

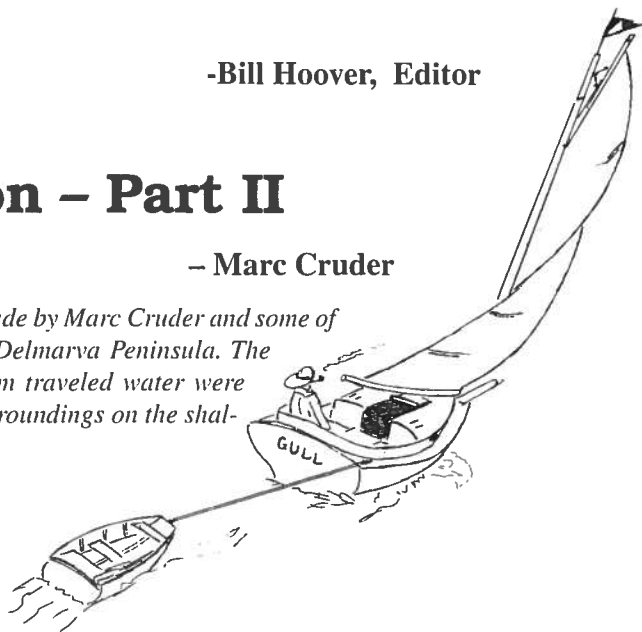
# Cruising

-Bill Hoover, Editor

## Down Bay 2000: Delmarva Circumnavigation – Part II

– Marc Cruder

Fall Bulletin No. 123 recounted the provisioning and planning made by Marc Cruder and some of the other catboat sailors before they left the dock to cruise around Delmarva Peninsula. The issues of safety and comfort for the 450 mi. cruise into some seldom traveled water were examined. The cruisers expected hazards of weather, heat, bugs and groundings on the shallow Delaware and Virginia eastern inland waterway.



In this issue the long cruise gets four catboats to Ocean City, MD, from the Chesapeake.

-Bill Hoover, Cruising Editor



Having covered background and preparation in Part I, this installment describes the participants and the first third of our trip, including excerpts from the kid's log books. Starting in the Annapolis area, we made it up and out of the Chesapeake Bay, through the C&D Canal, down the Delaware Bay, through the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal, out Indian River Inlet into the Atlantic Ocean and back in at Ocean City, MD. So sit down, follow along with a couple of charts and some sipping rum. Now our adventure begins.

### Circumnavigators:

Marc "My kingdom for a good gooseneck fitting" Cruder with first mates Noelle "When can I go in the water again" Cruder and Matthew "Cabin boy" Cruder sailing *Sylph* - Wittholz/Hermann 17. Bill "Hard aground again" Hoover sailing *Gull* -Mystic 20. Pete "It must be a good day, nobody ran aground" Peterson sailing the still stealth *C'est Moi* -Mystic 20. John "Somebody tell me we're having fun" Tugboat Brown with first mates Liz "I found you guys and I'm back for the night" Brown and Danny "Is the eel still alive" Brown sailing *Mufasa* -Atlantic City 24.

### Returning Cruisers:

Jerry "Where are you guys, I brought the mother ship" Smith with Tony "I don't think we need to empty the holding tank every night any more" Minneo sailing *Bulldog* -Nonsuch 26. Bruce "I told you I was bringing the schooner" Smith sailing *Woodduck* - Presto-type sharpie schooner. Don "I'll see you as far as the C&D" Dunn with first mate and grandson Robbie "I think I'd like to come back again next year" Dunn sailing *Tir-Nan-Og* -Atlantic City Kitty.

## Catboats We Met Along the Way:

Jack "No matter where you are, I'll find you guys" Smith sailing *Winters Dream* -Marshall 18. Dan "I think we took a second" Sinclair racing on the Northeast River, Northeast, MD, in *Chessie* -Marshall 18. Tom "Look at all the catboats, this must be the place to tie up" Smith overnighing with us in Cape Charles, VA, aboard *Torby* -Herreshoff 18.

