



Dinghy Down!

Sunday August 21st – After a fun and relaxing 2 nights at Tod Inlet we pulled anchor and headed to Port Sidney for a night on the docks. We can't ever go to Sidney (or even get near it) without Ava begging to go to the aquarium. It's a tiny little aquarium but for some reason she loves it! Julie and I took Zach and Ava while Todd and Tami took Skylar into town. The kids had a lot of fun and even got to see the octopus that rarely ever comes out of his den.

We all had a great dinner off the boat that night, then fired up the engine to make way for a border crossing the next morning. After crossing the imaginary line cutting Haro Strait in half we were back in the USA! We saw a few signs of whales in Haro Strait but couldn't track them down so we pointed our bow toward Friday Harbor to clear customs and dock the boat for the night.

Todd and Tami arrived way before we did and got a slip assignment. We didn't have reservations and had to wait at the customs dock for a while for a slip to open up.

Our friends and owners of American Tugs, Kurt and Kristin, were already in Friday Harbor on their new to them sailboat. This was their first big trip on their sailboat and we were

lucky to be able to catch them on the tail end of their trip.

We made plans to meet up with them and we all hung out together that evening, having a wonderful dinner on Todd's boat.

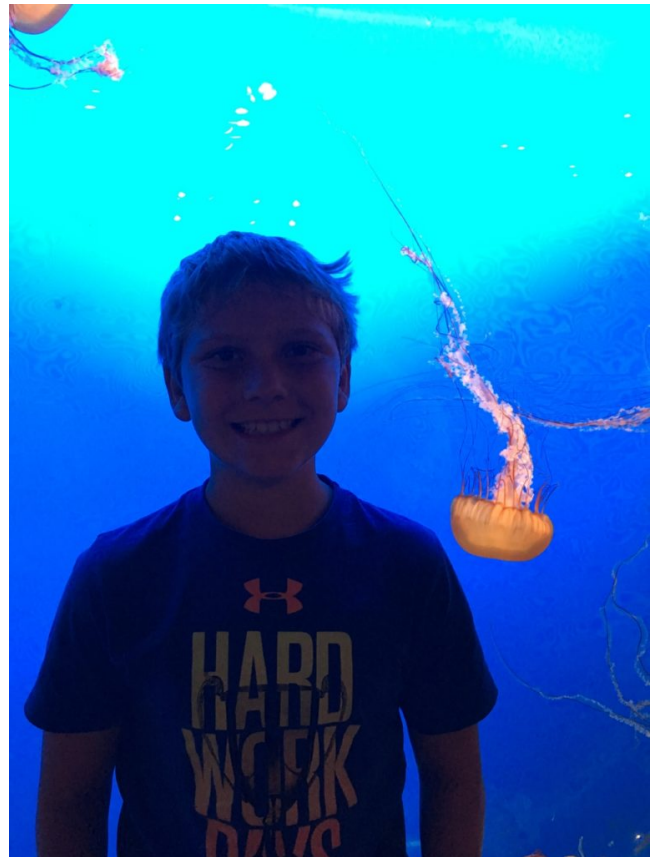
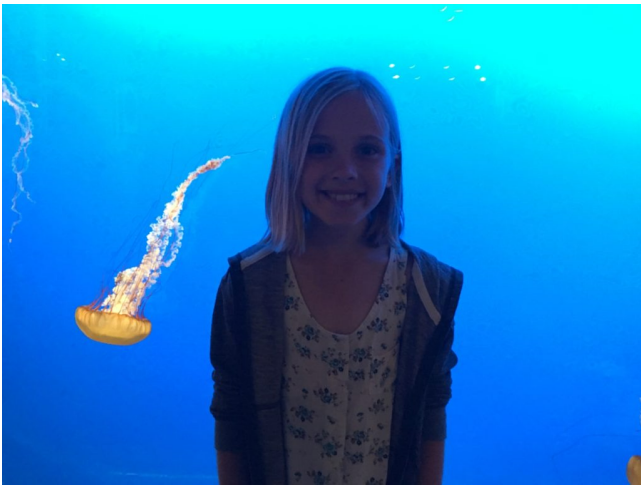
The next morning, we decided to make a dinghy run over to Turn Island, 2 miles away. Todd and Tami were missing their dinghy because a few days earlier, while docked in Victoria, some scum of the earth folks decided they should have it. In the middle of the night they cut the line tying the dingy up and stole the boat. May the wrath of God fall upon you, you dirty thieves!

So all 8 of us piled in our dinghy. Riding a little low in the water it was slow but got the job done. Kurt, Kristen and their daughter Grace came along in their dinghy for the trek over to Turn Island. All went as planned except a couple hundred yards before the beach at Turn Island, Kurt's engine suddenly just quit. After a few minutes trying to restart, we just pulled him to the beach and left the dead motor while we hiked the island hoping it would start upon our return.

