

DeFever Cruisers Magazine



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Summer 2007

Haeseker, Hank and Nancy (#22) 1988 • DeFever 52 Offshore Cruiser • LAST LAUGH North Palm Beach, FL

The Future of DeFever Cruisers by Hank Haeseker - "Chief Pilot"

A Little History

Way back in 1994, the DeFever Rendezvous in Florida were planned and run by Oviatt Marine, the DeFever broker in Ft. Lauderdale. They were well attended, fun, and informative, although many of the ladies opted to go shopping rather than attend the somewhat repetitive technical sessions presented by the same vendors year after year. During those early days, Bob and Barbara Dein (#2) collected a comprehensive list of boats and their owners that would later become the member list for the DeFever Cruisers. In about 2001, Oviatt abandoned the rendezvous management, which led to the first rendezvous "For DeFever Cruisers, by DeFever Cruisers" in January of 2002. It was a smashing success and each year since then, a crew of volunteers has presented a remarkable meeting with a good mix of informative seminars by our members as well as by sponsors.

Bob and Barbara Dein became the King and Queen of the DeFever Cruisers!

Think about it. They seized power, collected a burdensome \$20 tax on the people, took charge, and ran the Kingdom. They edited and produced the newsletter; maintained the member database, mailing list and email lists; edited and emailed the monthly E-News; collected the dues; paid the bills; and helped with every rendezvous that followed. And they have done all that for 10 years! Finally, Bob and Barbara were properly crowned at the 2007 rendezvous!



An Heir to the Throne?

About 18 months ago, Bob and Barbara decided to abdicate the throne in the near future and retire from full time service as Royals. King Bob asked me (Hank Haeseker) to plan and lead the transition of the DeFever Cruisers. So, here I am, "Sir Henry." Or perhaps, "Henry the Navigator." And here is what I envision on the horizon:

A New Strategy

Since it is probably impossible to get a volunteer couple to do all that Bob and Barbara have done for 10 years, we need to divide the work up to a number of volunteers. Also, we should use the latest Internet technology to reduce the workload and provide for efficient communications. Our goal is to build the organization around a new web site for the DeFever Cruisers.

New DeFever Cruisers Web Site

The new DFC web site was unveiled to the rendezvous crowd in January and all present were invited to sign in and pay their 2007 dues online. The system worked! In the week that followed, all other known members with working email addresses received an email invitation to sign on with a user name and password that was provided in the invitation. All members who have been active in recent history can sign in online, update their own "profile," pay dues with PayPal or a



credit card, view and print the new *DeFever Cruisers Magazine*, receive the new email *News*, and view and print the member Roster. Members can also view and search all of the old newsletters, and post questions about their boats or cruising to the new DeFever Cruisers *Forum*. Dues for web access are \$25 per year. If you were among the few who prepaid your dues at \$20, we extended your membership proportionately. If you still want the *Magazine* printed and mailed to you (via “snail mail”) in the USA, it will cost \$10 more, or a total of \$35. We encourage you to try the \$25 option and download the *Magazine* so you can read it on your computer or print it yourself. We will use color photography throughout the web version. The printed version for snail mailing will use mostly black and white photography in order to keep the printing costs affordable.

Visitors to The New Web site

Visitors (non-DFC members) can read about our organization, view the history of DeFever designs, view pictures of our boats and past rendezvous, and enjoy the DeFever Experience. A page of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will answer most visitors’ questions about membership. However, visitors are restricted and can’t view or print the Roster, the Magazine, News, or access the Forum. They will have to join to do all that. But they can join right on their computers. As of March 3, 2007, 270 members have renewed their membership. About 100 have apparently changed their email addresses, so we are not getting thru to them yet, but we will track them down. The web site is getting a lot of visitors. Since startup in late January, there have been 1,088 visits to the site and those visitors looked at 5,803 of our web site pages.



Letter From the Editors:

This is the second issue of the DeFever Cruisers Magazine since we’ve taken over the editing duties. Just so you know who “we” are, Robin Roberts (#331) does all the text editing, and Peggy Bjarno (#839) does all the visual layout and artwork.

We urge you to continue to provide your feedback on the new Magazine to magazineeditor@defevercruisers.com or to our Chief Pilot Hank Haeseker (#22) at chiefpilot@defevercruisers.com – positive or negative. We’re always looking to improve, and we hope to continue to evolve the Magazine based on your ideas and wonderful articles.

This issue completes the editing of the large collection of inputs that I (Robin) inherited when I took over the Magazine, and I want to apologize for the late publication of some items. Bob and Barbara Dein (#2) made the Magazine publication look easy, and we’ve discovered that the task is a little more daunting than we first thought!

Please support us by continuing to send your photos, stories, tips, technical articles, etc. to magazineeditor@defevercruisers.com. If you have more short-term news items and notes, you can send them to Carol Rohr (#665) at newseditor@defevercruisers.com. Please send photos as separate files, not embedded in the text of your article. Trawler on!

Tips for submitting articles:

- Please be sure to include your name, DFC member number, and boat name.
- If you are sending photographs with your story, please leave them as separate image files. If your submission includes particular photos in specific parts of the article, just type the image file name as a placeholder in the article so we know where each photo belongs (“photo1.jpg goes here”).
- Be sure to include dates where appropriate, and some geographic information so we know what part of the world you’re writing about.
- Remember that stories and articles in the Magazine are read by a wide audience, so please try to omit the details that are not of great interest to this group. Many people write a cruising log to share with family, friends, DeFever Cruisers, as well as other boat clubs. Take a quick look at your article and do a little pre-edit to omit things that may not be interesting to DFC, if you can.
- Please don’t use fancy formatting or fonts - keep the text style simple.
- Our job title says “editor” so please remember that we may make some small changes to your article to improve readability or to make the format consistent with the Magazine’s style.

TESSIER, Tim & Carol (#878)
1981 • DF41 • ENTRE NOUS
Annapolis, MD

LOVE IS IN DeAIR

Some of you may recall the engagement announcement that was shared with the members at our January Rendezvous in Palm Coast! New members Tim Tessier and Carol Farley were wed on June 2nd aboard ENTRE NOUS (Passagemaker 41) docked at the Annapolis Maritime Museum near their home in Eastport, Maryland. The bride and 14 bridesmaids, who were adorned with matching flip flops arrived via water taxi, sipping champagne after cruising over from the Eastport Yacht Club. After the ceremony, family and friends strolled to the Tessier residence and toasted the happy couple. Carol and Tim enjoyed a honeymoon trip to Quebec City.



Tim Tessier and Carol Farley wed on June 2 aboard their boat "Entre Nous."



DeFever Cruisers Boat US Membership Discount

DeFever Cruisers Members are eligible for a special rate when joining or renewing membership with Boat U.S. (Boat Owners Association of The United States). As of the first quarter 2007, the standard BoatU.S. membership fee was \$25.00 annually. The DeFever Cruisers discounted price is \$12.50. Use the code: "GA84456B" to get the discounted price. If you need more information, please refer to: <http://www.boatus.com>



What DeFever Cruisers Want

By Hank Haeseker, Chief Pilot

April 6, 2007

A recent survey of members who DID ATTEND the '007 Winter Rendezvous at Palm Coast, Florida gave the event very high scores. The *total experience* was rated "Superior" by 71% and "Very Good" by all the rest. 75% rated the *value received for the cost* as "Excellent" or "Good – well worth it." Only 15% answered that the cost was "a little too expensive" or, "way too expensive for me." Interestingly, almost everyone (95%) said they would attend again. We attracted 45% from outside of Florida, some from as far as Seattle. Florida is still a great place to be in the winter, even when we have a cold snap – after all, it's known as the "Sunshine State." The *facilities* at the Club at Hammock Beach were rated "Superior" or "Very Good" by 89%. The volunteer crew that did all the hard work is rightfully proud and very pleased that so many people had a great time. The unanswered question remains *why was the Rendezvous attendance lower than in prior years?*

To answer this question and to help shape future Florida gatherings, we sent out a second survey that went to members who DID NOT attend the Rendezvous. Again, valuable information was obtained from the 85 members who took the time to respond. Here are the results:

- 1. How many previous Rendezvous have you attended in Florida?** 62% have never attended. 33% have attended between one and five. 5% have attended more than five.
- 2. What is the MAIN REASON you did not attend?** 34% said they would have attended but circumstances prevented it this time. Another 12% cited a variety of special situations, like “granddaughter’s birthday” or “cruising in the Bahamas” or “TrawlerFest conflict.” So, taken together, 46% were not able to attend because of *circumstances*. The next largest group, 20%, indicated “Florida is too far for me to travel for a Rendezvous” as their answer. That is understandable since our members are scattered across the continent and around the world. Only 12% said, “cost was the primary issue.” Those who commented said it was the *total cost* of travel, lodging, and registration that kept them away. Only 8% said, “The location was not good for me.”
- 3. If you would seriously consider attending a Florida Rendezvous, what month would you prefer?** 45% answered February, 29% January, and 21% March. So it would seem we were pretty close to optimum since our Rendezvous was at the end of January. February might be a better choice for the future.
- 4. If you would seriously consider attending a Florida Rendezvous, WHERE would you prefer we hold the Rendezvous?** 32% said “Atlantic Coast – Stuart to Miami.” 25% prefer the Florida Keys. And 20% voted for the Gulf Coast from Naples to Boca Grande. In other words, 77% prefer the southern half of Florida.
- 5. In recent years, our Rendezvous have cost about \$250 to \$300 per person to produce. Our ‘007 Rendezvous registration fee was \$190 per person. (The difference was subsidized by our sponsors.) Marina cost was \$2.75 per foot plus electric and tax. Hotel was \$200 to \$250 per night. These are “high season resort rates.” There was no anchorage, only a marina. What is your opinion of these rates?** 21% said “way too high for me. I won’t attend at such prices.” But 79% said such costs would not stop them from attending.
- 6. Would you like to see us hold a Rendezvous in the Bahamas, probably in May or June?** 48% answered “Yes”, which is a pretty high percentage; 52% answered “No.” There appears to be rather strong support for a Bahamas location, but more than likely it would be the Florida based cruisers that would attend. There are some new resorts, such as Chub Cay, that can accommodate our crowd.
- 7. Some interesting comments were received, here are just a few.**

“Hey, guess what? There are DeFeverers on the West Coast, too! Why not think about San Diego? Please don’t turn the DeFever group into an East Coast-centric organization.” This deserves a response. Future Florida or Bahamas Rendezvous will, as a practical matter, be organized by members located in Florida, and everyone is welcome. Recent Rendezvous in the Chesapeake Bay area, in Washington State, and in Southern California have all been organized by members in those areas. So it’s really up to the volunteers in each region to host a Rendezvous. The DeFever Cruisers club will help by using the new website to promote Rendezvous in all areas - you just need a local committee, and it needs to be financially self-supporting. We can print your news articles. We will display photos of your Rendezvous on the website. And we can provide mailing lists that target specific geographic areas. Here are the current statistics from the website for the largest concentrations of members: Florida 147, California 50, Washington 40, Chesapeake (Maryland, Virginia, Delaware) 36, and Texas 30.

“I hate going to southern Florida. If there were John Deere classes, I think more newer DeFeverers would be interested.” Well... we just held a Rendezvous in Palm Coast, 25 miles north of Daytona Beach - that’s not South Florida. John Deere was there as a sponsor and seminar teacher. Sorry you missed it.

