

# The Flexible Voyager

By Carlie Hennigan

*This is the continuing story of a voyage on 28-foot cruising catamaran, from Vancouver, British Columbia, down the west coast of North America to the Sea of Cortez.*

The Captain of this small vessel woke me up at 3:30 in the morning as he came down into the hull to climb into his berth. Peering at him through a bleary eye, I saw he was full of energy, the complete opposite of the comatose state in which I had left him sprawled on the saloon couch. "We are going to haul the boat out at La Paz in February 2008, cut out the cuddy cabin and lift it 4 inches!" he proclaimed. Knowing we plan to head out to Hawaii in March of 2008, my eyes shot open, and I loudly protested.

Our Richard Woods designed Gypsy catamaran, loaded for long-distance cruising, has lost much

of her clearance under the cuddy cabin, resulting in loud and potentially dangerous smacking of waves in heavy seas. While I knew my boatbuilder husband's plan was probably logical, the thought of "sawing the boat up" and rebuilding her in a process that will undoubtedly take triple the time Garrett expects it to take, chills my blood. Yet, I prepare myself to adjust, accept and, if and when the time comes, help to get the job done as expeditiously as possible.

**VOYAGING...** in a small boat is all about flexibility. And remember, everything except freighters and cruise ships is

small on the ocean. You sail when the weather is not screaming in your face. At each new anchorage, you search for Internet connections with your WiFi system, and if you cannot find one you do what I just did: visit a Starbucks only to be told that you cannot use Internet unless you are signed up with Verizon. And to do that you have to be on the Internet! You find out where the Harbor Master is; where the showers are; where the laundry is. You ask about grocery stores, and in our case being vegetarians, good reasonably priced produce. You meet dozens of wonderful people on land, in



different from those of my wife. For months we have looked at boats but have not find common aesthetic ground.

In the meanwhile, and confidently determined to move forward, I have found a new home for *Caribbean Clipper* with a gentleman from Canada. She will soon be making an overland journey to new horizons and cruising grounds in New Brunswick. I'm sure that she will bring her new Master as much enjoyment and adventure as she has provided me for nearly two decades.

My search for the ideal replacement for *Caribbean Clipper* continues, and I remain confident that my wife and I will find the perfect compromise for our divergent tastes and requirements in a sailing vessel. Who knows, perhaps it won't even be a sailboat, there are, after all, growing numbers of multihulled power boats coming on the market each year. Perhaps the near-term solution to our dilemma may be to charter a few boats and really explore the differences that attract us to various boats, while actually using them and living aboard.... at least for short periods of time.

Do I miss my multihull? Yes, occasionally I do, especially when I see a trimaran or catamaran sailing swiftly across the near horizon. But, for the most part, I fancy that my pleasure in cruising will be enhanced immeasurably by the presence and accompaniment of my dear wife; it's so much more fun to share the joy of cruising with someone else. The space and creature comforts aboard a larger boat will certainly be a great improvement over those of my little 24-foot trimaran, and the cuisine I am sure to enjoy while cruising with my wife will be far more "gourmet" in nature than the quick and dirty one-pot dishes that were more commonplace aboard the tri. In retrospect, the speed and agility of my trimaran fulfilled a special need in my sailing life at a particular time and place. But, it's also been nice to leave the "fast lane" behind and to contemplate the simple pleasures of cruising without any set itinerary or timetable. The "slow lane" can be equally enjoyable, maybe even more so. That elusive, yet perfect, boat for the two of us is out there and waiting for us to discover her, and although our progress toward our new destination has been slow, we're sure to fulfill our newly shared dreams of cruising in the "slow lane."

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boats, and adjust to their varying, colorful, interesting personalities.

If you are harbor-hopping down the west coast of the U.S.A. for the first time, as we are, you explore. Friendly, well-meaning locals tell you the produce store is "about half a mile up that hill," and after about four miles with the sun in your face and your ill-prepared feet hurting, it has become a game of chicken: it may be at the next light or around the next corner, or it may be another mile – should we continue or give up?

We would be spending three months traveling along the west coast of the U.S.A. Many Canadians think we have no distinct culture. We know otherwise, but did not expect the differences in culture to be so apparent nor so unsettling. The population of America is about 10 times ours. There are 10 times as many RV parks in Washington, Oregon and northern California. In Southern California, stores stocked with expensive stuff, the ubiquitous Starbucks and tanned people are everywhere. Canada in fact does have a very definite culture, and much of it is based on the space we enjoy and the relatively small population. There is less pressure to comply with what everyone else is doing and thinking. In America, it seems the trends are much stronger. Millions of people are of like mind. Good in many respects, not so good in others. We have met many warm welcoming people, and we appreciate the kindness with which we have been received. For a couple whose travel has been "limited" to cruising the beautiful B.C. coast, a few trips to Montreal in Eastern Canada to visit Garrett's family,

about two prior trips to California and my one trip to Hawaii many moons ago, the adjustment is an unexpected but healthy exercise in mental flexibility.

How do you "adjust" to 10-foot swells at 8-second intervals from the northwest, with 6-foot cross swells from the southwest at 14 seconds, in 20 knots of following wind approaching Cape Blanco with a stomach clenching to keep from heaving? Your mate is the skipper, sure. It was his idea to take this trip in the first place. But you love him. And you simply cannot force him to continue 36-hour watches on the over-

night stretches down the coast. It is physically impossible. Single-handers make long offshore voyages all the time, but sailing as we are, harbor-hopping down the coast, demands vigilant watches.

Writing this in Mazatlan, Mexico, we can add language skills to the flexibility requirement. All the way down the coast, in fact a few months before we left, we had been learning Spanish, using the Pimsleur audio method. We have now completed 38 of 90 lessons, and can converse with the locals quite passably, finding out what we need to know and sharing information with



*The Captain raising the American Flag...  
the Voyage Has Begun*



our host people, and making many new friends among them. Learning a language at 50+ years of age is great fun, and we hear it is also an excellent exercise for the brain and has been shown to help prevent, or arrest, the onset of Alzheimer's. Learning Spanish with this method is effective and very enjoyable.

Last, but not least, is the continuing making and parting of friends. We have made more friends during the past five months than most people make in a lifetime. And some of these friendships have developed deep roots of understanding, shared humor and interests, and respect. All cruisers who have reached the Sea of Cortez have dealt with similar challenges in the voyage. If, like us, they have come from the Pacific Northwest, they have survived the big, rough and bruising seas and incessant fog off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and Northern California, where the water is 49° and the air temperature 49.1. They have timed their entrances under the Golden Gate Bridge to avoid huge standing waves generated by outgoing current opposing the almost constant wind around San Francisco. They have negotiated the intricacies of Customs and Port requirements of two foreign nations, and adjusted to two different currencies. They have adapted to 20 to 40 new anchorages, towns or cities, and had to find showers, laundry facilities, fuel and provisions. They have had to repair or replace worn or damaged equipment.

We left our home marina in Richmond, a suburb on the Fraser River that divides that city from Vancouver, on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, and after

a short recuperative trip 40 miles north to our favorite healing hole, Jedediah Island, we made our way to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. After clearing U.S. Customs very painlessly at Friday Harbor on August 5<sup>th</sup>, we felt we had finally officially begun our journey.

#### **SEQUIM AND NEAH BAY...**

Predictably, for greenhorns anxious to start our Grand Adventure, we were caught by a flood tide in San Juan Channel leading into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Why we did not check the tide tables for the tides in this channel is a mystery, as we are certainly accustomed to transiting narrows and channels sailing to and among the Canadian Gulf Islands and Desolation Sound. Perhaps we were a little giddy about finally clearing U.S. Customs and having all that legality behind us. Though we got an early start from our nearby anchorage in Griffin Bay at San Juan Island, it was not until 2 p.m. that we were finally crossing Juan de Fuca. The winds were light, but eventually we sailed with the screacher on a close reach. After an hour, the winds were 15 knots and we were doing 6 to 7 knots. The waves were close together so it was a little bumpy, but at least we were going south in the right direction. As soon as we entered the Strait, we felt those ocean swells for the first time since our 650-mile circumnavigation of Vancouver Island in 2001.

