

# SAN JUAN SAILING & YACHTING

## SKIPPER'S HANDBOOK

### Welcome!

And thank you for choosing San Juan Sailing & Yachting for your charter!

Our goal is to help you enjoy the very best boating vacation/adventure possible. To this end, we have worked hard (along with the boat owners, maintenance people, cleaning crew and others) to provide the most reliable, best equipped and cleanest boats in the region. And we have put together systems to get you out on the water and back as smoothly as possible. The purpose of this document is to introduce you to those systems and pass on other useful knowledge.

When it comes to your charter we view ourselves as facilitators – besides getting the boats ready we are here to help keep everyone safe, pass on some knowledge and provide some useful services. But there are parts of this process we simply cannot do... you and your crew must participate in order to be properly prepared and have things go smoothly. Therefore, we urge you to read through this document and the owner's notes for your chosen vessel before arriving for your charter.

If this is your first or second trip with us we encourage you to read this carefully. If you are a returning guest we have formatted things in an outline form to make things easy to find.

Again, it's our privilege to serve you.

Cordially,

*Danelle, Mike, Lothar and Crew*

## **1) Overview**

### **Arrival Day**

Let's take a quick look at a typical boarding day. For most of you this will be a Friday (or in the spring it might be a Tuesday) where you get up early and travel some distance to get to Bellingham. Once there, you may do your provisioning and then head to our office.

This is where you get some time to go through the boat and get familiar with her. Once you have completed this we will have one of our check-out skippers come down and answer any questions and point out any unusual things about the vessel.

Once your check-out is complete it is time to load your gear onboard. And somewhere in here getting something to eat is good idea. By the time most people finish this process it is around 9-10 PM and they are tired. Due to the busy schedule of the evening, dinner reservations are really not practical.

We understand this is a long gruelling day! So we have done what we can to make it easier. But the biggest stress reducer is for you to come prepared. We cannot overstate this – it is important for you to put some time and effort in before leaving home. Read on to see what we suggest.

### **Boating Safety**

The safety of you and your crew are job #1 for both you and us. Over the years we have learned having two people 'on watch' is better than one. This is why we started our NSO (Navigation and Safety Officer) program. Since you have confirmed your charter we have probably asked you for the name of your NSO.

The concept is to have this person read the owner's notes and be involved with the daily operation of the boat. We ask that they keep track of where you are on the charts and help keep a lookout for traffic and other hazards, such as logs.

On our end we provide a comprehensive safety briefing and strive to provide the best maintained boats in the charter business. And, in case something does go wrong, we have someone available by phone 24/7 while you are out. We also have a chase boat, should it be needed.

## 2) Pre-Charter Preparations

### Your Trip to Bellingham

- **Location:** Our address is: 2615 N. Harbor Loop Bellingham, WA 98225  
Phone: 360-671-4300

We're just off Interstate 5, 100 miles north of Sea-Tac, and 45 miles south of Vancouver, BC. For details, please go to <http://sanjuansailing.com/charters/getting-here.html>

- **Arrival Time:** Assuming you are pre-boarding, please arrive about 1 hour before your assigned check-out time. This time will be communicated to you in an email which we send about 10 days before your charter. Check-out times are generally 6, 7 and 8 PM so you can expect to arrive between 4 and 7 PM.
- **Seattle Traffic:** Be aware Seattle/Everett traffic on Friday afternoon (most weekdays actually) IS HORRIBLE. We strongly recommend leaving Sea-Tac by 1 PM. After 2 PM the trip will likely take 3 hours or more. The same is true if you are driving from Oregon or other points south. It is important to get through downtown Seattle or Bellevue by 1 PM.
- **Rental Cars:** Getting a rental car has a couple advantages. The first, of course, is convenience. The second is the ability to do your provisioning once you get to Bellingham. With that said, we have good taxi service and Uber in town so a rental is not truly necessary.

### Packing

- **Luggage:** Duffle type bags are best. Hard sided and/or large roller bags are not allowed onboard because they cause too much damage and, on most of the boats, there is no place to store them. Please advise your crew of this. If someone forgets please unpack from the cockpit and bring the bag up to our office for storage while you are gone. Please note, we have a very small office so we cannot handle anything but the exceptions.
- **Weather:** Be aware it will be cooler on the water, especially if the wind is blowing. The water temperature is in the low 50s so swimming is only for the very hearty. In April, May and June the weather can be quite variable, with daytime temperatures from the 50s to the 90s and nights from high 30s to 50s. July, August and September are generally very comfortable and dry, but there can be occasional rain.
- **Packing Tips:**
  - Pack light with casual wear
  - Layers work well
  - Light duty rain gear

- Passports (check dates) for all crew members if going to Canada
  - Sunscreen, hats, etc.
  - Camera (a must)
  - Swimsuit (some of the resorts have pools and/or hot tubs)
  - Quarters (onshore showers in Bellingham and most marinas take quarters)
- **Cannabis:** These products are not allowed on the boats. Yes, they are legal in Washington and in B.C., but the waters are patrolled by the US Coast Guard. They are a federal agency which still lists these products as Schedule 1 drugs. On top of that, neither Washington nor B.C. allow these products to be imported. The exceptions are federally allowed hemp-based products.

### Preparing for Your Charter

- **Required Reading:** We have posted on our website the Owner's Notes for each of our vessels. These are intended to be an operating manual. Our planning and systems assume you and your NSO have read the notes for your boat prior to your arrival. If you have not, we will ask that you do so before your check-out. This will likely cause a significant delay, making your day even longer.

While not required, reviewing the Inventory (posted on the website next to the owner's notes) is also a good idea. This document will help you locate items when onboard and give you better understanding of what equipment, tools, etc. will be available. There are printed copies of both the Owner's Notes and the Inventory onboard all boats.

- **Required Viewing:** In years past we have done our safety briefings in person, but due to the COVID-19 situation we created a video version for you to watch at home before you arrive. About ten days before your charter we will send you an email with a link to this video (we don't provide it earlier as we want it fresh in your mind). We will also attach a worksheet to that same email. Please fill out this worksheet as you watch the video and return it to us before your arrival to prove you have watched it. **Watching this video is a requirement and we must have your completed worksheet before you will be allowed access to your boat.**
- **Planning Your Cruise:** Our cruising grounds are expansive so it is not practical to go into detail here. We do recommend you have a general idea as to where you would like to go, the San Juan Islands, Gulf Islands, Desolation Sound, etc. And we recommend you get familiar with the options – do some reading about the area (options for this in a bit).

We do not recommend planning every day ahead of time – there are too many variables. Weather, liking where you are and wanting to stay another day are good examples. There are many marinas, marine parks and remote coves to explore. You can spend the whole trip in one place or try a mixture (our recommendation).

We have some sample itineraries on our website which may be a good place to start. – <http://sanjuansailing.com/charters/sample-cruises.html>. If you have a need/desire for more information we would recommend the Waggoner Cruising Guide (<https://waggonerguide.com/cruising-tweets/san-juan-islands/>) or San Juan Islands: A Boater's Guidebook ([https://www.bluelatitudepress.com/bl\\_sji.html](https://www.bluelatitudepress.com/bl_sji.html)). Please be aware both of these guide books are onboard all of our boats.

In addition, the Navionics web based chart viewer can be very useful for planning. This viewer allows you view charts in the same manner you would on a chart plotter. You can zoom in and out and it also does automatic routing. Here is a link to it – <https://webapp.navionics.com/?lang=en#boating@7&key=sjmgH%60vqmV>.

If you are planning on going north of the Gulf Islands (Desolation Sound or Princess Louisa Inlet) or west of Victoria (Barkley Sound) please let us know as we will need to put additional charts onboard for your charter.

And one other planning point, the wind in the San Juan Islands can be quite variable from one place to another. This is especially true on hot summer days. On such days we get a strong sea breeze (25-30 kts is common) coming in the Strait of Juan de Fuca that blows across the bottom of the San Juan Islands. While at the north end of the islands it can be quite calm. If you listen to the NOAA weather on the VHF radio they will report the strongest expected wind anywhere in the area. This can leave you scratching your head if they predicted strong winds and you are up north with nothing. The best way to get a better picture is to use one of the wind apps such as Windy or PredictWinds. If you do not have one of these on your phone we suggest loading one and practicing with it before you arrive. If you would like more information on our local weather and resources for predicting we suggest this article - [Weather Article](#).