“I don’t understand why one of the most expensive marinas in Florida was chosen for the Rendezvous. Even for Florida, the prices were exorbitant.” This is a fair question that is actually easy to answer. I, too, thought the marina fees were a bit high at the Club at Hammock Beach in Palm Coast. But if you check around, as the Rendezvous search committee did, you will find that \$2.00 per foot and higher, is now the norm for run-of-the-mill transient marinas in Florida. And they are full and can’t accommodate 40 transient boats, even with reservations a year in advance. Resort marinas that cater principally to transients are the only ones that may not be filled with full-time or seasonal boats during Florida’s winter season, which limits our choices. Consider: Bahia

Mar, Pier 66, Miami Beach Marina, Ocean Reef Club, Hawks Key, Key West, or South Seas Island Resort - they are all charging \$3.00 to \$4.00 per foot. Just so everyone understands, the marina price is only one of the factors a Rendezvous committee considers when selecting a venue. We need a place that can handle 40 boats, provide meeting rooms for 200, hotel rooms for 100 or more, banquet capacity for 200, plenty of lobby area for all our auction stuff, a free anchorage nearby, water taxi service or a dinghy dock, and reasonable access by boat, car or air. Further, we would like to use the docks for a potluck gathering we call our Docktail Party, at no cost to us. If the weather is bad, we would like to have an indoor backup location for our free party. If the marina and the meeting and dining locations are not within walking distance, we need water or land transportation. And, one final thing, our members prefer January, February, or March, which are the absolute peak season months in Florida. The Club at Hammock Beach was the only place that met our requirements for the 2007 event - the ONLY place. I'm not trying to rub it in with such a strong answer, and I appreciate the question because others undoubtedly have the same question in mind. If anyone has found a location that meets or even approaches the specifications above, in the southern half of Florida, please tell me about the place!

In Summary, here is what we have learned:

1. Members strongly prefer South Florida, the Keys, or Southwest Florida in February. There is little interest further north or in a "boatless" Rendezvous in a location like Orlando.
2. The Bahamas in May or June is a potential location for a fairly large percentage (48%), but this will be mostly a Florida crowd.
3. About 80% recognize the high costs that prevail in Florida during the season and can deal with it. 20% won't attend because of cost.
4. The most common reason for not attending is conflicting circumstances. Next is the travel distance. Time is an issue for working members.
5. Although cost and time are issues for members traveling long distances, 45% of this year's attendees were from outside of Florida.
6. The '007 Rendezvous was rated *Superior* by 71% and *Very Good* by the remaining 29% of those who attended. That's a total of 100%. Not a single person rated it *Good*, *Fair*, or *Poor*.
7. It is not easy to find a venue that can meet all our specifications. It is impossible to find a venue that can meet all our specifications at bargain rates.



DeFever
TECH

These "short shorts" are questions that have been posed to the group via the DeFever Forum, most of them about the technical aspects of our boats, with the answers shown as well. Got a question? See us online at www.DeFeverCruisers.com and post your own question — or send it along to Newseditor@defevercruisers.com.

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MILLER, Dave & Janis (#110)
McHenry, IL

1986 • DF51+9 POC • ODYSSEA

ODYSSEA's VF Drive

It's been a while since we last wrote about life aboard ODYSSEA. The article on "Power Factor" in the Spring 2007 DFC Magazine by Bob Utter (#221), spurred me to share this with all who have bow thrusters. After many years of messing with batteries, chargers, motor brushes, and 90 second run times, it was time to make a change. The old 24 volt DC motor finally died, and I had to do something. I looked at hydraulics (too messy), the new longer-running DC motors (even more batteries)... I have two generators on board so why not AC? Single phase motors were too big and don't like to be reversed easily. Why not put a three phase AC motor on my old Wesmar 12/24 bow thruster?

So, I converted to an AC system. The way it works is this:

Inside the V/F drive (V/F stands for variable frequency), 220 single phase from the generator is converted to DC and stored in a bank of large capacitors, then inverted to three phase 220. The whole drive is smaller than the original relay box for the old motor. The drive also lets me control the speed and torque of the motor's output, ramp speed, reverse time, over load, and many other parameters of the motor. The only change to the motor was to shorten the shaft, and I also had to make an adapter plate.

The motor is a standard, aluminum wound, three phase, 208-230 volt industrial 4-way c-mount. I'm still testing different speed and torque settings: 86 hertz (approximately 2500 RPM) seems to work well. The nice thing about this set up is the motor is a standard c-face motor and the drive is some what oversized, so experimenting will be cheap and easy.

I can run this unit until I run out of fuel - it weighs about 400 lbs. less, and will never blow an o-ring or have a dead battery. If I ever need variable thrust all I need is a joy stick!



View of motor and adaptor plate



View of V/F drive



HAESEKER, Hank & Nancy (#22)
North Palm Beach, FL

1988 • DeFever 52 Offshore Cruiser • LAST LAUGH

How to Fix Leaking Portholes

Leaking portholes are a common problem on all boats - that's just their nature. I have been successful in stopping the leaks using several different techniques, depending on the source of the leak.

Not all portholes are made or installed the same. Mine are stainless steel and glass, marked 'Jai Her' on the glass. 'Jai Her' is pronounced, 'Mae Leek' in Chinese. My DeFever 52 was built in the CTF yard in Taiwan in 1988. The porthole is installed from the inside of the boat and then a trim ring, or flange, is installed from the outside. Look carefully and you will see how it goes together.

The three potential leak locations are:

1. Between the fiberglass hull and the outside 'trim ring'. Probably the least likely.
2. Past the rubber gasket, especially when it gets old and hard. Probably the most likely.
3. Between the glass and the stainless steel frame. More common than you would think, and a little harder to detect.

Do some detective work to locate the leak. Here are some clues:

1. Follow the ‘blood’ (actually the rust trail). If you don’t see rust, the leak may be between the hull and the outside trim ring. If you find water on the floor or you see water stains on the interior teak, especially by the floor, water may be finding its way in and running down the inside of the hull, behind the wood paneling until it hits the floor. This calls for *Repair No. 1*. (Described below)
2. If you see rust at the interface of the rubber gasket and the frame or right below it, chances are it is a gasket problem. Could be as simple as tightening the dogs more. But when the gasket is bad, this calls for *Repair No. 2*.
3. If you see rust on the glass where it fits into the frame, chances are the water is getting in between the glass and the stainless frame. See *Repair No. 3*.

REPAIRS by the numbers – Pick the method based on your detective work:

1. Removing the outside trim ring (the flange that is fastened with screws from the outside) is not easy. I had it done on four portholes by a boatyard technician. I watched and learned. It took about one man-hour each. He started by taping all around the trim ring to protect the fiberglass, then he drove a putty knife between the hull and the ring to cut the old bedding compound. CTF uses some black stuff to bed everything that is really tough. Then he used about eight small wood wedges to progressively pry the trim ring up all around in order to avoid bending it - which worked well. After cleaning the old bedding out, he re-bedded the ring in 3M 5200, which is not a bedding compound but an adhesive. It will now be there forever. If you think you will ever want to remove the porthole again, use something like 3M 101 (which is purely a bedding compound, not an adhesive). Now, I must admit, I don’t think that was the source of my leaks. That is how I learned about *Repairs No. 2* and *No. 3*.
2. Replacing the gasket is not terribly hard – it’s just work. Remove it by pulling it out of the stainless channel that retains it and clean up the channel by scraping the old stuff out. A wood chisel of the right width worked well. Now inspect for signs of the No. 3 type of leak. Notice that there is a retaining rim that is sealed against the glass and forms one side of the channel that retains the gasket. If you see rust signs that water is getting in between the glass and the frame or the retaining rim, do *Repair No. 3* before you go to the trouble to replace the gasket, otherwise you get to do this again. Live and learn!
3. The retaining rim will come out easier than expected. Pry it out gently all around. Try not to break the glass or bend the rim. When the rim is out, you will see that the glass was bedded into the frame, probably with clear silicone. You may need to get the glass out and re-bed it in silicone, depending on where you think it is leaking. Then put the rim back in, bedding it in silicone. Then install a new gasket as described below.

About the Gasket:

1. You can’t buy a ready-made gasket as far as I know. You have to buy the gasket material by the foot and cut it just right with a razor blade so that the ends butt together perfectly. Put the joint at the top. I don’t have a good source for the material, but try ‘Clean Seal, Inc.’ on the web.
2. I had the best luck by running a bead of clear silicone in the channel and then pressing the gasket material into the retaining channel. Contact cement does not work well. Then close the port and dog it down with medium pressure to set the gasket while the silicone cures.

When all this fails:

If you are pitching into nasty head seas, those forward portholes will be submerged and may not be able to resist the force of the water, so they may still leak at the gasket. It happened to me after all the learning experience I accumulated above - so I did what I had to do. I opened each of the four forward ports, applied a bead of silicone to the gasket, and then closed the port forever. We just don’t open the ports in the bow stateroom. Opening the deck hatch will provide plenty of fresh airflow if needed. Gee, I guess you could try this first!



Port Gaskets

A member asked about gaskets for ports. Following is a summary of the various responses.

MOONEY, Mike & Alison (#735)

I also have “Jai Her” port lights with worn out gaskets. I have been trying off and on for over a year to find a good replacement with only limited success. A friend does business with a company called McMaster-Carr (www.mcmaster.com) with an online catalog. They have a wide variety of gasket material. So far, I have tried five types, three of which are currently in the boat being tested. None are ideal – they either don’t quite cover the area that needs sealing (which is really a Jai Her production issue), or the compression is too soft or too hard, or they don’t have sufficient elasticity to return to their original shape after being clamped down for a period of time.

For what it’s worth, the gaskets that I’m currently testing are McMaster item numbers: 1129A6, 93085K12 and 93625K17. Some others that looked like they might have potential are: 8709K62, 90125K55, and 8694K86.

I have also tried contacting CTF to try to get the specs of the material, but no luck there so far.

HURD, Jerry & Christine (#318)

We have a 1990 DF49 RPH named COMPROMISE and it has “Jai Her” ports. We found the gasket material at Karr Rubber in Southern California. I think that I talked to John at the time. Their phone number is 800-955-5277 or 310-322-1993. Just give him the measurement and a description and he will make it for you. It has been three or four years since we ordered but, it was \$3 per foot when I ordered it. They are very good people to work with.

KOVACH (former member)

I have two sizes of Bowmar gasketing on the boat for my ports, made by Manship. They are larger than 3/8. The first size was a tad big. It was round, but it can be made to fit in a rectangular hole as it did flatten out nicely. I just received the second size, and wanted to try it as its dimension was closer to the rectangular hole in my ports, and I think it will work better as it is a bit smaller.

HANDEL, George & Elaine CHANDLER (#18)

I just noted your quest for porthole gasket material. I assume that you have “Manship” portholes, and I believe that Ted Hood Inc. (Rhode Island) is the U.S. representative for Manship products. I believe that I have heard of another source (or maybe Charles Green, or Ships International could have the gasket material sent over with their next boat).

I replaced the gaskets several years ago, but picked up the material myself at Manship Machinery Ltd. in Kiaoshung Taiwan (wonderful people). I have the Manship Machinery Ltd. fax number if you want to try to order directly from them, although shipping is likely to be expensive.

I actually only open our large stern portholes. I have sealed all the bow and hull side ports shut with silicone around the gaskets, to permanently prevent leakage. I find even with new gasket material that leakage can occur with repeated porthole opening. Then if you or a guest forgets to carefully close and tighten one of the bow or hull side ports, teak veneer damage will have likely already occurred by the time the error is discovered.

We have screens for the forward sliding doors, and screens for the large stern portholes. Naturally we have the air conditioning units, but if we choose not to use them, just a large fan running off of the inverter usually keeps the boat quite comfortable at night using the above described openings for ventilation. One caveat though, we do not use the boat in Florida in the summertime. For Florida in the summertime, it is just plain time to close it up, and turn on the air conditioning.