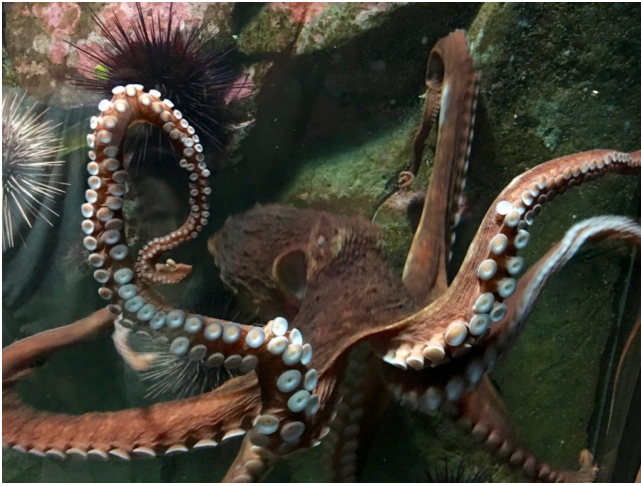
We all had a great time making our way around the tiny little island. The trails on the island are fantastic and the views are awesome. The kids ran most of it, stopping for every little thing they thought was cool.

When we got back Kurt's engine still wouldn't start so we prepared for a tow all the way back. 8 people in our boat towing another dinghy with 3 people against the rushing tide was slow going! But, it was a fun adventure, and we all had a great time!

After saying our goodbyes (Kurt and Kristen had to head home as did Todd and Tami) we left Friday Harbor for a new anchorage Kurt recommended on Shaw Island called Indian Cove.







Friday Harbor







The tow home



I Gotta Pee! AKA – Ruff, Ruff, Ruff

Friday August 19th we left Victoria headed for some warmer waters. In all the years of boating in this area we have never been to Butchart Gardens. By car Butchart is just a short distance from Victoria but by boat you have to go up north around the Saanich Peninsula then south again.

Our destination anchorage was Tod Inlet where we were told the water actually gets fairly warm. From Tod Inlet you can dinghy to a dock that provides a secret back entrance to Butchart Gardens.

As we entered the inlet the water turned a beautiful green color. Todd anchored his boat and we rafted to him in the largest part of the narrow inlet. It was a packed but beautiful anchorage not unlike many of the anchorages we experience further north in Desolation Sound.

Best of all the water was plenty warm enough to swim! Right after we got tied up we all jumped in the water to cool off and play on the toys. Skylar and I both stood on the paddle board and rocked it until one of us lost our balance and fell off. He usually got me. The kids swam and played in the water until they were exhausted. We had a quiet night on the hook exited to see the gardens and fireworks display the next day.

On Saturday we made our way through the back entrance for lunch at the Butchart restaurant. They got our reservations screwed up but fortunately they gave us a great outside table for all 8 of us overlooking the gardens. We had a great meal! Most of us got their tea which includes a bunch of delicious food samplings. The kids really loved it. Mid lunch the kids took our blankets out to the fireworks viewing

area and laid them out to claim our spot for the evening fireworks show. We wandered through the incredible gardens after lunch then back to the boat.

More swimming and we set a couple shrimp pots before we headed back to Butchart for the fireworks show. The show was incredible! Much bigger and longer than we expected, we all had a lot of fun.

That evening the inlet got a little rowdy. A few drunk boats yelling at each other kept it interesting. Then a very drunk guy was trying to get his dog to shore on a very small blow up raft without oars. It was very dark and he couldn't quite figure out. Him and his dog were trying to find anyplace the dog could get off and pee and high tide made it very difficult. He gave the whole inlet a loud play by play encounter of all his difficulties finding a beach suitable for the dog. Very entertaining!