- **Provision Planning:** While not necessary you may find it helpful to do some preplanning for your provisioning. Anything you can do to shorten your arrival day activities will help. For example, having a pre-planned shopping list. We have a sample list on our website – <http://sanjuansailing.com/charters/sample-menu.html>

Bellingham is large enough to have excellent shopping options with a 10 min. drive; we have a Costco, two Fred Meyers, a Whole Foods, Haggen and a Trader Joes. A map to these locations is provided later and you can get a copy at our office if needed. Also, Fred Meyers provides a service where you can order online and they will shop for you. You can then pick them up. And there are other services which may be willing to deliver the groceries to our location.

If you would like the provisioning done for you here is a list of local companies providing this type of service:

- Sharon's Errand Service – Provisioning by Sharon Steinbach (360-510-9850)
- [The Galley Girls](#) – Provisioning & pre-prepped meals (360-441-0396)

- [Eight Bells Provisioning & Catering](#) – Full or partial provisioning with recipes (206-854-3284)
- [America's Cup Coffee](#) – Coffee, prepared breakfast & lunch items (360-255-9998)

All of the boats in our fleet have a propane fired BBQ. Some have freezers, but many are of limited size. The online owner's notes should give this information, along with the size of the refrigerator.

Water on the boats is usually quite good. We fill the tanks with Bellingham city water, which is excellent. And the tanks get turned over frequently. Some of the boats have built-in filtration, again the owner's notes should mention this if present. In addition, most of the boats have Britta filter pitchers on them.

While some boats have a specific galley inventory linked on the web specifications page, you'll find our standard list of required galley supplies at <http://sanjuansailing.com/charters/standard-vessel-equipment-sail.html>. As part of the turn-around cleaning the cleaning crew will also stock your vessel with salt, pepper, 1 roll of paper towels, 3 rolls of toilet paper per head, a dish sponge, dish soap, hand soap, hand sanitizer, and basic cleaning supplies (including germicide).

### 3) Arriving and Getting Onboard

- **Step 1 – Check-in at the Office:** When you arrive please check-in with our office. We will provide you with your charter packet (a collection of paperwork you will need for that day's chores and during your charter) and direct you to free parking.

We will also check on the status of your boat. If you have arrived more than one hour before your onboard checkout time there is a small chance it may be ready. We say small because most boats come in from their previous charter at noon, so we have only a few hours to clean and do maintenance. Please have patience; we will get you on board as quickly as humanly possible.

**Please do not get onboard prior to being given permission**, which is normally given by handing you the key to the companionway or entry door. Our boats are cleaned in stages, so it may look clean on the outside but the inside may not be done yet, etc. We also need to make sure the maintenance people have finished with their work.

- **Basic Timetable and Events:**
  - **4:00-7:00 PM – Arrival at Our Office:** About 10 days before your charter we will send you an email that will tell you when your check-out is scheduled. Please arrive about 1 hour prior to this time as you will need time for the self-orientation discussed below.
  - **Gain Access to Your Boat:** Stop by our office to see if your vessel is ready and get the key.

- **Self-Orientation:** It is now time get familiar with your boat. We ask that you fill out the provided checklists during this time.
- **6, 7 or 8 PM – Review of Boat with Check-out Skipper:** We schedule one-hour check-outs at 6, 7 and 8 PM. You'll find a reminder of your checkout time on the cover of your charter packet, along with the gate codes for the start and end of your charter. This check-out is where we answer any questions you have about the boat and show you some of the nuances of that boat. Your checkout skipper will expect that you have read the Notes from the Owner for your boat (if you have not it may delay your check-out ) and have completed your checklists to the best of your ability.
- **7:00 to about 9:30 PM – Office Remains Open:** We keep crew on hand in case you have further questions or find you need something.
- **Orientation and Onboard Systems Checkout:** We strongly recommend that you do not put your gear aboard, other than food needing refrigeration, until after your onboard checkout is complete. The reason is simple: it gets in the way of accessing compartments on the boat during the checkout process. On larger powerboats this recommendation carries less weight as there is more room and gear is seldom stored under the.

We really do encourage looking in all the hidey-holes, lifting all the cushions, opening all the compartments, etc. If it is raining and you need to get the gear onboard take time to look under the berth mattresses and note what is there. Then put your bags in those berths, but do not unpack.

In order to facilitate your tour we have created two checklists, one for the skipper and one for the NSO. We ask that you go through these lists and find all the listed items. At the same time please make sure the items are functional. For example, test the binoculars – the guests before you may have dropped them so they may be misaligned. If you find something which is not functional please let your check-out skipper know and we will get you a replacement. These checklists are customized to each individual boat, therefore do not use the samples shown below. The actual checklists to use will be in the charter packet we give you upon arrival. Please note these sample checklists are for our sailboats – we do have different sets for the powerboats and catamarans.

The intent of these lists is to help you locate important gear. They are not super long so should take 20-30 minutes to complete. If you cannot find a particular item in 2-3 minutes skip it and move on to the next item. When our check-out skipper gets onboard ask him or her to help you find those missing items.

The check-out skipper's job is to help you feel comfortable with the boat. They will answer your questions and point out some unique things (if any) about that vessel. This is why we require that you read the owner's notes before arriving, as this is your chance to get your questions answered.

# SAN JUAN SAILING

## SKIPPER'S SELF-GUIDED BOAT ORIENTATION

### Owner's Notes Studied?

Yes

No

*If no, STOP. Study and notify your Checkout Skipper. We'll get back to you for your Checkout as soon as other Checkouts permit.*

**Interior:** *(Mentally operate equipment based on your study of the Owner's Notes. If comfortable, operate equipment.)*

- Visual Engine Check – verify no fluids under or around engine.
- Raw Water Strainer & Seacock Valve – Above or Below Waterline? Assure the Valve is Open!
- Heads (Flush Toilet, Dry/Wet Bowl Valve) and “Y-valve” Operation (if applicable)
- Holding Tank(s), Valve(s), including “Y-valve” (if applicable) – Tank Monitor (if applicable)
- Electrical Panel
- Voltage/amp hour monitor (Never below 12 volts).
- Switches for Charger & Inverter (if applicable)
- Water Tank Manifold Valves (to switch multiple tanks) & Tank Usage Gauges
- Stove & Oven Operation (and Gimbal lever).
- Diesel Cabin Heater Operation
- Procedure to Convert Dinette to Double Bed (if applicable)

**Exterior:** *(If comfortable, operate equipment.)*

- Anchor Windlass
- Deploying and Reefing Main
- Start/stop Diesel Engine...listen/see cooling water exiting (check regularly when underway)
- Fuel Gauge showing full?
- Cockpit Instruments: Wind Speed/Direction, Knot Meter, Chart Plotter, Autopilot
- Start/stop Outboard...after stop, close fuel cap's vent by twisting, to prevent water intrusion
- Propane Tank On/Off + Manual “Gate Valve” (if present) to BBQ
- Operation of BBQ
- Identify Deck Plates (“Water”, “Waste”, “Fuel” – always read caps!)
- Lazarette equipment: (crab ring, cleaning bucket, boat soap and brush/sponge)

**I accept this boat as being in safe operating condition and agree to abide by Washington State Boating regulations.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Boat Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# SAN JUAN SAILING

## NSO's NAVIGATION and SAFETY CHECKLIST

### Exterior:

*(Note location of each.)*

- Emergency Bilge Pump & Handle in Clip
- Emergency Tiller
- Winch Handles, Locking (minimum of 2): \_\_\_\_\_  
*(May be inside in nav table or under nav seat)*
- Fender Step at Shrouds
- Number of Mooring Lines (minimum of 4): \_\_\_\_\_
- Two Dinghy Oars
- Seat in Dinghy (minimum of 1): \_\_\_\_\_
- Boat Hook
- Number of Fenders: \_\_\_\_\_
- Radar Reflector

