

DeFever Cruisers Magazine

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HOOKER, Robert & Alice (#222)

2000 • Grand Alaskan 64 • BALI MOTU • Stuart, FL

BALI MOTU Completes the Great Loop!

Editor's note: The first set of photos belongs to the part of the cruise described in the last issue of the Magazine (Summer 2007). The tales of the beautiful BALI MOTU on the Great Loop wrap up in this issue.



Peterborough 65 foot vertical lift lock. The water in each chamber weighs 1,500 tons (330,000 gallons). An extra foot of water is added to the upper chamber (130 tons) which forces it down and the lower chamber up.



View from on top of the Kirkfield Lift Lock. Note the narrow canal ahead



Big Chute Marine Railroad (57 foot vertical drop)



Bali Motu tied up on blue line dock awaiting the Big Chute railway (in background) the next morning.



Bali Motu entering the Big Chute railway



Bali Motu on the Big Chute railway

Received 1 August, 2007: We are now at Beaver Island in Northern Lake Michigan where life is a little slower, with the Shamrock Bar across the street. On the 25th we arrived at Drummond Island for Customs processing, then on to Mackinac Island for four days prior to docking at St. James City, Beaver Island Municipal Docks.



Georgian Bay Lighthouse

taking the food from the game fish. We were successful eating from the sea by catching small mouth bass and northern pike, although smaller in size. We were pleased that our friends Jack and Sue were able to catch their limit during their visit and be able to eat them, minutes later.

The big three boating towns in the North Channel are Killarney, Little Current, and Gore Bay.

In Killarney, the Mountain Lodge is operating fine, however the Sportman's Inn was just sold by the bank to new owners and

Our farewell tour of Canada's North Channel took a month, and we were able to see the people and places we frequented in the past. The rock formations, the different granite colors, the sheer cliffs, and deep water depths next to shore offer gorgeous rugged beauty. Shallow depths and weeds have proliferated thanks to nature as well as human impact. Anchorages like the Pool at the end of the Baie Finn fjord are no longer usable because of the weeds. Some believe that the water depth is a natural water pattern, but a foreign ship dumping its water ballast with zebra mussels into the Great Lakes 20-30 years ago has changed the ecology. The zebra mussels have sharp cutting edges and no predators, and they filter and clean the water permitting sunlight to penetrate into shallow water aiding growth of plant vegetation. The mussels do not seem to be multiplying as when first introduced, and they may be abating as well as the cormorants which have impacted fishing in the past. They still are eating their weight in fish everyday,

Continued on Page 3

ROBERTS, Jim & Robin (#331)
Green Cove Springs, FL

1988 • DeFever 49 RPH • ADVENTURES

From the Editor...

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed tips, notes, and cruising tales. Your articles are what fuel the Magazine and we are lost without them. I apologize for the tardiness of the "Fall" issue of the Magazine, but the fact is we didn't have enough material to publish earlier. The Winter issue will also need a good bit of input if we are to continue the strong publication that Bob Dein started! Please keep those photos coming as well. The Magazine editor's email box (magazineeditor@defevercruisers.com) is fairly small, and a large shipment of photos will sometimes fill it. You can always send large files to my personal account at robin@mvadventures.com. Let us know if you have any problems sending material to us!

For those of you who receive the Magazine in printed form, I hope you take the time to look at the online version (available through the Member's section on the DeFeverCruisers.com web site), since all of the beautiful photos are in full color there. My publishing partner Peggy Carr Bjarno (#839) is responsible for the gorgeous layout of the Magazine, the creative art work, and the vibrant look of the photos.

We would love to see the coverage of cruising areas expand a bit, with some regular contributions from the Pacific Northwest, Great Lakes, as well as Europe (for those who live there as well as those who are traveling to Europe to charter boats). Let's not forget New England (several of us are heading to Maine and Nova Scotia this summer and would love to get a better preview), the Chesapeake, Mexico and Central America, etc. Our members are scattered across the globe, and we'd like to hear more about the areas where YOU boat and live. Don't be shy... all articles are welcomed, long or short.

Bali Motu continued from Page 2

the famous fish and chips at the fishery is doing great. Little Current has a new town dock and the wharf along the town wall is very well done with 50 AMP power. Gore Bay also has new docks that include 50 AMP power. The town itself hasn't changed during the past six years since we were there in 2001, except the town has four Customs officers instead of Sue, who was the only official there for many years. We received Customs clearance and cruising number when arriving in Canada at Belleville on Lake Ontario. After more than a month in Canada, stopping at 20-some ports and traveling nearly 500 miles through the mainland of Ontario Province, we were searched by two Customs agents in Gore Bay. The agents were welcomed aboard, shown our cruising license number and we answered how long and where we have been since arriving. They then put on the black gloves and searched the boat, including staterooms through all clothes and compartments. When they issued us a blue cruising permit, I ask why I needed it since we already have a cruising permit number that is officially registered in the Canada Customs computer along with our personal data. Their answer was "this is more official". I didn't have the guts to ask why it was more official than the one already in the computer. When entering Canada, most cruisers call in to Customs and receive a number after being asked how much booze, cigarettes, and if there are any guns on board. If the vessel has been in Canada previously, they confirm that their computer information is correct including wife's name. If you weren't inspected at entrance, I have been informed that they have the right to inspect your property at any later time. After an inspection, only the police could inspect your boat with cause. The procedure makes sense on paper, but after a month of friends legally bringing booze across the border and swapping with other boaters and Canadian friends, the black glove inspection seems be caused by too many Customs officers stationed in an outpost needing something to do and a curiosity to tour different boats. For the town of Gore Bay where they reside, if boaters feel they will be inspected after prior clearance, they will avoid the village.

We considered Gore Bay our summer weekend home for more than 15 years, flying the plane into its rural airport Friday evenings and riding to the marina with Customs agent Sue, who lived across from the docks. We had many good Friday dock parties and Saturday morning breakfasts at B & J prior to departing for a few days cruising the North Channel on our 46 foot sailboat.

The other unusual experience we had was during a storm in Beardrop Harbor - a catamaran sailboat's anchor dragged about midnight. As it came down on us, I put the spot light on and sounded the horn. This summoned the captain out of his slumber and when he tried to start the engine it failed. I yelled to fend off in the pouring rain and he only lightly contacted our boat. I asked him to throw us a line to save him from crashing into the rocks. I took his line and tied it to our stern cleat while he tried to get his engine started and cleared his weed-fouled anchor. Since he could not get it started and the rain was pouring down, I relented and let him remain tied to our stern like a tender for the night. After an hour of watching the storm abate and his 6,000 lb. boat remain safely behind us, I retired to bed. At 0500, a yell from the catamaran woke us up just at the time we came down and bumped into his boat.

How did our anchor break loose in less than twenty knots of wind and why did we crash into the boat tethered behind



Entering Killarney Channel



Grand Hotel Mackinac Island

us? After questioning the retired Professor of Humanities catamaran captain, he said that during the night the wind died, changed direction, and the boats did circles. His line attached to our stern got tangled in our anchor chain, so he untied it from his boat and set his own anchor. Now, our anchor is not being pulled from our anchor chain, but from his rope attached to our stern which pulled it out. When we pulled our anchor, his rope was coiled around the Fortress (danforth) flukes. I felt it a tad arrogant of the Professor to suggest that he wouldn't demand



Mackinac Island

damage payment to his boat since only a stanchion was hit and he had built the boat. I'm starting to get a complex about retired sail boaters – I saved this guy's boat and he is doing me a favor after he didn't let us know his line fouled our anchor..

When US Customs arrived at Drumond Island and immediately cleared us without questions, they said that if anyone had contraband, they wouldn't go through Customs with it. It would have been transferred to another boat or to one of the many islands prior to Customs. Makes sense to me, however they couldn't provide us with a cruising permit for our BVI registered vessel without sending all the data to their District Headquarters at Sault St Marie. The agent faxed our documents and requested our cruising license be faxed or emailed to us. We understand that the paper work is being prepared for us and hopefully we will be able to receive a copy in the next few days.

We stayed four days at Mackinac Island where we enjoyed horse and buggy transportation, (motor vehicles not allowed), Grand Hotel's long porch, Woods and Carriage House dining, and watching the "fudgies" - the thousands of tourist who arrive by ferry each day. There must be more fudge shops per block on Mackinac Island than any other place in the world. It was good to have Barb Koski, one of my mentored parent's daughters aboard the boat for a couple of nights. We watched the 50 year fire works celebration of the Mackinac Bridge setting on the island's shore – it was completed in 1957. It connects the upper with the lower peninsular of Michigan and its five mile length is the longest span bridge in the US.

Now we are enjoying the laid back Beaver Island with one of the best restaurants we have enjoyed through out the entire trip - Nina's at the Lodge. We will be returning to the mainland on Friday in the Harbor Springs to Charlevoix area. Only Cingular/ AT&T cell service is available on the island so communications are presently limited. We will



Bob and Ali in Leland MI

retain Internet service so that we can transmit this and be able to make calls by Skype.

Received 27 August: It has been a few weeks since we have written, while cruising Lake Michigan. We made our northern home at the Charlevoix docks for almost two weeks. The beautiful waters of Lake Charlevoix, new comfortable docks, central location, the weather, and friends combined to make it an enjoyable stay. A few days after arriving, Rick and Jamie from Fort Pierce flew in to look at purchasing a boat in the Traverse City area. We enjoyed Jamie driving their rental SUV over the Mackinac Bridge and taking the ferry to Mackinac Island where we were a week prior. In the afternoon, we took the scenic route back to Charlevoix via Mackinac City - the covered tree route to Harbor Springs, then to Petosky and Bayharbor. The next

day Jack and Sue Collins arrived and we cruised back to laid-back Beaver Island, then to Harbor Springs prior to returning to Charlevoix. We spent a few days with Ray and Judy Gosnell who live in the attractive Harborage community, 14 miles down Lake Charlevoix at Boyne City. Boyne is a skiing and golfing community with a large boat condo marina at the Harborage. We will look forward to seeing them at their Vero home.

Prior to departing after a weather wait, we participated in the second annual Round Lake Dinghy Poker Run. With squirt guns and super-soakers ready, we cruised to five different stations to pick up our cards. We received a cap for our involvement.

When the weather was less than twenty knots, we departed for Leland - a small fishing/tourist village forty miles south where we took on fuel at a negotiated \$3.00 per gallon. This was the first major fueling (1,000 gallons) since Syracuse. We visited this popular location 20 years ago and because it was a weekend, the tourists were like bees at the hive.

On Sunday, the next day, with easterly winds and waves less than three feet we departed 50 miles south to Frankfort. As you cruise the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, you travel by 500 foot sand dunes, and then every 25 miles comes an inlet with a lake just inland of the shore. We were joined by Tom & Arlene (Alice's brother and sister-in-law) who were coming north to see an entertaining friend play at the Little River Casino. The next day was inhospitable for travel so we went to the casino with them. Next stop was Pentwater, another small town and fifty miles down the sand dune coast. We decided to boogie on to Grand Haven the next day as the weather wasn't looking great for the next few days. The forecast wasn't wrong, as you all know - the floods and weather situation caused by a stationary front has provided rain and wind for the past several days.

We have been planning to start through Chicago and the Illinois River on Sept 5-6. The storms have destroyed one Chicago marina and now all the other marinas will not confirm reservations. Also parts of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers are flooded and will take a week to lower if no more rain occurs. We have reports from other boaters that the current is running 6 to 8 knots and so are the logs, tires, and other debris floating down. So the word is to wait and see how this develops.

This past Friday, Alice's daughter and granddaughters came aboard (Connie, Leah, and Ashlyn) for two nights. On Sunday, we had Alice's relatives from the Grand Rapids area aboard for a picnic. As weather permits, we plan to go to Holland and South Haven prior to leaving for the Chicago area.

9/29 - River Running: We are presently easy to find - look on a map for the intersection of Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi. If you have an atlas, I could suggest a gander at where the Great Loop trip has taken us. We joined the "Loopers" organization a few months ago which provides valuable information on conditions coming up and a camaraderie amongst those who are doing the Great Loop. There are more than 1,000 members in the organization and 300 presently on the Loop.

Since our last communication, we have traveled across Lake Michigan to Chicago, down the Chicago River to the Illinois Ship and Sanitary Canal which connects to the Illinois River, then onto the Mississippi at Grafton, down the Mississippi to Cairo, up the Ohio River to the Cumberland River before entering the Tennessee River through the canal between Barkley Lake and Kentucky Lake. Traveling the rivers with the tows that push up to 56 barges, which may be a quarter of a mile long keeps you busy during the day, and researching the next day's run fills your evenings. Sorry, we haven't sent updates lately.

Leaving South Haven, Michigan, we crossed 68 miles to DuSable Harbor downtown Chicago at Randolph Street. We spent the next day putting the radar arch down to clear the 17 foot height restriction through the Chicago River, which forms the

famous Chicago Loop. The next day we walked to Michigan Avenue and the Watertower Plaza to let the girls shop. That evening we had a pot-luck aboard with "Catch Me if You Can", "Sun Cat", and a couple other fellow Loopers. The next day we went through the lock at Navy Pier and started down the Chicago River.

We slipped under the many Chicago bridges, past the Wrigley Building and Sears Tower. After 25 miles we came to the "12 miles of Hell" on the Sanitary Canal dug to join the Illinois and Chicago Rivers and also to reverse the flow of the Chicago River from flowing into Lake Michigan to down the Mississippi which eliminates the sewage on the Chicago waterfront.

The notorious "12 miles of Hell" is an industrial stretch where the canal is narrow, lined with rock walls and barges, and where tows and their barges



Chicago River Loop



Chicago River Sears Tower



Chicago River Southloop

always advise which side they want you on. Tows are actually tugs which push their loads, and are called tows because in the early days they were tow boats on the river system. One time the captain told us to come around on the 1 and when he saw there was no room to cut in ahead of him because of parked barges, he went into full reverse making a wake that threw us dangerously close to the wall. On another occasion we were passing on the 2 and he said that he would give us room by moving closer to the wall and he did - his lead barge was scraping it. This is the most difficult and dangerous area on the system. With a sigh of relief, we docked along the Joliet wall after passing through the dam at Lockport. That night we celebrated Alice's birthday at Harrahs Casino with a large birthday cake.



Chicago Waterfront



Locking with Tow

are put together. In this stretch we wait for an area where we can pass or overtake the tows. The procedure is to call the tow and request a pass on the "1 or 2". The one is my port side and two is on my starboard side whether meeting or overtaking. They may suggest you wait because of limited space, but will

Prior to departing the next day we called the Dresden Lock two miles away and the lockmaster said to come at 7:45 AM and he would get us through. Yep, he got us through at 10:45 and this was the way it was with all of the locks on the Illinois. They would work us through with the commercial traffic as they have first priority. The tows could put three barges wide and three barges long in the 600 foot long Illinois locks. However, most of the tows were larger than nine barges so they would have to be "cut". The tow would push nine barges into the lock and they would be locked up. Then these barges would be winched out of the lock with about 50 feet of space between the lock door and the barges. We could sneak behind these barges in the fifty foot open space, enter the lock and take the lock down and slip out between the rest of the waiting barges and the tow and lock doors. Or sometimes we would ride down with the tow and the balance of its cut barges. This was with the permission of the tow's captain and never could it be done in a lock with dangerous materials such as chemicals or petroleum. The tow captains and lock masters were excellent in working with what we were called - PCs (pleasure crafts).

We traveled the 330 miles of the Chicago/Illinois rivers to the Mississippi at Grafton, Illinois.

We overnighted at Harborside Marina where we put the radar arch back up. The average lock wait was two to three hours, and we were fortunate that the Peoria and La Grange lock wickets were down because of the high water. They lowered the dam's wickets and you sail over it. The three enjoyable stops were Ottawa because



Joliet, IL



Illinois and Mississippi Rivers Junction

knot current on the stern. That night we pulled off the Mississippi at the Kaskaskia River and tied up to the outside of the Kaskaskia Lock wall. We dropped the tender and went through the lock 10 miles to the town of Evansville, IL where we ate dinner at the Farmers Table. We returned back to the lock just as night fell, then off the next foggy morning for 110 miles to anchor in a three knot current, seven miles north of the Ohio River at Boston Towhead.

We were up at day break the next morning and at 7:00 we turned into a one knot current on the Ohio at Cairo. We passed by heavy barge traffic for the first 10 miles and then into rural land. After 18 miles we came to lock 53, and then after passing by Paducah we came to the notorious lock 52. Although there were tows lined up on both sides of the lock, the lockmaster put us through the small lock with a group of PCs. The tows have an interesting way of parking waiting for the lock. They push their front barges onto shore and pin themselves there by keeping the power on (perpendicular parking). 56 miles up the Ohio, we anchored at the Cumberland Island towhead. We could have turned into the Tennessee River at Paducah and ended up at the same Kentucky Lake location saving 20 miles, except that the lockmaster on the Tennessee is not overly kind to PCs (according to Fern), so most use the Cumberland and join the Tennessee at Kentucky Lake via the one mile canal between the Cumberland and Tennessee at Barkley Lake. Confused? So were we at first! Fern also added that the Kentucky Dam was not manned by US Army Corps of Engineers personnel as on the Illinois, Mississippi, and Ohio; it was manned by State personnel. Leaving the Cumberland towhead, we traveled 30 miles up river on the Cumberland to the Barkley Lock and Dam. After locking through into Barkley Lake, Green Turtle Marina is within a

of the town's courtesy, IVY (Illinois Valley Yacht Club) for its member's kindness, and Grafton for being a small party town.

