

# Mr.P's Spring Voyage

April, 2019

A spring, 2019 voyage in "LEVITY" to our Maurelle Island Camp

*"Spring Voyages for Children & Others"*

Presented by Tim Ellis and with contributions from Mr.P.

Spring is the fittest season, she normally bolts out of winter gloom straight into bloom, but this year there seemed to be some doubts. After a warm and carefree February, March came in angry, wet, noisy and cold. It got worse. Snow came and entered our lives. For two or three days we frolicked and played, but then it wouldn't go away. It lay icy and irritating on the ground for nearly three whole weeks. Too thin to do anything with, then wet, then icy again and it still wouldn't go away. The midnight sleepy-time dreams of a pleasant jaunt up the coast were dashed. Finally, the weather started to clear.

Mr.P and I motor sailed north to Maurelle Island, departing on April Fools Day in brilliant sunshine returning to Vancouver on the 10th. This was the first visit to the Camp this year for both of us. Mr.P is now an experienced sailor and all that he requires is a snug place to sleep with a nice soft mat under him, meals served twice a day at around 7 am and 6 pm, frequent stops for Mr.P to pee and, of course, as many daily stick fetching opportunities as possible. Oh, and did I forget to mention he likes having his velvety smooth ears scratched?



Seals sunning themselves on the rocks



Mr.P at Smuggler Cove Marine Park

Typically, he sleeps in the saloon on the cabin sole above the engine, it being warm, and when it comes to sleeping aboard, or indeed just about anywhere, Mr.P is quite predictable, he will raise his head just after dinner, languidly raise himself onto all four of his lovely long legs and totter off to bed, wherever it may be. He will not emerge again until after dawn. Ah, peace. Later when he thinks I am asleep he will stealthily settle himself onto an unoccupied berth cushion. This subterfuge would

be completely successful were it not for the fact that it is often accompanied with an enormously long and loud sigh - an onomatopoeic expression of luxury and blissful satisfaction. Of course, he has other duties, such as peering wistfully over the bow preparing himself for the next destination, preening to maintain his clean-cut good looks, determinedly butting his head against the closest human being to seek more affection, and the usual tail wagging. Although, it must be said, Mr.P dislikes rock and roll, no not that one, the other one, but he perseveres.

Our first break, after close to ten hours, is at Smuggler Cove, a famous bit of watery paradise, but even more agreeable at this time of year when still pristine and cool enough to deter less hardy visitors - we may even be the first visitors this year! The first order of business requires paddling the small tender to an adjacent rocky island for Mr.P to pee, returning for sustenance and rest. A certain amount of discipline is necessary as a result of Mr.P's penchant for stickery. Should one be tempted to throw sticks too early then Mr.P tends to forget about peeing and other more important big stinky business with the result that within ten minutes after returning to the boat, one once again has to paddle swiftly to the shore. Now getting him into the little rubber tender is easy, he slithers under the lower lifeline and just pours himself down into the tender, rather like TATE & LYLE's Golden Syrup spooned over a Shrove Tuesday pancake. On the other hand, getting him back onto the yacht now requires at least three sets of hands - as you know, Golden Syrup will not travel uphill. However, as you also know, most of us only have one pair of hands. So, one must carefully tie the tender parallel to the lowest part of the deck in two places, raise the lower lifeline with one hand and then persuade Mr.P to stand on one pontoon with his hind legs and with his forelegs on the cap rail of the yacht. From this position it is possible, with co-operation, to place a hand firmly against a hairy bottom and catapult him onto the deck. Phew, or should that be pew!



Smuggler Cove calm in the rain



Primitive but Adequate - The Container Cottage

Inside our humble home for the next few days, Mr.P's assigned bed is in the very bottom of the open wardrobe, lined with thick furniture removal rugs, dark and secure, and out of the way, surrounded by the scented clothes of his guardians and friends. The weather was sunny and 14dC for the first day, but quickly deteriorated to bands of rain sweeping in from the South, dark, gloomy and only 9dC.



Still, there is work to be done. First, top off the 2000 litre water tank which requires hauling the pump and generator to the stream from where we draw water, bleed the system to remove air and hey presto....one has lovely clean, untreated and natural H<sub>2</sub>O for another couple of years. What is vital to this exercise is the spring snow melt; which ensures the streams are filled to bursting, all the detritus washed away, clear and snow-melt-blue. Then, up on the roof and pull the wood stove chimney components apart to find the source of a very tiny leak, re-assemble and pray. Not forgetting, of course, all the other little chores waiting such as preparing food and the cooking of it, essential tea making activities, and generally taking care of the Camp...all the time watching the incorrigible Mr.P to make sure he doesn't get eaten by a sea wolf. Yes, really, no kidding. Various islanders often come by and visit and we exchange gossip - the Discovery Islanders' currency - accompanied by tea and buns.



A cozy cabin on a high bluff,  
overlooking Desolation Sound and the Discovery Islands

Alas, duty calls all too soon, and in consultation with Aeolus we learn that big winds are coming and decide that discretion really is the better part of valour. So, two days to get up, a week of light chores and deep contemplation, followed by two more days to get back, but this time the seas are unhappily confused in advance of the low pressure front bringing with it more and heavier rain and stronger winds. With our teeth gritted we did make it a little further than usual on the first day, safely within reach of our home port. The last day of the voyage was quite OK, sunny periods and no rain, but still confused seas, we left at 7 am and were back in our usual berth by 3 pm on the 10th.

Now we start planning the next trip...



Mr.P staring at the Captain...Isn't it dinner time yet!