



SALTSPRING ISLAND SAILING CLUB

Tell Tales

VOLUME 23 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2004

Meet & Greet Social

Meet our new club members
at an informal gathering
at the Sailing Club
Tuesday, January 27th at 1900 hours

Good company
and light refreshments!



RIK MACKINNON PHOTO

New Year's Day Race 2004

Congratulations to all who turned out for today's race—and what a turnout it was—ten boats on a clear dry day with a developing wind from the north. The club calendar calls for a 1030 start for this race but at 1000 there were a few ashen-faced participants parking cars so we delayed to 1045. We were told to be back for 1200 so that we could enjoy lunch with the more sensible members of the club. We chose 'U62 and home' as the course and all boats were home by 1230.

It was a good start and the wind built as we travelled down the harbour. Lots of wind past Second Sister and I think all boats had a ride that cleared the hangers. *FINAL DASH* rounded the mark first followed by *ALACRITY* and *FANDANGO* with a fair gap before the balance of the fleet which was quite well bunched. It was a hard beat back to the finish line with *FINAL DASH* taking line honours. *FANDANGO* and *ALACRITY* crossed tacks at close quarters on a number of occasions resulting in *ALACRITY* beating out *FANDANGO* by 2 seconds according to

Continued on page 4

Cruising 2004

Watch for announcements In TellTales!

The 200004 or so cruise schedule is as fixed as it can be without some gathering of skippers and crews for the long trip planning. As the yearbook will show you, there is a variety of cruises, some short and a couple which will take considerably more time than a week.

The suggestions for all cruises came from club members and are favourites, like the trip to Tod Inlet when the incredible fields of trillium should be in bloom (though given the strange weather this timing could be way off).

Some cruising will be hosted by Hugh Greenwood who will point his sharp mind at the local geological events surrounding us. When I walk the beach with him it is as if I have never seen my neighbourhood. He introduces me to it and I learn of the unique character of our home Islands. An amazing guy, an amazing place, stupendous and powerful events!

A 'special treat' he has prepared for us is—for the first time since the beginning of time, ladies and gents—a *Land Cruise* of Salt Spring Island. For this, a limited

Continued on page 2

The social scene

The Christmas social...

this year attracted 50 to 55 pseudo-Santas, with gimmick gifts from the popular 'singing bass' to 2 lengths of hose (I think the Santa in question was probably told to wrap up a nice pair of hosiery and got confused)... I'm sure Gary Railer will find an appropriate use for them! The exchange would not be complete without the master of ceremonies, aptly handled by Phyllis Waltho who kept us all in stitches. I am impressed with Phyllis' depth of knowledge of most everyone in the club and what their idea of a good gift might be. She could easily start her own game show. I believe by the time the night was over (too early by my measure) everyone had either been shocked by the 'ruthless tactics' used to acquire shiny objects (some kind of multi-purpose tool) or quite happy with what they were able to keep! I almost got to keep the 'singing bass'; however, you just can't trust a Norwegian by the name of Brochmann. My thanks to Susan Paynter and her crew for putting together an eventful evening.

The Annual Hot Rum Race 'Social'

I always thought the site of our club was ideal. However, this past January 1st's weather changed my idea of how simple it was to drive to the club *down* Douglas! A few of us (fortunate to have 4-wheel drive vehicles) took the food and liquor to the club on New Year's Eve afternoon, and actually got back *up* Douglas. My nightmare of not being able to make the return trip the next day did not materialise thanks to a quick warming trend that allowed 75 to 80 people to attend the annual race luncheon. I believe there were at least a dozen boats that were blessed with 15 to 20 knot winds which made it great to watch the finishes from the club—with an appropriate refreshment on hand. Speaking of refreshments, I must remind myself to double the order of rum for the hot rum mix as I could have made the club

Continued on page 2

**Deadline for the next
TellTales is 30th January**

Wharfingering

Your Wharfinger Committee for the coming year is as follows: Wharfinger, Jon Healey. Committee members are Tony Booker, Cam Cartwright, Bryn King, and John Myers.