### Interior:

*(Note location of each.)*

Sample Only

- Check for Maptech Chartbook & Rolled Charts  
(US 18421, Canadian 3441, 3442 and 3443)  
*Ask for Desolation Sound Chart Pack if going north of Nanaimo.  
We also have Vancouver-only charts.*
- Nav Gear (Parallel Rules, Dividers, Hand-Held Bearing Compass, Pencils)
- "Emergency Contacts List" in *Charter Guest Reference Manual* (a big, white notebook).
- Location of All Fire Extinguishers (minimum of 2): \_\_\_\_\_
- Binoculars
- Location of Propane Solenoid Switch (off except to use).
- First Aid Kit (usually in head, in a compartment or behind mirror)
- # of Life Vests (one for each adult crew member and appropriate sizes for children)
- Emergency Gear "Mesh Bag" with Flares, Fog Horn, Etc.  
*(Usually stowed under nav table seat)*
- Open All Drawers, Cupboards, Floor Hatches, Stowage Under/Behind Cushions  
*(See other gear)*

**I accept the condition and completeness of the navigation and safety gear aboard.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Boat Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

- **BBQ:** In years past we have provided food to those pre-boarding via a BBQ. Due to the COVID-19 situation these BBQs are NOT being done to assure social distancing.
- **Parking:** Adjacent to our office and the docks is a large parking lot provided by the Port of Bellingham. This parking is free and the Port provides some security patrols. While we have not had issues, we would suggest putting tempting items in the trunk. Sorry, they do not allow RVs.
- **Loading Gear Onboard:** There are public dock carts (the blue ones) usually available in front of our neighbor's office. And we have some of our own (the green ones) normally stored to the east of our office. If there are none there we suggest walking down the main dock, where there are usually some by the restroom building out by E-dock. Also, please be sure to return them as soon as you have unloaded – they are in high demand. Storing your gear in a cart is not allowed and you may find your gear piled on the deck should you do so.

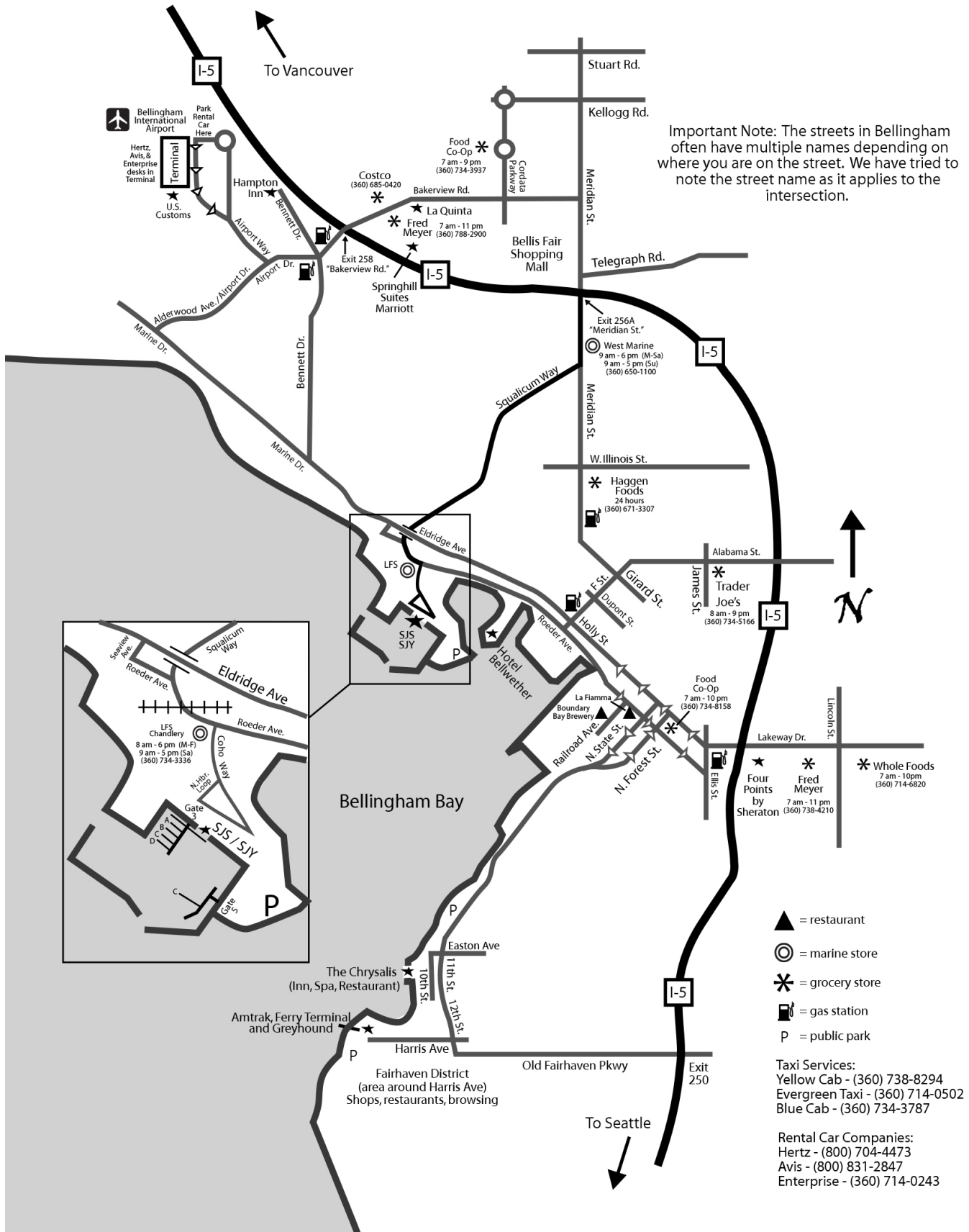
Once you get your gear to the boat, please be very careful when moving it onboard. If you do have a hard-side largish bag we strongly recommend unloading it from the cockpit. These bags can (and do) scratch the woodwork or soles and are therefore not allowed on the vessels. If you find you have a bag which needs to be stored during your trip we do have some ability to hold them for you.

- **Towels, Linens and Blankets:** When you booked your charter we asked how many persons would be onboard – this tells us how many sets of towels to provide (we plan on one towel set per person per week). We also asked how many sets of linens to provide (again, one set per berth per week). Generally these will be onboard when you get access to the boat, but it is possible for them to come a bit later. If you do not have them by your check-out time please let our check-out skipper know.

Most of our boats have a comforter for each cabin. If you need additional comforters or blankets please let us know. The same is true for towels and sheets. Reminder: if your crew size has changed since you booked please call or email us with the change so we have these counts setup correctly.

- **Provisioning:** As mentioned earlier Bellingham has a good selection of stores for provisioning. Shown below is a map with the majority of these listed along with the cities major streets. We have printed copies of this map in the office if you need one. If you have enough crew it may be a good idea to have some of them do the shopping while the skipper and NSO are in the briefings.

If you have purchased your food and need a place to store refrigerated items prior to getting on your boat we have coolers with ice in them just outside our office.



#### 4) During Your Charter

- **Before Getting Underway:** Please be sure you have turned in the necessary paperwork – signed checklists, crew list and ding sheet.
- **Getting Underway:** Most of our charters start Saturday at 9:00 AM (or Wed. at 9 for some). If you pre-boarded and have everything organized you are welcome to leave anytime after daylight on the day the charter officially starts. Please note, you cannot leave the night of pre-boarding.

Remember to take the power cord, dock lines and, if it is portable, the dock step, with you. You will need these items at other harbors during your trip. And take a quick look at where your slip is located. We have it noted on the packet we give you but it will not hurt to get oriented.

If the conditions have you concerned or you just would feel better with some help feel free to call us on VHF 80 or on the phone. We will be happy to give you a hand getting off the dock or, if needed, take her out of the slip for you.

The biggest issue people usually have is with backing into the wind – if you need to do this please use a bit of speed (in wind going too slow allows the wind to take over) and back as close as possible to the dock across from you.

