

ARCLYD II's circumnavigation
By the Mech family

Part 1: Eureka!

Part 2: Eureka to Monterey

Part 3: Monterey to San Diego

Part 1: Eureka!

Friday, October 5, 2001

Hi to all,

Made it into Humbolt Bay and Eureka yesterday and found a library [with email facilities] within walking distance, so here is an update on our trip so far.

Overall we have had some really nice warm, sunny weather along the U.S. coast. We left Salt Spring on Sept. 11, and have stopped at Victoria; Port Angeles (cleared customs there), Neah Bay and Grays Harbour, Washington; Newport and Winchester Bay, Oregon; Crescent City and here (Eureka), California. With light or no winds, or some Southerly wind, we have motored instead of sailed for much of the trip so far. We have travelled through the night 4 times up to this point, and, except for the big roly seas of the last night, it has been very pleasant. The only thing is that we tend to not start shifting off for sleep early enough and mom and dad end up with 3–4 hours sleep only on those nights. Probably the scariest thing along the way was spotting crab traps about 5–6 miles offshore off of La Push, on a cloudy night. With it being so dark, we knew we would never be able to spot them all and had the potential for hitting one! Didn't expect anything like that, that far out.

The bird life has been prolific, especially on the Oregon and California coasts, with lots of seagulls, of course, pelicans, herons, and some other smaller birds we have yet to look up in our bird book. At sea we have continually many Common Murres out on the waves. We have only spotted one whale, off the Oregon coast, too far away to identify.

Kelsey and Dad have to spend most of our travel time (except for when sleeping) out in the cockpit, but Mom's steady stomach allows her to be inside, usually as much as needed. Tessa is proving to be a good sea dog, but does get very snugly when we are rolling around a lot and the horizontal position of her ears sometimes indicates that she would probably rather be somewhere else. Overall she manages very well on our moving boat and has adapted well to continually changing locations.

In Neah Bay, Kelsey and mom went to a very nice museum with 300–500 year old artifacts from a Makah Native People's village that was at Odette (a little ways down the coast). We had travelled in fog all the way from Port Angeles to Neah Bay, but we got to see Tatoosh Is. and Cape Flattery as we rounded as the weather had switched to cloudy by the next day.

In Grays Harbour we were surprised to already see Pelicans, and we enjoyed a lovely beach with long, rolling swells coming in, as well as all the gift shops on the strip we were moored beside. We also traded a case of beer for a 3–4 lb. Coho salmon!

In Newport we were treated to lots of Stellar sea lions, basking in the sun and swimming nearby, some of them in the water right beside our boat. The weather was beautiful while we were in Newport and the place is very picturesque. We had a nice walk to the beach and nearby lighthouse/museum, visited two historical museums and also toured the Hatfield Science Centre (part of Oregon State University) which was very interesting. There was a 2-day opening (the last of the season) for sport fishing for halibut while we were in Newport. We have never seen so many fish brought in by sports fishermen—salmon and snapper as well as halibut? Most of the halibut were in the 50 lb. range, but one person caught a 123 pounder. One kind man who had been to B.C. and been treated very nicely there gave us a chunk big enough for 3–4 meals—what a treat! We gave one meal's worth away to another cruising family from Australia—the only other cruising boat with kids that we have met so far. The two girls aboard

were 9 and 11 and have been on their boat since they were 2 and 4.

In Winchester Bay on the Umpqua River we toured a 110 year old lighthouse and even got to stick our heads inside the lens. As well, we walked on some of the highest sand dunes on the coast—up to 200 feet high in this area. We also got a free ride on a 'Dial-a-Ride' service they have there, into Reedsport to do some shopping and tour the Umpqua Discovery Centre there—it was quite interesting, almost like a mini B.C. Museum in Victoria. We ended up spending 3 days more than we wanted to in Winchester Bay as the wind continued blowing from the West, directly onto the bar entrance, resulting in big seas and swells over the entrance. It was closed for the better part of four days, and we rushed out late on the Friday morning it opened up again (Sept. 28). We then travelled the rest of the day and through the night, under a full moon, to arrive at Crescent City, California last Saturday morning.