There are several items to bring to the attention of members.

B-Dock moorage

Derek Barrio and his crew hope to start on the reconstruction of B-dock in the week of January 19. The reconstruction will involve all the fingers on B dock and members who have vessels located there will have to find alternate moorage for the duration. There are three main options available. Members may be able to arrange to raft alongside another vessel on D, E, or the north end of F-docks. This option is more suitable for the smaller vessels. If you will be using this option please call and discuss the matter with Jon Healey, at 537-1222. The second option is to move to the Royal Vancouver Outstation in Long Harbour where Jim Ballantyne has made arrangements to accommodate up to ten+ boats. If you wish to use this option please call Jim at 537-4283. The third option is to move to Salt Spring Marina at Moby's Pub. In this case the member will be responsible for the moorage charge of \$4.50/ft./month, prorated for the time there. Please arrange to vacate your slip in B-dock by January 19. Thank you for your cooperation.

The new B-dock configuration will be quite different and will require considerable relocation of vessels. Your wharfinger committee is working on this and will endeavour to find the best overall arrangement, keeping vessels in a berthing aspect similar to what they are now, as far as possible. The new arrangement will be posted in the clubhouse in the near future.

Electricity use

Work on determining the electricity use of vessels with hook-ups is on-going. We have purchased a new Fluke clamp meter to measure the power draw. This is a fairly expensive meter but is the industry standard and the same as meters used by BC Hydro. This instrument gives us a very accurate reading of voltage and current draw—hence the power (wattage) used. With the cold weather, some vessels appear to have a higher draw than expected. Perhaps an extra heater has kicked in!

Dinghy storage

Many of the numbers identifying spaces on the flat storage dinghy dock were missing or illegible. New numbers have been installed which will make keeping

track of the dinghies somewhat easier. Unfortunately there are a number of dinghies still without identification. This is a problem both for updating the dinghy register and for managing the storage area. Twice in the past few months a member has found their space occupied by another dinghy—an unidentified one. This is a difficult situation to resolve short of simply removing the offending dinghy. Please identify your dinghy. As your previous wharfinger has said, "We will show no mercy!"

The boats and docks do not seem to have suffered any significant damage from the heavy snowfall we received over the past few days. Tarps and such appear in good order. It is advisable to check your vessel frequently in these winter months. Watch particularly for signs of chafe on your mooring lines.

We wish everyone happy and safe boating in 2004.

—Jon Healey
Wharfinger

(Please note: my telephone number is 537-1222. There is an old cell phone number floating around which no longer reaches me... use it only in the case of complaints!)

Social scene, from page 1

a lot more money at the bar if we could have offered more of the special mixture which seemed to hit the spot! The beef, chicken and quiche pies from Embe's were a hit (only had a few left over and 'sold' those to the guys who decided it was their turn to cook that evening). The pies were accompanied with the 'special' salads and desserts which disappeared completely with no 'after-sales'.

I believe the crowd enjoyed the food, the race, the hot rum, the conversation, the talented bar tenders and the absolutely superb kitchen help, all of which helped to make the day a success! My thanks to the crew and a special thank you to Chris and Marilyn Schmah for their contribution of the floral table centre pieces. My wishes for next year...no snow, same wind, more hot rum and more people to experience a fun time.

—Rick MacKinnon
Staff Captain

Cruising, from page 1

number of participants (about 10) will travel our home base by car, exploring the local places of geological interest, with a refreshment time after at the clubhouse. I advise you to register early for this and other cruises which have a limited participation number. You can either email me at meadow@saltspring.com, phone/fax at 653-9253, or sign up when a notice appears on the club door and the notice board at the head of the pier.

Fisheries are an issue we all are afloat in. Knowledge is the key to understanding. Combine information gathering with a great sail to a growing city... sounds good to me—and it's free! I personally guarantee the tax man won't get you—unless you step ashore. A tour of the Fisheries Institute at Naniamo is being arranged for this shorter voyage up the coast. Learn, and flounder around no more.