## Saturday, 6/10: Day One - Destination: Fairlee Creek, MD

**Weather:** Sunny and hot with temperatures in the mid-nineties; wind SW at 10 kt.+.

Originally, this was supposed to be a "leave first thing in the morning" day with the usual crew, my son Matthew. Although we got the flat top haircuts together, some last minute changes involving completion of school work arose; so I left Matthew at the dock and moved Noelle up on the crew list. Noelle, aside from not wanting a flat top haircut, had a gymnastics class Olympics to cap off the end of her spring season, and I thought it important to wait for her, even though it meant a later than usual departure. Noelle was thrilled to be upgraded in crew status, so she had all her gear packed and was ready to go. I had an engine, a lot of extra fuel and a newly installed 12 V DC system, which meant permanent running lights, so it sounded like a plan.



Initial CCBA raft-up.

Our late start got us away from the dock at Selby Bay on the South River at about 1445, by the time I stowed everything and got the dinghy in tow. We got the sail up and cleared Thomas Point Light at about 1515 under sail and power on a course of about 030 deg. Per Magnetic Compass (PMC) shaping up for the middle of the Bay Bridge and then paralleling the upper Eastern Shore. Since the forecast called for increasing winds, we had one reef in. Moving under power, but with the sail pulling all the while, we cleared the Bay Bridge at 1630. We were making good time, and abeam Love Point on the north end of Kent Island at about 1700, abeam Rock Hall at about 1830 and abeam Tolchester Beach at about 1930. Daylight was still with us, but fading fast, so I had the chance to turn on my new running lights at about 2030, just as we picked up the flashing red entrance buoy to Fairlee Creek. Doused sail and powered in to find the CCBA raft up in the cove immediately to starboard, back behind all the power boats in the shallow

water. I found five catboats rafted up and one sharpie schooner. The Nonsuch was "allegedly" (because they're lawyers) up the creek where the water was deeper.

Although we were in a secluded (due to draft) cove, the scene on a Saturday night was anything but that. Powerboats of all sizes were aplenty, and a waterside restaurant had a live band starting up. There was lots of room and a different atmosphere further up the creek, but this is where we were. When you show up last you can't complain about the choice of anchorage. My first clue should have been the fire on the beach on the way in... luau inboard/outboard style. On the other side of things, the wind was up and the bugs were not to be found. We made our way around the raft up, found a few new players, heard some stories about the mill foil seaweed clogging inboard engine intakes, and a lost dinghy incident.



Noelle howling at the mouth of Fairlee Creek.

Although her first cruise, Noelle had no trouble going boat to boat socializing as the self-appointed Queen of the cruise. We finally settled down to enjoy the breeze by sleeping on deck after the band's last set. All the catboats stayed rafted up. We were living large calling home on the cell phone, then recharging it aboard, while using the new cabin dome light instead of grabbing for a flashlight. It was a successful first day and all were accounted for.

## Cruise Notes:

1. Fairlee Creek was pretty enough, so worth the trip. For us, it would have been better enjoyed by anchoring further up the creek away from the seaweed and revelers, and most likely quieter on any night other than Saturday.

2. The entrance was well marked and easy to find.

3. There were several active large carp, breaking the water and occasionally bumping the boats.

**Best Sea Story:** *Mufasa's* tale of looking back while enroute to see their dinghy gone and the painter broken, then turning back to find it with a hole in it after being hit by some high speed power boat. Since it was wood it stayed afloat.

**Kid's Log (Noelle):** We are going fast again; we are having green apples right now; it is hard for me to eat or bite them because I have a loose tooth, but they are very good.

