

ing a destroyer during WWII did not prepare him for the petty nuances of sailing. Without a full crew to keep a vessel in order, Fred became commander, navigator "skivvie" and boiler room mechanic. Both admit that hardly a day went by without something going wrong.

Although Fred continued working on the boat until the very last minute, they finally set off from their private dock in Mitchell Bay, motoring all day to their first destination. Planning a counterclockwise circumnavigation, they headed for Newcastle Island near Nanimo, considered the jumping off place to cross the Strait of Georgia.

They were heading up Johnstone Strait, between the mainland and Vancouver Island, when the first problem struck. The water pump broke, so they fell back on sail power to reach harbor. Soon Peg found herself alone at the helm, sailing the boat in rough weather while Fred disappeared into the engine room trying to make a repair. Feeling very much alone, she couldn't wait for him to take over the helm. After more adventures, they were finally towed into Alert Bay.

Later, against the advice of the Canadian Coast Guard they headed out looking for winds from the north. Fred says, "Summer winds were supposed to come from the north but that year they didn't do that."

They entered the Pacific Ocean out of Port Hardy, sailing all day, stopping short of Cape Scott light station. The next day

they headed out in gale winds to make a run for it. They just rounded the cape when Fred noticed his transmission fluid was low, so they had to turn back.

At the next weather update the now familiar voice reported: "For the north coast of Vancouver Island — storm warning. Strong winds, 30 knots-plus are expected by late afternoon and will increase by tomorrow morning. And yet another of an unending series of southeast storms is on its way." This led them to stay ashore, enjoying a delightful four-hour lunch.

The following day, with winds down to force five, they got underway for Winter Harbor, doubling Cape Scott for the second time. As they sailed southward, the wind began increasing, so they doused the mainsail and proceeded under jib and mizzen. They fought force eight winds (34-40 knots) and increasing, all the way to San Josef Bay, and despite a challenging day in heavy seas, Peg sat up all night to make sure they didn't drag anchor. "It was an uncomfortable and harrowing night," she said.

"Another day, another problem," thought Fred as he put the engine in gear to discover there was no propulsion. With winds gusting to over 50 knots and an anchorage offering as little protection as Open Bay in a southwest storm, even trawlers with rigged stabilizers were rolling and pitching heavily. They endured a wild afternoon and night just trying to hang on

below decks.

The next day the hunt was on again for help and parts to make repairs. And so went their journey — eight knots forward — another "shake down" problem — and 10 knots back. Looking at the chart one bleary morning, Peg noted: "It took us 12 days to travel 11 miles from Port Hardy."

After lots more adventures in the open sea, they completed their last leg from Barclay Sound to Victoria, arriving just in time for the annual lamb barbecue. After spending the night, it was back to home port, their own sheltered dock in Mitchell Bay.

By the end of their 1,000-mile-plus circumnavigation, the Hoepfners knew they would be sharing many more cruising adventures. And sure enough, they travel any time they get the chance. They have cruised to Skagway, Alaska, twice, sailed the Queen Charlotte Islands and traveled the Columbia River. Now they are planning to fill in the gaps of places they've missed.

Peg is standing at the window looking at Mariana, tied to the end of their dock. Sunny skies and a gentle breeze are calling to her — she wants to go sailing. A sigh escapes her as she watches Fred carry another load of tools down to the boat. Just as the boat was nearly put back together after the winter-long refit, Fred embarked on a total rewire project. "If Fred can finish repairing the boat in time we will be lifting sails as soon as the weather changes," she says hopefully.