

Serendipity Travels

Log of the *Serendipity* San Juan Islands, WA USA

The first four days.

Wednesday, 2 July 2014

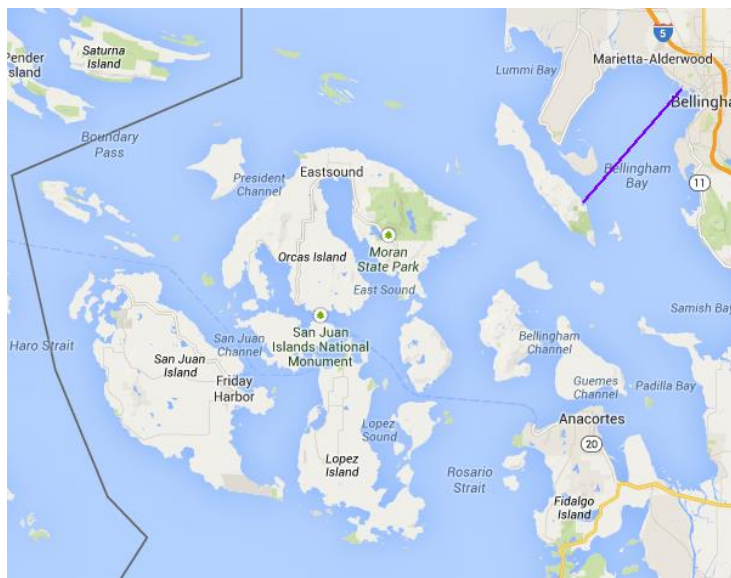
On this trip, Serendipity Travels will travel aboard its namesake vessel, the *Serendipity*. Our journey will take us to the Northwest corner of the United States – the San Juan Islands of the State of Washington.



The homeport of *Serendipity* is Squalicum Harbor in Bellingham, Washington – which is also the hometown of Serendipity Travels. We planned our trip to start the second day of Meredith's retirement. Early in the day, we loaded our provisions and luggage, and paid a visit to the fuel dock to top off the tanks. A last-minute dental procedure delayed our departure until that evening.

At 18:45, we headed across Bellingham Bay into 20 knot winds and 3-5 foot breaking waves. Not particularly pleasant, but *Serendipity* is designed for such

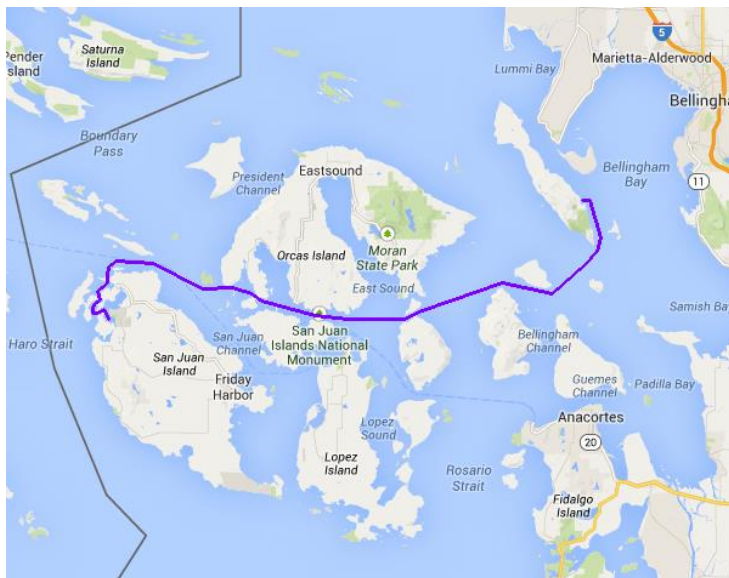
conditions. This far north (48° 45'), the summer sun sets after 21:00, so we had plenty of light for cruising and anchoring. About an hour's run from the harbor is Inati Bay, on Lummi Island. The bay has a great anchorage that is protected from most winds. We set the anchor and were ready for a glass of wine to celebrate the successful beginning of our trip.



We are close enough to a major town that we are able to connect to AT&T's 4G Internet service and check our email and Facebook friends. Connectivity will not always be so good.

Thursday, 3 July 2014

After a good night's sleep, we are up early. The wind continues to blow 10-15, but a change in the direction of the current (from last night's ebb to this morning's flood) means the waves will be lower. Anchor is weighed and we are off at 08:00. The route today will take us through the heart of the San Juan Islands, with our eventual destination being Garrison Bay, on the far side of San Juan Island. We belong to the Bellingham Wheel and Keel Club, which is sponsoring a cruise there this weekend.



The ride is uneventful. About an hour out, we use text messaging to inform the cruise leaders, on the vessel *Moonshiner*, that we are in-bound. We are informed that we will be on the port side of the raft, requiring that we have lines and fenders on our starboard side. Due to the number and size of the boats, and the strength of the wind, we are asked to drop our anchor as we join the group.

Once inside Garrison Bay, we contact *Moonshiner* again. We make arrangements to hand off our (towed) dinghy to them before we start the anchor drill. Dinghy away, we pull ahead of the raft about 100', drop the anchor, and reverse into position. The raft of five boats, ranging in size from 37 to 26 feet, now has two anchors set in the direction of the prevailing South wind.

