

The Great Siberian **Sushi** Run



by Ken Williams

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An important disclaimer....

This book is filled with comments, opinions, strategies, techniques, tips and more, some by the author, and some by others who wrote to the author. You are responsible for independently verifying anything you read here. No two boating situations are identical, and techniques that worked for one person may or may not work for another. The author makes no claim as to the accuracy of anything in this book, and has made no effort to verify any of the information in the emails and letters from others that are printed herein. And, whatever you do, keep safe!

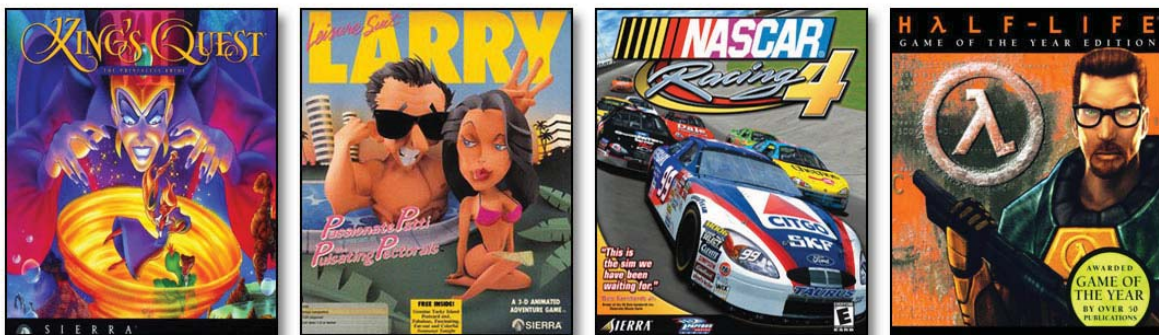
preface

Before you begin, I'd like to share a bit of background on myself, and the book that follows.

During the summer of 2009, three privately-owned Nordhavn trawlers set out from Seattle Washington bound for Japan. We nicknamed our journey the Great Siberian Sushi Run (or, GSSR), reflecting that our voyage would take us through Alaska, the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands, and into Japan. Each of the three boats is owned by a retired couple, and the trip was done strictly for fun. Our goals were nothing more than to 'see the world' and to do so by visiting places that very few people EVER have seen. As you read the book you will be amazed by all that we discovered, and all the fascinating, and at times down-right bizarre, people we met.

This book was composited from a blog that I sent out during the trip. Very little editing has been done, and in some places, this book's origin as a blog is obvious. I suppose that with a huge effort, I could have rewritten everything to remove all indications that the words in this book were once part of a blog, but that wouldn't really change anything. I think you'll find it is good news, in that this book was written in 'real time' as events were unfolding. As you read, you'll get a real sense of what it feels like to be out to sea wondering what lies ahead, and if you'll ever see land, or civilization, again. In addition to the blog entries, I've included a selection of the thousands of emails I received during the trip. Tens of thousands of people follow my blog, many of whom have a much better grasp of history, archeology, geography and even boating than I do. You will find that these emails are often far more interesting than my own writing, and also very educational. Don't skip them.

As to my background...



I am almost certainly the least likely person alive to have written a book on exploring, cruising or the history of WW II. And yet, I seem to have done so, and you are holding it in your hands. My background is as a software developer and software entrepreneur. My wife and I founded and ran for nearly twenty years, a very successful computer game company, Sierra On-line. We retired in 1996, and as part of our retirement bought a boat. We had been boating all of our lives, but had never been out of sight of land, until 2004, when we decided to cross the Atlantic, along with 17 other boats, as part of a rally put on by our boat's manufacturer (Nordhavn). The trip, which was commemorated in my incredibly successful book "Crossing an Ocean Under Power" changed our lives. Once we had crossed the Atlantic, our destiny was sealed. We started talking, almost immediately, about crossing the Pacific.

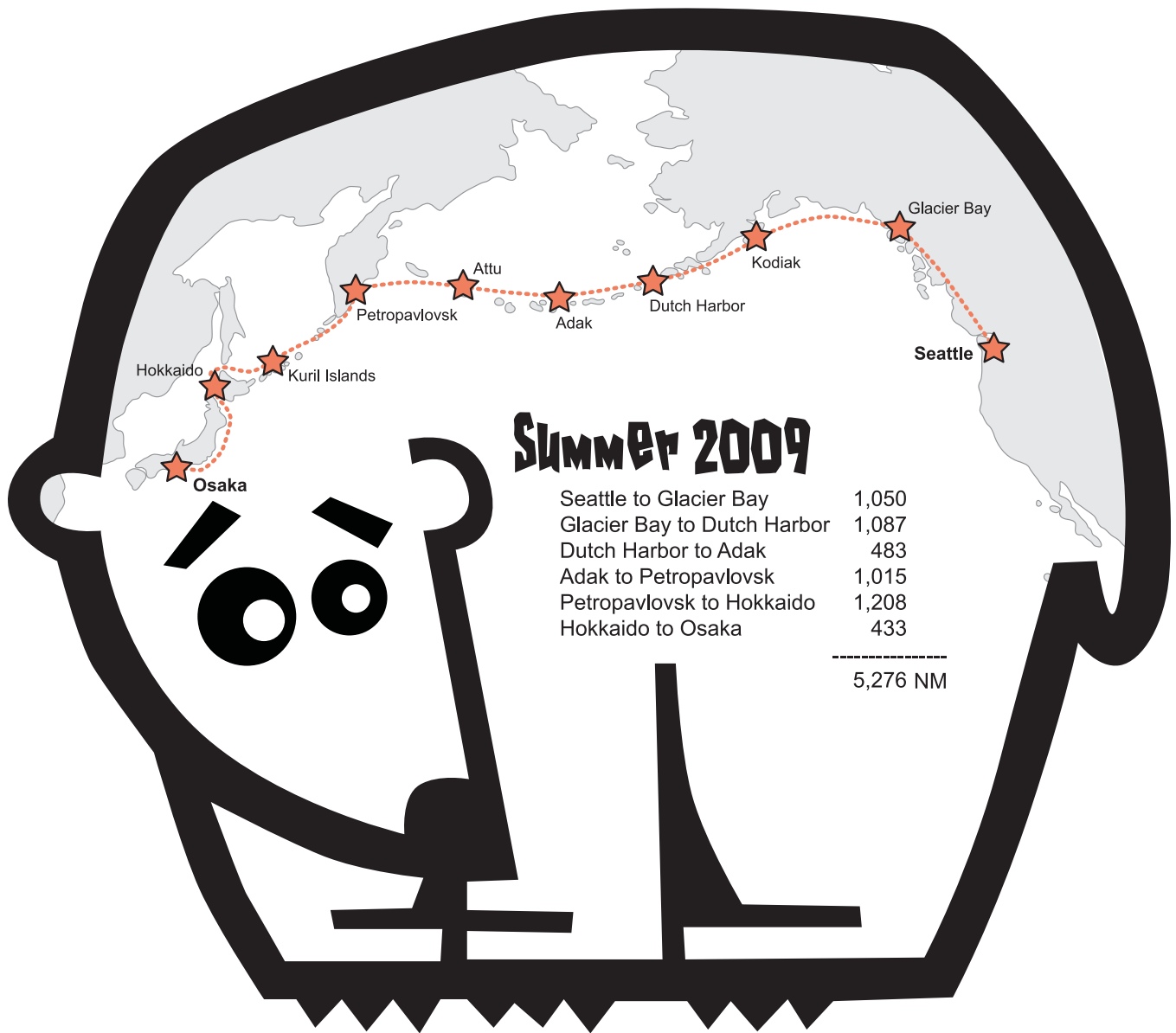
At the time that we crossed the Atlantic, my boating skills were 'dubious.' I still remember asking, after we had committed to go on the trip, what we were going to do at night, and if we'd be running overnight, or somehow stop. How does one drop anchor in the middle of the Atlantic? Since that time, I've matured a bit as a boater, and gone on to get some serious nautical training, and obtained a USCG 100 ton Master's license, plus a European Yachtmaster's license. I've also covered many more miles, taking the boat last year all the way south to Costa Rica. As you read the book, my hope is that you'll learn a great deal about boating, although I've tried to keep the boating technical speak as light as possible. The book is about the cool places we went and the people we met. It's not meant to be a boating text book. That said, if you have dreamt about someday taking your boat around the world, you will find much here which will help you prepare for your own journey.

