

2014 Nanaimo Gyro Georgia Strait Charity Challenge

David Strang and Saul Hilchey, members of the Nanaimo Gyro Club, organize the biennial Nanaimo Gyro Georgia Strait Charity Challenge. Strang made the crossing in 1hr and 48 minutes this year. Tony Harris of Harris Auto Group provided safe passage for Strang in his chase-boat. "It's about 40 kilometers over to Sechelt" Strang said. "It's just not safe to be out there on your own. We couldn't do it without Tony". The trio launched from Pipers Lagoon at 9:27am with 20 knot winds. The first part of the crossing saw Strang exceed speeds of 40km/h with Hilchey and Harris trying to keep up amid the swells. However, the wind died down closer to Sechelt and in the end, Strang was forced to pump his own sail to generate wind. About 500 meters from the shore the tide was pushing Strang away faster than he could pump, and Harris towed him ashore.

Saul Hilchey, a Vice President and Wealth Advisor with RBC Dominion Securities, does the fundraising. "This year we raised over \$29,000" in corporate donations, plus another \$1,000 from Gyro Garth Johnstone, owner of Archie Johnstone Plumbing & Heating who offered to match \$1000 for the Nanaimo Child Development Centre." The Nanaimo Salvation Army will get some as well, but the largest chunk, approx. \$20,000 is going to the City of Nanaimo to rebuild Groveland neighborhood park. Strang further commented: "These are still hard times. Economically it's more difficult. Big corporations are cutting costs and they don't have as much money around. The credit goes to Saul, he raised all the money. I'm just the rider."

"The first six crossings have raised over \$150,000 for Nanaimo. This will bring the grand total to over \$180,000, which is really incredible" said Hilchey.