

El Salvador to Canada via Hawaii on *Chantey V* Daragh Nagle



Ring in the New Year of 2016 was a quiet event for my wife Catherine and me in the Immigration line up at Mexico City Airport. Sure, the dings and chirps of incoming celebratory texts and emails broke the tedium, but most people focussed on shuffling forward and not missing their turn with the Customs man. Our flight from Canada had a plane change here for our final destination of San Salvador. *Chantey V* was on a mooring in the Bahia del Sol, El Salvador, while the 2015 Hurricane season passed by. Santos Marine had taken good care of the boat for the previous seven months with regular bottom cleaning, as well as a cockpit teak sole replacement that had turned out very well.

Boat Woes

Our Perkins 4-108 started immediately but a slight change in the sound after a few minutes turned out to be due to overheating. Upon investigation the raw water pump impeller had failed – not too surprising after 600 service hours and the extended lay-up. The spare impeller installed easily enough but there was still a significant drip of raw water from the shaft seal. Fortunately Bill from the local El Salvador Rally organization had a spare seal and installed it very efficiently. When checking the house batteries I noticed that the normal clearance above them seemed to have disappeared. Further investigation revealed that the floor of the battery compartment had swollen upwards about 3 inches. The mystery was



Turlough, Joaquin, Cathy and Daragh at Sucitoto

solved when I discovered that there were steel punchings used as levelling ballast below the floor. These had been infiltrated by spilled battery acid over the years and were now expanding. I removed all this, cleaned it and then reinstalled it, soaking it in fibre glass resin to stabilize it. I found some marine plywood and glassed this over top to reinstate the floor. Finally we were now ready to leave for the trip north to Puerto Madero, Mexico. We were joined by fellow Irishman Turlough Cott, who had flown in from his winter home in Antigua for the passage. Turlough has sailed with us in the past including a trip from Isla Mujeres, Mexico to Havana, Cuba, back in 2014. We might have been ready to go but the Bar crossing was not – the lowish tides in effect combined with some large offshore based swells had created short steep waves on the bar that were impassable. After waiting a couple of days on standby for an opening we gave up and decided to do an inland trip to the old Colonial town of Sucitoto. This is situated on the old Camino Royale trail and was a delightful diversion for a few days stay-

ing at the Los Almendros Hotel.

Back to Mexico

Sure enough the conditions had moderated when we got back to the boat and we were able to set out on the double overnighter to Puerto Madero, Mexico. Winds were light out of the north so it was a motor sail most of the way. *Chantey V*'s systems all worked well after the layup and it was a pleasant reintroduction to life back aboard. 41 hours later found us entering the familiar Marina Chiapas which was much more developed from our previous stay on the trip down the Pacific coast in 2012. The staff here spoke excellent English and helpfully gave us a ride to officialdom in Puerto Madero to complete Immigration formalities. Mexico very generously allows 10 year Temporary Importation of foreign boats, so our permit from 2011 was still valid.

Gulf of Tehuantepec

We began to look at the weather forecasts for the next leg of the trip which involved crossing the notorious Gulf of Tehuantepec. Huatulco is about 250 NM to the North and winds frequently blow in excess of 40 kts for weeks at a time. Over the years I have come to rely on Grib files – certainly for the initial assessment of potential weather win-



dows for passages. The following week-end looked promising and we tentatively planned our transit. We discussed our plan with the locals and were advised to expect a lot of fishing boat traffic that would be leaving at the same time having been penned in for the last week or so. Turlough became ill and was unable to stay on for the passage. It turned out to be an excellent crossing allowing us to sail directly on the rhumb line and avoid the prudent but tedious “one foot on the shore” route that most sailors use. We were surprised out of the blue on the second day to be approached by 3 rough looking fishermen in a small panga looking for water. This is not uncommon except that we were 80 miles offshore in all directions. The concern is that it might be a ruse often used by pirates to assess a boat for potential robbery. It turned out that they were quite sincere and we were happy to give them our lunch and a few beers along with a few gallons of water, which they gratefully accepted. We arrived at Marina Chacue, Huatulco in the early morning with a total of 48 hours for the passage.

Huatulco is a very enjoyable Mexican town and attracts both international and Mexican tourists. The Marina is a Mexican Government operation and quite well maintained with a variety of restaurants and the usual fishing and diving outfits based there. I found a supplier of solar panels there and decided to double my array from 180 to 380 watts. I was always a little underpowered and now that I had decided to sail back to Canada via Hawaii I knew the increase in capacity would be very helpful. It was a little difficult to source the related cables and parts but one week later it was complete. It has made a huge difference and has resulted in much reduced need to run our engine for battery charging.

