

Fetching the Blue Rocket

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Image: The Blue Rocket.

My husband, Kennard, affectionately calls our old truck the Blue Rocket because it can go faster than 8 knots, the speed at which he is used to travelling on the *Moody Blue*. Today is our first trip across Johnstone Strait to Kelsey Bay, and the reason for our trip is to fetch the Blue Rocket from Port Hardy and bring it back to Kelsey Bay, our closest point to British Columbia's highway system.

Whether or not to include the truck in our new life was one of the many issues we pondered before setting out. What is a realistic carbon footprint? How much can we reduce our fossil fuel consumption? What are our current needs? Where will we keep a truck since our home has no road access? These questions and many more were considered, before we finally made our decision.

I have been fortunate to attend talks given by Guy Dauncey twice over the past few years. He is a very inspirational speaker who not only frankly addresses the current human crises, but also provides a number of potential solutions to these crises. He speaks to the need for “transition”, the way by which we get from a fossil fuel dependent society to one based on clean renewable energy. His research suggests that we have enough fossil fuel remaining to help assist us in our transition to a new energy regime. Ultimately, my thoughts regarding the truck kept coming back to this concept of transition – that to end our fossil fuel “addiction” by going “cold turkey” was not the best approach. We decided that we needed the truck to aid in our “transition”, as it would provide us access to goods and services while we were still setting up our homestead and before we had achieved a level of self-sufficiency. Fortunately, the truck, like us, is getting a little older, and the idea of leaving it parked, often for several weeks at a time, in the public parking at the Kelsey Bay harbour was not one that we had any trouble with. The old truck wasn’t worth much to steal, and didn’t have enough get-up-and-go to give anyone much of a joy ride!

Logistics! I have quickly learned the meaning of this word as it applies to getting things to remote locations. How do we get the truck down to Kelsey Bay while the two of us are busy herding a “fleet” of boats down to Port Neville? This indeed was a challenge. Thankfully, good friends assisted us by driving our truck down to the Prince Rupert ferry terminal at a pre-arranged time and date. For a charge, the BC Ferries employees loaded the truck onto the ferry, and then unloaded it in Port Hardy at the end of the ferry trip. However, there the truck sat as we tried to figure out how to get from Port Neville to Port Hardy. The ferry terminal had very restricted hours during which we could pick up the truck, which was being kept in a locked compound. While crossing Johnstone Strait with the *Moody Blue* was not particularly difficult, getting from Kelsey Bay to Port Hardy turned out to be a challenge! The only bus service available not only didn’t stop in Kelsey Bay (the closest stop was 11 km away), it arrived in Port Hardy long after the ferry terminal was closed for the day. After much phoning around, we finally found a taxi company that would take us from Kelsey Bay to Port Hardy.

After carefully arranging taxi times with ferry terminal times with crossing times, the weather conspired to upset my careful planning with an unexpected gale force wind. Our second attempt was more successful, although we had some lumpy seas, and after a 4 am departure from our home in Port Neville, we finally saw the Blue Rocket again in Port Hardy at 1 pm. Logistics! I am learning the challenges of what it means to live in a remote place! The old truck had a special

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surprise for us – a bottle of wine from our friends to celebrate our success! A second surprise was also in store for us – although we expected to pay a hefty parking charge for leaving the truck in the ferry terminal compound for 4 days, the BC Ferries' employee on duty that day happily waived the fee, saying that since they hadn't been open for much of that time, we obviously couldn't have gotten our truck anyways. It always feels so wonderful to know that there are good people out there!

We filled the truck with groceries and various and sundry other items, and headed back to Kelsey Bay. What a day!