

Reid Harbor Cruise -- 1/26/05 -- 1/30/05

1/26/05

Left Edmonds at 1:00 p.m., three hours later than planned. Should have provisioned the night before. Also, forgot power supply for the laptop. Had to wait at the slip while Liz found it and brought it down. (Turned out the laptop -- an old E-Machines -- was useless as a GPS. The screen was unreadable in daylight. Next time I'll try the new laptop Dimitri gave me on retirement. With the laptop useless, I used a hand-held GPS sans waypoints, with hard copy charts. That worked.)



Putting in at Edmonds Marina

Went up the east side of Whidbey Island, and moored at Deception Pass Marina at 4:00 p.m. Because it was late, I decided to lay over there for the night, as I didn't want to get caught underway in the dark. No lantern on board, so I stuck it out as long as I could in the dark and then went to bed at 8:00 p.m.

1/27/05

Woke up at 3:00 a.m. That's what I get for going to bed at 8:00. Had breakfast at 4:00, then sat around until daybreak at 6:30. Paid for my moorage (\$9.00) at 7:00, cleaned up the boat and fooled around until 11:00, then left for Stuart Island. Waited til then to catch slack tide at Deception Pass. The pass was a breeze.

Saw many seals off Fidalgo Island. Evidently they were feeding on salmon, which were jumping all around.

Stopped at Friday Harbor on San Juan Island for fuel. While there I picked up a Coleman lantern. At least tonight I won't have to go to bed at sundown. The lantern will also serve as a heater.

It appears I'm getting about 5 miles per gallon at 22 knots, 4,500 rpm. The boat tops out at 30 knots, at 5,500 rpm.

Made Reid Harbor (Stuart Island) 1:00 p.m. Distance 92 miles from Edmonds. Set up for camping mode. I expect to stay here two nights.

Note: Hormel sells a line of dinners in pouches. Fully cooked. Dump the pouch in boiling water for 10-12 minutes. Beef tips with gravy was delicious! And no cleanup required. After heating dinner, I used the boiling water for coffee. Next time I'll carry a variety of these meals -- beef tips, meat loaf, etc.

1/28/05

Woke up at 8:00 to bright sunshine. Bacon & eggs for breakfast, then off to explore. The island is just as it was when JK, Gretchen and I were here in the sailboat 23 years ago. Absolutely beautiful, but deserted this time of year. This is a *good* thing.

I spoke too soon. At 2:30 p.m. *Island Grace*, a 44-foot yacht from Lopez Island tied up at “my” dock. What nerve! A couple with pre-teen son and daughter aboard. I enjoyed their company.

I’ll stay here tonight and head back in the morning -- hopefully by 8:00 a.m. This will give me time for a little exploring on the way.



Reid Harbor. Here I’m moored exactly where I was in our sailboat *Harvey-Go*, 23 years ago.



One of the little islands prevalent in the area. This one is about 100 yards from left to right.

Up at 6:30 this morning, and underway at 8:00. Left Reid Harbor and just went island hopping. I haven’t the faintest idea what islands I visited, for I didn’t take notes. Just wandered from one tiny little island to another, often with them separated by only a half-mile or so.

Around 10:00 I quit this nonsense and headed for Deception Pass, getting there at 12:00 noon, just in time for slack tide. Going through at slack tide was a breeze. During the peak of flood and ebb tides, current in the pass can run 10-12 knots, with whirlpools and other strange goings-on. Since it is a very narrow pass, surprises can be dangerous. Yet it looks calm and placid. Guess that’s why they call it Deception Pass. Since my boat is capable of 30 knots, it can handle Deception Pass at any stage of the tide, as long as the operator is on his toes.

With Whidbey Island to starboard (Gee, I like that nautical talk) I drove south for an hour or so to Oak Harbor, where I refueled, then continued south toward Edmonds.

At 2:30 p.m. I was about to go “home” to the Edmonds marina when I got a call on the cell phone. My nephew Brian, and two friends on the 43-foot sloop *Harbinger* were on their way to Gig Harbor, and suggested I join them there for dinner.



The bridge over Deception Pass joins Fidalgo and Whidbey Islands.

So much for ending the cruise. I aborted my turn into Edmonds and headed for Gig Harbor, some 40+ miles away.

Half-way down it was getting dark and I discovered my hand-held GPS had quit. A fuse had blown, discombooberating a number of circuits, including the cigarette lighter that was powering the GPS. (It turned out the “hot” side of a fuse box had died, killing all four associated circuits.) It didn’t matter much, since by now I was in familiar waters, except it got real dark real soon. I slowed the boat to about 3 knots for the last 10 miles, in deference to possible floating logs. Got into Gig around 7:00, just in time for dinner. Moored at The Tides tavern, had dinner there and stayed the night at their dock.

1/30/05

Got up about 8:00, had a leisurely breakfast at a local restaurant with Brian and his friends, and followed *Harbinger* out of Gig Harbor about noon. With my camera, Brian took some pictures of *Gunkholer* in a drive-by, then passed the camera over to me. (That was kind of scary. I had visions of the camera not making the move from *Harbinhger* to *Gunkholer*.) Then I took some pictures of *Harbinger* under sail. Then I headed for home. Got to Edmonds at 2:30 and the boat was on the trailer in our back yard by 3:30.



Harbinger and *Gunkholer* at Gig Harbor. The ramp leads to The Tides restaurant. 24-hour free moorage for customers.



Harbinger and Gunkholer



Reid Harbor entrance, taken from inside the harbor itself. The harbor is about a mile long and 1/4 mile wide at its widest point.

Lessons Learned

- 1. Always carry backup navigation systems.** I had GPS on my laptop, plus a hand-held GPS, plus charts. The laptop died and the hand-held died, but I still had my charts.
- 2. Carry more food than you need for the intended stay on the water.** You may decide (or weather may decide for you) to stay out longer than planned.
- 3. Don't take too much stuff.** I took things I didn't use, and they just got in the way. I did take a folding card table and a folding lawn chair, and bought on the way a Coleman lantern. These things made all the difference for comfortable camping on board.
- 4. Don't fry bacon (or anything else) in the cabin.** Bacon grease splatters and floats, and is a bear to clean up. From now on, all my cooking in the cabin will involve boiling.

Conclusion

I put in about 300 miles in 5 days, and enjoyed every mile and every stop. What a great time! I can hardly wait for summer and the Canadian San Juans!