



# BIRCH BAY, WASHINGTON

AUGUST 2015

A SoFoBoMo book by Lorraine M. Day

This book was created as part of the 2015 Solo Photo Book In a Month project. All images were imagined, captured, selected, edited, and laid out in book format between August 2 and August 31, 2015, in Birch Bay, Washington, 10 minutes south of the Canadian border in the extreme northwest corner of the United States.

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# FOREWORD

THIS IS MY THIRD, and most challenging, SoFoBoMo book. I had many constraints during my 30-day project period including working full time plus overtime, working a second job in a gallery co-op, and a massive wind storm during my last three days of production which left me without power for hours at a time. But those obstacles were nothing compared to my mental block! My previous projects have been imagined around very tight themes and I found my focus (no pun intended) right away. This year, though I've been long wanting to do a booklet on my adopted home town, I've been unable to form an overarching theme or story to pour my photos into, and my lack of focus severely impacted my ability to shoot images and to plan a book structure.

(35 images of the same seascape and moored dinghys wasn't going to make it.)

But I was determined to honor the project and *finis* . And true to SoFoBoMo's objectives – just finish the damned thing! – I not only finished the object but in the process found the frame for my story. Following the outline in this booklet, I know where I'm going now with my book about Birch Bay, and am focused and eager to take this 'study' and turn it into my real project. I'm sure I can get it done in time for Christmas.

Thank you, SoFoBoMo!

*Work doesn't come from the muse....  
the muse is summoned by the work.*

attr. unknown

# CAST OF CHARACTERS



**Arlene** - She of Many Projects and the matriarch of the Canadian family next door. There are probably as many Canadian property owners in Birch Bay as there are Americans; Arlene and her husband built their 'cabin' in the '70s and summers at Birch Bay were part of her three daughters' childhoods. Now Arlene's grandchildren are making their own memories of Birch Bay.

This year, Arlene is working to garner support for a Loretta Lynn festival (Loretta spent several years here when she was just starting to sing - who knew?) and is building a wharf - of her own design - on the beach.



**Susie**, one of Arlene's three daughters, and Susie's husband **Craig**. These lucky Canucks have much more vacation than we Americans do, and are able to spend a lot of time down at the cabin with their two young daughters. Craig's time here is usually spent working on the cabin, but this year he came down less often and played more when he did.

(Susie is a very busy mom and it's really hard to get a photo of something other than the back of her head. This is the only one I've got!)





Chloe.....



and Abbie...

... Susie and Craig's daughters.

Abbie, as you can see, will major in drama in college and marry someone who can take her to Prague and finance her theater group. Chloe is much quieter, but she's very sly (you have to watch out for her). She may not marry, choosing instead to major in finance and devote her energies to her brokerage firm.

Also featured are Chloe's and Abbie's older cousins **Madison, Levi**, and others who seem like a baker's dozen but probably number only 4 or 5.



**Deb** - our neighbor, and an American like me. Deb is a retired ER nurse, an amazing cook, and a seriously gifted gardener who is single-handedly raising her autistic grandson. Deb just turned 70 this year.

She would be very tired - if she had time to be.

**Max** - Deb's grandson, who turned 8 this summer. Max is significantly impacted by his autism, but he doesn't seem to know it. He owns the hearts of everyone who knows him, absolutely.

Max LOVES WATER.