And... *and*. Harold suggested (as did others) that we use our reciprocity rights in Victoria/Esquimalt. Visit the club and, with a little luck, take a look at the forces base where underwater mapping is quietly going on. More on this later.

The two cruise/races which are annual events are the Maple Bay and Round Penders. Cruisers pander to the every whim of the racers—well perhaps not every whim. But we do fire up the club BBQs (now two of them). What more can a simple sailor ask for.

And more—check the yearbook, read TellTales. Take part in your club activities.

So, lots to choose from. Lots to take part in and, as always, lots of knowledgeable, like-minded, good-humoured company. And all our plans are written in sand.

—Neil Buchan, FCC
(aka the cabin boy)

Be sure to visit
the Sailing Club website at
saltspringsailing.ca

- download or read TellTales
- latest club announcements
- up-to-date racing results
 - 2004 club calendar
 - 2004 cruising schedule

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The MastLift is back!

Submitted by Kevin Vine

After stranding at least two past commodores at the top of their masts, it was time to get the MastLift repaired. It has now returned and been put back into service. The machine has been completely and thoroughly overhauled. Several parts have been replaced with newer, higher quality, better engineered, parts. The vendor was somewhat surprised about the problems we were having with our MastLift, as he has had few complaints from any of his other customers. Nevertheless, he continues to stand firmly behind his product... an encouraging endorsement!

When using the MastLift, make sure you understand the instructions (included in the box) before you use it. If you are new to the machine, ask the advice of an experienced user. I know of at least one past commodore who has used it successfully! Experienced users won't be hard to find... there are lots of SISC sail boaters who have used the MastLift. It's important to understand that body weight and physical fitness are critical factors in the successful deployment of the device.

Hoisting the MastLift up your mast is a critical part of the operation. Make sure that the device—once at the top—is properly aligned and nestled nicely at the masthead. This can make your ascent or brake (sic) your descent (pun intended). Again, read and understand the instructions.

Descent from the summit will require a 'tug' on the continuous line. If you're heavy (like me) and have been bouncing around up there tussling with whatever it was that sent you to the top in the first place, the safety brake (see pun above) will be firmly set. Having the brake set firmly is certainly not a bad thing, but it may be the source of some unexpected problems, if you're not aware of them. It may take more than just a tug to release the brake to begin your descent. In fact, it may take a substantial initial pull. But be sensible; if it takes more than a reasonable yank then give up and let yourself down on the halyard. Once the brake has released, descent is a piece of cake. Don't worry about things getting out of control on the way down. At no time are you free-wheeling; you have to physically 'pull' yourself to the deck. (Once the brake is released, this is very easy to do.)

Whenever you use the MastLift, make sure that you have a 'buddy'. If your weight, upper body strength, and endurance ain't what it used to be, a buddy can be very useful in helping you get up to the top. Tall masts take a lot of pulls on the continuous line! A buddy can help you trip the brake as well for the descent. If things go screwy, a buddy can always ease you down on the halyard, back to the safety of the deck.

Having used the MastLift several times myself, I can certify that it is a real asset to

going up and down a mast. It is a great tool when used with precision, caution, and common sense. It has the potential to decrease the real dangers of going up a mast. But it must be used with care.

The MastLift is there for you to borrow. Responsibility for your safety while using the MastLift is solely yours, not Saltspring Island Sailing Club's.

If you have any doubts as to the safety of the MastLift, don't use it. Leave it only in perfect condition for the next user. Report any problems to Derek Barrio, Rear Commodore.

What is a MastLift?