About 20 miles north of St. Louis and fifteen miles down the Mississippi from the Illinois is Alton, Illinois. The Alton marina, like the Grafton, was very nice and reasonably new. We rented a car and spent three days touring and picking up Diane and Steve (Koch #74) at the St. Louis airport 25 minutes away. A couple of highlights included visiting the Melvin Price Lock Museum and Fast Eddies Restaurant (unique). A mile after departing Alton Marina, we were being locked through the Melvin Price Lock. Seven miles further south we entered the Chain of Rocks Lock Canal. This was the last lock on the Mississippi going downbound to New Orleans and the ocean. These two locks, and the two on the Ohio that we passed through had double locks, 1200 and 600 foot long chambers; the traffic flowed better than when the barges had to be cut on the Illinois. Just after the Chain of Rocks Lock, we passed by the St. Louis Arch.

After 45 miles, we were at Hobbies Marina which is the last marina for the next 248 miles until we reach Turtle Cove Marina in Lake Barkley on the Cumberland River. Each evening Fern gives a presentation on where to anchor, the river conditions, and dangers on the way to Green Turtle. We traveled with *Sun Cat* and *SILVER BOOTS* (Jim & Pam Shipp, #537) 41 miles down the River with a two



St Louis Arch

mile where we docked for two days.

Green Turtle is a well known location on the *Land Between the Lakes*, (between Kentucky and Barkley Lakes) made in the 30's by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). When traveling up the *ditch* this spring and preparing our restaurant critique, we solicited other recommendations. Someone suggested "Patti's at Grand River" while at Green Turtle. We indulged ourselves on the house specialty of two inch thick pork chops. I commend the recommendation and the facility. The successful family-built restaurant business has expanded to shopping stores, a little wedding chapel, and miniature golf course in a tasteful down-home setting. While at Green Turtle, we enjoyed the company of Bud and Kathy Orr (#237) who keep their boat here and at Long Boat Key in Florida. They were helpful suggesting future stops on the Tennessee, Tennessee-Tombigbee and on the Big Bend area of Florida to Sarasota.



Fern Skippers Meeting

A mile after departing with Jim and Pam on SILVER BOOTS, we turned into the one mile canal between the lakes, entering Kentucky Lake on the Tennessee at mile marker 25 (mile zero is at the Ohio River). We traveled to Cuba Landing Marina at mile marker 115 where Pam had negotiated a diesel price of \$2.46. This was 65 cents less than at Green Turtle and considerably less than other marinas. The next day we traveled 100 miles and through the Pickwick Lake and dam at mile 207, just arriving at our anchorage on Zippy Creek as darkness fell. The next morning we traveled only two miles on Yellow Creek to Aqua Marina at the start of the Tenn-Tom Waterway - 450 miles from Mobile. Like Green Turtle, Aqua Marina is another must-stop on the Great Loop. The first 150 miles we traveled on the Tennessee was mostly wilderness, with the Land Between the Lakes National Park for the first forty miles. Then came wildlife refuges and river islands as we traveled from the Kentucky Dam and Lake. The last fifty miles was habituated with homes along the river banks, and after passing the lock into Pickwick Lake we were treated to estates on the shores. Just prior to the dam, Pittsburgh Landing is along the river where the bloody civil war battle of Shiloh was fought. The Tennessee River continues for a total of 652 miles to Knoxville. Our captains and crew ("Jungle Bob", "Aqua Ali", "Scuba Steve", and "Diver Di") decided on Mobile instead of Knoxville to "Reason with Hurricane Season".

10/16 - Tennessee River to Mobile Bay: We are in the Panhandle Area of Florida heading for Apalachicola. On October 9th we crossed the border from Alabama and entered our home state waters, but still we are many miles from Stuart, as the Okeechobee Waterway remains too shallow. This will give us the opportunity to see the upper Keys again.

We had just turned off the Tennessee River at Pickwick (corner of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee) with Steve and Di aboard in our last email. From there it was 450 miles to Mobile through the Tennessee-Tombigbee System. Leaving Aqua Marina, we started through 39 miles of the Divide Cut section of the Tenn-Tom. This section actually connects the Tennessee River with the Tombigbee Canal section.

More earth was removed by the US Army Corps of Engineers to make this cut than in the Panama Canal. We went through three locks, one of which had a drop of 84 feet. That evening we stopped at Fulton where our friend Sonny has his houseboat. Unfortunately, Ali's long time friend, Judy who dated Sonny for four years, had just flown to Ann Arbor. Sonny drove up to Aqua Marina the day before and took us to Shiloh Battlefield and other Pickwick areas and graciously showed us



Di Meeting Tow



White Banks on TenTom

It was a good anchorage for a few boats. After two more locks we tied up at the Demopolis Yacht Basin the next night, and ate at the marina's restaurant and bar to get the local flavor. Maybe after a few days at the restaurant, I could better understand the tow captain's deep Cajun accents.

At Demopolis, the Black Warrior River joins the Tombigbee River and this is the official southern end of the Tenn-Tom 213 miles north of Mobile Bay, but most people call it the Tenn-Tom the entire distance. From Demopolis we traveled 100 miles and through one lock to Bobby's Fish Camp, which has about 150 feet of dock with a gas fuel pump but no power, and a restaurant offering the best cat fish. But it is a port in a storm, or the only port in 200 miles. We had a couple of beers at the restaurant, but Bobby is in his 70's and only comes into the store in the morning.

The next day we passed through the last lock at Coffeerville and continued another 100 miles to our anchorage on Lizard Creek. This anchorage was a little snug for our size vessel, but we dropped the hook at the junction of the North and South Branch of the Lizard Rivers and backed up to attach a stern line to a water-logged stump, which held us from swinging into the bank during the night. We were rudely awakened the next morning as bass boats flew by, along with shotguns blasting in the woods. One of the hunting boats helped us untie our stern stump line and we asked what the hunting was about. He said his "dumb son was in them woods shooting squirrel and wild hog." A better anchorage selection would have been the southern junction of the Canot River, four miles to the south.

Happy to be out of the shooting gallery, we traveled 20 miles south through Mobile and the Port of Mobile at the north end of Mobile Bay, 30 miles from the ocean. We were impressed with the ocean and barge vessel traffic, boat building, and the oil well platform construction along the waterfront. From Mobile, we traveled another 15 miles to Eastern Shore Marina in Fairhope, AL on Mobile Bay. We transferred guests as Kent and Ronna drove from Stuart, and Steve and Di returned to Stuart in their car. At a farewell dinner for Steve and Di, we presented them with a Bali Motu Frequent Cruising Certificate for voyaging 1,000 miles on Bali Motu from Alton, Illinois down five waterway systems to Mobile Bay.

Mobile Bay to Clearwater: With Kent and Ronna aboard we departed Fairhope on Mobile Bay and headed for the 145 mile marker on the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), 15 miles to the south. The Eastern Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GICW) starts at the

around the Fulton and Tupelo, Mississippi area. This included a trip to Elvis' birth house and memorial. Sonny's hospitality included a breakfast for us aboard his houseboat *Bodacious* prior to touring the area.

The next day we traveled through four locks in the Canal section and tied up in Columbus, Mississippi.

We drove the courtesy car around the largest town on the Tenn-Tom. Columbus has many antebellum homes, and with a special map we drove by the many beautiful mansions that were built when cotton was king. We visited Rosewood Manor where the owner took us through the home. In the spring the town has an open house week where, for a flat fee, you can see all the homes with the owners clothed in traditional dress.

We anchored at Sumpter Recreational area, a small bay off the Tenn-Tom, the next day. The Tombigbee River winds back and forth, and the Corps has made cuts to straighten the river section.



Demopolis on TenTom



Bobbys Fish Camp

Mississippi River and travels 375 miles east to Dog Island near Carrabelle, Florida. Along the 230 miles we traveled, it passed by such cities as Pensacola, Fort Walton, Destin, Panama City, and Apalachicola.

The first night we anchored in Ingram Bayou, Alabama and dropped the tender to look around and clean the mustache off the bow. We dinghied a few miles and found Bear Point Marina to be rustic and reasonably priced – it had not been listed in the guide book. It has adequate side tie space for 100 foot vessels, and a restaurant. Another transient marina within thirty miles of Mobile Bay with dining facilities is the Perdido Key Oyster Bar Restaurant and Marina with easy side tie docking. The next day a sign welcomed us into Florida after passing through Perdido Bay, and we docked in downtown Pensacola at Palafox Marina. As at all major towns, we rented a car and drove around the area and to the local beaches. At Pensacola we went to the National Museum of Naval Aviation at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. I could have spent another day looking at the vintage and modern aircraft.

Then we continued onto Destin and the Fort Walton area. We were able to secure a dock in Destin Harbor by renting a slip from a condo owner at Marabelle. Destin appears to be newer looking and the quaintest of panhandle towns, with beautiful white sand beaches that feel like sugar when you walk on them. Destin Harbor is located in Old Pass Lagoon almost on the Gulf. During October it has a Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo where several different types of fish can be brought in, weighed, and recorded on a big scoreboard at AJ's Restaurant. After two nights, we continued on to Panama City on the GICW. From the downtown Panama City Marina, we drove to the beach area and ate lunch and dinner on the beach. During the day we stopped at Club La Vela where the manager allowed the girls to go in and have their pictures taken on the runway and podium in the middle of the pool. This is where the wild Spring Break parties and shows happen, which you may have heard of.

After two days, we moved 60 GICW miles to Apalachicola. We could have turned off the canal near White City and taken the six-mile St. Joe Bay Canal to Port St. Joe. Since Chicago, we have been in the Central time zone until White City, Florida. We arrived at Apalachicola to dock at Scipio Marina. It is the only marina for our size vessel, and we found the facilities closed because of the owner's death, to open again in two days. We tied ourselves up near the fuel dock and walked the world's Oyster Capital and enjoyed eating them at Boss Oysters. Apalachicola Bay is known for its rich oyster beds. With our rental car we drove to Port St. Joe and were surprised by the size and wealthy appearance of the town. This Gulf port has a chemical plant and other businesses which have provided an economic base to the community. The marina facilities, docking, and restaurant were nice and a definite stop on another trip. We went by car 25 miles east to Carrabelle. Unfortunately unlike Port St. Joe, it has gone the opposite way with no businesses to bring in new people, and many are living in housing from World War II.

During the next two days the winds were forecast to be 15-20 out of the southeast, making for four to five foot seas on the bow to cross the Gulf of Mexico and Florida Big Bend passage. There is not a GICW along this stretch and no deep water ports for 150 miles... so we had a few more oysters, and after a cold front passed, we left Apalachicola for Clearwater. This nearly 200 mile passage would take 22 hours. Leaving at 9:30 in the morning and passing through Apalachicola Bay we went through the Dog Island/St. George Island cut at noon. It was a very comfortable run until 2:00 AM when the winds switched onto the nose at 20 knots. For the next four hours it was a bumpy ride until we got into the lee of the land just north of Tarpon Springs and Anclote Keys. We slowed our approach into Clearwater to have light upon arrival. We secured Bali Motu at the Municipal City Dock, had a big breakfast and went to sleep.

Kent and Ronna rented a car and we spent the next day touring the unique city of Tarpon Springs, which is the sponging capital of the US. When sponges were found in the Gulf of Mexico in the early 1900's, the Greek/Mediterranean sponge divers came to Tarpon Springs and dove for the different type of sponges. Along the Anclote Inlet River, the sponge boats along with the shrimp boats still go out to sea. Quaint Greek stores and restaurants are abundant on the river front.

There is only one marina that would be able to take our size vessel. The next morning Ronna and Kent left for their home in Stuart and we were left without company for the first time in five weeks. We felt their presence added to our enjoyment and the voyage. We will be stopping and visiting friends as we navigate the Florida peninsula from Clearwater to Stuart.

Received 11/12: Just a note to warn Stuart, FL that BALI MOTU will back home on Wednesday or Thursday of this week. After departing Clearwater we went to St. Petersburg Municipal Marina, Twin Dolphins Marina on the Manatee River in Bradenton, and then to the Moorings at Longboat Key, Sarasota. We were pleased to be with friends Herman & Sharon Frankel and Eve Kommel and Chub who graciously provided fine dining, transportation, and good conversation. Then tropical storm Noel came along with its winds, and we asked Bud Orr (#237) to kindly let us stay in his slip while we drove to Stuart for the Chrysanthemum Ball, a black tie benefit for Martin Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Back on the boat we motored down the GICW to Cayo Costa and tendered into Cabbage Key restaurant with its famous walls papered in dollar bills... then to South Seas Plantation which now has a beautiful pool area open after two years of hurricane reconstruction. The shopping stores aren't there at this time and the par three golf course has been shortened. They have a fully operational restaurant at the pool and evening restaurant at the marina.

The Mucky Duck and Bubble Gum restaurants are just south of the entrance which the resort trolley will take you to. Then

off to Naples for a couple days with Jeff and Brenda Bowen (#435) who were superb hosts with a slip arranged, dinner and orchestrated slide show, local boating tour, and Naples YC lunch as well as the Chickee Bar YC libations. We would have liked to stay longer having all that excitement in two days, but we needed to get home for the Bush/Nextel Homestead race next weekend, so we departed Saturday afternoon and anchored in Factory Bay on Marco Island for an early departure Sunday morning. We left before light with a below zero water datum tide and took the Yacht Channel to Channel Five Bridge, over 100 miles with thin water as you approach Long Key above Marathon.

To say that the crab pots were numerous would be an understatement. At dusk we anchored in Matecumbe Bight and now we are waiting for the winds to slacken as they are gusting over 25 in Hawk Channel. The run south to the Keys is necessary because of the low water in Lake Okeechobee, which would normally let us traverse from Fort Myers to Stuart. Hopefully, Tuesday (tomorrow) we will be able to get to Miami and then home on Wednesday to close the Great Loop.

11/14, 1800 hours - Crossing our wake: It has been more than 5000 miles, taking better than six and a half months traveling through 17 states and two countries. We put 658 hours on the engines, requiring three oil and fuel filter changes. Don't tell Al Gore that we consumed over 6000 gallons of diesel. The Loop which circles the eastern half of the US and through Ontario, Canada is an experience of witnessing difficult cultures, scenery and boating systems. The most unique of all the culture varieties was the Cajun riverboat captains. By the time we passed Demopolis, AL we could almost understand them. We always asked them which side to pass on when meeting or overtaking them and it was good that we only needed to understand "on the one or two side." From the palm trees of southern Florida to gorgeous North Channel rock formations to the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan to the White Sand Banks on the Tenn-Tom, the scenery was impressive. And for the boating systems, we learned what a lock cell was and how to slip in between cut barges. Yet the part I will remember the most are the people we shared this with and who assisted us along the way.

The people in chronological order are:

Barry and Bonnie on *Bonnie B* who traveled to Canada with us and assisted with the restaurant reviews on the east coast.

Walt and Margaret Fletcher of Love Provo for their hospitality at Seabrook Island, SC

Son RJ who helped us from NJ through NYC, up the Hudson River and through the Erie Canal to Oswego

Egon and Bonnie who helped us through the Trent Severn System, Canada

Elaine and Owen on *Suncee* who boated with us through a portion of the 30,000 Georgian Bay Islands

Jack and Sue Collins in the North Channel of Canada

Cruising and long time North Channel Friends

US Customs for permitting us back in the country and arranging a Cruising Permit

Barb Koski for taking the time to visit with us at Mackinaw Island, MI

Ray and Judy Gosnell in Charlevoix, MI area

Rick and Jamie Hurst (#407) flew in to stay with us in Charlevoix area

Jack and Sue again in Charlevoix, Beaver Island, Harbor Springs area

Alice's brother and sister in law, Tom and Arlene, in Frankfort, MI

Alice's family including grand children at Grand Haven, MI.

Bob and Sharon on *Catch Me if You Can* boating together from Grand Haven, MI to Joliet, IL

Steve and Jean on *Suncat* boating from Chicago to Green Turtle Marina, KY

Steve and Di Koch (#74) on board from Alton, IL to Mobile, AL

Bud and Kathy Orr (#237) for their hospitality and info at Green Turtle

Pam & Jim Shipp on SILVER BOOTS (#537) from Alton to Aqua Marina, MS

Sonny on *Boataious* for his hospitality at Aqua Marina and Fulton, MS

Kent and Ronna Talcott for being aboard from Mobile, AL to Clearwater, FL

Bud and Kathy Orr (#237) for the use of their slip at Longboat Key, FL

Herman and Sharon Frankel for their Sarasota hospitality

Eve Kommel and Chub for the use of their BMW convertible on Longboat Key

Jeff and Brenda Bowen (#435) for the slip arrangement, hospitality, and their Mercedes

Also, all those friends who took the time for a lunch or dinner while transiting their area

Finally to all those who have written or called us during the past six months to keep in touch

And now we believe we will be looking to do shorter cruises where a more agile and versatile vessel for local trips (such as to the Bahamas) would better suit our needs. So after seven years since taking delivery, we will have a project of getting our BALI MOTU ready for sale.