OWENS, Ron & Charma (#401)

If you have or can get a Defender Industries catalog for 2003, look at the bottom right hand corner of page 111 - they carry three sizes of gasket material. I bought the 3/8" for our standard ports. To date it remains a “one of these days” project, but I have no reason to think it will not work.

Other inputs via DEIN, Bob & Barbara (#2):

Here are some places from which members have mentioned obtaining gasket material:

1- Gardico in Seattle, 206-283-5850
2 - Defender Portlight Rubber - 3/8" size
3 - M.M.I 2633 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, CA 92663 1-800-747-3014
fax 1-714-631-0313 (Manship Gasket Weather Resistant Thermo-Plastic PVC)

O'MALLEY, Jim & Ann (#238)

The gasket I used was purchased from Lewis Marine, a wholesale house in Florida. The part is a Bowmar gasket. The part number for Bowman is P100-52. The part is a just like a piece of line except it is mane of neoprene and is 9/16" in diameter. That is what worked for the windows I have in the '80 DeFever I own. They also make a gasket with a diameter of 1/2" and its part number is P100-51.



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!*

BERNHEIM, Bob & Sue (#453)
San Francisco, CA

1999 • Grand Alaskan 64 • SOFT TOUCH

January 2007: Sue and I are planning to attend the 2007 Rendezvous on our Grand Alaskan 64 – SOFT TOUCH.

We just returned from a near perfect (rain the first 10 days) 2003 nm trip into Canada, passing through 214 locks in two and a half months. Cruised up the Hudson in heavy rain to Troy, through the Erie Canal in very high water to Oswego, NY, crossed Lake Ontario in perfect weather that continued for the balance of the trip, to Kingston, north channel through the 1000 Islands to Montreal, up the Ottawa River to Ottawa. The first eight locks entering the city of Ottawa had to be a highlight, then the historic Rideau Canal, the Trent Severn Waterway (Soft Touch was the largest boat on the "Big Chute" in the last three years), then on to a part of Georgian Bay. Then back on the Trent Severn to Oswego and rumors were confirmed that the Erie Canal was closed to perhaps next year at Lock 10 for at least the next two months, due to flooding. After many phone calls the head of the NY canals said he would arrange for our route through the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain

The NY canal tenders each had a schedule of our arrival. As the posted clearance is 15 feet, with everything removed (radars, satellite domes, running lights, etc.) we floated at 16' 8". Starting at Lock 5 they started lowering each lock pond down to Lock 3 that had the lowest clearance. The lock tenders used a laser to measure water level and our clearance, and at Lock 3 they told us to proceed under the low bridge with 1 7/8" inches of clearance, after millions of gallons of water was released for us!

We completed a perfect trip with various scenic and historic routes, partly due to the summer floods on the Erie and Mohawk waterways.



OLSEN, David & Sandra (#937)
Niceville, FL

2002 • DF49CPMY • LEPRECHAUN

6/23/07: The next big cruise of the Leprechaun is a southern great circle route of the Caribbean. Leaving in November after the hurricane season, I and a group of friends will depart across the Gulf from our home port in Niceville, Florida, across the Okeechobee, crossing into the Bahamas from Lake Worth, down through the Turks & Caicos to the Dominican

Republic, Puerto Rico, BVI, the Leeward Islands, Windwards, and the ABCs, to our southernmost terminus, Cartagena, Columbia. From there we will go up the East Coast of Central America to Isla Mujeres and on to Key West on our way home. The trip, broken up into five legs to allow crew changes, will take five to six months.

Members of the crew include two medical doctors, one 100 ton captain, and five USGG Auxiliary members joining us from as far away as Seattle. We've conducted extensive route planning and seamanship training. With an eye toward safety and security, we are also looking for other cruisers interested in the same or portions of our route. Anyone interested: contact Dave Olsen (850) 729-9299, deolsen fla@cox.net, or Dick Gercak at Captain Dick1@aol.com.



CROTHERS, Dean & Jennifer JACOBS (#390)
Seattle, WA

1970 • DF50, Wood • EMILY B

We left Neah Bay at the end of August and harbor-hopped down the coast to San Francisco. We managed to avoid any severe weather by keeping up with the NOAA forecasts on the VHF as well as www.buoyweather.com, which we found to be quite reliable in our previous travels to Alaska and around Vancouver Island. There were several gales off the Washington, Oregon, and northern California coasts during that time and some of the boats we knew that went straight through, got hammered. We spent more time at the dock than at sea, since only 13 of the 32 days from Anacortes, WA to San Francisco Bay were spent underway. But as a friend wrote in response to my complaint, "It's better to be at the dock wishing you were at sea than the other way around!"

In the meantime, we enjoyed the local culture in such places as Westport, Washington (fishing charter capital), Astoria, Oregon (awesome maritime museum), Newport (four days - rented a car and visited Lincoln City too), Coos Bay, Brookings (expect to be boarded by the Coast Guard there), Crescent City (hooray- we're in California, but there too long- five days), Eureka (bought tuna off a boat), and Fort Bragg (lots of funny smelling cigarettes in the air there). We ended up in Fort Bragg for nearly a week waiting for seas to subside and then we made the run in pea soup fog the whole way to Bodega Bay, where we had to rely on the radar to see the channel markers in the twilight and fog. Our biggest challenge was the shortening days. With 12 hours or more between ports, it became more and more difficult to leave and arrive in the daylight. If we had it to do over, we would have left a month earlier to have longer days. As it was, we did a few overnights so that we could leave before dark and arrive after daybreak.

One of our biggest thrills was going under the Golden Gate Bridge. It was a sunny day, the seas were calm, and the air was crystal clear so we had a glorious view of San Francisco. We tied to the mooring buoys at Angel Island (one at the bow, the other at the stern) and breathed a sigh of relief. We had made it down one of the most difficult coasts on our own bottom. It felt great to be floating at a mooring in a beautiful setting as well, since all of our stops down the coast had been at docks. We enjoyed a couple of days there and we hiked to the top of the island for killer views of San Francisco Bay. It was sublime!

We spent most of October at the dock in Emeryville, doing boat projects and visiting with old (and new) friends there. Dean found a leak in the shower floor and spent many days re-fiberglassing and painting it. He also had to replace the tachometer, which gave up the ghost along the Oregon coast. I had lived in San Francisco in the late 70s and I had a great time reconnecting with friends and visiting old haunts. We even were able to attend a 60's party that a friend threw - Dean dressed as a greaser and I was Yoko Ono. But after a month, we were ready to head south. We had a great time harbor hopping down the central California coast with stops in Half Moon Bay, Monterey, San Simeon, Morro Bay, and Port San Luis. We had a nice cruise around Point Conception and into Santa Barbara before nightfall.

Going around Conception was another milestone, as there is a distinct climate change entering southern California. We tossed our polar fleece aside and pulled out the sandals. Santa Barbara is a beautiful city, albeit very pricey, but we enjoyed the palm trees and lush flowers. From there we went to Oxnard, where we bought EMILY B nearly seven years ago, and stopped for a week at the dock of the former owner. Here, Dean installed the solar panels we had bought in Oakland and fabricated brackets to attach wheels to our Caribe dinghy. We ran into Santa Ana conditions, where the wind blows eastward through the low canyons out to sea, on our way from Oxnard to Marina del Rey. We had very steep, choppy seas off the port beam for a couple of hours with sustained winds of 25 knots and gusts as high as 35. Luckily it died down when we got in the lee of the San Bernardino Mountains.

We spent a lovely three days at the Del Rey Yacht Club before running out to Catalina Harbor, on the back side of Catalina Island. It was a bit pricey there (\$30 a night for a mooring buoy), but there was a winter special - one week for the price of two nights plus \$2. It was somewhat cold and foggy there, but we enjoyed being off the dock, and Dean snorkeled in the kelp forest nearby. We also saw a buffalo on shore there - how surreal! From there we went to Dana Point, where we visited with friends Janzel and Mark Eggen (#898 - ACQUIRED TASTE) living nearby, and Dean replaced the water pump motor. We next headed into San Diego Bay - what a zoo! As we were entering the harbor, a fishing trawler was about 150 feet off our starboard beam and a HUGE warship was coming up fast from behind. At the same time, a fast sport fishing boat zoomed between us and the trawler, creating a terrible wake that we couldn't turn into. *!%*& I tried to hail him on the radio, but he didn't answer. Some photos available at www.emilyb.com - Oct 06 and later.

We spent a couple of weeks in San Diego, first at the Southwestern Yacht Club, then in Chula Vista where we celebrated Thanksgiving with friends Jim and Jan (#438 - MAÑANA). We headed back to the Police Dock on Shelter Island to get ready for our trip into Mexico. In the meantime, we visited the famous Downwind Marine, where we dropped a couple of 'boat units' on a last minute storm anchor that we felt we should have and a replacement membrane for the watermaker. Provisioning? Did I mention provisioning? Well, we did plenty of it along the way - for food, wine, spare parts, fuel, and more spare parts. By the time we left San Diego after final trips to Costco and Trader Joes, the boat was stuffed to its gills. We couldn't afford to stay any longer in the U.S. - there would always be one more part or special treat we couldn't resist.

EMILY B is now in La Paz, Mexico, in the Sea of Cortez. Our trip down the Pacific coast of the Baja peninsula was awesome - fantastic scenery, great fishing, and good weather windows. Our autopilot pooped out as we were entering Turtle Bay after a 40 hour run. Perhaps it got too hot - we're not sure. But luckily we had our crew member, Jerimy (who met us in San Diego), aboard to help with hand steering the rest of the way to Cabo San Lucas. He and Dean had a wild time fishing - starting out with a bonito (not very attractive), then several skipjack tunas (which were yummy), and finally three dorado (mahi-mahi), each one bigger than the next (the last was about 40 lbs). Needless to say, the freezer is full of fish!

We made the trip from San Diego to La Paz in two weeks. Our first stop was a day trip to Ensenada, where we checked in with Mexican officials. We stayed one night at Marina Baja Naval where the staff helped us fill out paperwork before we went to Immigration, Port Captain, etc. This was well worth the \$25 dockage fee as we breezed through, while others struggled on their own. A few hours later, Dean obtained his reciprocal Ham radio permit for Mexico, after a wild ride across town to the bank. He was so crestfallen when the woman at the SCT office (which issues the permits) told him it was closing in 20 minutes, that she took pity on him and took him in her own car to the bank and back in time.

We left that evening for our 300 mile, 40 hour (two overnights) trip to Turtle Bay. In Turtle Bay, we fueled up from Annabel's Panga - a barge containing fuel that tied up to our boat. It was very convenient but it made Ernesto, who has fuel at the pier there, very mad and he banned us from the pier. Never mind - we checked the weather report and decided to leave the next morning for the next leg of the trip, as bad weather was coming in a couple of days.

We then did a passage of 200 miles (32 hours) to Bahia Santa Maria. We had huge swells on that leg - 10-12 feet high - but they were 15 seconds apart so it was a gentle up and down motion. We had intended to stop in Magdalena Bay, another 20 miles down the coast, but the weather started kicking up so we decided to pull into Santa Maria, where we spotted a large whale about ten feet off the starboard beam. We anchored in 23 knot winds and whitecaps, but were quite snug there. We spent three nights relaxing onboard and waiting for the winds and waves to settle down. It was beautiful - isolated and wild with dolphins, pelicans, magnificent frigate birds, and steep, folded brown hills rising from sea level. We traded beer, pop, candy, and chicken for lobsters there.