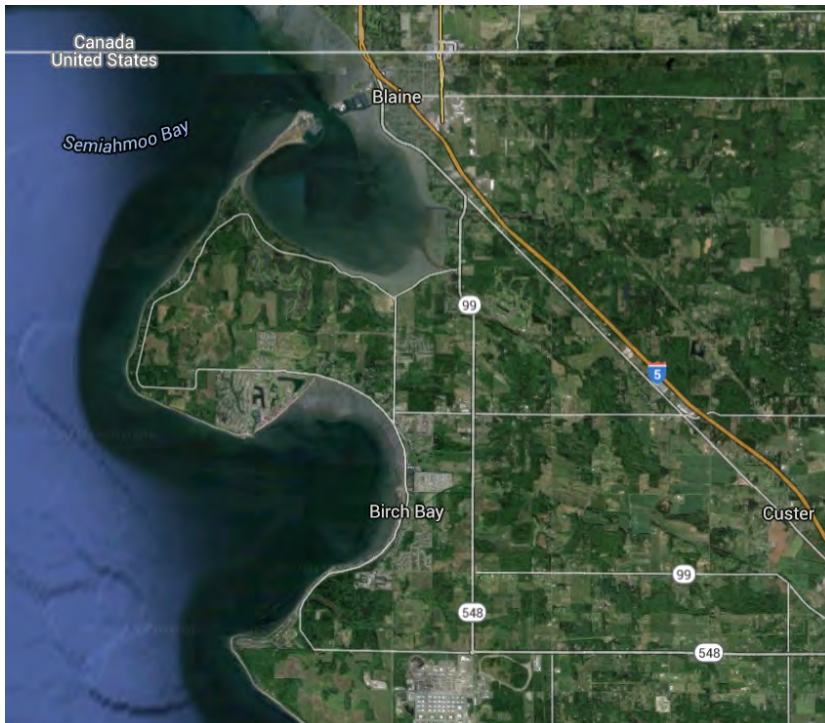


And of course, there is **the beach**.

Birch Bay is the southernmost bay that comprises the city of Blaine, Washington, lying at the Canadian border. It was named by Archibald Menzies, a member of Captain George Vancouver's crew, in 1792 because of the thick stands of birches that grew near the shore. It is 2.5 miles wide and has approximately 19.1 miles of marine shoreline

It is a typical northwest shoalwater bay that nearly empties when the tide is out, leaving tidal flats behind. When the tide is in and the bay is full, it is so shallow that bathers can walk out seemingly forever without going in over their heads.

Because it is so shallow, Birch Bay is very warm - a rare thing in this northwest corner of the country, where swimming beaches are few and far between. Beginning in the 20s Birch Bay was a lively workingman's resort, complete with a roller rink, cars cruising the bayside, and dances at the grange. Remnants of those days are still present, with old trailers and small cabins mixed in among the new, modern stick-built homes, housing a mix of permanent and vacationing residents. We are a motley crew indeed, and a little down at the heel, but the expectations are high for a return to our former glory.





# THE BAY



















# THE BUILDINGS



Via Birch Bay Cafe and Bistro, the only building on the bay side of Birch Bay Drive, was badly damaged by severe winter storms and high tides in 2012. The waves had reached all the way to the second floor and had blown out many of the main windows... Though countless hours of clean-up and renovations with support from the community and employees, the restaurant re-opened only two and a half months later. Now, Via has come into her own and has a loyal customer base.







The Birch Bay RV Resort was built in the '50s and today is still a thriving mobile home/ RV park for both permanent and vacationing residents. Beneath it, the Bay Center Market has been taking care of Birch Bay residents and vacationers for more than 60 years.



Vacationers watching the famous Birch Bay sunset.

Along the waterfront, upscale condominiums sit side by side with quirky vacation cabins, newer single-family homes, trailer park 'resorts' and beachy pubs and restaurants.





















# MAKING A BUCK

Garage sales, garden produce, and puppies - and remnants of businesses that have come.... and gone. Drive down any rural road and you'll find someone offering something for sale.