More DeFever's cruising... cruising...

Even a long weekend or daytrip can be of interest to your fellow DeFever Cruisers. We're all **Ready to Go!** So tell us where it is and what it was like – we'll join you there in a heartbeat!

DEIN, Bob & Barbara (#2)

1999 • DF44 • GONDOLA Venice, FL

Little Bell Island, Exumas, Bahamas - May, 2007

As had been done for the past several years, GONDOLA crossed the Gulf Stream with Bob & Andy Utter (#221, DF44 FLORISEAS), and two days behind Ron & Charma Owens (#401, DF44 JOURNEY TO...). This had become our annual pilgrimage, occurring from approximately tax day through mid-July. The plan was always to spend about a month in the Exumas, and then migrate north to the Abacos for an equal stay. Add in some weather and equipment delays, and ten weeks became the norm.

This was our 12th Bahamas cruise, five aboard our DF40 SCENIC PATHWAY (now LAST DANCE, Glen & Jill Moore #314), and the last seven aboard our DF44 GONDOLA. Each year had its own character, molded by many memorable moments. This year, the weather defined the character; it was not because of memorable moments, but ten weeks of seemingly perpetual siege. The various weather sources all used the same terminology: “unsettled.”

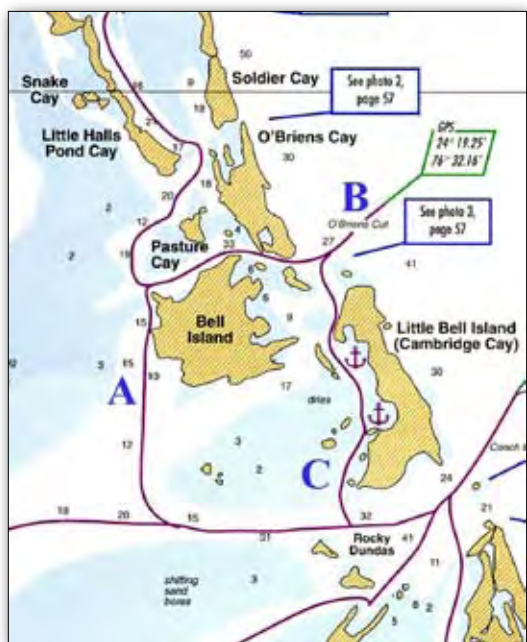
Actually, while in the Exumas we had 17 days of totally settled weather. The wind blew from 060 degrees at 20 – 35 knots constantly, the epitome of settled, if not desirable weather. For the remainder of the 10 weeks, low pressure, tropical waves, and tropical storm threats (never materialized), ruled. So, we stayed “holed up” at safe harbors for much of the time.

While in the Exumas (central Bahamas), we found ourselves mentally looking for a safe haven. Ron Owens suggested the Little Bell Island mooring field. As mooring balls are finite in number, the three DF44s quietly weighed anchor from Big Majors Spot one morning, and roared (DeFever-speak for “putted”) north, past Sampson Cay, and Pipe Creek toward Bell Island, O’Briens Cut, and Little Bell Island, aka Cambridge Cay (see chart). As the wind was blowing mightily from the eastern quadrant, we were fortunate that a passage on the Bahama Banks (western) side of the Exuma chain is suitable for the five-foot draft DFs (route A). The accompanying chart shows the three entrances to the mooring field, although the southern approach,

passing “Kiss Rock” (route C), is best suited for more adventurous souls at high tide, and dinghies.

Once in the mooring field, picking up a ball was a treat in itself. The painter ends were not marked and looked identical to the end leading to the bottom, so we each took turns attempting to retrieve the incorrect end. Each one inch, non-compliant painter line was twisted into a slit-like loop that accommodated the business end of a boat hook with great reluctance. Once each crew was suitably humbled, the three 44s settled in for six days of moderate comfort. FLORISEAS learned the hard way that the mooring ball closest to O’Briens Cut was subject to surge in brisk northwest winds, particularly at high tide. Southwest-to-west winds are the anathema of peaceful nights on the hook in the Exumas. Checking the chart, the mooring field appears open to such winds, but the adjacent water is very shallow (dry at low tide), and surge from that direction is mitigated.

Until about a year ago, Little Bell Island was an *anchorage* within the Exumas Land and Sea Park. The Park officials recently added many moorings, at least in part as a fundraising effort. This has both good and bad points.



Good:

1. The moorings are new, and appear well constructed. Once hooked up, we felt safe.

Well, now for the bad:

1. \$20 per night.
2. For anchoring, the bottom has GREAT holding ability. Are moorings necessary for safety?
3. There are moorings for fewer boats than could be accommodated at anchor. Anchoring is still allowed, but mixing moored and anchored boats can be a risky business.



Although a safe haven, Little Bell is a beautiful area in all conditions, and we had previously visited it several times under more favorable circumstances. The water clarity is unparalleled, and three well-publicized snorkeling opportunities are close by. About 1 ½ miles north is the Sea Aquarium, with two dinghy mooring balls and a fish-holding array of coral. To the south inside of Conch Cut, are Rocky Dundas and the Coral Garden, each



with its own unique rock and coral formations. As the area is within the Exumas Land and Sea Park, no fishing is allowed, and no material of any kind may be removed - this is enforced.

The Exumas Sound side of Little Bell Island

Figures 1, 2, and 3 are from the Exumas Sound side of Little Bell Island. This body of water is technically a sound because one chain of barrier islands lies about 25 miles to the east, allegedly providing protection between the Exuma chain and Africa. It looks like the ocean to us! Figure 1 shows “Bell Rock”, a signature feature on the horizon; its shape suggests having been molded by God’s teacup. Figures 2 and 3 reflect the elevation that most islands in the Exuma chain enjoy. Climbing is a bit tricky, and appropriate footwear is a must. I found that the hard rubber soles of my Crocs held up well to the small, skin-shredding, limestone stalagmites that can ruin the day of an unsure-footed hiker.

Figure 4 is of the three ducklings in a row, on their respective mooring balls. As FLORISEAS and JOURNEY TO... have subsequently been sold, the image is all the more poignant. Is there a message for us here? Hmm...



Now, about that unsettled stuff: Figures 5 and 6 are of FLORISEAS, taken from GONDOLA’s boat deck. Notice anything different in the two images? These were taken about three hours apart! Figures 7 and 8 were on the morning of our only beach picnic in the area; the conditions could hardly have been more beautiful. Figure 9 was taken later that afternoon! Those familiar with waterspouts will recognize the flare-up at the bottom, and know that this shot was taken up-close-and-personal.

All that having been said, the Little Bell Mooring Field is a great place to visit. It is located between the ever-popular Warderick Wells (headquarters for the Exumas Land and Sea Park), and Staniel Cay area. Unfortunately, it is hardly undiscovered.

Several years ago, the area had special meaning for me. After spending a few days in the (*then*) Little Bell anchorage, with



“Unsettled Weather” was the rule of the season.

FLORISEAS and JOURNEY TO..., GONDOLA had to leave. I was definitely NOT ready to depart our friends, nor the area, but the siren song of that dreaded four letter word beginning with the letter “w”, called. The thought of leaving the Bahamas in general, and this anchorage in particular was just too much. I checked the cell phone, and remarkably had one bar of service. I called my partners back home and gave my one year notice. Three hundred and sixty five days later, I was retired.



Notes From the Abacos and the St. Johns River

Is the Abaco island chain still a great cruising destination? That is a question recently debated in Soundings after Peter Swanson, a regular contributor to the magazine, wrote a negative article about his most recent Abacos cruise beginning with “How I dreaded my most recent stay . . .” and ending with “Arrrrgh, the Abacos!”

While I will agree that the Abacos are becoming Americanized with upscale rental homes whose fly-in occupants rent and operate boats with little or no knowledge of the Rules of the Road, the island chain still holds much charm and many areas of interest. Yes, while Marsh Harbour commercialized and tourist-ized, and the Baker Bay Resort that will take over the upper half of Great Guana Cay with large homes and a golf course leaching potentially deadly fertilizer onto the coral reefs are aspects that I also dislike, there remains much to be enjoyed. Much of the change is not bringing better quality of life in the aspects we desire, but that could be said of most geographical locations, including my hometown and probably yours.

There may be cleaner waters and more tranquil anchorages elsewhere, but the Abaco archipelago still has much to offer cruising boaters. Being close to the U.S. makes it practical and appealing to those whose cruising time is limited. The Abacos offer a variety of islands to visit, from the uninhabited to ones with world famous restaurants and bars. It is home to some of the world’s largest reefs with colorful coral and fish. If the natural beauty becomes too common, there are populated and party spots such as New Plymouth and Nippers.

If anything, the changes in the Abacos encourage us to place them high on our cruising agenda so that we can enjoy the natural areas of the islands before they disappear. We spent July in the Abacos and will share some of our experiences to allow others to make their own decision about including these islands in their plans.

Moraine Cay: Moraine is one of our favorite spots. We anchored in the small area between the cay and the rocks twice, once for three days. One DeFever friend was puzzled about our multi-day stay as Steve Dodge lists it as a day anchorage since it is only protected from winds over about 90 degrees. We also found some challenges in anchoring as the water near the island is shallow and the bottom hard. Checking the tide charts and clock, comparing that data with the actual depth when we arrived, we correctly calculated the low-tide depth to be 4’ 8”, giving us minimal clearance for LAST DANCE’s 4’ 2” draft. We solved the hard bottom challenge by having Glen dive the anchor, holding it by the “ears”, and sticking its “nose” in the bottom as Jill backed down. The pointy end of the CQR dug into the bottom and held through a couple of 360° swings as brief storms brought quick wind direction changes.

Moraine has a large, wide reef around three sides of the island. We snorkeled on the reef for three days and were unable to see even half of the reef. There were many fish, including a sleeping 12’ nurse shark lying under the edge of a coral head. This reef contained the most colorful coral we witnessed. It is a private island, with three houses under construction on this very small piece of land. The beauty of Moraine is not the land, but the waters and surrounding reef, so there is not really a temptation to visit the island. For those wanting a more secure anchorage, Allen’s Pensacola Cay is five miles away with a well protected harbor.

Green Turtle Cay: New Plymouth on Green Turtle is our favorite populated spot along the island chain. It has a quaint, slow-paced charm. Three grocery stores have ample supplies for re-provisioning with Sid’s Grocery getting our vote for the best Coconut Bread in the Abacos. While some will argue that Vernon’s Grocery and Bakery has better bread, Vernon only cooks

Coconut bread occasionally, while Sid’s has as many as three deliveries a day of fresh homemade bread. Taking it back to the boat and slathering butter on the Coconut bread while it is still warm is a delightful treat. It becomes a daily staple of our diet and all available space in the freezer is stuffed with bread from Sid’s.

Black Sound Marina stored LAST DANCE for the month that we were back in Florida. We were very comfortable leaving the boat there. It is a well supervised, safe marina with helpful, friendly management. They took an active role in checking the boat during our absence, taking care of any needs. Black Sound is a long, skinny bay, providing good protection from weather.

As we were leaving the island on our last visit, we noticed that the New Plymouth Inn restaurant, which has been closed for a few years, appeared to be open. We walked in and visited with the new owners,



LAST DANCE stored at Black Sound Marina

discussing their menu and food preparation. It was their first day of operation. If you are interested in an upscale, island cuisine experience in a historic atmosphere, the New Plymouth Inn may offer a unique opportunity. Since the building is a newly restored and reopened old colonial inn, is it now the New Old New Plymouth Inn?

Fowl Cay: The national park at Fowl Cay has a large reef, great for snorkeling. The two largest dive shops, Dive Guana and Froggies, feature trips to this reef. While our charts had inadequate information on the reef area, Steve Dodge's guide suggested that it was possible to anchor between Fowl Cay and the reef. Since the skies were clear, making the water easy to read, we ventured into the area to find an anchorage. Although there are a few coral heads scattered in the area, the depth averaged 20' with a sand bottom that willingly grabbed our anchor. Having *Last Dance* anchored along the reef made for a convenient headquarters for a full day of snorkeling. On our second trip to Fowl the seas were over 2', creating uncomfortable conditions. Searching along the reef, we found an area at the upper end, near Scotland Cay, where a large circle of round coral heads creates a protected anchorage. The chop was less than 4". Others boaters had already anchored within this protected area, but anchoring just outside the circle gave us much smoother conditions. The location is just northeast of 26° 38.304' N, 77° 02.871' W.

Union Ship Adirondack: In 1862, the Union ship *Adirondack* was rushing to Nassau to report on Confederate ships in the islands when it struck the reef off Man-O-War Cay and sunk. Most of the ship has disappeared due to its wood construction, but a number of cast iron structures and cannons remain. The wreckage lies in less than 12' of water, easy to explore with only snorkel gear.

We anchored between Man-O-War and the reef, taking the dinghy toward the site of the *Adirondack*. Something white was floating near the correct area appearing to be a mooring. As we approached it, we determined that it was a few 100 yards south of the wreck site and was a white fender rather than a mooring ball. We tied the dinghy to the fender and noticed that the bottom did not appear correct as we looked through the choppy surface. Diving over the side found us tied to a 50' Viking sport fish. Later, we were told that the Viking had hit the reef in March, 2007. The crew left the boat on the reef allowing the locals to practice their grandfather's salvaging skills. The boat was stripped by the next day, with the rods and reels offered for sale at Nippers. All that remains is the hull, a pair of Detroit diesels, and an Onan generator. While we planned to dive one wreck, we found two that day.

Two Boats Can Make a Crowded Anchorage: Our first stop at Guana Cay was planned to be an anchorage in Bakers Bay. After a smooth crossing of the Whale passage where Jill lost a big snapper to a shark, we found the wind blowing directly into the bay creating choppy conditions. We cruised around the end of the cay and found the Atlantic side to have calm waters. Although it seemed that anchoring in the Atlantic, in sight of the Whale passage, might not be the best decision, we had a comfortable night anchored off the beach. As we were awakening, Jill commented about hearing diesel engines. Peering out the forward windows I was looking at the side of a big boat, about 50' off our bow, right over our anchor. When we got out on deck we found one of the *Gallant Ladies*, a 162' Feadship, dropping anchors on either side of ours and backing toward the beach. After she was secured, two of the crew came up to *Last Dance* in one of their dinghies, a 25' RIB, apologizing for intruding on our space and explaining that the only place they could anchor was that exact spot as they needed to tie the stern off to a rock on the beach. They offered Cokes and ice as an apology, but we pleasantly declined the offer. Later, one of the crew returned, asking permission to come along side. He apologized again and handed us a bag with two top grade filets and a bottle of red wine. We accepted.

Abaco Regatta: Our July cruise coincided with the Abaco Regatta. We joined them for a couple of events – the parties, not the races. The kick off event is the July 3rd "Cheeseburger in Paradise" party on the beach at Fiddle Cay with free cheeseburgers and rum drinks. If you get tired of the solitude of quiet anchorages



Abaco Regatta



Jill at the Cheeseburger Party

along uninhabited islands, this event will give you enough interaction with people to cure you. At the “Cheeseburger,” we found many cruising boaters with whom we have crossed paths over the years as well as a number of sailors we know from St. Augustine. Good people, good conversation, good food and drink, and a good time. If you are in the Abacos during early July, we would recommend joining this crew of happy folks for at least one of their events during the week-long regatta.

Fishing Class: Ted Minick (#563, *Sweet C*) presented a workshop on fishing at the ‘07 Winter DeFever Rendezvous. My time in the workshop was rewarded with fish on the end of lines we trolled behind LAST DANCE while we traveled to, from, and through the islands. As Ted pointed out, since our normal traveling speed is close to trolling speed run by many off-shore fishermen, it makes sense to have a couple lines off the stern while moving. We hooked up with many fish, although across the banks too many of those fish were barracuda. Our thanks to Ted as his lessons helped us return home with a freezer even fuller than when we left. We were disappointed to have lost a big dolphin, but afterwards realized that we had no more room in the freezer anyway. The photo here was submitted with some hesitation as I know that Teacher Ted will grade it an “F” due to lack of PFD and mobile VHF radio on the fisherman. But, Ted, look in the background. We were fortunate to be crossing the Gulf Stream in lake-like conditions and the crew is just behind the camera in case the fisherman falls off the boat.



Ultimate Tender: We towed *Pearl*, our 13’6” Boston Whaler down the Intracoastal, across the Gulf Stream, and throughout the Bahamas. It was great to have a bigger tender to use as a dive platform, grocery getter, fishing boat, and island hopper. The Spring 1999 issue of *PassageMaker* had an article about towing a tender behind your trawler. That’s where the idea originated. The authors of the article, Bob and Barbara Dein (#2), had towed a 15’ Boston Whaler behind their DF40 SCENIC PATHWAY. The article detailed the benefits of having a larger tender and described techniques for towing safely. Later that year I bought SCENIC PATHWAY, and she was rechristened LAST DANCE. The Boston Whaler was not included.