By 6 pm, we had arrived at Dungeness Bay, a very shallow bay where according to the Don and Reanne Douglass' *Exploring the Pacific Coast from Seattle to San Diego*, we would be pro-

tected from the westerly winds by a natural low spit. The winds were now 25 knots with a one-foot chop behind that very low spit. The rule is that when we are out on open water we wear our inflatable PFD's and harnesses. One of the features we enjoy with our cat is that the hulls are separated from the cuddy cabin by walkways, making going forward very safe. Nevertheless, our rule in significant wind and sea is that whenever we go past the hatches down into the hulls, we must hank onto the jack lines.

We found that Dungeness Bay is not a really protected anchorage; it is just a very long natural spit that protects you from the incoming swells. But due to the extreme shallowness of the bay, you cannot get close enough to it to prevent wave chop build-up. So it was rough and *Light Wave* was pitching. I was hanked on as it was my job to get the anchor ready, measure out the rode we need and lower the anchor. Eventually, at San Francisco, we would exchange the 22-lb Bruce anchor we had been using since *Light Wave's* launching in 1999, for a 33-lb Delta that we had stowed away for wild weather. A pair of world voyagers, Uwe and Eva Keil aboard their catamaran *Quinuituq*, told us that the three crucial factors in voyaging are a good anchor, good autopilot and good GPS, and recommended using our biggest anchor at all times. You never know when the wind will come up and this way it is always set and you can have some peace of mind when asleep or ashore. Plus, how can you put your "Big Gun" out when you are anchored and the wind is suddenly wailing at 40-50 knots? What



*Futuristic Cat at Sequim*



good would our big anchor be in such a situation if it was stored somewhere? Since making that important change, we have found the 33-lb Delta has been totally reliable for our 6,000-lb catamaran even in 50-knot winds. However, the only drawback is that as we have no anchor windlass, I cannot lower the heavier anchor by hand, which, until then, had been one of my jobs. (We are now in the habit of critiquing all anchors we see, and are amazed at how many big heavy monohulls have insubstantial anchors.) However, at Dungeness Bay we still had our 22-lb anchor deployed. We were really bouncing around and the wind was blowing all mighty, so it was a bit scary. I crept cautiously out onto the pitching bow and lowered the

anchor while *Light Wave* bounced around in those choppy seas.

Try as we might, the anchor would not set. It was getting late, we did not feel protected enough to be secure for the night even if the anchor did set, and we were tired, so we backtracked to Sequim Bay. We arrived at 9:30 p.m. just before darkness set, and were grateful for another of the Sailor's Delights: a safe haven after a hard day's sail.

Next morning we found we were anchored near John Wayne Marina (so called because Big John kept his big powerboat at this marina for his fishing forays into B.C.) As soon as we could get our Porta Bote assembled, we motored in to check the shower and laundry facilities.

Having kept clean with thorough sponge baths and occasional outdoor showers off the transom (another exercise in joyous flexibility!), it was a real treat to have a long hot shower in the top notch facilities at John Wayne Marina. Food is always a priority, so while our laundry was washing we started to run what we were told was a "one mile walk" to the "KFC", where we were told we could find all the groceries we needed. This turned out to be another case of a land-lubber-with-car being "distance challenged." We thought it weird that a Kentucky Fried Chicken would have groceries, but plowed on trustingly. In fact, we discovered that the American accents are stronger here than we had



expected, as the store was actually a "QFC" for "Quality Food Choices," an affiliate of Safeway.

Our five-mile round trip involved only two miles of running as on the return, Garrett was saddled with a six-pound watermelon in his backpack. On the way back we also found extensive blackberry bushes right along the road, so picked a pound or so to take home, and ate a pound or so right there.

We spent an extra day at Sequim waiting for a lull in the prevailing strong westerlies which howl down Juan de Fuca. The forecast was for light winds so we figured we could do the whole 70 miles to Neah Bay in one long day.

Sequim is a friendly little town and we enjoyed our short stay, punctuated by this bit of excitement: while Garrett shuttled back and forth to the marina with gas and water, he saw what looked like a huge preying mantis type catamaran come into the harbor. It was about 100 feet long and the "bridge" hovered about 25 feet off the water. They anchored

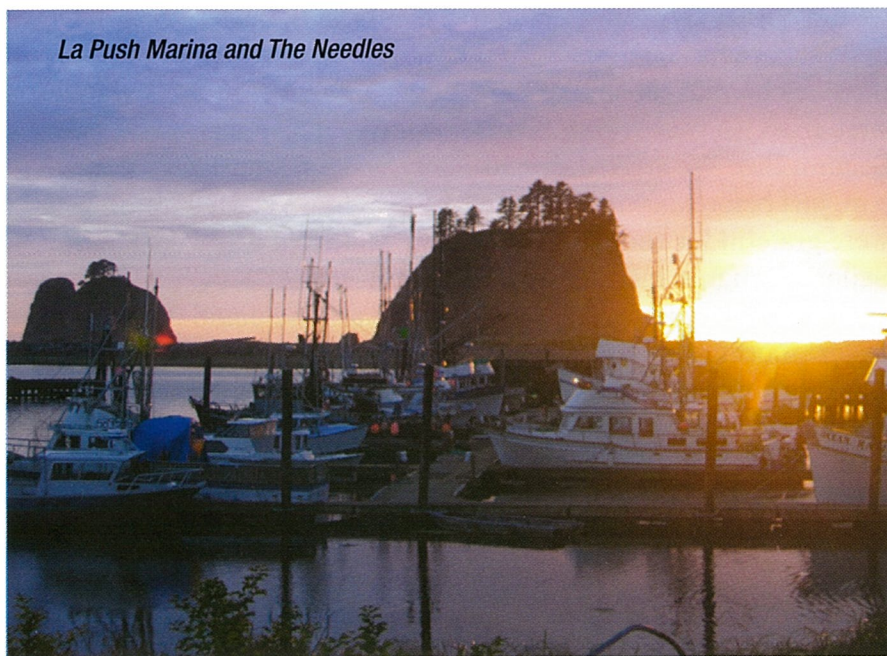
about 100 yards from us, so, Garrett being the friendly St. Bernard puppy that he is, dinghied over to get story on this weird catamaran. Much to his surprise, when he quizzed the operator about the type, length and most importantly the purpose of this strange vessel, the operator said, "I am not allowed to say anything about the boat." Is it a top secret military craft? An obscure research vessel? A prop for a new James Bond movie? Kevin Costner's vessel in Water World Next Generation? You decide.

Arriving at Neah Bay, my thoughts and body were muddled. It had been a long day: we had left Sequim Bay at 5:30 a.m. and motored 70 miles, arriving here at 9 p.m. Even though the West Marine Relief Bands had worked, preventing my usual *mal de mer*, we had been sitting on a boat all day, going up and down in the swells elevator (Up! and down... Up! and down... slowly, but constantly). This is one of the things I'll have to get used to again.

Fog and mist had lain in the near distance on the last half of our leg, and the temperature had continued to drop. I wondered why on earth I had packed all of my cozy winter sailing duds away in a plastic box at the back of our empty berth. Oh! Now I remember! It was 80° F when we left Vancouver and for the first 12 days of our trip I had dressed in the skimpiest clothes I had. The West Coast, however, is also the Wet Coast and even in mid-summer it is cold and damp out there.

My thoughts turned to our little penthouse apartment in Vancouver that we had gleefully rented out when we could hardly wait to shed ourselves of the land entirely and get on the water. Now, in my frazzled state, I yearned for the simple pleasures of our warm dry home, a great roasted vegetarian and feta cheese pizza from Zaccary's Pizza nearby on Oak Street, a Caesar salad and a movie. Yes! Let's be couch potatoes again. I can handle it.

Morning dawns, the boat has gotten off that inexorable elevator, I see the sun shining through the clouds of fog blanketing the hills of Neah Bay and, again, I feel at peace. I remember why we are doing this, and what all this effort, discomfort and trepidation are about. Everything worthwhile has a price. The price of this voyage of discovery is the hard work, the constant planning and checking, the early hours, the inventive coping with equipment failures, keeping one's spirit up, finding out how to use the pressure cooker for more and varied recipes, baking yummy stuff to make life interesting. Whoever said or thought this would be easy?



*La Push Marina and The Needles*



**PUSH TO LA PUSH...** We rounded Cape Flattery and into the truly open waters of the Pacific Ocean. In nine hours, we would cover 45 miles versus 70 the previous day over 14 hours, but my tummy was not doing well. The last four hours were a rather grueling battle of mind over matter. The matter kept trying to push up and out, if you know what I mean.

