



Big Boat Trip 2019 – The End

Wednesday August 28th 2019 – We left Seattle and headed for Blake Island to catch one more night out in nature before heading home. Luckily there was space for us at the dock. Needing some beach time, we all jumped in the dinghy for a wet ride (it was quite choppy) to the southwest side of the island where we beached the dinghy. Julie and Ava basked in the sun while Skylar and I did some fly fishing off the shore.

Somehow the dinghy lost its anchor hold and floated off the beach. In a panicked serious voice, I told Ava it was her responsibility and she needed to go swim and get it. Her response was a serious tone back “is that supposed to be a joke”. Unsuccessful in delegating the task I pumped myself up and jumped in the freezing water to retrieve our ride home.

Back at the boat Julie had the idea to pick up garbage along the breakwater and document it for a service project Ava would need to do when school starts in a couple days. We all chipped in and filled a couple garbage bags. One of the other boaters was impressed and gave Ava some honey from his bees.

The wind calmed and it ended up a beautiful calm night with delicious cedar plank salmon for dinner.

Thursday August 29th –We left Blake Island and slowly cruised south down Colvos passage headed for Tacoma. While cruising along at 8 knots we all cleaned the boat and prepped it for offloading all our stuff. Skylar actually had a good attitude and was very helpful. After 18 years he had an epiphany and told Julie and I, “wow, it’s actually a lot easier to get stuff done when I have a good attitude”. Finally!

After 2 months living on the boat, we were almost back home. What a crazy summer. I can honestly say this was by far the most eventful boat trip ever. We had sickness, wild weather, lots of rain, huge waterfalls, Julie’s mom passed away, and a serious accident that sent Skylar to the hospital. It was kind of an exhausting trip but certainly memorable and the bonding we had as a family, stuck on a boat together, will last a lifetime.









Ava read all these books



Leaving Blake



Back to Tacoma



Our Boathouse



“Captain”

Saturday August 24th 2019 – 6:30am we woke (ok just Julie and I) for an early morning departure from Roche to cross the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The sun coming up over calm seas was a beautiful sight, but then a pod of Orcas made it even better! An amazing crossing all the way to Seattle’s Elliot Bay Marina for the night. We got there about 11am, then took a taxi to fishermen’s terminal to see if we could find some Deadliest Catch crab boats. Ever since we were able to find and meet Sean Dwyer a couple years ago, Ava just had to go back and check it out. But no crab boats this trip, so it was off to the Evo store for some shopping, then a walk to Fremont, and dinner at funky Mexican restaurant.

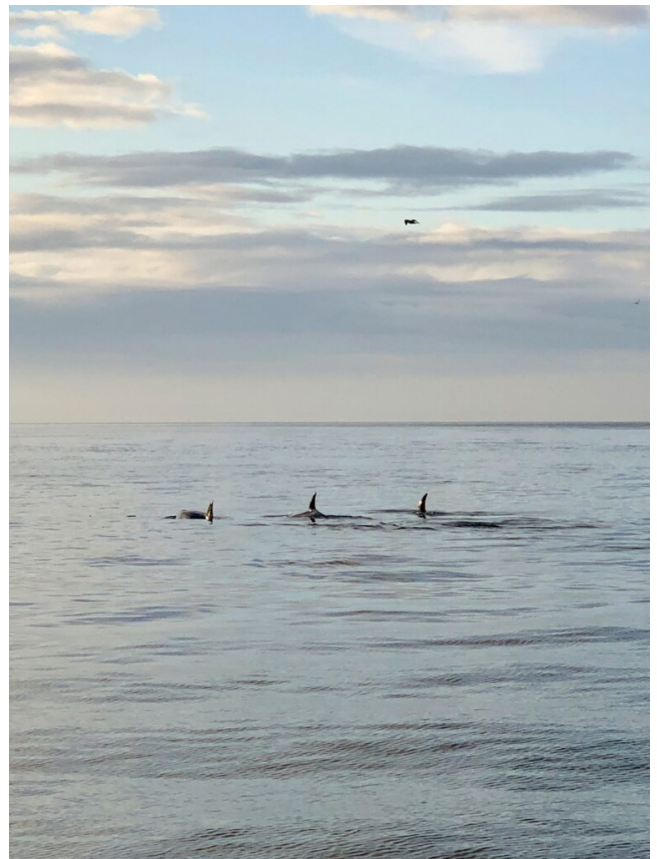
Sunday August 25th – Took the boat over to Bell Harbor for the next 3 nights. Had a great dinner at Aerlume. It’s become evident that downtown Seattle area has become..... well how do you say.... a total S@#t hole. Ok, of course not all of it, but wow, every year it becomes less and less attractive to spend any time here at all. It’s dangerous, not a place to walk around during the day let alone at night or with kids. Dirty, smelly, people doing drug deals, shooting up, getting arrested, peeing on the sidewalk, sleeping everywhere, our kids witnessed it all in a few hours. It’s really sad because we have loved coming here, especially on the boat for almost the last 20 years. It’s a huge drug and mental health problem. These people need help, but obviously the city’s solutions to get them help is failing miserably, which everyone suffers for.