Tender is the appropriate term to describe the smaller boat that accompanied us during the cruise, a few feet behind. That great source of information, the Internet, provided – Tender, Definition: A small boat accompanying a larger vessel, to be used as a service/workboat or a dinghy (About.com). While we were enjoying having the support of *Pearl*, the Ultimate Tender cruised up and anchored close by.

Mystere Shadow from Shadow Marine was accompanying three Offshore yachts on their cruise of the Abacos. *Mystere* is quite a bit more “service/workboat” than *Pearl*. At 163’, she carries a selection of support vehicles: helicopter, sportfish boat, jet skis, submarine, motorcycles, and a Mini Cooper. She also provides a little extra storage – 10,000 gallons of fresh water, 5000 bottles of wine, and a walk-in freezer. There is also a larger sister ship, *Paladin Shadow*. *Mystere Shadow* is available for rent, or purchase, if



you are so inclined. Google “Shadow Marine” for more details.

It would be nice to have your tender follow (shadow) you rather than having to tow her.

Stray Thoughts: Our biggest disappointment with cruising in the Bahamas is the new, more restrictive fishing regulations. We met some long-time Bahamas cruisers who are claiming they will not return due to the fishing rules. While the rules are reported to have begun January 1, 2007, customs was still distributing the old rules. Which rules are being enforced is hard to determine, but it is known that violating fishing regulations can be expensive and painful.

Even with the changes that can be construed as negative, there is much to enjoy in the Abacos. These islands will remain on our cruising agenda for the many great features that they offer. There are many more miles of reefs that we have yet to snorkel, more fish wanting to attack our lures, and more quiet anchorages for peaceful nights. May we cross paths there some day.

NOAA Charts: In preparation for our trip we assembled the necessary charts and guides and noted that our electronic charts were getting somewhat dated. A couple articles in cruising publications had announced that NOAA had placed electronic charts on their site that could be downloaded at no charge. So, we navigated to the NOAA website to search for new charts. We found them. The search is pretty straight forward, taking you to a two selection processes: 1) selecting the charts graphically by clicking on rectangles on a map or 2) selecting charts by chart number. Using the graphic interface, we selected all the charts from South Carolina to the Florida Keys and downloaded them to a CD. The charts required less than half of the CD. They worked fine on our cruise, interfacing with the navigation software with relative ease. The charts were downloaded on May 15 and most of them had an April 28 update notation. The free price does help the cruising budget, but getting the latest updates is the more important and critical feature.

St. Johns River - Welaka Maritime Museum: A number of members have written articles for the DeFever Cruisers Magazine about cruising the St. Johns River. While many interesting areas and aspects of a cruise up and down the river have been described before, we wanted to share a couple of our favorite spots.

The Welaka Maritime Museum is a must. Even if you are not cruising the St. Johns and you find yourself traveling the state by car and come anywhere near Welaka, you should budget at least half a day to spend at the museum. For those unfamiliar with rural Florida place names, Welaka is north of Daytona, south of Jacksonville, along the eastern shore of the St. Johns River.

The museum displays a collection of antique engines and a few antique boats. However, the main attraction is a number of boats that are relatively new, but appear



The Welaka Maritime Museum is a must!



antique. Richard Speas built the boats, starting with an antique marine engine then designing a boat that he felt complimented the engine and the designs of that era. He built the hulls from small pieces of wood and epoxy and made all the hardware by hand. His workmanship is beautiful and his designs artistic. We would argue that it may be more of an art museum than a boat museum.

Richard Speas has quite a history in boating – from building his first boat, a 65 foot square rigger, which he took his wife and five children from Michigan to spend 10 years in the Caribbean, to owning a marina and boat yard on Key Largo. He built eight cruising boats he called Tortugas, one of which we found at a dock on Tilloo Cay in the Abacos.

One of his boats began with a single cylinder 1902 engine which he salvaged from the bottom of a lake after decades in the mud. Another has a wood-fired steam engine. He is still looking for the appropriate engine for a 1924-like Gold Cup racer he built. While the engine search continues, he placed a Holman Moody 351 Ford in it so he could experience the boat on the

water.

Claiborne Young states in his guide that boats cannot stay at the Welaka city dock overnight. But, we, and other DeFeverites have found that staying one night so you can spend ample time at the museum never brings any complaints from the locals. At the head of the dock is an interesting restaurant, The Palms Café Bleu, another reason to stop at Welaka.

Seven Sisters: While not a secret, being listed in Young's Guide and getting all "4"'s (except for shopping) from Skipper Bob, the anchorage at Seven Sisters Islands is one that you must have in your cruising plans when you cruise the St. Johns. Peaceful, isolated, beautiful, natural Florida, could all be used to describe this spot.

Midges: No cruising area is perfect. We must share that the mild winter in 2006-2007 resulted in a record crop of midges. The bugs are commonly known as "blind mosquitoes" and are a non-biting insect. While they inflict no pain on your body, they can sure make a mess of your boat as they seem to number in the millions and squash easily under foot. Normally, they appear twice a year signaling the beginning and end of summer, but this year they were attempting to be year-round residents.

River Cruising: The St. Johns lacks the clear waters and big fish of the Bahamas, but has many interesting places to visit and offers more protected waters. River cruising is an experience that brings a different mind-set to travel and adventure on a boat. Since your only option is returning the way you came, planning stops at different places going north and south keeps the trip back from being a repeat experience. We found language problems on both cruises. When cruising the St. Johns, we have difficulty saying "up river" when traveling south, finding it much like learning to say "key" when you see the word "Cay" on the charts.



**VAN GEMERT, Richard & Sue (#432)
Pasadena, CA**

1991 • DF49+6 RPH • LIONHEART

LIONHEART's Continuing Cruise – Key West to Georgia

April 2006: We spent seven great days in Key West, Florida, enjoying sunsets at Mallory Square, margaritas at the Hog's Breath, key lime pie, touring around the town on foot and on the Conch Tour Train, and relaxing after our tiring trip across the Gulf. It was also really windy for a week, so our sojourn was not just a vacation but once again a wait for weather. What I liked best about Key West, besides just reveling in being back in the States, was the architecture and the colorful nature of the town. While it is truly a tourist destination, it has a lot of history, including the summer White House of Harry Truman, the home of Ernest Hemingway, and the legacy of Henry Flagler (the man who built the railroad down the east coast to the Florida Keys).



Captain and Admiral on the Atlantic Ocean in Miami Beach.

On the eighth day, April 15, we moved up the east coast of the Keys to Marathon where we had the boat hauled out of the water for bottom paint and a general inspection after the first six months of cruising. This all took five days in the yard "on the hard". Richard, Nick and I enjoyed the hospitality of Liz and Ritchie at their home which is just steps away from the Gulf of Mexico on Grassy Key. We enjoyed sunsets there too. This whole area was hard hit by the hurricanes last year. The major damage was not from the wind but from the surge that covered the entire key with three feet of water. This killed all salt intolerant vegetation as well as ruining the ground floor of the buildings that have ground floors. New buildings are required to have no living space on the ground floor however; much of



LIONHEART anchored in Biscayne Bay, Miami.

Marathon was settled in the 1950's with the advent of air conditioning, so there are many old trailer parks and motels that took a lot of property damage. The whole city is 12 miles long and less than 1/2 mile wide, from the Atlantic to the Gulf side. The road that goes through town is US 1, which is a series of bridges and causeways that follows the old railroad south through the Keys to Key West. Marathon and many towns in the Keys reminded me of what Route 66 looked like when I was a kid, only with palm trees instead of cactus. Our stay with Liz and Ritchie included playing bridge for the first time in six months, playing Mexican Train (one of our favorites), a haircut, a trip up the highway to Homestead to re-supply at Costco, and shopping for some new summer clothes (it seems that we are in perpetual summer on this trip).

On April 21 (marking six months to the day we left Long Beach on our odyssey) we bid farewell to our wonderful crew member Liz and her great

guy Ritchie and headed north, still pretty much on schedule to make it to NYC by early June. Thus we officially started our trip around the Great Loop of America. We anticipate finishing the Loop in November back in Marathon. We spent that night anchored off of Key Largo. We anchored two nights in Biscayne Bay in Miami Beach at 25 deg. N and 080 deg. W. When we entered the bay through the Government Cut that takes you to the Port of Miami, we passed directly south of the famed South Beach which was really rocking on a Sunday afternoon. Where we anchored was like being anchored in Newport Beach. There are about 10 residential islands with beautiful homes and boat docks. The high rise skyline you see on the intro to CSI Miami was all around us, as were hundreds of boats of all sizes going very fast. There aren't any speed rules in the channels, as best we could tell. After spending a day sightseeing on South Beach, we headed north in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) which will take us all the way to NYC.

We left our anchorage at 8:30 AM but had to wait until 9:00 for the draw bridge to open. There are many bridges on the ICW, and some of them are too low to allow LIONHEART to pass under. These are all drawbridges that open on demand or at certain times of the hour or the day. We had to wait a few times. Also, the ICW in Florida is evidently full of manatees. These are slow moving creatures that cruise around under water. Much of the time the speed of boat travel is restricted due to manatee conservation. Also, people living along the ICW don't like big wakes that can harm their docks, and in some places slop into their yards. All in all, travel north of Miami is like an endless Huntington Harbor or Newport Harbor Duffy cruise. Cruising through Fort Lauderdale was like Newport Beach on steroids. I have never seen more palatial waterfront homes, on huge pieces of land. It made Harbor Island look like tract houses! Nor have I seen a larger concentration of huge private yachts. In fact, I saw *The Huntress* docked in Fort Lauderdale, and she is ranked as #32 on America's largest 100. She makes LIONHEART look like a Duffy!

A major feature of the ICW is that it has a channel that is supposed to be dredged to at least 10 feet deep. The width of the channel varies. The way one manages to stay in enough water is by staying inside the ICW markers. Even with the wonderful computer navigation tool that puts the chart on the computer screen and shows your boat on that chart as you move along, the Captain and crew have to remain vigilant to stay in the channel and, therefore, in deep enough water to float your boat! We failed to do this late in the day and went aground in the Boynton inlet. The markers were very confusing and there was a big incoming tide – we hit bottom and it looked like we were stuck. NOT GOOD! Fortunately the Captain was able to power up those two big Caterpillar engines and get us off and back into the floating position right away. We have since seen others in the not-so-lucky position of being high and dry. This remains a concern for all of the ICW, however the cat and I much prefer the smooth cruising after months of rough road in the Pacific and Caribbean. That night we anchored by a bridge in Lantana. On the 26th we made it without incident to Ft. Pierce. On the 27th the large homes started giving way to more moderate homes and less inhabited shores. We cruised by Cape Canaveral and saw the NASA building and launch stands from a distance. We anchored off of Titusville in a big wind. A brush fire



A porpoise playing in LIONHEART's wake in the Florida ICW

started on shore just as we were starting dinner and we saw it on CNN news within the hour. It was a big one that closed down Highway 1 because of smoke and flames. It was out when we got up in the morning and we moved north to Daytona Beach.

At Daytona Beach we went to a marina for two nights. The Captain needed to clean the raw water strainers that had sucked up a lot of sand, gravel and mud when we went aground. Also, LIONHEART had developed a fuel leak that had to be addressed. The old boat maintenance thing again! The Captain was able to fix the leak for a cost of \$70... \$30 for the part, and \$40 for the cab ride. Now in Mexico the cab ride would have been \$5 but you would never find the part! He also had to take apart and clean the raw water strainers on both engines. This is the third time he has had to work on the engine cooling system. However, the last time was in the middle of the night, in the middle of the Caribbean Sea, with the boat bouncing around in 10 foot waves, the engine room was 110 degrees, and he had to rebuild the water pump on the starboard engine... he did it in 29 minutes! That was a special experience, especially for the Captain. Thank God he's tough as well as agile for a guy his age. You see, cruising is not for sissies!

From Daytona Beach we headed north to St. Augustine. This is the oldest European settled City in the U.S. This is where Ponce de Leon came ashore and found the Fountain of Youth which is still there, and can be seen from the city tour train. It is also home to many beautiful buildings built by Henry Flagler around the turn of the century. While building the Keys railroad he fell in love with St. Augustine. He moved there and built a mansion for himself, several churches and a hotel that is now Flagler College. These buildings have Tiffany windows, fabulous wood and tile work, gold leaf ceilings, etc. Mr. Flagler, as you may know, was John D. Rockefeller's partner in Standard Oil. Fortunately, he spent a lot of his fortune developing Florida and much of it (but not the railroad) remains today, to be enjoyed by the residents and tourists in Florida. We also hooked up with our friends on *Beso* again and started north from St. Augustine on May 1. By this point the scenery along the ICW has turned into beautiful sand dunes and marshes that are alive with water birds. We crossed into Georgia late in the afternoon and anchored for the night just off of Jekyll Island. This is a resort and outdoor camping vacation area.

As we have traveled north, it has mercifully gotten cooler. I guess it is unseasonably cool but we love it! We have slept without the AC on for the past two nights - this is a first since leaving San Diego. We had to root around and find our sweat shirts and pants. While I know this is only temporary, it is a nice break from the heat and humidity of the past six months. We are enjoying the scenery and smooth ride and looking forward to arriving in Savannah sometime tomorrow.

Georgia to New York: LIONHEART Continues the Northbound Leg

May 2006: On May 1 we entered Georgia, still traveling in the ICW. We passed by some very popular resorts on Hilton Head, Jekyll Island, St. Simon Island, Cumberland, and Broughton Island which are all part of the outer bank of islands that forms the barrier between the Atlantic Ocean and the ICW. While we didn't see any wild horses on the islands, we did see a huge variety of water birds, but alas, no dolphins in this part of the waterway. On May 3 we arrived in the city of Savannah early, by way of the Savannah River, and docked on the waterfront between a couple of river tour boats. We spent the day exploring the city and found it every bit as beautiful as reported in "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil." It was laid out in a grid by the original English colonists. The grid included small parks every few blocks - which means the elegant old homes around these squares face these lovely green spaces. We also enjoyed the waterfront, which features old warehouses and customs house renovated into restaurants, shops, parks, etc. Quite a lovely stop, but lots of current in the river made us pleased to cast off the next day and head to Beaufort, South Carolina.

On May 4 we arrived in Beaufort, which is another scenic little town on the ICW dating from the first settlers of the Carolinas. Lots of movies have been filmed in this town and the surrounding area including *The Prince of Tides*, *The Big Chill*, and one of my favorites: *Forrest Gump*. During the Civil War the residents abandoned their homes, which were appropriated by the Union Army for housing and hospitals. After the war, the former owners were allowed to buy back their property if they could pay the back taxes, pay a fine, AND pledge allegiance to the Union. Some of the largest homes were repurchased for \$8 and some were not repossessed by their southern owners because of the third provision.

We stayed in the downtown marina where we met eight other boats headed north in the ICW to get out of the hurricane belt for the summer, including our pals on *Beso*. On the morning that we left, there was a strong current moving through the marina which caused a departing boat



Sue and Richard in downtown Beaufort, SC, at rush hour.

to lose control of his vessel, hitting *Beso* - a hull-smashing blow on the nose with his anchor pulpit. Every captain in the marina leaped into action to get lines on that boat and keep him from doing any more damage. After a major Chinese fire drill, he was able to leave without hitting anyone else. When we started to pull away from the dock, the same current drove our bow into the dock (in spite of the bow thruster) hitting a piling and making a serious dent in the rub rail as well as the Captain's good humor... it happens!

We arrived in Charleston, SC on Saturday, May 6. What a great stop! First, we were docked across from a mega-yacht, reportedly owned by the attorney who won the big tobacco litigation. I wonder if he knows (or cares) that his captain and crew were smoking on the dock? We also met Bob and Barbara Dein (#2) who were at the dock in their DeFever 44 GONDOLA. They have been following our website and publishing our adventures in the newsletter. They are cruising the east coast of the US this summer, and still managing to publish the newsletter. They check out every DeFever they see. There are 428 members of the organization world-wide but I have no idea how many DeFeverers there are world-wide. I bet Art DeFever knows!

It was a little stormy in Charleston for the two days we were there, but we toured anyway with our friends on *Beso*. On Sunday we took the city tour which included the grounds of The Citadel, the military school which was the subject of Pat Conroy's book "The Lords of Discipline" and the movie "Taps" with Tom Cruise. We saw the checkered parade terrace which reminded me of Ella's Terrace at SCR. We missed graduation by one day but loved seeing so much history in one spot. Sounds like their traditions around football and mascots rival those of USC. On the same tour we saw the old town of Charleston which is right on the harbor, dating back to the colonization by the British, with many wonderful old homes overlooking Battery Park. One of the oldest residences has a cannon in the attic which landed there during the bombardment by the Union Navy during the Civil War. It was too heavy to remove so they just fixed the roof and left it there. It is now probably an asset for resale! We also visited Fort Sumter which was a major tactical objective in the Civil War. Fort Sumter was an active part of the east coast military defense system until after WWII. Now, coastal defense is handled by the US Navy with non-fixed missile delivery systems (more in the Hampton Roads segment). We enjoyed the arrival of a storm while at Fort Sumter and during the dinner hour in Charleston. Poured rain but was not cold, therefore everyone and everything just carried on as usual... soaking wet!