From Santa Maria we made the 24 hour run to Cabo San Lucas, where we anchored in the far east of the Bay. Cabo San Lucas was a bit of culture shock after the barren west coast of the Baja peninsula. Sport fishing boats, cruise ships, water taxis, para-sailing boats, and jet-skis plied the waters there and made for a constant rock and roll in the anchorage. We spent a day visiting with Seattle friends Paul and Dory at their San Jose del Cabo condo. They helped us eat some of the mahi-mahi, which Paul marinated and cooked poolside on the bar-be-que. The next day we said "adios" to Jerimy, as he had to fly back to the Tri-Cities in eastern Washington. Our weather guru, buoyweather.com, showed a three-day window starting Sunday, so we pulled up the anchor and headed out towards La Paz. It was three easy day-hops with stops at Los Frailes (the Friars) and Los Muertos (the Dead Men) anchorages, and then into La Paz by Tuesday afternoon.

We were lucky to get a slip here at Marina De La Paz (we were on the waiting list), where we have signed up for a month. La Paz is a large city (population 240,000) but not a tourist destination. On Wednesday morning we got hit by 25 knots of wind from the north (a 'norther') and we were sure glad to be tied to the dock as the boats in the anchorage looked quite lively out there. There are all sorts of holiday potlucks and activities here - we enjoyed an informal jam session at a local restaurant last night - so we will relax for a while and settle into the cruising community. And by the way, we visited the local CCC Supermarket yesterday and they have EVERYTHING - bagels, yogurt, booze, you name it. I felt very chagrined at all the provisioning I did before getting here as indeed, people in Mexico do have to eat too. We hope to visit some of the nearby islands next week when it looks like there will be a weather window for a few days. For pictures and further details of our trip, visit our website (www.emilyb.com).

From Mazatlan

For those of you who don't know, we've been waylaid here in Puerto Vallarta for the past two months due to emergency surgery for a detached retina that I developed quite suddenly. You can read details on our web site at: www.emilyb.com, but to summarize I had the surgery in Guadalajara and we have been making trips back and forth there for follow-up care. It is a five hour bus ride, but not bad as the first-class buses in Mexico are much nicer than anything in the U.S. Seats that almost fully recline, movies, and snacks make it almost enjoyable. The recovery is coming along fine - I no longer have double vision and the gas bubble that was inserted in my eye is almost gone. I now have a cataract in that eye that will need surgery within the next few months. Needless to say, our cruising plans have changed as we won't be able to go back to the Sea of Cortez this spring/summer. We hope to cruise south to Barra de Navidad and points in between after my next check-up mid April in Guadalajara. Then we'll tie EMILY B up to the dock here in Puerto Vallarta (Paradise Village) for the hurricane season that runs from June through October. We hear Puerto Vallarta is very hot and humid in the summer, so we're planning some escapes. We'll make a trip to Seattle in June/July and possibly visit friends in Alaska. Then we're hoping for some land trips in Mexico - perhaps to the Copper Canyon, while EMILY B is laid up for the season.

We've been enjoying our time here as much as possible, hanging out with friends and family who have come to visit. Laurel was here a couple weeks ago (and announced that she and Noah are engaged!) and Dean's brother Randy and wife Virginia just left here after visiting for a week.

Our big excitement has been a two week hunt for a 'mouse' that slipped onboard, that turned out to be a rat. Dean 'dispatched' it with a plastic hammer and a pair of channel locks. We're tied to a seawall at the Nuevo Vallarta marina the past month waiting for a slip at the marina. Hopefully we will move later this week, as a huge party catamaran has pulled in behind us and they are doing major repairs with hammering and circular saw noises all day long.

Anyway, the cruising life has not exactly turned out as we expected this year, but we've learned that life continues to happen wherever you are. If I have to go through something like this, it is just as well here in 70-80 degree temperatures than elsewhere. We have met some wonderful people and have reconnected here in Puerto Vallarta with several boating couples who we met on our travels down the coast. If any of you have Puerto Vallarta in your travel plans, please let us know as we would love to see you.



Smith, George & Jessica (#623)
DF41 • ROBERT E. WYNNS
Green Cove Springs, FL

07/08/07: We left gorgeous Cape Lookout, NC after two weeks of early morning walks on the miles of deserted beach in this unique anchorage. We anchored for one night in Cedar Creek off Adams Creek, a really pretty spot, with a nice breeze in the heat. Spent the next night in the quaint town of Oriental - they finally have cell phone service. Anchored for the night in Campbell Creek - lots of crab pots but still beautiful and deserted. The next morning we got underway early. The Corps



of Engineers has a major dredging project underway in the 20 mile long straight Pungo canal - big dredges with miles of pipe, and we had to wait for the dredge to move his anchor. The captain said they were going to dredge from “bridge to bridge”. We continued north on the Alligator River with following seas and winds of 25+ knots. The Alligator bridge opened just as we got there and we turned into the Little Alligator River. We found good protection from the howling southwesterly winds and carried seven feet of water almost to the old wreck. Against Jessica’s good counsel we crossed the infamous Albemarle Sound starting at daybreak to beat the wind. WRONG! We got slapped about by the steep waves all the way across. Spent a quiet night at Goat Island in the start of The Great Dismal Swamp. Unbelievably, someone has built an expensive looking dock on Goat Island with a wood walkway going into the island! I hope they don’t develop this wonderful anchorage. The Great Dismal Swamp was well dredged - we draw four feet with a skeg that protects our single screw, felt a couple of bumps but had no problems. Stopped at the friendly visitors center for a couple of their nice blue jean shirts and continued on, misjudging the lock time so we had to wait an hour. It was hot and the deer flies were out to get us. “Loquacious Robert” was the lockmaster - we gave him a conch shell from Cape Lookout and he treated us to some tunes on his shells. Jessica blows a mean conch herself, so we had a concert as we waited for the water to go down eight feet. We cruised through the well patrolled no wake zones and bridges of Norfolk, and are currently tied up at Waterside Marina in Norfolk. The price went up this year to \$1.50 a foot. We have cruised 1000 miles since leaving our winter anchorage in the St. Johns River.



**DEIN, Bob & Barbara (#2)
Venice, FL**

1999 • DeFever 44 Offshore Cruiser • GONDOLA

April 2007: Well, springtime means that it’s Bahamas time. As Venice is on the west coast of Florida, we must travel south to the Keys before departing for the Gulf Stream crossing. It’s always gratifying that so many fellow DFC’ers are “on the march” at the same time.

In Naples FL, we rendezvoused with Ron & Charma Owens (#401, JOURNEY TO...), Bob & Andy Utter (#221, FLORISEAS), Jeff & Brenda Bowen (#435, QUEEN B), Ted & Cindy Minick (#563, *Sweet C*), and Jeff & Tampa Brooks (#808, *Slow Dancin’*). Naples Sailing and Yacht Club was the venue for our first get-together.

The first night “on the hook” was spent in the Little Shark River, just north of Cape Sable. The enormous 60 foot mangrove trees were still bare following Hurricane Wilma’s wrath, but the excellent protection was welcome, following a bumpy ride.



The group split up, with DF44s GONDOLA, FLORISEAS and JOURNEY TO... heading to Boot Key Harbor, Marathon. Surprise! Along came Frank & Ruth Keeler (#69, DF44 WIND DRIFT), returning from their annual winter stay in George Town, Exumas. Like all DeFever, she looked like a great addition to the harbor.

Isn’t this DFC stuff fun?

We’ve only been gone a week and it seems like a homecoming, with so many DFC friends on the water.



HOOKER, Robert & Alice (#222)
Stuart, FL

2000 • Grand Alaskan 53' - 65' • BALI MOTU

5/11/07: We are on a weather hold at Charleston, which isn't the worst place to get stuck while the winds blow 50 for three days. It is about 1,000 miles from Stuart to the Chesapeake, and we try to make 10 miles an hour. Prior to this weather we had a good run since departing on April 29. We are half way up the ditch (ICW) to Norfolk where it ends. We were able to run outside (ocean) from Georgia/Florida border to Hilton Head. Our overnight stops have been at Melbourne, Daytona, St. Augustine, Cumberland Island (GA), Hilton Head, Seabrook Island (SC), and Charleston.

While at Seabrook, we were pleased to have dinner and an evening with family who have a condo on nearby Edisto Island, SC. The next day friends Margarete and Walt showed us around Kiawah Island and took us to breakfast at their private tennis, golf, and swim club. In order to belong to the country club, you have to own property on Kiawah Island. We were unaware of the southern charm/beauty and wealthy estates in the country clubs on the island. Truly, this is one of the most gorgeous areas in the country. We arranged to have our traveling companions Bonnie and Barry on the *Bonnie B* play tennis doubles with Margarete and Walt, but the weather snuffed out the great match. We met Margarete and Walt in Provo last year where they live during the winter; they live in Seabrook the remaining part of the year.

Bonnie B is a new 68 foot Hampton with speeds into the 20's. I haven't figured out if it is patience or financial responsibility to run at 12 knots, but for the most part we have been able to stay close during cruising days. We usually leave a half hour earlier and arrive a half hour later. I keep suggesting that they run faster since I have stock in a number of oil companies. We are having good times in ports and entertaining ourselves along the way. We're just eating too well!

Dining in the Ditch:

We decided to rate the restaurants along the way up the coast from Florida. Here is our Dining the Ditch report in transient order. All restaurants are within walking distance of the marina except as noted. Dockage rates ranged from \$1.25 to \$2.00 per foot, except as noted.

Melbourne, FL, Harbour Marine of Brevard (City Marina) - Chart House Restaurant - Very good
Daytona Beach, FL, Daytona Boat Works - Chart House Restaurant - Very good
St. Augustine, Couch Inn - Harry's (New Orleans style) – Bad. Good in the past, but poor food and service - taxi
Fernandina, FL, City Marina - Marina Restaurant – Good, reported by fellow boater *Bonnie B*
Hilton Head, SC, Hopetown - Quarterdeck Restaurant - Good
Seabrook Island, SC, Bohicket Marina - Rosebank Farms Cafe - Good
Charleston, SC, Ashley Marina - RB's Seafood Restaurant - Fair, service slow - taxi
Charleston, SC, Ashley Marina - 82 Queen Restaurant - Very Good lunch - marina courtesy car
Charleston, SC, Ashley Marina - AMH City Marina Restaurant - OK
Wacca River, SC, Wacca Wache Marina - Boone Docks River Grill - Bad food, but enjoyable marina for a night
Southport, NC, Southport Marina - Yacht Basin Provision Company - Not recommended
Wrightsville Beach, NC, Seapath Marina - Bluewater Grill - Very good
Beaufort, NC, Beaufort City Marina, Stillwater Cafe & Market - Very good and expensive
Belhaven, NC, River Forest Manor Marina & Restaurant - Not bad, ugly
Coinjock, VA, Coinjock Marina and Restaurant - 32 oz prime rib OK - Diesel fuel \$2.29
Hampton, VA, Bluewater Yachting Center - Surf Rider Restaurant - OK scallops, reported by *Bonnie B*
Solomons Island, MD, Zahniser's Yacht Marina, Dry Dock Restaurant - Very good and expensive
Annapolis, MD, Yacht Basin - Rockfish Raw Bar & Grill - Good
Cape May, NJ, Canyon Marina - Over priced at \$2.75 per ft; dinner aboard
Atlantic City, NJ, Farley (Trump) Marina - preseason rate of \$2.00 per ft. \$2 jitney to all restaurants
Atlantic City, NJ, Farley State Marina - Old Homestead at Borgata Casino - Excellent and expensive

6/1/07: We have been at Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 18 miles south of the Battery for the past 10 days. While *Bonnie B* has been visiting with their kids, grandchildren, and friends, we have tendered down the Shrewsbury and Naversink Rivers. If your stay is more than one night at Atlantic Highlands, its worth spending a day visiting these waters viewing huge mansions along the Naversink. Atlantic Highlands' area is the highest terrain along the Atlantic coast. It is also reported that there is a nude bathing area along the five miles of Sandy Hook beach... so there are sights to see in the area.

