



BCMS NEWS

May-June 2008



If Cam McCannel were a traffic cop, you'd be in trouble! Browning, May '08

Of publishing glitches and gremlins:

Problems in word processing have delayed this edition and forced the editor to use an old issue as a model. My apologies for the various computer gremlins refusing to cooperate with one another!



Swansong of *Gilbert & Sullivan*. Racing downwind at Port Browning, May '08

Newcastle Sail-In

The Main BCMS Summer Event of the year!

!! Yikes!! This weekend !!

The Mid-Summer Sail-In at Newcastle Island, just off Nanaimo, will be July 5th and 6th, 2008, though some members are anticipating being there from the July 4 to 7 at least. Weather should be excellent at this time of the year. Many multies are expected.



Beware of the Harker Raiding Party appearing at Newcastle Island!

Newcastle is a good opportunity to dedicate a couple of extra days to catching up with club members.



A gaggle of club multies at Browning this year. *Flying Kiwi, Gilbert & Sullivan, Manitou, and Bad Kitty.*

This year we are inviting all previous members to reacquaint themselves with the present club and other former members. This will enable people to find out what happened in the intervening years and what other old friends have been doing with their boats and their lives. If you know of anyone who used to be in the club, please ask them to come along, whether by sea or land. There should be lots of room and we again anticipate a good turnout - even better than last year.

Club Librarian Stu Kerr will be there in his new Banks 35 cat *Flying Kiwi*. Look for Stu in his new rainbow-striped

racer. Your humble editor expects to be there to welcome you in the monomaran *Friendly Dragon*, though with great regret, a family emergency could prevent him from coming.



Land Ho! The crow's nest beckons...

Newcastle Island Provincial Park is easily accessible by taking a small and inexpensive water taxi to the island from the downtown docks in Nanaimo which are just North of the prominent high-rise building on the waters edge. Club members will also be delighted to pick you up if possible. The park is a great place for children to entertain themselves striking terror into the resident animals which include rabbits, squirrels and deer.

There are great BBQ facilities - the club has reserved a covered BBQ eating area so everyone will be comfortable even in the rare event of liquid sunshine arriving. But the forecast sez that good weather is expected.

See you at Newcastle Island!!



Did yer steak disappear last year at Newcastle? Unidentified south islander caught checking out the BBQ.

Port Browning Season Opening Event May 2008.

The season opening event was a great success. The event proved that this location and time can be outstanding, in spite of some wet years. The conditions were perfect, especially for the racing on Sunday - there was a stiff breeze out of the south and sunny conditions for some vigorous sailing in Plumper Sound.



Dream Chaser and Skana Sting.



Some of your BCMS members enjoying the camaraderie at Browning, May '08.

The dinner at the restaurant was great and was enjoyed by a good turnout of the club members. Many prizes were awarded. To the surprise of a visiting young, non-member multihull couple, they got a prize for - yes! - being non-members!



I have a dream... at Port Browning 08.

The ANNUAL General Meeting was held on the Saturday night on the beach at Port Browning just after the BBQ in the evening. The directors were particular pleased having many members available for the AGM which gave a better sense of where the members see the

direction that the club is heading. There were many inquiries about the business of the club and the better dissemination and gathering of information was much appreciated by all.



An incredulous Jamie found that a hungry dog was quicker than he was, when eyeing a nice steak! Browning 08

Many thanks to Alec Mackenzie who organized the Port Browning event, despite the challenges of that resort.

Swiftsure International Yacht Race, 2008.

The 2008 Swiftsure will go down as one of the best for the BCMS. We had several multihulls entered, and this year the star of the show was definitely the well-known, 35-ft cat **Bad Kitty** which claimed line Honours by beating all others across the finish line. It was of little consequence to many in the club that **Bad Kitty** was relegated to second place behind the extremely lightweight NWMA F25C tri, **Makika** after handicapping.



In Victoria's Inner Harbour, the crew of **Bad Kitty** about to win Swiftsure, 2008. So easy...if you are good.