This book covers a five month period, from when we decided to go on the GSSR, to how we researched the trip, prepared for the trip, and the trip itself.

If reading this book gives you 1% of the sense of exploration, discovery and fun that we had, you will be very happy you read this book, because, I've been a lot of places, and none of them were anything like what we discovered on this trip. I hope the chair you are reading this book from has seat belts, because you are in for a wild ride!

Thank you,
Ken Williams

Map of our Travels



The Great Siberian **Sushi** Run

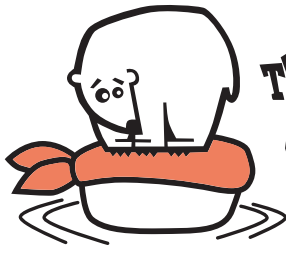
Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1: The Adventure Begins: March 18	8
2: Final Preparations: March 27	10
3: Redoubt Volcano Erupts: March 29	14
4: Final Preparations: April 9	16
5: It's a tiny distance but a really big milestone: April 17	21
6: Running from Seattle to Roche Harbor: April 19	23
7: Roche Harbor to Nanaimo: April 24	28
8: Roche Harbor to Nanaimo: April 25	32
9: Nanaimo to Port Hardy: April 29	38
10: Port Hardy to Pruth Bay: May 1	45
11: Pruth Bay to Prince Rupert: May 6	48
12: Ketchi-me-if-you-Kan: May 10	54
13: Ketchikan to Wrangell: May 14	58
14: Wild Times in Petersburg: May 17	62
15: Tracy Arm: May 21	67
16: Tracy Arm to Glacier Bay: May 29	71
17: Bear Quest (plus, wolves, otters, puffins, and even a Pelican!): June 3	76
18: Showtime!: June 6	83
19: Gulf of Alaska: June 9	85
20: Glacier Bay to Kodiak: June 14	90
21: Grizzly Bears at Geographic Harbor: June 18	95
22: Approaching Dutch Harbor: June 22	103

Chapter

Page

23: King Cove: June 23	108
24: Arrival in Dutch Harbor: June 24	113
25: The Calm Before The Storm: July 2	117
26: Back in Dutch Harbor: July 7	123
27: Umnak Island, and the Swell From Hell: July 10	126
28: Atka - Visiting A Plane From The Past: July 14	133
29: Adak - Sometimes we win, Sometimes the weather wins: July 17	145
30: Kiska and the Fish That Wouldn't Die: July 23	154
31: Attu To Russia: July 27	163
32: Welcome To Siberia: August 2	171
33: Welcome to Tomakomai Japan!: August 4	179
34: Shelby gets out of jail, and the GSSR leaves Hokkaido: August 12	187
35: Tokyo and the Yokohama Bayside Marina: August 17	193
36: Typhoon!: August 30	203
37: Well, that wasn't very exciting: August 31	205
38: Shimoda Japan: September 4	207
39: Hiding from a typhoon, again: September 7	212
40: A picture I forgot to include: September 8	218
41: We did it!!!!: September 10	221
42: The End Of The Road: September 14	222



The Great Siberian Sushi Run

#27

Chapter 27: Umnak Island, and the Swell From Hell: July 10

- Total Distance: 5,276 nm
- Run so far: 2,610 nm
- Nautical Miles to go: 2,666 nm
- Tomorrow's goal: 260 nm

Our departure yesterday was a bit more disorganized than usual. Historically, this group has been almost military in handling our departures. When we say "Anchors up at 6am," we mean it. At 5:59am, three anchors will rise from the depths.

As we do prior to every departure, the captains of the three ships hold a Captain's Meeting, where we discuss the upcoming trip. We review the latest weather report, any mechanical issues, and anything else that might be relevant to the upcoming passage.

Because the weather around Dutch Harbor had been bad for several days, there was a more serious air than usual to the discussions. We were looking out the window at nasty weather, but a two-day weather window was to open the next morning. Based on this, we made a decision to leave the docks at 6:30am.

However, as we were coming back from dinner, the wind was still over 15 knots at the docks. This led to some casual discussion of whether or not we would still leave if the wind hadn't dropped by morning. Our worry was that if we were seeing 15+ knots sitting at the dock, it might be much rougher out at sea. We loosely said we'd make a go/no-go decision when we woke up. Then, later in the evening, Braun (Grey Pearl) stopped by and we started talking at the back of the boat. I mentioned that I had just pulled the weather report, and the latest outlook was that the winds

would not drop until the afternoon. I also mentioned that Bill had spoken to some local fishermen who said they were going to wait for the afternoon to depart. We talked about possibly waiting until noon for departure, and once again said that we'd decide in the morning.

At 6am I was at Sans Souci's helm ready to go, but saw no activity on Seabird or Grey Pearl. At 6:30 Braun wandered over to the boat - "Are we going?". The wind was still above 15 knots, sustained. I was tired and would have been happy to go back to bed. I said, "Let's talk to Bill." To no great surprise, Bill had an opinion. "Look guys. The days of flat seas are over. This is about as good as it gets. Don't ask my opinion, because I wouldn't even think about whether or not to go in this."

Braun and I said, "That's it. Let's go!" Braun said he'd be ready in 10 minutes.

Although we started our time at Dutch Harbor rafted to each other, extra space at the dock had become available, and the other two boats had moved to the inside of the dock. To leave the docks they needed to maneuver around the end of a very tight dock, in very shallow water. Both boats exited easily and in 10 minutes were underway. Only later did I hear that Seabird had understood from our prior night's conversation that we would be leaving at noon. Oops. I was quite impressed that Seabird's crew was able to go from sleep to leaving the dock in minutes!





The wind died as quickly as we left the dock. The weather gods seem to be fans of the GSSR. Throughout our 100 nm run to Umnak Island, we had calm seas and light winds. It was a very smooth run.

About midway through our trip we overheard a helicopter overhead. It was the coast guard just saying hi. *(image on top right)* Bill chatted with them on the radio as they passed overhead, and posted this message on my comment board:

The Coast Guard helicopter gave us a nice fly-by this morning and I spoke to my friend Jason, a rescue swimmer. They were out searching for a crewman who fell overboard a fishing boat so were low on fuel and could not give us much chance to take photographs. It's a privilege to have acquaintances there and know they are on our side. I have a good many friends who are still alive due to a ride in their hoist basket, and I thank the CG for being there every time I see them.

As we approached Umnak Island, there was a bit of fog. This photo is of some waterfalls on shore.



Here's a look inside the pilot house, and our first view of where we would be anchoring. We would be dropping anchor at 8:30pm, which would normally mean bedtime after a long day.



However, the weather report once again had us thinking. We were projected to have two days of good weather, followed by a storm. As I've said many times, we have been spoiled by calm seas, and hope to keep it that way. Storms roll through the Aleutians quickly, and unless we are willing to accept getting bounced around, we need to move whenever we have a weather window. I can tell that our extreme focus on seeking weather windows is a sensitive issue for Bill. He is on this trip because he is passionate about the Aleutians, and excited to share his passion with us. We were now anchored at a tremendous spot, in front of a volcano that he was looking forward to hiking, and enjoying. However, the group's analysis of the weather was that we had only a couple days to reach Adak, our next major destination, before another storm would be on us.

Rather than miss the opportunity to see Umnak Island, we decided to drop the tenders and explore, even though it was 10 at night, and we would be departing early the next morning. Specifically, we wanted to find the hot springs. Umnak has a volcano that violently erupted last year. When Bill was here prior to that, the sand on the beach was too hot to be

walked on barefoot. His crew dug pits in the sand, that filled by sea water, creating personal hot tubs.



Here is Roberta and Steven from Seabird -- Shelby looks unhappy because she was having trouble walking through this high foliage with her life jacket on. (A bit later, we removed her life jacket and she was much happier.) (bottom right image)

I have been VERY curious to set foot on an Aleutian island. When viewed from the boat they have a smooth green appearance, like a well manicured lawn. We've been referring to it as green peach fuzz that covers the islands. Here you see a close-up, and as can be seen, it is a dense brush, with flowers, a couple feet deep. We hiked for a mile through this stuff, and it is fairly easy to hike through, with or without a path. Walking, we hit a few areas where the bottom was cluttered with old logs, requiring us to step from log to log or fall into pits of unknown depth. I don't really understand where the logs came from. Other than a few trees, hand-planted by local island residents, we haven't seen a tree for over a thousand miles. I asked Bill, and his guess was that they fell off logging boats. (third image from the top on the right)

Umnak is a big island, third largest in the Aleutians, covering 700 square miles. That said, like most Aleutian Islands, it is sparsely populated, being home to just 39 persons.