Sunday morning *Bonnie B* and BALI MOTU will pass under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge by 8, the Statue of Liberty and then the Battery by 9. We will then be propelled up the Hudson River for 75 miles by a flood tide for the next 8 hours to Kingston. The next day we will reach Troy at the start of the Erie Canal. After navigating 39 locks, we plan to be in Oswego, New York on the Shores of Lake Ontario on June 11. Then we'll cross the lake to Trent, Ontario where we will begin the Trent/Severn system to Georgian Bay.

Additional dining suggestions from boating friends:

From *Syringa*: Beaufort, NC - the Grocery

From *Sea Fox*: Titusville - Dixie Crossroads (10 min cab ride)

St Augustine - A1A

Thunderbolt - Tubbys

From *Boataious*, we also received a suggestion of Patti's at Kentucky Dam which we will try in the fall.

6/11/07: Destination Canada

We spent last night in Brewerton on the western shore of Oneida Lake. This morning we turned off the Erie Canal into the Oswego River Canal and arrived in Oswego around noon. It was great having RJ aboard; he was a big help with the locks and also helping Bob with a few repairs. He will be leaving us in the morning and we are planning to depart across Lake Ontario to Canada on Wednesday morning.

While in Canada we were going to add the International Calling to our cell phone, but found out that Verizon discontinued the "North American plan" about a week ago. We will be able to receive calls and call out in some areas, but the roaming charges are pricey so we won't be chatting a lot. We will be using our email through our cell phone, but are requesting you to refrain from sending jokes, downloads, pictures, and forwards as they are up-charging us for the amount of kilobytes we receive. We always love hearing from you so please write, but only send what you write. We are planning on returning to the U.S. around August 1. At that time we will resume our normal emails, phone, and data service, etc.

6/25/07: We are now in Midland after transiting the Trent Severn Canal. During the Trent Severn and since arriving in Midland, we have had limited time to write and send emails so we will try to get this off prior to departing.

Bonnie B and BALI MOTU crossed to Belleville, Ontario from Oswego on June 13 where we met Bonnie and Egon, sailing friends from Georgetown, Exumas. After a couple of days at their marina and touring Belleville, we departed for Trent. The Trent Severn system begins at Trent in the Bay of Quinte, not far from the Thousand Island area at the east end of Lake Ontario, and the system ends at Severn on the south end of Georgian Bay. The system has 42 locks and a total distance of 240 miles. The waterway travels through the Trent River, canals, a number of large lakes including the 20 mile long Lake Simcoe, and ends in the Severn River prior to reaching Georgian Bay. The first part has a minimum depth of eight feet up to Peterborough, and the second half the minimum depth is six feet. The locks vary from typical water locks to two lift locks and a marine railway. Boats enter the lift locks into a 155' long by 32' wide tub of water, and then the tub is raised 40 feet to the higher water level. While your tub is raised up, a similar tub of water is coming down next to you to move down-bound traffic. Long, very narrow canals provide entrance into and departure from these two lift locks with six foot depths. It is in these waterways that most of the problems arose - where we either struck bottom or dead head logs from the bottom. If a vessel our size passes though the system, we stir the logs from the bottom, suspending them in the water for the next boat to hit. We believe all hits were logs except two, one of them after leaving a lift lock, in the middle of the channel. The canals are narrow - when an 18 foot runabout met us, he had to hang onto trees along the side of the canal while we passed. The marine railway lock, Big Chute, was the second from the end. It's a combination rail car and marine travel lift operated by ski lift cables. The rail car is lowered into the water and you drive your boat into the cradle. They adjust straps to hold your boat vertical, sitting on its keel when the car comes out of the water. The car and boat are held

horizontal by the front and back wheels riding on separated rails. The back and front rails are raised to different levels to keep the car level through the transit, up over a hill and down a 40 foot drop - pretty slick.

Our first night out of Belleville on the Trent River was spent at Campbellford. Our guests, Bonnie and Egon's friends in Campbellford invited us to an outstanding, wonderful dinner at their home on the river - crab legs and steak were included in the five course meal. As we passed their house the next day, we gave them a captain's salute as they watched us pass by. The next evening we stayed at Peterborough watching a fountain send water 40 feet high near our marina. The following day we went to the Peterborough lift lock and afterwards to the canal by Trent University. This was where the troubles began. We bumped in the canal and ended the day's run at Buckhorn Marina after passing through Clear Lake, one of the most beautiful inland lakes. Unfortunately, *Bonnie B* took a hit on the canal and had to have the props removed and serviced by the Buckhorn Marina and Prop Shop. The shop's location is almost too convenient and prices are Ouch!

After staying two nights at Buckhorn, BALI MOTU continued on leaving the *Bonnie B* to wait for their props to be finished the next day. This was the most stressful day of boating I can recall. We went through the second lift lock and on its long entrance and exit canals, we bumped logs and had two hard strikes. Then we proceeded in 30+ knot winds across a lake so full of weeds that the boat speed was reduced to a single knot. Backing off several times, we cleared the weeds and continued on, finally tying up to a lock wall at Talbot. That evening, I related a portion of the day's events to *Bonnie B*, and the next day, *Bonnie B* informed us of their decision to turn around. The system held them overnight at a lock prior to entering the Peterborough lift lock canal so they could raise the water level.

Unfortunately, it happened again - hitting after exiting the lift lock where their props had to be removed and reworked by Buckhorn when they tied up at Peterborough. We visited with them that night while taking Bonnie and Egon back to Belleville in a rented car. The only good news was that Herman's Hermits were playing at the band shell within 500 feet of their boat the next evening, if that was good news. We can't express how sad and sorry we feel for *Bonnie B*, we are missing them.

The next day we crossed Lake Simcoe in 25 knot winds and tied up to the dock at the entrance of the Big Chute Railroad. Except for the wind, this was an easy day. The last day after the Big chute the scenery was beautiful along the Severn River. As we were loaded on the big Chute Rail Car, I overheard Egon ask the lock attendant to report any damage to our boat when it was hauled out, but don't tell the captain. Eavesdropping, I heard the favorable news and then Egon reported the good news to me. Whew, what a relief. The attendant said that we had mud in our engine intakes and took his knife and our water hose to clean them while the boat and railroad car traveled on the tracks. As we entered the lock at Severn, the lockmaster said I bet you're glad this is the last one — yep was the answer and glad we survived although our thoughts and hearts went out to *Bonnie B*.

In retrospect, the Trent Severn is a system that, if transited with a three-and-a-half to four foot draft vessel, would be a challenging but a very lovely trip. The scenery is sometimes gorgeous and varies from narrow canals, to red rock islands, to wooded pines. There are many expensive and impressive homes along some stretches, while other areas are virgin woods. The locks themselves vary in size and operation. Half of them are manually operated gates and valves. So we have done that, but "never again" in such a large sized vessel. Except for two locks along the route, we were treated very well - the attendants were friendly and informative. During a days run, they would know where you were in the system and attempt to have the lock set for you when you arrived.

Proceeding through the final lock we took dockage at Doral Marina, a large marina where the Toronto people come to enjoy the 30,000 Island area of Georgian Bay. After arriving and returning Egon and Bonnie back to Belleville, we met up with a couple that keeps their boat at Doral that we dined with in Bay Fin six years ago. Owen and Elena Smith, who live in Toronto, have a condo in Provo and, by letter, introduced us to Walt and Margarete who also have a condo in Provo - we stopped and visited them near Charleston a month ago. It's OK if you don't follow all this! Anyway, they were kind to drive up from Toronto and spend time boating together in the 30,000 Islands, however we have spent the last four nights at the dock enjoying their company instead out in the islands. First, our master head kept popping its circuit breaker. Owen and Elena took us around Midland and believe it or not, Bayport Marina had a Sealand vacuum flush pump and motor, only it appeared to be a newer model. After spending a BOAT (*Break Out Another Thousand*) unit for it, we believed that we could disassemble it and turn the motor to the other side and it would fit. If we were wrong, we just lost a little more than a BOAT unit. The next day, Saturday, we got it reassembled and connected the system. It was a good investment. Owen suggested that we visit Saint Marie of the Hurons, a re-created village and museum using their car. After returning, by 2 o'clock, we were to leave for the islands however our friends informed us that they had a fuel leak on board and needed a new fitting which wouldn't

be available until Monday. Then, after flushing our toilet a number of times Sunday morning, the new pump circuit breaker popped just like before. Oh Crap - after all it is a toilet. Removing the pump's out-going line, STUFF shot out like it was from a cannon. After wiping both Alice's and my faces dry, we concluded that the 1 1/2" line from the pump was plugged. Owen came to the rescue by driving us to Home Depot and picking up a 25 foot snake that operated with a drill. We worked for more than an hour, going in both ends of the 20 foot hose, breaking up cement-like buildup that had attached itself to the walls of the tube. Finally, 60 psi of water pressure cleared the blockage after continual grinding with the snake. Now a guy can do what he needs to do in his own backyard. The story wouldn't be complete without saying that I climbed into the dumpster container and retrieved the old pump and motor which obviously wasn't the problem.

This Monday morning while we wait for Owen and Elena's boat to be fixed we've had the time to write this diatribe, as the prior week was too demanding. We believe we will take a week through the 30,000 Islands and be in the north around the first of July.

7/1/07: For a Florida boy, highs in the 60s for a week are cold. We went fishing down Collins Inlet at Mill Lake and the 30 minute tender ride at 35 miles/hour back to Killarney was so cold that it took hours, scotch, and a hot water bottle to warm up. We did have fresh fish for dinner.

We left Georgian Bay at Midland about a week ago and traveled a good portion of the inland route to Killarney at the north end of the bay and the entrance to the North Channel. The route travels through beautiful islands, rocks, and narrow passages for over 100 miles among the 30,000 Islands. It is well marked with adequate water depth, except at the southern entrance to Collins Inlet on Beaverstone Bay. We bypassed this area, but later checked it out by tender and found the depth to be six feet and marked with low water buoys. Going around sharp turns and between close-together red and green buoys wasn't any problem.

After our head pump problems that a number of you have sent a variety of comments about, we departed Midland with our mentors, Owen and Elena Smith on *Suncee*. They took the lead and we headed to Longuissa Bay about 20 miles away. Elena loves to fish and she put out lines around their 38 foot Monk trawler as soon as we anchored. She caught the biggest large mouth bass I've ever seen. The next day we continued another 20 miles on the inland route and split off near Frying Pan Island to the Provincial Park Moon River area and anchored in Three Finger Bay. Cottages populate many islands along the route, except for the park area. The land is rocky and well forested. We tendered and fished the area and caught three northerns and two small mouth bass which Elena presented on a platter for dinner. The next day we took the dinghy to Henry's at Frying Pan Island Marina for lunch. The marina is capable of accepting boats to 70 feet with nice floating docks and one 50 amp service. Owen and Elena departed back to Midland the next day and we felt a little lonely, on our own on the inland route. Owen had gone over all the charts to Killarney, marking the better anchorages, alternate routes, and chart changes. Their assistance and company was warm and much appreciated.