Finally, while Garrett was resting and I was on watch, I resorted to visualizing the faces of my friends at home, faces wherever I had seen them last. My mind was at Kalamalka Lake in the Okanagan valley of B.C. swimming and visiting friends, or laughing on the dock at River Rock Casino in Richmond just before we cast off. It is amazing what mind can do, and there is in fact no distance to mind as I was right there with my friends. Did they feel me or think of me? All fancies aside, that little exercise took my mind off more visceral matters and I even ate a bit of the yummy chunky vegetable soup I had made for journeying. Adjusting to constant motion takes time, and harbor hopping does not give you the magic three days at sea to do so.

At about 7 p.m. we closed with the coast approaching our destination of La Push, a lovely little village owned by the Quileute Indians. Wondering at the unbelievable and majestic "needles" and rough, inhabitable islands that guard the entrance to La Push, we carefully made our way across the bar and through the narrow marked channel into the marina, which is protected by a breakwater on both sides. Both exhausted, it was with great joy that we beheld the warm lights of what appeared

to be a restaurant shimmering across the water and people moving about inside. "That looks like a restaurant!" Tired, unbelieving and remembering Don and Réanne Douglass's report in *Exploring the Pacific Coast from Seattle to San Diego* of no facilities or restaurants in La Push, I said, "No I think it's some kind of a tribal longhouse." A friendly sailor directed us to an empty slip and assured us that the lights we had seen were indeed at a restaurant with great food. Bless them, the Quileutes had recently opened the River's Edge Restaurant, noteworthy for tired cruisers. We gratefully tied up to a rickety skinny dock. Who cares? We stepped onto it and knew our work was done for the day. Making our way up the ramp and down the walkway that borders the marina, we passed several parked RV's and SUV's with dogs tied to them, and comfortable old sports fishermen enjoying their evening beers and telling fish stories.

How often has a tired sailor gratefully tied up at a dock, savored the taste of someone else's cooking in a warm and comfortable restaurant, and realized how little things can make you supremely happy? It was like this with the halibut sandwiches and fries we enjoyed, followed by a shared piece of New York cheesecake. River's Edge Restaurant is very classy, offering soft jazz music, a great view and wonderful food. Most importantly, it has provided 15 jobs for the Quileute Indians, and we met several pretty young waitresses and a very friendly manager/host by the name of Rio who reminded us of our Iranian friend Angelo at Cravings Restaurant in Vancouver.

The marina at La Push is not dredged deeply, so deep draft vessels may not find moorage. We enjoyed walking the lovely long beach, watching wet-suited surfers in the pounding froth, and discovered a delightful resort and campground with great cabins appropriately called Oceanside Resort. We were tickled pink to find very basic showers for the campers. La Push is a homey little spot that provides welcome respite to weary cruisers.

After two nights at La Push, we left at 12:00 noon to cross the bar at a safe time for tides, and timing it so that an overnight trip would get us to the very tricky bar crossing at Tillamook, 140 miles south. This was a big deal for us as, although we have done night sailing before, we have never sailed through a full night on the wide open ocean off an unfamiliar coast. We would be safe with our GPS and compass. Our brand-new Furuno Radar had gone kaput, now working only for about 60 seconds before overheating; so it was back to the "basics" which are still a far cry from what they were when Captain Vancouver, Captain Cook, and others charted the West Coast. (When we returned the radar to West Marine in Sausalito for repair, Furuno advised us that they had had a run of problems with that model due to a faulty drive belt. As we were still covered by warranty, our only cost was the delivery charges. Another couple we later met in San Diego had had the same breakdown, and was relieved to find that the problem was fixable, and would be repaired by the manufacturer.)





### NIGHT PASSAGE TO TILLAMOOK...

On this our first long overnight passage, with *Light Wave* being tossed about in the wicked seas unique to this stretch of the coast, I was sick, sick, sick, and considered throwing myself overboard. The only thing that stopped me was knowing how disappointed Garrett would be and being quite sure he would not continue his wonderfully planned trip alone. I had to sit in the big collapsible chair we have, in the middle of the cockpit, where there is the least motion, for the last 9½ hours it took to get to Tillamook, and Garrett gleefully snapped the worst photo in the world of me.

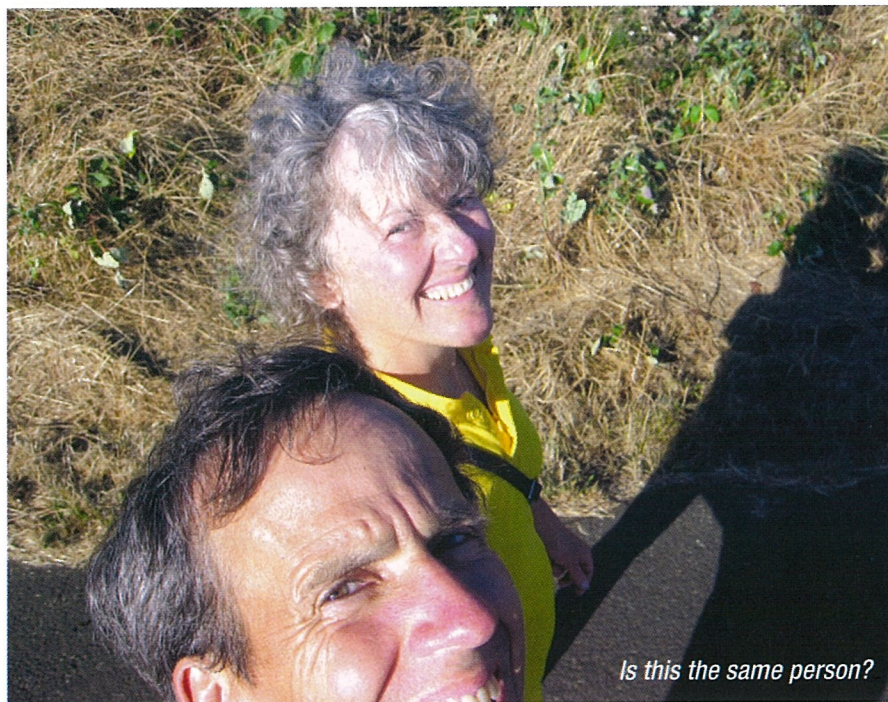
"We closed the coast from 10 to 4 p.m. and then crossed the bar into Tillamook Bay with a bit of a flood tide. At 4 p.m. we were tied to the perfectly calm transient dock, after 27 hours and 140 miles covered. I was very tired and Carllie was very relieved. We both had not eaten in a long time, so the first order of business was to find a restaurant. We found a great fish and chips place and had a late snack at 7 p.m. There was quite a change in Carllie in just 6 hours! Was this the same person?"

Tillamook is a busy fishing town: both commercial and sport fishermen energetically and enthusiastically charge into the big ocean swells early every morning and come home with big catches of tuna. One couple, who had recently commissioned the construction of their sturdy aluminum 40-footer, happily reported having caught 1,200 lbs of tuna in one day. Their fuel costs for the day were however about \$750, so we have no idea what their final take would be if they sold it, but it was good to see their delight as they scrubbed down their new vessel.

As a complete diversion after the trials and tribulations of the previous two days, we decided to take a scenic train ride on an old steam-driven train for an hour and a half up the coast. This was the first really touristy thing we had done on our voyage. It relaxed us from the demands and decisions of the voyage and gave us a chance to see Tillamook and nearby settlements.

After two nights at the transient dock, we moved out and dropped our anchor in Crab Harbor. We decided that in spite of the 25-knot wind, we would go to shore. A two-hour walk around the park that borders the bar, and trudging through the beginning of the famous Oregon sand dunes limbered our limbs and filled our lungs with the fresh sea breezes we had been missing.

Early next morning, after a favorable bar report, we listened to the heavy surf breaking on the beach on the other side of the spit. We felt a little uneasy about leaving, but the Coast Guard had provided a favorable bar report and conditions were good. We pulled up anchor at 6:15 a.m. and reached the mouth of the bar, and the conditions were as described; but, the swells were very close together. We made it through, but as we headed south, the boat motion was really twisty in swells coming from different directions. Tum-mies reacted unfavorably until eventually the seas rounded and the sun burned off the damp fog.