Although light on population, Umnak played an important role in American history....

[Note: I am not a Historian, however, my blogs over the next few weeks will necessarily need to recount some events from WWII. I do not have the time, or inclination, to fact check everything I say, and will apologize in advance for any errors. I'm confident that those of you reading my blog will flood my email box if I botch the facts, and I will publish retractions as they are needed.]

For those who may have forgotten, Dutch Harbor was bombed on June 3rd and 4th, by the Japanese, nearly six months to the day after the bombing at Pearl Harbor. The war in the Aleutians is considered by some as the forgotten war, so don't be surprised if you aren't familiar with it. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be visiting the islands where the Aleutian war took place. The bombing of Dutch Harbor was the opening salvo in the Aleutian war.

Although neither America, or the Japanese, had any real interest in the Aleutians prior to WWII, or since WWII for that matter, they were considered of critical strategic importance by both sides during the war. Each side felt that the Aleutians could be key to launching an air offense against the other. Simply put, planes with bombs have fairly short range, and must be launched from close to their targets. Both the Japanese and the Americans felt the Aleutians were critical for both offensive and defensive reasons. It was important to each country that 'the other side' not use the islands as air bases, and that air bases be established from which to launch attacks against the other party's mainland.

The Americans were not completely taken by surprise by the Dutch Harbor bombings. They knew an attack in the Aleutians was coming, and had been working to establish airbases in the Aleutians. One of these was on Umnak Island, only 100 miles from Dutch Harbor.

The bombing of Dutch Harbor on June 3rd was not a proud moment for either country. The weather was horrible, and half the Japanese force turned back unable to find Dutch Harbor. The other half was able only to bomb relatively insignificant targets. America did not respond at all, due to communications foul-ups between Dutch Harbor and the air base at nearby Umnak. Given the lack of American response, the Japanese decided to try their luck again on June 4th. The weather once again helped shield Dutch Harbor from the brunt of the bombing. Between the two bombings, approximately 60 Americans were killed, mostly military personnel, and a like number were wounded. The Americans this time did react, fiercely. Planes were launched from Umnak, to the complete surprise



of the Japanese, who had no idea that an airbase existed on Umnak. Six Japanese planes were quickly shot down, and the Japanese ships they were launched from were on the run.

For a bit more about Umnak during WWII: www.tinyurl.com/yfv12cz

Video: <http://tinyurl.com/yh8376a>

Hiking on the beach, we found only a couple of things; a dead baby orca whale, and a strange pouch with Japanese writing. Our guess was that the pouch was a ration off a Japanese life raft.

Unfortunately, we were running out of light, and needed to return to the boats.



I was surprised when I saw the back of Sans Souci, and realized that it was going to be difficult to approach the stern with the tender. Sans Souci was rolling, at anchor, fairly strongly. This caused me to glance over at Grey Pearl and Seabird. They were being tossed around violently by the swell.

We were in a six foot swell, coming in to the bay. The wind was positioning the



boats so that we were beam-to the swell. When the swell is coming from the bow, it isn't that bad; however when the swell is from the side, it can be miserable inside the boat. We had run for 12 hours to reach the anchorage, dropped the tenders, hiked for a couple of hours, and put the tenders back on deck. We needed to pull anchor the next morning at 6:30am and were exhausted. Roberta and I went immediately to bed, but quickly discovered that it was impossible to sleep being rolled violently from side to side.

Sans Souci has "flopper stoppers" which can be used at anchor to dampen the rolling motion caused by swell. These are large metal plates, which dangle into the water from giant poles that protrude from Sans Souci's side. They are quite effective and would have given us a better night's sleep. However, they take half an hour to set up, and half an hour to take back down. We were too tired to put out the flopper stoppers, but certainly would have had we known what the night would be like.

As Roberta and I laid down for the night, I said to her, "Do you think we should just call the other boats and ask if they would like to pull anchor and go?" Our next leg would be 260 nautical miles, requiring a day and a half. I didn't need to check the weather report to know we would be more comfortable at sea than continuing to lie at anchor rolling like this. Roberta asked if I was serious, and I said I was. After a brief discussion, we decided that everyone was probably sleeping on the other boats, and we shouldn't bother them.

The next morning, as we were pulling anchor, Steven (Seabird) and I were chatting on the radio. Steven mentioned that he hadn't slept, due to getting beat up by the swell. I said that I almost called him to say "Let's go." He said, "You should have. I almost called you to say the same thing." Later when we spoke with Braun, he mentioned that he almost called the two of us to ask if we'd be willing to pull anchor and go. A miserable night could have been avoided had we spoken to each other. Ouch.

And, lastly...

Here's a photo of the fishing boat I mentioned yesterday, built in 1913, that sank a submarine during WWII.



Also, I mentioned that our boat had been 'sooted.' Here's a close-up showing some of the soot that was dumped on our boat.

That's it for today. Next stop: Bechevin Bay on Atka Island, where we'll hike to a B-24 Liberator that crash-landed during WWII.



PS The Nordhavn 57, Flat Earth, just completed a successful passage from Hawaii to the west coast. For more information, click the links below.

<http://tinyurl.com/yfckowc>

And, <http://tinyurl.com/ykgd4l9>



Posted by Hal W on Jul 10, 2009, 06:48 PM EST

Did you see any reindeer on Atka?

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 10, 2009, 06:57 PM EST

Hal: We saw MANY reindeers on Atka, and I have some great photos of them. We're arriving in Adak within the hour. A wild trip here. Confused seas all the way, and high winds (25-35 knots). Grey Pearl was right behind me when their autopilot quit, and they made a surprise 90 degree turn. A few minutes ago Seabird suddenly did a 360 degree turn. I still don't know why, but I'm sure the story will be interesting. They seem to be going again now. -Ken W

Posted by Neil Small on Jul 10, 2009, 09:04 PM EST

Hi Ken, Early on in this series of your blogs you had indicated that both you and Roberta have survival suits. I am curious to know if Kirk also has one as well as the other GSSR boat crews. Also, what provisions have you made for Shelby if ditching becomes necessary. I compli-

ment you and Roberta on your improved use of the video camera. It is evident by the fact that you are now panning and zooming much slower. Again, thanks for taking Eva and I along on this fantastic adventure. Neil

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 10, 2009, 10:20 PM EST

Neil and Eva: We have eight or more survival suits on board, and only eight persons. Roberta and I wanted custom suits because she's petite and I'm "over-sized." Unfortunately, Shelby has no suit. If the boat were to sink, we would hope to get her onto one of the other two GSSR boats as quickly as possible. We did discuss how to manage Shelby during an emergency, and believe she will be fine in most situations. Ultimately though, should we all wind up floating in our survival suits, priority #1 will be the humans.

All of the other boats also have survival suits, and we keep ours piled right by the door in the pilot house.

Thanks for the feedback on the video. I have some very cool video from Atka, where we were earlier today. Hopefully I'll get it edited tomorrow. Ken W

Posted by Peter Sheppard on Jul 10, 2009, 10:14 PM EST

Ken, We are almost half way around on our 7200 nm circumnavigation of Australia (Hobart to Hobart) on N55#38, and currently situated on the fairly inhospitable west coast in the Indian Ocean.

Flopper stoppers are essential for comfort to us when anchored, so we have ours ready to go which only takes seconds to deploy and redeploy. We leave our pole (we only have one on the portside, but a spare plate ready to be hooked off the davit, which is stb mounted) deployed all the time, and need to just lower the plate 16' to the water, and we are away - that simple. Probably the easiest chore on the boat. If the wind and swell effects the plate causing it to hit the topsides, we carry it down to the cockpit or duckboard, and drop it over there after reattaching the drop and retrieval lines. I like my sleep too much whilst at anchor. Good luck with the rest of the trip. Peter

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 10, 2009, 10:31 PM EST

Peter: When Roberta and I are running from anchorage to anchorage, we always leave the poles to our flopper stoppers out. We just set the plates in the cockpit and toss them in the water once we drop anchor. We were being lazy because we knew we would be tying to the docks in Adak, and you can't be at the dock with the flopper stoppers out. Also, we are worried that if we run with the flopper stopper poles out, in rough seas, that we might "dip a pole" and then I'm not sure what would happen. I assume the pole would come loose, and the lines could wrap around the stabilizer or prop. Not a pretty thought.