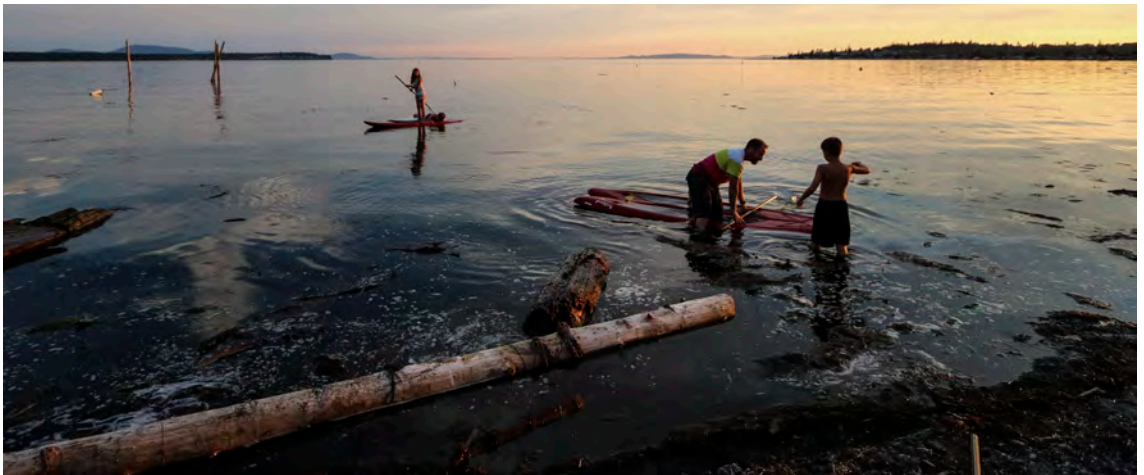


# BIRCH BAY, AUGUST 2015



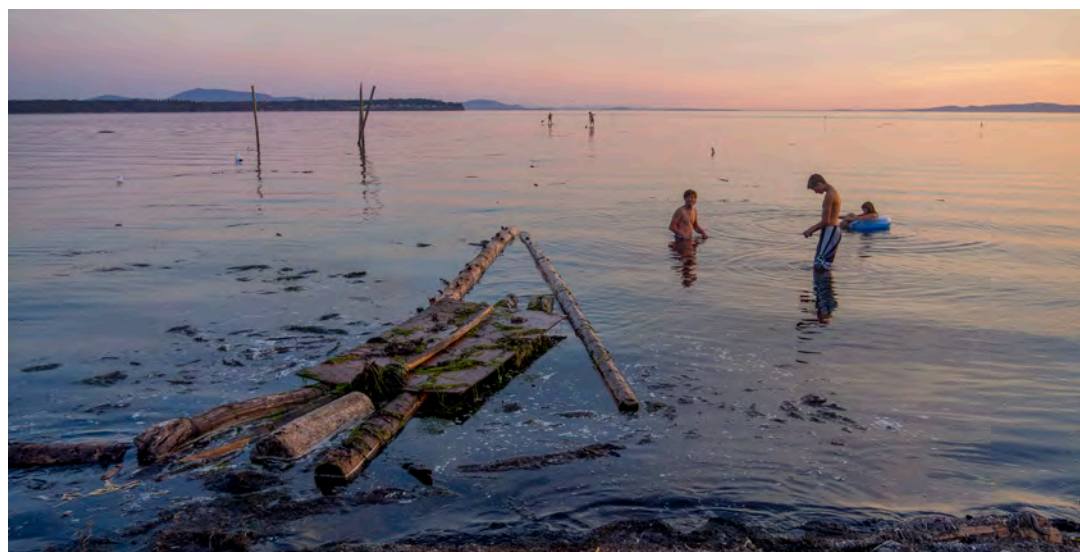
Arlene starts her wharf, from drifted logs, salvaged plywood, and 100 yards of cable donated by the local cable guy!. She recruits help (grandkids) but the lure of the paddleboards soon proves too strong.