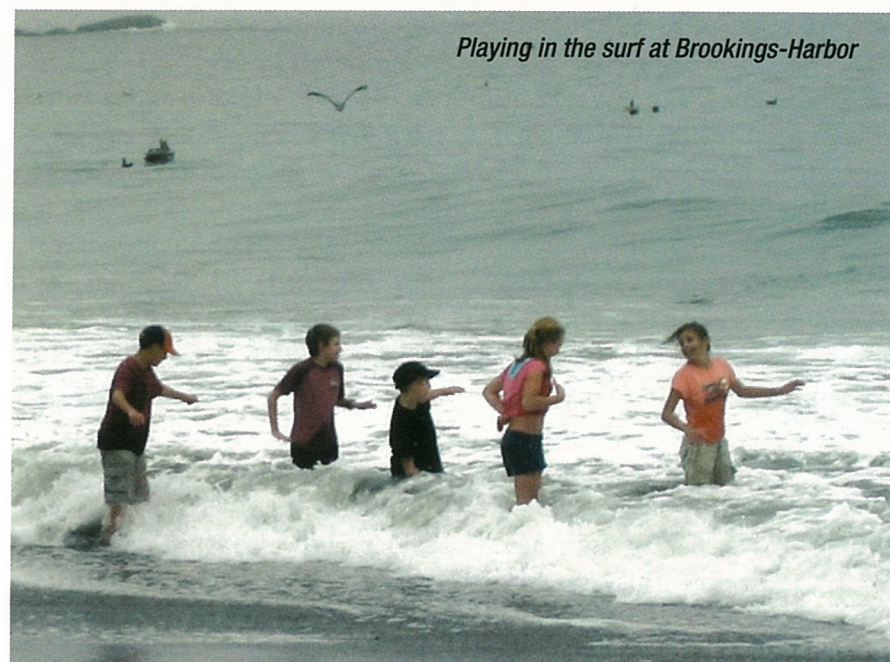


## NEWPORT, OREGON...

After a fairly rough passage, we arrived in Newport, Oregon in the early morning, and spent the day being tourists... lots of fun. We took the free shuttle bus to the "old town" from the south side of the river where the marina is located, to the north side where the actual town of Newport is, and had a close look at a colony of Stellar Sea Lions that we had heard barking all night long at the marina.

We had never seen sea lions before, and, in spite of their awful racket, and complete oblivion to the requirements of noise bylaws let alone polite society, were mesmerized. They are huge creatures and very vociferous. Apparently, if you leave your boat anchored in a bay, they may climb up onto the swim grid or transom, and if enough climb on, they could sink your boat. And in the USA or Canada, there is nothing you can do about it (like shoot them!) because they are a protected species. You cannot bash them off the boat, for instance. Now that we are in Mexico, we are pretty sure that if an animal or specie becomes a nuisance or threatens local livelihoods, it would be dealt with in a more practical manner. It is amazing how economies like ours, artificially propped up as they are by credit, can "afford" to even pass, let alone enforce, such impractical and costly laws.

In Newport's Old Town, we visited one shop that was full of fabulous *objets d'art* and jewelry. This was the first time we saw the beautiful creations of Tim Cotterill, "The Frogman," who fashions beautiful bronze



*Playing in the surf at Brookings-Harbor*

frog sculptures in all sizes and poses. They are incredible and each one has a name. Cotterill was brought up in England, and where he played there were lots of frogs, and he became very intrigued with them. His school reports (included in his autobiography) are quite revealing. While he got very low evaluations in Math and History, he did very well in Art. Now, where he lives in California, outside his studio, he has created a special pond refuge where he keeps frogs and watches them. It is very inspiring to see what people can create. And nice to know you do not have to be a mathematical genius or a history buff to succeed.

While strolling along the waterfront, we stopped at Randy's Bait and Tackle. Randy's has the comfortable look of a well-worn hardware store with all sorts of gear stacked around the place and, when we were there, the proprietor's four-year-old grandson was sound asleep on a stack of gunny sacks near the door. It's the kind of place grizzled fishermen love.

When we told her we wanted to troll a hand line for tuna, Randy's wife Marilyn fixed us up with a 75-foot hand line, leader and a "zucchini" lure. We were advised to look for water that is 62° and over for tuna, and as that water temperature is about 60 miles off the coast or farther south, so it will be a week or two before we will be in prime waters, but we will keep trolling it for now.

**THRASHING TO BROOKINGS-HARBOR...** Nine hours after leaving Newport Marina, as the seas were not as crazy as they had been and my stomach was doing better, we changed our initial plans to make the next trip a short 45-mile jaunt to the town of Florence, and decided to sail through the night and skip Florence, Coos Bay, and Bandon. Instead, we would round Cape Blanco and go to Port Orford. Just two hours later, the winds picked up to 20 knots and we were hurtling down the waves at 8 to 10 knots. The seas had again become washing machine-like



and I was sick. We were now past Florence and had no option but to continue. Luckily, we were able to use our crippled radar one minute at a time, before it overheated, to check our location relative to the coastline.

Throughout the night, the wind continued to pick up and Garrett kept reducing sail to cope with it. At one point, the autopilot tiller pin sheared off so he switched to the backup pin, which luckily we had mounted on the extension arm. When the wind picked up to 25 knots, we had trouble furling the screacher; after that experience we try to furl the screacher before the wind gets to 15-20 knots. We have also learned to use the whisker pole only in lighter winds, as it is a little too dicey trying to haul it back in if the winds and seas have picked up.

By 6 p.m., with the wind at 25 knots, I was so sick I had to lay down, the only position to deal with seasickness. This is okay if you have a third crewmember, but we do not, so this passage from there on was an endurance test for Garrett. Swells reached eight to ten feet during the night, with violent motion, and near Cape Blanco the waves became very steep. In an almost moonless night, he managed to get the boat safely past this perilous cape and into Port Orford, and catch a few hours of rest. However, we were forced to continue as swells were still wrapping around into Port Orford, and my stomach would not settle even in that motion. This pithy excerpt from Garrett's journal shows what he went through that night.

*"I have read from other cruisers that the nights are long, and*

*this one would be a long one as I would have to stay up through the night. We had to sail about 10 miles to the west, go out past Cape Blanco and the dangerous reefs which extend about 5 miles off the cape. The moon would not come out until 1:00 a.m., so it would be very dark for 4 hours. Time seemed to really slow down. My only company was the odd tuna boat with those great lights way out in the distance. I wasn't so much scared as uneasy and nervous. I just didn't know what was coming. I couldn't see the waves or the reefs I was going around. You have to religiously plot your position on the chart, confirm it with the GPS chart plotter and what the radar shows (if it's working). We sailed for the last 18 hours of the 21 hours we were underway. Our top speed was 11 knots and we covered a total of 126 miles."*

We made good time, but it still was going to be close to get to the joined cities of Brookings-Harbor at Chetco River by sunset. Shortly after leaving Port Orford, the fog descended upon us, and we were fog-bound all the way to Brookings-Harbor. Garrett's observation: "One interesting thing about the fog is that it gives you the impression that you are not on the big ocean as your world only goes 200 yards in any direction, which is okay as long as you know where you are." By the time we reached Brookings, and called the Coast Guard for a bar report, visibility was only 100 yards. We literally had to feel our way in, unable to see the entrance buoy. Suddenly, we heard a roar from behind, and saw the 42-foot aluminum Coast

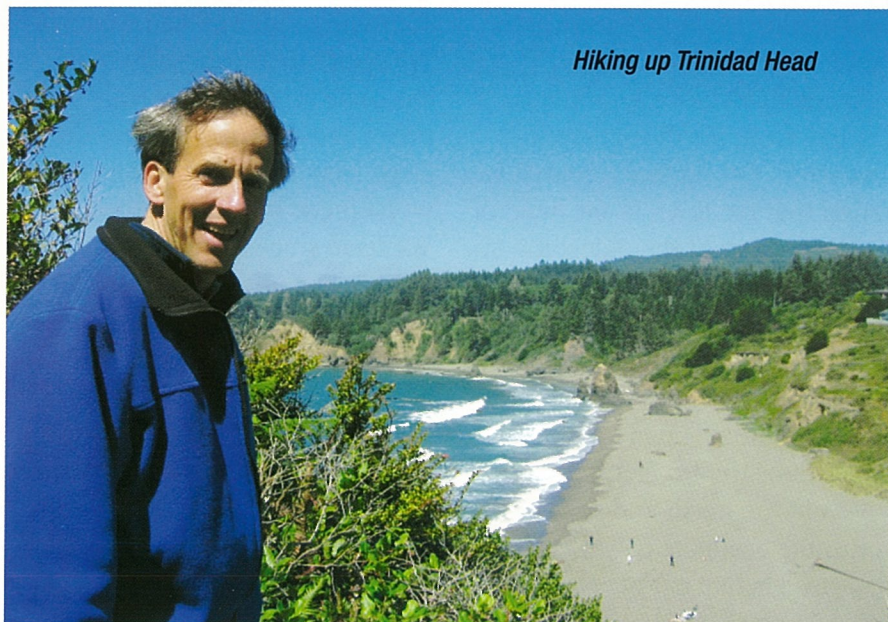
Guard cutter *Chetco River*. They had been tracking us on radar and asked if we were going to be all right (yes), and if we had been inspected by Coast Guard (not yet).