When we were in Mexico last year, I spoke with Jeff Leishman (designer of the boat) about my habit of running with the poles out. I bet I have run 1,000 miles over the years with the poles extended. Jeff said he saw no problem, and thought I would never have a problem. I'm working my way your direction as quickly as possible. Perhaps I need bigger oars! - Ken W

Posted by Scott Evangelista on Jul 11, 2009, 10:46 AM EST

Ken, Thanks for the stream of updates. I am really interested in knowing how hard it was to lift the tender in a 6' swell...I can imagine the cable snapping taught and being quite dangerous and stressful to the people and the mechanics...looking forward to you next post

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 11, 2009, 12:24 PM EST

Scott: Sans Souci has two tenders; a small 10' one that weighs only about 200 pounds, and a large AB that weighs closer to 1,200 pounds. Luckily we took the tiny tender to shore.

Bringing it on board was not easy. What made it possible is that the swells were coming in sets. Every seven or so swells there would be a 15-30 second break. It seemed fairly predictable. We watched for a break in the action, and popped the tender up quickly. Then two guys held the tender against the side of the boat, suspended in air, for a few minutes until the next calm spot between swells. This allowed us to avoid the stress on the line that would be caused by the tender bouncing. As soon as we had another break in the swells, the tender was raised the rest of the way onto the boat, and dropped into its cradle in seconds. If we had dropped the large tender, I don't know what we would have done. - Ken W

Posted by James on Jul 11, 2009, 01:13 PM EST

Ken, I am certainly no historian either and were it not for my youngest doing a report recently, wouldn't have remembered all of this, nor be chiming in here... but thought it fitting sense the GSSR crew are there in the thick of it...and are our... 'Honorary Aleutian Diplomats'!

An interesting bit of history that you don't hear too much about now is the involvement of the USS Indianapolis in the Aleutians for about a year starting in the summer of '42, which was several years prior to her carrying "Little Boy" to Tinian. She was heavily engaged in the battles to retake Attu and Kiska, and supported the occupation of Adak and Amchitka Islands. In fact in one battle on Kiska after lighting off her 8" guns in heavy fog the Japanese thought they were being bombed and returned fire into the air. After launching scout planes later from the Cruisers they found a number of ships sinking in the harbor and fires burning at shore installations. Pretty good shootin' while rolling around in the Bering Sea, which by the way, was named after Vitus Bering a Danish born Russian navigator

and explorer who crossed it in 1726, presumably without flopper-stoppers! James

Posted by Bill H. on Jul 11, 2009, 06:31 PM EST

Since James is into his Alaska history: Few people know that the last action of the Civil War was in the Bering Sea. The Confederate commerce raider Shenandoah was engaged in disrupting whaling by Yankee companies throughout the world. The Shenandoah made it's way from Australia up through the islands to Japan, Kuriles, Sea of Oskost, Siberia and the Bering Sea. They intercepted Yankee whaling vessels, took the crews prisoner and burned the ships. When they were full of prisoners they filled one of the whaleships and ransomed it off to carry the prisoners to San Francisco. The last of these actions was months after General Lee had surrendered at Appomattox.

On another subject, I'd like to say hi to my nephew James who is apparently reading this blog. In answer to your question if they are enjoying your uncle Bill. Maybe. You know how outrageous I am. Some things never change.

Posted by john edwards on Jul 12, 2009, 11:14 PM EST

KEN & crew I have been checking your site off and on for the past few weeks sounds like an adventure in travel to me , there's one thing about Alaska if you don't like the weather wait a few minutes and it will change , I have been up in the area you're talking about a few times and am coming back up again next year , where are you going after Japan , well keep posting john M/V Thunder smooth sailing

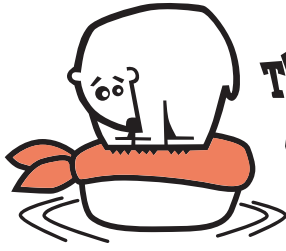
Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 13, 2009, 01:19 PM EST

John (M/V Thunder): The group has not focused on what happens after Japan.

I think we're all waiting for someone to suggest something that sounds fun. This has been a challenging trip, and getting more challenging by the day. We're having fun, but it isn't easy cruising. Japan will also have its challenges. We'll be arriving at the height of typhoon season, in a strange country, with a language we don't speak and navigational standards we don't know. I think we're waiting for someone to jump on the radio and say, "Let's go to []. They have calm seas, white sand beaches, restaurants and pubs on the beach, good wifi everywhere, and your cell phone works." Unfortunately, I'm not sure this perfect destination exists on this side of the world, or perhaps it does?

Realistically, I'm guessing we'll go to Taiwan, because our boats were made there, and it would be fun to see the factory. There's an Indonesia rally that might be worth considering. There's also some interest in heading into the south pacific.

Australia and New Zealand would probably be at the top of the list, but there are dog-entry problems, and we have Shelby. Once we have the boats safely to Japan we'll start thinking these thoughts. For now, it feels like bad luck. - Ken W



The Great Siberian Sushi Run

#28

Chapter 28: Atka - Visiting A Plane From The Past: July 14

- Total Distance: 5,276 nm
- Run so far: 2,938 nm
- Nautical Miles to go: 2,338 nm
- Tomorrow's goal: 0 nm

At 6:30am all three crews were on the bow, pulling anchor for our departure from Umnak.

Our planning discussions for this leg had been difficult. Our goal was Atka, 260 nm to the west. However, a storm was coming, and would arrive in just 48 hours. This would give us plenty of time for reaching Atka, but probably not our next destination, Adak. In other words, if we stop in Atka, we will be trapped in Atka, by the weather.

The unanimous preference, if we were going to be stuck somewhere waiting on weather, was to be at the docks in Adak. This would allow us to weather out the storm, safely tied to docks, rather than spending nights worrying about an anchor dragging.

Put simply, we could have an easy run to Adak, 360nm away, or stop for the night, two thirds of the way, at Atka Island, and then either be stuck at Atka, or risk being caught in rough seas when we do our next leg to Adak.

The GSSR has a simple guiding philosophy: we move when the weather is good, and sit still when it isn't.

The weather forecast called for 48 hours of southeast 15 knot winds, followed by a day of southeast 25 knot winds, then a day later becoming a west wind of 25 knots. We are moving west. So, for two days, we would have relatively light winds, behind us, followed by a day of fairly strong winds, once again behind us, followed by strong winds in front of us.



There are many factors to evaluate when looking at weather. Some of the important ones are: Wind Speed, Wind Direction, Fetch, Current, Swell Height, and Direction of the Swell. All of these need to be taken into account to really understand sea conditions. I've been in 50 knot winds that I hardly noticed, and 15 knot winds that had sea water over the bow hitting the pilot house.

Weather is a huge topic, and many books exist for those who really want to dig in, and it is a topic that can get boring fairly quickly. Thus I will give only a quick generalization. As a rule of thumb, if the wind is coming from behind you, you are in much better shape than if the wind is coming from in front of you. Personally, if the wind is behind me, and under 30 knots, I might worry about maneuvering in port, but the passage itself, and anchoring, are not concerns. On the other hand, if the wind is anywhere over 10 knots, and I'm going straight into it, I know that, at a minimum, it will be an uncomfortable ride.

For our run to Atka and Adak, the weather report was telling us that the winds would be behind us for the next three days. For the first two days we would have light winds behind us (15 knots) and on the last day they would strength to 25 knots, but stay behind us. It would make for a messy arrival, but otherwise it should be an acceptable run.

Here's the summary from a weather report we received while underway:

"...Based on the more favorable wind/sea pattern ... you may wish to consider continuing to track directly toward Adak Islands while the conditions are favorable. Stopping in Bechevin Bay (Atka) then continuing onward on Friday will tend to result in increasing SE-S winds that could be near/at Gale force by the

time you arrive, not to mention rain/rain showers and fog which will tend to lower visibility. ..."

The words 'Gale Force' are a real wake-up call.

All of this raises the question, "Why were we even discussing stopping at Atka, and how bad do we want to go there?"

Our goal was to find a B-24 Liberator that was wrecked there, in 1942. There are only three of the B-24 Liberators in existence today, one of which is in a museum, one of which is in tiny pieces, and the other is lying near a beach on Atka, rarely seen by human eyes.