The weather in Crescent City was warm and sunny and even though the docks were dirty with lots of seagull and pelican droppings, they are right beside a long, lovely, protected beach with a very picturesque lighthouse (built in the mid-1800s), situated at the end of it (about a 1/2 hr. walk along the beach from our boat) so Kelsey, Tessa and Mom had several spells of wading and walking on the beach, with Tessa especially enjoying running on the sand (while Dad worked on the boat). And we all had fun swimming (and showering) with two visits to the nearby pool. We also rented a car for one day to make a trip to see the California redwood trees. The tallest one in the forest is almost 400 ft. tall (and we didn't have the time to make the long hike to get to it). We did see one named 'Big Tree', which is 1500 years old, 304 feet tall, and 68 ft. around. As well, we drove up to Brookings at the south end of Oregon and ended the daylight hours that day watching the surf crashing in on the rocks and sand along a beautiful beach there.

We stayed in Crescent City for four days, partially waiting for favourable tides for getting out of Crescent and into Eureka. We left two nights ago at 10 p.m. and arrived at the bar entrance here for the slack tide at 8 a.m. the following morning, after spending the night motoring in a very roly sea, without any favourable wind to sail with and steady the boat. We are enjoying looking at the old Victorian homes here and the nice, new city marina with its great facilities.

If the weather conditions are favourable for getting out over the bar and for rounding Cape Mendocino we will pull out of Eureka tomorrow and head to Bodega Bay (about a 30 hour trip).

Till the next time,

Kelsey, Michelle, Karl and Tessa

Part 2: Eureka to Monterey

Saturday, October 27, 2001

Hello to all,

We are now in Monterey where the sun is shining and the daytime temperature is summery warm. We are tied up at the end of a dock, deep inside the bay, and beside us the California sea lions and the local sea otter frolic in the water. It is so wonderful to be able to watch them closeby, along with the pelicans, which are now a common sight for us.

The biggest treat of our trip has really been the bird and mammal sea life, which is so prolific along the U.S. west coast. When one nears a port, a line of Brown Pelicans in flight is a usual greeting, and often a seal lion or two will pop their heads out as well. Most harbours along the way are protected by rocky breakwaters and you can often 'hear' an upcoming breakwater as well as see it, as basking sea lions bark out their song (California these days instead of Stellar). If not sea lions, a cacophony of birds line the top of the breakwaters creating a picturesque silhouette along the rocky wall. Inside most of the harbours these same creatures play and feed, along with Harbour seals and a variety of seagulls. Many are the nights that we have fallen asleep listening to the barking of sea lions. A smaller variety of heron (which looks to be the Black-crowned Night heron in our bird book?) is now taking the place of the Blue herons we are used to at home and along the Washington and Oregon coasts and we have seen one White egret so far along the way. The consistent abundance of all this sealife is quite awesome.

The somewhat surprising thing we have found is the lack of time to just sit and relax. It seems to go like this: while we are in port, the days are full of school work, grocery shopping, showers and sometimes laundry, and then trying to take in as much of each place as possible. Then, to keep within our 'weather window' it is time to move on again. The trip is certainly enjoyable and interesting, but it will be nice to get somewhere and stay a while and fulfil that image of sitting back with a good book (and a glass of wine) for longer than the little snippets we manage to get in on occasion!

Back to our actual travels! After Eureka, we did another over-nighter to Bodega Bay, and saw our friends (from Sebastopol), the Winns (who moved there from Salt Spring a little over a year ago). Hayley (Kelsey's good friend) and her mom, Laura, came down to the boat to take us to their home for dinner and Kelsey stayed with them for 2 days. Plans for Kelsey to attend school with Hayley were nixed when they arrived at school and were told that Kelsey needed insurance to be able to attend! (You know we're in the U.S.) So Hayley skipped school instead and they had a great time together. Michelle joined them for the second afternoon to do some grocery shopping and see a bit of Sebastopol.

Bodega Bay is also a bird sanctuary and white pelicans and a variety of 'sandpiper-like' birds abound along the shoreline, many of them migrating there to and from Alberta.

