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CURRENTS

WE ENCOURAGE CURRENTS SUBMISSIONS

This is a local news-driven section. If something catches your attention that would be of interest to local boaters, send it along to samb@pacificyachting.com.



SAILING OUT A STORM IN SWANSON CHANNEL

It feels like I just crawled into my sleeping bag when a flapping headsail and the boat lurching from one side to another rudely wake me up. I stumble on deck and watch the crew furling the headsail.

This was day three of a 48-hour non-stop

sail during an advanced sailing course on a Beneteau 38 and we were sailing south in Swanson Channel, three miles north of Poets Cove.

The latest weather forecast called for strong winds but this was building quicker

than expected and we immediately put a second reef in the main. At this point I estimated the wind to be a solid 30 knots gusting perhaps to 35 but it kept getting stronger. We put the third reef in the main sail and furled the jib further. We ▶

MARITIME MUSEUM FLOODING

A broken water pipe on city property adjacent to the Vancouver Maritime Museum caused extensive damage to the facility in February. The museum was closed for two days and then reopened to the public. The break in the pipe released soil-contaminated water that penetrated the basement area of the building and flooded the archive, library and offices, and rose to several inches above the concrete floor.

Carpets covering the floor had to be taken up and to get to them many structures, cabinets and furnishings had to be removed. Fortunately the broken pipe and flood was discovered before the water could rise to an extreme level and quick action on the part of staff made it possible to move many items to safety. Also fortunate was the fact that

many items were stacked on spacers keeping them above the floor level. However, damage was done to many archival items including books and other publications as well as to frames containing valuable paintings. The estimated damage and cost of repairs runs into several hundred thousand dollars.

Museum director Ken Burton said, "We were very fortunate that no maritime treasures were lost or seriously damaged. VMM Staff moved very quickly to safeguard these items. The Vancouver Maritime Museum is working closely with the City of Vancouver to recover from this unfortunate event. It should be business as usual in a few short weeks. The museum galleries and the St. Roch are currently open for visitors to enjoy."

—Peter Vassilopoulos



PETER VASSILOPOULOS

started to take some serious water over the bow and the anemometer read 50 knots. At this time we had the jib furled up, the mainsail triple reefed and the boat behaving nicely. The only problem was that we made no headway. We really needed a bit of a foresail, but our heavy weather jib was not on the boat (that would make for a whole other story).

We started the engine but the 50 horsepower Perkins did little to improve our speed. At this point everybody was tired and just wanted to get to port. I had slept less than four hours in the last two days and the my judgment clearly was clouded when I decided to turn the boat downwind to run for Otter Bay with the main up and no jib.

The boat was hard to control and the bimini (previously tested in 35 knots of wind) disintegrated around us. Thank God for a wonderful crew who managed to get the mess of canvas and badly bent stainless steel tubing down and lashed safely to the deck.

Racing downwind there was no way we could take down the main yet the boat was hard to control so I decided to head upwind and get the boat sailing as comfortably as possible. When forereaching, the

boat would be on the edge of luffing and close reaching. She would head up until the mainsail would start to luff, then bear away, gather some speed only to head up again. The boat speed was around two to three knots as she weaved through the waves.

The bad news was that we literally sailed backwards, a result of the onset of the flood, strong wind and very little boat speed.

At this time however I was quite reluctant to try anything else. Forereaching worked wonderfully and luckily enough the storm only lasted a few hours and soon we managed to unfurl the jib foot-by-foot and when we did this we were able to make decent headway. By 14:00 we were safely docked at Poets Cove. Shortly thereafter the entire crew was soaking in the hot tub, sipping on rum overlooking Bedwell Harbour. The adventure of a lifetime came to a happy end.

—Christof Marti

