



Thursday, July 25, 1985 O&E

(B.F. 10C, 16C*, R.W.G.-4C) **8C

Gulf Islands, B.C., is haven for sea lovers

GULF ISLANDS, British Columbia — There are eagles and cormorants, seals raising their shining heads out of the sea and killer whales standing by in unexpected places, but in the end it is the seagulls that tie the Gulf Islands together.

The seagulls are there when your ferry or pleasure boat follows a slack tide from the Strait of Georgia into the warmer waters of the islands. They circle your boat in the sunset waters of a small bay or cove their way in a wing of sound above the wharfs and waterfront shops of a funky little island town.

Ferries sail several times a day from the mainland of British Columbia, near the city of Vancouver, to the Gulf Islands, which hug the coast of Vancouver Island two hours away. There are also regular ferries from the mainland of Washington state, near the city of Seattle, to the San Juan Islands, which are separated from the Gulf Islands only by an invisible border of water.

The people of both cities use their island groups for fishing, sailing and cottage colonies, and to pleasure themselves on a summer day. They also take regular ferries from either the U.S. or Canada, through the islands, to the city of Victoria on the tip of Vancouver Island.

I consider this northwest Pacific coast to be one of the most beautiful settings in the world — humped green-free islands rising out of the sea in a glory of beautiful mountains. There is always a skyline of water vessels on the horizon: sailboats, motor boats, ferries, tugboats hauling log booms, fishing boats pulling salmon out of the sea, container ships, anything that floats.

THE MAP will tell you that this body of water is the Strait of Georgia, but the people who live on or around it call it "the gulf." I have



This skipper enjoys the sun and sea as he sails out of Vancouver Harbour to the Gulf Islands.

sailed across the gulf dozens of times on the ferry that winds through the Gulf Islands to Vancouver Island, but this time I was lucky enough to sail with friends who know how to raise a jib, sail wing-on-wing across a glorious sea or share a gin and tonic at sunset.

It was a wet chilly morning run from the Vancouver Rowing Club, in the heart of downtown Vancouver, past Point Grey and Point Atkinson (where a whale was stranded on the beach this morning) and across the twenty miles of strait to Porlier Pass, which runs between Galliano and Valdez Islands.

There are five passages into the Gulf Islands: Porlier Pass, Active Pass, Gabriola Passage, Boundary Pass and Dodd's Narrows.

WE WENT through the passage on slack tide at 2:30 in the afternoon, past a few fishermen waiting for the

salmon to follow us. As soon as we were through the pass we could see that the rain was gone; it is always sunnier here in the islands. The warm air polished the sea, and whipped cream clouds hung heavy above us.

There are hundreds of tiny little bays like this, where a sailboat can drop anchor and hide from the world. There are also easily identified red government wharfs open to the public in many of the popular docking areas in the Gulf Islands. There are cottages clinging to almost every island shore, but the ferry services only the main islands: Pender, Mayne, Galliano, Saturna and Salt Spring Island.

Salt Spring is probably the most populated and well known of all these islands on the Canadian side of the U.S.-Canada border. Artists, island lovers and retirees live in the

houses clinging to cliffs over the beaches, each house built with its own glorious view.

THE TOWN of Ganges, on Salt Spring Island, is a popular stopping place for boaters in search of arts and crafts or a little island shopping. This is the place to stock up on groceries, buy wine or spirits from the local liquor store, or have dinner in one of the many tiny seaside restaurants that dot the island.

It is also a good place to find a house for the summer. Real estate agencies seem to be the most popular commercial establishments in town. Many an islander has stopped for dinner and stayed there for the rest of his life, although the ferry trip to either the mainland or to Vancouver Island can be a nuisance if you want to go into the city to dinner and the theater.

There will be a lot of tourists and sailors in British Columbia and here on the islands in 1986, when Canada hosts EXPO 86 in Vancouver. That world fair coincides with the hundredth birthday of the city of Vancouver and of Canada's transcontinental railway lines.

There were three other boats and a flurry of seagulls in Glenhurst Passage, a cove of bay where we anchored for the night at the end of a long arm of water. Cottages could be seen through the trees, clinging to the rocky edges of the islands. A ferry made a silhouette against the crimson sunset sky. And the seagulls settled down a few feet from our hull to share dinner with us.

THE SEAGULLS have been amusing sailors for a long time in these waters. They were certainly here when the Spanish sailors nosed through what is now the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the sixteenth century, and when captains Cook and Van-



Photo/Micky Jones



Ships stacked up in the Vancouver Rowing Club's part of Vancouver Harbour. A Canadian Goose calls one dock home. She happily hatches her eggs in a life preserver.

cover named many of these tree-mounded islands in the eighteenth century.

Early in the morning, when the sky was trying to make up its mind what to do, the VHF marine radio crackled through the sound of birds to report the weather and the hazards to shipping. This water world is a new experience for Great Lakes sailors, who must learn the tides and currents, and where to find the thousands of unmarked rocks and shoals hidden by high tide.

There is something very special about the smell of bacon and eggs rising from the galley, especially when the ocean is lapping up and down a seaweek-covered shoreline in a bowl of green trees and water.

For more information on Canada, contact the Canadian Government Office of Tourism, 1900 First Federal Building, 1001 Woodward, Detroit 48226 or by telephone 963-8686.

Michigan vacation cost up 5.9%

The average cost of a Michigan summer vacation for a family of four rose 5.9 percent from last year's cost to \$150 per day, according to AAA Michigan.

The cost is based on a family of two adults and two children who eat three restaurant meals a day, stay in a hotel or motel and travel 300 miles daily by car.

This year's suggested budget allows \$72 for meals, \$57 for lodging and \$21 for 300 miles of travel. The cost of meals excludes tips, cocktails and snacks.

VACATIONERS should expect to spend seven cents per mile for gas, oil and car maintenance. Fuel expenses are based on a car averaging 23 miles per gallon.

Lodging at Michigan's 503 AAA-approved establishments averages \$57 per night for a two-person/two-bed room. That price includes an av-

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erage of \$5 per night for each child. But some properties waive charges for children under a specified age.

This summer's state vacation budget is up more than \$8 from last year, but is \$14 below the nationwide average vacation budget. AAA's national survey shows vacation costs for a family of four to be \$164 per day — \$143 for meals and lodging, plus \$21 for car travel.

The survey also shows meals and lodging may cost 30 percent less in small towns and rural locations, and

80 percent more in large metropolitan areas and at resorts in season.

The vacation budget does not include road tolls, souvenirs, entertainment and recreation costs and emergency funds.

TRAVELERS CAN reduce costs significantly by camping and eating at fast-food restaurants, picnicking or having the main meal at midday to take advantage of lower lunch prices.

State park campers pay an average of \$8 daily for a site in Michigan with electricity — \$1 more than last year. Rustic site fees at state forest campgrounds range from \$1 to \$4. The average cost for a campsite at a private park is about \$9.50.

Call in your results: Observer 591-2312 Eccentric 644-1101

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 Fort Malden
 Fort Malden was established at Amherstburg in 1796. British troops from the war took part in the War of 1812 and the Rebellion of 1837. Today, Fort Malden National Historic Park includes an original barracks, remains of the earthworks, and two exhibit buildings. The park is open daily from 10:00 to 5:00.