When we finally and thankfully tied up to the dock right opposite the Coast Guard station, a couple of cheerful Coast Guardsmen came aboard and, after sympathetically advising me to get out of the boat onto *terra firma*, conducted a very friendly, but thorough inspection involving a lot of questions including, "Do you have any guns?" In ten minutes we were done and they gave us a copy of the report so we could present it if we were queried again.

It was at Brookings that I finally saw a doctor and got a prescription for Transderm Scop patches to prevent seasickness. Since then, whenever we have been out on the open ocean for longer passages, I have applied a patch four hours before departing, and have had no problems. However, to avoid the serious "side effects" that are unavoidable with any prescription drug, I am still trying to adjust to the motion of the sea, using natural methods such as acupressure *Relief Bands*, sucking on raw ginger, and drinking ginger tea.

Each stop on this long journey is a welcome respite from the rigors of a sea passage. At Brookings, we were able to catch Chetco Seafood Co., a nearby little seafood restaurant, just before they closed, and got the best creamy clam chowder we have ever had. That was the first food I was able to hold down in about 29 hours, so I have fond memories of that soup.





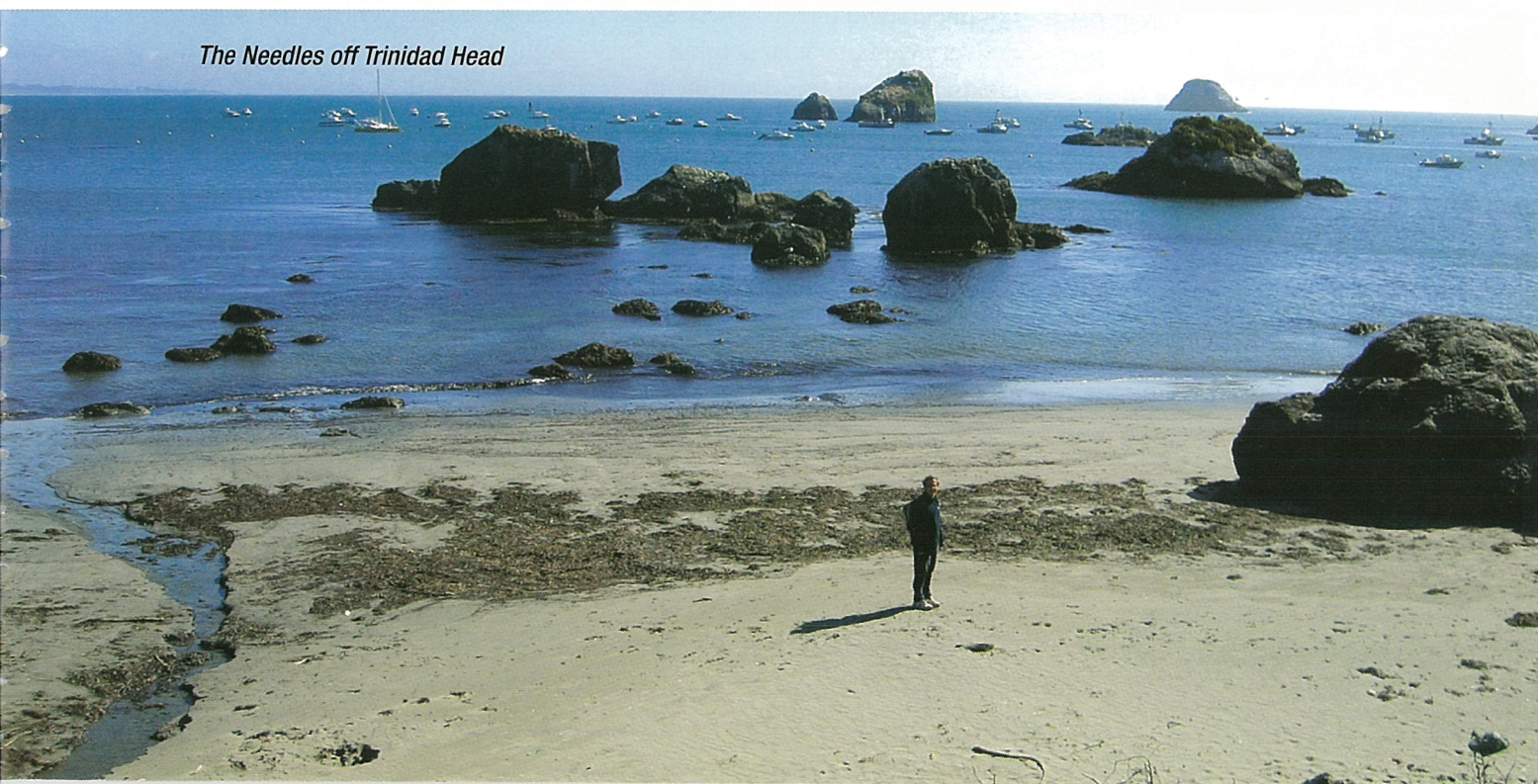
*Hiking up Trinidad Head*

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, we went for our first run in almost two weeks. Finding ways to exercise while voyaging is an exercise in flexibility itself. It is easier while harbor-hopping, but we would find when we got down to the Baja Peninsula, that the heat and dusty or non-existent roads, not to mention the lack of shower facilities, make running much less tenable. However, the long walks necessary to provisioning a vessel without access to a car, kept

us in good shape on this part of the journey. As the voyage progresses, we are adjusting our meatless diets (more vegetables and fresh seafood), and trying to be more creative with exercise routines, though regardless of where we are – at sea, tied to a dock, or at anchor – we always fit in our morning and evening breathing exercises. After recently doing running clinics with Simon Foster, a fellow cruiser from Victoria, who is traveling

with his wife Sunny Matheson aboard their William Gardner designed trawler *Seascope*, I have added these exercises at sea or at anchor: tiptoeing back and forth across the cockpit, and bouncing up and down on my toes, and sit-ups on an exercise mat.

A long walk to the beach the following day rewarded us with our first views of diving Brown Pelicans (which we would see all the way down the Baja and into the Sea of Cortez), and a group of children, immune to the 50° F water, frolicking and screaming delightedly in the surf. Pelicans dive like feathered swords into the waters around our dock in early morning and throughout the evening. Whining, squawking birds, somewhat like sea gulls, follow them like leeches, hoping to pick up tidbits that escape the pelicans' "holding sacks" under their beaks when they strain out the water from the fish they've just caught. From far down the river when we traveled up it yesterday, we saw the vertical spumes of spray from the dive-bombing pelicans.



*The Needles off Trinidad Head*





**TRINIDAD HEAD...** After a quick half-day journey to Crescent City, the northernmost city stop in California, and a two-day stay in this rather unpicturesque anchorage and economically depressed town, we pushed on to Trinidad Head. At our motoring speed of 5 knots, this leg took nine hours. The cool weather demanded storm suits, and en route we had our first nibble on our new hand line, which we deploy as soon as we are out in the open ocean, and had been doing so since we bought it in Newport. The nibble, however, did not turn into a bite, and I hectored Garrett about "What a great fisherman you are!" as we had never caught anything but mud sharks and one itty bitsy rock fish in all of our days of sailing in B.C.

Rounding the headland into Trinidad Head, we found the harbor filled with about 100 mooring buoys and about 80% occupied by small sport fishing boats. We tied up as we had no alternative, there being no remaining space to anchor in reasonable depth. We were surprised to learn they cost a whopping \$17 per night, and came with no amenities like showers. We were a little disappointed with the enforced cash grab at this otherwise pretty harbor, as we had to stay three nights

waiting for the right weather to tackle Cape Mendocino.