## Sunday, 6/11: Day Two - Destination: Northeast, MD

**Weather:** Sunny, hot and hazy; wind from the SW 10 kt.

Spent a nice night on deck without bugs. Slept well because we were finally here and doing it... no more last minute prep, boat mods, etc; this was it! Took some shots of the raft up, and then discussed the navigational game plan with the group, before departing to find our wayward Nonsuch. They were up the creek in a nice open and airy spot. We came along side, shared some more coffee with Stella d'Oro Italian cookies, and got the nickel tour, since Jerry had just moved up from a Herreshoff 18 to this beautiful 26 footer. Others made the effort to pay their respects before sailing out, including *Winters Dream*, *Tir-Nan-Og*, *Woodduck* and *Gull*. It was also worth some time to catch up with Tony Minneo, Jerry's regular crew, flown in from North Carolina annually for our trips. The boat was top shelf, with its bimini, cushions with the boat's name on them, standing headroom, and as Noelle quickly pointed out... a pottie with a door! *Bulldog*, with over 4 ft. of draft, was heading for the Sassafras River instead of following us Northeast. *Woodduck* decided to join them. *Winters Dream* was sailing back to Rock Hall, where he launched, and promised to find us in Delaware later in the trip. So we rendered the *Bulldog* salute and departed under power, before clearing the creek entrance and raising sail at about 1015.

We found ourselves sailing as much by the lee as possible on a port tack between the buoyed channel and the shoreline. At the 1200 radio check we were on the north side of Still Pond, approaching Howell Point on the south side of the Sassafras River. I raised *Bulldog*, who was astern with a visual on *Woodduck* and who had made contact with *C'est Moi*. The haze had set in and the remainder of the group was ahead some-



Noelle cools her piggies in a bucket.

where. An hour later we were abeam buoy No. 54, coming left to about 050 deg. PMC, to cross the shipping channel and make for Turkey Point, which separates the Elk and Northeast Rivers. Noelle wasn't feeling well, so she came on deck, and I filled a bucket with water so she could soak her piggies. I saw the color slowly come back to her little face.

Things continued to get hotter and the wind, although favorable, was easing as we made our way into the Northeast River at about 1430. With no relative wind over the deck, I rigged the transom ladder for Noelle to stand on the bottom step (which allowed her a moving dip almost up to her knees), and gave her a Navy Reserve Club cup with which to continually fill and douse herself. With her spirits up again, she cooled off, but lost the cup. I was relegated to filling my hat with water, putting it over my head as needed and making sure I had enough sun block on. I now had a visual on the Mystic 20s ahead in the river. We cleared the last buoy on the Northeast River at about 1630, came across CCBA member Dan Sinclair and crew in *Chessie*, his Marshall 18, and sighted the group split between a raft up and the minimal docking facilities near the public park at Northeast. The original plan was to tie up, get to town or cook ashore. The group dynamics and heat made the raft up and swim call a better choice.

As soon as I was tied off to *Tir-Nan-Og*, Noelle was thrown into the water (with her life jacket on, of course). The dinghy was back there too, and I always throw out a buoyed line tied to a cushion, so there is something to grab. The ladder was never unriggered since the Navy Reserve Club cup was lost. The river was busy with powerboaters and associated chop from numerous wakes. Again, this was the end of the weekend and things settled down before sunset, as the weekend boaters tied up or headed home. Happy hour ensued after swim call; Noelle got busy socializing on other boats as I cooked dinner. Called home via the cell phone, and then had another night on deck, after breaking from the raft up to set my own anchor. We were now down to five catboats: *Mufasa*, *Tir-Nan-Og*, *Gull*, *C'est Moi* and *Sylph*.



"Queen of the Cruise" socializing with Captain Hoover and Catboat Pete.

### Cruise Notes:

1. For shallow draft boats, the channel into Northeast is plenty wide and there is sufficient water to be able to sail in and outside the marked channel.

2. Visiting the town, one of the Chesapeake's original settlements, was on the agenda and promised to be interesting, but didn't happen... maybe next time.

3. The only thing we didn't count on and couldn't do much about was the AMTRAK train that is close to the shore and comes by at regular, and I mean regular, intervals. This is not a quiet anchorage by any means, and you can't hide from the train. This little tidbit is conveniently missing from all the cruising guides.

**Best Sea Story:** Sailing by the lee, *Sylph* bounced her gaff up over the mast in a cross wake. The sail didn't rip, but the wind indicator looks like it got run over by a truck.