When leaving the Bellingham marina via the west entrance (NW corner of the marina) be sure to turn left toward Lummi Island as you exit (if you stay straight you'll go aground, or, in this case, 'amud'). When you turn left, you'll see a red and a green buoy – go between them. The south entrance has no obstructions.

- **Safety:** Your safety is one of our biggest concerns. We work hard to ensure that your boat is well maintained and safe. We also make sure you have all the information you need to make good sound decisions. But we cannot make them for you; the safety of your crew and vessel will require you to pay attention at all times, but especially when underway. We have four types of hazards in this area. Let's review each briefly:
  - **Rocks** – Our waters have rocks, and most are not marked with buoys. However, they are all on the charts. On top of that, we have currents which like to push you onto said rocks. The best way to avoid these rocks is to pay very close attention to where you are, on the paper charts and the plotter. And to use the course-over-ground line on the plotter to be sure you are going where you intend. We have most (but not all) of the rocks which might logically be hit by charterers marked in red on the paper charts for our most popular areas, i.e. San Juan and Gulf Is.

The other 'dangerous' time is while anchoring or entering/exiting anchorages. Zoom way in on the chart plotter in these circumstances – all the rocks are on the charts, but you need to be zoomed in to see them.

- **Logs** – We have rivers and we have tides and both of them will put logs in the water. These are pretty easy to see if the wind is not blowing but they like to hide in the troughs of the waves when it is windy. It is best to have two people looking for them in these conditions.
  - **Docks** – While docks usually damage boats more than people they are one of the leading areas for injuries. The main example is when people jump off a boat and twist an ankle (or worse). Please remind your crew to be careful.
  - **Fog** – While it is not common in our area we do have periods of fog. It usually forms overnight and clears by noon. If you are moored or anchored we ask that you stay put and wait for it to clear.
- **In Case of Trouble:** Our goal is to have everything operate perfectly for your charter. But sometimes boats are boats and failures can occur. Here's what past guests have found works well:

- **Don't be proud** – Look it up in the "Notes from the Owner" once again. In addition to proper operating procedures, you may find trouble-shooting tips. If that doesn't solve it please contact us or if the owner of the boat has provided their contact info please use it.

During office hours you can reach us on VHF Channel 80 or by phone (360-671-4300). We may be able to trouble-shoot for you over the phone. Our office hours are 9 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday, and 8:00 AM – 3 PM, Saturdays – Closed Sundays. If we are closed please call –

Mike Huston (206-963-1308) or Lothar Taylor (425-260-7881),

Or

Call the Maintenance Pro (MP). He's dedicated specifically to your boat and may well be able to diagnose the issue over the phone. His number will be in the boat's Reference Manual, tab 4.

- **If we can't solve the problem on the phone** – We will do all we can to get you repaired as quickly as possible. If not critical to the operation of the boat, we'll try to arrange a repair at your next scheduled marina. But if you can't proceed, we will either send a repair crew on our chase boat or engage a proven marine mechanic in the islands, whichever is best.
- **Whales and Your Trip:** One of the attractions to our waters is the abundance of wildlife, the most popular are the Orcas. These whales are having a hard time surviving due to a decreasing food supply and increasing noise pollution. They feed using echo-location so noise in the water makes it harder for them to locate their prey. Both the US and Canada have put in place new rules to protect them. In general terms, these rules require boaters

to stay at least 400 yards (1/4 mile) from the whales and when within sight of them, slow to below 7 knots.

In addition, Canada has created two NO BOATING zones in the Gulf Islands, one off the west side of N. Pender and one around the south end of Saturna. Our charter guests seldom frequent the water off Saturna, but the zone off N. Pender has been a popular route. In the past if you left Bedwell Harbour after clearing customs and head to Ganges you would go right through this new No Boating zone. Be aware the fines can be significant, up to \$1,000,000. If you plan to boat in the Gulf Islands please view the flyer on these zones available at this website: [https://www.bewhalewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Transport-Canada-publication\\_whale\\_poster\\_July11-2019.pdf](https://www.bewhalewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Transport-Canada-publication_whale_poster_July11-2019.pdf). We have placed a version of this same chart on board all the vessels.

- **Going Ashore:** When going into a beach please be kind to the dinghies. The beaches in our waters are a mixture, some sandy, some with gravel, some rocky and most are have a mixture of all three. So please do not drag the dinghies up the beach. Also when you come back from the beach please have everyone take their shoes off and clean the bottoms before putting them back on. Most of our boats have swim step showers which work well for this. This will help keep those beautiful floors from getting scratched. Thank you.
- **Managing Boat Systems:** All the boats in our fleet are setup for ease of use. For example, all the battery systems are equipped with isolation devices so it is unnecessary to 'play' with the battery switches. The start battery is separated from the house bank automatically. That being said there are some things you will need to keep an eye on.
  - **Battery Levels** – Please keep an eye on the battery voltages, they have a limited amount of juice in the tank. If the house bank (or any other bank) goes below 12.0 please start the engine or generator to charge for a while. Some of our boats have solar panels which usually keep things charged up, but it is still part of good seamanship to keep an eye on things.
  - **Holding Tanks** – The holding tanks are also a limited resource, so empty them regularly. We suggest doing this on a daily basis, especially if you have a boat full of people. Also, please note that we do not allow TP to be flushed. Only foods which have been digested are to go into the system. The occurrence of plugged heads has dropped to nearly zero since we started this rule. We have garbage cans with plastic bags in each head and extra bags are provided.
  - **Fuel** – If you are chartering for a week it is unlikely you will need to refuel before returning. But on a longer charter please keep an eye on the fuel tank level. Most boat fuel gauges are inaccurate so we suggest looking at the engine hours before you leave and monitor them as you go.
    - Powerboats: Most of the power boats carry enough fuel to get you through a two week charter and many of them have sight gauges on the tanks.

Most of the owner's notes should give an idea of the fuel consumption at different speeds or RPMs

- **Sailboats:** Sailboats usually have odd shaped tanks, which only adds to the inaccuracy of the gauge. So here is a formula which might be handy: If you take the horsepower of the engine and divide it by 48 you will get the fuel consumption per hour when running at 70% of its rated RPM. For example, a 40 hp engine will burn .8 gal/hr. Most sailboats cruise in this range so this formula works well for them (most powerboats cruise at a much lower percentage so this formula is of no use for them).
- **Maximize your enjoyment:** Listed below are some thoughts and ideas we have learned over years of cruising in the Pacific Northwest waters. Nothing here is firm, just some hints.
  - **Time off the Boat** – In some cruising grounds, say the BVI, the trade winds blow 24/7 and the sailing is fantastic. At the same time, there is not much to see or do ashore there. Here in the PNW things are a bit different--the winds are much less predictable and there are fun things to do ashore. There are tide pools to explore, hikes to take, shorelines to explore by kayak, etc. Our suggestion is to flow with what is offered, for example if you are on a sailboat then sail when the wind blows and do some exploring when it is not.
  - **Docks or Anchorage?** – We are blessed with a wonderful mixture of marine parks, private little coves, resorts and small-town marinas. All of these have their own charms and offering. We suggest trying some of each.
  - **Ship's Library** – All of our vessels have cruising guides, books about the local flora and fauna, etc. Taking a bit of time to read about where you are or are going can reap some big rewards.
- **Clearing Customs (Going to Canada):** Should you choose to do so taking the boat into Canada is possible. Listed below are some things to know about clearing Canadian Customs.
  - **Foods and Alcohol** – Some foods are not allowed when entering Canada, for example fruits with pits (including apples) are not allowed. And there are limits on alcohol. You can get the latest on this by going to this website – <http://www.sanjuansailing.com/documentation/customs-clearance-information.pdf>.
  - **Drugs** – While cannabis is legal in both Canada and Washington State, crossing the border with it is not legal. On top of that, the US Coast Guard is run by the federal government which still considers cannabis a Sch. 1 drug. If they find some onboard they will confiscate the vessel.
  - **Passports** – Double check to see that everyone's passport is current, signed and onboard. In some cases, an enhanced driver's license will do.
  - **Criminal Record** – Be aware Canada denies entry to US citizens who have DUI convictions on their record. There are some other restrictions as well so if anyone

onboard has a criminal record we suggest checking with Canadian Customs before trying to enter.

