

THE JOURNAL OF THE



# AMERICAN SAILING

## ANATOMY OF A RESCUE: HOW ASA SAILORS SAVED LIVES IN THE OCEAN

**O**n May 16 in the Bay of Florida, 80 miles out of Key West and the finish line of the 2013 Bone Island Regatta, Captain Roy Rogers saw something unusual – a boat on the horizon drifting with its sails down. A few other vessels could be seen in the distance, but this one stood aimlessly alone, a strange sight in the middle of a racecourse.

Up in the cockpit, with the sound of the wind and the boat's stereo playing, it was difficult to know what to make of it, but below in the cabin was a different story: two short, garbled mayday calls came through on the VHF radio, and then silence.



*When a garbled mayday call came over the VHF in the midst of a south Florida race, ASA Instructor and Capt. Roy Rogers stepped out of the race and into action.*

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## ADVENTURES IN CRUISING • BOB VINCENT AND CLAUDETTE CHAISSON



*Claudette Chaisson*

**E**ven though my wife and I own a 42-foot sailboat in San Diego, we have done many bareboat charters over the years, and it is absolutely our favorite thing to do. So when the opportunity to go sailing on one of the ASA flotillas in Vancouver came up, we jumped at the chance. We made contact with Capt. Roger Philips, and booked our Catalina 42 Mark II sailboat Raven through San Juan Sailing. Roger immediately sent us the itinerary for the seven-day trip.

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## ADVENTURES IN CRUISING

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He also sent links to more information about our destinations. Raven would be the ninth of nine boats in the ASA flotilla.

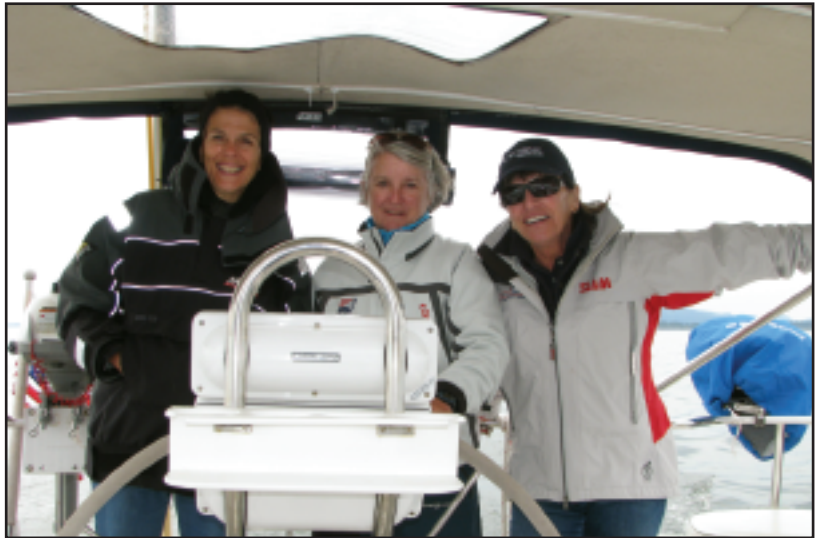
### *Preparing for the Pacific*

As an avid sailor and power boater my whole life, no matter how much experience I have accumulated over the years, I love the feeling and excitement I get when preparing for a bareboat charter, especially to a place I have never been before. I get all the charts and cruising guides that I can find for the area where we are going, and start studying our course, the wind, local conditions, and the destinations that are available to us. Capt. Roger, a seasoned ASA instructor and flotilla leader, had made it very easy for me this charter. He had the whole trip mapped out, including information on the marinas we would be visiting, the events and group dinners that were planned, and about the local provisioning options. After downloading and reading Raven's owner's manual, I felt I knew our boat inside and out. We were well prepared!

Like the ASA, San Juan Sailing is a first class charter company out of Bellingham, Wash. They had a well-organized skipper's briefing where we got a lot of invaluable information before we boarded our boat, and a nice little BBQ reception for us the night before we departed. My crew consisted of my wife, Claudette, and two other women; Elaine Lembo, deputy editor from *Cruising World Magazine*, and Susan Daly, a world-class racing sailor, both hailing from Newport R.I. They were excellent crew, and great boat mates, too. I nicknamed us "Captain Bob and the Ravenettes."

Some of the main concerns about sailing in the Pacific Northwest are the large tides with strong currents and the floating logs that are so prevalent because of all of the timber and logging industry. Each boat was required to assign a crewmember as the "log watcher," and it could not be the same person who is driving the boat! SJS also requires that one crewmember be designated as the NSO (navigational safety officer). Detailed tide charts for the week were provided to us, along with a customs worksheet, a skipper's self-guided boat orientation, and the navigation safety officer's checklist. We also got the crew list for all the other boats, which was very helpful in remembering the names of the people we were meeting. The ASA gave us some great shirts with the name of the flotilla embroidered on them ... a very nice touch indeed!

Flotillas are a great way to get used to "cruising," especially while you are gaining more sailing experience.