**Kid's Log (Noelle):** I went to Mr. Hoover's boat and got some peaches. They were very good!

### Monday 6/12: Day Three - Destination: Chesapeake City, MD, on the C&D Canal

**Weather:** Hot, hazy with variable wind from the SW.

Slept well until the breeze slacked off and the bugs came out. Skin-So-Soft by Avon handled the situation fine, so we stayed on deck. It was quiet after all the powerboats left, except for AMTRAK. Got up and cooked some eggs for Noelle and myself before taking her on a rowing lesson in the dinghy. We landed at a nearby beach and chased baby ducks before making the rounds to all boats to discuss the day's game plan.

The weather wasn't giving us a break and stayed hot, as we eased down the river at about 0915, under power making about 4 kt. by *Gull's* knot meter. Things could be worse; at least we were making our own wind over the deck. At about 1115 we rounded Turkey Point, raising sail for a marginal assist as we turned north toward the C & D Canal. At the 1200 radio check we were between Buoys No. 7 and 8 near Cabin John Creek. By 1330 we were at Buoy No. 25, which is just below the entrance to the canal, so we doused sail. As we entered the canal at about 1345, we were at slack water based on the day mark pilings. Made Schafer's on the north side of the canal at about 1500, tying up with some of the other catboats to get fuel and ice before making our way across to the basin on the south side of the canal. The others tied up at the sea wall, which now had a floating dock attached. Got a few

pictures. With the heat on, we anchored, rigged the awning and had swim call... Noelle over the side again, but under her own power this time.

At 1600, sighted Debbie and Matthew on the shore. Cleared out Noelle's gear and brought Matthew aboard before going ashore for dinner. Joined the group at the Hole in the Wall, which is attached to Bayard's Restaurant. With its air conditioning and ample bar, it was rum and frozen drinks all around while the kids had Shirley Temples. Noelle took a picture of the barmaid. Dinner followed, and would be the first of many as we sampled the seafood around the Delmarva. Liz Brown and some friends arrived to visit *Mufasa* and crew. Liz was making the passage to the Cohansey; the first of several legs she participated in.



CCBA at the Hole in the Wall. (right to left) Don Dunn, Bill Hoover, Pete Peterson, Noelle and Marc Cruder.

Saw Debbie and Noelle off at about 1930, after some sherbet by the canal. Matthew and I were back aboard at anchor by 2000. The anchorage was a little crowded as the wind came up quickly, changing direction through 180 deg., followed by rain, which swung everyone around so we could see the scope on our anchor lines and the relationship to those anchored around us. Got cozy, slept in the cabin, no bugs.

### Cruise Notes:

1. A clean bathroom is always open, obviously marked and in sight of the town dock.

2. There's plenty of water in the anchoring basin (10 ft.), but it can be crowded, when everyone is playing the tide to advantage at the same time. Get in early to find your spot.

3. Specifics on the canal are in the Coast Pilot. Obvious among the rules is that there is no sailing through the canal and commercial vessels have the right of way. If you monitor Channel 13, you will be aware of the commercial traffic.

**Best Sea Story:** Pulled Noelle around the basin in her lifejacket with the dinghy, because she just wasn't ready to get out of the water yet.

**Kid's Log (Noelle):** In the middle of the day I served my dad a very nice lunch.



Swim call at Chesapeake City.

## Tuesday, 6/13: Day Four - Destination: Cohansey River, NJ

**Weather:** Cloudy and overcast; winds from the east 10 kt.+

It was a rainy and windy night in the basin, but nobody broke loose. There was a rumor that one yachtsman's anchor we all know and love dragged slightly, but it couldn't be confirmed. All were instructed to be up for an early start, so we could make Reedy Point before the westward ebb back through the canal.



Matthew aboard; clearing Reedy Point with *Mufasa* alongside.

We were away under power with remaining catboats *C'est Moi* and *Gull* at 0705, heading east through the canal. *Mufasa* with his 30 hp inboard would catch us at Reedy Point while *Tir-Nan-Og* and crew headed back to the Chesapeake Bay.