The MastLift is a device used to safely and easily hoist a person up and down a sailboat mast. (Both 'safely' and 'easily' are relative terms and depend on the user's penchant for catastrophe and physical fitness.) The device is attached to a halyard, and hoisted to the top of the mast. The person going up the mast clips a bosun's chair on to the MastLift's hoist line and uses a 'continuous' line on a 10:1 reduction gear to pull him/herself both up and down. The potential for an 'oops' to happen—and have someone unexpectedly plummet to the deck—is greatly reduced. The worst thing that has happened so far is that two of our past commodores have gotten themselves stuck at the top of their masts. Although the view is great from up there, and may well have been the best place to park the two blokes in question, the simple remedy is to lower the commodore and the MastLift down on the halyard in the conventional way.

On the docks – January 2004

International Marine Flotation Systems, the people making our new breakwater and docks, have informed us that the first half of our new concrete breakwater was poured December 29. The second half will be poured, subject to cooperation of the weather, during the second week of January, with an expected launch of all four sections around the end of the month. The dock improvement sub-committee has been very busy working out the bugs associated with adapting the existing B-dock fingers to the new concrete floats. This will involve getting a local fabricator to weld up the necessary brackets and have them ready by month-end.

The Wharfinger has a plan in place to have all 26 boats vanish from B-dock during the week of January 19 so that your 'dock rat' team can move in and start tearing apart the whole of B-dock to convert it into new fingers for use on the inside of the breakwater (see October issue of TellTales). All this work must be completed before the arrival of the new concrete floats and the pile driving equipment. Island Marine Construction managed the installation of the breakwater last year and will again be responsible for the smooth integration of the new docks. Club members will be taking care of attaching the fingers to the new docks, so please volunteer your time if you can.

—Derek Barrio
Rear Commodore

Lost, stolen or strayed

*My anvil has been mislaid
It wasn't a big one
Just a small iron round one
For grommets to stop getting
frayed.*

(Apologies to A.A. Milne)

Dear reader, this 'anvil' is (was) a cylindrical piece of iron, 2" dia., with a central hole and a groove around the hole. It is essential to my grommet kit which I loaned in the past year or so to persons now forgotten. The box was returned with all the parts, except this key piece is missing. If you, upon reading this, should suddenly recall having used the grommet kit, could you please have a look about to see if you still have it. A successful search will be rewarded by a bottle of the best (or almost best) from my cellar. With thanks,
—Hugh Greenwood

Land-cruising becoming the latest vogue?



On seeing this, someone speculated that perhaps John Myers had given up sailing and taken up motoring! This, however, turned out not to be true

CONTRIBUTED

RACING NEWS

Winter Series Race #1

The start of the Winter Series on Sunday, 23 November, was more or less as advertised. The three boats out had coffee and Danish before the race; wind and rain during the race and perhaps a touch of snow after the race. We were happy to welcome *PETRONELLA*, a C&C 38 owned by Wim, usually a crew member on *WESTWIND*. The other boats were *FANDANGO* and *ALACRITY*.

FANDANGO led us down the harbour, but once around Second Sister slowed while putting in a reef. *FANDANGO* was first around Welbury but then on the way to the speed buoy elected to have muffins and coffee instead of putting up the spinnaker. This allowed *ALACRITY* (with crew augmented by Roger Kibble and his son Jeff) to slide by and be first around the speed buoy. *ALACRITY* stretched out the lead on the way back to Welbury and then back to the finish line. The wind was increasing as the race progressed so the large genniker flown by *PETRONELLA* was an impressive sight. It also allowed her to catch *FANDANGO* and enjoy a very close finish (before handicap), as the attached photo shows. Note the pin, you have to look for it.

It was a good day out; as Phillip Grange commented, "You question the wisdom of going out on days like this but are always glad afterwards that you did."

Winter Series Race #2

Sunday, 30th November—note the date. Hard to believe but true—downwind the sun was positively warm on the face. A northerly wind gave us a spinnaker start although I really think *FANDANGO* should write 'top', 'front' and 'back' on the corners of the spinnaker. We all enjoyed a great spinnaker run to U60. *ALACRITY* stayed close to the Second Sister shore and stayed above the rhumb line. This paid off when the wind strengthened and veered below Captain Passage. The relative wind varied between a beam reach and on the quarter, giving us over 8 knots through the water at times and allowing *ALACRITY* to be first around U60.