Bad Kitty, designed, built and owned by Karl Uthoff was sailed by a well-oiled team of Bob Davis, Alec Mackenzie, Ron Tomas, and Richard Woods. Unfortunately Karl could not be on the boat, but no doubt his spirit was leaning over their shoulders, urging them on, ever faster!

This year, Swiftsure provided the usual fickle conditions, and ran through a spectrum of challenges for the contestants. In contrast to last year, they all got off to a slow start in light airs as the crews all pleaded for anything resembling a breeze to fill their sails. This was

the scene for much of the outgoing leg. Heavy monohulls like **HMCS Oriole** were dead in the water - for now.



Formula 40 *Dragonfly* at Swiftsure.

However during the night conditions changed with wind and tides, and in the early morning return leg, **Bad Kitty** was almost air-borne as she flew through the gap at Race Rocks with spinnaker flying at over 20 knots. The crew report that the whole boat was vibrating with excitement, as if it was about to explode. Yet by the time she approached the finish line into Victoria Harbour the wind had dropped and they drifted in just ahead of the large, well-known, Australian-built, Seattle-based (but now BC-owned) Formula 40 cat, **Dragonfly**. But **Bad Kitty** was still decisively ahead.

Congratulations to Karl and the crew of *Bad Kitty* in her shining hour, even if it took place while most people were still slumbering as dawn broke.



Cam and *Dream Chaser* doing what they do best. Port Browning '08

Next year may see additional multihulls entering the Swiftsure, possibly including Cam McCannel in his F9AX ***Dream Chaser***.

Thanks to resident multihull rep John Green of the Farrier F9AX ***Sauterelle*** for organizing another great event, which included an excellent dinner for multi-enthusiasts at the RVicYC. It was agreed by all attendees that this dinner included better organization and value than in previous years at the Empress Hotel. About a dozen BCMS members attended the dinner.

Snake Island Regatta

Will take place at Nanaimo in the weekend of June 27/28, 2008. This regatta is well-attended and enjoyed by all. John Green says that Nanaimo always puts on a great event that is enjoyed by all. Good luck to all racers.

Cowichan Bay Regatta.

Tim Night, who is the BCMS pointsman for the Cow Bay regatta, sez that in spite of previous uncertainties, "Cow Bay" is definitely a "GO!"



Dutch Treat on a beam-reach romp at Port Browning '08.

The regatta will take place Aug 2nd and 3rd 2008. This is a popular event supported by many organizations and is the main racing day for the North-West Multihull Association of Seattle. They are always very welcoming for those who want to participate in either the sailing or the organization of the event. Cow Bay is known for its consistent, reliable winds and flat water in a safe environment. More info is available at either the NWMA or Cowichan Bay websites if you Google them.



Roy Mills, builder and owner of *Gilbert & Sullivan*, with Peter Walford at Browning. Roy, as usual, has his hand on the important things in life! Roy has just sold G&S and it will be shipped to New Zealand.

The fine Arte of **Sail cleaning.**

Or "Out! Out! Damned spot!!"

If you want to brighten up your Dacron sails, they can be cleaned on a suitable flat surface by using a solution of dish detergent (with lemon in it) and a capful of bleach in a 5 gallon pail of warm water. Use a relatively soft brush to scrub the sails, in particular in stained or darkened areas. Flush thoroughly with clean water, and follow up with a pressure washing of both sides, using a light-to-medium strength pressure washer that will clean but not damage the cloth. Dry well before folding and bagging. The editor used this method to remove stains etc on the sails of his new trimaran with great success.

Many thanks to Tim Knight of

UK Halsey Sailmakers Northwest in Victoria - and club resident sails guru - for his help in this.



Koah, Skana Sting and Blue Tango racing across Plumper Sound, May, '08.

Cell phone contact on the water.

Have you lost it?

The following is the adventure I have had in trying to find the best solution for poor cell phone coverage on the water. It is not intended as the final or expert word on this matter.

We might want to cut ourselves off from life ashore at times, but sometimes it is really important (especially for those left ashore) for us to retain cell phone connections.

