

leisure reading, photos of kids, medical first-aid kit, English translation (from the Internet) of all the equipment aboard, as it's a Finnish boat, previously owned by a German.

We researched every bank for the best international access and Internet system and found that the TD Canada Trust suited us best. We then cancelled our other banks, transferred funds, applied for new credit cards. We set up every bill for payment online, and for automatic payments. We researched for medical coverage and applied for an extension of our provincial coverage. We changed our address to our daughter and son-in-laws; prepared a garment bag of a few formal outfits for various occasions that may call us home; packaged up our ski gear for winter access when we're home.

I had to wrap my mind around packing in my professional career. I absolutely loved the work I was doing, and was plugged into the pulse of the Calgary community which doesn't happen overnight. It took years of socializing, smoozing, being seen and seeing people, which fed into the successes my organization was experiencing. To close that chapter was difficult too. Con looked internationally for the right person to take a portion of his day-to-day business so he could manage the bigger picture from *Big Sky*.

Saying goodbye to the kids was really emotional, it almost did me in during the first few months of sailing. I was so crippled by homesickness for them. They're all adults and living away from home, but there was so much more to the dynamics. My daughters and I were still working

through our grieving from the sudden death of my husband, their dad. We had just blended our families Con and me, so we hadn't made a lot of "family history" together, you know Sunday dinners sort of thing, and now we were going. That for me was the most difficult part of going.

ON: How did you choose your boat?

B&C: The two main criteria were safety and comfort. Safety meant that the boat had to be capable of withstanding almost all weather conditions. Comfort meant that it had to have a pilot house so that we would not, as the French call it, live in "la cave." Although we had always been impressed with the Nauticat design, we were open-minded and with the aid of the Internet searched the world. We met with yacht brokers in Seattle, Boston, Fort Lauderdale and The Netherlands, viewing dozens of boats. Once we boarded a Nauticat 42 in the Boston area, we knew it would be a Nauticat. On the Internet we spotted a slightly-used 515 stored in the Nauticat Factory in Finland. After negotiating the price, we flew to Finland to inspect it, loved it and finalized the purchase. We took possession and haven't regretted a moment of our decision.

ON: Did you take any medical courses before you began voyaging full time?

B&C: We did. There were a few courses to choose from: a half-day basic course; a one-day; and a three-day, eight hours per day course. That's the one we took, but in a medical situation, it really comes down to common sense. In the Baltic states, Scandinavia, Europe and

Northern Africa where we traveled so far, we've always been close to great medical care if we had needed it.

We consulted our doctors about what medications to take along, researched which inoculations to get and got them. Mind you, we had a lot of bruises, bumps, scrapes and cuts the first few months adjusting to the living aboard. It's about knowing where the top of your head and your toes are in relation to the various spots on the boat.

ON: What equipment do you use for communications?

B&C: On the boat we have a VHF radio which we monitor while underway, but it's rarely used as a communication tool with marinas, they prefer cell phone contact. We buy a new SIM card for each country for our cell phone which gives us phone calls around the world, SMS, and most importantly, acts as a modem with our laptops for Internet access. The Internet is our biggest communication tool, and generally we find WiFi spots everywhere. We now use Skype (Internet telephone) as an inexpensive way to make phone calls to family and friends. It's becoming increasingly easier to get reasonably priced Internet connections. We've watched the progression of this communication tool in the past two years and anticipate it to be even better in the future.

ON: Do you have a watermaker on your boat?

B&C: We do. It has never been used and probably never will. According to the factory it was the worst model they ever built; spare membranes and parts are no longer available. We have been able to get