*The 'Ravenettes' enjoy some time at the helm on a cool day on the water in the Pacific Northwest. Having surrounding boats lent a sense of security with fun.*

Because you have a "leader" and other boats around you, you can feel safe and assured knowing that someone has your back. As it turned out on this trip, several of the people had taken sailing lessons through ASA schools; some where they lived, and some in other distant locations, and then had signed up for this flotilla. Some of the folks had filled their own boat with people they knew, while others traveling solo, got placed by Capt. Roger on boats with other people that were looking for crew. It all seemed to work out great!

### *The Summer Sailstice*

As part of our daily plan, Captain Roger arranged for morning VHF check-in calls and daily weather updates, so he could keep track of his fleet, and reviewed that day's sailing plan. Our first sail was from Bellingham to Sucia Island, and the date was June 22, the summer solstice, dubbed the "Summer Sailstice" by our friend John Arndt some 14 years ago. This is an international organization that invites sailors to take part on the longest day of the year in the sport that they love, sailing! It was great that we celebrated this day with other sailors, in style, and in one of the most amazing boating areas in the world. The winds were light that day, but it was a pleasant and scenic trip to Sucia Island, a national marine park that is inhabited only by nature and visited only by the people who come in by boat to one of several picturesque anchorages.

We anchored in Echo Bay, with views to the east of the Cascade Mountain range and the majestic Mt. Baker. While ashore, we went for a nice walk through the beautiful lush trees, snapped some great shots of our boats in the anchorage, and started meeting some of the people from the other boats in the flotilla. Capt. Roger had organized rowing "dinghy races" that afternoon. We didn't know until the rule brief that the oarsman had to be blindfolded. It was a great day followed by the most

stunning full moon that night. It was the perfect day. We had a nice dinner onboard and took too many pictures of our gorgeous surroundings and the Supermoon in perigee.

The next morning, we left for Vancouver, B.C., some 45 nautical miles to the north. We motored most of the way under windless cloudy skies and light rain. Once again I was reminded how important it is to have packed proper foul weather gear to counter the forces of Mother Nature. Coming into Vancouver by boat is a beautiful sight, even though the weather limited our visibility that day.

### *Visiting Vancouver*

Vancouver is an amazing city, and although we had visited there by land before, we had never come in by boat, so it was extra special this time. Now that we were in Canada, we had to clear customs, but the ASA and Capt. Roger's briefing and reference notes had made that an easy process.

A slip at the False Creek Marina on Granville Island had already been arranged for us. It was a great spot to be, with a fantastic public market just a short walk away, and convenient water taxis that could take us all over this fabulous city. We had one full day and two nights there, so we got to see and do a lot of the city. We had a great time playing tourists, and had a good meal and lots of fun at the "Sandbar" one night, and a truly exquisite dining experience at the Blue Water Cafe in Yaletown on the last night.

From Vancouver, we sailed to Snug Harbor on Bowen Island. On this evening, we shared a fun night with all of the other folks from the flotilla at the local restaurant there called Doc Morgan's Pub. It was a very diverse and interesting group of people. They were from all over the U.S. and the world; one from as far away as Japan and even some folks from Pakistan. Since we had all come on this flotilla for the same reason, the love of learning more about sailing, adventure and travel created a great sense of camaraderie among the entire group.

From Bowen Island, we sailed back to the south and cleared U.S. customs at Pt. Roberts, Wash. Checking back into the U.S. is not nearly as easy as it was in Canada, and it took us a couple of hours and the surrender of some fruit. Because we were the first boat in the flotilla to arrive there, we decided to sail on further south and visit an old friend who lives on Orcas Island. We called Capt. Roger and told him of our plan and that we would rejoin the flotilla the following



*The spectacular natural grandeur of the Pacific Northwest makes its somewhat short season extremely popular with sailors from all over the world.*

afternoon. Although it was not part of the planned itinerary, it turned out perfectly. We had a very nice night in another beautiful anchorage at Deer Harbor including a tasty fish dinner onboard with our good friend Jeff and the Ravenettes. As my wife and I have learned on every bareboat charter we have ever taken, when we venture off of our planned route for whatever reason, we always find that the new destination turns out to be one of the highlights of the trip. The same was true this time!

Time flies when you are having fun. After a week of sailing (and motoring), we arrived at Inati Bay in Lummi Island for a flotilla raft-up on our last night. Everybody brought a course of food to share that was pre-arranged by Chef Roger. We had a fantastic potluck BBQ party on the beach. In spite of the less than perfect weather, we all agreed that it had been a very well organized event, and that a great time was had by all!

Since our return, we have received an email from Capt. Roger about his plan for next year's flotilla in the Pacific Northwest. He has all new locations planned for next year, and it all sounds wonderful. We're seriously thinking about signing up for it again. We know that we want to return to the area to explore more places there, and we can hardly wait to go again! The ASA offers a lot of great choices, both for new sailors, and for seasoned old "salts" like us.

Be sure to read *Cruising World* for a more detailed article about this trip in an upcoming issue. Thank you to the American Sailing Association, San Juan Sailing, and Capt. Roger Philips, for a truly fantastic week. Like I said, we love bareboat charters!