Next followed sailing under the Golden Gate bridge and a week-plus in the San Francisco area. We started out in Tiburon, staying at the San Francisco and Corinthian yacht clubs, each for two nights, under reciprocal privileges since we belong to Bluewater Cruising and are from a relatively long distance away. They have very reasonable rates. Tiburon to San Francisco is sort of like West Vancouver to Vancouver, only smaller, and we really enjoyed our time there, with the lovely homes and a quaint and charming town shopping area, including a strip of historic buildings housing the shops. On our last day there, the Winns drove up to join us and take us over the Golden Gate bridge to do some sight seeing—to the Presidio and the Exploratorium Science Center, to the Cliff House on the coast

with its impressive beach views and its large collection of vintage arcade and music machines, which one could play (at updated rates), and to a great Mexican restaurant.

The weather was wonderfully warm and sunny while we were there and continued as we had Hayley stay over and join us the following day to sail across the bay to San Francisco itself, with a short detour under the Golden Gate bridge for Hayley, then a walk into the city on a record breaking 93 degree F afternoon. After that, fog and cloudy skies cooled the air for our San Francisco sightseeing.

We took the ferry to Alcatraz, roamed Pier 39, took the cable car from Fisherman's Wharf to downtown San Francisco, did a bit of souvenir browsing and shopping, had dinner in Chinatown, and visited the beach near our boat. A fantastic Golden Gate sunset finished off our visit to the 'big' city.

We left San Francisco under renewed sunny skies to motor out under the Golden Gate into fog, which stayed with us all the way to our next stop 25 miles away, Halfmoon Bay. Even though quite close to San Francisco, it is a quiet little fishing town, with mostly fishing boats filling the marina, and very friendly pelicans which occasionally come on the wharf beside you. At one instance, three of them took a great interest in a newspaper Karl was carrying and they make several attempts to peck it away from him!

Next stop Santa Cruz—a morning of motoring, with a nice sail in the afternoon before we sailed by the famous Boardwalk amusement park on the beach and entered the small boat harbour there—lucky to get a spot on a Saturday at this popular place! Our 2½ days there included, of course, Michelle and Kelsey taking in the Santa Cruz Boardwalk with its 70 year old 'Big Dipper' roller coaster along with many other great rides, a trip to Natural Arches State Park to see the arch and to also see the Monarch butterflies which have begun arriving from Canada (about 3000 so far of the 60,000 or so that migrate there). It was very interesting to see the clusters hanging from the Eucalyptus trees, as they can't fly when it is under 55 degrees F and so cluster to stay warm and for protection. As the sun comes out and it warms up they break out of their clusters and fly around.

Lastly, we left a sunny Santa Cruz to cross a foggy Monterey Bay, and enter a sunny Monterey, lucky again to get a spot at the basically full marina here, right beside Fisherman's Wharf. It has been summery warm and sunny here so far and there is much to do in this charming town. We were lucky enough to arrive on a Tuesday when their farmer's market is held, with several blocks in town closed off for the weekly event. It was a great market with lots of good, fresh food, both to eat there and to take home.

Most of the museums here are free and include tours through heritage houses—built in the 1820s when this area was still part of Mexico and Monterey was the capital. Lots to learn and see. Yesterday, we walked through 'Cannery Row' to go to the Monterey Aquarium which is well worth the \$35 US price tag for us all to get in. (We had forgone other aquariums along the way as this one was reputed to be the best.) It easily rivals the Vancouver aquarium in excellence and size, and contains many different exhibits related to this area, so was very interesting for us.

We are planning on setting off again tomorrow—weather permitting—for an 'overnighter' to Morro Bay (where we will hopefully spend Halloween). It will be hard to leave this lovely little city, which has been one of our favourite places so far.

Hope this finds all of you well and happy,
Love, Michelle, Karl, Kelsey and Tessa

Part 3: Monterey to San Diego

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Hello to all,

First of all I should let you know that, since we were enjoying the California coast so much, about a month ago we decided to spend Christmas in San Diego, instead of rushing down to La Paz.

