

Winter Solstice

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Image: “The Snow Queen” – a print from the original painting by Emily Balivet, 2012.

Winter solstice has passed, Christmas has been enjoyed, and here we are ... we’ve gained a whole

entire minute of daylight!

As usual, our life seems to be moving along, often quicker than we realize. Coming into the shortest day of the year, we were starting to feel the impacts on our solar panels and the amount of charge we were getting to our battery system. Since I'd managed to get some contract work, and this required a bit of computer time, which further impacted our battery capacity, we decided it was time to add a second battery bank to our system.

Four 6 V golf cart batteries, and \$1500 later, our electrical system is much improved. Even this late in the year, if we get a sunny day, we can fully charge both battery banks. Having separate banks also gives us better control over our electrical consumption by limiting certain devices to only one battery bank or the other. Greater storage potential also allows us to continue to scheme about further auxiliary energy sources (microhydro or wind). So the dream continues ...

Our neighborhood has been in flux this year. The couple who were renting the Hansen house up at Ransom Point left early this year, resulting in a real social vacuum in the Inlet – the Hansen house was always the neighborhood gathering place – it was large and was accessible by the public wharf. Now the remainder of us have been struggling to find new patterns. Taking the *Awen* on a snowy boat ride to the mouth of the Inlet, we gathered together at a home opposite Ransom Point on Christmas day for an enjoyable gathering – tasty food, great discussions, and a warm wood stove. A little different from a snowy sleigh ride, but what the heck!

Going further up the Inlet, we are starting to find friends around Fulmore Lake and Jackson Bay. As an aid to this process of exploration, we received a wonderful solstice gift – a friend drove his excavator down our logging road, ripping out 15 years of overgrowth (some alder trees were 30 feet tall) and recovering the old road bed. Now we have a serviceable gravel road that links us to Port Neville Main and ends only 500 feet above the house. A little more road building at this end, and we will be able to travel the roads at our pleasure. Likely, we will get an old beater truck to use on the logging roads. This will make it much easier for us to visit our neighbors, both east and west.

As I sit here typing, Ken is busy working on our water system. The weather turned to freezing a few days ago, and we got snow yesterday. Of course, the water line into our house has frozen (it is almost impossible to keep the lines under the house thawed when in is below freezing). But worse, our grey water drain line has also frozen. In spite of pouring lots of hot water down the sinks, it remained frozen, and Ken diagnosed the problem as roots that have grown into the pipe through some of the drain holes. He is now replacing the line, so at least we will be able to drain water out of our sink even if we have to haul our water into the house in buckets. In spite of minor problems like this, we are still happy in our little piece of heaven.

Journal

Our Adventures

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