FANDANGO was second around the mark and managed to hold a much better course than the rest of us upwind. *ALACRITY* put a reef in the main for about 15 minutes, but I don't think anyone else did. *SAORSA* and *DERYN MOR* were enjoying close racing near the mark but the fleet did stretch out on the upwind leg.

It was a quick race in glorious conditions and home in time for lunch. It's as good as it gets.

New Year's Day Race, from page 1

time but I think it was closer than that. The many spectators in the clubhouse suggested about 12 inches was closer.

As race organisers, David and I were delighted so many boats turned out. Is this a foretaste of the season ahead of us? We hope so, it's much more fun with a double-digit fleet. As a reminder, the next race is the 25th January, with a 1000 start. Breakfast will be served in the clubhouse about 0845. See you there!

Next race, which counts for Spring Series, there will be rating adjustments for new racers as advised by David in the December TellTales. Looking at today's results this could be very interesting!

—Bob Jones, *ALACRITY*

Racing schedule

Sunday, 25 January
GROUND HOG DAY (RH)
 1000 h start, TL 1330
 distance 6.6 NM
 Start - Batt Rock (P)
 - Welbury Spar (P) - Finish

Sunday, 8 February
BEN MOHR ROCK RACE
 1000 h start, TL 1430
 distance 9.0 NM
 Start - Ben Mohr Rock (P) - Finish



BOB JONES PHOTO

PETRONELLA and FANDANGO in a very close finish

New Year's Day Race

These (Time on Time) results do not count for Spring Series

Boat	Skipper	RTG	Elapsed	Corrected	Points
<i>MINKE</i>	Meek	252	1:36:30	1:21:15	100
<i>FINAL DASH</i>	Wood	104	1:20:20	1:23:41	90
<i>ALACRITY</i>	Jones	138	1:27:34	1:26:30	80
<i>FANDANGO</i>	Phill/Art	138	1:27:37	1:26:33	70
<i>SAORSA</i>	McEwen	180	1:35:07	1:28:20	60
<i>SOUL DANCER</i>	Simpson	156	1:36:32	1:32:40	50
<i>WESTWIND</i>	Andersen	172	1:40:43	1:34:37	40
<i>GWAIHR</i>	Pattinson	260	1:55:00	1:35:50	30
<i>AFTERNOON D</i>	Dashwood	130	1:36:05	1:35:05	20
<i>ALMUCANTAR</i>	Greenwood	179	1:47:00	1:39:31	10

Winter Series #2 - (Time on Time)

Boat	Skipper	Rate	Finish	Corrected	Points
<i>ALACRITY</i>	Jones	138	11:55:56	1:54:11	100
<i>DERYN MOR</i>	Vine	234	12:22:10	2:02:32	75
<i>SAORSA</i>	McEwen	180	12:14:33	2:04:57	50
<i>FANDANGO</i>	Grange	138	12:07:36	2:06:02	25

Race report

January 2004 - The new racing year began very auspiciously, with a good breeze, relatively warm temperatures and, best of all, a great turn out of boats and sailors for the Hot Rum race. Bob Jones' report on the on-the-water events appears on page 4. It was a good thing New Year's Day came when it did—on January 1st, as it usually does—because 3 days later we would have had none of the above, nor the very pleasant gathering for lunch in the clubhouse after the race. Let us hope that winter is done with all its snow and ice by the Ground Hog race on January 25th, and that spring appears when we need it, in time for the Spring Series.

Racing in 2004

The guiding principle behind the race committee's approach to our club's racing program is that those who come out to race should have fun. The other things—improving sailing skills, getting to know the waters of the Gulf Islands—are important, but secondary. If people don't have fun, they will not come out, at least not very often. Of course what is fun for one sailor may not be fun for another. All that we as the race committee can do is to build on the things that work for us, and hope that others will see that we are having a good time and come and join us. So, what is it that we will be doing differently in 2004?

