

So, You've Agreed to Lead a Cruise...

Salt Spring Island Sailing Club encourages members to step up to offer to lead a cruise. So, now you've done it... What does that mean? Have you sold your soul to the devil? Are you responsible for peoples' happiness?

Well, not really. But there are a few things to consider which will make the cruise enjoyable for you and your fellow cruisers.

First off, the purpose of a Club cruise is to get people together in the boating environment. This builds community and friendships in the Club, which is really important. The people participating in the cruise might not know each other. So, that's a consideration. There may be a mix of experienced cruisers who are regular Club cruisers, along with first time cruisers, new boat owners, and new members to our Club. The goal is to make everyone feel like they are part of the group and to encourage people to get to know each other by spending some time together.

The second thing is to ensure that people know what is happening on the cruise. Are there scheduled events? Are there travel plans people need to be aware of? Are there times when everyone can get together? Are you being clear about the plans?

The third thing is to take advantage of the location. Is there some history there? Are there interesting things to do? Does someone on the cruise know something about this location that they could share?

The fourth thing is to build in some flexibility. Some people may only want to participate in part of the cruise. They might drop in for one of the days or nights. Being clear about where you'll be and what you'll be doing as a group is important here. That way, people will feel comfortable stopping by as their plans allow. This way, you'll know how many people to expect at any given time and location.

Here are some suggestions:

- in your communications, make sure you are clear about the cruise itinerary and plan (times, events, what to bring in terms of appies and potluck contributions)
- before departure, email a list of the registered boats to the participants so people have the option of traveling together, as well as knowing who to expect on arrival at the destination
- plan for some "get together" social time (walks and/or explorations, happy hours, potluck meals, guided tours, games such as bocce or croquet, events/services that people can choose to attend or not)
- find out if there is useful expertise in the group (someone who might know about the history or geography, etc. who would be willing to share)
- designate a contact person who is responsible for "registering" people and keeping a list of participating boats. -This will also provide an additional safety measure to

ensure that boaters who are expected to arrive at a certain destination are accounted for.

- for the enjoyment of Club members, cruise leaders are encouraged to document cruises with stories and photos for subsequent publication on the cruising web page.

People will be keen to join in if the cruise itinerary/plan and pre-cruise preparations (food requirements and marina reservations) are clearly outlined. Leading a cruise can be great fun and people are generally very appreciative to have someone doing the legwork. That person might be you!