- **Canadian Charter Guests** – If you are Canadian and planning on taking the boat back into Canada be aware that not all customs agents understand the word charter. It is best to tell them the boat is rented and due back in Bellingham on said date. Otherwise, they worry you are trying to import the boat.
  - **Returning to the US** – There are two ports of entry in the San Juan Islands; Roche Harbor and Friday Harbor. You can visit one of these ports to clear back in or you can use the new phone app they have created, it is called CBP ROAM. Here's the site where you can download it - <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/pleasure-boats-private-flyers/pleasure-boat-overview/roam>
  - **Crew to Stay on the Boat** – The crew can secure the dock lines, but then must re-board and remain aboard (not on the dock) until you are given your clearance number. Only the skipper can go to the customs office or go to the phone to call.
- **Boat Status Call or Email:** Please give us a call or email us if there are maintenance issues with the boat we should know about before your last day. This call is not a requirement and the timing of the call can vary; for charters ending on Friday please call on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. For charters ending on Monday please call on Saturday. The idea is to give us time to order parts or plan extra manpower. This call or email can also shorten the time to do your check-in on your last day by preloading your list (if you have one).

## 5) Return to Bellingham and Getting Off the Boat

- **Last Night:** For your last night we recommend that you stay on the East side of Rosario Strait. The reason is fog. Rosario Strait is the foggiest place in the San Juan Islands. And due to being near the mainland Bellingham Bay is one of the least foggy places. On your return day you need to be off the boat by noon (unless a different time is pre-arranged), which means being back to the docks around 10:30 AM. That being said, our cleaning crew and the maintenance people could use a bit more time if it is not a burden for you being off by 11 AM would be appreciated. So, should you stay at Sucia or Rosario you will need to be underway by 7 AM in order to get back in time. Doable (if it is not foggy), but not much fun.

Here are the best anchorage options on or near Bellingham Bay:

1. Pelican Beach, Cypress Island (NE side) – half dozen buoys, no anchoring. Nice trails ashore.
2. Eagle Harbor, Cypress Island (east side): about a dozen usable buoys; half the buoys (the ones closest to Bellingham) are good depth. The other half, closer to shore and with red stripes, are for small shallow draft boats. Caution: the bay shallows suddenly past the first row of buoys!
3. Pleasant Bay, southern end of Chuckanut Bay (mainland south of Bellingham): anchor only. Excellent storm hole with depths of about 45', but



with no shore access. The north end of Chuckanut Bay is also useable, a bit more exposed to southerly winds but also near railroad track (can be noisy during the night).

4. Inati Bay, Lummi Island, (east side) – beautiful, secluded, anchor only. Watch out for the reef upon entry/exit (has white marker south of reef). Squirrely anchorage if windy during the night. Small enough anchorage that most boats stern tie. Bay shallows evenly, but calculate tides carefully!
5. Cap Sante Marina (Anacortes) is another option. Good guest docks and nice options for eating out.
6. Home at your slip in Squalicum Harbor – No charge, it's your boat's slip and makes for a no rush morning on the last day.

- **Getting Off the Boat:** The process of getting off is easier and faster than getting on – but it still takes some time. It is best to be back a couple hours before the end of your charter. We really do need you off the boat by the end of your charter, noon for most of you. Here is the reason why – between your getting off and about 6 PM we need to clean the boat and do any needed maintenance. There are days when we are doing up to 25 or more boats. As you can imagine this is hard to do, please do your part by being on time, thank you.

The basics seem pretty easy, fuel the boat, get to your slip, fill the water tanks and empty the holding tanks. Then get your gear off the boat and tidy/organize things. Please do the dishes, remove any garbage, etc. It is not necessary to clean the heads, vacuum, etc. as our crews will do this. Listed below are some details worth knowing about this process:

- **Fueling** – Bellingham has only one fuel dock with two diesel pumps. So on busy return days the wait time can be an hour or more. Please plan accordingly. This is one of the reasons why some prefer to come in Thursday evening, fuel up and have a quiet night at the dock.

During the peak season we do allow sailboats to fuel at Rosario, Blakely or Anacortes on Thursday and we consider this full. The 2-3 hours of running needed to get in does not have a large impact on the fuel tank. And doing this also helps reduce the lines at the fuel dock for the powerboats who are required to fuel in Bellingham.

- **Water and Holding Tanks** – We do ask that you fill the water tanks upon your return, there are hoses at every slip for this purpose. And we require that the holding tanks be empty (or very close to empty, a couple of flushes are not an issue). There is a pump-out dock just toward shore from the fuel dock and there are pump-out carts on the docks.
- **Extra Food? Please Donate It** – If you have extra food you are not able to take with you please bring it up to our office – there is a large plastic grey box on the water side of our office where you can put it. It is marked Charter Guest Food.

Please be discerning, open items are okay if there is enough there to make it worthwhile sorting and moving. We take this food to the local homeless shelter. Beer, wine or liquor should be brought inside our office. Thanks.

- **Final Check-In** – Once you have your gear off the boat do one final look for missed gear. Don't forget to check the cockpit lockers. Once you are off the boat please come up to our office for a short debrief. If the boat has a companionway or door key please bring that with you (no need to lock the boat as the cleaners will onboard shortly).

The packet we give you when you arrive will contain a Return Checklist. This is intended to make the process discussed above a bit easier. Here is a sample of what it will look like:

## **San Juan Sailing Return Checklist**

**UPON RETURN:** Please remember to be off the boat by NOON (Sail: \$75 charge per hour late; Power \$100 charge per hour late. Allow up to 2 hours for fueling, disembarking.

**EXPEDITED CHECK IN:** If you want to save some time or have a system which will need special attention please call (or email) us on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning with your list of items we should know about.

**WHEN BACK IN SQUALICUM HARBOR:** After completing the items below please bring the companionway key to our office and do a short debrief with our staff.

- Wash all used dishes/cookware and stow.
- Please organize the boat (put things back where they belong), no need to clean beyond this.
- Double check all storage areas for personal gear.
- Assure refrigerator and icemaker (on some powerboats) breakers are "ON".
- Remove all leftover food. Feel free to bring useable food to our office for donation.
- Remove all garbage and recycling (dumpsters/recycling up ramp and across street, behind fence).
- Return boat's entry key to office (unless combination lock).
- Fill up fuel tank. If charter staff fuels: \$75 (sail) or \$100 (power) charge per tank + cost of fuel.
- Fill gasoline in dinghy outboard tank for all dinghies with outboards that are 4HP or larger. On boats with smaller outboards you need not fill small gas can.
- Pump out holding tanks. If charter staff pumps: \$75 charge (per tank).
- Fill up water tanks as courtesy to next guest.
- Boat moored with 4 lines: bow, stern, and two spring lines (led through chocks).
- Please straighten running rigging in cockpit and put on sail covers (if applicable).
- Connect boat to shorepower and switch AC breaker to "ON". Assure battery charger is "ON".
- Please move dinghy up near the bow (if not on davits).
- Please put engine key in nav table (if applicable) and leave boat unlocked for the cleaners.

## 6) San Juan Islands “Educational Safety Self-Assessment”

These questions are designed as a learning tool, not a test. They highlight what keeps people safe here in our islands. The answer key with an explanation of why we have made each choice follows. Ready?

1. What is the greatest danger to the boat and crew while sailing in the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands?
  - collision in fog
  - rocks
  - logs
  - crab pot floats/lines
  - collision (especially ferries)
  - docks
  
2. Who is the most dangerous skipper?
  - young
  - inexperienced in navigation
  - first timer in the islands
  - one who uses charts instead of a GPS Chart Plotter
  - experienced skipper who has sailed these waters frequently and has a perfect safety record
  
3. Safe navigation...
  - is best done by the skipper alone, for accountability
  - is best shared between the skipper and a designated navigator
  
4. The single greatest cause of accidents in the islands is...
  - excessive alcohol consumption
  - inexperience
  - ineptitude
  - momentary diversion of attention
  - complacency
  
5. The most effective way to stay safe while navigating underway is to use
  - paper charts or chartbooks
  - GPS chart plotter
  - Both when used together with the chart plotter zoomed in and out.
  