Telus claims to have complete coverage of the Georgia Strait and most of the way up past Port Hardy. But most of us know that that is simply not the case – at least with the typical portable cell phones we use. Not only are there a lot of pockets among the

islands that have no coverage, but areas in the middle of the Strait are also devoid of coverage – in spite of what Telus says.

How can our cell phone reception and transmission be improved? I have been digging into this matter recently and present some info for you that may be of interest. This will be continued as further info comes to light.

Telus will be discontinuing the analogue cell system later this year and are calling on those of us using analog phones to upgrade (downgrade?) to digital. While the kids may laugh at my 7-year-old Motorola flip phone, little do they know that at about 1 watt, this analog phone has much greater transmitting power than a typical new digital model, which is usually 0.25 to 0.33 watts. And all the cutesy cell-phone features in the world don't mean anything to me unless it does its basic job of verbal communication!

Certainly the batteries last longer on the new cell phones, but I have already established from experience that my old analog phone will out-perform any of the new digital cell phones that we have tried on our boat.

Certainly a satellite phone would do the job, but most of us do not want to go to the expense or hassle of having one. A booster or amplifier is also available for about \$250 to \$400 with various features to match the prices. That will allow the transmission to be increased to the legal maximum of 3 watts. This is a great advantage for transmission, but, considering the expense, it only improves the incoming signal a minimal amount.

It appears that cell phone communication is largely determined by the same criteria that is applied to VHF radio. To this end, it appears that the best transmission and reception is achieved by 3 things:

1. Type and height of the antenna above

- the water.
2. Least possible losses from impedance in the cable
 3. Power output of the phone.

While the internal cell phone antennas will accomplish the job in most cases when close to a cell tower, an external antenna will provide a huge advantage. The transmission and reception of my old Motorola can be vastly improved by my pulling out the 6" long antenna while using it. Not many digital phones now have such an antenna. However, just like a VHF radio, we can improve our chances of success on the water.



Is this a new kind of antenna? He might be a lightning rod of sailboat design, but this is Richard Woods freeing a stuck halyard on a Woods 28, *Tucanu*, before the race at Port Browning, 08

The signals between cell phones and towers

is close to the same line- of- sight factor as with VHF, so being behind an island will continue to be problematic. However, by installing an external antenna on the mast-head you will increase your clarity and range dramatically – either above the horizon or over an island. As well, by using an antenna with a higher dB gain you will appear to have greater transmission power, as the increase in dB appears exponentially greater to the receiving device.

Using a 3 dB gain keelboat antenna will appear to a receiving tower or boat to have a signal that is 9 times as if the signal was emanating from a standard cell phone or VHF radio. The 3 dB antenna must be omnidirectional in output because, when heeled, it disperses its signal in all directions – including that in line with the antenna , which is wasted. But multihullers need not be restricted to this type of antenna, because our vessels heel very little. .

The higher dB gain antennae, which are usually aimed at the power boating community, can provide better performance and are usually rated at either 6 dB or 9 dB. These antennas are engineered to compress the outgoing signal so that less energy is broadcast vertically and is instead broadcast horizontally. The 9 dB is the most extreme in this type but at about 27 ft long, it is a challenge to mount on a mast head. However, the shorter 6 dB antenna could be perfect for multihulls.

This means that the standard one-third watt cell phone with a 3 dB antenna will appear to transmit about 2.75 watts, a 6 dB antenna it will appear to be about 36 times or about 12 watts, and a 9 dB antenna will appear to put out an astonishing 25 watts! Note that the output power has not increased, but the “focus” of the radiated power has increased – in a useful, horizontal direction.

Likewise, a standard 25 watt VHF radio will appear to put out about 225 watts, the 6 dB

will appear to put out about 900 watts, and the 9 dB gain will appear to provide an amazing 2025 watts.

There are difficulties to get to this level however. The installation means that the tall antenna and mast will require a longer coax cable that will have dB losses from the impedance (a type of overall resistance) that increases with the length of the conductor cable. This can be somewhat offset by installing the biggest diameter coax cable that one can, as coax cable with a greater diameter usually also has a central conductor with greater cross-sectional area, and therefore allows greater flow of transmitting energy than a thinner diameter cable. But this adds weight aloft – something we are loath to do in any boat.