May 8 found us traveling the ICW again, anchoring in Cow House Creek across from Wacca Wacci Marina, followed by stops in North Carolina in Swansboro, Oriental, and the Alligator River. In the Alligator River, the captain of *Indian Summer*, a beautiful Fleming yacht, took the best 'glam' photo of LIONHEART I have ever seen. The sunset and moonrise on the night of May 12 was fantastic and fortunately recorded for posterity (see photo gallery in website).

On May 13 we arrived at Elizabeth City, NC and were greeted by Fred and the 'Rosebuddies'. This is a huge volunteer hospitality effort made by this boat-oriented township. We experienced similar efforts to make cruisers welcome in small towns along the east coast and well into Canada. Fred and his 'Rosebuddies' met us at the town dock to help us tie up and supply information on their town, and an invitation to a wine and cheese party at 5:00 pm. (you know I never pass up a wine reception!). At that gathering we were apprised of the advantages of the next (and last) leg of the ICW... it was the trip through The Great Dismal Swamp. This trip is made in the Dismal Swamp Canal which was originally surveyed by George Washington (yes, THE GW, before the Revolution, first President, etc.!). Well, we took the Dismal Swamp Canal north on May 14. By the end of the day we had arrived in Portsmouth, Virginia, completed the 1200+ mile ICW, and wiped out both of our propellers when we hit a BIG stump in the Dismal Swamp. Evening found us tied up at Ocean Marine yacht shipyard in Portsmouth with the hope of being hauled out to inspect the damage the next day. We were actually hauled out on Tuesday, May 16, and found the area of damage. On "the hard" for two nights, Nick stayed on LIONHEART while we stayed in the local Holiday Inn (Nick had the best deal!). During our stay in Portsmouth, we visited Norfolk across the river, watched a number of US war ships arrive and leave the great Norfolk shipyards, and enjoyed the lovely old town of Portsmouth. There are many historical sites and fabulous museums in the area that we plan to visit on our next trip there... next spring. Yes, this was just a reconnaissance mission!

On May 19 (with new propellers all tuned up and LIONHEART purring like a kitten) we headed north from Portsmouth, through Hampton Roads, into the Chesapeake. Hampton Roads is home to the US Navy with war ships coming and going daily. Rows of battleships and aircraft carriers lined up for refitting or new assignments. The Coast Guard is much in evidence in this area, keeping anything and anyone from getting close to the war ships. It was a great day on the Bay and we traveled north to the Potomac River where we turned left and went into the mouth of one of the tributaries (the Glebe River) and anchored for the night. The next day we traveled north to Annapolis, Maryland. Our entrance into the harbor took us head-on into the Naval Academy. We took a dock right in front of the Annapolis Yacht Club and our good friends from Long Beach, Shirley and Merrill Knopf met us on the dock. We walked around the little town of Annapolis with the Knopfs and their son, Kevin and his family, and had a traditional Maryland crab dinner compliments of the Knopfs. Kevin is an oncologist practicing in Annapolis and at Johns Hopkins, which is where his Dad went to school. The best part of all of this is seeing our friends after seven months away!



Arriving in Baltimore Harbor

seven months!), and was willing to drive me around to the West Marine stores to fulfill the Captain's supply orders! While Gayle is not Baltimore's most enthusiastic promoter, we had fun doing the Baltimore Duck Tour, dining in Little Italy, and enjoying the harbor area which features some wonderful public art. We also drove to St. Michaels on the eastern shore of Maryland to see where the VIPs in DC have their retreats. Another area to visit on our return tour next summer!

Leaving Baltimore on May 26, we headed north to the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. As the name indicates, this canal connects the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware Bay. We spent the night in a marina on the canal. The next day we entered Delaware Bay and turned north into the Delaware River and were docked in downtown Philadelphia by noon. We chose to spend the Memorial Day weekend at a dock because it gets crazy on the water everywhere on Memorial Day. Fortunately, one of Richard's high school friends from Los Alamos now lives in New Jersey. Bob Berglund drove over to Philadelphia and visited with us Saturday night. Bob took us on a walking tour of South Street in Philly and he and Richard had a great visit. On Sunday we took a brief tour of all the historical sights. I say brief because one could spend days or weeks seeing all the buildings and exhibits about the founding of our country and the framing of the constitution in 1776. However, the waterways called us and we pulled out of Philly on Monday of Memorial Day weekend, May 29, which was my birthday and still the crazy boating weekend. I want to note here that I received a brand new pair of stabilized binoculars for my birthday. They have really improved my bird, big boat name, and sign identifications enormously!

We headed down the Delaware River, through the Delaware Bay to Cape May, New Jersey. We entered the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway at Cape May, carefully following Skipper Bob's Cruising Guide. The waterway is very shallow throughout (the technical term is 'skinny water') and we promptly found the bottom and joined the 'crazy boaters' who go aground through lack of experience or some other excuse. I wish I had a photo of this one as LIONHEART, the biggest boat for miles, sat like a large toad in a small pond and waited for the tide to come in and float us. The Admiral suggested putting down the anchor and starting the BBQ and pretending we were there by choice! The next day we left the ICW and went out into the Atlantic for about 90 miles, skipping Atlantic City, and traveling to our last stop before NYC. We spent the night at a marina (loose use of the term) in Brielle, NJ. May 31 we left Brielle in a pretty dense fog and headed for the Big Apple.

As we entered New York waters, we passed Sandy Hook and entered the deep water channel, still in the fog. We passed several large and small Coasties who were patrolling the entrance channel.

May 21 through 25 found us in Baltimore, Maryland visiting my dear friend Gayle Lombardi, and enjoying another great historical region of the USA. Gayle and I have been friends since the sixties. She used to live in Seattle where I visited her almost every year on my way back and forth to LIONHEART while we kept her in the NW. Gayle adopted a Russian orphan about seven years ago and has been living on the east coast since then. It was a real treat to visit her again and see what a lovely daughter she has wrought in Caroline Lombardi. As always, Gayle knew where to get me a good haircut and color, the nearest Trader Joes (first time in



LIONHEART cruises into NYC

As we approached the Verrazano Bridge which connects Brooklyn to Staten Island, we could not even see the entire bridge because of the fog. Just at noon as we entered the harbor, the fog began to fade and we saw the skyline of Manhattan through the mist, and Lady Liberty was an absolutely stirring sight to see from our own decks! By 1:30 PM we were tied up in Lincoln Harbor Marina on the NJ side of the Hudson River directly across from mid-town Manhattan.

So, we actually made it all the way from Long Beach to NYC by June 1. There were many times when we thought it highly unlikely that we would meet this goal, but we did it! It took 222 days. We'll include a mileage report in the next chapter.



ROSS, JR., Michael and Jane (#641)
Manteo, NC

1999 • DeFever 44 Offshore Cruiser • BLESSINGS

North Carolina Cruise

August 2, 2007: Departed our homeport of Manteo, NC to experience the delights of the North Carolina coast. The State of NC has the largest expanse of inland waters on the east coast and enough shoreline for years of exploration. We are looking for marinas near many lesser-known towns, or even hidden behind a creek or river in the middle of nowhere. To add value and pleasure to our cruise, we have planned to visit ports with coastal history, legends, and folklore. The first port of call on our list of places to cruise is Albemarle Plantation Marina. BLESSINGS crossed the Albemarle Sound that is the largest freshwater sound in America on Thursday, August 2, 2007. We are very careful of sound crossings after our experience on the Pamlico Sound on October 18, 2005, when we were starting out on our maiden voyage. On that crossing we had eight foot waves breaking over the bow of BLESSINGS. Crossing the Albemarle was beautiful and picturesque... a little warm, but after all, it is August!

Albemarle Plantation is a HUGE development out in the middle of nowhere. Hertford is the nearest town and it is about 10 miles away. There are tons of amenities here that anyone coming into the marina can use. Golfers will love the 18-hole PGA course (a Dan Maples original) which winds around the Plantation property. There are also tennis courts, swimming pool with lovely bathhouse, Albemarle Plantation clubhouse, bicycles, and they even brought us a golf cart to use while we are here. Winding golf cart paths throughout the property are excellent for walking, running, biking, etc. At the end of our dock is a large grassy area for Godiva (our chocolate Labrador Retriever) to chase balls, and when she gets hot the Yeopim Creek is good for a refreshing swim.

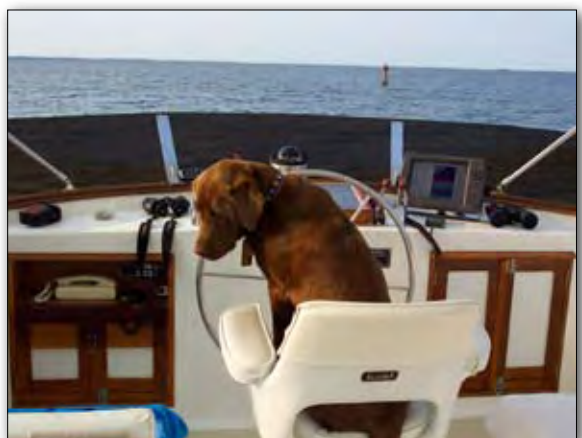
Recently we had a boat club from this area come into Manteo and we have seen several of those folks here at their home marina. Sandy and Lee were at the fuel dock when we arrived. Sandy came over to our boat as we were pulling into the dock. She looked at me for a minute waiting for me to recognize her. It took me a few minutes to focus in as Mike and I had a really crazy time docking BLESSINGS. We are used to small slips but this slip is just too big. Ha, ha.

Lee and Sandy graciously lent us their car to visit Hertford and Edenton, where we made arrangements for the next leg of our trip. On Sunday evening we had dinner at their lovely home. Sandy has a fabulous kitchen and is a great cook as well as a pastry chef.

Last evening (Monday) we returned the favor and had Lee and Sandy aboard BLESSINGS for dinner. Mike outdid himself again with his fabulous spaghetti sauce. Mike and I planned on staying here one evening but have decided a week would be better to take advantage of all there is to do and see. Our next stop will be Edenton Town Docks and we will write some more when we arrive there.



Godiva helps with the fishing.



Hey, I'm the Captain here!



Two of Edenton's lovely historic homes.

August 12, 2007: Arrived at Edenton Town Docks just before noon. We waited several days to get the great weather we had today to cross the Albemarle Sound. Edenton is a charming southern town with tons of history. The village was incorporated in 1722 as the second oldest town in North Carolina, and named Edenton to honor the recently deceased governor Charles Eden. Actually, it was the first capital of North Carolina before Raleigh. The attached photos of the historic homes will speak for themselves. We do want to give some history on the Roanoke River Light, which was recently moved to the park next to the marina and is awaiting restoration. The Roanoke River Light is the only survivor from 15 screw pile light stations that formerly guided navigation on the sounds and into the rivers. It was the last light station to be built and is on a grander scale than any other of its predecessors. Deactivated in 1941, it was moved to Edenton fourteen years later from its original position in the Albemarle Sound off the mouth of the Roanoke River. On another note Edenton does not get many visitors in the marina because it is not along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). However, it is well worth the trip to spend a few days here.



Roanoke River Light

August 20, 2007: We departed Edenton on August 18th and cruised to Alligator River Marina for an overnight stay. On August 19th we departed at the break of dawn to cruise to Belhaven, NC. We entered the ICW at Alligator River and had an enjoyable trip. Belhaven Waterway Marina is small but very cute. Owners and dock masters Les and Brenda Porter cruised for eighteen years, and their knowledge of boating and boater's needs clearly shows. The bath/shower rooms are decorated in nautical themes and past family history, including genuine letters and pictures from World War II.

Belhaven has 2400 residents. Along Water Street there are beautiful, large stately homes. Right next to the marina is a new condo complex and we were told the condos were selling for \$400,000. Most of them are still empty. Mike and I can not understand why since there is nothing here to support that price for housing - the only thing here is the water. We met an older gentleman last evening while biking and he told us Belhaven is only two feet above sea level. He lives in a home his grandfather built in 1907, and it is four feet above sea level, the highest spot in Belhaven. Needless to say, Belhaven has felt the force of many storms in both wind and water.

August 23, 2007: We departed from Belhaven yesterday and made the four hour trip to Bath, NC, traveling 31 miles. Bath has a nice state-maintained dock, but the free dock does not have power or water. Since we have a generator and carry 370 gallons of water this was not a problem, even though it got quite hot in



Belhaven's Crab!



Self Portrait overlooking Bath Creek

August 24, 2007: We traveled about 18 miles on the Pamlico River up to Broad Creek and Washington Waterfront Docks yesterday. Mike and I immediately liked this place as the docks are right on Water Street and the main part of town. We had two dock masters assist us in tying up and provided us with lots of useful information about the City of Washington. So far we have eaten lunch twice at “Down on Main Street” and it was yummy both times. We biked to the WalMart Super Center and were somewhat amazed at this huge store in the City of Washington, population 9,800!

August 29, 2007: I am writing this from the upper helm of BLESSINGS while we are underway to Oriental, NC. Sunday morning we attended the 8:30 service at the Washington United Methodist Church. After the service a couple behind us greeted Michael and me and we began a conversation which carried over into the church parking lot where our bicycles were parked. DJ and Ray Midgett invited us to their home for lunch. They live in a bungalow type home that was called a “craftsman” because it came as a kit from Sears in the early 1900’s. Their home is lovely with many of DJ’s personal touches. It turns out Ray was raised on Hatteras Island and his father was in the Coast Guard. The “lunch” DJ prepared was absolutely delicious and became our meal for the day. Our hosts were interested in seeing our “home” so we invited them all to visit us on BLESSINGS after we biked back to the dock.

September 5, 2007: After staying one night back in Bath we cruised to Oriental on August 29. Michael & I have found that it is very wise to wait for the right weather to venture out in the Pamlico or Albemarle Sound. Consequently, we have had wonderful cruising. We follow the three w’s rule...wind, waves and wife...if any of the three say “no” you don’t leave the dock. It took me a while to teach Michael these three rules but he finally caught on and it has been “smooth sailing” ever since.

Oriental is located at the mouth of the Neuse River on the Pamlico Sound. The town, once known as Smith’s Creek, was given its intriguing name by the wife of Oriental’s founder and first postmaster, Lou Midyette. Rebecca Midyette saw the name on the transom name board of a Union steamship that sank off Hatteras in 1862. The name board washed ashore and was displayed at a residence in Manteo where she was visiting. The ship’s legacy is now preserved in the name of the town. Called the sailing capitol of NC, Oriental boasts a boat to resident ratio of three to one.



The birthplace of Pepsi in New Bern

the afternoon. Mike and I took a guided tour of several homes which were built in the 1700’s. Bath is the oldest incorporated town in NC and was established in 1705. This town also had the first public library in NC. Its early history was marked by political rivalry, the yellow fever epidemic of 1711, the Tuscarora Indian War of 1711-1715, and piracy. The notorious pirate Edward Teach, better known as “Blackbeard” frequented the area and terrorized coastal shipping. It is said he married a local girl and briefly settled in the little harbor town about 1716. In 1718 he was killed by Lt. Robert Maynard of the British Navy at Ocracoke.

Bath’s political and economic importance declined when the Beaufort County seat of government was moved to Washington in 1785. It has since remained the quiet waterside village it is today, with a population of 275.

September 14, 2007: We have been in New Bern almost two weeks and what a wonderful time it has been. Dockmaster Joe (used to be the dockmaster in Shallowbag Bay) gave us a GREAT slip right next to the Sheraton Hotel. Boaters have so many amenities here. Gym, swimming pool, free, WiFi, hotel computers, complimentary daily newspapers, complimentary fruit, free shuttle service, and most of all... two fresh water fountains for Godiva to soak in and cool off after chasing tennis balls! Now you can see why we love it here, not to mention the lovely town and huge waterfront park right

next to the marina. New Bern has a lovely historic district as we have found in most of the towns we have visited on this trip. However, signs of revitalization are everywhere with many ongoing projects.

Well, all good things must come to an end and Michael and I plan to begin our trip back to the Outer Banks either Sunday or Monday morning. BLESSINGS will be hauled out for bottom paint on September 21. After taking care of some other obligations and provisioning we plan to begin our trek south in mid-October with a final destination of Boca Chita Naval Air Station in Key West, Florida by December 20.

September 27, 2007: Final chapter of the NC Cruise. As we have heard many times before and can now attest to with first-hand knowledge, NC has some of the most beautiful cruising grounds that exist. Michael and I enjoyed the beautiful rivers and all the historic towns we visited. Not to mention all the friendly people. What an adventure!

Be advised to pay attention to the warnings about the Albemarle Sound. Due to some minor repairs our trip home was delayed by two days. On September 18th we traveled from New Bern to Belhaven and stayed overnight at the Belhaven Waterway Marina. September 19th we traveled from Belhaven all the way to Wanchese. The last three hours on the Albemarle Sound were not enjoyable. My husband, Captain Mike did not obey the Three W Rule. You know, wind, waves, or wife...if any of the three say “no” you don’t leave port. Michael did a superb job in the rough water, manually steering BLESSINGS and constantly watching for crab pots while Miss Godiva and I were hanging on for dear life and sick as dogs... haha. As you can guess, we’ve had a discussion now that we are back in port and have come to the conclusion that the Three W rule needs to be obeyed at all times in the future.