First of all, rest assured that all the things you enjoyed about racing in previous years will still be there: the Round Saltspring race (which actually is on the May 24th weekend this year), the Wednesday evening series, the familiar races with the beautiful courses, such as Montague Harbour, and most of all, the friendly camaraderie of the racing group. Onto this firm foundation, we are making some additions which we hope will be fun for the regulars, and attractive to those who are not so regular.

Food

It is hard not to notice that the two best attended sailing events on the club calendar—the Sailpast and the Round Saltspring—have a heavy food component. In the hope that this is not just pure coincidence, we have decided to have a meal together before or after some of this year's events. The first will be the Opening Day breakfast on January 25, before the Ground Hog race. This being a reverse handicap race, it looks as if the faster boats, who start later, will be the ones doing the cleaning up, so if you have a boat rated 175 or more, this would be a good time to come out. There will be a second breakfast before the Montague Harbour race in September.

Council of BC yacht clubs report

Although I have been unable to attend the meetings recently, the following is a brief report from the minutes:

Marine Parks Forever - Of the some \$500k available in the kitty, \$250k has been earmarked for the purchase of a lot on Quadra Island to be included in The Octopus Islands Marine Park. There is 'unrest in the parks' with the introduction of the contractors controlling the Host Park Program. It seems that CCYC will no longer offer to be hosts at Tod Inlet.

Safe Boating Council - Because Canada has the dubious record of having the largest number of drowning deaths in the western world annually, it appears that the wearing of PFDs will soon become mandatory in all boats under 6 metres in length.

Maritime Advisory Council - Although it is not yet 'policy', it would seem that there is a strong movement to require bilge pumps to have filters on boats over 15 tons. There will be discussion with 'stakeholders' on this issue in 2004/5.

Recreational Boating Advisory Council - Many of the SISC members have been following the saga of Vancouver and it's attempts to have the boat houses removed from False Creek. It now appears that a new 'no-fee' licence will be required to anchor there which will be valid for 14 days out of 30. A fee for any services will, however, be charged. This policy has wider implications beyond False Creek and would, once the precedence is set, for example,

Dockside barbecues were a successful addition to some of the Wednesday evening races, so we will continue this tradition, with a barbecue once a month after the race. There will also be a barbecue, perhaps up at the clubhouse, after the three One Day regattas we have added to the schedule.

One day regattas

The idea of these regattas is to squeeze a lot of round-the-buoys racing into one day on the water. On each day, we plan to run 4 or 5 races, each of 45–60 minutes duration, on courses set within Ganges Harbour—basically the kind of racing we get on Wednesday evenings, but a whole month's worth of races squeezed into one day—with a barbecue afterwards. We had two last year, and although we only had 5 boats out each time, they were a lot of fun, and that is what it is all about. The first of these one-day regattas is on March 21; the others are in July and August.

make it impossible to moor a barge as a breakwater and would affect the use of boat houses wherever local authorities wish to impose the regulations.

Marine Parks fees - The Council has expressed in writing to the Minister that the new fees are exorbitant and will negatively affect the use of Marine Parks. The Minister has not responded. The Council has recommended that boaters 'boycott' the Parks.

Gulf Islands Marine Park - The Superintendent of the Pacific Rim National Park has issued 'Restrictive activity orders' prohibiting access to Long Beach by all 'powered and unpowered vessels' including kayaks...; does this imply that Parks are not for people? A similar incident confirming this was received by an artist accessing Cabbage Island for a day of tranquil painting, by aircraft.

Navais and Navigation safety - As of 1 January 2004, VHF channel 66A is designated for communications with marinas and between boaters.

Hydrographic Services - It has been noted that the crab trap problem in Ganges is undiminished and that 'at least half the boaters ignore the 5 knot speed limit'. It appears that the various Departments are still referring the problem to each other. At least it seems to keep bureaucrats employed! Another interesting local observation followed the theft of a 12' aluminum dinghy in Ganges to which the RCMP advised that they did not have a boat to investigate the theft. Is there no MOU between the RCMP and CCG for such events? I guess not.