Monday August 26th – We decided to leave the tents and dirty streets of Seattle and taxied over to Bellevue for a night at the Hyatt. Skylar’s friend Jordan drove up to stay with us and we had a great dinner at the Lakehouse. Lots of back-to-school shopping and the boys had fun swimming in the pool.

Tuesday August 27th – Breakfast in Bellevue then back to Seattle for a little more shopping before a fun and delicious pizza dinner at the Alibi Room. That evening, back at the boat, we saw about a 32' sailboat cruise by the breakwater really close. So close in fact that a guy who had climbed up the mast, jumped off onto the breakwater. Not sure how he managed that, but he climbed down on to the docks asking for help. Apparently, the sailboat he was on lost its engine and they were under sail only. Problem was that no one onboard really knew how to sail. In an attempt to stop the boat, they tied a line on one of the pilings. With the sail still up, the wind then pinned them to the seawall in a very uncomfortable and dangerous manner. No one onboard knew how to put the sail down. Skylar and I decided we better help and got in the dinghy to see what we could do. As we approached the sailboat everyone onboard was pretty scared. Skylar has some sailing experience and was able to get on their boat and put the sail down. That calmed things down quite a bit and eased the pressure off the boat that was slammed on the wall. Then we were able to carefully tow the sailboat into the harbor with our dinghy. The captain and crew were very appreciative along with a 6-month-old baby that they pulled out of the cabin after we got to the dock. The baby had been sleeping the whole time, oblivious to what had been going on.

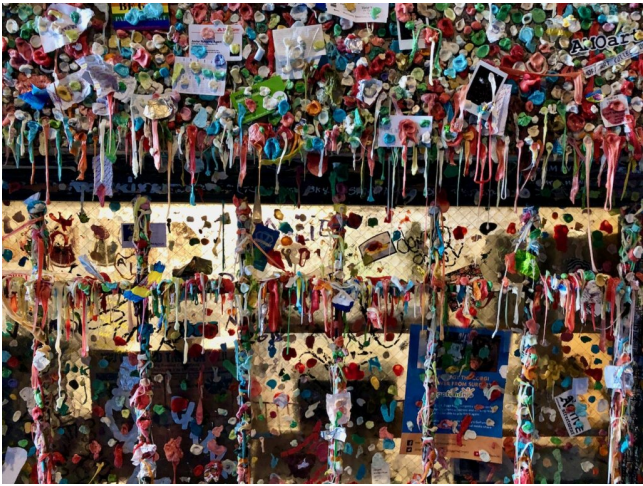
It was fun, and Skylar felt like a hero.

We found out that the guy who jumped off the boat was the owner "Capitan" who had just bought the boat. This was his maiden voyage and he decided to take some friends "crew" out with him. It didn't go so well.













Ghost Hunting

Sunday August 18th 2019 – We decided to spend another night at Roche with friends. Todd's parents and sister joined us at Roche and we all had a nice time together. We set some crab pots and all the kids had a great time hanging out together that evening. Todd made up a scavenger hunt for the kids that took them all over Roche. Then the kids went ghost hunting. They found an app that sends you to places people have reported ghosts. It was dark and they were gone a long time. We started to get a bit worried but then they came back all jacked up. They went ghost hunting in the cemetery and this is not just any cemetery. It's in the deep woods with really old gravestones. It's a bit scary walking through on a bright sunny day let alone at night hunting ghosts!! But none of them cared much, even Ava thought it was awesome. That night was late night. We partied until after 1am (if you know Julie and I, that never happens) with a bunch of friends that happened to be docked right by us.

Monday August 19th – Leaving our crab pots just outside Pearl

island we left Roche with the Steels for a short crossing to Stewart island's Reid Harbor to spend one more a night at anchor with our friends. We anchored together then went on a 5-mile hike to the lighthouse that was beautiful. This was our last night of the trip together with our friends, so we decided to cook a huge dinner and have some fun. Crab was on the menu but first I had to make a run in the dinghy back to Roche to pull the crab pots and, hopefully bring in the bounty. The wind had kicked up, but I made my way through the waves and spray over to Pearl island. Luckily there were some keepers that would be perfect for dinner! We cooked up an amazing, huge meal for all that lasted another late night. The kids played music and we were a loud bunch in the bay, but it was our last night together.

Tuesday August 20th – The Steels took off in the AM headed for Bellingham, while we planned on another night in Reid Harbor. But plans changed as the weather forecast displayed 25 knots for the evening and into the next day. So, we decided to go back to the protection of Roach harbor for a few days before continuing home. We spent the next 3 days relaxing at Roche with just our family. Going to spa, loop hike every day, toured fancy boats, walked the sculpture park, fished for tiny bass in the ponds, and took a taxi to Friday harbor for the day.

One day on our loop hike we found a package alongside the road. It looked like the UPS truck had dropped it. So, after looking up the address on the package we continued walking about another 2 miles to try and deliver the package to its rightful owner. The crazy thing was that when we knocked on the door and Rusti answered, we saw a familiar face. Her and her husband used to be American Tug owners and we had met them several times at American Tug get togethers. Her husband had since passed, and the American Tug had been sold but it was so nice to see her again and talk boats and life.





Outhouse at Turn Point



Turn Point light house