Upon arrival in Wanchese we were hauled out at Bluewater. BLESSINGS now has new bottom paint and new zincs in place – she is ready for our trip south.



SISCOE, John & Karen (#499)

1986 • DF46 POC • CHATEAU Plant City, FL

Cruising in Europe

We purchased our current DeFever in 2000 in the Great Lakes and have had the good fortune to be able to spend from four to eight months aboard each year since that time. Over those seven years we have covered over 22,000 miles doing the Great Lakes, the Great Loop, extended time in Canada, and several trips into the Bahamas which was John’s dream for our retirement.

Karen had hoped to spend extended periods of time in Europe as she had lived in Paris while studying French during her college days and spent many years teaching language arts. Spending summers in Europe aboard a boat made sense, so in the spring of 2007 we purchased a Dutch-built steel cruiser in Holland which we moved aboard to pursue our newest retirement dream - living aboard while cruising the rivers and canals of Europe.

During our summer cruise we e-mailed several reports back to friends and family which we referred to as “Siscoe Notes.” In these notes we described what we were seeing and doing on this adventure and included numerous pictures that we had taken of sites, activities and friends along the way. The following article is made up of excerpts from our six “Siscoe Notes” which were written during our four month stay last summer.

The end of May finds us tied to the city mooring in Roermond in the south of Holland where we had purchased the boat in late March.

We were doing some last-minute shopping after having spent about ten days upgrading, cleaning and doing the other things required to turn the boat into a comfortable summer home. Note that we are proudly flying “Old Glory” and have actually seen three other U.S. flagged ships during our first two weeks on the water, although we have yet to meet or talk to any of the Americans aboard these vessels.

I was fortunate to have contacted a boater living near the town where we purchased the boat who I had emailed after seeing his name and home town here in Holland on an internet boating site. He and his wife came and looked us up shortly after our arrival and invited us to stay at a club in Venlo where he is a member. That worked out great as



Tied to the city mooring in Roermond

this was the town where we were to meet friends coming from the States who were to spend time with us.

We visited Norbert at his home, which sets on the Maas River in the village of Arcen. The home was built sometimes before 1806 as he has a river chart on the wall showing its location there at that time. Norbert and his wife came to visit us the day we arrived at his club in Venlo, and he returned the following day to take us for an auto tour of the surrounding area. This included two ferry crossings of the Maas River and a short ride into Germany which is only a few kilometers away. The highlight of the day was a visit to a local brewery where we had to sample some of the product in their outdoor café. Norbert presented us with a gift pack of six of the different kinds of beer they brewed the day we left.

Janet and Bob, boating friends from Florida, arrived in Venlo a couple of days later by train and spent 9 days with us as we moved north on the Maas River on our shakedown cruise. They spent nine summers cruising Europe on their own boat starting back in the mid 1990's and they were a wealth of knowledge when it came to the European navigation, lock operation, and all there is to know about cruising in the Netherlands. Every day was like being in "cruising school" from the time we got up in the morning until we went to bed that night. What great boating guests they were and we only hope to remember all that they taught us.

Bob and Janet had the opportunity to meet Norbert and Mirjam as we were all invited to their home for coffee as we passed by their village on the day that we left Venlo. It was very nice to be received to their garden for coffee and pastries.

After Janet and Bob left we spent several more days in Den Bosch waiting for the Sluis' (locks) that were being repaired, and we took this opportunity to get to know the town better. This gave us the time to enjoy some of the scenery, café's, sights, and to complete more boat projects - including renaming the ship CHATEAU DEUX and buying and installing new lettering on the boat.

The cost of mooring will shock most of our boating friends as some improved city moorings are free except that you may have to insert a Euro or two in a slot to get electric or water. Those moorings that require a fee usually charge one Euro per meter which is less than twenty five per cent of what it would cost at most marinas along the east coast of the U.S. for this boat. At this rate we will have a problem spending over \$300 U.S. per month for mooring fees, which really breaks my heart.

After an early morning exit from Den Bosch we headed South on the Zuid-Willemsvaart Kanaal (South Williams Canal) to complete our shake-down cruise. The cruise back to the South was pastoral with many farms and much open country, but the countryside is so flat that it surely can not be called scenic. Everything is very neat and extremely clean, with flowers everywhere - the whole country seems to be so neatly trimmed. What makes it even more impressive is the fact that all utility lines are underground so that you see no poles or wires running over head to clutter the view of the countryside. It really is very pretty. We encountered many more locks along this route than we had seen on the Maas River during the first leg of the trip, but we know that this is nothing compared to the number of Ecluse' (locks) we will see as we head towards the hills and mountains of Belgium and France.

As we ended our shake-down cruise around the south of Holland and headed for Belgium, I am happy to report that the boat has performed flawlessly and that we now understand most of the systems on board. The Perkins Sabre 135 HP diesel runs perfectly just slightly above idle, in order to stay below the speed limit on the rivers and canals, and is so quiet that I sometimes forget that it is running when we stop.

Belgium is the youngest country in Western Europe, even younger than the U.S., and is made up of two very distinct and different parts. The Flemish part in the north is very much like its neighbor to the north - Holland, although they speak a different dialect. The southern or Wallonia part of Belgium speaks French and is very closely tied to France. Our route took us through the French-speaking Wallonia region as we traveled the very commercial and busy Albert Canal for the first couple of days, which can only be described as industrial and very UGLY.

When rejoining the Meuse (Maas) River after turning south at Namur, we left the smoke stacks behind us and started to encounter a beautiful valley with mountainous scenery that we had been hoping for. Wow - lovely villages, beautiful chateaus along the river side, gorgeous Gothic Cathedrals and



Dinant, among the beautiful parts of Belgium, along the Maas River!

forts perched on cliffs every few miles - now this is what we came here to see. We spent our last three days in Belgium at the wonderful small town of Dinant, just north of the French frontier. Can you see why??

On to France

As we crossed the French border we continued to rise, and we followed the Meuse River into the Ardennes Mountains and eventually into the Canal des Ardennes at Pont-a-Bar. As we traveled deeper into the Ardennes-Champagne region we spent most nights in small towns or villages which were working hard to attract tourism to the region and had provided good moorings at docks or walls in almost every village we passed. Most also provided electricity if you got there early enough, as well as moorings with a water point to fill your tanks if you needed to. It required just over three weeks to reach Paris, and thirteen of those nights were spent at free town or ecluse (lock) moorings with the rest costing two to eight Euros per night. Man do I love this boating in France!

At Meaux, much nearer to Paris, we found a port de plaisance with very modern floating docks including water and electric at every mooring location situated again in a beautiful park near the center of town. The mooring again was free, although we had to raft off of some Dutch cruisers that we had met earlier who were also heading for Paris. Can you pick out the one American flag in the middle of all of the boats? Meaux had a wonderful Cathedral with gorgeous adjoining gardens and a museum. The Saturday market covered several square blocks and was situated immediately across from the boats. I could take up residence here!!!! Not one French flagged boat to be found.

The canals in this northern region were very narrow and had many locks, often more than one lock per kilometer making travel very slow, but you had lots of time to enjoy the scenery. One day on the Canal de Ardennes we had a flight of twenty-seven locks in thirteen kilometers which had to be taken in one day, requiring six to seven hours of steady travel. Hikers and bikers using the tow paths made faster progress than we did and they often beat us to the next town. You can bet that we were ready for a bottle of wine and a fresh baguette when arriving at our destination at the end of that day.

Most of our days were shorter, often only traveling twenty or thirty kilometers, which gave us lots of time to enjoy the scenery such as the hillsides with their vineyards and the wheat fields in the valleys.

It has surprised us that very few French people are out on their bateaus using their beautiful canals and rivers. We have met and shared drinks and stories with many other cruisers along the way, most of them from Holland. We have also cruised with people from Germany, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, South Africa, Canada, and have even met two other American couples along the way. It has been great fun floating along with such a great international community, although it does at times create some interesting language challenges. We always seem to manage as English is no doubt the international language and Karen's fluency in French definitely helps when dealing with the locals. Everyone comments on how pleasant and helpful the French people have been to us boaters everywhere that we stay.

We have faced one new challenge that we have never experienced while cruising in North America and that is how they handle those hills or mountains that are too tall to build locks to get over. How?? Build a tunnel! Now they will cause you to pucker up and pay attention, and the one on the Canal de Ardennes was almost five kilometers long. Because of the lower speed limit it took us well over an hour to get through without one moment to relax, as we had only about one meter to spare on either side. You can believe that I was glad to see the light at the end of the tunnel - open a bottle of wine!!

AAAHHHHH—Paris---We made it!!

We cruised the northern French rivers with an English couple who had traveled the world - he had been a commercial airline pilot and he said it best when he referred to Paris as undoubtedly "the most beautiful city in the world". There is only one "City Of Lights" with her unbelievably wide boulevards, beautiful architecture, wonderful river, over 170 museums, and more monuments and fountains than you could ever count.

We looked forward to the time when we could visit by entering the city on the Seine River in our own boat, and it was as exciting as we had thought it would be, in more ways than one. The dozens of Bateaux Mouches carrying sightseers made the navigation a bit tense but the sights were well worth it. The first notable sight when entering the city from down stream was Le Tour Eiffel, accompanied by a lady on an island in the middle of the Seine that we are used to seeing on an island in a different city several thousand miles away.



A quick review of our history books should help us remember that the Statue Of Liberty that we are so used to seeing in New York harbor was a gift to the people of America from the French to help celebrate our independence from England after the Revolutionary war. Lady Liberty's little sister has resided on this small island in the center of Paris since that time, very near the tower Mr. Eiffel designed and built for the 1900 Paris exhibition. This is probably the most recognizable tower in the world and a symbol of Paris.

After passing more beautiful bridges and buildings than we can describe, we came to another island with a small church that many of you would recognize - Notre Dame!!

We notice that the view is much better from the river than it is when you are at street level trying to look over and around hundreds of other tourists who are also straining to get an unobstructed view.

A short distance upstream we entered thru a lock to the Arsenal, which is the Port de Pleasance located at the foot of the Bastille Monument, right in the center of downtown Paris. We spent ten days here and talk about location, location, location.

After having almost no internet service because of a lack of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout rural Northern France, we now had full time internet because the city of Paris, like many of the larger cities in the States has established a free city-wide network of hot spots, so you can get online from anywhere in the city. We loaded over 300 e-mails and used our Skype VOIP internet phone service almost non-stop for the first day or two to call family and friends and catch up with all that was going on at home.

The neatest new addition is the city-wide bicycle program. Over 10,600 brand new and very different looking bikes have been strategically placed at over 750 locations around the city. In order to reduce the load on public transportation and to reduce the number of cars being driven they have created bike lanes all over the city and are encouraging the citizens to ride these bikes to work or just to get around town. The best part is that they are free for the first half hour.

The charge to use them after the initial half hour is reasonable and we saw them being used by the thousands by locals going to work in their suits, and tourists riding around with their backpacks and maps trying to figure out where they were. Just put a valid credit card into the machine so they know who you are and who to charge for the extra time (or the bike if you don't return it) and you're off. You can leave it at any of the 750 locations when you are finished which makes them very convenient to use.

We left Paris with American friends Vivian and Bill aboard and retraced our way up the Marne River, heading for the Champagne country. We were lucky to have mostly nice weather for the six days that they spent with us, allowing us to spend most of our time outside. This was especially good for Bill and Vivian as they are avid bird watchers and have now been in North America, Europe, India, and Australia within the past year visiting pilot and boating friends and bird watching on each of these trips.

We try to finish the days travel and be moored by early or mid afternoon so we can spend some time exploring the town or village and seeing the sights. We also spend part of the time checking out the local restaurants, if we have decided that we may want to eat out that night, and most importantly I evaluate all of the boulangeries to decide where I will go the next morning to do my shopping.

The decision of where to go this morning was



easy as our bike ride the previous afternoon had turned up only one place to buy my normal two croissants, one pain au chocolat (pastry with chocolate bits) and our baguette for the day. If the village has no boulangerie we will usually breakfast on fruits from the local market that can be found in most of the towns and villages that we pass through. We have a tendency to shop like most Europeans, which is every day, as the refrigerator on our little ship is very small. Our daily shopping excursions are to the boulangerie or patisserie for our baked goods, the fromagerie for our cheese, charcuterie for our meats, local cave or marche ou vin for our wine, or the epicerie for other grocery items. This is all part of the fun of being here.

Some days we have the opportunity to do one stop shopping if we arrive for the local weekly market. Here you can buy everything including meat, fish, bread, fruits, vegetables, clothes, tools, eggs and did I mention shoes and purses? These markets are usually held on the village square in the middle of town. If all else fails in larger towns we sometimes break down and go to a large Carrefour (department/grocery store) which is the second largest chain of stores in the world behind WalMart.

One of the things which you must be very concerned about in France is the many low fixed bridges which you must go under as you pass along the rivers and canals. The French chart books, which also have information in German and English, are not always helpful about the height of specific bridges as you travel. The books tell about the supposed lowest clearance for each canal or section of river, but because it has been a very rainy summer we found that the clearance for many of the bridges was somewhat less than the guides had indicated. We had to lower our radar arch (4.25 meters high) for almost all days that we traveled in France, but could usually leave the canvas top in place until we approached a very low bridge. To solve the problem of not knowing the exact bridge heights I built an adjustable height gauge to place on the front of the boat so we could check the bridge height before proceeding on through.

On a couple of occasions Karen had to use "EMERGENCY REVERSE" to stop us from smashing our canvas top into the bridge when the gauge scraped the bottom of the bridge as we entered. I am happy to report that after going under several hundred bridges that we have returned to Holland unscathed with everything still intact. As the water levels were higher than normal not all of the cruisers were so lucky, as we saw a few broken masts, bent radar arches and crumpled canvas tops.

Now that CHATEAU DEUX has been placed on the hard for the winter we have had some time to reflect on our summer's cruise. We are now even more convinced that the joy of cruising Europe's inland waterway has to be one of the boating world's best kept secrets. This extensive waterway network of rivers and canals that twist and turn through Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, and deep into Eastern Europe all of the way to the Black Sea would take a lifetime to explore. The small country of Holland has over 6000 kilometers of waterways, France has almost 10,000 kilometers and the list goes on and on. France's VNF (waterway management commission) has almost 6000 employees overseeing this system which also includes almost 2000 locks and over 350 dams. I only hope that we have enough time left in our lives to see most of it.

Although the scenery we passed by and the places we stopped to visit were extremely beautiful, I must admit that the weather throughout Europe was absolutely horrible last summer. We had rain and cold temperatures almost all summer and it was reported to be one of the worst years on record. The heavy rains resulted in floods and high water on most all of the rivers although we were lucky enough not to have been caught in any weather related closures of the waterway system. Here is hoping that the weatherman is more cooperative next year.

After almost 22,000 miles of boating on CHATEAU here in North America the transition to cruising the landlocked waters of Europe is quite a change. No more do we have to wait for the right weather window that is required to venture across the Gulf Stream to the Bahamas, or to cross the Gulf of Mexico from the panhandle of Florida to Tampa Bay. No more dodging the wakes of the large go-fast boats or setting an anchor and watching to make sure we are holding before we go to bed. We are now cruising the perfectly flat rivers and canals where the speed limit for the whole system is between four and eight miles per hour, with an area occasionally set aside for water skiing and speedsters. No longer do we have to listen to the marine weather reports two or three times per day because we don't really care where the winds are from and we know that wave height won't be an issue. If we don't find a nice village or lock with moorings for us it's not a problem. You can just pull over to the side of the canal and tie to a tree or secure yourself by pounding stakes into the ground and tying up for the night with no need to set an anchor alarm on the GPS to wake us if the anchor should drag. One new challenge was learning the new navigation rules for the European waterways, and on occasion it takes us a while to unravel the mystery of diamonds of all different colors posted along the sides of the canals and on the bridges and locks. One of the biggest changes was the fact that the red and green navigation aids which mark the outer limits of the waterway are just reversed from those in North America (no more red-right-return).

The final challenge has been to continually watch approaching barges to see if they are displaying a large "Blue Board" on the side of their cabin as they are meeting you. This means that the barge is going to change sides of the river to take advantage of a favorable or avoid an unfavorable river current. Because of the size of these guys, you don't want to miss that signal as you would surely lose any argument you may have with one of those behemoths. Although we made a few mistakes before we were able to unravel all of the new navigation rules, we avoided any serious problems by just using good old common sense.

As we sit in the evening and plan for the next day we have had to scale back on the number of kilometers we plan to cover and there is one very good reason for this -LOCKS. Thankfully there are usually so many interesting villages and towns and they are so close together compared to what we are used to here at home that we do not really want to go too far each day for fear we may miss something.

The locks are a challenge for other reasons besides the large number of them that you must pass through, and that challenge is that no two seem to be the same. While traveling through Holland and Belgium we spent most of our time on larger rivers and the locks were usually huge. Most were manned by lockkeepers so we just waited until the gates were opened for us and then entered and tied up. But things changed drastically when we entered the smaller canals in Northern France.