Bill visited the plane a decade ago, and knew where to find it. He wanted to see how it had deteriorated over the years, and we also wanted to find it.

Ultimately, we decided "Let's just go for it, and if the weather turns nasty we'll just sit at anchor for a few days." We didn't want to miss out on seeing the plane. Plus, our experience has been that any forecast over about 24 hours, is subject to change. And, in the worst case, a few days sitting out a storm at anchor wouldn't be the end of the world. All of us have good faith in our anchoring gear, and would be just fine.

Our run to Atka lasted overnight, but was as smooth as it gets.

Here's a few pictures from the run...

Here's a look at Roberta driving the boat. On the right hand monitor is an engine room camera. Kirt was doing an engine room check, and we were spying on him.



Here's a look at Grey Pearl running alongside. The Internet on Sans Souci is still working perfectly (Mini Vsat). Every once in a while a call will come on the radio, "Sans Souci, this is Grey Pearl. We're going to sneak alongside to do our email." They need to come in fairly close to pick up our wifi signal. (top right image)

This is the Kasatochi volcano. I've got a wild story about it erupting last year that I'll include in my next blog. The volcano may not look too impressive in this photo, but keep in mind: This is post-eruption.



There is a 46' trawler, a Diesel Duck named 'DavidEllis,' which has been working its way from Hong Kong to Seattle. We've been tracking its position, as have they ours. We were to pass near each other overnight, and frequently called them on the radio, as well as zooming the radar out to 24 mile range. And, in fact, I know now that we did pass near each other, but we never saw them on the radar or had radio contact. Darn! They were recently in Japan, and we were looking forward to speaking with them.

As we were approaching our anchorage at Atka, Bill and I had a funny discussion...

I switched on the Sonar. Bill was running the boat at the time, and said "I don't need that. I've got everything I need to drive." This led to a debate over the merits of Sonar. My favorite line from the debate was when Bill said "This isn't a boat. It's a [bleep]-ing video game!" Bill was referring to Sans Souci's extensive collection of electronics, which can be intimidating, until you get used to everything.

It was a good natured discussion, the result of which was that I learned some new tricks.

Sonar allows you to look around, under the water. Physically, it is like a periscope that pokes out beneath the boat. I use it when entering unknown bays, to look

for rocks. I also use it underway, to look for uncharted shoals, and while at anchor to look for any rocks, or shallow spots, that might be within my swing circle.

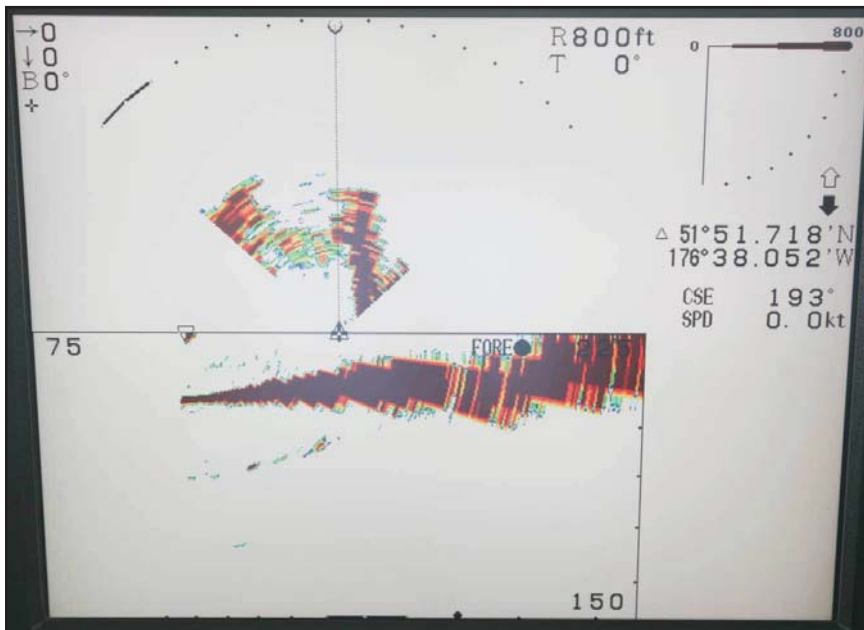
I said this to Bill, and asked him how he could possibly know that there aren't rocks ahead of us in the bay without Sonar. His answer, "I've been here before." I said that wasn't a valid response, because there are plenty of times we enter bays that we haven't been to before, and that the charts can't be relied on this far off the beaten path. His reply, "I use my depth finder." This made no sense, and I said so. "A depth finder only looks beneath the boat. What good does it do to discover a rock, if you're already on top of it."

just give the quick overview and those of you with boats, and good quality color depth finders (aka fish finders) can experiment at home. Bill had me manually set the range to much deeper than the water I was in, and then crank up the gain. The image for the bottom was replicated. This told Bill it was a hard bottom. A soft sand bottom, such as in the image above, would not have produced the second echo. He then showed how the color could be used to warn of an upcoming rock or shoal. A blue tint meant the depth was about to change. As you are moving forward, if you look beneath the thick line that indicates depth, you'll see some blue start to creep in. With enough experience, you learn that it is an indication of a shallow spot coming.

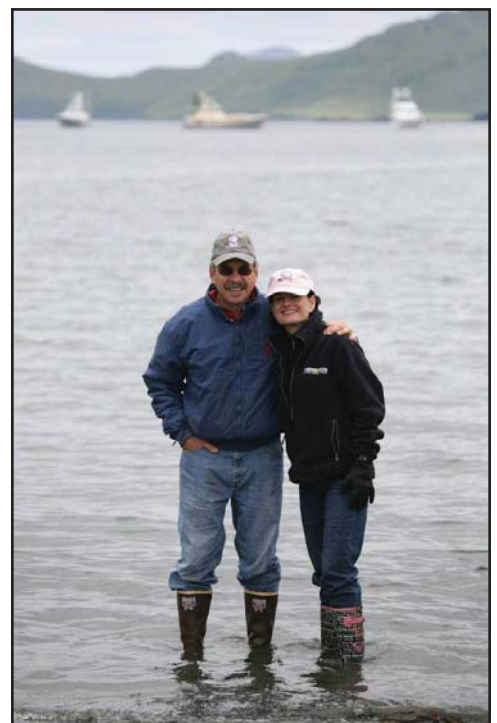
Overall, he didn't convince me, and I didn't convince him, but I definitely will be working to hone my depth sounder skills. There's more to it than I realized.

Anyway ... enough tech talk... now, on to the fun stuff...

Here you see the three boats, at anchor, and us tendering to shore.



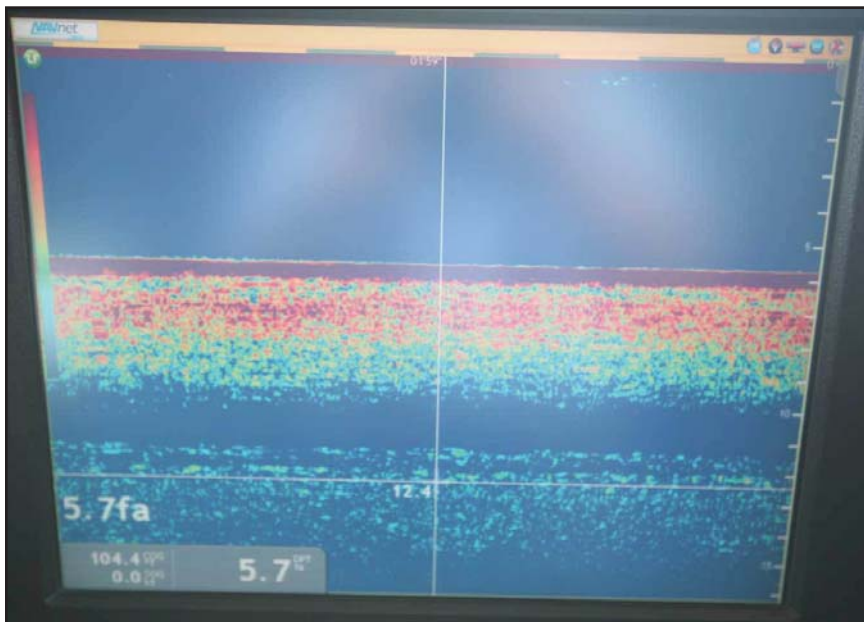
SONAR



Steven and Carol Argosy (Seabird)

Video: <http://tinyurl.com/y9tt7av>

Here's our first view of the plane, as we



DEPTH FINDER

This led to Bill conducting a class in 'Advanced Depth Finder' usage. I had always thought I understood depth finders, but Bill explained some pro-tips. I don't know that I quite understood all that Bill taught, so I'll



came over a tall bank. The plane is completely hidden from view from the water.