So, back to where we last sent out an update—Monterey, from where we motored along to Morro Bay (doing a lot more motoring on this trip that we had thought). In Morro Bay, we stayed at the Morro Bay Yacht Club and enjoyed the little shops along the waterfront, as well as watching the fog roll in and out and form a 'cap' on the big Morro Bay rock at the entrance. We also experienced our first rain of the trip there—not bad, after almost two months! For Halloween, we got a last-day, half-price, scary-mask costume for Kelsey and we took her trick-or-treating to participating shops, restaurants, motels along the waterfront, and then up into some of the residential area. We all had a great time. The next morning Kelsey and Michelle got to go to Hearst Castle which is fairly close to Morro Bay, but unaccessible by bus. We had pretty well given up on it, when a kind shop keeper we were talking to offered to take us as 'the next day was her day off and she really thought that Kelsey should have the experience of seeing it'. Talk about nice people! (Karl and Michelle had seen it years ago, so Karl stayed behind.)

Next stop was Santa Barbara—what a beautiful city—with Spanish Colonial architecture and streets verdant with tropical growth! And more kind people! We ended up tying up across from some live-aboards on another Fraser 41, which they had bought from our area of the world and brought down the coast. They are also looking for a lot on Salt Spring Island, and one of the ones they were considering is actually kitty-corner to the lot our house is on—talk about a small world! They also lent us their car for an afternoon and a morning so we got to see some of the surrounding areas, including Solvang, a quaint and picturesque little Danish town, with accompanying architecture, windmills, pastries and shops.

From Santa Barbara, with the weather coolish and cloudy, we decided to forego the Channel Islands, lured instead to the hot tub and heated outdoor pool at the marina in Oxnard. We spent five days there, enjoying some real relaxing for the first time on our trip so far, three planned and two more added when a storm came up and it blew and rained like mad for a day!

Next we put in at several Los Angeles area harbours—namely Marina Del Rey, Redondo Beach, Long Beach (actually stayed in Alamitos Bay, nearby), and Newport Beach. These are great places, and mostly one does not feel like one is close to L.A., except for the amount of garbage in the water which we started to see as we neared Marina Del Rey. There are also several yacht clubs in each of these places and we have been treated to reciprocal tie-ups most nights! We cruised by Santa Monica beach on a beautiful, clear day, able to stay close to shore and enjoy seeing the homes and countryside in this 'movie-star' residential area. In Marina Del Rey, we walked the famous Venice Beach, known for the 'interesting' people who frequent this stretch of shoreline. In Redondo Beach, the water was finally warm enough for our first ocean swim (inside a very clear harbour), and in Long Beach we saw the *QUEEN MARY* (from the outside only—tours were absurdly costly).

After staying at Lido Isle Yacht Club—located on a very unique and exclusive residential area in Newport Beach, we sailed 'the 26 miles across the sea, to Santa Catalina . . .' on a

lovely-weather day, to tie to a mooring buoy at Isthmus Cove—and ended up spending our most uncomfortable night yet on the boat when an unpredicted Santa Ana wind (NE storm) came up in the evening. So the next morning we sailed around the west end of the island to Catalina Harbour, very sheltered and directly across the isthmus, only 1/2 mile by land! A few days later the Santa Ana winds passed and we motored around the other end of the island to tie to a mooring buoy in Avalon—the famous Mediterranean style holiday town, with its now-a-museum casino which movie stars of bygone years used to frequent. It is very picturesque and we really enjoyed the atmosphere of the town and the stunning views one gets by taking the steep hikes up the enclosing hillsides.

At this point we have traveled over 1500 miles, with many day hops, and nine overnight trips when distances between ports required longer jaunts, and have motored way more than we have sailed—a bit of a disappointment and surprise, but usually indicating settled weather. Along the way, we had only four rainy days, but lots of fog, with several trips made entirely in the fog. We do have a few things to get for the boat, and to fix, but San Diego is not turning out to be the boater's 'candy store' that we had read and heard, so finding everything is not turning out all that easy.

Right now, we have turned our mast step into our Christmas tree by wrapping lights and garland around it, and hanging ornaments from the garland!

Have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Karl, Michelle and Kelsey