Our next destination was Acapulco some 250 NM to the north. Once again we could not leave due to weather conditions; in this instance the harbour access was closed by the Coastguard due to the fierce conditions raging on the Gulf of Tehuantepec. After a couple of days we appealed to the authorities for an exemption based on the fact that we were northbound and a following wind in the 30 kts range was well within the capability of ourselves and our boat. They agreed and we set out next morning. It was pretty rough for the first half a day but conditions eased and we had a very peaceful sail arriving at the classy Club de Yates, Acapulco for a total of 50 hours for the passage. This is a reciprocal club to our Royal Victoria Yacht Club and we were granted temporary membership cards along with a free day of moorage. It is very well appointed facility with an excellent restaurant and we really enjoyed a little luxury Mexican style. Acapulco itself is a large city dominated by American tourists and much of their culture has migrated there as well.

Wedding bells in Zihuatanejo

Much refreshed we set out for Zihuatanejo a mere 120 NM to the north. This distance was more our style and we were pleased to drop anchor next day in the beautiful crescent shaped bay. This is our favourite Mexican town and a place we are sure to return to again in the future (by plane of course). It is stunningly picturesque and is an ideal size, large enough to have affordable international flights service yet small enough to have retained that delightful Mexican charm. The beach dinghy landing is very manageable, especially as the boat boys wade out to assist and watch your boat for the day for a modest “*propina*” of a couple of dollars. We are now encountering sailing cruisers from our previous visit and recognized boat names on the morning VHF “net”. So it came that we were invited to the beach wedding of Canadian cruising friends Kirk and Charlene of *SV Freedom Kirkland*.

We carried on up the Mexican coastline with anchorage stops at Los Hades and Enseada Carrizal en route to the lagoon at Barra de Navidad, which is a popular destination for cruisers. The entrance channel here can be tricky owing to silting and irregular, if any, dredging. Once in though, it is a very secure anchorage providing much appreciated relief from the Pacific swells. A highlight here is the daily visits of the French Baker with fresh baguettes and pastries delivered right to the boats. The Lagoon is also well served by the local water taxis, making it easy to stay out late for dinner if desired. This contrasts with the challenges of making beach dinghy landings in the surf that is characteristic of cruising Pacific Mexico.

After a pleasant few days here we sailed on up to Tenecatita and dropped our anchor close to the white sand beach and our Alaskan friends John and Nikki on *SV Seychelles*. This was a reunion after 4 years and there were many stories to exchange over the next week. We did a couple of day trips to the nearby town of La Manzanilla for provisioning and also got a new cooling fan installed on my navigation laptop. We monitored the weather daily in hopes of getting a fair sailing wind to take us to La Cruz in Banderas Bay. The prevailing wind is out of the North and this season was no exception. After a week here we had to settle for wind abatement such that we could at least motor sail the 120 NM distance. We made a pleasant anchor stop at Chamela to wait out the afternoon blow and swam ashore for a visit and dinner. The beach seafood restaurant very kindly gave us a ride back to the boat in their panga afterwards. The engine got a good workout on this passage as we pushed into a strong headwind and seas. We cleared the notorious Cabo Corrientes at dawn, which is the ideal timing to minimise the rough seas here. The course change allowed us sail the rest of the trip and we arrived into the La Cruz Marina just before noon.

More boat woes

I noticed more fluid than normal under the engine bilge which turned out to be diesel fuel. This was traced to a leak at the fuel injection pump and, although the engine was running perfectly, the fix required the pump to be rebuilt. We asked advice on the morning cruisers net and by the end of the day we had located a pump rebuilding shop as well as a diesel mechanic to do the removal and reinstallation. We had planned to spend a week in the Banderas Bay area anyway so the timing of this setback was good at least. La Cruz is another favourite for us with a good selection of restaurants

with live music most nights of the week. We made several day trips into nearby Puerto Vallarta and also to visit friends who live in the surfing town of Sayulita to the north. After 10 days here, it was time to press on to Mazatlan, where our friend Kelly Campbell flew in to spend a week on the boat with us. Once again, the prevailing northerly wind meant a lot of motor sailing to get there. The engine was running fine after the pump rebuild, thank goodness. We stayed at the fancy El Cid Marina and Resort, which is on the north side of Old Mazatlan. We had a great time here, swimming most days while sampling the luxury resort lifestyle. It got a bit noisy as it was Easter week (*Santa Semana*) which is celebrated very enthusiastically all over Mexico. We made a day trip with the boat to Stone Island, a very beautiful white beach on the south side of Mazatlan. We anchored here for a day of swimming and relaxing. We had some great meals in Old Mazatlan and this is another city worthy of a return visit in the future.