—Jim Ganderton, *Past Commodore*

No flying sails race

The annual Sailpast brings more club boats out on the water at the same time than any other event. It is true that we only go out for a short time, and then ceremoniously repair to the clubhouse to replenish the inner man and woman. Our plan is to encourage some of those who are already down at the club, once they are refreshed, to return to their boats and come out for an informal (and not counting for points) race in which no flying sails are allowed, so that no one need feel afraid of hoisting their spinnaker upside down, or dropping it onto the foredeck of the boat behind them instead of down their own hatch. It is only a couple of weeks before the Round Saltspring, so a good opportunity to ease crew members back into the routine. Sailpast and No Flying Sails race are on May 2nd.

—David Wood
Fleet Captain, Racing 5

Latitude and longitude

As some readers may be aware, I have over the past years had correspondence with several sections of the Canadian Coast Guard with respect to a number of issues. One of these issues has to do with the hazards to navigation which results from the profusion of crabtrap floats in Ganges Harbour. One of the sections concerned with such matters is the Navigable Waters Protection Division, whose mission statement is to 'preserve the public right of unimpeded safe navigation'.

You may not have heard about it, but last year these people designated an official channel from the vicinity of Second Sister island to the inner harbour which is to be clear of floats. For the benefit of TellTales' readers I have gone to some lengths to obtain the following picture showing where the channel is located.

If you are setting crabtraps you must be sure to set them so that the floats are outside this area; and if you wish to avoid having your propeller fouled, you must stay inside it—provided you can figure out exactly where it is.

So, how do you know where the channel is? That's easy; look at the geographic coordinates on the picture, plot them on your chart and/or enter them into your GPS.

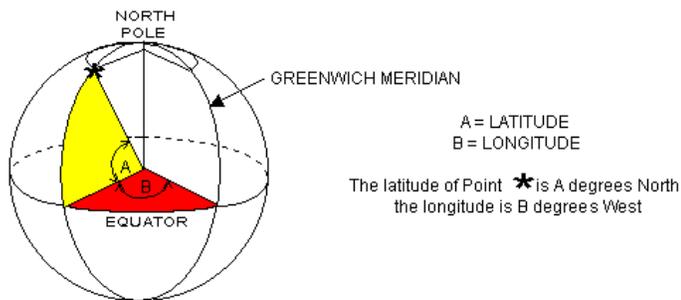
They are:

48° 51.52' N	123° 29.36' W
48° 50.47' N	123° 27.30' W
48° 50.38' N	123° 27.38' W
48° 51.47' N	123° 29.47' W

When I plotted these points on my Ganges Harbour chart I made an unanticipated discovery. More on this later.

As the title of this piece suggests, I'm not really intending to write about crabtraps—but rather on latitude and longitude... and the various systems for determining these. Yes—there are many such systems. I was only very dimly aware of this until recently when I tried to locate the coordinates just mentioned. Since then I have done some reading and I'd like to pass on some of the fascinating things I have learned.