To further enhance transmission and reception, connections should be as few as possible and contact points must be firm and corrosion-free. Seal the connections well from the salt air and as usual, use marine-grade, tinned copper cables. Like all matters regarding any vessel, it is a compromise as to what strength of signal and features one wants and what the cost is in other aspects, including money.

I believe that the serious loss of transmitting ability with the cheapest, smallest and least efficient cable RG58U is too great, so I will not use it. The middle-sized RG8X (about 0.25" OD) is much better for little extra cost.

However, because I value safety a great deal, for my VHF I plan to use the largest RG8U (about 0.42" outer diameter) and I will run this through my boat and mast, and then use a 6 dB gain antenna above that. I will also affix another 6 dB antenna on top of a 10 ft pipe extension and install that on my aft rail for the cell phone, again using the RG8U. I hope that this arrangement will give me a very good performance for both VHF and cell phone. Too bad they cannot share the same antenna on top of the mast.

This leaves me with the question about what actual cell phone make and model I should get to use with this arrangement. Many cell phones do NOT have a receptacle of any kind that can be used to connect to a coax cable leading to the antenna. Some cell phones can transmit by being in the vicinity of a booster or amplifier, but otherwise one needs that physical connection from the phone. I am looking for the phone that will allow that direct connection to the antenna. But more of that later on in the next issue.

One thing that amazed me was that very few of the Telus outlets have anyone on their staff who even considers the best options for cell phones on the water or other periphery areas. They know all about the various costs, the trendy colours, models, ring-tones, the ability of the cameras, and other very secondary functions that are for city-bound folk. But it took me a lot of phone calls to find someone who even had thought about marine use. It appears that catering to the subscribers on boats or in outlying areas was not a concern with Telus – in spite of the large numbers of people who must be affected.

If anyone has suggestions or comments, please contact me at editor@bcms.bc.ca

Richard.



Two generations; prominent BCMS member Karl Uthoff in a pensive moment with multi-enthusiast son Robbie behind.



The membership owes a big debt of gratitude to Marlene Mackenzie, who has been a stalwart supporter and director of the BCMS for many years. Thank you, Marlene. You are a gem, and much appreciated.

2008 Directors List

President - Bob Davis 604-583-9396
[email- bob.davis@kwantlen.ca](mailto:bob.davis@kwantlen.ca)

Past President - John Harker 604-940-7084
[email - mjharker@telus.net](mailto:mjharker@telus.net)

Vice Pres.- Jamie McKerrow 604-596-1721
 email – mckerrow@questairinc.com

Secretary - Bob Davis 604-583-9396
[email - bob.davis@kwantlen.ca](mailto:bob.davis@kwantlen.ca)

Treas.- Marlene MacKenzie 604-538-0917
[e-mail – alec@arguscontrols.com](mailto:alec@arguscontrols.com)

News letter- Richard Britton 604-521-9279
[email - editor@bcms.bc.ca](mailto:editor@bcms.bc.ca)

Library - Stuart Kerr 604-534-7120
[email - library@bcms.bc.ca](mailto:library@bcms.bc.ca)

Web site - Bob Davis 604-583-9396
[email- bob.davis@kwantlen.ca](mailto:bob.davis@kwantlen.ca)

Web site – Gary Astill 250-390-3957
 Email – gastill@telus.net

Publicity Alec Mackenzie 604-538-0917
 Email - alec@arguscontrols.com

Racing - Karl Uthoff 604-323-0122
[Email - kuthoff@shaw.ca](mailto:kuthoff@shaw.ca)

Membership – Stuart Kerr 604-534-7120
[email - membership@bcms.bc.ca](mailto:membership@bcms.bc.ca)

Social Director – Gordon Brown

Member at large – Gary Astill 250-390-3957
 Email - gastill@telus.net

Member-at-Large Bob Harris
 e-mail – buckman@infinet.net

C.B.C.Y.C. Rep. Glen McDonald 604-940-8621

***BCMS Address and
 Website
 Box 101, 5010 – 48th Ave.
 Delta, B.C. V4K – 3N5
 bcms.bc.ca***

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