Most of the French locks were automatic (unmanned) which can create all kinds of challenges trying to activate the locks. After activating it to make the doors open, you can enter, activate the door closure, and allow the water level in the chamber to fill or empty. Finally the doors will open so you can depart.

Upon entering France at the frontier we were given a remote control that looked like a garage door opener with instructions on how to use the device to activate the lock as we approached. When you approach the lock you will pass a sign telling you to "aim and click". AAAAH - but where do you aim it when you are hundreds of feet away from the lock doors? Finally we discovered that if we pointed it at the sign, an orange light on top of the sign would start to flash and the lights at the lock would change to red and green indicating that the lock was being prepared for us. Shortly the doors would open so we could enter. Just when we got this system down they took our door opener away from us and explained that it wouldn't be needed any more as we would now just have to twist a pole that was hanging over the water, which would activate the lock. This usually worked as advertised but we learned to slow way down and not let go of the pole until we were sure that the red and green light was on. This meant that the switch on the pole had actually worked and the lock was being prepared for us.



Following this we entered a section of the waterway that had a radar dome situated a short distance before the lock which worked fine on our boat. However, cruisers with smaller and lower boats would on occasion have to pass in front of the radar waving a frying pan high in the air in order to be seen.

Later we passed through a number of locks that were activated when you broke the beam of an electric eye very much like the devices that we find on the bottom of our garage doors at home that stop the door from closing if something is in the way.

If we were not able to activate the lock doors to start the locking process we could make a call to the VNF people on the cell phone or the VHF. Usually within ten or fifteen minutes we would see a little white truck coming down the tow path with a smiling employee who would get the gates open for us and in we would go.

Once inside we would find two vertical pipes leading up the lock wall to a control box. By lifting the blue pipe the doors would close and the water would automatically be raised or lowered, depending if we were going up or down. When the water reached the proper level a bell would ring and the other set of doors would open so we could be on our way. The red pole was to alert VNF personal of a problem or emergency.

The most impressive lock, and one that I had been reading about for several years, was the Stepy-Thieu boat lift in Belgium. The structure, which was opened in 2002, is over 350 feet tall and could be seen from miles away as we approached.

I had actually planned our return route to Holland through this canal in order to visit and experience this lock, the tallest lock in the world. We actually drove into a large bath tub type of vessel which is almost 350 feet long and can hold many barges and boats at the same time. The large tub



is then raised over 250 feet to another waterway on the plateau above us. This new waterway is reached by crossing a water-bridge which is several hundred feet long.

I found out afterwards that most Belgian people, even the boaters, are disgusted with their government for building this lift lock as it cost several billion (that's billion with a B) euros and they think it was a total waste of money. I have to tell you that it was a very exciting ride and the views from the top are wonderful as you can see the waterway and towns along it for miles away.

The people that we met as we traveled were just wonderful to us, both the boaters and the people that we met along the waterway. Many people think that the French people hate the British and Americans and that when traveling in France you would encounter rudeness, or at best, indifference. This could not be further from the truth. The French people have been very friendly, helpful and always courteous. The French people are unfailingly polite. Shop keepers always wished us "bonjour" before serving us. Even complete strangers often greeted us on the streets, and it would be unthinkable to them to meet someone that they knew and not shake their hand or kiss them on both cheeks. Even the young people and teenagers greeted each other this way when they met. When is the last time you saw an American teenager go around and shake hands with everyone in a group? Never while shopping in France or Belgium did the clerk or shopkeeper not say "Merci" and "Au revoir" when I was leaving, even if they had moved on and were now waiting on another customer. A Brit told me that the French sometimes think that the British people are rude because they do not always meet and greet people the same way that the French do, and rarely shake hands. Failing to shake hands is seen as a discourtesy.

We flew our American flag the whole time that we were there this year and never had one incident where anyone made an unkind or rude remark to us. In fact, we found just the opposite to be true. People seemed to go out of their way to wave to us and shout hello as we passed. We had an older gentleman stand and remove his hat and place it over his heart once as we passed through a small village. We also had people give us the victory sign as we passed by and one day a young man on the barge beside us in a lock saluted us when he saw the flag. Although they may not like our politics and what is going on in the world right now they surely do NOT hate the American people.

I was totally impressed with the Dutch people and their ability to speak such perfect English. When I mentioned this to a young man who was serving us in a store one day and asked how he'd learned to speak such good (American) English, he smiled and said "MTV" (Music Television). Most of the programs seen on Dutch TV are American and they are broadcast in English with Dutch subtitles, so they really learn their English starting at a very early age watching "MTV", "Law and Order", and "Desperate Housewives". What must they think of us???

Because I speak only one language, and not always very well, I am intrigued by those people who speak three or four languages and can switch back and forth so easily without missing a beat. We went out to eat one of our last nights in Holland with Norbert (German) and his wife Mirjam (Dutch). The restaurant was near the marina and sitting beside us were people from two other boats that we had met previously. One couple was from England and they had a couple visiting. The visiting lady was from England and her husband was German. The lady from the second boat was Dutch and her husband was also German. At a table behind us were four men all speaking English (well, sort of English) as two of them were Brits, one was Scottish and the other was an Irishman. As the night moved along the conversation flowed between people at the different tables and it was intriguing as I sat there sometimes listening to three different languages being spoken amongst this one group. The most impressive part of the evening was watching the young waitress as she moved among us taking food and drink orders from this group, speaking to each one of us in our own language without ever missing a beat. Oh well, maybe if I spend enough summers cruising in Europe I'll learn more than my current 50 words of French, 10 words of Dutch and five words of German. Here's hoping!!

Until next year...



OWENS, Ron & Charma (#401) 1985 • DeFever 44 • JOURNEY TO . . . • Apollo Beach, FL

Old Cruisers Look at Happy Days

A very, very old adage purports to convince us that the two happiest days in the life of a boat owner are: 1 – the day you buy it, and 2 – the day you sell it. The person who speaks these words must have suffered continuously in the days that passed between the purchase and the sale of his vessel, for surely those in-between days have not only been kind to us, but their memories grow richer and sweeter with the passing of time, and the comfort of reverie.

Our days on the water began as a family on the inland lakes of the Midwest. As the boats grew progressively larger, the prospect of adventure was merely heightened by being able to sleep aboard. The magic of a sunset with water at the horizon was a revelation for all of our young family. Not all the days were gentle and kind, of course – especially as the bodies of water where we ventured became larger and larger, progressing from the Great Lakes, and later the Atlantic Ocean. There were some memorable squalls, storms, and some frightening moments. Some are made less frightening when viewed in retrospect, while others taught us that open water has its moments that are very deserving of your respect and fear. The water is a wonderful place to go, so long as you remember that you always go on the water's terms.

We have had all manner of boats – open aluminum runabouts, ski boats, one-design sailboats, cuddy cabin boats, small cruisers, center console fishing boats, cruising sailboats, and finally, several sizes and types of cruising power boats – or trawlers, if you prefer. Our habit of spending time on the water has been chronic – and seems to have no final cure. And the point, here, is that it is not the boat - IT IS ABOUT TIME ON THE WATER! The type of boat is primarily driven by our desires, dreams, and the demands of that always present “other life”. So, the type of boat to have at any point in your life is the one that still permits you to enjoy time on the water, while meeting all those other criteria.

So, we arrive at one more fork in our road. We find ourselves boat-less for the first time in many, many years. Of all the thousands of miles under our keel in all types of boats, and all kinds of water, the last seven years may well have been the most satisfying. This satisfaction is driven in no small part by the boat itself. We came to love our DeFever as no other craft we were privileged to own. It is perhaps a stretch to think that boats have souls, but we surely learned to listen to her language. All the squeaks, groans, clicks, whistles, and hums, seem to somehow send a message about something – and over time, you came to know if things were going well, or struggling, or occasionally, badly broken. There are just some sea conditions where the boat seems to be gloriously happy to be there. And, speaking as something of a gearhead, the engine room is just a special place, as so many of you know.

At this time in our “other life” we plan to travel further and wider for our time on the water. The long distances will be covered in the air, but will ultimately deliver us to a boat – in Alaska, in the canals of Europe, in New Zealand, or a place to be named later. We will surely have another boat – smaller and more suited to the nearby coastal waters, but our DeFever cruising years will be moved to a special place in memory's bookcase – high up on the top shelf, with no dust!

We surely plan to remain as members of DeFever Cruisers. We have made so many friends by way of this venue that leaving would seem treasonous.

We will watch the transom of our much-loved JOURNEY TO... as it drops over that watery horizon we have reached for, so often. Not sad, but with mixed emotions, to be sure. Of course, as our love affair with her ends, her new owners, Bill and Ruth Donovan (#950) will begin theirs – with fresh excitement and anticipation, as we have known so well. God speed.



SMITH, George & Jessica (#623) 1983 • DeFever 41 • ROBERT E. WYNNIS • Green Cove Springs, FL

Lightning Strike!

Received 9/21/07: We were at the dock at Waterside Marina in Norfolk on July 10th when we were struck by lightning. I was aboard working on my laptop when there was a loud crack and the laptop shut down. The boat is protected by a stainless lightning protection brush at the top of the mast. It is still there and looks fine so it protected itself, just not the boat. We spent the next month at Ocean Marine replacing our fried electronics. The strike entered the tallest VHF antenna and fried the top of it. That was connected to the VHF which was connected to the GPS for DSC, and like dominos the strike continued through our navigation equipment and then through our 2500 watt HEART inverter/charger. The upshot was that the insurance company replaced our broken stuff to the tune of about \$24,000. After a month of work we were back to cruising. We are currently up the Nanticoke River in Delaware visiting family and finishing up some projects. We haul out next week for our annual paint job and hull wax. Our plans take us over to the Annapolis boat show then south to Beaufort, SC for Thanksgiving before we go to our favorite anchorage off the St. Johns River. For those of you with a technical bent we replaced our JRC 1800 radar/chart plotter with the new Garmin 4208. It has impressive graphics and the radar has MARPA which automatically plots the course and speed of approaching vessels. The autopilot connects to the plotter and the boat will follow the course to the waypoint. I can remember when you had to navigate and run the boat. Jessica and I are in good health and Slick, our parrot, needs her wings clipped so I have to get clippin'.

Club NEWS Notes

DeFever Cruisers Winter Rendezvous – 2008

The Winter DeFever Cruisers Rendezvous will be aboard the Caribbean cruise ship “Enchantment of the Seas”, departing Ft. Lauderdale, FL on February 9, 2008. The cruise includes four nights aboard, with stops in Jamaica and Grand Cayman. In addition to the cruise amenities, DeFever Cruisers is planning to hold two mornings with seminars by members. The return to Ft. Lauderdale is on the same day that the Miami Boat Show opens.



Roberts, Ron & Cheryl (#180)

1987 DeFever 49 CMY • Lazy Days • Long Beach, CA

Southern California Rendezvous – August 2007

We want to thank everyone for their help and support at the Rendezvous. Our final count was 25 boats (20 DeFever), and 79 party folks! A big thank you goes to Arthur DeFever (#1) for his presentation at dinner Saturday night. It's always a pleasure to welcome him and Ruth to our function. Also, it was great to meet Grant Huber (#490), and hear about her and Arthur's plans to preserve the history of DeFever Yachts. We wish them the best of luck with this new project.

Big thanks to Larry and Cheryl Scott (#560 PASTIME) for hauling all the food, and hosting Mike (and Rachel) our fabulous chef. I'm sure everyone agrees the food was superb, and it was nice to be catered to for a change!

Also, big thanks to Bill and Ann (Shannon) for their help, “the pig”, and Saturday night's dinner wine. Our Rendezvous wouldn't have run quite so smoothly without the help of the rest of the crew from Horizon Yacht & Ship Brokers: Su, Randy, and Valdimar. Thanks again to everyone!

Ron and I will be leaving around November 1 to cruise Mexico for seven months. We will send out a few e-mails during this time, just to keep in touch with everyone as we make plans for next year's Rendezvous. If you change your e-mail address during this time, be sure to let us know so we can keep our list updated. We will check this e-mail address whenever we're in port, and have an Internet café available. Our e-mail on the boat is n6kts@winlink.org. This e-mail is for short messages only – no photos or attachments.

If you have any ideas for next year's Rendezvous, be sure to pass them along to us. Also, we have a list of those who volunteered to be on committees for next year... and trust me, we'll be calling on you!

Have a safe, short, dry winter, and we'll see everyone next summer.





FEATURED BOAT:

History and Background of the DeFever 40 Passagemaker

The DF 40 Passagemaker was a recent topic of conversation on the DeFever Cruisers Forum, and Michael Thompson and Bill French were kind enough to offer some significant pieces of history about this particular model.

THOMPSON, Michael (#925)
Cape Canaveral, FL

1973 • DF40 Passagemaker • FULL STEP

I wrote to Mr. DeFever asking him about the history of my boat a few months ago. I received a very nice reply that is the basis for most of what I have written here. Mr. DeFever did not comment on the numbers of boats built, but he did say that my boat was a rarity, a “gem,” and that I should hold on to it.

If other DeFever PM 40 owners can expand on this I would be grateful for any corrections or additions.

You have to be very careful to define exactly what boat you are referring to when asking questions about a DeFever 40 Passagemaker. As far as I know there are:

- Some all-fiberglass DF 40s where the decks and cabins were molded in a one piece female mold. These boats were built by Jensen Marine first, and later by Downeast. I have seen estimates that there were as few as 17, and as many as 100 of these boats built. These boats have a radius chine.

- Some boats with fiberglass hulls and plywood decks and cabins. Some of the early Jensen advertising described these boats as having been built by Jensen, but I have seen reports that they were built in Taiwan and imported by Jensen.

- There were several Taiwanese yards building rip-offs of the Passagemaker 40 in the same time period. They were sold under several different names originally, but these days sellers and brokers almost always refer to them as DeFever Passagemaker 40's.

Currently (Fall 2007) there are 12 listings on YachtWorld for a DeFever 40 Passagemaker. Actually there are only ten boats in total since three of the listings are for the same boat. The boat in Nova Scotia is a all-fiberglass Jensen boat. The boat in Annapolis is an all-fiberglass Downeast 40 built from the same molds as the Jensen boat. As for the other eight - only a personal inspection will tell you for sure.

Copies of the Jensen Marine advertising for the DeFever Passagemaker 40 can be seen at www.bangorpunta.com.

FRENCH, William (#969)
Corpus Christi, TX

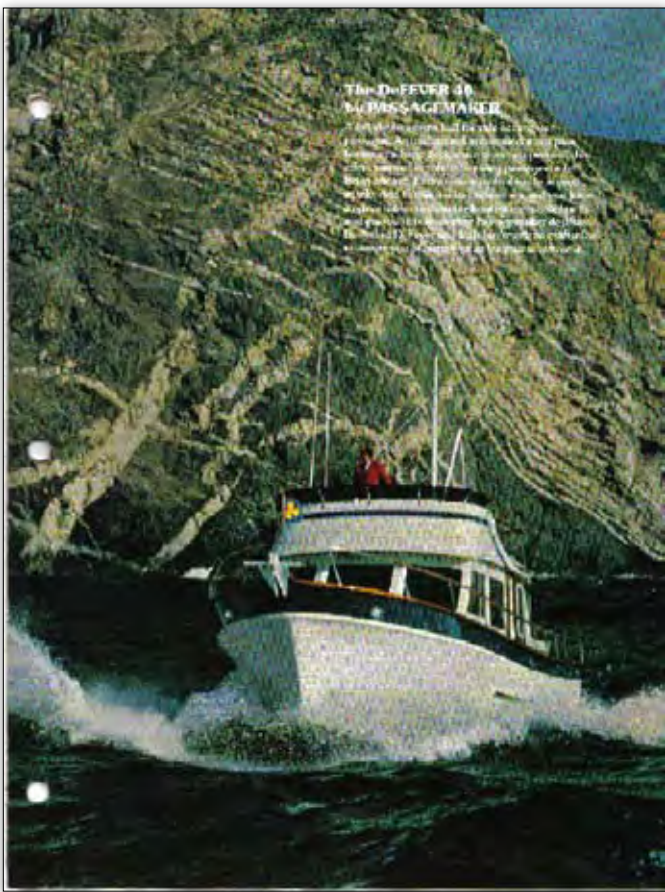
1976 • DF40 Passagemaker • SATISFIED THREE

Here is some information as I know it. Jensen Marine built the DeFever Passagemaker 40 and a smaller Passagemaker at their Costa Mesa, CA plant. The first two boats were built for Jensen in Asia and were an absolute mess. This Asian tooling was later used to build Marine Trader 40's and led to lawsuits between Jensen and DeFever on one side and the Marine Trader people on the other.

New tooling was created in Costa Mesa and a total of 131 Passagemaker 40's were built. New tooling was again created and boat number 132 (the one I now own) was built. This new tooling was sold to Bob Poole at Downeast and a number (I think between 30 and 40) of boats were built. The Downeast boats had a different cabin and bridge layout from the Passagemaker.

The Passagemaker was built with single or twin engines, Ford or Perkins, and many have a “come-home” system run off the generator. The quality of these boats helped to establish a quality reputation for all DeFever boats.

