

October 3, 2002

Greetings from San Francisco. We arrived Saturday, September 28, after almost 8 days at sea. We are presently moored at Marina Village Boat Harbor in Alameda and are enjoying very much our stay in the area. It is a most lovely marina.

Here is a recap of our first leg from Bellingham to San Francisco. We departed Bellingham on Saturday, September 14. Spent our first night in Friday Harbor and then on Sunday sailed to Port Angeles. We waited there as one front passed by, spent a day getting the boat ready for sea, and then on Wednesday, September 18, pushed off to Neah Bay. Waited Thursday in Neah Bay as another front passed by.

On Friday, September 20, after the fog started to lift around 11 a.m., we finally set sail for San Francisco. The first day's passage mainly consisted of lots of swell, lumpy seas, and on and off motoring as there was very little wind. By evening we were about twenty-five miles off the coast from Cape Alava, Washington. That first night was very cold and damp.

The next two days were just gorgeous days sailing (only a little motoring) – mostly north wind 10 to 15 knots – with equally beautiful clear nights. By early Saturday evening we had passed into Oregon. By early Sunday evening we were off of Waldport, Oregon. We were making just excellent progress. If all continued to go as well, by Monday evening we would cross into California.

Monday started off just as glorious as the previous two days -- north wind 25 knots with 10 to 12 foot seas from the north. Then by early evening we got caught in a compressed pressure gradient (Phil calls it a "blue sky gale") with winds all of a sudden increasing to 30 to 40 to 45 knots – a total surprise to us as the NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts never forewarned us. For the next 36 hours we were hove-to – basically going nowhere – with 12 to 15 foot seas. So, instead of sailing or motoring into California like one usually does, we finally "drifted" into California early Tuesday evening due to the southerly current.

During Tuesday night the seas finally started to subside a little and the wind blew just 30 knots.

So, at first light Wednesday with just our trisail up we started to run out of the compressed pressure gradient in which we had been trapped. Within a couple of hours we were once again sailing with 20-knot winds from the north. By late afternoon seas were totally calm and then by late evening we were once again motoring due to lack of wind. Wow – from feast to famine so quickly! Believe it or not, we continued to motor for the next 2 ½ days into San Francisco due to lack of wind.

We anchored Friday night in Drake's Bay just north of San Francisco so that we could make our entrance into San Francisco on Saturday during daylight hours. We timed it so that we arrived just underneath the Golden Gate Bridge at 12 noon. What a most beautiful day it was to come into San Francisco – no fog – just glorious blue sky. Simply amazing – and amazing, too, that there was no wind in San Francisco Bay. It was wonderful to be in San Francisco and to fulfill a dream of going underneath the Golden Gate Bridge – and to finally get a good night's sleep.



Like all passages there are always little things that need to be fixed or repaired before we head on down to Ventura, many of the repairs stemming from our time being hove-to. Present plan is to push off from San Francisco either Tuesday, October 8, or Wednesday, October 9, (depending on weather) sailing non-stop to Ventura. This next passage should be around three days.

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