Trinidad Head fully protects the bay from northwest swells and wind. On further research we found that the town at the head of the bay is one of the oldest towns in Northern California, established back in 1850 when there was gold mining in the vicinity. We trudged up a very scenic trail that circumnavigates the head and climbs to 600 feet with great vistas to the north and south.

Resting one more day at Trinidad Head before our big passage around Cape Mendocino, we had breakfast at the Seaside Restaurant at the mouth of the bay. The restaurant was destroyed in 1951 when a severe winter storm with hurricane force winds from the south washed everything away, or almost everything. According to the report, "The only thing left of the restaurant was a freezer that was lodged between some rocks." Another winter storm brewed waves that rolled over the 100-foot Pilot Rock at the entrance to Trinidad Harbor. Luckily for us, it was still summer. We cannot understand those owners and delivery captains who actually choose to travel this coastline in the winter months. A 45-foot catamaran washed ashore in Oregon this December, during storm force winds of 70 knot; all three delivery crew were missing. Another tragic reminder that safety is so dependent on seasons and timing.

#### INFAMOUS CAPE MENDOCINO

On the morning of August 26<sup>th</sup>, we left for Cape Medocino, the notorious headland on the California coast where the coast changes direction from north-south to southeast. It is known for

confusing seas and bad weather. We spoke to a local sailor who has gone around Cape Horn four times and describes the waters off Cape Mendocino as being "the worst piece of water in the world." We have since learned that a canyon or fault lies deep under this water, and generates currents which cause the unpredictable and often violent conditions.

Leaving Trinidad Head at 6:45 a.m., the minimum distance to the next anchorage of Shelter Cove was 85 miles, which is 17 hours at 5 knots. We would not be able to make it before dark, so we revised our goal to Fort Bragg, 120 miles from Trinidad Head. By leaving now and sailing through the night, we would get there the next morning, in daylight. Seas were initially okay, and we made good time. That morning, we met with our first pod of dolphins, about 20 of them. They came from the west and crossed right in front of us, but they did not stop to chat and seemed to be on a mission. They say that seeing dolphins is supposedly a good omen. We hoped they are right.

The forecast for the day was light winds of only 5 knots from the south winds which we can motor into. At about 11 a.m. the winds did start, but at 10-15 knots from the southwest, the exact direction we were going. Unfortunately, with *Light Wave* being a lightweight cat, we cannot motor into these seas comfortably. The wind generated short choppy waves that slammed against the nacelle floor and, coupled with the remaining swells from the northwest, making for a very noisy ride. We tried to take the waves at an angle and managed to sail at 4-5 knots but only 1 knot VMG,



and were still only about 8 miles from the river bar entrance back to Eureka.

At this point, a tiny yellow bird landed on the ropes on the starboard side where there was protection from the wind. He could only hold onto the ropes as the decks were too slippery and found a nice little spot behind the winches and had a little nap for 20 minutes. This seemed to revive him and he started looking around for some food. We tried to feed him without scaring him off, and he flew away once he was evidently revived. We later determined he was a migrating Townsend's Warbler, and are amazed that such a tiny creature can cope with the winds we coped with off this coast, for thousands of miles.

### FISHING DROUGHT ENDS

Sailing against the weather, at this slower speed of 3-4 knots, we were surprised to see something waterskiing back on forth on the fishing line. When we pulled it in, we found a nice big salmon. We tied him up and threw the line back in while we listened to the weather to decide whether to go back to Eureka or continue bashing. Within 15 minutes I shouted, "Look! Another fish!" and we pulled in another big salmon. Having no freezer aboard, and only basic refrigeration, we planned to release him, but unfortunately he had broken his neck while thrashing around so we now had two big salmon which we would consume for almost every meal over the next six days. Another time, I will use my friend Eva Keil's simple recipe for curing salmon (see **Sidebar**).

After digesting the forecast that the south winds were supposed to stop, and being inspired with catching our first fish in seven years, we decided to keep going. We took the sails down and were able to motor at 3 knots towards Cape Mendocino. It was 18 miles away and it was 2 p.m., so we would be going around the cape at 8 p.m., around sunset.

We continued to motor into the waves until we reached Mendocino, where the seas were a little less choppy and things looked hopeful. Unfortunately, now it got dark, very dark. It was foggy and there was no moon, no stars, no horizon, no nothing. It was just black everywhere except for the white deck. It reminded Garrett of his days piloting small airplanes, flying at 10,000 feet at night. We just droned on with our engine, the light of our GPS chart plotter, and checking of our radar every

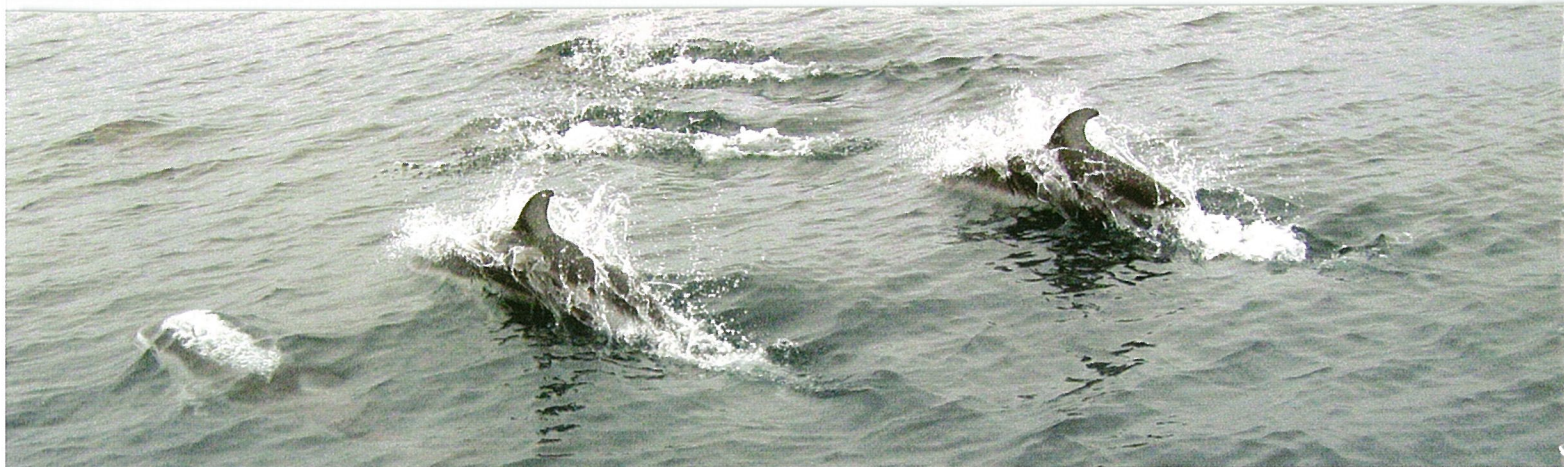
15 minutes to tell us where we were and where we were going.

It was a long night. These night passages on moonless nights are the most challenging. Though with 3- or 4-hour watches each person takes a share of those dark hours, it is a test of endurance and maintaining mental toughness.

Suddenly, just as dawn broke, about 60 Pacific White Sided Dolphins surrounded us. About ten of them zigzagged back and forth off our hulls, darting under and between the bows as we watched them from three feet away while hanging over the forward beam. It is amazing to see these beautiful creatures up close. After a while we could identify the individuals by their different coloring. About five hours later, 25 miles from Fort Bragg, the same pod of dolphins returned, and stayed with us even longer now – for over half an hour.







## FORT BRAGG-BODEGA BAY

We arrived at Fort Bragg at noon after being underway for 29 hours. Moorage is up the Noyo River, a mile or so. After going under the 101 Highway Bridge, we snaked past all these commercial fish docks and restaurants. The river is quite narrow, maybe 50 yards. After about half a mile we arrived at the commercial yacht basin and tied up, but fortunately found that the office was closed and showers were not available. A short walk took us farther up the river to Dolphin Isle Marina, a much nicer marina with available moorage, and most importantly showers.

In keeping with our pattern of a couple of days of extreme effort followed by a day or two off, we rested on the Noyo River, where it was so quiet and still at night that we had trouble believing we were still on a boat. We finally put the dinghy together and went for a boat ride up the river. According to the marina manager Gregg Stevens, you can travel about six miles up the river, depending on the tide. Timing it just before high tide, we slowly motored in our Porta Bote dinghy up the meandering river. Big Redwood stands come down to the river and we passed large groves of tall Eucalyptus trees with their fragrant, long, banana-shaped leaves.