Sea of Cortez

Our next destination was Topolobampo in the Sea of Cortez, some 220 NM to the north. We got a good sailing wind for a change and averaged over 6 ½ knots all the way. We docked at the Marina Palmira, which is a secure and well run facility. Our plan was to visit the Copper Canyon, which is an all day “El Chepe” train ride into the mountains. The scenery was spectacular as the train wound its way 8,500 ft up the mountain, finally stopping at the frontier-style town of Creel. We stayed one night here and the next day took a bus to the Mirador Hotel, which is perched on the edge of the Copper Canyon itself. We rode the Gondola across the canyon, which was a truly amazing experience. Even though this Canyon is 4 times larger than the Grand Canyon, not many people have even heard of it. It was a long slow trip back on the train but at least there was a dining car serving tolerable food and wine to pass the time after dark.



El Chepe to Copper Canyon

and we set out the next day for Isla Carmen on the Baja California side. When we arrived we were delighted to see our friends Bill and Michelle on *MV Adagio* and we anchored nearby. We had a lovely day touring the abandoned salt ponds, with the rusting remains of machinery frozen in time. We went snorkelling in the belly of a shipwreck in the bay and marvelled at the sea life making their home in it. We finished the day with a delicious shrimp dinner on board *MV Adagio*. Michelle took a nice picture of us which eventually made the front cover of this summer's Moody Compass magazine!

Next morning we bade adieu to Bill and Michelle and made the short trip to Puerto Escondido. This is another very sheltered bay much in favour with the cruising community. We recognized some familiar names on the morning radio net and soon were visiting with friends Dick and Anne of *SV Full and Bye* whom we had not seen for 4 years. We did a day trip to Loreto, which is a very charming town about 20 miles to the north. We experienced our first rain in 3 months here and stayed an extra day to wait for better weather before heading south. It was good to be able to sail again now that the northerly winds were always favourable. Our next destination was La Paz, with overnight anchor stops at San Evaristo and San Francisco Bay on the way. We buddy-boated with our friends Doug and Lynn on *SV Miramar* for part of the passage and were able to exchange photos of each other's boats under full sail, with the Sea of Cortez in the background. Making good time, we arrived at the Palmar Boatyard late afternoon Sunday and tied up beside the hoist for a lift out next morning.

While here we had the bottom faired, painted and exchanged our fixed prop for our feathering Kiwi prop in preparation for the upcoming passage to Hawaii. I noticed some play in our cutlass bearing and the folks at Palmar installed a new one very efficiently with the prop shaft still in place. This is a good boatyard and we relaunched 3 days later as scheduled. We moved on to the Marina Palmira and enjoyed a dinner out with Doug and Lynn in La Paz. I had the standing rigging checked and tuned, again to be well prepared for the 3 week passage to Hawaii. La Paz is very popular with the cruising community and here are many resources to support them here. English is very prevalent and it's easy to see why so many cruisers “swallow the anchor” here and make this their permanent home.

We were now ready to move around the tip of the Baja Peninsula to San José del Cabo, where we planned our provi-



Cathy and Daragh on *Chantey V* in the Sea of Cortez



sioning and crew change for the 2,500 NM Hawaii trip. We made overnight stops at Los Muertos and Los Frailes along the way and met up with our musical cruiser friends Chris and Liz on *SV Espiritu*. On our last night we had a BBQ on the beach with a sing a long and jam session. The water is perfectly clear here and wonderful for snorkelling.

We found a good slip at the San José del Cabo Marina and were joined by John Duggan ICC and Al Kitchen BCA, both of whom had flown in to Mexico for the voyage to Hawaii. Catherine treated the boys to a fine meal at the Tequila Restaurant and wished us all a “*Buen Viaje*” as she sensibly headed for the airport to Westjet her way back to our home in Victoria, British Columbia. Job one for the new crew was to provision for the 21 (or more?) day trip to Hilo, Hawaii. It took two trips to the supermarket plus side trips to stock up on water. Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was pasted on the water record-keeping book as a grim reminder of what running out looked like. Amazingly we found places to store all the food, with the aft cabin doubling as a “*bodega*” for the fruit and veg. in baskets. We departed heavily laden for a mini shakedown cruise to Cabo san Lucas - and of course the final night out on land for a long time to come. We had an excellent meal at the Brazilian restaurant La Maderia, along with enough wine to sooth any lingering doubts about the voyage at hand. John Duggan takes up the narrative here having generously taken on the additional role of ship’s scribe for the voyage.

