



Always Put Your Dinghy Up

Saturday August 12th – Leaving Ladysmith today we decided a relaxing anchorage at Wallace island would be perfect. The weather was good, wind calm and we only had about 10nm to our destination so we decided to just tow our dinghy. Instead of using the crane to lift the dinghy on the upper deck we often just tow it behind the big boat when the weather is good. Its makes it much easier when you get to your destination, especially when anchoring and stern tying like we planned on doing at Wallace.

Half way there the wind started to pick up. Not too bad 10-15 knots with 1-2' of chop. Then things started to increase 15-20, then 20-25. As we rounded the northern most tip of Salt Spring Island the wind whipped up to a sustained 32 knots and the water turned white with very short steep waves. Not too big of a deal except that we were towing a 13' dinghy 75' behind us.

Julie said "I don't know about this, maybe you should turn around". I kind of ignored. A few minutes later Julie said "Chris, turn around" in stern voice but I had foolishly gotten too far into it and turning around was not an option.

Our destination anchorage was only about 1 mile away and I

thought we may be able to get some protection in there to either turn around or get anchored. As we slogged through heading into the wind there was nothing we could do about the dinghy. At times, you couldn't even see it except for the fishing poles sticking up, as it went down in the trough of a wave.

We made it to the anchorage but it was so windy there was no way we were going to get anchored in the small, narrow bay that was already full of boats. It did however provide enough relief to get the boat turned around. There was no way in this wind to get the dinghy put back up on the upper deck, our only option was to keep towing it. As I struggled to get the boat pointed in the opposite direction, I told Julie and Skylar to get the dinghy pulled up "short" on the tow line so it was only 25' or so behind the boat not 75'. After I got the boat turned around I looked back and the dinghy was gone! "Where's the dinghy" I asked. "Right where you told us to put it, tied up on the "port" side. There was obviously some confusion between the words "short" and "port".

After they got the dinghy back on the tow line we made our way back through the rough stuff. The dinghy, now surfing down the waves, would take on water at the bottom of the trough then pop back up. The fishing lures on one of the poles came loose, flying all over the place we were worried it was going to put a hole in the dinghy.

After all the excitement, we made it back to Thetis Island's Telegraph Harbor Marina where the wind was calm. They were able to get us on the dock where we promptly cracked open a couple beers after getting tied up, then relaxed on the boat the rest of the day.

The moral of the story is – "Be prepared for anything. Always put your dinghy up".

Sunday August 13th – The wind seemed to have died down so we

packed lunches and hoped in the dinghy for a ride to Clam Bay. We love the beach at Clam Bay and we were excited to get over there. Once again all was good until we rounded a corner and got hit with strong winds again. There was no way we were getting the dinghy safely to the beach and tied up. The waves were pounding the shore so we turned around defeated once again by the wind. We decided it was a project day and spent the whole afternoon getting little projects done on the boat.

After a nice dinner onboard we tried Clam Bay again to find the wind died down and calm seas. We played on the beach as the sun went down then explored the bay in the dinghy. A fun but somewhat stressful last few days!