We traveled on the inland route for 10 miles to the entrance of Parry Sound, which we decided to bypass since we had been there by car a few years ago. We continued on for 20 more miles to the Shawanag area where Owen suggested that we anchor. The winds were coming in at 20+ knots in one anchorage so we went to another amongst large cottages - I felt uncomfortable about intruding on their privacy. This area has many fine homes or cottages and we would like to stop if we're in the area again. In five miles around sharp turns we came to the narrows of Pointe Au Baril that provides an entrance onto Georgian Bay. Prior to the present large light house and range marking the entrance, they put a barrel at the entrance with a lantern on top to mark the entrance. As you look toward land from the Bay, you see many low lying flat rocks, with no defining entrance to bring a boat through for miles along this shore - thus the need to mark the entrance since it was the French who originally settled the area, coming by canoe and portages from Montreal, Pointe Au Baril.

Entering Georgian Bay we traveled north for 25 miles to an entrance back into the inland route at the Bustard Islands, just south of the main outlet of the French River which was the final river that the fur traders used for an entrance to Georgian Bay. The Bustards are more like the North Channel, where you can see the mountains near Killarney in the background. We spent two nights literally chilling out. The next day we traveled five miles to the Bad River Channel of the French River. This is the most beautiful of all the islands with high pink granite sides and the Devil Door Rapids which we didn't dare to attempt in the tender. It may be more accessible in higher lake water since it seems more like a three foot waterfall now. The raw cold wind and rain came in so we decided to depart for Killarney, 25 miles to the west. Taking a slip at Killarney Mountain lodge we enjoyed an evening with a prime rib

meal, sitting near their pool. The next day we froze on Collins Inlet, but caught our dinner and retired to watch Canada's Independence Day fireworks.

After two good days at Killarney, we decided to go west of Little Current for a few days, waiting for friends Jack and Sue to arrive.

In conclusion, the Georgian Bay inland waterway is a worthwhile adventure that is fairly easy in good weather. There are portions that are exposed to west winds in Georgian Bay and good visibility helps. The southern part is populated with Midland boaters who live in Toronto and use it as a boating base on weekends and vacations.

Happy 4th of July!

8/1/07: 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.

Our farewell tour of Canada's North Channel took a month, and we were able to see the people and places we enjoyed in the past. The rock formations, the different granite colors, the sheer cliffs, and deep water depths next to shore offer gorgeous, rugged beauty. There have been a few changes from nature and man's assistance - the low depths and weeds that have proliferated in the water. 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, with sharp cutting edges and no predators, filter and clean the water permitting sunlight to penetrate into shallow water, aiding the growth of plant vegetation. The mussels do not seem to be multiplying as much as when they were first introduced. The cormorants have reduced the fishing in the past. They still are eating their weight in fish everyday, taking food from the larger game fish. We were successful in being able to eat 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 doing fine, however the Sportman's Inn was just sold by the bank to new owners, and the infamous 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 for many years. We received Customs clearance and our 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 had 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 asked why I needed it since we already had 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 responding to questions about how much booze, cigarettes, and 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 to be the result of too many Customs officers stationed in an outpost needing something to do, and an interest in touring different boats. For the town of Gore Bay where they reside, if the boaters feel they will be inspected after prior clearance they will avoid the village.

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

The other unusual experience we had was during a storm in Beardrop Harbor when a catamaran sailboat's anchor dragged around midnight. As the other boat 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. In the pouring rain I yelled to fend off, and he contacted our boat only lightly. 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 the engine started and with the pouring rain, I relented and let him stay tied to our stern, like a tender, for the night. After an hour of watching the storm abate, and with his 6,000 lb. boat safely behind us, I retired to bed. At 5 A.M., 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 20 knots of wind, and why did we crash into the boat tethered behind us? After questioning the retired professor of humanities catamaran captain, he said that during the night that the wind died, changed direction and the boats moved in circles. His bow line that was 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 the 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 damage payment to his boat since it was only a stanchion hit and he had built the boat. I'm starting to get a complex about retired sailboaters – we saved this guy's boat and he is doing us a favor after he didn't let us know his line fouled our anchor...

When U.S. Customs arrived at Drummond 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. So the agent faxed our documents and requested our cruising license be faxed or e-mailed 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 tourists 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 fireworks celebration of the Mackinac Bridge's 50th anniversary. It connects the upper and the lower peninsula of Michigan and its five mile length is the longest span bridge in the U.S.

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 by Friday, in the Harbor Springs or Charlevoix area. Only Cingular cell coverage is available on the island so communications are presently limited. We will retain Internet service so that we can transmit this and be able to make calls by Skype.



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

1989 • DeFever 49 Pilothouse • AURORA

7/17/06 (Better late than never – Ed.): Greetings from the crew of AURORA who are reporting in from Stuart, FL. We arrived safely on Saturday at 6 p.m. after departing Mangrove Cay at 5 a.m. and dragging (trolling) fishing lines for over 10 hours without catching anything! We enjoyed a delightful crossing with light winds and calm seas but were hoping to add more catch to the freezer. However, Steven did have the best fishing day of his life while cruising the beautiful waters of the Bahamas, and we will cherish that memory for a long time. We enjoyed an easy check in with Customs and Immigration as they've added Homeland Security agents to local marinas to make it easier for us boat people.

I believe the last email we sent described us as being new members of the Bill Fish Club, and we're still flying the flag proudly. We then joined boating buddies in Eleuthera where we rented a van to tour the island and local settlements. We visited a nice resort, an exclusive island where Prince Charles and Diana vacationed, saw H.S students raising money for their prom by selling Bahamian food, and walked the beach where there once was an American missile tracking station during the Cold War that has been reclaimed by Mother Nature. Often you see buildings in various stages of construction or deconstruction, as you're never sure. Dreams of creating an island paradise by foreigners or investors turn to Herman Wouk's classic, "Don't Stop the Carnival" where once again

Mother Nature reclaims what is hers. People are always friendly and offer smiles with directions for lost tourists, and enjoy seeing boats anchored in their harbors. Back to the boats to view the island from a different perspective and enjoy the sunset. The group cruises on to anchor off Loretta Lynn's home on Current Island to enjoy drift snorkeling thru the "cut" where the current takes you on a Disney-like ride through the water. You get to hang on to your dinghy and watch all the fish swimming by as well as coral formations, and end your ride on a shallow sand bar wanting to buy another ticket! We also dove for conch, sea shells, and more cool fish sightings. Next stop is Royal Island where there is a protected harbor that once included a mansion (circa 1950's) that was abandoned, and you used to be able to go ashore to visit the ruins. Ah, progress! Someone purchased the island, cleared the ruins, and is building a marina/resort! We'll see how long it takes, and IF it gets finished. We enjoy one of our best snorkels on the back side of the island where there's tons of coral and fish.

Time to move on, so we cross the big blue to head north for the Abaco Islands. We drag lines again for 8 hours, but nothing bites. We decide to head for the inlet and one boat in our group decides to continue north when they spot birds working. We should have done the same thing as they catch five black fin tuna! They're kind enough to return to the anchorage to share the bounty and we all have sushi onboard BALI MOTU.

The weather is changing and the next 2 weeks bring rain, clouds, and squalls as we anchor off Hopetown, and enjoy periods of sun to get in the water and collect conch and shells. The Fourth of July is rapidly approaching and it's our tradition to have a beach BBQ with burgers, dogs, slaw, and to set off fireworks and/or outdated flares! We receive a respite and pull it off in grand style as we gorge on the culinary delights that all have prepared, watch fireworks courtesy of the marina, and pray for those protecting our freedom. We move into Marsh Harbor, the big city of the Abacos, where there's lots of shopping, groceries, restaurants, and PEOPLE! We arrive to find the harbor nearly vacant as most boaters are following the sailing regattas and festivities which are to arrive here in two days. We enjoy time ashore to visit shops, restaurants, and a fine bakery (coconut bread is the best), and to provision with fresh produce. We enjoy a couple of snorkels and see lots of large lobsters BUT...they're out of season so no takie! Ashore at night for a free party with drinks and favors to celebrate the races, a wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres party at a local wine store and dancing with the locals for a very fun, hot time, then back to the boat for showers and bed.

Time is moving much quicker and we need to continue north to reach "home" by 7/15, so we say farewell to our boating buddies and depart for Green Turtle Cay where we will stay at a friend's dock. We are welcomed by Roger and Lyn Race to learn that we are the first guests at their new dock!

After 15 years and several hurricanes they decided their dock needed to be replaced, and what a fine job they did. It's well built with 3x8" thick cross beams and large SS bolts. Add electric and water and it's a resort. They've lived here for five years and are a great asset to the island, its economy, and the friendship of many. We hear of an approaching tropical wave and are happy to be secured, but it doesn't really develop and we're VERY happy with that news. We spend several days enjoying their company, getting out to the reefs and working on the boat so there's less to do once we're back in the states. Our friends, Dennis and Nellie join us at the dock on their boat as well, and we discuss final cruise plans for our return trip. We depart the dock at 9 a.m. on Thursday to anchor off Allens-Pensacola for our last beach walk, swim in the surf, snorkel, and general "good-bye" to the islands we love so much... it truly is Better in the Bahamas. Steven takes a last look at the bottom of the boat in crystal clear waters then it's anchors up and a long run to Mangrove Cay for our final anchorage. We enjoy our last Bahamian sunset, blowing of the conch horn, a quiet evening onboard, and alarms set for 0:dark:30... which brings us back to the beginning of this story.

So, hope you have enjoyed our updates, everyone is well and enjoying summer fun, and we look forward to hearing from you. We're now preparing for our Saturday departure to Alaska as we join friends on their boat for a two week cruise to a part of the country we've never experienced. Should be totally awesome and we're very excited.



Dreams Come True – How It All Started

12/1/06: I am attempting to write the Van Gemert cruising history as an article for the DeFever newsletter - here goes. Also, I would remind all that this is written from a woman's point of view.

Way back in the early '70s when we were young and all things seemed possible, this California girl introduced a young man from New Mexico to sailing. He really liked it and he bought a 28 foot sailboat. We started cruising to Catalina Island almost every weekend of the long California summers - that was 35 years ago. On November 19, 2006, we realized one of our dreams and major cruising goals when we completed The Great Loop of America on our current boat LIONHEART. We left Key West on April 15, 2006 and traveled 5,186 miles to cross our wake back in Key West. This is the second benchmark in our current big adventure. The first was to transit the Panama Canal which we did in February 2006, but let me back track to all the dreaming and other adventures that got us started in the cruising lifestyle.

In the early days of our adventuring, we did what we now call line of sight sailing. We sailed from Long Beach to Catalina Island and back probably 25 times before we found out about charts. As they say, God watches out for children and idiots! After learning about charts and other basic safety stuff, we ventured as far north as Santa Barbara and as far south as Ensenada in Baja California. By 1987 we were on our second sailboat, an O'Day 37, when Richard announced that he had just about finished getting it ready for blue water sailing. He thought we should consider selling the house as soon as the kids finished college and take off for a round-the-world cruise. Now I knew that he had been thinking about this world cruise adventure, reading about it, etc., but I had come to the conclusion that I did not want to cruise around the world on a sailboat. As I said to him, "You had better start looking for crew because you are not looking AT the crew." After considerable gnashing of teeth, reconsideration, and a completely



windless summer in southern California, the Captain suggested we purchase a powerboat and plan a cruise to Alaska as our big adventure. Now, mind you, it's not like we never had any other adventures. My favorite sport is skiing, especially deep powder heli-skiing. The Captain also heli-skis, has a private pilot license, has had a number of sports cars, motorcycles, big game fishing trips, water-ski boat, off-road racing car, has gone sky diving, and we have gone white water rafting. However, when we purchased our 1989 36 foot Grand Banks trawler FAT CAT, he completely threw himself into learning everything there was to know about the boat and the trip he was planning to Glacier Bay, Alaska.

