

patches of fog and clear area along Fidalgo Island. We soon pass the opening to the marina but we continue south to our final anchorage at Bowman Bay.

Well, after a very interesting 14 hours and 35 miles and one more close call when a lovely sailboat came charging out of the fog and swells, we drop anchor in Bowman Bay. We went ashore and enjoyed the facilities and took a walk to get rid of a bit of tension. I mentioned earlier that there were a lot of very scenic trails in the woods and along the cliffs of Bowman Head. The views were typical of this whole region.



Looking west from Bowman Head



Bowman Bay, fluorescent green plankton, at night it was phosphorescent



After hiking the trails on Bowman Head, Pat and I decided to hike up the hill to the bridge over Deception Pass. The hike was well worth it once we were on the bridge. It took a long time for our spit to hit the water.

Just after the sun went down, I decided to set another anchor so our bow would point into the swell that came around Bowman Head and we would rock less. I had failed to do this the last time Alice and I were here and it was not very comfortable, lesson learned. The fog lifted in the night and the stars shown in all their beauty, a perfect ending to a, if not perfect day, an eventful and instructive day.

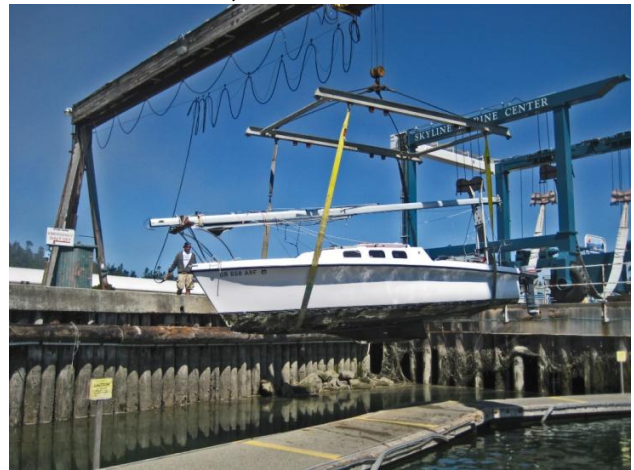


Sunset, Bowman Head



Unstep the mast and secure it well

Up the next day in what else fog, we headed the 6 miles north to the marina and after a few foggy surprises we arrived at the harbor entrance and could just make out the markers in the fog. We were soon tied up and watching the fog, lift, arrgh. A short time later after dropping and securing the mast, we were hoisted out and onto the trailer. This is a nice method as it allows perfect placement on the trailer and perfect tongue weight. The fee for in and out was only \$35, quite reasonable considering I didn't have to soak my trailer in salt water.



Up, up, and away

Loaded up we headed into Anacortes town for lunch. I parked at the West Marine and bought a few things and then we had a nice Italian lunch. Checking the straps I saw it was chaffing and needed some chafe pads. I had just passed a Goodwill store and walked



Colorful and effective chaff gear

back to it. Out back was a dumpster and a person sorting donations, she was a sailor and when I explained my need she said she had the perfect chafe pad. It worked great, though every time a car passed us with little kids in it they had the most distressed expression, hmm I wonder why. A night at my sisters in Portland, then a quick trip home and the vacation was over.

I had previously chartered a 32 footer in the San Juans with my wife. We both felt that we really enjoyed the smaller Rhodes, but inclement weather has more of an impact on the experience of a week on the water on such a boat. The pop top enclosure was a lifesaver and for the time Alice and I were aboard it was up for much of the time. That combined with the Bimini gave us a surprising amount of shelter. The little propane heater was a lifesaver during the day, but we weren't comfortable using it at night, a couple of good sleeping bags and fleece blankets did the trick. Though we had a two burner gas stove that we would set up in the cockpit on a special table under the protection of the Bimini, we also should have brought a single burner butane stove. With this we could make a quick cup of coffee or coco without all the hassle of setting up the big stove.

Food wasn't much of a problem (see attached list). We could always buy food (sometimes a bit expensive) at the numerous marinas and at several of the towns we visited. Keeping perishables and drinks cold wasn't too hard as sometimes it felt warmer in the icebox than outside. Ice was available pretty much everywhere. Also available were many nice restaurants in the larger towns and marinas.

Because we did a fair amount of motoring the alternator served to keep the batteries charged even though I ran a machine all night that help me breathe because of severe sleep apnea. On those days we did sail the skies were mostly sunny, only partly cloudy or bright overcast, so the 55 watt solar panel helped to keep things charged. We never did hook up to shore power during the entire vacation and we never had a dead battery. The 16 hours of light and the fact that we would not stay up late reading probably helped too.



We had a simple GPS but I found that sometimes the accuracy was questionable. I think I may be in the market for a better one. We used two Waterproof Charts titled "San Juan Islands #43" and "Gulf Island British Columbia #86", they are printed by *WATERPROOF CHARTS INC. Punta Gorda, Florida*. These charts were just what we needed in the wet cockpit of the Rhodes. They stowed just aft of the ice box on a little shelf and held up very well to the abuse they received. We also had a couple of publications. *A Cruising Guide to Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands, Olympia to Port Angeles*. Second Edition by Migael Scherer and published by McGraw Hill. This spiral bound guide has great information and history about each island; we really enjoyed reading and using it. Another is the *Cruising Atlas for Northwest Waters* published by Evergreen Pacific Publishing. This spiral bound chart book was very useful. The final publication, and this was of great use is *A Current Atlas, Juan de Fuca Strait to Strait of Georgia* and included with this publication is a small booklet entitled *Washburne's Tables 2009*. This shows the direction of currents and flows on

an hourly basis around all the islands. Many of these currents are counter intuitive but these books help make sense of the complicated tidal flows in this area.

Having a *reliable* motor is a must, and I made a big mistake in not testing the motor thoroughly after I had it serviced prior to taking the trip. Because the winds were unpredictable in this area it is wise to carry a lot of fuel. We carried two five gallon and one two and a half gallon tanks. I am not sure how many gallons of fuel I burned but I did fill them all up at least twice.

I would eagerly recommend sailing in this area with a well founded small boat. The challenges are many, but none that can't be overcome with careful planning, a good boat and crew, and oh yes, some dumb luck too. I've had such a good time I intend to return to the San Juans and the Gulf Islands next summer, maybe just a bit later in the summer when the weather is supposed to be better.



Last anchorage, the end of the voyage, Bowman Bay