

History of the Little Current Cruisers Net

Part 2 2009 - 2010

The 2009 season started with a Winter Cruisers' Net Party at the home of Germaine and Terry Hyatt in Punta Gorda, Florida. For many years, they had spent their summers cruising the waters of the North Channel aboard their beautiful sailboat, BLUE HERON. It is sold now, but they never lost their love for the North Channel and the boaters who cruise there. In total, 39 boaters from home ports in Ontario, the northern U.S. and Florida attended to take part in what we hope was the first of many Winter Cruisers' Net get-togethers. We are returning to the Punta Gorda area this winter (2010) and the Hyatt's have already volunteered to host Party 2011. The date is yet to be decided and I'll post it in a future email this winter.

The 2009 year started slowly due to the decrease in the number of boats cruising our area. After two weeks, the number of call-ins totaled over one hundred less than the previous year. **BUT**, by season's end on August 31, a new record had been set with 5,846 calls being recorded from 1,003 individual boats. The record number of calls in one morning occurred on August 2 when 161 boats called in. Thank goodness there were a number of people present to help record the names and locations.

In 2009, with donations from the Anchor Inn, The Little Current Yacht Club and many of the area boaters I had enough money to purchase over \$1,400 in new equipment. The major expense was a new commercial radio costing over \$800. Boaters immediately noticed the improvement in the distance the signal reached and the clarity of the transmission. Unfortunately, it does not improve reception and another new feature was added. With the increased range, we reach more distant areas so when we ask for boats to call in, the areas are broken down into very specific segments starting from the east on even numbered days and the west on odd numbered days. In addition to the new radio, desk microphone, fan, and other equipment, I was able to purchase two high quality SWR meters which can test VHF, SSB and HAM radio operations for boaters. Also, I now have a portable VHF antenna with 20 feet of coax to help diagnose more difficult problems. This is a free service, and if you would like your radio tested, please call in next summer and I'll be happy to test your equipment.

At first, I only gave out home number to boaters we personally met and who asked for a contact for aging parents or family and friends who might need to get in touch with them. This offer has never been abused and now anyone, even if we haven't met, is given permission to leave our personal number with family, friends or your business. Speaking of giving out our phone number, this summer I returned home to have my wife inform me that a gentleman had called and asked if I would contact a new boat just cruising our area for the first time. I asked, "If he's new to this area, how did the man ever get our number?" My wife said "He phoned the Coast Guard and they told him the best contact was a man named Roy and here's his number." So instead of making you phone the Coast Guard ☺, here is our phone number **705-368-2148**.

There have been numerous changes over the years. In the beginning, my broadcast was a page to a page and a half in length. Now, the broadcast runs 6 - 8 pages. From the tiny office under the

stairs, I now broadcast from a beautiful spacious 2nd floor conference room, generously donated each summer by the Anchor Inn for the use of the Cruisers Net. We have air conditioning, windows overlooking the harbour, lots of seating for visitors and an entire wall showcasing 72 burgees donated to the Net by visiting boaters from around the world.

2010 started with a superb January evening at the Canadian Safe Boating Council's Annual Awards Banquet in Toronto. They presented seven awards to recipients from across Canada. The "Top Marine Rescue" went to a man from British Columbia, the "Top Boating Professional" went to a man from the North West Territories, the "Top Company Involved in Environmental Cleanup" was from New Brunswick. I had the unbelievable honour of receiving the "Top Volunteer Dedicated to Safe Boating". An award which never would have been even considered without the extremely generous nominations from listeners to the Cruisers Net.