While we continued to ply the waters of southern California from our base in Long Beach for the next 2 years, in 1991 we took FAT CAT up to the Sacramento Delta. This trip up the coast to San Francisco and into the Delta took a week and was very good experience for future coastal cruising. The waters north of Santa Barbara are a bit more challenging than sunny southern California, but we remained undaunted and had a great time cruising in the Delta for two months and then returning down the coast. We managed this by leaving the boat in the Delta and flying up every other week for 10 days until we ran out of vacation time from work. We also met an "older" couple on a 49 foot Grand Banks *Tamara*, who spent every other summer in Alaska and every other winter in Mexico. I say "older" then

because we were younger and retirement still seemed far off. But they were cruisers like we envisioned becoming.

The next five years were spent cruising and living life while the Captain moved forward with his plan for the BIG adventure. He took the Coast Guard course and became licensed to pilot any boat of 100 tons or less. He took a week-long course on diesel engine maintenance and repair. He outfitted FAT CAT with all the necessities for cruising to Alaska. In 1996 he became unable to work as an oral surgeon because of his eyesight. However, you don't have to have great depth perception to drive a boat at eight knots, so it was time to head north.

In 1996 the Captain and a friend left Long Beach, California, heading for Vancouver Island in British Columbia. They left on April 8th and arrived in Sydney, Vancouver Island, on May 1. That trip up the coast was not easy. There are not a lot of places to stop in sheltered harbors between the Golden Gate and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. They had a lot of days of waiting for weather and a lot of long days with big waves and high wind. In Bodega Bay they met up with our original idols on *Tamara* who were again traveling to Alaska for the summer.

During the summer months of 1996, the Captain stayed in Canada and I flew into Sydney to meet the boat for several two-week trips into the Gulf Islands and Desolation Sound. Cruising in that area was a fantastic change from the many years of weekends on a mooring in Catalina, and we put on lots of boat miles exploring this lovely part of the world.

On June 1, 1997, we left Sydney to realize our Big Adventure plans. We cruised north through the Inland Passage all the way to Glacier Bay and back. We were out for 90 days. I had taken the summer off work and had some young college interns from Yale house-sitting and cat-sitting, and all of our business and family matters under control for the summer. We absolutely loved that trip. The Inside Passage is easy to cruise. There are only two places where you must be "outside" and that is crossing Queen Charlotte Sound and crossing the Dixon Inlet. We cruised around the Misty Fjords near Ketchikan. We watched the bears catch salmon with their mouths at the Anan Bear Preserve. We took FAT CAT right up to the snout of the Grand Pacific Glacier at 59 deg. N and watched it calve. We picked up a feral cat in Wrangle (Nikolas has been our cruising cat ever since). We anchored at the base of more waterfalls than we could have imagined ever seeing. We caught halibut, salmon, crab, and shrimp. We anchored out 90% of our nights and never repeated a single anchorage. All in all, it was an amazing and wonderful trip that started us thinking that we would visit Alaska again. However, to do that I thought we needed a bigger boat. I mentioned it to the Captain as we returned to Sydney, and he got right on the project.

In April 1998, we became the proud owners of our DeFever 49 RPH named LIONHEART, which we also docked in Canada. Since I was still working, the Captain spent much of his winter and all of his summer in Canada and I flew in to ski in the winter and boat in the summer. The summers of 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 were spent exploring Desolation Sound, the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, the San Juan Islands, Puget Sound, the Gulf Islands, and a memorable circumnavigation of Vancouver Island which is 322 miles long with the west coast facing the Pacific Ocean. All of these trips took us to beautiful anchorages where the wildlife was abundant, the fishing was great, and the people we met were few and far between but all very interesting, especially the cruisers.

During the winter months the Captain was busy in those years having stabilizers and a bow thruster installed, as well as a five foot extension added to the back of LIONHEART. These improvements went forward as we became more interested in and committed to a REALLY Big Adventure: The Great Loop of America.

By 1999 we became members of DeFever Cruisers and shortly after that the America's Great Loop Cruiser's Association (AGLCA). We had definitely decided to do a six month cruise to Alaska and were thinking of taking LIONHEART south after that... south all the way to the Panama Canal! We met a couple on another DeFever 49 who had taken their boat into the Caribbean and back, AND we met a 23 foot Bayliner in Alaska in 1997 that we read about completing the Loop. We were interested and excited in the adventure potential.

The summer of 2002 was set for me to retire and for us to cruise again to Alaska. We left on May 17, 2002 from Sydney in the company of friends who would travel with us as far as Queen Charlotte Sound. We had a hairy time getting around Cape Caution that year. We had the good fortune to hook up with a Canadian who was cruising Alaska that summer with his Mum on a 50 foot power boat. With his "local knowledge" and our previous experiences, we wound up going to many new and incredible anchorages and towns. We circumnavigated Baranoff Island and Prince of Wales Island which we had not done before. We visited Glacier Bay for a second time and found that the glaciers had indeed retreated at least ½ mile since our last visit. We found *Tamara* once again tucked up in a bay, and we took them with us up to Sawyer Glacier for a floating lunch among the icebergs. We again saw the bears fishing, fished quite a lot ourselves, and were blessed with the company of Nikolas, our pure Alaskan Shed Cat from Wrangle. He didn't even request that we visit Wrangle again - he knows a good gig when he gets one!

2002 was a rainy year in Alaska so we headed south earlier than anticipated with the decision fully made that we wanted to continue the adventure of cruising. We felt we had the perfect boat all ready to go in LIONHEART. The trip down the Pacific coast from Cape Flattery to San Francisco was as difficult as expected and undertaken by the Captain and two friends without me and the cat, for that leg. I picked up the boat in the Sacramento Delta a week after they left Canada. We played in the Delta and took our time coming down the coast from San Francisco to Long Beach, arriving back in our home port on October 24, completing our first six month cruise.

On the way down the coast we visited friends and discovered a place where we would really like to build a house. We purchased property in the beach section of Oxnard, California in 2003 and began making serious plans for the BIG ADVENTURE. We decided we would sell our house because we didn't want the responsibility of an empty house or a rental house while we were gone. We decided our trip would take us south through the Panama Canal and on to Florida, and that we would do the Great Loop of America. Beyond that we planned to spend time exploring the east coast of the U.S. and the islands of the Caribbean, then bring LIONHEART back to California. We figured this would take us three to five years. The only people who didn't think we were nuts were our kids because they have lived with us and know we often make plans to do extraordinary things.

We sold our home in January 2004 and moved onto the boat in May. The experience of getting rid of everything that did not fit on the boat or in an 8x10 foot storage unit was something of a test in itself. You just never knew how much stuff you have that your kids don't want and that you don't want to pay to store, until you do it. That would be a whole chapter in itself.

We lived aboard in Long Beach for 18 months while resolving all commitments and adding all the equipment necessary for serious off-shore cruising and living aboard, including air conditioning. On October 21, 2005 we left the dock and headed south. The trip down the coast of Mexico and the coast of Central America was long and difficult. We did our first overnight on the Baja leg with a friend on board. We did our first overnight, just the two of us (and Nick), crossing the Sea of Cortez on a dark night with no moon. We had many more overnights before reaching the Panama Canal on February 3, 2006. The unanticipated, or rather unknown, elements of that passage were the many overnight passages that are necessary because of the lack of harbors on the Pacific coast. Long passages usually end in unknown anchorages with wind and bottom conditions that try a Captain's soul and the crew's sanity. Off the coast of Central America there are many small fishing boats called pongas. These boats are out all night with men aboard tending nets that you can't see, and the boats have no lights. Dodging pongas all night long tries the patience of everyone except Nick. Also, while you think you are headed south, you are actually going east, into the sun, every day. From sunup at 6:00 AM to past noon, you have the sun in your face and it is 98 degrees in the pilot house. There is also the constant checking in and out of every port where you stop. We had heard that you check in and out of Mexico once - not true! In any event, our whole voyage is documented on our website www.lionheartcruise.com complete with photos, so I won't go into detail and make this article a book!

Reaching the Panama Canal was the first benchmark on this part of our BIG ADVENTURE. We reached the Balboa Yacht Club which is where you wait to transit the Canal unless you want to pay a considerable nightly fee at the really lovely marina around the corner. We transited the Canal on February 10. It took us 9 hours and was a thrill of a lifetime. We left Colon Harbor, which is the north side of the Canal, on February 13 with friends aboard, and spent what was probably the worst overnight passage of the trip making it to Bocas del Toro on the 14th. We were weathered in at Bocas for almost three weeks before leaving Panama to cross the Caribbean by way of the off-shore islands of Nicaragua, Honduras, Belize, and Mexico. We had a third crew member for this part of the trip and a buddy boat. This made the five major overnights less odious. Why were they an unpleasant aspect of the trip? Because the western Caribbean is a rough piece of water. A GOOD forecast from Chris Parker, our weatherman for hire, would be winds less than 20, seas less than six, and a wave interval of eight seconds or more. It was never smooth. One night the Captain had to change out a raw water pump on one of the engines (the one that runs the stabilizers) while we were bobbing in this wild ocean, in the middle of the night, in an engine room that was easily 130 degrees. Now was that fun? Ask the cat!

We crossed the Gulf from Isla Mujeres to the Dry Tortugas on April 6 though 7, and arrived in Key West on April 8. It had taken us almost six months to get there and we were very happy to be there. We didn't dally too long because we had decided to do the Great Loop in 2006, and since we had come all this way to do it, we got on with it immediately. It is a good thing we did keep moving. If we hadn't made it through the Erie Canal ahead of the big rains and the closure of one of the locks for the summer, we would have had to turn back, which would have been most unsatisfying. As it is, we completed the Great Loop in seven months and feel quite gratified to have complete

this second benchmark of the Big Adventure.

Since leaving Long Beach in October 2005, we have traveled 12,037 miles. The Great Loop accounts for the last 5,186, and is also the most enjoyable portion of the Big Adventure so far. Including our travels north of California, since 1998 we and LIONHEART have traveled 21,050 miles in the Pacific, Caribbean, Atlantic, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, and rivers of America. We have been as far north as 59 deg. and as far south as 9 deg. 99% of that time it has been the Captain, me and the cat. Its 550 square feet of living space (we had to measure for carpet) and a ton of hard work for the Captain, since he gets all the 'blue' jobs. We have our moments and they are not usually over how the food is stored on the boat! There have been real hard times, like when I was sick in Central America. And, there is a modicum of boredom occasionally. We definitely miss our family and friends. However, we have made many new friends and the next port always beckons.

Speaking of next ports and adventure plans: we plan to spend 2007 kicking back in the Bahamas and exploring the east coast between Florida and New York. In 2008 we plan to do the Down East Loop which will take us back to Canada, out the St. Lawrence Seaway, around New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and down the east coast back to Florida. After that, we will see. We would be happy to talk with anyone who is thinking of long-distance coastal cruising and wants to talk to old salts... well, at least we are getting pretty old! I know we are grateful to the Stobs and their book, the AGLCA, Bill Buckley and other cruisers who have written books, and our old friends on *Tamara* and *Shearwater* who inspired us to go on and DO IT. And, if you have gotten this far, we say "Go on and just do it!"



VAN GEMERT, Richard & Sue (#432)

1991 • DF49PH+6 • LIONHEART

Pasadena, CA

This is a continuation of the Adventures of LIONHEART that appeared in the Spring 2006 issue of the DeFever Cruisers Magazine (Volume 10, Issue 2).

LIONHEART's Cruise – Panama to Florida

February 2006: If you have read the travel log so far, you know that we transited the Panama Canal two months ago, on February 10, 2006. In the past two months we have traveled north from Colon, Panama, to Key West Florida. Where we went and what we did along the way is outlined below in words and pictures.

