

Couldn't be better, but most unlikely to happen again

Sea to Sand. That's what it's like cruising up the Columbia River.

In June 1996, Peg and I were considering a cruise up the Columbia River so we contacted Linda and Leo Munson, who live in Richland and have voyaged between there and here many times in their 38-foot powerboat.

Linda is the daughter of long-time residents of Mitchell Bay, Mildred and John Freytag.

Leo said to wait until the river slows down a bit about mid-June. We waited one week, then two; river still too fast and full of debris. Leo then suggested that we call the Corps of Engineers, they should know the river's condition. Called the Corps and a nice young lady quickly responded to my question with, "The river is now running 4,385,000 cubic feet



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Columnist

per second."

Long pause. "Thank you, but I need to know the current rate," I replied.

Long pause again. She then suggested that I call the marine superintendent of Tidewater Barge Lines in Vancouver. His first question was, "How fast can you run?"

"Six knots."

"No way now. River is going down; call again in about 10 days."

Two weeks later he said,

"OK now, if you can get past buoy C-91 just below Bonneville Dam."

We departed Mitchell Bay on 21 July with daughter Carol and shaped a course for Port Angeles to pick up John Bailey. His mother, Jo, and Carl Nyberg were on hand to bid us a fair passage.

Took departure from Angeles Spit under power in heavy fog and 20 knots of head wind at 1525. Turned the corner at Cape Flattery at 0350 the next morning and headed south still in heavy fog. At eight bells, the fog lifted and 20 knots came in from the NW. We set all canvas for a broad reach until evening when the wind

pipled up to 25 knots. At this point, we dropped the main, and shortly thereafter the mizzen.

Noting that at our speed at a steady 7.5 knots under a 100 percent jib we would fetch the sea buoy about two hours before slack flood, we jibbed several times to slow us down. This is very important as serious breaking waves can form when the onshore wind meets the ebb current (river plus tidal).

With Clatsop Spit abeam to starboard, 100-foot fog set in, but with careful dead reckoning and radar we arrived safely at the West Basin Marina in Astoria at 0620.

Twenty-four hours from the cape to the river, with only minor course and sail changes. Couldn't be better, but most unlikely to happen again.

The Mitchell Bay Regatta July 8 had six intrepid sailors in some challenging weather. Most notable was that the fleet was composed of boats from a 14-foot Laser to a 40-foot ketch.

The first three of four races were sailed in fairly light

winds. The last race started under the same conditions, but then quickly changed as a force 5 wind came in from the southeast as the fleet raced from Mitchell Bay around Low Island off the county park.

Our salute goes to Jonathan Bryan, who at times showed his Laser's stern to most of the fleet.

Bill Van Skyhawk in Levi, a Cal 20, was top sailor on corrected time. Lloyd Bacon in Got-To-Run, also a Cal 20, was second. Howard Lewis in Liberty and this writer tied for third. The regular monthly meeting of the Friday Harbor Sailing Club followed the water event.

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The Pig War has never been settled, at least in the views of the Brentwood Bay Power Squadron and the Friday Harbor Power Squadron.

They have challenged each other for more than 20 years — fortunately, not with muskets, but with nearly as lethal games such as Bocce Ball, Pig Golf, 9-hole Frisbee Golf and Life Ring Toss.

The scores have been close to equal except for the past two years when the Canadians have prevailed. July 6, the Squadrons mustered a total of 20 boats and crews into the fray at the Port Browning marina in Canada to continue the war — and enjoy a nicely roasted store-bought pig.

— *On the Waterfront col-*

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