The wind does not always blow, however, nor does it always blow in the same direction. Also, tidal currents can (and usually do) reverse direction from ebb tide to flood tide. With two (or more) anchors out, there is a danger that the boats will swing and the anchor lines will become twisted – a real mess. After lunch and a few beverages to celebrate our safe arrival, we set an anchor off

To see more pictures of the first four days cruising, overlaid on a map, click: [San Juan Islands Trip 2014, Map I](#)

the stern of *Moonshiner*. The stern anchor will hold us through current shifts and in a light breeze from the North, which should be sufficient.

The remainder of the day is uneventful. About 16:00, we bring out tasty hors d'oeuvres to share and chat about our past experiences. This group has been boating together for about 20 years, so recent tales are intermingled with some stories that have been heard before.



The “appetizers” at these gatherings are generally sufficient for dinner. Once the other boats have taken their dogs to shore, we gather in the salon of *Serendipity* for a few games of Liars’ Dice. The names of the winners are lost to posterity, but who really wants to be remembered as the best liar?

Friday, 4 July 2014

Independence Day dawns with a mixture of clouds and sunshine. After a leisurely breakfast, Meredith packs a lunch. She has her sights set on the summit of Young Hill, which rises behind English Camp on Garrison Bay.

Our preparations are interrupted by the departure of one vessel and the arrival of another. *De Anna Lynn* drops her anchor and reverses into position on the starboard side of the raft, which now consists of (from port to starboard) *Serendipity*, *Moonshiner*, *Intrepid*, *High Interest*, and *De Anna Lynn*.

[San Juan Island National Historical Park](#) consists of two parts – American Camp on the southeast corner of the island and English Camp on Garrison Bay, on the northwest portion of the island. The [History and Culture](#) page describes why there are two camps on this small island, all due to the killing of a pig. A few buildings remain at both camps, and we dinghy to a shore to explore English Camp and the adjacent Young Hill.

Young Hill rises 650’ above Garrison Bay. The path to its summit is slightly over a mile long, meaning an average 10% grade. At some points, the path is level, at others, steeper. With a few pauses at overlooks, and several pauses to catch our breath, we attain the summit. The view is marvelous, enabling us to peer down into Garrison and other bays on San Juan Island, and across to the Canadian islands on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island. It is a great spot for lunch.



We hike back down and rejoin our comrades. Tonight, a pot-luck dinner is on the agenda. After a nap and a beverage to celebrate our hike, Meredith prepares our entrée and we join the others on *De Anna Lynn* for dinner. My iPhone has music appropriate for the Fourth, and we play that through the boat's speaker system.

Roche Harbor is known for its fireworks display on the Fourth of July. We estimate that there are more than \$1 *billion* dollars' worth of yachts moored in the basin this evening, so they can afford to be a bit extravagant. A few of the boats in our raft have fairly substantial dinghies, and we are invited aboard *White Lightning* (no surprise, it travels with *Moonshiner*) to make the trip from Garrison Bay to Roche Harbor. Darkness falls about 22:00, and the first fireworks are shot at 22:15. Lots of oohs and aahs for the next 15 minutes or so; after the finale, the boats blow their horns in appreciation. We return to our boat and share rum and Cokes with our friends. Bed time is about 00:30.

Saturday, 5 July 2014

The fireworks were a late night, and we sleep in until about 09:00 this morning. No one else is moving particularly fast, although those with dogs have already made at least one trip to shore.

We usually tow a small boat – a “dinghy” – behind us when we're cruising. For this cruise, we are towing a 10' Bullfrog (that's the brand name) with a 15 HP Honda motor. The boat looks like a hard-bottom inflatable, but it actually is made of rigid plastic pontoons with an aluminum bottom. The Bullfrog and motor are quite light weight and easy to tow – with very little detrimental effect on the speed or handling of *Serendipity*.

Today we decide to take the Bullfrog to Roche Harbor Marina, about a 15 minute trip. The marina has a small grocery store, boutiques, and restaurants. It also has better cellular service. Off we go, wearing our water-activated inflatable life vests, with credit cards, camera, money, and iPhone safely secured. Zipping along at water level can be cool in many ways, and we are wearing warm jackets as well.

Upon arrival in the harbor, we weave among the many yachts still anchored and find our way to the dinghy dock. We nose in between two other boats and tie up. Since it is 13:00, our first stop is the Lime Kiln Café.

After a tasty lunch, we explore the shops. More accurately, Meredith explores the shops and Steve glances in them. Having skimmed the selection, he finds a bench and makes use of the cellular Internet connection. Some attractive Martini glasses are found to add to our boat's beverage service collection. After taking some pictures and visiting the ATM, we buy some ice in the store and head back to the Bullfrog.



The ride back to Garrison Bay is uneventful. The main event of the day is a drink mixing contest, followed by another hors d'oeuvre party. Several drinks are offered to be tasted by the judges, the cruise chairs on *Moonshiner* and yours truly. The selection ranges from a variety of moonshine (*not* from the eponymous vessel) to "Pink Viagra" (whose main ingredient is watermelon) to guava smoothies to Chipotle Martinis.

Pink Viagra is the people's choice winner (perhaps because everybody on that boat voted for it), and Chipotle Martini is the judges' choice. There were no losers, and fortunately the quantities available were insufficient to cause any serious intoxication. Tasty snacks once again served as our dinner fare.

Later, as is common on these trips, several friends gathered in the salon of *Serendipity* for a game of Liars' Dice. Rum and Cokes enhance the players' ability, and, once again, your scribe has neglected to record the name of the ultimate winner.