6. The single most practical, yet effective, procedure to protect from leaking propane (and explosion) is to
  - shut off the solenoid after each use of the stove
  - shut off the solenoid after each use of the stove but allow the burners to burn off fuel remaining in the lines
  - turn off the valve on the tank
  
7. Grounding in the islands usually means hitting
  - sand/gravel
  - mud
  - rock

8. When backing out of a slip with your stern into the wind, you should
- back into the center of the channel, then shift into forward and proceed slowly
  - back as far as possible to the windward side of the channel, then shift into forward, turn the wheel over hard and goose the engine until gaining way
9. When docked along a pier with boats fore and aft, and a wind pushing you back into the dock, the best technique is to
- have crew push the bow out and depart in forward
  - have crew push the beam of the boat out and depart in forward
  - have crew push the stern of the boat out and depart in reverse
  - have crew run a spring line from the bow to a point on the dock opposite amidships and hang a fender at the bow, turn the wheel toward the dock and engage forward. When the stern is well out, straighten the wheel and engage reverse.
10. A sudden stop poses the greatest danger to
- your crew
  - your boat
11. The inner rings on the chart's compass rose indicate
- magnetic headings
  - true headings
12. When using paper charts, the ideal clear weather safety practice when sailing or cruising in the islands means
- plotting out the course using pencil, compass rose and parallel rules
  - noting your location by taking regular line of sight readings with surrounding terrain, referencing the chart book.
  - Both
13. When using the GPS chart plotter, the ideal clear weather safety practice in the islands means
- setting courses using waypoints, then zooming out to display the overall route
  - avoid waypoints but zoom in sufficiently so all rocks appear, using the chart book for “big picture” navigation.
14. As long as I am on the correct side of a navigational buoy, I will be safe.
- true
  - false
15. Current can be dangerous because
- it accelerates my speed over ground
  - from the side it can cause me to drift off course and onto rocks I hadn't seen on the chart as being on my intended course.

16. To see if my boat is being “set” (moved off course by a side current), one should
- look over the stern and over the bow, and draw an invisible line on the water from the point where you started, to your destination. See if you are above or below that line then offset your course accordingly.
  - on your chart plotter, look at the predicted course-over-ground line. It should point toward your destination. If it does not, adjust your course until the line is on your destination, even though your bow may be pointed well away from it into the current.
  - both
17. Auto-inflating PFDs (many of our boats have them)
- must be worn at all times when underway to be legal
  - should be checked by the skipper before each cruise to assure the cylinder reads “green”
  - both
  - neither
18. When maneuvering inside a marina the skipper should always
- designate a “rover” with a portable fender to insert at any potential point of contact with dock or with another boat
  - wait until after selecting the slip before placing lines and fenders
19. Floating debris that can damage the boat is most often found
- anywhere in the islands
  - in the tide lines where the tide moves in and out from the shore
20. Large logs pose a threat to both hulls and props and are most frequent in
- spring
  - summer
  - fall
21. Crab pot floats which have gotten caught on your prop can
- most often be removed from your prop and shaft by pulling on the crab pot line from the cockpit
  - immobilize the engine, leaving you adrift and helpless if there is no wind
22. Crab or shrimp pots can be found
- anywhere in the islands
  - most often in 60' or less depth (inside the blue area marked by the 10 fathom line)
  - both
23. On the chart or chart plotter, a + or \* means
- an area to avoid because it indicates a rock that can threaten your keel
  - a point of reference to be checked on chart margin footnotes

24. Most chart plotters are capable of showing four vectors – heading, course over ground, current slippage and windage. Which of these vectors are 100% accurate all the time?
- heading
  - current slippage
  - windage
  - course over ground
  - heading and course over ground
25. AIS systems are handy because they allow you to see what information on the chart plotter?
- where the vessel is relative to your vessel
  - the name of the vessel
  - the vessel's speed and heading
  - all of the above
26. AIS system's data allows the plotter to calculate and present a CPA, which stands for
- current plotting area
  - closest point of approach
27. Eelgrass floating in the water
- indicates eels may be feeding nearby
  - should be avoided because it can plug your engine intake
28. To protect the engine against overheating, you should
- clean the raw water strainer daily
  - clean it only if the engine temperature rises or you detect steam in the exhaust
29. The greater threat to your safety comes from
- eelgrass plugging your raw water strainer and overheating the engine, causing the plastic muffler to melt and rendering the engine useless
  - forgetting to re-open the seacock after cleaning the raw water strainer, causing the plastic muffler to melt and rendering the engine useless
30. Channel 16 is to be used for
- emergency calls only
  - both emergency calls and initial boat to boat contact
31. Which of the following better represents proper VHF protocol?
- "Misty, Misty, Misty; Illuminé."
  - "Misty, Misty, Illuminé calling. Come in please. Over."
32. The depth sounder should
- give you accurate readings in generally shallow water. Interference in deep water can come from fish, underwater debris and varying water temperatures
  - give accurate readings at all times. Any errant readings indicate a malfunction
33. In event of a person overboard you should
- immediately throw a Type IV PFD, which should always be readily available, to the overboard person
  - assess the situation to determine the best course of action to get the person back aboard
  - assign a spotter to keep an eye on the victim

34. The biggest threat to safe maneuvering while leaving or entering a slip is  
 a dock line accidentally falling overboard, trailing and then wrapping around the shaft  
 failure to deploy all fenders before docking
35. A mooring buoy should be approached from  
 downwind  
 it doesn't matter
36. When deploying the anchor, you should  
 place the anchor where you intend your boat to be  
 place the anchor at a distance upwind and 3 to 4 times the depth, bow to bottom, of where you intend your boat to be
37. When setting the anchor, you should  
 test the holding of your anchor with your engine in idle reverse.  
 let the wind set the anchor for you, not the engine
38. Tide tables are important for determining  
 if you are likely to hit bottom while entering or departing an anchorage  
 if you are likely to go aground during the night  
 the amount of rode to use when anchoring  
 all of the above
39. The VHF should be on and monitored with sufficient volume  
 at all times when underway  
 at all times when aboard  
 whenever you wish to place a call
40. In case of emergency aboard a boat, the primary rescuer will normally be  
 the Coast Guard  
 the nearest boat
41. When deploying the anchor, the most common danger comes from  
 getting fingers caught in the chain  
 failing to set the anchor properly
42. When underway, the chart book should be  
 available in the nav station  
 stored under the dodger for quick reference  
 in the cockpit for regularly checking your dead reckoning location
43. The VHF weather report can be accessed  
 by pushing the wx button, then selecting any channel that comes in clearly  
 channel 16  
 channel 4
44. The VHF weather report should be checked  
 whenever the weather looks threatening  
 twice daily: every morning before departing and every afternoon before

mooring/anchoring

45. When in the vicinity of the San Juan Islands on the VHF weather report, listen for
- Admiralty Inlet
  - Juan de Fuca Strait – east end
  - the northern inland waters
46. On the VHF, “securitee, securitee, securitee” means
- a boat is either doing something or sees something they feel other boats should be aware of
  - a boat is in trouble but not sinking
47. In the two primary Commercial Shipping Lanes in the San Juan Islands, ships
- have the right of way and you should stay out of their path
  - need to give way to you if you are under sail
48. Commercial ships in the islands normally travel about
- 6 to 10 knots
  - 12 to 15 knots, depending upon their type
49. There is a vessel coming from your port side which appears to be on a collision course with you. You have maintained your course and speed, but as the other vessel nears it does not appear to be taking corrective action. You should
- turn to starboard and do a circle large enough to allow you to pass behind the other vessel
  - hold course and determine who has the right-of-way.
  - turn to port to pass behind the other vessel
50. To check if your VHF is working properly, you should:
- call for a radio check on Ch 16
  - call for a radio check on Ch 22 or Ch 83



*Some of the answers are cut and dried, right? Some you may have had to think about.*