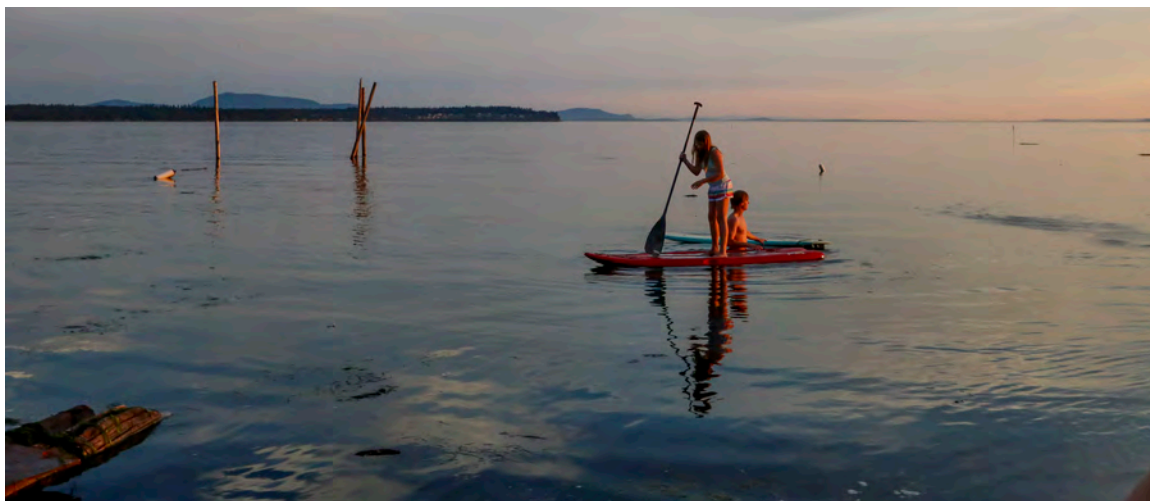














But she is a woman on a mission...





And a couple of days later, look who's using the wharf!





Max would surely use the wharf, too - if you could just get him out of the water!







Otter DNA?



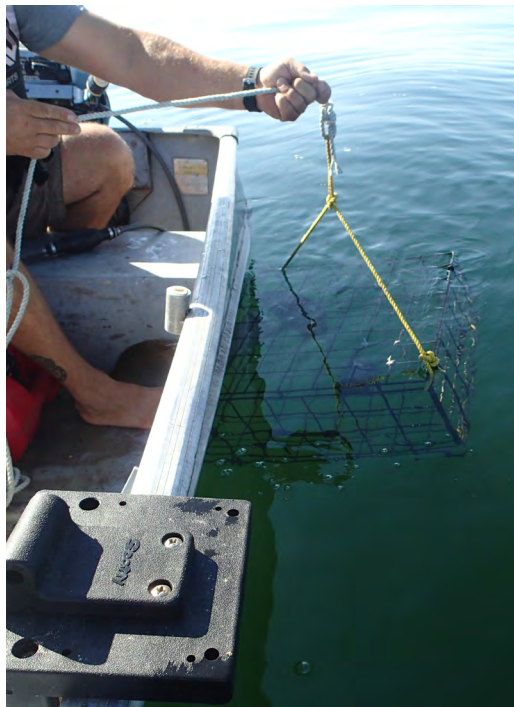








August is crabbing season, and Craig heads out, walking his skiff o deeper water before starting up the engine.







Just minutes after being pulled from the water, the crabs are quickly killed by a blow with a hatchet and dropped into the cooking pot.





The girls are well acquainted with these creatures.....



But they are new to Max and he isn't so sure.