Telegraph Harbor Marina





Hamburgers for dinner



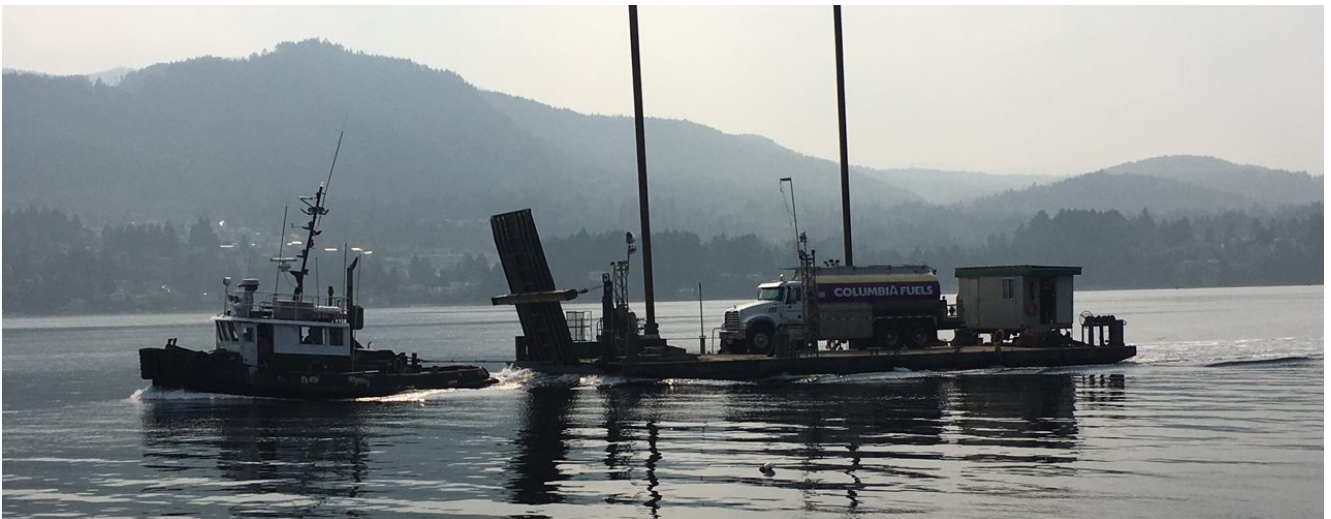
Ava grinding coffee





No fish at Clam Bay





Crank it up to 20

Friday August 11th – Julie and I woke up, abandoned the kids on the boat, and set out for another hike around the island. While hiking I devised a plan that would take us in the dinghy

over to Silva Bay. I've read about it and always wanted to go there but we've never gone. Silva Bay is just off the Strait of Georgia and to get there from our location required transiting Gabroliia Passage. The current in this Passage can run over 8 knots so you have to be careful even in a small fast boat. I calculated our arrival time resulting in 4 knots of current.

We grabbed the kids, lifejackets, fishing poles and a VHF radio then cranked the dinghy up to 20 for our passage to Silva. I kept the rapids a bit of a secret from Julie knowing she would be stressed leading up to the passage. As we approached I let her in on the secret. No time to get nervous, we cruised through avoiding the biggest whirlpools, skipping across the water. We got thrown around a little but nothing too scary.

Once on the other side we explored the maze of islands and passages ending up at Silva Bay dinghy dock. The place was a little run down and the restaurant looked like it was on the verge of closure. We decided to risk it and I'm glad we did, the food was actually really good!

While we waited to pay, the kids went exploring. They came back saying they found the motherload of blackberries. With a couple of to-go containers in hand, we picked a massive amount blackberries. They were growing all around an old abandoned, fenced tennis court that made for the perfect picking location.

On our way back home, we made a detour out to the Strait of Georgia for some fishing. Skylar got what we thought was a huge one on but when it came to the surface it was the "D word" (while fishing you never say "Dogfish", you can say the "D word" or "dog like fish" "shark like fish" or anything like that but never, never Dogfish). We got the nasty creature off the line and kept fishing for a while with only a couple more shark like fish to add to the catch.

Back through the narrows we went, now running 5 knots in the opposite direction we blazed through in a squirrely fashion. We pulled anchor and made our way to Ladysmith. The marina there lost our reservation so we waited outside the docks for a while while they rearranged some boats to fit us in.

We hiked up the hill to the town and got some groceries at the store. The kids wanted blackberry pie but we didn't have a pie pan. We decided to get some premade crust and make simple little pocket pies. On the way back down we stopped at a cool new Mexican restaurant for dinner. Super fun time and incredible food! Defiantly have to come back here.

For desert, we made the blackberry pie pockets. We thought it would be much simpler than making a pie but boy were we wrong. What a pain, trying to keep them all together but they were delicious!



Moring hike, still smoky!