We left Colon on February 12 in the late afternoon, heading north up the east coast of Panama to Bocas Del Toro. We left late in the afternoon, supposedly ahead of a weather system that would have kept us in Colon for one to two weeks. It was a passage of 150 miles so we needed to travel overnight in order to arrive at our destination during daylight hours, approximately 21 hours later. All of that turned out as planned except for the part about being ahead of the storm. We caught that storm (or it caught us) and made for one of the roughest passages we have ever had anywhere! The Feslers were with us so we weren't lonely, but everyone, especially the cat, was really uncomfortable for 16 of those 21 hours at sea. I will describe the experience as that of being in a really hot milk carton, inside a washing machine on the wash cycle. Nick has never had such a bad night before or since.

We arrived in Bocas Del Toro very tired but looking forward to exploring this area that is a popular surfing destination. We immediately checked into Marina Bocas Del Toro so that we could plug into electricity, do laundry, etc. The stormy weather stayed over the Caribbean for three weeks, so we had plenty of time to explore the area. The first three days it rained and blew. The weather turned Bocas town into a muddy destination to be reached by a dinghy ride through rough water. The good news is that it is warm water whether it is waves or rain, and absolutely everybody gets wet all the time. We accepted this way of life but we did elect to stay inside during the major rain storms. Staying inside the boat with the AC turned on, we played Mexican Train, cribbage, and Scrabble with Will and Sue, when we were not out buying vegetables and getting wet. Our friends left us on Feb 16, and we were in Bocas

until March 3.

Bocas Del Toro town is on Isla Colon in Bahia Almirante on the NE coast of Panama. It is famous for surfing beaches, snorkeling, and other water activities. There are no giant resorts in this area. Land accommodations range from \$7 (not recommended) to the classy over-the-water bungalow of Punta Caracol Aqua Lodge at \$150 per night.

We cruised by Aqua Lodge and agree with the tour books that it is isolated and it is beautiful. Bocas town has many bars and restaurants for a town so small. The booming industries are tourism and real estate. You can get a shack for less than \$200,000, but not for long. The Americans and Europeans are shopping for waterfront property in one of the last places it is available.

While in Bocas we visited Cayo Coral to snorkel and Red Frog Beach on Isla Bustamiento to watch the pounding surf. On our hike across the island to the beach we saw a small crocodile in a pond, a lemur in a tree top, and the tiny red frogs which give this beach the name. We anchored at the north end of Isla Colon and took the dinghy out to watch the pounding waves on the coral reef that surrounds the area. We traveled two hours by water taxi to the town of Changuinola on the Panama mainland. There we saw the operation of a huge banana plantation and saw how the natives in that area live along the swampy rivers. We attended Carnival in Bocas town on February 28. It was a big event for the locals, complete with costumed revelers, lots of libations, and the national security police out in force. By March 3 when the weather was finally clearing enough for travel, we were ready to go north.

We left Bocas on March 4 in the company of another boat, a Nordhavn 40 named *Beso*, owned and operated by a couple from Santa Barbara, headed for Florida. In our discussions with many boaters, we had determined that buddy boating in the Caribbean waters off the coast of Central America is a good idea for many reasons. There are not very many cruiser-friendly ports on that coast and there really are pirates, so having another boat that travels about the same speed as you do gives you company and radio contact, especially important on those long nights at sea. We also picked up a crew member for the journey north to Florida. She is a Canadian woman, Liz, about our age whom we had met in El Salvador. She was crewing on a sail boat which developed mechanical difficulties and had fallen way behind schedule in getting to the Panama Canal. We enjoyed her company and had told her to contact us if she needed a ride north. Liz arrived on March 1 to join the crew. She was with us until we arrived in Key West. Her experience from five years of Caribbean cruising, and having one more person to stand watch on the night passages, was most helpful. She is also a great cook and used to making do with what the local markets can provide for the ships stores. I learned much from her and enjoyed her company for the 38 days she crewed with us.

From Bocas we traveled north to the island of San Andres. This is a Columbian Island which lies about 100 miles off the coast of Nicaragua. I won't go into the details of the 31 hour crossing but I would say it was very much like the trip from Colon to Bocas: rough on the equipment and the crew! When we arrived at San Andres, we saw the beautiful aqua blue waters and barrier reefs that we expected to see in the Caribbean – for the first time. San Andres is a big resort town that caters to wealthy Columbian vacationers. There are huge hotels and condos and it is a duty free shopping port. However, a two hour taxi tour of the entire island takes you to caves where the pirate Captain Morgan stashed his loot, beautiful ocean views from coral beaches, quaint little huts where you can sample the local seafood, and a view of the homes of the native San Andreans. We took our dinghy out to the coral reef that surrounds the island and had a great afternoon of snorkeling.

On March 8 we made an eight hour trip to Isla Providencia, the second Columbian island off Nicaragua. It was a rough crossing that brought us to one of the prettiest anchorages we've seen on the trip. There were a number of cruising yachts anchored in the bay, all waiting for weather to go either north or south. One of the boats organized a snorkeling trip to the barrier reef and then lunch on the beach at one of those quaint beachside restaurants which are so prevalent in this part of the world. The snorkeling was fabulous and so was lunch. We stayed in Providencia for seven days. We took a two hour taxi tour of this island also, stopping at local spots of interest, and lunch. This island is not a tourist



LIONHEART at anchor in the bay at Isla Providencia

destination but the locals seem to have a better life than seen at most of our ports of call in the last six months. They suffered serious hurricane damage in the past two years, but the Columbian government has provided funding to rebuild roads and replace roofs on almost every structure visible. The literacy level among the 4000 inhabitants is very high. The language is English because the English settled the area; however the Columbian government now requires the schools to teach Spanish as well as English. We met the Port Captain who was very helpful to cruisers and is working on increasing tourism to his island in order to improve the economy. He gave us info on how to contact the Columbian Navy and the fishing fleet if we needed to do so at night. We enjoyed our stay here very much. Our next passage was 208 miles north (28 hours at sea) to Cayo Vivorillos off the coast of Honduras. This again is the picture of Caribbean beauty. It is basically a reef that forms a bay which affords a smooth anchorage. Again we traveled with Beso and again met several of the sailboats we had met in Providencia. The local fisherman traded conch for rum and we have feasted on conch fritters ever since. Liz and I took the opportunity to wash and air out all of the bedding. We thought we had some kind of bug on board that was biting us during the night and causing righteous welts that itched like crazy and sort of looked like smallpox. It was an exercise in futility because we continued to get bites until we got to Belize.

Our next stop was 88 miles north to Roatan - an island about 60 miles off the coast of Honduras. It is a major scuba diving destination. We stayed in a lovely marina called Barefoot Cay. The crossing was much better this time, and the female crew were able to spend the afternoon of the 25.5 hour trip giving each other pedicures. What luxury! Nick did not barf once! We spent eight days on Roatan where we hooked up with our old friend and first boat partner Dale Grenoble, who now lives in Honduras and has a beach house on Roatan. We spent a lovely afternoon snorkeling off his pier on the west end of Roatan, walking on the beach which is inside the barrier reef which provides such great diving, and watching the sunset from his front porch. Dale also took us to La Ceiba on the mainland where I got my hair cut, the Captain did boat errands, and visited Dale's home in the mountains outside of town. We spent a rainy day at the pool at our marina with Dale, his wife, and his youngest son, two year old Brenden. Once again, it doesn't matter if it is raining - the water is warm, the air is warm, and everyone is going to get wet anyway!

On March 28 we headed north again, into Belize. We made three stops in Belize, visiting the offshore reefs named Glovers Reef and Turneffe Reef (south and north end). These reefs actually form atolls like those in the South Pacific. The waters here are clear and warm and we snorkeled after we anchored at each new spot. As the weather was favorable, we kept moving every day in order to position ourselves to cross the Gulf of Mexico to Florida in a good weather window. Leaving the waters of Belize, we crossed into Mexico where we stopped in Xcalac (pronounced Ish-ka-lak). This was a very tricky entry through a natural cut in the reef that surrounds Ambergris Cay which is where Xcalac is located. Think about surfing into an entrance that is only a hundred yards wide (big hairy reef on both sides) on a 54 foot surfboard that happens to be your house! It was a wild ride, executed perfectly

by captain and crew (cat slept through the whole thing). We skipped Tulum because of a similar approach, and stayed on Banco Chinchorro, Cayo Norte. This is a Mexican island off the coast of the Cancun Peninsula that is also surrounded by a reef. Once inside the reef, the anchorage is smooth and the snorkeling is good. The Mexican Navy chose to board and search our boat here. While I was snorkeling we spotted two bottle nose dolphins swimming very close to the boat. I swam after them and was lucky enough to have one of them come and look me over very carefully. He/she swam within four feet of me, back and forth - it was a special experience. They stayed around all night and were there when we left in the morning. We traveled on to the Mexican mainland, spending one night anchored on Culibra Cay in Bahia



LIONHEART Crew at Chichen Itza

de la Ascencion. This area is the setting for a significant part of the story in Jimmy Buffet's book "A Salty Piece of Land" which we enjoyed reading very much. Bone fishing is big in this region.

From Bahia Ascencion we literally traveled back into civilization, arriving at Puerto Adventura Marina on the Cancun Peninsula on April 3. This is a very posh resort area that stretches from Cancun south to Tulum. The marina is in the middle of hotels and condos. There are restaurants, bars, and shops surrounding the dolphin pools where one can swim with the dolphins or just watch the shows. After my personal close encounter, I did not feel the need to pay for the privilege. From the marina we were able to take a day trip to the Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza. It was a three hour drive to get there, followed by a two hour tour. We were totally amazed at the scope of the site. The most completely restored building is El Castillo and it is incredible to see. Visitors are no longer allowed to climb up to the top of the structure because a tourist fainted while at the top of the many steps and fell to her death, only six weeks ago. We had a marvelous time walking around and listening to our 78 year old Mayan guide tell us about the history and culture of the site.

We left Puerto Adventura for Isla Mujeres on April 5, and crossed the Gulf of Mexico on April 6, arriving 35.5 hours later in the Dry Tortuga Islands, U.S.A. Thankfully, it was the best crossing of all since leaving Colon. We arrived in Key West on April 8, and are very happy to be back in the good old U.S.A. Key West is beautiful by any standard, but compared to much of the world we have discovered in the past six months, it is truly paradise. We will spend some time here touring and doing boat maintenance. Once again we are waiting for weather to make our trip up to Marathon a nice passage.

We have been cruising for six months now, and we have traveled 5452 miles since leaving Long Beach. Once again we have cell phone service (YEAH!). We are looking forward to the next leg of our journey which will take us up the east coast of America to New York. If you wish to view our ports of call so far, you can access the Central America Map page on our web site: www.lionheartcruise.com. We would love to hear from you, which is possible also from the web site.

Editors' Note: Lionheart continues to be a prolific contributor to the magazine, adding descriptive, insightful, details about their travels. Watch this space in our next issue for their trip from Key West and up the east coast of the US . . .



MARK, Bill & Kathy (#596)
Bainbridge Island, WA

1971 • DF54, Wood • RUFY ANNE

Pacific Northwest Rendezvous – September 14-16, 2007
Dock Street Marina, Tacoma, WA

Photos from 2006 event on the next page... Hope to see you there this time!

*Oh the fun that we had. . .
Now join us for THIS one!*

**Pacific Northwest Rendezvous
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**NORTHWEST DEFEVER CRUISERS
RENDEZVOUS
BROWNSVILLE, WA
APRIL 22, 2006**

