



Clipper Run Down

Monday August 1st – We left Blakely Harbor at 6:30am on Monday August 1st headed for La Conner on the Swinomish Channel. Our boat still needed the upper deck seating installed and a bunch of miscellaneous other items that the factory was going to complete.

As we headed out of the bay it became apparent we were in for some serious fog. Keeping our speed to about 7 knots Julie and I were glued to the radar, chart plotter and our surroundings while the kids slept below. Unfortunately, if you boat in the Pacific Northwest for any length of time you will encounter fog. It's never fun and can be very stressful but after some whiteout experience you get just a little more comfortable. However, when you see a blip on the radar racing toward your stern you get a little nervous. Then out of the fog you catch glimpses of the Victoria Clipper racing along, it's a little eerie and unsettling as the clipper runs you down in the fog while you never actually see it.

We arrived in La Conner at about 1pm and the guys were quickly down to the dock starting the seating install. The next day we hauled the boat out at 10:30 am so we could install a new thru hull fitting to relocate where the watermaker was pulling

seawater. The boat was out of the water for a couple hours hanging in the sling while the factory performed the work. A few other miscellaneous projects got done but still more to do tomorrow. All together we spent 3 nights in La Conner sitting at the dock while the factory performed the necessary work. The kids were very good considering but they (actually Julie and I too) were getting a little stir crazy!



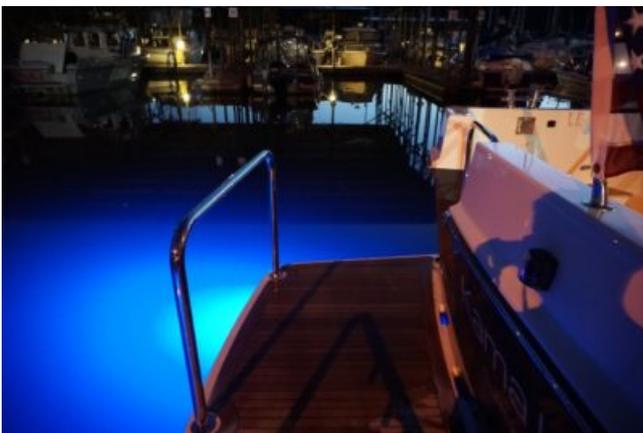
Fogout!





New upper deck seating





Family Reunion

Friday July 29th – Sunday July 31st After a successful midnight anchoring experience we woke up to sunny blue skies. All morning long we worked on little boat projects. Julie and Ava laid out on the bow reading books until Ava decided it was time to go tubing. We pulled her around until her arms couldn't hang on any longer then we got ready to go to dinner at the Boathouse with Toodie, John, Jeff, Shannon and Sophie. We all had a great dinner together then Ava stayed the night at the cabin while Julie and I kayaked in the dark back to the boat for the night.

The next day was the official start of "Hinckley Family Fun Days". Everyone came from all over the state, Bellingham, Yakima, Sumner, Bellevue and Portland to spend time with family and have some fun. Nancy brought Skylar so he could join our voyage. The kids played in the water and we shuttled people out to see our boat. Always a big hit for the kids is the rope swing. They swung for hours taking turns until their little arms couldn't take any more. Skylar was the official head of camp. He kept the fire going strong and the camp organized. Families pitched tents for the night but Skylar, being the so called Mountain Man he thinks he is, slept in his sleeping bag on the dirt, in full view of the stars.

Sunday morning everyone got back together for a nice breakfast then said goodbye.

We all had fun spending time with family we don't get to see all that often. Thanks to everyone who put so much work into a successful reunion but especially John and Toodie who open up their cabin every year to the chaos that is "Hinckley Family Fun Days".

At around 2:15 on Sunday we pulled anchor and set off back

north for the start of our summer boat trip. But, before we go much further we need to ditch this 18' boat we are pulling. We thought it would be so much fun to have on our trip but as much fun as it would be, its also a total P in the A! Thinking about it back there while towing and always having to deal with it when docking or anchoring is difficult. We were able to see what its like having it tied to the big boat while anchored. If there's any wind or wakes from passing boats the little boat bounces all over the place in the waves. We would be more limited on our anchorage choices and if unexpected wind comes up it could easily cause damage. Too much stress! So, we made the decision to drop it off at our boathouse in Tacoma.

After dumping the boat, we motored north to Blakely Harbor on Bainbridge Island to anchor for the night. This was a beautiful first time anchorage for us that has a view of the Seattle skyline. It was awesome at night looking at all the lights! Tomorrow will be an early start for the long run to La Conner!













We are off!!



Can't Get Going

Thursday July 28th – We've been planning our big summer boat trip for the last few months. Having a new boat to deal with has been a lot of work figuring everything out. We planned to make our first stop Oro Bay on Anderson Island to do some crabbing for a couple days before heading to Julie's family reunion in the South Sound. Our mission every year is to stock up on as much crab as we can for a good family feast. Most years we do pretty good but this year our poor planning was going to cost the family a feeding frenzy. Our plan was to

leave Wednesday morning but we just couldn't get the boat all stocked and ready. Thursday morning came and went as we packed up the car for our final load to the boat.

5:25pm we were finally able to shove off. We decided to tow our 18' center console boat behind the big boat this trip so we had a fast boat for extended exploration and fishing. In order to get the little boat hooked up someone has to drive it to open water to meet the big boat so we can hook up the tow line. Skylar is skipping this leg of the trip because he was with a friend at Suncadia. Julie suddenly realized Skylar wasn't there to Capitan the little boat like he usually does. "I can't do it! I can't do it!" She said over and over. "I've haven't even driven the boat yet". Once she was done freaking out she gathered the courage and jumped in the boat to make her way through the yacht club and past the ferry to open water. She did a fantastic job but not without a couple heart racing moments. As we pulled out she passed the Coast Guard and then she passed the Police boat. She doesn't have her boaters license and she was sure they knew it!

After all the hustle to get going, we couldn't get free yet. First, we needed to go down the Foss Waterway to get fuel in the boat. 1 hour and 498 gallons later our 640 gallon fuel tanks were full. 7:25pm we actually started our trip heading south. Our plan was to make it to the Pirates Cove where we always anchor for the family reunion but that was almost 4 hours away. Boating in the dark is never fun but we decided to just keep going. The sun set over the Olympics giving us an amazing sunset as we just kept motoring into the night. Radar and GPS position showing on our charts we cruised with limited visibility until about 10pm when it truly went black. No moon light, nothing. We were totally piloting by interments but even that doesn't help you with logs in the water. We crept along at 4 knots while Julie sat out on the bow looking for anything in the water. We made it into Pirates Cove at 11:10pm and for the first time ever, anchored

the boat in total darkness but the water was dead calm. It was a fun adventure but not something we want to repeat.



Coming into the Foss Waterway for fuel



Beautiful sunset, but its

getting dark and we are
still a long way from our
anchorage!