*Here are our answers (marked with a \*) and why:*

1. What is the greatest danger to the boat and crew while sailing in the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands?
  - collision in fog [*Fog is dangerous but rare.*]
  - rocks [*Yes, this is our biggest safety threat and rock avoidance is job #1. Crew members can be seriously hurt when the boat suddenly stops and they do not.*]
  - logs [*Surprisingly perhaps, these pose a threat, especially in spring from heavy rains...and they can be very hard to spot, especially into the sun or when it is windy. Suggest always have a crew member on watch. They will damage the boat but are not likely to hurt a crew member.*]
  - crab pot floats/lines [*Can seize your shaft...lock it up...be alert for crab pots in shallower waters and shrimp pots in deeper waters.*]
  - collision [*Fortunately very rare, but preventing them does take attention on your part.*]
  - docks [*Second major cause of damage.*]
  
2. Who is the most dangerous skipper?
  - young
  - inexperienced in navigation
  - first timer in the islands [*almost never hits*]
  - one who uses charts instead of a GPS Chart Plotter [*they are the best!*]
  - experienced skipper who has sailed these waters frequently and has a perfect safety record [*Sorry, all you careful "it could never happen to me" old skippers, but that's what the data shows. The greater your experience, and the more you've sailed these islands, the greater your risk of a hit the next time out.*]
  
3. Safe navigation...
  - is best done by the skipper alone, for accountability
  - is best shared between the skipper and a designated navigator [*Two minds are better than one. That's why we ask you to designate a Navigation and Safety Officer, NSO. Use them! They can save you!]*]
  
4. The single greatest cause of accidents in the islands is...
  - excessive alcohol consumption
  - inexperience
  - ineptitude
  - momentary diversion of attention [*this is number 2*]
  - complacency [*Yup. Research shows it's problem #1. Period...by experienced skippers with a perfect safety record — up until they hit!*]
  
5. The most effective way to stay safe while navigating underway is to use
  - paper charts or chart books
  - GPS Chart plotter [*With the advent of Chart plotters I expected our rock hits to go down if not disappear. Instead, they got worse! Rocks disappear when zoomed out for navigation!]*]
  - Both when used together with the chart plotter zoomed in and out. [*OK, argue with me. It's alright. But the research shows that keeping the big picture keeps you away from rocks. No substitute for knowing where you are on the chart book page.*]

6. The single most **practical**, yet effective, procedure to protect from leaking propane (and explosion) is to
- [\*] **shut off the solenoid after each use of the stove** *[Simple and easy...NSO, just make sure it happens please. This cuts off the flow of propane at the tank.]*
  - [ ] **shut off the solenoid after each use of the stove but allow the burners to burn off fuel remaining in the lines** *[Good in theory, bad in practice. Why? When you relight the stove you have to wait for propane to refill the line, which sometimes results in an open and unlit burner by mistake.]*
  - [ ] **turn off the valve on the tank** *[Ideal in theory, but not practical after each use and unnecessary.]*

*We are aware our answer here disagrees with the ASA Bareboat text. Part of the reason is there is not enough gas in the lines to cause an explosion. And closing the tank valve after each use is not necessary or practical, having the valves at the stove closed and the solenoid closed is sufficient.*

7. Grounding in the islands usually means hitting
- [ ] sand/gravel
  - [ ] mud
  - [\*] **rock** *[Our islands are submerged mountains. Only the coves seem to have sand/gravel/mud bottoms]*
8. When backing out of a slip with your stern into the wind, you should
- [ ] back into the center of the channel, then shift into forward and proceed slowly
  - [\*] **back as far as possible to the windward side of the channel, then shift into forward, turn the wheel over hard and goose the engine a bit until gaining way** *[This is a common problem, especially for cautious skippers. Back up as far as you can in order to get as much maneuvering room in front of you as possible, then accelerate quickly to get "way" so you can control your boat, and not have the wind blow you down on the docks you are trying to leave.]*
9. When docked along a pier with boats fore and aft, and a wind pushing you back into the dock, the best technique is to
- [ ] have crew push the bow out and depart in forward
  - [ ] have crew push the beam of the boat out and depart in forward
  - [ ] have crew push the stern of the boat out and depart in reverse
  - [\*] **have crew run a spring line from the bow to a point on the dock opposite amidships and hang a fender at the bow, turn the wheel toward the dock and engage forward. When the stern is well out, straighten the wheel and engage reverse** *[For some reason, many skippers are afraid of reverse. Get your stern way out from the dock, back away, then slip it into forward, punch it to gain steerageway.]*
10. A sudden stop poses the greatest danger to
- [\*] **your crew** *[Crew members are never braced and always land against something hard.]*
  - [ ] your boat
11. The inner rings on the chart's compass rose indicate
- [\*] **magnetic headings** *[If you got this one wrong, please study your navigation text again. Or come take one of our classes.]*
  - [ ] true headings

12. When using paper charts, the ideal clear weather safety practice when sailing or cruising is
- plotting out the course using pencil, compass rose and parallel rules
  - noting your location by taking regular line of sight readings with surrounding terrain, referencing the chart book
  - [\*] **Both** *[Plot your course, and always note your location by comparing the chart to your surroundings. There is no better way to stay safe.]*
13. When using the GPS chart plotter, the ideal clear weather safety practice in the islands means
- setting courses using waypoints, then zooming out to display the overall route *[No, NO, NOO! Avoid using waypoints and you do not want those rocks to disappear off your chart plotter, as they will if you zoom out!]*
  - [\*] **avoid waypoints but zoom in sufficiently so all rocks appear, using the chartbook for “big picture” navigation.**
14. As long as I am on the correct side of a navigational buoy, I will be safe.
- true
  - [\*] **false** *[I can introduce you to several sailors who passed too close to buoys, and paid the price. Buoys shift with the currents, and often mark the center of a rock/reef, not the edge. Keep at least 2-3 boat lengths away from buoys.]*
15. Current can be dangerous because
- it accelerates speed over ground
  - [\*] **from the side it can cause me to move off course and onto rocks I hadn't seen on the chart as being on my intended course** *[It's happened! Too many times. The current can slide you sideways onto a reef you hadn't thought possible to hit given your intended course.]*
16. To see if my boat is being “set” (drifting off course by a side current), you should
- look over the stern and over the bow and draw an invisible line on the water from the point where you started, to your destination. See if you are above or below that line then offset your course accordingly.
  - on your chart plotter, look at the predicted course-over-ground line. It should point toward your destination. If it does not, adjust your course until the line is on your destination, even though your bow may be pointed well away from it into the current.
  - [\*] **both** *[These are both good indicators to tell you if you are being swept sideways by the current. The COG line is the easiest and best method.]*
17. Auto-inflating PFDs (many of our boats have them)
- must be worn at all times underway to be legal
  - should be checked by the skipper before each cruise to assure the cylinder reads “green”
  - [\*] **both** *[If not green, the PFD won't auto inflate when immersed.]*
  - neither
18. When maneuvering inside a marina the skipper should always
- [\*] **designate a “rover” with a portable fender to insert at any potential point of contact with dock or with another boat** *[Assigning a rover gives protection and peace of mind, as well as soft landings! Good scratch avoidance practice]*
  - wait to decide on the slip before placing lines and fenders