You can still see where the plane first struck the ground, and parts are scattered over about a 200 yard area. It says something about how isolated we are, that the parts are still where they were first scattered, sixty years after the incident. We did touch things, but were careful to put them back exactly where we retrieved them from.

Here's the strut and wheel. It appears that the plane separated from the wheel and came to rest about a hundred yards farther, where the tail broke off.



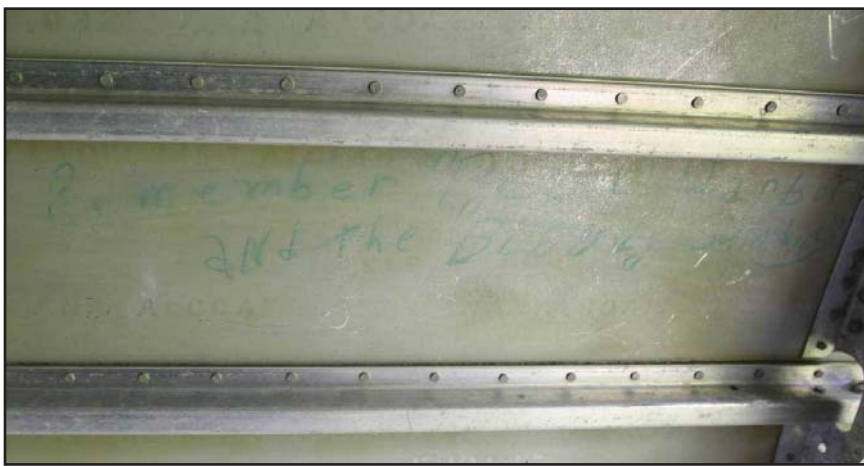
This is the tail section of the plane, upside down.



Here's a few shots of the graffiti inside the plane. Bill remembers much of it from when he was here many years ago, and believes most of it was written by the original crew.



My guess is that this hole in the side of the plane was cut by someone wanting to take some of the graffiti home to put on display.



There is one panel from the plane where visitors have been marking their initials, and when they visited. There haven't been many visitors. We thought about carving initials, and putting the date, but it seemed wrong. Bill knew some of the people who have their initials here. (top right)



Above is the Sans Souci crew (L to R - Jeff Sanson and Kirt Ahlquist of Pacific Yacht Management, Roberta Williams, Ken Williams, Shelby (Dog), Bill Harrington)



I looked under the plane, and the spare tire is still hanging there, looking brand new, sixty-five years after the crash. Bizarre. (bottom right)



moved, and their crew was still standing on the bow. A few minutes later, we heard on the VHF, "GSSR fleet, this is Grey Pearl. We have blown a hydraulic line and are trying to bring the anchor up by hand." Braun went on to explain that the hydraulic break was in a hard-to-reach place, and not easily fixed. He had made the decision to continue to Adak without making the repair. On his N62, there is a closed hydraulic system, used only for the thrusters and the windlass. If he could get the anchor off the bottom, his only other problem would be on arrival in Adak. Without thrusters, if we arrive in strong winds, docking will be 'interesting.'



Reindeer.

This is a strange looking fox. I've never seen one that looked like this before. It's also one of my favorite pictures ever. The fox was watching us from just outside his lair. (*top right*)

A fishing boat that dipped its nose into our anchorage, just at sunrise.



I couldn't imagine how Grey Pearl was going to get their anchor off the bottom by hand. I wanted to ask, but knew Grey Pearl had plenty on their plate, and it would be wrong to interrupt them. I've thought often about how Sans Souci would get our anchor off the bottom, if we were to lose a windless (the motor that pulls the chain up, and lifts the anchor from the bottom). Our anchor weighs 250 pounds, PLUS the weight of the chain, which is many times that. I do have a backup windlass, but both are powered by the same hydraulic system. In other words, if I lose my hydraulics, I'll have lost both windlasses, and in my case, I'll also lose my stabilizers, as well as all thrusters. There are valves I can



At 6:30am the next morning we started our 70 nm run to Adak. As usual, everyone was on the bow with their windlasses running by 6:29am, but at 6:30am when Sans Souci and Seabird were floating free, Grey Pearl hadn't

close (I think) which would allow me to isolate parts of the system, and get some functionality back, but I've never done any of this. The hydraulic system has been very reliable, on this, and on my Nordhavn 62. Hopefully my luck will continue.

While Braun was lifting his anchor by hand, I was trying to do circles in the bay. The wind had come up, and we were keeping busy just trying to make turns. Sans Souci has a fair amount of windage. We were seeing 25 knots and more of wind, inside the bay. Turning the boat, and doing circles was easy, kind of. It wasn't a huge bay, and we also had Seabird circling, plus Grey Pearl at anchor, and very limited visibility (due to the sea spray and rain.) Miraculously, we only circled for about 30 minutes before Grey Pearl was on the radio saying "GSSR Fleet, Grey Pearl is ready to go."

Our run from Atka Island, to Adak, was in the roughest seas we've seen so far, but because the wind was behind us, the boats hardly felt it. We were consistently over 20 knot winds, with long stretches over 25 knots, some 35 knots, and even some gusts touching 50. But, it was as smooth a trip as you could imagine. The bows weren't even pitching. If you watched the Atka video, you saw an example of our ride, and heard my comment on current. We were in strong current, that sometimes shot us forward, and other times held us back, but overall we made great time, and had a good ride. Approaching Adak we were a happy group of cruisers.

Once underway I was able to ask Braun about lifting his anchor. He explained that he had a custom made winch-handle, manufactured by the Argosy company. My windlass has a place in the top where you can insert an aluminum bar, for cranking up the windlass, but there is no leverage. Actually lifting the anchor would be impossible. Apparently, Braun thought ahead, and he and Steven (Argosy) custom fabricated a much longer handle, that would provide the leverage needed to crank up the anchor. A great idea! I wish I had one... All I have is the standard-issue popsicle stick that Nordhavn provides.

We had been warned, by Bill, that the docks in Adak are 'rustic.' Adak really has two places to tie up; a small boat harbor, which is well protected, and very nice, but with only enough space for about ten boats, and in bad need of dredging. Depths at the entrance are only about five feet at low tide. There was no way we could enter, and there was no space for us even if we could. The larger docks also had their issues. The pilings were badly in need of repair, and the ladders that you climb to reach the dock were falling apart. On a nice day, we could perhaps have found a decent place at the dock, but in a 25 knot wind, approaching the docks was dangerous and not happening.



We had received advance notification, from the harbor master, that one of us could tie up to a fuel barge that was tied to the docks. It would float up and down with the tide. This sounded great to me, and I tied to it. Grey Pearl entered next, and quickly ascertained that tying to the dock would be impossible.

I asked them to stand by while I sought permission for them to raft to two nearby tugs. Permission was granted and Braun worked some magic approaching the tug. In a few minutes he was tied up. Steven then rafted alongside Sans Souci, and we were happily tied up at Adak.



Although our boats were now docked, we still needed to figure how to get ourselves to shore. Between Sans Souci, and the dock is a big fuel barge. Transiting from Sans Souci to the fuel barge means stepping across a three foot gap, twenty feet above the water. Then crossing from the fuel barge, to a platform beneath the dock means stepping across a gap, also 20 feet above the water, which is sometimes only a foot across, and at other times six feet across. Here we see Steven yanking on a line, trying to bring the six hundred or so tons of Sans Souci, Seabird, and the fuel barge, closer to the dock, so he could step across. With high winds, this can be quite a struggle. Once across, you climb 10 feet up a ladder. This isn't too bad, until you remember that we usually are carrying Shelby, and a bag of trash. Cynthia from the Harbor Master's office brought us a bucket, making life much easier. Shelby likes her daily bucket rides...

We were assisted in tying up by several Adak residents who had come out just to welcome us to town. I asked one how often they see boats, other than commercial fishing boats, or military boats, come into Adak. He said that it used not to be very common, but was starting to be



And lastly...