Mexico to Hawaii

Daragh and I had not set eyes on each other since leaving school some four and a half decades ago. We had emigrated to opposite ends of the earth but made contact again through the modern miracle of Facebook, when Daragh was already on his epic circumnavigation (almost) of the North American continent, from his base in Victoria, British Columbia. Rash promises were made over a dinner in Portugal, resulting in my joining him in November 2014 for a brisk passage from Bermuda to St Martin, aboard the good ship *Chantey V*. This went so well that, when Daragh mentioned that he was planning a passage from Mexico to Hawaii, en route to Victoria, I eagerly put myself forward.

So it was that I found myself in late April 2016 alighting at San José del Cabo airport, on the southern tip of Baja California, the big peninsula that droops down the west coast of Mexico. *Chantey V* was safely moored in the secure hurricane-proof marina, its big and solid pontoons a reproach to the pathetic lollipop sticks that we so often suffer in Europe. Here I met Daragh’s wife Catherine, his valiant crew for much of his ambitious itinerary; Catherine was not staying aboard for the trip to Hawaii and we were joined by Al Kitchen, also from Victoria and a veteran of several lengthy passages in the Pacific. We enjoyed a pleasant if hectic few days, sorting out pre-departure bits and pieces and getting our mind around the challenge of victualling and stowage for a three week passage. The many excellent restaurants in the area were a welcome distraction but, after a final steak dinner in the bustling tourism and game fishing town of Cabo San Lucas, we set off on Saturday 30th April into a surprisingly chilly north westerly force 4-5.

On passage

Progress was slow for the first few days and no-one was feeling particularly chirpy in the lumpy conditions, with the prospect of some 2500 miles still to go. Nonetheless, all meals were prepared, served and eaten – in my own case, thanks to Stugeron, despite its usual side effects of dry mouth, cold and drowsiness. The current, which had been setting us south and even a little east, started to become more cooperative, as did the wind, which settled into something more or less out of the north.

Unaffected by the conditions were the other members of the dramatis personae, Otto the Autopilot, Helga the Hydrovane and Waldo the (Walder) boom brake, all of which were to give sterling service in the coming weeks. Other valuable onboard technology included the ham radio, which repaid Daragh’s attentions with regular and useful weather forecasts, and the InReach Delorme tracker, a great low-cost solution to the challenge of keeping the folks at home informed of progress, while also allowing short messages to be sent and received by satellite.

One piece of kit which had been jettisoned since my previous voyage was the water maker, which was no longer rewarding the expense and effort lavished on it, so strict water rationing was enforced throughout the voyage – two litres per person for personal consumption and hygiene, plus four litres per day for cooking and general use.



It doesn't sound like much but, with extensive use of sea water for washing, boiling spuds etc, we got by surprisingly well, although this opinion may not have been shared by anyone meeting us before we hit the showers in Hawaii.

By Thursday, we passed our first virtual milestone, as the GPS counted us down past 2000 miles to go and the first chinks started to appear in the skipper's hitherto ironbound rules about liquor on board, a celebratory tot following the solitary glass of wine with dinner. To be fair, this austere regime also provided for a beer or cocktail in Captain's Hour at 16.00, accompanied by whatever snacks resulted from inspiration in the galley. Despite the challenging limits on fridge, freezer and general stowage, we enjoyed a great variety of meals and nibbles, taking advantage of the excellent tomatoes, avocados, limes, chillies etc available in Mexico, and we had little repetition throughout the three weeks of the voyage.

Emergency!

By Friday, the wind started to pick up again from the north and we put in two reefs in the main and some rolls in the Genoa, to make life easier for Helga, who was saving a valuable two amps compared with the autopilot, while steering well in the messy 2 metre sea. The wind died down overnight but the seas were still all over the place and in the light of day, we discovered the lower shrouds slack and the babystay hanging on by only a few strands. The mast was wobbling distressingly so we rolled up the Genoa while working out a plan. Daragh was hauled aloft to put a strop around the roots of the lower spreader, from which an old main halyard was led to a block at the stemhead and back to a Genoa winch. This got the mast back in column but the babystay was in sad condition, with signs of corrosion around the upper swage. The rigging is only five years old but, to be fair, has seen many thousands of miles in that time, and it seems that the shorter stays are the most likely to let go, as they have less capacity to absorb shock than the longer ones. Much communication followed over the coming days, to make sure a replacement stay was available to meet us in Hawaii.