19. Floating debris that can damage the boat is most often found  
 anywhere in the islands *[Yes, logs can be anywhere, especially in the spring when rains wash logs down the rivers. NSO alert! Always have someone on watch.]*  
 **in the tide lines where the tide moves in and out from the shore** *[Key words are “most often”. Alert your crew to watch for these soapy lines in the water. They may also contain logs, eelgrass and other debris that at best will slow you down, at worst cause damage.]*
20. Large logs pose a threat to both hulls and props and are most frequent in  
 **spring** *[Heavy spring rains wash logs down the rivers and into cruising waters. By late summer most logs have washed up on shore. Yet, even in summer high tides can break them loose again which can lead to damage.]*  
 summer  
 fall
21. Crab pot floats which have gotten caught on your prop can  
 most often can be removed from your prop and shaft by pulling on the crab pot line from the cockpit  
 **immobilize the engine, leaving you adrift and helpless if there is no wind** *[You might get lucky and unwind, but 90% of the time you need a diver to cut it loose. Meantime, you can be at the mercy of the currents. You may need to anchor and dive.]*
22. Crab or shrimp pots can be found  
 anywhere in the islands  
 most often in 60' or less of depth (inside the blue area marked by the 10 fathom line)  
 **both** *[You'll find crab pots in the shallower waters, usually 50-70'. And the orange buoys in 300-400' of water often mark shrimp pots.]*
23. On the chart or chart plotter, a + or \* means  
 **an area to avoid because it indicates a rock that can threaten your keel** *[If you got this one wrong, please register for a Learn-N-Cruise...seriously! :-)]*  
 a point of reference to be checked on footnotes on the chart margins
24. Most chart plotters are capable of showing four vectors – heading, course over ground, current slippage and windage. Which of these vectors are 100% accurate all the time?  
 heading  
 current slippage  
 windage  
 **course over ground** *[COG is the only vector calculated using GPS information, the other use the autopilot's compass which are notorious for falling out of calibrations. These other vectors should not be trusted]*  
 heading and course over ground
25. AIS systems are handy because they allow you to see what information on the chart plotter?  
 where the vessel is relative to your vessel  
 the name of the vessel  
 the vessel's speed and heading  
 **all of the above**

26. AIS system's data allows the plotter to calculate and present a CPA, which stands for  
 current plotting area  
 **closest point of approach** *[This calculated number tells you how close you will get to the other vessel based on the current speed and heading of both vessels. If it is close (in feet rather than nautical miles) action by the give way vessel is a good idea. This number can, and does, change based on any change in speed or direction of either vessel, so keep a close eye on it until the other vessel has passed.]*
27. Eelgrass floating in the water  
 indicates eels may be feeding nearby  
 **should be avoided because it can plug your engine intake** *[Most often found in tide lines or in floating blobs, especially in Bellingham Bay near our marina]*
28. To protect the engine against overheating, you should  
 clean the raw water strainer daily  
 **clean it only if the engine temperature rises or you detect steam in the exhaust** *[Why? See next question]*
29. The greater threat to your safety come from  
 eel grass plugging your raw water strainer and overheating the engine, causing the plastic muffler to melt and rendering the engine useless  
 **forgetting to re-open the seacock after cleaning the raw water strainer, causing the plastic muffler to melt and rendering the engine useless** *[It's happened...so many times. In fact, if you MUST close the raw water intake, put the engine keys over the seacock handle. Hard to forget this way]*
30. Channel 16 is to be used for  
 emergency calls only  
 **both emergency calls and initial boat to boat contact** *[After contact, move to an agreed working channel like #68, #69 or #72]*
31. Which of the following better represents proper VHF protocol?  
 **"Misty, Misty, Misty; Illuminé."** *[Brevity. Useless words are well...useless.]*  
 "Misty, Misty, Illuminé calling. Come in please. Over."
32. The depth sounder should  
 **give you accurate readings in generally shallow water. Interference in deep water can come from fish, underwater debris and varying water temperatures**  
 give accurate readings at all times. Any errant readings indicate a malfunction
33. In event of a person overboard you should  
 **immediately throw a Type IV PFD, which should always be readily available, to the overboard person**  
 assess the situation to determine the best course of action to get the person back aboard  
 assign a spotter to keep an eye on the victim.

34. The biggest threat to safe maneuvering while leaving or entering a slip is  
 [\*] **a dock line accidentally falling overboard, trailing and then wrapping around the shaft**  
*[Skipper, please make sure the dock lines are securely aboard, not trailing. It's happened too often, sometimes bending the shaft and canceling the charter]*  
 [ ] failure to deploy all fenders before docking
35. A mooring buoy should be approached from  
 [\*] **downwind** *[If blown over the buoy, your prop or rudder can get tangled in the buoy anchoring system]*  
 [ ] it doesn't matter
36. When deploying the anchor, you should  
 [ ] place the anchor where you intend your boat to be  
 [\*] **place the anchor at a distance upwind and 3 to 4 times the depth, bow to bottom, of where you intend your boat to be.**
37. When setting the anchor, you should  
 [\*] **test the holding of your anchor with your engine in idle reverse.** *[For boats with a folding propeller slightly higher RPMs may be required]*  
 [ ] let the wind set the anchor for you, not the engine
38. Tide tables are important for determining  
 [ ] if you are likely to hit bottom while entering or departing an anchorage  
 [ ] if you are likely to go aground during the night  
 [ ] the amount of rode to use when anchoring  
 [\*] **all of the above** *[Important for all these functions; hitting underway is more dangerous than going aground at anchor, but you don't want to go aground during the night either. And not taking into account increased water depth at high tide can lead to the anchor dragging.]*
39. The VHF should be on and monitored with sufficient volume  
 [\*] **at all times when underway** *[Really important...you may save a life, or a boat. It's happened to our son.]*  
 [ ] at all times when aboard  
 [ ] whenever you wish to place a call
40. In case of emergency aboard a boat, the primary rescuer will normally be  
 [ ] the Coast Guard  
 [\*] **the nearest boat** *[Admittedly this can vary depending on the type of emergency, but a boat nearby can get there a lot faster than the CG. And you could be the hero. But if your volume was too low, the villain.]*
41. When deploying the anchor, the most common danger comes from  
 [\*] **getting fingers caught in the chain** *[This is debatable, but our experience shows this causes more injuries. Please keep hands and feet away when operating the electric windlass]*  
 [ ] failing to set the anchor properly

42. When underway, the chart book should be
- available in the nav station
  - stored under the dodger for quick reference
  - in the cockpit for regularly checking your location** [*Probably the greatest single safety precaution against hitting rocks...know where you are at all times...on the chartbook*]
43. The VHF weather report can be accessed
- by pushing the wx button, then selecting any channel that comes in clearly**
  - channel 16
  - channel 4
44. The VHF weather report should be checked
- whenever the weather looks threatening
  - twice daily: every morning before departing and afternoon before mooring/anchoring**
45. When in the vicinity of the San Juan Islands on the VHF weather report, listen for
- Admiralty Inlet
  - Juan de Fuca Strait – east end
  - the northern inland waters**
46. On the VHF, “securitee, securitee, securitee” means
- a boat is either doing something or sees something they feel other boats should be aware of** [*For example, in our waters there are several narrow channels where it is common to announce ones entry*]
  - a boat is in trouble but not sinking
47. In the two primary Commercial Shipping Lanes in the San Juan Islands, ships
- have the right of way and you should stay out of their path** [*When in shipping lanes commercial vessels are considered constrained by their draft, which makes them the stand-on vessel over sailing vessels*]
  - need to give way to you if you are under sail
48. Commercial ships in this region normally travel about
- 6 to 10 knots
  - 12 to 15 knots, depending upon their type** [*They use to travel at around 20 kt but have slowed some to help the whales by reducing noise. But they will still be ‘on you’ faster than you think. Plan ahead and stay out of their way.*]
49. There is a vessel coming from your port side which appears to be on a collision course with you. You have maintained your course and speed, but as the other vessel nears it does not appear to be taking corrective action. You should
- turn to starboard and do a circle large enough to allow you to pass behind the other vessel** [*This is the proper maneuver to avoid a collision in this case.*]
  - hold course and determine who has the right-of-way. [*This should have been done long before this point.*]
  - turn to port to pass behind the other vessel [*The rules say do not do this! The reason is this – if the other vessel finally becomes aware of the situation they will turn to their starboard to pass behind you. If you have turned to port the two of you will then be pointed right at each other.*]

50. To check if your VHF is working properly, you should:

[ ] call for a radio check on Ch 16

[\*] **call for a radio check on Ch 22 or 83.** *[It is illegal to ask for a radio check on Ch 16. This channel is reserved for emergency and initial boat-to-boat contact. In the US use Ch 22 and Ch 83 in Canada.]*

Now please review any incorrect answers to make sure you will score 100% on the “big test”--your charter!

***This request--***

- *Please jot down any questions that were difficult for you, were worded in a confusing manner, or answers that you question. Send them to [mike@sanjuansailing.com](mailto:mike@sanjuansailing.com).*

Thank you, very much!