Passed under the Summit Bridge at 0805, verifying our speed of advance of 3.5 kt. with outboard running easy and a favorable tide. Passed under the St. George Bridge at 0930, and under the Reedy Point fixed bridge at 1000, sighting *Mufasa* coming up astern. Passed one westbound tug pushing a loaded Vane Brothers tank barge ahead. Although I heard some reports of bad weather at Cape Henlopen from the inbound tug, the wind was from the east so the narrow upper bay would be fine. We were making a stop, so I tied in a single reef, as well as the clew and tack for the second reef, before slowing to confer with the rest of the group. Plan was "All ahead full."

We cleared Reedy Point at 1035, with the expected east wind and good visibility. The Salem nuclear power plant is huge, as visual landmarks go. All catboats proceeded south in the Delaware Bay under sail with the ebb. Sighted one tanker downbound and one ahead with Coast Guard Buoytender *William Tate* working the No. 5R buoy off Reedy Point. By 1230 we were abeam red nun No. 10L due south of the power plant, with the wind easing and shifting more south than east, forcing us to start tacking. At 1530, we got a positive I.D. on red day mark No. 42 and a visual on Ship John Shoal Light as well as the #1 green entrance day mark to the Cohansey River. With the wind light, we doused sail and motored into the Cohansey. Finding a lee halfway to Hancock Harbor in a wide bend, we rafted up for happy hour, then dinner. *Mufasa* joined us after dropping Liz off further up the river. By then we had battled the current and all anchored separately for the night. The wind stayed up and bugs surprisingly again were not an issue.



Raft up on the Cohansey River, NJ.

### Cruise Notes:

1. Tide here is in excess of 4 ft., and the current seriously runs in the river at about 3 kt., so no fooling around when you set the anchor. Pay out plenty of scope.

2. The bottom is soft here. That, combined with the current and tide, means be sure to have some fluke area down. I had trouble setting the grapnel I usually use.

3. Marine wildlife and waterfowl abound in the marshes, so bring a reference guide.

**Best Sea Story:** Listened to two squeamish trawlers on Channel 13 discussing a weather report from a tug on how rough things were on the Delaware at Cape Henlopen (at the bottom of the bay). One of the trawlers passed our group, went out on the Bay and then came back in. I raised him on the VHF and inquired as to the actual state of affairs out on the bay. He obviously couldn't assess things for himself, only telling me what the tug captain had told him, but knew enough about his own limitations to wait. We went anyway. After all, two large sailboats passed us, went out and didn't turn around.

**Kid's Log (Matthew):** We left Chesapeake City and it was really bad... we started to come into the Delaware Bay. Then I went into the cabin until we got there.

## Wednesday, 6/14: Day Five - Destination: Lewes, DE

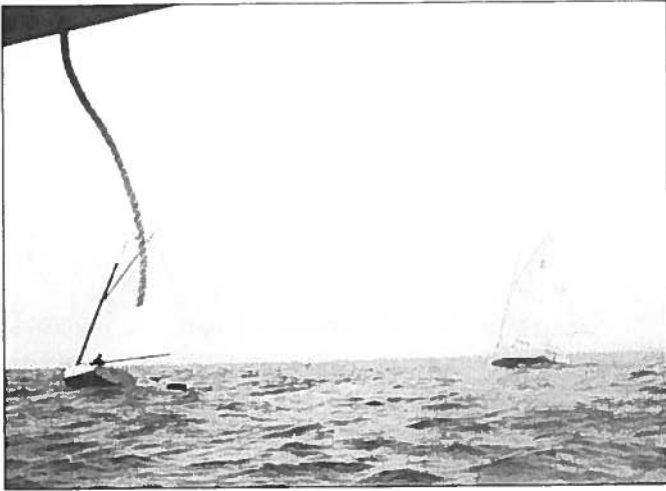
**Weather:** Cloudy, overcast with good visibility; winds from the east at 10-15 kt.