There were two brochures done for the Passagemaker, one black and white and one four-color. In addition there was a four-color brochure done for the smaller Passagemaker. I have these brochures and would be happy to scan them and e-mail them to anyone who wants them.



The DeFEVER 40 by PASSAGEMAKER

For the DeFever 40 by PassageMaker, the design team at DeFever Yacht Design focused on creating a motor yacht that was both functional and beautiful. The yacht is designed to provide a comfortable and enjoyable cruising experience for up to six adults. The yacht features a spacious interior with a large dining table, a full kitchen, and a comfortable sleeping quarters. The yacht is also equipped with a variety of amenities, including a stereo system, a VHF radio, and a compass. The yacht is built with high-quality materials and is designed to last for many years of service.

The 10 km you stretch out. The interior is designed for comfortable living. Look at the main table. It's an open plan and you can get around effortlessly. The generous use of oak on trim and paneling not only makes you feel at home - it creates a warm, cozy atmosphere. The deckhouse windows are fitted to keep out any harsh sun. This is truly a home on the water. The dining table adjusts to cocktail height and converts to a double berth. There is a guest stateroom forward with a V-berth, storage and an enclosed head. The guest stateroom accommodations for up to six adults.

Enough passage? Never. Space is used so intelligently you can look forward to every passage aboard the 40. The motor has long. Both heads have showers. Both staterooms and guest cabins have ample hanging lockers and storage. There are additional lockers under the berth and settee. Under the tubermen's seat you'll find an original DeFever design: a roll out dry box. A modern hard chine hull gives the 40 a water line. The modernized fixed bow has been accentuated to give even greater protection from spray on the bowdeck.



Dimensions

L.O.A. 39' 8"
 Aft. 34' 7"
 Beam E.P. 8'
 Beam W.L. 12' 9"
 Draft Fwd. 3' 4"
 Draft Aft. 3'
 Freshwater Fuel 67
 Freshwater Aft. 4' 0"
 Max. Height Above W.L. 22'
 Vertical Power Above W.L. 13'
 Design Displacement 26,400 lbs.



Practicality and convenience make a great galley. The galley is efficient. It's large with plenty of light and ventilation. You'll find it well equipped with an AC/DC refrigerator/freezer, a hot water tank and even dual stainless Neenauer corner taps.

Positive control is designed in. The full size steering wheel, large sidestep and generous head room. The PassageMaker 40's helm station is easy to reach. There are complete steering stations in the main salon and on the flying bridge - standard. Electrical functions throughout the boat may be controlled from the master electronic panel at the main salon steering station.



The owner's stateroom. Whether living aboard or planning an extended cruise, you'll find all the stock and custom you need here. The design provides ample cubic space, for more than usually found in a 40-footer. Access to the cockpit allows extra light and ventilation, as well as being a safety feature. There was also no skimping on the dressers, hanging lockers, and drawer space. There are two enclosed heads, both self-contained, with vinyl tile and non-skid shower pans.



An outstanding feature of the DeFever 40 by PassageMaker is the extra large flying bridge. There's seating for five on the built-in benches as well as room for additional chairs. Used cruise storage space under the benches and stowage.

The PassageMaker 40 is fitted with a custom seat and steps to easy access to the lower deck. The side stowage and side table allow guests to sit on the deck with safety for children and adults, when under way. The fixed bowdeck makes anchoring easy. The bowdeck fixed bow helps to keep the vessel steady in choppy seas.

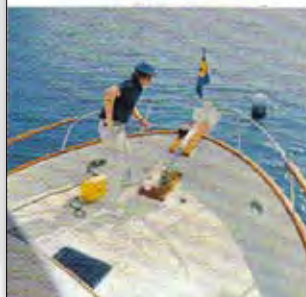
A typical feature on the 40 is the engine room space. It has been designed to allow adequate room for access to the engine and other equipment. Access may be gained through the main salon hatchway, or a step down from the owner's stateroom. There's also heavy sound and heat insulation to make your going even more enjoyable.

Passagemaker, a division of Jensen Marine, builds boats to top quality yacht standards for quality live operators, easy maintenance, ease of handling and economical cruising.

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Arthur DeFever. Noted for exceptional master designs for motor yachts, responsible for some of the world's finest motor and runabouts. His personal cruising experience spans dozens of years in waters all over the world. The 40 has his in his world famous design for pleasure yachts based on sea-lee tops.



DeFEVER PASSAGEMAKER

209 Fisher St., Coast Mesa, Ca. 92626 (714) 541-3400

• A Beneteau Power Company

© 1988 DeFever Yacht Design



NAUGHTON, Norm & Vicki (772)

1988 • DeFever 49 RPH • TIDE HIKER • Bear, DE

King Neptune Officially Renames DeFever 49 RPH

September 1, 2007: The gods of the seas and winds are now aware of TIDE HIKER, Norm & Vicki Naughton's 49 DeFever RPH and promise to provide fair winds and calm seas as she cruises their waters. About 50 invited guests and onlookers witnessed the renaming of this 1988 DeFever Classic.

King Neptune, the Greek god of the seas (or Poseidon in Roman mythology), was present to officiate the ceremony. Arriving in Bear, DE from Greece just a day earlier, Poseidon made a royal entrance down the ramp to "B" dock at Summit North Marina, on the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.



^ Guests Awaiting King Neptune's Arrival



<< King Neptune's Royal Entrance



∨ King Neptune Calls to Zeus



Speaking in Greek, King Neptune officially renamed the vessel and permanently recorded the name change in the records of the deep. Captain Norm and First Mate Vicki rechristened TIDE HIKER by pouring champagne over the bow.

A champagne toast for all guests as well as beer, wine and appetizers followed.

The events were attended by Vicki and Norm's family from Wisconsin, Ohio, and Connecticut and friends from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. A Naughton mini family

reunion and crab fest was planned to coincide with the Renaming Gala.

<< Rechristening Tide Hiker

Vicki, Norm & King Neptune

>>



DeFever TECH

NAUGHTON, Norm & Vicki (#772)
Bear, FL

1988 • DeFever 49 RPH • TIDE HIKER

Source for Port Screens

A number of DeFever owners were looking for replacement screens for their 8 x 16" ports. I have found a source and they have agreed to give the DeFever group a discount, (\$19.31 each). I ordered one to try it out and it fits perfectly. The source: Mariner's Hardware, 1320-P Commerce Street, Petaluma, CA 94954, 707-765-0880, www.marinershardware.com

Call and ask for Andrea or Scott to get the discount.



KOCH, Steven & Diane (#74)
Boynton Beach, FL

1989 • DeFever 49 RPH • AURORA

Sharing: Improvements, Maintenance and Trouble-Shooting on Aurora

As many of you know Diane and I have been very fortunate to secure AURORA behind our friend's Chuck and Karen Sprigg's (#13, *Turtle II*) home during hurricane season. After weathering four hurricanes at this location, Chuck and I decided that it would be best if we tied up our boats stern to the dock. Chuck went ahead and installed some heavy duty pilings for our lines and we went thru the usual drill of "yacht macramé". With 15 lines on each vessel we were very secure and we positioned each vessel with about five feet between the sterns and the dock to allow for surge and the wakes of the boats passing by in the channel. *Turtle II* had a boarding ramp made of kevlar (light and strong) and we made up brackets to fit on his swim platform in order to get on and off the boat. Aboard AURORA we tried jumping to the dock, stepping on an angle bracket that we secured to a piling and walking across a 2x8 wood plank.

Although Diane and I could do this, having company over for a drink or dinner was out of the question - we envisioned ourselves falling into the drink at one time or another. I checked on boarding ramps that were available and all the marine versions were at least a boat unit (\$1000). After doing some research Chuck came up with a great alternative. He found an aluminum plywood

walk board which is basically a unit that is used for scaffolding. It was available through www.scaffoldmart.com and is a piece of 1/2" plywood held between two aluminum rails with supports underneath. The company stated it would hold 1000 lbs and it weighed only about 30 lbs. We went ahead and ordered it, and when it arrived it looked like it was up to the task. Removing three bolts allowed



removing the wood in order to paint it, or when necessary replace the plywood. On the forward edge was a pair of hooks which fit right over 1 1/2" PVC pipe. I was able to find a used swivel seat base and I used a piece of 2x6 wood between



Starboard base and some bolts with spacers, which eliminated the need for drilling into the swim platform. The seat base allows the ramp to swing to either side but can be

controlled by tightening down on the swivel adjustment. We also found some tubing, and with a few mounts and elbows were able to make a guardrail for one side of the unit.

A few strips of non-skid across the plywood and this thing works pretty well.

Our only problem was when we would get a large wake, the ramp would bang up and down on the dock. I tried using some bungee cords to suspend it off of the dock but with the rise and fall of the tide we could not get them at the right tension all the time. As I looked to the Heavens for an answer it came upon me. Our dinghy davit was right above us. We positioned the dinghy davit over the stern and brought the cable down to the ramp. I added about two feet of heavy duty bungee cord to the rear of the ramp, and with the remote control for the davit motor in the cockpit we are able to raise and lower the ramp on and off the dock as needed. If we leave the boat we can raise the ramp enough so that when we board from the dock the cords will stretch enough to allow us to get on. At night we can raise the unit all the way up and no one is able to get aboard.

A few days later we tested the strength of the unit when our friend Dennis Lainey (#565 *Dennel*), Chuck, and I removed and replaced all the batteries aboard AURORA.

This included eight L16s (115lbs) and four 8D AGM (160lbs) batteries. With two of us standing on the ramp and holding the battery we had no problem with the ramp. As far as our bodies go that is another story. Anyway if anyone needs help with the details feel free to ask. The ramp is part # SKU16167 and sells for \$83.00 from www.scaffoldmart.com.

Our next device is a “time delay relay” that delays the return of power for a pre-set amount of time to an appliance that has had the power interrupted for any reason. After remodeling our galley in January 05, we installed a new Maytag refrigerator. As many DeFevers do, we operate our fridge on 110 volt AC power either through shore power or the inverter. As all of us know, the power at marinas can be quirky to say the least. Also when switching between shore or generator power to inverter there can be a momentary delay before the power is restored. For a while I did what Dennis suggested, and that was wearing a bungee cord around my wrist while I switched off the fridge and waited a while before turning it back on. The only problem was after a few drinks I would look at my wrist and wonder what this bungee cord was doing there?! After having the power drop out and quickly come back on at a marina the compressor in our new fridge would not work anymore.

After some calls to Maytag, a service van finally showed up to state “no guarantees on a boat”. After some discussion, I said I would place the unit on the dock if that made a difference and we came to an agreement. (\$)... So after replacing the compressor and dryer we were back in business, but this could not be repeated. I went on the internet and looked for an answer. A time delay relay would be it. These units can be programmed to either delay power transfer when power is lost or comes back on. With a timer knob on the unit it can be set between 1-15 minutes and handle 10 amps AC power. I mounted the unit atop a wall plug

the base and a length of PVC. By installing the end caps on the PVC, the ramp fits right on and can not slide off of either end but still allows the ramp to raise and lower as needed.

I cut two pieces of Starboard and attached them under the ramp where it would slide on the dock, and this eliminated the ramp damaging the dock as AURORA moved around. I was also able to clamp the mount to the swim platform using a



box and hooked up a plug to go to the wall outlet. Anytime we lose power for any reason the relay will not let the power turn back on again for five minutes. Knock off a breaker - no worries, it will just power up after the time delay. No more fussing and banging from the fridge trying to start up again. This device can be used on any appliance or accessory using 110 volts.

The parts are available thru www.graininger.com or any electrical supply house. I used a 6X601 time delay relay and a 5X852 socket. A generic box supplied the mount and a short piece of wire and a plug completed the unit. If it ever goes bad we could just unplug it and plug the fridge right back in again. Relay, socket, and other stuff was about \$80. Tired of wearing that bungee cord on your wrist?

Another convenient addition is a new fuel filter vacuum gauge with a resettable pointer. These heavy duty gauges are equipped with a needle that will stay at the highest vacuum obtained during the time of usage. You do not need to run down to the engine room while the engines are running wide open throttle to see what your filter vacuum is at the time. You can just check what the highest reading was at the end of your day and decide to change the filter if necessary. They are very well constructed and ours are plumbed directly to the fuel system. The company www.designatedengineer.com also sells adapters to mount them on the top of the filter as well. I also found them to have very competitive pricing for Racor units, parts, and filters.

Our last item to write about is not so nifty and more like a big pain in the ...

Last year after leaving for our Bahamas vacation, our 6KW Northern Lights generator was getting harder to start and was not putting out much power before spitting fuel and oil on the water. After changing fuel and air filters, adjusting the valves and checking breakers and the like I could not get the unit to run well and after a while it would not even start. I removed the fuel injectors and was able to take them apart and clean them, to no avail. We finished our trip using our 15KW Onan generator and decided to work on the other one when we returned to the US. I removed the injector pump and had it rebuilt and at the same time I checked compression and it seemed ample. At 250 PSI it would blow my handheld compression gauge out of the hole. I removed the intake plenum thinking something had worked its way inside and was blocking up the intake. Nothing.

Let me say I was getting pretty frustrated at this point. I actually went as far as hiring another mechanic to come and look at the problem. Believe that one? After about a half hour he had no idea and said to remove the head and check for a bad head gasket or cracked block. OK, what the heck... For the gear heads among us, I removed the water pump, exhaust manifold, intake manifold, fuel system and lines. Guess what? Everything looked fine. I know you are out there thinking about this. After taking a few more things apart, I found the problem and I will let you know in the next Magazine... just kidding!

Well, it was the exhaust elbow. It was so blocked with rust and salt that nothing, I mean nothing, could get through it. It looked like a clogged colon. We were all thinking intake and compression but nothing about exhaust. Let me add that this is the second elbow that I have replaced and the generator has less than 2900 hours and is nine years old! The last time it went bad the hose end blew off and the generator kept running, spewing exhaust and water into the lazarette for a while before we knew there was a problem. Since there was plenty of cooling water going through, the unit did not know there was a problem. There is nothing in any service manual that mentions replacing or even checking the elbow. At the boat show their comment was that the generator would run for years if you started it and let it run. Hello, is this the way we use them?

ANYONE WHO HAS A NORTHERN LIGHTS GENERATOR MUST CARRY A SPARE EXHAUST ELBOW. ALSO LOOK IT OVER CAREFULLY AND ANY SIGN OF RUST OR WATER SEEPING THROUGH IT MEANS IT IS READY TO GO.

Well that's it for now onboard AURORA. Ain't boating fun? There's a saying that goes, at any given time there are five things wrong with your boat and you only know about two of them. If you're looking for help locating the other three, I have an established work history with the DeFever Cruisers as a knowledgeable, dependable, technician who is experienced with many of the operational systems aboard our vessels. For those of you who have recently found your dream boat and don't have the time to move her to another location or are overwhelmed by the complexities of your vessel, Captain Steven and Captain Diane can make this new venture a positive experience. You may contact us at sushstevdi@aol.com or 941-320-4266 for details.



ROBERTS, Jim & Robin (#331)
Green Cove Springs, FL

1988 • DeFever 49 RPH • ADVENTURES

Teak Finishing Tip

We recently completed a major project to have our boat painted with AwlGrip, and we worked with the former head of finishing and quality for Hatteras. We picked up a lot of little tricks and tips from the crew, particularly one for

finishing teak that will improve the durability of the finish - this works for both interior and exterior teak. Strip the teak down to bare wood - the preferred method is a heat gun and a stiff paint scraper. (I stripped all our painted caprails this way - it's not hard, and it works very well.) Sand with 150-180-220 grit (depending on the condition of the wood), tack and wipe down with acetone to remove the oils, then paint on a coat of West System epoxy using their 207 Special Hardener (instead of the 205 or 206 regular hardeners). The 207 hardener makes the epoxy dry to a clear finish - paint it carefully and it's gorgeous. Sand with 220 or 320 as needed, and coat a second time if you have any thin spots. The wood is now protected, and the epoxy actually soaks into the wood to really seal and protect it. Now you just need a UV protector for the epoxy, since the epoxy has no resistance to UV and it will begin to flake off in short order without some protection. Varnish is a perfect UV protector, and now you have a tight, durable base to apply it to. Be sure to wash the amine blush off the epoxy with simple soap and water, then sand and tack per the varnish instructions. The higher the gloss, the more UV protection is provided. Build up lots of thin coats (which dry quickly), and just scuff and add coats as needed to maintain.

Note that the 207 hardener is pretty slow to dry - you need up to eight hours for it to set up well, with no exposure to moisture while it's drying or it will get a milky haze. Sand lightly and recoat if that happens.



MCCARLEY, Ted & Nancy (#526)
Solomons, MD

2002 • DeFever 44 • ALOHA FRIDAY

Teak Desk and Helm Chair Project



Several years ago we saw a lower helm chair and desk in the salon of an Ocean Alexander that we really liked. We took a few pictures of what we saw and Ted set out to reproduce it in the salon of our 44' DeFever. The helm chair can go up or down. Its primary use is as a helm chair but it can be lowered and rotated 180 degrees to

be a desk chair. The teak desk drawer and center section were the original teak work bench that had been installed in the engine room.

Two photos show the work in progress, and the third photo shows the final product. If you have any questions about the design or installation, send us an email at edoted@aol.com.