Two parties were held this summer. The first was held on Sunday, July 25th. For the first time, we coordinated with the Great Lakes Cruising Club whose members were on their way to a Wilderness Rendezvous two days later. Together with listeners to the Cruisers Net, we had a great turnout as 117 people from 54 boats filled the new pavilion area. There was an excellent morning presentation by Jeff and Suzie Parker of Idyll Time describing their adventures climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and their trek to Base Camp 1 on Mount Everest. In the afternoon, we hosted a Garden tour of my wife's beautiful flower gardens. In the evening at a pot-luck supper, GLCC Commodore J.E. Fordyce presented the club's prestigious Honorary Membership Awards to Dr. Jack Bailey, for his years of dedicated work as GLCC fleet surgeon and myself, for my work with the Cruisers Net. It was indeed an honour for the two of us to receive these awards from an organization of which we both think so highly. The famous GLCC Log Book and Harbor Reports contain over 1,200 separate reports of decades of detailed observations by members, who have personally visited the areas, anchorages, harbors or waterways described in the individual reports. The reports are considered indispensable to anyone doing any serious cruising in any of the Great Lakes. The evening concluded with door prizes awarded by Turners of Little Current, The Anchor Inn and the Little Current Yacht Club.

Two days later, Don and Lois Babson, who were just passing through our area aboard the yacht Que Sera Sera, very kindly gave a presentation describing their sailing journey around the world. This was our first evening presentation in the new LCYC club room and there was standing room only to hear their very entertaining presentation.

The second party was held on August 20. The town generously offered two nights dockage for the price of one to help celebrate the occasion of a new record - the 6,000th caller this season to the Net. Another great turnout, started the night before with Bill Caesar giving another of his excellent presentations, this time on the Lighthouses of Manitoulin with an update on the proposed reconstruction for next summer of the original lighthouse of the Port of Little Current - 1864. In the morning, thanks to volunteer drivers, we experienced a tour of the rainbow trout farm operated by Coldwater Fisheries on LaCloche Island, Tom Geggie of Mystic and Doug Gates of Sound of Silence gave a wonderful presentation on their Favourite Anchorages in the North Channel. At 5 pm, talented Sudbury musician Barry Hamilton, skipper of CHECKMATE II, entertained us at the pavilion. This was followed by a pot luck supper and once again door

prizes donated by the Anchor Inn, and the Little Current Yacht Club. The evening closed with the draw for the boaters who would be designated callers number 6,000. Leslie and Peter Terry of the sailboat CARANDY were the recipients of the gift from Turners and the title of Callin #6,000. I was very moved by a further presentation by Jib and Debbie of a beautiful and unique Turner's gift in recognition of my work with the Cruisers Net.

We also hosted six Cruisers' Net Happy Hours at the Anchor Inn on Fridays from 3pm-5pm with an average of 30+ boaters showing up for great fellowship and free hors d'oeuvres compliments of Kelly O'Hare co-owner of the Inn and manager of the restaurant.

This year, another one day record was set when on July 27th, calls were recorded from 164 boats. Thankfully there were a number of boaters in the broadcast room that day to help record the calls.

Speaking of helping, I am very grateful to, Annie Westlund, David Naples, Margaret Van Camp, Lori Wells, and Tom Geggie who assisted doing the broadcasts when I was unable to be present. Thanks to their assistance not a day was missed and the Cruisers Net was on the air every morning throughout July and August. In addition, each morning it was such a pleasure to have boaters drop in to listen to the broadcast and volunteer to help out by recording the names of the boats calling in. Without their help it is virtually impossible to receive, talk and also record the calls

I also wish to thank the callers who each day forwarded RELAYS to the Net when we were unable to receive the caller. This has really helped boaters in the far west and east of our coverage area who can hear the broadcast but we could hear them.

In closing, I look forward to your safe return next summer, renewing friendships and making new ones

Statistics for	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
First Day Check-ins	1	2	20	42	35	27
Last Day Check-ins	16	26	24	53	47	46
Average Daily # of Calls	16	33	56	76	91	101
Season's total calls	1024	2043	3450	4708	5,846	6,284
Distinct Boats Calling In	342	532	742	825	1,003	894
Record calls in one day	?	?	?	?	161	164