The rigging drama was followed by a failure of the boom vang - a reminder of the need for constant checking of everything on a long voyage - but this was quickly sorted out. The skipper's brochure had portrayed weeks on end of sunshine, following seas and steady trade winds but the reality was rather different. Overcast skies were the rule rather than the exception and the wind frequently went around to the north, even with a bit of west, while big weather systems away to the north of us sent vigorous swells to mix with our trade wind wave pattern. We were glad to have the protection of the full enclosure of the Moody's centre cockpit when being swept by 30 knot squalls laden with rain. When we arrived in Hawaii, we met 2 sailors who had been sailing pretty much in parallel with us during our voyage and whose autopilot had failed after 3 days; steering by hand for three weeks in an unprotected cockpit, their relationship had become, let us say, strained and, once again, we gave thanks for the assistance of Helga and Otto, each of whom proved their worth in making our voyage relatively painless.



Daragh jury rigs mast

When the sun did appear, however, we had some glorious days of sailing and at night we had spectacular views of the Milky Way, planets Saturn and Mars, and the Southern Cross wheeling majestically over the southern horizon. We had all this very much to ourselves and we saw astonishingly little sign of life on the voyage - a few dolphins, some pretty white birds which followed us for a week, and some suicidal flying fish thudding into the hull at night. We saw a solitary vessel, a container ship en route to Taiwan, whose captain exchanged pleasantries with us and gave us a useful weather forecast.

Despite limited freezer space, we had enough fresh meat to do us for the voyage and it was fortunate that we were not dependent on fishing for our survival. Days of trailing lures of various shapes and sizes resulted in a solitary Mahi Mahi, which did provide delicious *ceviche* during Captain's Hour and tasty fried fillets for dinner. I was secretly pleased that we didn't catch more, as my conviction that we should be able to confront the reality of catching and killing our food does not stand up very well in practice to the reality of extinguishing the life of a beautiful creature.

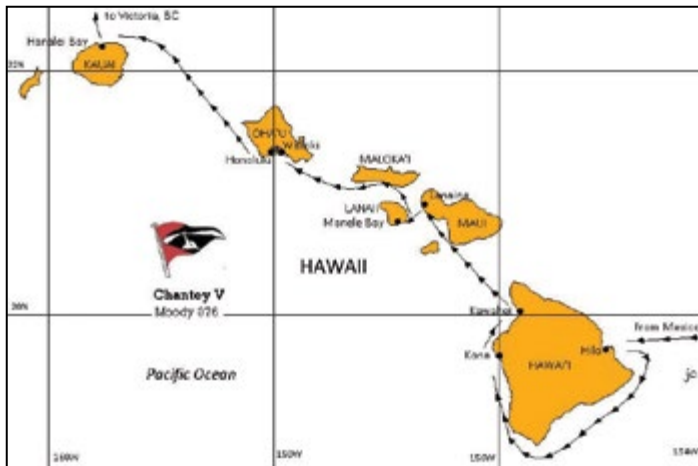
Managing battery power became an obsession, especially after discovering a dead cell in one of the batteries, which drastically reduced our storage capacity. Despite attempts to desulphate it, we never got back to full capacity so the engine got more of a workout than we anticipated. Fortunately, the wind kept up to a respectable velocity and we found ourselves running either with main and cruising chute or with poled out Genoa and storm jib. The latter doesn't sound like much but it actually pushed us along a decent rate close to hull speed with a well balanced helm.

Our last full day was one of the best, with bright sunshine, easy seas and a fine 18 knot breeze. Overnight, though, the weather closed in and we got our first sight of Hawaii when only some five miles out. We were under some pressure

to get a move on, as we had learned that US Customs at Hilo close at 1400 on Saturdays and we didn't fancy spending the weekend on a mooring until Monday morning. All worked out for the best, however, as we squeaked in before the deadline and helpful Agent Foss from Homeland Security picked us up in his paddy wagon, saving us a long trek around the container terminal to get to the Customs Office. Formalities were completed fairly easily and we were soon free to enjoy a long anticipated shower and sample the very good choice of restaurants in the faded tropical charm of Hilo.