I spent this afternoon playing with a new toy that is pretty cool! I used an underwater camera to check out the props on my boat, and on Seabirds. I have heard about these things in the past, but always thought they were a waste of money. A fisherman in Juneau convinced me I should give one a try, and I found one cheap on ebay. Depending on quality they cost anywhere from \$200 to \$1,000 new. The one I bought cost around \$400 on ebay, and probably double that new (the Atlantic AUW-5600.) It's a camera for seeing underwater. The camera hangs at the bottom of a cable, 200' long, that you can dangle under the water. Once under water, you can turn on lights on the camera, and have remote control over aiming the camera. After looking at our props, which were clean, we decided to experiment with dropping the camera all the way to the bottom, about 40 feet below. Wow! We had a crystal clear view, and watched fish swimming, found an old aluminum gang plank, and even a rotting old wooden boat. We were hoping to see some King Crabs wander by, or a Halibut, but, no luck. A very handy device!



much more frequent. "Usually," he said, "we see sail boats, headed east." I asked him to quantify how many yachts a year Adak sees. "Two," he guessed. Wow! We had achieved 150% of Adak's annual quota, just with our little group.

Cynthia, from the Harbormaster's office, invited us to a party in our honor, being held at the local high school. We couldn't believe the food they put together for us! It was wonderful, and creative. The local kids played drums for us, and we had a Q&A session. Very cool. We keep running into posters around town, including a brochure on the bulletin board at the local pub with bios for each of our boats.

I am deliberately saying nothing about Adak itself. This blog is already too long, and I want to give Adak plenty of attention.

Just to give you a teaser, Adak is the most unusual town I've ever been in, and I've been a lot of places. It's like a town plucked from somewhere deep in the twilight zone. By this I do not mean anything derogatory. I always say that the people ARE the town, and the people of Adak are incredible. I also say that it's not the cards, but how you play them. The people of Adak have been dealt some tough cards; some of the worst weather in the world, and a town that is eerie, that comes with a lot of unique challenges. Don't miss my next blog.

PS Some of you may have sneaked a peek at the weather, and realize that we're "stuck" waiting on weather. This is our first real weather delay since the trip began, and it is a big one. Our next major stop is the island of Kiska, 220nm west. To get there we would be fighting a 20 to 35 knot headwind all the way. I suspect we'll be here at least another four or five days, or longer. Oh well... this isn't a bad place to be stuck!



"Reader's Comments"

Posted by HAL on Jul 14, 2009, 03:55 AM EST

As usual, another fantastic entry! The images and photos of the plane really radiate the past. Just incredible! I wish I were with you, in person, rather than thousands of miles away and living vicariously through your entertaining and well written blog. Your trip is likely going to change my future. Watching you has indeed cemented my desire to travel by boat when retirement comes around. I have to assume you're paving the way for more who will follow.

I've been meaning to ask about "Animal Proofing" and your dog Shelby. When wandering around these islands, are there bears or others dangerous indigenous animals? What is your protection against the elements, on land? What if that adorable fox had thought Shelby looked like dinner? While it is clear a lot of thought has gone into this amazing trip, I'm curious about some of the details.

Posted by Don James on Jul 14, 2009, 05:49 AM EST

Capt. Williams: That "spare tire" you mention in your blog, is in fact one of the main landing gear tires. Military planes, especially "war birds", don't carry spare tires unless it is a cargo plane or for some unusual reason. The fox is a silver fox. As you explored the B-24, I hope you said a quick prayer and thank you to those who served and are serving in the military.

Posted by Curt C. on Jul 14, 2009, 08:00 AM EST

Ken: Not sure if you caught my question from the last blog post but when (if) you have a second I was very curious if you would say things are "more difficult", "less difficult" or "about as expected" thus far based on the extensive planning you guys did for this trip?

I see you mentioned you are using mini-vsats for your data connection. Glad to hear its working so good - I had corresponded with you back when you first starting building your new boat when Fleet 77 was about the best one could do and the BGAN/Fleet Broad Band stuff was about to be introduced. Curt C.

Posted by Hal at halwyman dot com on Jul 14, 2009, 09:33 AM EST

Congratulations on passing the half-way point, Ken. Someday I hope you can describe the process you had to go through to get visas for Russia and Japan.

Posted by Brad Friedrich on Jul 14, 2009, 10:35 AM EST

Ken- As always a fascinating read, it must be rewarding to be exploring so far off the beaten path. The people must be extraordinary to live in such an inhospitable place. Tech question- Overall how satisfied are you with your navigation software and e-charts?

Posted by Ron Rogers on Jul 14, 2009, 12:24 PM EST

www.tinyurl.com/yhnpzvy Answers the questions I had about this intentional crash landing. Below is an extract revealing that all survived:

"On 9 December (1942) Colonel Hart and Brigadier General William E. Lynd of General Buckner's staff, took off from Adak in a B-24 piloted by

Captain John Andrews. The two officers wished to accompany the weather plane to make personal observations from Kiska and Attu. The plane reached Attu, circled over Holtz Bay, and then returned to Adak. Arriving back at Adak at 1600, the pilot found his base socked in by weather. He notified the tower that he planned to fly to the far end of Atka Island and attempt a crash landing. Atka, too, was closed in, and the plane was crash-landed . . . There was only one casualty. General Lynd sustained a fractured collarbone and the crew members and Colonel Hart spent an uncomfortable night on the beach while the personnel of Eleventh Air Force Headquarters spent an uncomfortable night wondering what had happened to them. The next day, they were signed by a Navy PBV which landed and put a rubber boat ashore. The men had adequate food and were able to gather enough driftwood to build a fire, a difficult problem in the treeless Aleutians. The castaways were picked up on 11 December by the Navy seaplane tender USS Gillis, chilly and tired but otherwise unharmed." Ron Rogers

Posted by Ron Rogers on Jul 14, 2009, 12:55 PM EST

Ken, Weren't you going to tell us about two autopilot failures on the other boats? Ron

Posted by George Seivert on Jul 14, 2009, 01:12 PM EST

Ken the pictures from the B-24 are amazing, especially considering how long the plane has been sitting there. Reminds me of a P-38 they dug out of 270 feet of ice on Greenland years ago. BTW, there are a few more B-24 left than the 3 you quoted, check out <http://www.johnweeks.com/b24/> for more details.

My Grandfather was stationed in the Aleutians during WWII and would tell me of the bitter cold they experienced during night watches. He also stated it beat the hell out of storming beaches in Normandy or the South Pacific, which he just missed out on having to do. I wish he were still alive to hear the stories again and I had paid more attention to the details. Thanks again for letting us ride along. GEORGE.

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 14, 2009,

02:07 PM EST

A lot of questions today! For efficiency, I'll respond to everyone with one long email...

** First off, HAL... who asked who we keep animals from attacking Shelby. Our primary worry has been the eagles. There were eagles everywhere in southeast Alaska and Shelby would make a good meal. We've kept her on a short leash, and worried whenever she goes out on the boat deck through her dog door. We think she is fine, because the railing blocks an eagle from a direct attack, but who knows? Similarly, when we're hiking, such as on Atka, we worry about foxes. We've talked about leaving her on the boat, but our current thinking is to just keep her close, where we can grab her at any time. One nice thing is that the lack of trees make it tough for a fox to sneak up and grab her.

As to our advance planning for the trip, we did do a lot of planning over the year prior to the trip. If you look back at the old blogs you'll see all that we went through. We read every cruiser blog we could find, read books on the Aleutians, I met with cruisers who have been here, spoke with commercial fisherman who have been here, spoke with cruise ship captains who have been here, etc. And, after all that, we still felt it would be smart to have someone aboard who has been here before; Bill Harrington, a commercial fisherman. There's nothing like local knowledge.

*** Don James corrected me on the tire, that I thought was a spare, but was actually the original tire, folded up under the wing. Thank you Don. He also identified the cute little fox we saw, as a Silver Fox. Bill called it a Cross Fox. Unusual ears and eyes for a fox. Don also reminded us to thank all those in the military. Absolutely!

*** Curt C. asked if the trip thus far had been easier or tougher than predicted. Southeast Alaska was definitely easier, and much more fun than predicted. I've always said that I am a warm water guy, and would never go anywhere with cold water - but, SE Alaska was a blast, and I'd do it again. I now understand how people go back there year after year. From the Gulf of Alaska west, the trip has also been easier than expected. We've had great weather (until now), with calm seas, barely any rain, and no fog. This part of the trip though, I would not do again. I'm happy I did it, and it is a once in a lifetime experience, but once will almost certainly be enough. We're doing fine, but there is real potential for things to go wrong here.