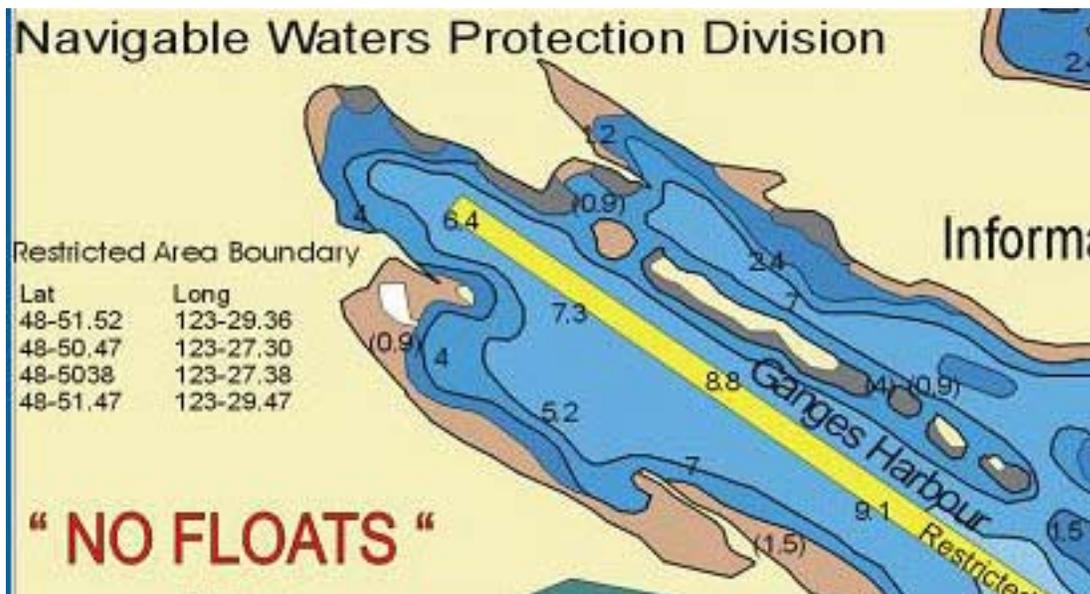
To start, let's review some familiar fundamentals.



We live on the surface of a sphere. Places on the surface are located using spherical coordinates. Latitude is measured in degrees from the equator. Each degree is subdivided into 60 minutes; and so there are 5400 minutes, or 5400 nautical miles from the equator to the North Pole. When the metric system was established, the kilometre was defined as 1/10,000 of that distance. So, 1 km = 0.54 nm.

From the beginnings of cartography, a fundamental problem has been how to accurately draw something which is spherical on a flat piece of paper. Polar, cylindrical, conical, and Mollweide projections are only some of the very many ways of doing this; and all of them have their drawbacks. Some marine charts make use of the Mercator projection.

Representing positions on the Earth's surface on a projection involves mathematical transformations; and these have to be based on



a mathematical description of the Earth's surface. If the Earth was truly a sphere, then that would be straightforward—but of course, the Earth is not a sphere—it's a pearshaped ellipsoid, with two diameters. The diameter from the North to the South Pole is 12713168 metres, while the diameter across the equator is 0.3% less. 'Pearshaped' refers to the fact that the southern hemisphere is slightly larger than the northern.

Another complicating factor results from surface bulges caused by the Earth's crust being thicker under continents than under oceans.

All of these complications result in the fact that there is a whole slew of different latitude/longitude systems in use. Each based on a particular mathematical description of the Earth's shape, each selected for a particular purpose, and each having a defined reference location called a datum. The three most commonly used systems in this part of the world are the NAD27, the WGS83/84 and the UTM systems.

UTM stands for Universal Transverse Mercator. We won't say more about it, except to note that for many surveying purposes it is the system of choice.

The NAD27 system is based on a mathematical model developed in 1866, measurements taken around the turn of the century, and with its datum point the cookhouse of a certain cattleranch in Kansas. I am telling the truth here. It was formally adopted in 1927 and up until the latter part of the 1980's our coastal marine charts were based on it.

The WGS83/84 system was adopted so as to complement the 3-D coordinates used in GPS satellite navigation. Marine charts are now issued in WGS83/84; but there are still lots of the older ones around—and they are not identified as such.

So, "What does all this have to do with crabtraps," you ask. Ok, I'll tell you. If you want to find the end of the navigation channel in Ganges Harbour you had better make sure that the chart you are using was made using the same system as the coordinates are given in.

And you won't know if it is because the Ganges Harbour chart doesn't say which it uses, and also the coordinates given on the picture describing the channel are in neither system! In fact, if you try to use your GPS to find the end of the navigation channel, you had better tie up the boat and get in your car because you are looking for a place in the hospital parking lot.

—Harold Brochmann, GYPSY