The Hawaiian Islands

(Daragh resumes the narrative): We were now stern tied in Radio Bay, Hilo, some 21 days after the departure from Cabo san Lucas, Mexico. I reluctantly bade farewell to John and Al, and prepared the boat for the return of Catherine with my daughter Kim. Radio Bay is a rather rough and ready container port but gave us our first access to these amazing volcanic islands. We visited Volcanoes National Park and the active Kilauea Caldera, which regularly spews steam and molten lava over The Big Island of Hawaii. We also traversed a lava tube, which is actually an enormous long cave that once contained smoldering magma. Very spooky, but also very cool to see! The next day we plunked our shade umbrella down at Hapuna Beach, noted in the guide book as the #1 beach in the USA. We travelled inland afterwards and the sun was setting as we arrived at the top of Mona Kea Observatory, the highest volcanic mountain in the world at 33,000 feet from the ocean floor to the summit! The icy cold air hit us with a blast and apparently it was snowing at the summit a short distance above!



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It was now time to sail north up the leeward coast of Hawaii towards Kona. Unfortunately, we hooked two very large rusty anchors as we lifted ours from the bay and spent the next hour extricating ourselves from the jumble of chain and rode. Next day we made a brief stop at Captain Cook Bay (Kealahou), to pay respects at the monument to the great mariner and take a dip in the ocean before heading

for Kona. At last we arrived at the Hono-huhau Harbour which presented a rather impractical Tahiti -moor system of docking at the marina. Kim bravely 'volunteered' to swim out and lasso the forward mooring ball, which had neither pick up line or eye, and hook it over the bow. As a reward we treated her to the Kailua Kona Village Resort Hotel for a pleasant dinner and view over lovely Kona Harbour.



Lahaina dinghy surfing

Trade winds in the channels

A few days later we set off early for Nishimura Bay to get in position to cross the notorious Alenuihaha Channel to



Maui. Unbeknownst to us, a cauldron of trade winds was brewing under the shadow of the Mona Kea volcano. As we sailed north the whitecaps started to break over the seas and suddenly the wind forecast of 15-20 knots climbed to 30-35 knots. With the wind on the nose combined with adverse current we were barely making 2 knots and things were getting ugly quickly. I made a call into the harbour master at Kawaihae container port and we made a quick about face and tucked into the sheltered harbour to wait out the fierce trade wind. We monitored the wind speeds all evening, finally seeing some moderation after midnight. At 01.30 we slipped out in the dark and continued another 12 hours across the channel, with high winds and following seas, sailing all the way to lovely Lahaina.

Marvellous Maui

Lahaina is an old whaling village turned into a tourist Mecca. But it somehow it has retained its mellow ambiance whilst accommodating its many visiting surfers. We got a Lahaina Yacht Club mooring ball on the way in and braved

the fierce surf in our dinghy to tie up near the enormous Banyan tree that sends dappled light over a shady central courtyard. The small Lahaina harbor is very centrally located for touring the town. It was now time to check in with Stacie, Carlos and the friendly folks at the Lahaina Yacht Club. This famous Yacht Club sits right on the edge of the boardwalk overlooking the bay, but due to heavy surge has no slips attached - just a handful of moorings in the bay. The atmosphere inside however is a bustling hive of activity as the kids plunge into the surf and swim out to catch their tiny O'pen BIC sailing dinghies. After a shower we were ready to go explore. First up was Fleetwood's bar and restaurant, named for Mick Fleetwood and his famous band. The music was rockin' and the view from the rooftop patio breathtaking. At dusk the bagpipes play as the sun sets and the music echoes into the evening.

A tour of Maui along the hair-raising winding Hana Highway brought us to Hookipa Bay. Suddenly the rocks began to creep along the beach. It was a pod of 'Honu' turtles, basking in the sun and enjoying the occasional swim in the sea. Kim was on her way homeward so we ended the day at Wailuku's, The Mill House, an old sugar plantation with a magnificent vista of evergreen peaks and the valley beyond, before saying fond farewells at the airport. A few days later sister Teresa, Ted and nephew Sean arrived at Kannipali Beach for some overdue rest and relaxation Hawaiian style.

Lanai and Molokai Islands

Early next morning we set sail for Lanai, a small dormant volcanic island off the coast of Maui. The trade winds were up as the day unfolded, but we entered the tiny, sheltered harbour of Manele Bay and tied to the dock, luckily scoring the only empty slip nearby. We spent the day in Lanai City, a quaint village really, started by the Dole Company. This entire island was, up until recently, an enormous pineapple plantation. The industry eventually could not be supported as the cost of labour rose and relocated to other countries. Mr. Dole gave all his employees the opportunity to retrain in the new tourist industry and the result has been an overwhelming success for Lanai. A short walk from the marina is the scenic Hulopoe surf beach and the very grand Four Seasons Hotel, which we checked out briefly but skipped the \$30 lunch. Surf was definitely 'up' with a wicked undertow so a swim was out of the question. Next stop Molokai.