*** Hal asked how we got our Russian and Japanese visas. For Japan, we haven't done anything. We have an agent in Japan who didn't think we needed anything special. I hope he is right! For Russia, we also have an agent, who I found when I spoke with a megayacht captain who was in Petropavlosk a couple years ago. Our Russian agent arranged everything we needed (an invite from a Russian travel agency), moorage, security, pilot boats (!) and more. We then obtained our visas from a local travel agency in Seattle. The whole process was horrendously expensive, and hopefully worthwhile. I'm still a bit nervous about Russia.

*** Brad asked about our nav software and charts. All of the boats are running Nobeltec, and we all love it (as far as I know). It has its quirks, but overall is a great piece of software, and it is handy we can so easily swap routes. Steven on Seabird has been fighting a strange problem. His charts keep disappearing, and need reinstalled, but otherwise, we've seen almost no bugs. The charts themselves, I am less happy with. There are no raster charts for this part of the world, or I don't know how to get them. I've been using the raster charts that come with Navnet for the islands. The vector charts, for the Aleutians, on Nobeltec are poor. Although, that said, Steven seems to have better charts than I do for the Aleutians. I need to upgrade my charts on Nobeltec. Perhaps I'll be happier after I do. A project for later today... It's a little tricky, because I deliberately didn't feed Internet

to the computer with Nobeltec, so that I could completely isolate my nav system. Thus applying the chart updates is a little more complicated. There is a way... and I'll figure it out (I hope).

*** Ron Rogers supplied 'the rest of the story' on the B-24. Thank you Ron! I can't imagine flying here in the Aleutians, in fog and bad weather. Incredible!

Ron also asked about the autopilot failures I referred to in an earlier message board posting. I forgot to mention those. I always think of several things I should have mentioned about 2 seconds after hitting the send button on each blog. During our last run to Adak, about half-way into the run, in a particularly confused sea, just entering a pass, both Roberta and I happened to be looking out the back window at Grey Pearl when she suddenly made a steep 90 degree turn. I called via VHF to ask if all was well, and they said the auto pilot misbehaved. My guess is that the boat somehow fell out of autopilot. They put it back into autopilot, and had no other problems. Bizarre. A few minutes later, Seabird did a 360! Steven says that it was deliberate, and it may well have been. We were in a rain shower at the time, and Steven says that with the strong sideways winds, and sprays of fresh water, it was a good time to give the boat a proper cleaning. Or, at least, that's his story, and he's sticking to it.

*** George corrected my assertion that only three B-24s exist, by giving this link: <http://www.johnweeks.com/b24/>. Here's the quote that confused me, taken from an article in the Alaska Daily News <http://tinyurl.com/yhrk5kq> "... Although there are earlier and later models out there, the Atka B-24D is one of only three of its kind left in the world, according to Spencer. One is on display at the U.S. Air Force Museum near Dayton, Ohio. The other, an assortment of its parts anyway, sits on a military base in Libya..." Thank you all! - Ken W

Posted by Ron Rogers on Jul 15, 2009, 10:44 AM EST

Ken, On charts: I assume you are thinking of downloading on one computer and burning a DVD to transfer to your navigation computer or use Ethernet cross-over. Hope that there are no un-

locking obstacles!

On autopilots: I assume that yours is slaved to your GPS compass either directly or through Nobeltec. Is anybody using a fluxgate compass? Supposedly the magnetic field is becoming weaker up there. I had Grey Pearl's experience when I passed over an iron ore deposit (that's what people think it is) on the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay. Since the International Rules say that the last thing that you do to avoid a collision is to turn to starboard, I'm wondering if that is a default built into most autopilots when their guidance fails.

On B24s: I think the confusion stems from overly precise diction. One reference says that there are over 100 B24s lying around the world. However, there may only be 3 "D" models intact.

On GPS: I'm wondering if like Norfolk and the sub base near Seattle (Yakima?) the Russians will interfere with the accuracy of the GPS signal for defense reasons as you get closer. You should be alert to that. One source that would know is the USCG as they sent a good will cutter on a visit to the very same port you are visiting. Bill could phone his friends. You will probably be met 12nm out by a patrol/pilot boat so won't have to worry about hitting a rock. Ron

Posted by Scott Evangelista on Jul 15, 2009, 11:59 AM EST

Ken, I read this and thought you, your crew, your fleet, and your faithful readers might enjoy on Whales. www.tinyurl.com/y1xb3gw

Posted by Mystery Fox on Jul 15, 2009, 04:55 PM EST

Google and Bing shall set you free! That dark fox just didn't look right to me. Once again a single photo taken by Ken has provoked the discovery of a little-known story of commerce and environmental impact. The whole story could be entitled "Unintended Consequences". www.tinyurl.com/yjno2on

That search also turned-up the solution to the mysterious disappearance of the submarine USS Grunion in early WWII. 1000 feet down, North of Kiska, that mystery is almost certainly solved. www.tinyurl.com/yhydu4z

Posted by Tom Roth on Jul 16, 2009, 02:02 AM EST

Hi All, I am really enjoying your trip. Thank you for that. Someone mentioned the autopilot and I thought of mine. This may not apply but when I head north I have to do 3 360 degree circles to somehow lock in the autopilot and, I think the chartplotter tosomething. Anyway, it makes them work when I go north, and you are north. Maybe unnecessary with your software. Tom

Posted by Unknown on Jul 16, 2009, 05:35 PM EST

I just noticed a listing on Nordhavns site for Dimma, N6209. I believe this is the former Sans Souci with a very interesting paint job. It seems to me it'll be a tough sell...www.tinyurl.com/yzl6xw6 - Sam

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 16, 2009, 06:44 PM EST

Sam: I've always said that diversity can be your best friend. My old boat, N6209, now called Dimma, might represent a good opportunity for the right buyer.

I have no inside info on this, but the odds are that the sellers have already heard from Nordhavn that the paintjob is an issue. Painting a boat

is expensive, but not difficult. It probably helps that the boat was recently painted. All of the trim will probably come off for painting simpler than if this was the first paint job. Repainting the boat means delay and money, which are fine if the price reflects it.

There are some very positive things that probably make the grief worthwhile.

- I spared no expense on Sans Souci. If something needed done, we did it, and if it didn't, we often still did it. I'm always paranoid about something failing at sea, and tend to overkill maintenance

- It appears that the current owner spared no expense in the care of Sans Souci. The pictures indicate the interior has been redone, and I suspect the equipment has been well maintained.

- There are some trick things that only my old boat has. For instance, mine was the only N62 with a passarelle. The hard top over the back deck is incredible. It has lights and speakers. The stern bustle was better made, and more attractive than most, with a stern thruster.

All of this said, I haven't been on the boat in over four years, and can only guess at how it has been treated since then. My best guess is "very well", but it's strictly a guess. Ken W

PS I'm looking out the window at breaking waves, and we're showing 30-50 knots of wind. It's dangerous to leave the pilot house. And, that's sitting here at the dock! - Ken W

Posted by Chuck on Jul 17, 2009, 06:19 PM EST

How did the broken hydraulic line on Grey Pearl get resolved? Did he have a spare? Why did it blow?

Posted by Ken Williams on Jul 17, 2009, 11:34 PM EST

Chuck asked about how the Grey Pearl was able to fix their broken hydraulic line... Adak has a machine shop, and the guy who runs it, Ray (aka Grumpy), is a friend of Bills. Ray was able to find a piece of hydraulic hose, and the needed fittings. If not for Ray, I still think we'd have been ok. Both Sans Souci and Sea-

bird, and probably as well as Grey Pearl, are carrying a good supply of extra hydraulic hose and fittings. Ray saved us digging through all our boats to try to come up with something suitable. - Ken W

Posted by The Col. on Sep 06, 2009, 11:10 AM EST

Hello Sir, Quick noted there are far more than just three B-24 left here is a link to all know World Wide B-24s www.tinyurl.com/yl3eml2 It's a tad dated but is correct

Posted by Ken Williams on Sep 06, 2009, 05:23 PM EST

The Col. Read through the comments below. You'll see that the question about "How many B-24s are there?" has already been answered. The quick answer is that I was confused by a newspaper article, which was referring to B-24 Liberators. -Ken W