One Dinghy Short

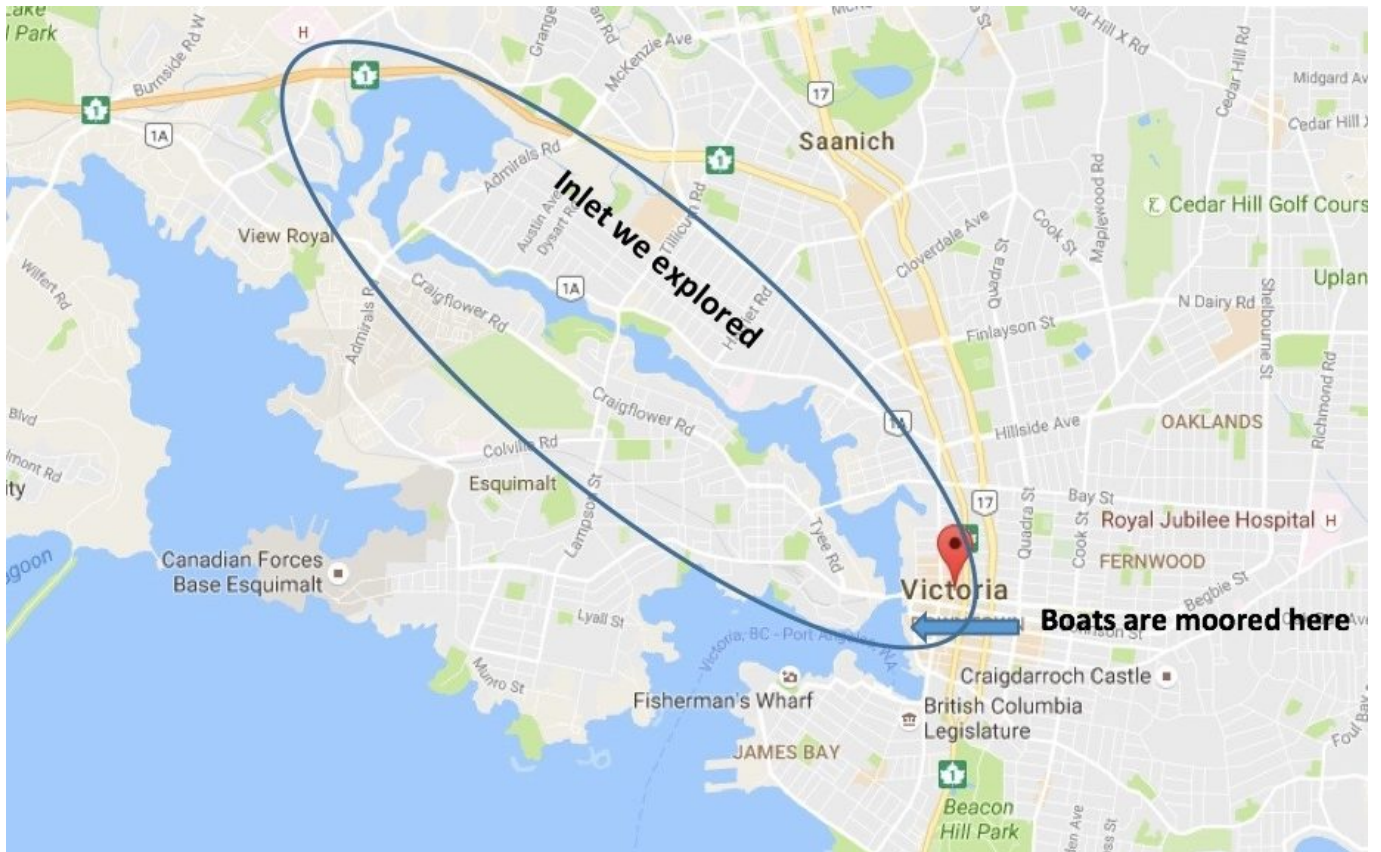
Tuesday August 16th – We pulled anchor from the shallows of Sidney Spit to make our way south through Haro Strait then turned west into the Strait of Juan de Fuca before making our way into Victoria's inner Harbor. The weather was perfect with calm seas. Our friends Todd and Tami left Sidney Spit well after we did but due to their superior speed soon caught up to us.

We docked our boats at the Warf Street Marina on a long dock that accommodated both boats. After a long discussion with the marina office over the dates of our 3-night stay (they had everything screwed up) we all took off to explore the city. Our mission was to see the city and do some school clothes shopping. Its always fun seeing new stores, restaurants and other items not offered in the USA.

That night all 8 of us had dinner at Pagliacci's Italian Restaurant. Its not fancy and you can't even make a reservation, but this little place is famous and fun. Many celebrities have visited, and the line usually runs out the door and down the sidewalk all evening as they pack them in this little place. The food was good, the drinks were great, but the staff and atmosphere were fantastic! We all had a great time!

The next couple days brought more city exploring and shopping but always a favorite for the kids is The Bug Zoo. They had so much fun learning about all the bugs and holding some of them. Our tour guide was fantastic, she was super knowledgeable and everyone learned more about bugs than they ever wanted.

The days got hotter as our stay continued so we decided to take a little day trip in our dinghies. There is a long inlet running from the Victoria inner harbor inland that we wanted to explore. Its about 4 miles long, gets really shallow in some spots and has a set of rapids in one spot that may be tricky to navigate depending on water flow but we were up for the challenge.



We grabbed some adult beverages, rafted our dinghies together (that doesn't sound good) and set off on a slow pace with county music in the background. Zach and Skylar wanted to get pulled on the tube but with only a 3 knot speed they only got drug through the water. They played all kinds of games and tricks on the tub falling off in the water several times. The water got warmer and warmer as we got deeper into the inlet but 6' was the deepest we could find and the water got pretty nasty with seaweed. We didn't really care by that point and all jumped off the boat to cool down.

We towed the kids all the way home and Tami even took a relaxing ride with Ava on the tube. It was a seriously fun adventure!

The final day greeted us with calm conditions but with a forecast for wind later in the day. I woke up, made some coffee then went out on the back deck. Todd was on his boat and calmly said "I think my dinghy got stolen". His dinghy, that was tied to the stern of his boat, was no where to be

found. It took a second to sink in but the cut line was a sure sign. The dirty B@#\$&\$#! didn't even have the decency to untie the line before taking off with the boat, they just cut it with a knife leaving evidence it was truly stolen and didn't just float away.

Todd called the Police and filed a report. They said there is almost no chance of finding the boat. Apparently this is somewhat of a thing lately in the harbor. They take the boats in the middle of the night, pull them out of the water and later sell just the engine. The worst part is that its not even Todd's boat, he was borrowing it from his dad.

One dinghy short, we left Victoria and headed north to Todd Inlet near Bchart Gardens.