After a morning run and fueling up, we headed out, planning on an easy 25-mile trip to Cuffey Cove. Exiting the entrance bay, we found 4-6 foot swells and about 15 knots of wind from the north. The picture on the right is supposed to show the swell towering over the stern of the boat. You have to use your imagination.

By 7 p.m. we were about half a mile off Cuffey Cove and it did not look very inviting, being an open roadstead next to 100-foot cliffs and offshore rocks. The swells were breaking on the rocks and the land presented a lee shore, so I wondered: "How are we going to get out once we get in?" It just didn't look safe and it would be impossible to leave at night, which is always a possibility if the winds shifted to the south. So, after a team meeting, we decided we would give Cuffey Cove a miss. The only option was to continue the 60 miles to Bodega Bay and sail through the night – not something we had wanted nor planned to do – but an unsafe anchorage was not an option.

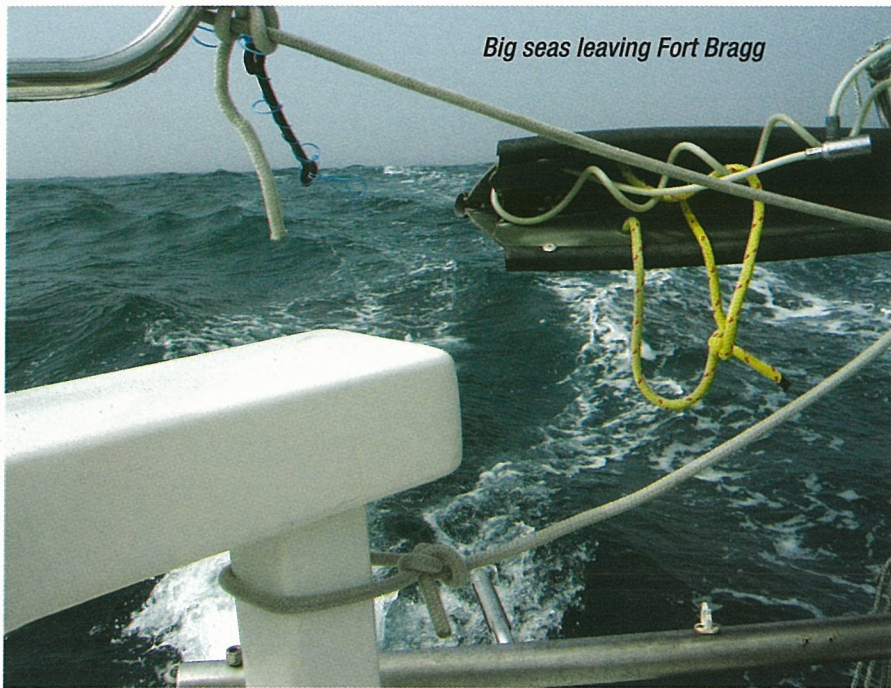
We enjoyed a pretty exciting night of sailing... up to 8 knots, reducing sail and getting her back down to 6 with the jib alone. The night was clear, lit by a half moon and a blanket of stars, and we, in the southeast, started to see the distant glow of the San Francisco

Bay area. At about 11 p.m. we passed Point Arena and the winds started to really blow, estimated at 30 knots. With just the jib, we were going 8 to 9 knots which was, again, too fast. I took down the jib and this slowed the boat down to 5 to 6 knots with bare poles as we ran downwind. If she had gotten back up to 8 knots we would have had to deploy our drogue, ready at the stern, which would have slowed us another 3 knots but, fortunately, that that was not required.

Fog had claimed us again as we arrived at Bodega Harbor at 9 a.m. with a half-mile visibility and no wind. Motoring up the well-marked 2-mile channel, we were happy to arrive at the scene of Alfred Hitchcock's movie, *The Birds* where, protected and secure, we fell into dreamless sleep.

It is telling to think that we thought it was warming up when the temperature reached 65° F in the morning. It had not been that warm since we had left Friday Harbor almost four weeks earlier. The water is a balmy 62° F. It was a beautiful morning as we pattered around the boat in our shorts (we are Canadians, after all!). The hills around the harbor remind us of the area around Merritt, British Columbia: rounded, dry hills with some small clumps of green trees near the town.





*Big seas leaving Fort Bragg*

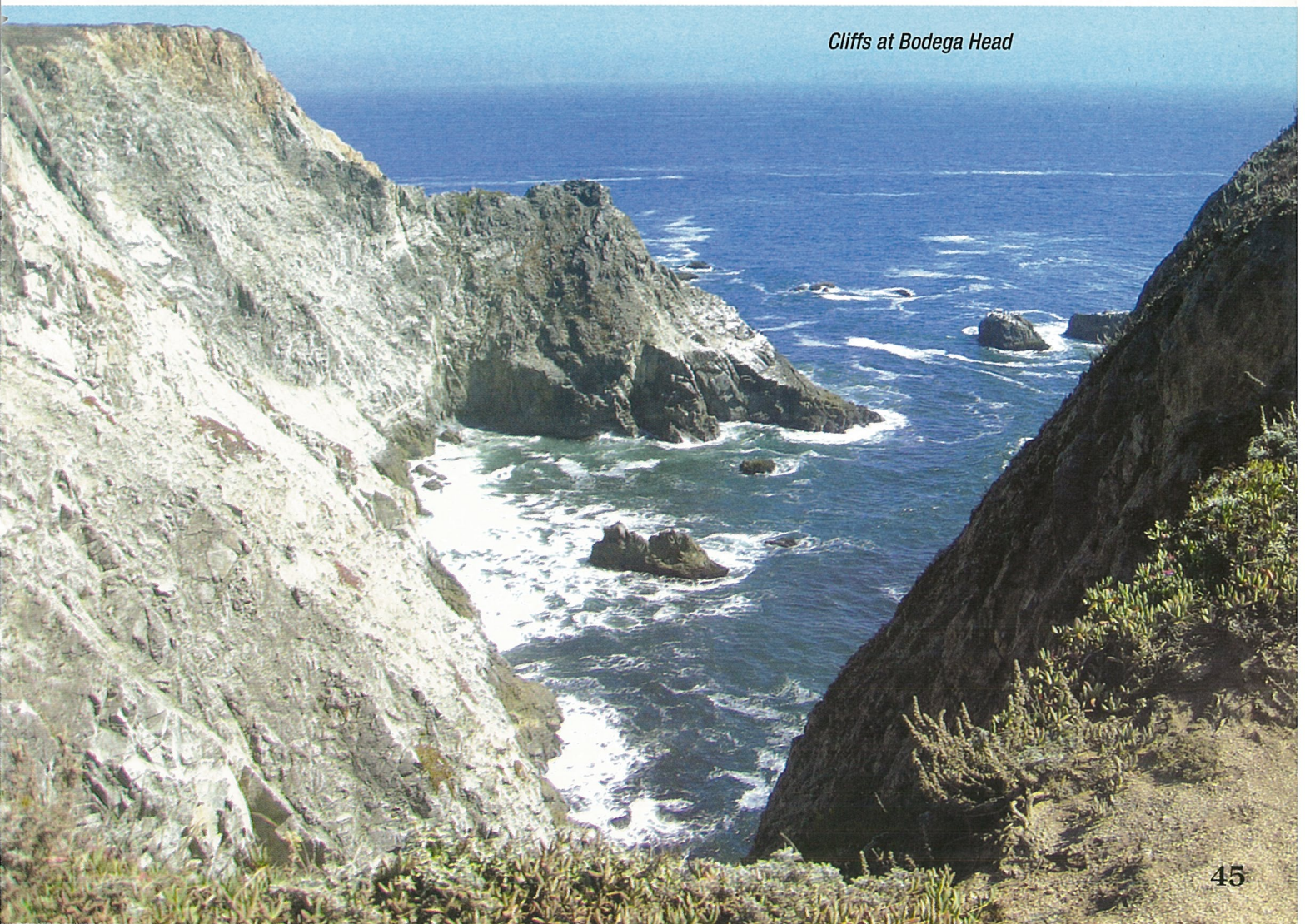
Breaking our boat-bound lethargy, we happily chugged to shore for a long walk to the park

at Bodega Head at the entrance to the bay. As we were walking along the road to the park we saw

a jogger running towards us. As he went by we called out, "You know you are only the second American jogger we have seen in four weeks!" Breathing hard, he replied in heavily accented Russian, "I am not American!" We laughed, and continued our watch for Jogger No. 2.

