore and pile the loose line in the boat. Next time.

First thing Skylar did was jump off the boat into the warm water! We took off for a dingy tour of the harbor and noticed a sign showing a trail to a lake. It was about 1 mile round trip so we took off through the dense forest to see what we could find. It was a beautiful lake but not good for swimming, too many logs and marshland. Locals call it Leech Lake. Ava is turning into a great hiker! There was even a small waterfall and a bunch of old equipment left behind from logging days.

Fish tacos for dinner and Skylar took a nice long evening kayak paddle. It's the only thing that settles him down. Since the prospect of warm water that's all he can talk

about, driving us crazy with; dad come swimming, Ava watch this, can I jump off the top of the boat, can I, can I, can I, watch this, watch this, watch this! He has a one-track mind that demands your full attention at all times. You gotta love the energy and excitement though!



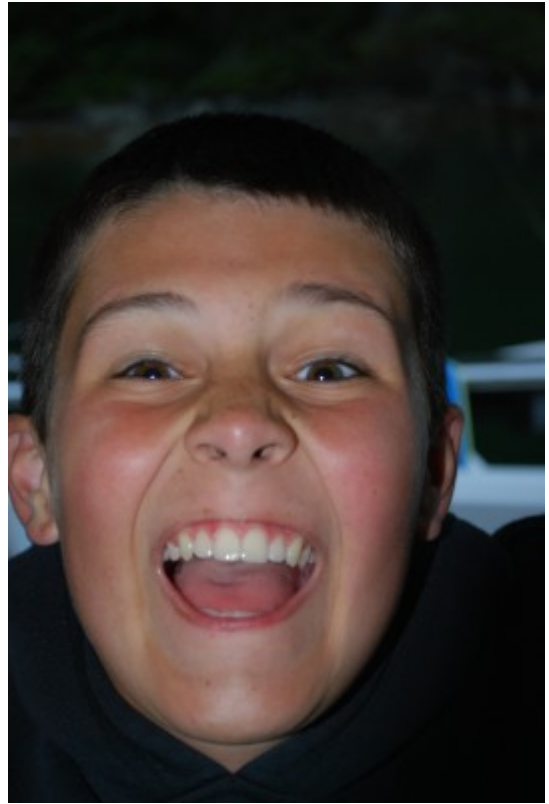














## Whisky Gulf

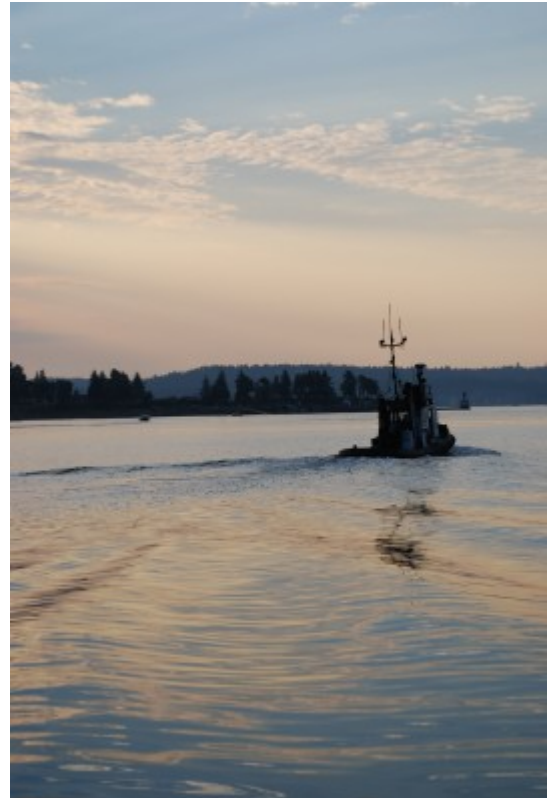
Day 7 started off at 6:30am. Bound for Pender Harbor on the east side of the Strait of Georgia means that we must cross this large body of water that can get rough at times. The weather forecast was for light winds in the AM although clouds and some rain were coming in. We figured it was a good time to cross although Whisky Gulf was going to be active. Whisky Gulf is a torpedo testing area in the Strait of Georgia. It's used by the Canadian and US military and when its active they do not allow any boat traffic whatsoever. This area is extremely large and lies right in the path of our intended route. To get across we must travel around the restricted



area adding a little more time to our passage but not a big deal. The first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our passage was flat calm then things got a little rough but not too bad. Later we talked to a couple that left Nanaimo at 9am. They said the crossing was extremely rough and they heard there were even some rescues going on. Good thing we left when we did!

We pulled into Pender Harbor Garden Bay (Garden Bay Marina and Pub). After talking to the locals we found out you could hike to a lake just up the road. A short hike revealed a beautiful lake that looks like the high mountain lakes we have back home. Skylar jumped off the rocks into the lake and had a blast swimming!

We took a really long dinghy ride exploring the many inlets in Pender Harbor. Dinner at their pub was really good that night and everyone was very friendly.



















## Denied, Denied, Denied!

Day 6 would be spent in Nanaimo all day. We needed to re-provision and get the boat ready for the next leg of our adventure, another 100 miles north. Washing the boat and getting everything ship shape all morning long was no fun for the kids but it had to be done. We figured they needed to get out so we took them to the park for what proved to be a lesson in kids with behavioral issues. They were like caged monkeys that just broke free. They really are great kids but this outing was not their shining moment.

Two carts full of food at the grocery store and we had everything we needed now all we needed to do is pay for it. The first credit card didn't go through for some reason; well maybe they don't take Discover I thought. AMX same thing, what the @#\$%. Last option, the debit card returned the same result. 3 cards, 3 denied, I was a little embarrassed especially with all the people waiting behind us. The checker was able to put our transaction on hold while I figured out how to pay. Just then, my phone rang. It was Discover card fraud prevention department. Apparently they put a hold on the account due to transaction made in a foreign country, same thing for the other 2 cards. Good thing I was able to answer my phone and call the other cards. I guess you need to notify them when traveling out of country.

The day ended with an awesome air show from the Canadian Snow Birds that just happened to be going on right above the marina. It was amazing seeing what they do but the jets were way too loud for Ava. Tomorrow is an early departure for crossing the Strait of Georgia.