Molokai is a sleepy, lozenge-shaped island noted for being an isolated Leper colony during the American colonization period. It was a sad chapter in the lives of those individuals who were banished and lived there, including Father Damien, who was only this year canonized as a Hawaiian saint by Pope Francis. One of the most interesting gastronomic finds is the prevalence of SPAM. Hawaii residents consume the most of this canned meat per capita in the entire USA. In fact there is a whole festival called Spam-Jam dedicated to everything SPAM! The passage between these islands can be rather boisterous, with steady winds of 25 knots plus, and big seas as the afternoon trade winds pick up. After a 9 hour ride at 6-7 knots we finally spotted the prominent headland of Diamond Head looming in the distance, and sailed briskly into Mamala Bay, Oahu.

Waikiki on Oahu

The imposing vista of skyscrapers off Waikiki was a welcome sight as we dropped sail and headed into the calm waters of the Ala Wai Boat Harbour. We checked in with the Waikiki Yacht Club and a day later we moved to a quiet slip at the Ala Wai Marina on X Dock with all of Waikiki as a backdrop. We spent a few days on the inevitable boat repairs, laundry, cleaning and provisioning for the new crew, while awaiting the arrival of our pals Michelle and Patrick from Canada. Waikiki is a vast menagerie of deluxe resorts, hotels, restaurants, high-end shopping centres and fine sand beaches, visited by a host of nationalities. Japanese come to tie the knot along with a plethora of Pacific Rim countries. Hawaii is a harmonious blend of many peoples, including the native Hawaiians, Polynesians, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Portuguese and Italians. With Patrick and Michelle alongside, we played tourists and enjoyed drinks poolside, lounging by the lagoon, swimming, and boogie-boarding in the surf at Waikiki Beach. Music abounds everywhere and we even danced on the beach at the famous Duke's Bar to a live band. Our friends stayed at the Ilikai Resort Hotel. Once the grandest resort on Waikiki, it has hosted the likes of Debbie Reynolds, Elvis Presley, and President Kennedy in the 60s, and a myriad of stars such as Michael Jackson and Beyoncé in recent years.

The Ali Wai Marina is enormous and proved to be a good place to catch up on some boat maintenance. Art Nelson stitched up the sails, Rich McCreedy tuned the rigging and local cruisers Dave and Sarah fixed a pesky window leak over our navigation station. Surfing is big here and I learned to ride the waves with a lesson at one of the many beach surfboard rental outfits. A tour of the island of Oahu led us past the incredible scenery of the west shore with soaring, lush mountain peaks and wild blue-green waters with crashing surf beaches. The north shore brought us to the elegant Turtle Bay Resort for luncheon and more dramatic scenery. The week flew by and before long we were saying '*Mahalo*' at the airport and planning for the next crew change and the long journey home. *Chantey V* is in top shape but Hurricane Celia and Darby reminded us who's boss when it came to departure dates.

Hawaii to Canada

Royal Victoria Yacht Club and Turkey Head Sailing Association sailors Gerry Morrison and Paul Jenkins flew in to Honolulu to join *Chantey V* for the voyage to Kauai and onwards to Victoria, BC. We again bid adieu to Catherine, who still prefers to go to weather by jet. We allowed a few days to take in the sights, provision for the three weeks or more voyage and get familiar with the boat. The weather picture was looking uncertain with a succession of tropical lows coming from Mexico every week.

Hurricane season already!

Darby, now diminished to a Tropical Storm, did in fact pass by Waikiki so we delayed departure to Kauai for 2 days. This allowed for a little more socializing at Hawaii and Waikiki Yacht Clubs and a visit to the Sunday music session on the beach at Dukes. A fierce squall hit while we were there and flooded the stage, which had to be abandoned. We sought refuge in the grandeur of the nearby Moana Surf rider Hotel and waited for the torrential downpour to end. The water was up to the doors on cars on the taxi ride home.

Next morning we were thrilled to see our RVYC Vic-Maui competitor *SV Westerly* on the Hawaii Yacht Club docks. We dinghied over for a visit and Lance and Clay gave us a tour and related the highlights of their record breaking race. We finished the provisioning with the fruit and vegetable run and were under way for Kauai by noon. We stopped for fuel at the Ko Olina marina and carried on the overnigher to Hanalei Bay. By following closely behind *TS Darby*, we got a rare south wind to start with. It reverted to the usual easterly trade winds by next morning, which carried us the rest of the way.