Our "little" walk turned into an eight-mile expedition. Once we reached the park at the base of Bodega Head, looking out over the sea we had traveled, we climbed the cliffs and walked a dubious pathway perilously near the edge of the cliffs, with a drop of 200 feet straight down.

We were now just 45 miles from San Francisco. We can't really believe we have come this far: 600 miles traveled.



*Cliffs at Bodega Head*





**GOLDEN GATE...** This was going to be the day for the final push to San Francisco as the forecast was looking good when we went to sleep last night with light northwest winds. When we woke at 6 a.m. to do a final check of the morning forecast, the weatherman had revised it and now was predicting south winds. We decided to just stay put and not beat up ourselves and *Light Wave*.

We spent the next three days pleasantly anchored in Bodega Bay. Garrett reinforced our screacher sail by hand-sewing the luff of the sail to the Spectra line that runs along the luff, improving the furling performance in stronger wind. I tried my hand at baking some raisin bread, which was delicious and well worth the effort (see Sidebar).

On Labor Day, September 4<sup>th</sup>, the forecast was good so we woke up at 6 a.m., in the dark, and were off at 7:30. The winds were calm with just slight 3- or 4-foot swell from the northwest, but it was grey and overcast. We motored for the first couple of hours and as we approached Point Reyes the wind came up and we were able to set sail.

The wind rose to about 15 knots and we were able to sail at 6 to 8 knots for the remaining 35 miles to San Francisco. The sun burned through the low cloud and it turned into a beautiful afternoon. We were both wide awake as we closed the last 10 miles to the Golden Gate Bridge, each of us taking turns with binoculars trying to spot it. At about 5:15

p.m. we caught our first glimpse of the south tower. As we got closer and rounded Pt. Bonita the full bridge came into view. It is truly an impressive sight. Each reddish orange tower is over 600 feet tall and it supports a two-mile bridge of six lanes.

We were sailing wing-on-wing with both the yellow drifter and screacher up, and decided to lower the drifter before we got to the bridge, as we were really starting to fly in the stronger winds which are funneled through the Golden Gate. As we lowered the drifter it did not fall onto the deck as usual, but instead fell into the water in front of the boat. We promptly ran over it at 6 knots until the entire sail was under the boat. The drifter, stretched tight over the bowsprit, assaulted



our sensibilities with these horrible ripping-like noises that made our guts clench, expecting as we were the final shredding. We now had a real mess on our hands as the sail had turned inside out and was acting as a big drogue stopping *Light Wave*. It was impossible to get it out of the water in its present state so we slowed the boat down further by rolling up the screacher. Then we let go of the drifter sheet, and Garrett slowly pulled the drenched drifter over the bow beam. This took about 15 minutes of rushed and panicked efforts as we were almost in the main shipping channel. Then we put the screacher back up and properly sailed under the bridge. (In a later discussion with another sailor we found out how to prevent this near catastrophe in the future. We will put a grommet in the middle of the drifter with a long, thin line attached, and pull that line to collapse the drifter before we lower it.)

As we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge we danced around and hollered a great big "Ya-hoo!" Hearing a responding cheer, we spied a few of many walkers waving to us 250 feet above from the bridge walkway.

The words of song Tony Bennett has immortalized, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," have new meaning to us: With all the cold, wet, foggy days we had endured, the words definitely do not seem quite so romantic. The 'morning fog'? How about the 'constant fog'? And the 'blue and windy seas'? You got that right, buddy. We will see about the 'golden sun shining.'

*(In the next episode, Light Wave will explore San Francisco Bay area, then sail through Southern California and the Channel Islands to San Diego.)*

### Simple Salmon Curing Under Way

Clean and fillet the fish into two fillets. Coat each fillet heavily in this order:

- Salt
- White Sugar
- Dillweed

Place the fillets together, treated sides together, and put a weight on top.

Turn once a day for 4 days, keeping weight on top.

The salmon is now cured, delicious, and preserved for your enjoyment!

### Raisin Bread on Board

For 1 loaf of bread (double everything for 2 loaves):

- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1/2 tbsp brown sugar or honey
- 1 package Fleischmann's Quick-Rising yeast (or equivalent from can)
- 3 1/4 cup all-purpose white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup large flake oatmeal
- 1/2 tbsp salt
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp melted butter
- 1 1/2 cup warm water

The trick with bread is to treat the yeast very carefully, keeping the temperature warm and constant. It is best to warm all of the bowls, utensils and ingredients you will be using beforehand, so that everything is warm room temperature.

Using a warm bowl, pour in the 1/2 cup of warm water, stir in the sugar or honey, and sprinkle yeast on top. Keep bowl warm by wrapping in towels, for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix together your pre-warmed dry ingredients in a large

mixing bowl, and keep warm in a sunny window or an oven that has been warmed and turned off.

In 10 minutes, yeast mixture, if all is well, should be foamy on top. If not, start again with new yeast.

Stir yeast mixture and pour over dry ingredients. Keep stirring while adding one cup of the cups of water, the butter and the raisins. Knead with your hands and continue to add more warm water as required until dough is just firm enough that it does not stick to your hands and makes a kissing sound when you pull your fingers away. If you have mixed in too much water, just add more flour for the right texture.

Pat top of dough with butter, turn it over and over in the bowl until whole mass is coated with butter. Cover the bowl with a towel, allowing space for the dough to rise, wrap whole bowl to protect from drafts, and place in warm sheltered spot for 1 to 1 1/2 hours until mixture has doubled in size. Do not let it rise so high the yeast overstretching the dough.

Punch and knead the dough back to its original size, form into a loaf, pat with butter and place in buttered pan. Use a knife to slice the top a little to avoid cracking, and again bundle against drafts with space for rising. Again, leave in a warm protected spot until double in size (30-45 minutes). Preheat your oven during this time.

Just before putting into hot oven, sprinkle loaf with cold water for a nice brown crust. Bake at 400° for 35 minutes. When done, bread will make a hollow sound when tapped.

MM



# Coming Back to America, Part 2

## An African Adventure

By Glenn and Debbie Braddon

In our last article entitled "Coming Back to America" in the July/August 2005 issue, we were gleefully awaiting the completion of our 40' cat to be named *Into The Mystic* and preparing for our voyage from Durban, South Africa to the United States. But, little did we know when we sold our home and flew to Durban, that it would be 9 months before the boat would be launched and another month to complete sea trials and wait for the appropriate weather window before we would be able to sail out of Durban harbor.

In review for those of you who are new to our adventure, Glenn had flown to Durban from California to meet the boat builders and see the factory before the contract was signed. What he saw and heard helped us to make the decision to work with them in building our dream. We both had taken early retirement and sold our home of 27 years in order to follow our dream of cruising the oceans of the world. Arriving in February 2005, we had only planned on being in South Africa for two months, but as time passed we gradually realized that construction of our boat was going to take much more time than both we and the builders had ever envisioned. Our boat builders were

a new company and the catamaran was a new boat for them, but at that time we still had confidence in their promise, our contract and the word of their shipwright that they knew what they were doing.

Before the arrival of our crew in April, we decided to rent a car and see, from the land side, the ports that we would be visiting in our new boat when it was finally launched. Leaving Durban, we drove down the Transvaal and along the "garden route" to Capetown. Our first stop was East London and the East London Museum, the home of the pre-historic coelacanth, a fish that was thought to be extinct when caught off the coast in 1938. We could not find the marina, but we did see the harbor entrance and thought it would be easy to enter with our boat. We drove through Port Elizabeth, the first British settlement in the country and South Africa's fifth largest city in terms of population, checking out the waterfront as we drove along.

Mossel Bay, a small harbor town with a big heart, was our next stop. We enjoyed the Diaz Museum, which has a replica of the caravel that Bartholomew Diaz, the first European around the Cape, had captained when he rounded the Cape of Good Hope on his way

to the Spice Islands in 1488. It was there that he found water and food to replenish his dwindling supplies.

They say that it is nice to visit Knysna, and it was a real treat for us to stay two nights at a beautiful bed and breakfast on Leisure Island, located in the bay. Knysna is an artsy, crafty little village and if you want to enter the bay from the sea you have to do it at the right tidal flow moment or you are in for a lot of headaches. A special stop we made was to the Knysna Elephant Park where we got to pet and feed some of the most magnificent African elephants. A sad note, a month after our visit, we heard on

*Diaz Beach, Cape of Good Hope*