Ava is getting good at tying the boat up



Marina? maybe. Resort? not so much





Blackberries surrounding the tennis court

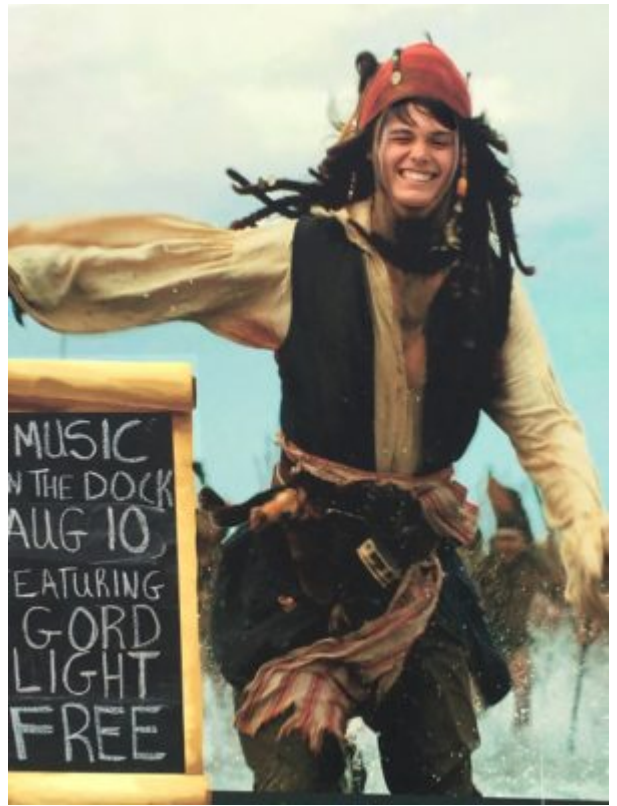




Kids showing their Canadian pride



Our walk up the hill to Ladysmith





Love Fest

Thursday August 10th – We had a great wind forecast to get us back across the Strait of Georgia today. Leaving Pender Harbor we motored under a smoky sky weaving around all the little islands that make up the harbor. Once out in open water we set the throttle for a timed arrival at Dodd Narrows that would give us very little current through the narrows. The strait was nice and calm and Dodd gave us a 2-knot push through.

We decided to anchor in Pirates Cove just south of the narrows. It's a tricky entrance but once inside the cove is open with enough room for a lot of boats. We anchored and stern tied creating a little space we could call our own.

We need to get the kids off the boat to get some energy out and I think Julie and I needed it more than them. There's a great loop hike (Ava loves loop hikes) so we set out for a beautiful walk in the woods. Actually the kids ran together most of the time way ahead of Julie and I.

After a sweaty hike the kids went swimming together for a long time even though the water is much colder here than Desolation Sound. I even convinced Skylar to swim around the whole boat

and clean the hull at the water line. It looked fantastic after he was done!

The kids happened to still be loving each other and playing together (not usually the case for a long period of time) so after swimming together, Skylar took Ava on a long paddleboard ride through the bay. Taking advantage of the kids getting along so well Julie and I left them alone on the boat and went on a romantic dinghy ride as the sun set!



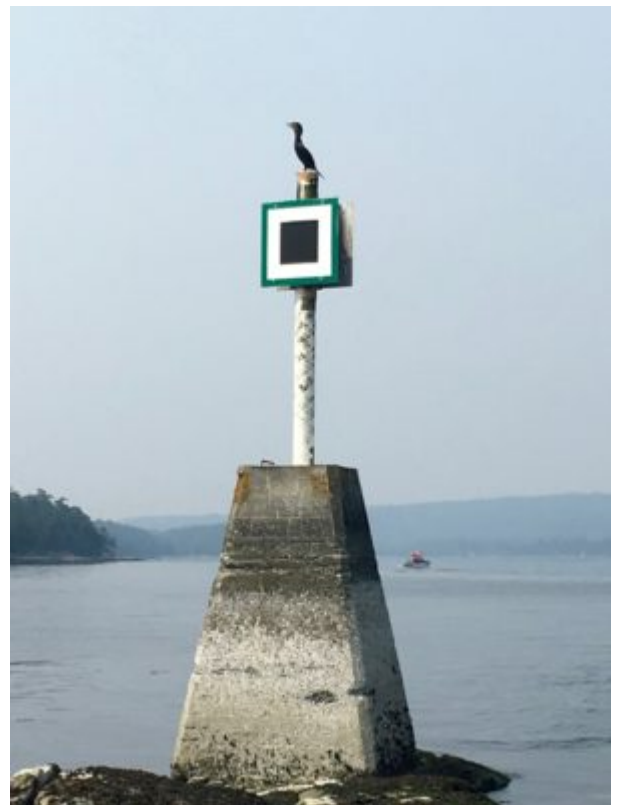


Kids having fun together





Our boat from the hike





Still having fun together