Hanalei Bay is as beautiful as advertised and we anchored in the crystal clear water. This was ideal for our next task which was to dive and clean the hull in readiness for the big trip home. Next we dinghied ashore and found dinner at the Calypso Grill in this delightful little town. We went ashore again next morning with plans to rent a car for the day but alas none were available. We resorted to touring the East coast down to Lihue by bus, which turned out to be just as good - and a lot cheaper. We discovered another Dukes bar on the water in Lihue and the Happy Hour was up to their usual high standard complete with a live band. It was a full day and the light was fading as we launched back into the surf from the beach. Next stop...Victoria!

We settled into our 3 on 6 off watch rotation in strong trade-winds and rough seas. By nightfall we had 3 reefs in the main and 50% of the Genoa rolled up and were still exceeding 8 knots at times. Pretty uncomfortable though, so we eased west to improve the ride and be kinder to the boat...we had a long way to go. Three days out our batteries needed recharging so we ran the engine for one watch. This slowed us a lot, as we couldn't run it with an extreme heel angle, and had to bear off.

Gerry and Paul are both excellent sailors with lots of racing experience and kept the sails trimmed optimally at all times. Initially hand steering was in vogue but after a couple of days...we deployed "Helga" our trusty Hydrovane self steering and it did well in the strong wind. "Otto" our Raymarine autopilot did an even better job when the going got really rough in big quartering seas, never missing a beat. Cooking was difficult with the heeling and constant lurching but hunger is a great motivator in the galley. The conditions improved after the first five days and the cuisine improved accordingly. Seven days out we were approaching the Pacific Northern High and we pondered our tactics to get around it. We got great shore support from Connie and Al, our BCA Fleet coordinators, who kept a watchful eye on us the entire trip. We also had success downloading weather and Grib files from Ham radio station KL7EDK in Fairbanks, Alaska as well as NOAA Radiofaxes from Point Reyes, California on our SSB radio. At this point we noticed some stitching failures in our Genoa at the leech. We dropped the sail and the sewing bee was on. The sun had been getting through the UV cover and damaged the thread. Gerry sewed it up handily and 2 hours later it was flying again.

That pesky high

Winds continued to ease and day 8 had us flying our Spinnaker. We gradually curved ENE around the high trying to stay in wind. We got too close once and had to run the engine to hunt for wind, and gave the batteries a much needed boost. We downloaded the latest weather daily and the high kept moving east with us and blocking our path. Going north over the top would add hundreds of miles without any guarantee of conditions being better when we got there; not to mention the potential encounter with a nasty low sweeping down from Alaska.

So we learned to be patient and stayed on our planned route. With only 4 days worth of fuel left we needed to preserve this for crossing the centre of the high when we finally got to it. The high persisted, tracking eastward and finally formed a ridge almost touching Vancouver Island. By now many of the returning Vic-Maui race boats were getting close to us but we did not sight any. We tried our luck fishing in the calm periods without any success. We were probably too far north for tuna and 7 Kts is trolling too fast for salmon. The final week had us changing sails and trim regularly. We set up our storm jib in anticipation of gale force winds off the BC coast.

One morning Paul heard a bolt fall from our boom vang and saved it from going over the side. The need for daily rig inspection on long passages was confirmed once again. Finally the wind dropped completely and we motored for 2 days across the centre of the high. Twelve hours later we were shortening sail down to 3 reefs again along with the storm jib. This proved to be too slow



Chantey V arrives at RVYC

so up went the Genoa again. The gale took a day to transit followed by the wind dying abruptly over the Swiftsure bank and we were motoring again. Next morning we were in thick fog at the Juan de Fuca strait entrance fighting a 2 knot adverse current. By 1100 hours the tide had changed and soon we were motor sailing fast to get to Race Passage before it turned again.

We were delighted to encounter the spectacle of the RMYC Wednesday night racing fleet as we sailed into Cadboro Bay, Victoria, where our families and friends were waiting to greet us. We had sailed the 2,800 NM from Hawaii in 20 1/2 days which was better than our most optimistic estimate. The total for the 2016 season from El Salvador to Victoria was 7,858 NM in just under nine months.

This concluded the *Chantey V* Pan American cruise that began here in Victoria on August 1st, 2011 just over 5 years ago. We have sailed close to 25,000 NM, visited over 30 countries and were joined by 33 friends and family along the way. Our Moody 376 has proven to be a fine offshore capable yacht with a good balance of live aboard comfort and sailing speed. Overall it has been a wonderful experience and the best part is the realization that our home in Victoria BC is the best place in all of the Americas.