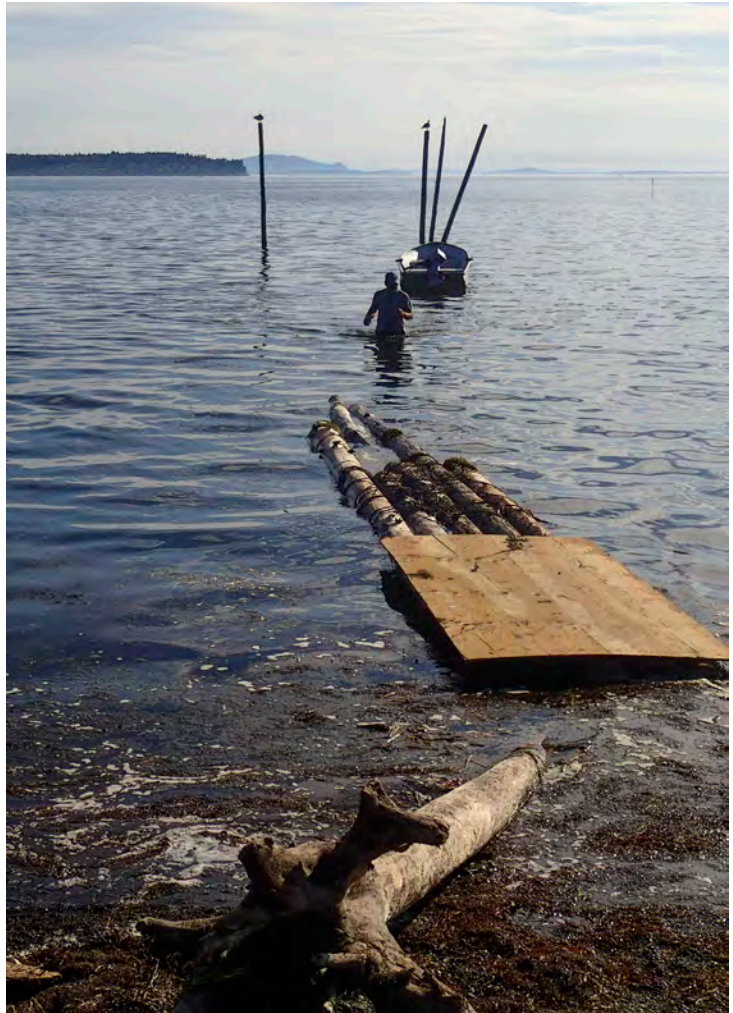
(I feel the same way, Max.)





As the sun falls towards the horizon, Craig secures the skiff for the night.

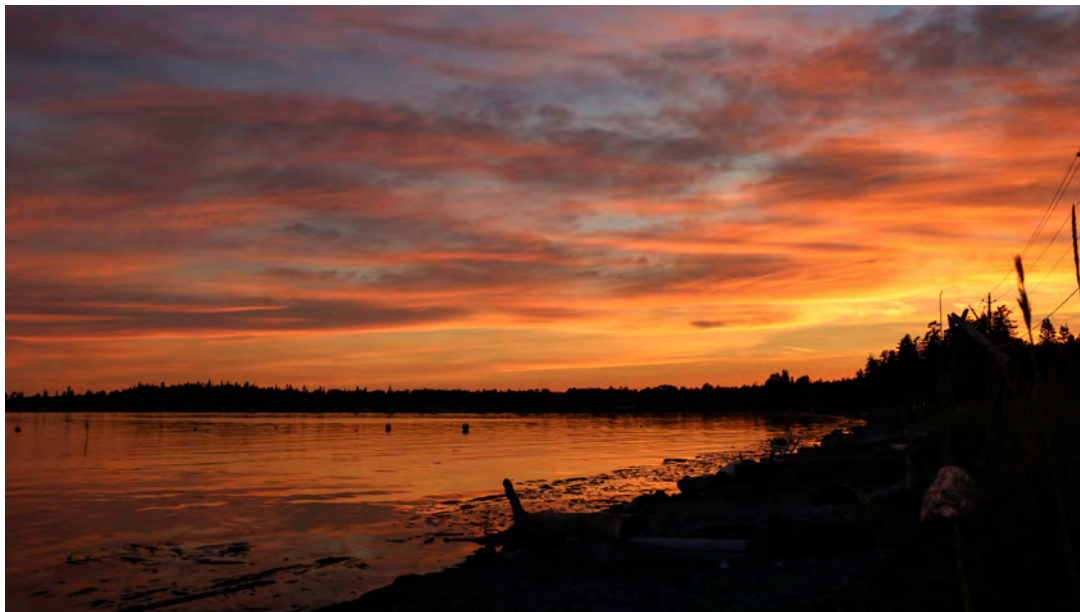
Maybe next year Arlene  
will build a longer wharf.





The start of one of Birch Bay's famous sunsets...





Summer is almost over. Max goes back to school next week, and my northern neighbors' visits will become less frequent as winter approaches. And the sunsets will come earlier and earlier...

.... until next year. I wonder if Arlene's wharf will still be there?



With gratitude to my friends from across the border,  
*children of a common mother.*