It was a quiet night on the hook except for the racing current and a short interlude that included a bump in the night. Arrived on deck to find *C'est Moi* close aboard. From the relative positions of the other three boats, he had dragged anchor down on us. He quickly started his engine, moved and reset his anchor; all quiet after that.

Woke up to wet, damp, misty but mystical looking marshes with low visibility. Not thinking we'd go anywhere soon, we took our time, cooked a corned beef hash and eggs breakfast and rigged the awning to keep the cockpit dry of the light rain. The tide was still flooding strongly, so I rigged the Debbie Outboard on the dinghy and made the morning rounds boat to boat with Matthew.

**Note:** The Debbie Outboard is an old Sears 3.5 hp that dates to my wife's youth, brought along as a last ditch back up

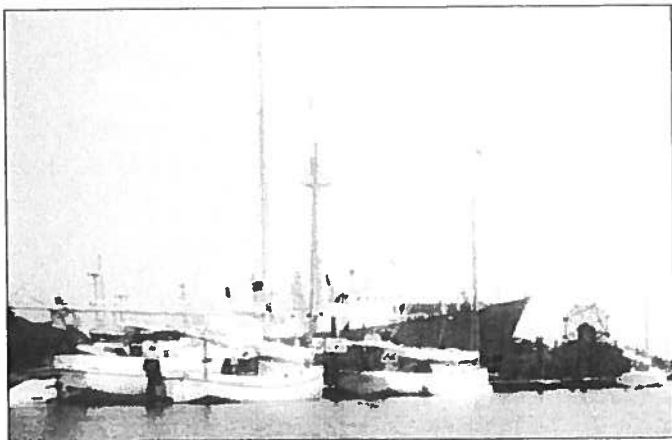




Gull and Mufasa hard on the wind.

for *Sylph*. It cranked right up and did the job.

Based on the steady and slightly clearing weather forecast, as well as the east winds, which were predicted to keep coming around to the south, we decided to move out. Staying would have meant several days waiting for another favorable wind. At about 1015 we were underway under power and sail with one reef in, moving nicely on a course of about 175 deg. PMC, making about 4 kt. By 1130 we were abeam green No. 35, and at about 1300, red nun No. 2. Commercial traffic included a Crowley containership, followed by a Ro-Ro (Roll on-Roll off) barge and then a tank barge, all upbound, with one light tankship downbound. We continued all day on the same course and speed in sight of one another, with solid radio comms on the hour. A strong easterly wind set us toward shore, so we missed some of the expected, charted buoys. The other boats were able to maintain 4 kt. on sail alone. I kept the outboard on to maintain station, balancing the sail plan to keep my port side mounted engine in the water on this long port tack.

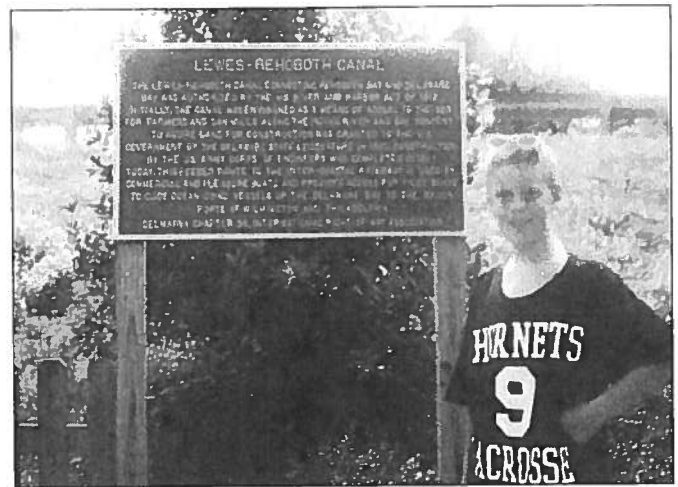


Catboats at the launching dock in Lewes, DE.

As the day wore on, the seas and wind were building as we felt the swell coming in from the mouth of the Delaware Bay. Matthew was in the cabin as we took seas, but were handling well. At 1600 *C'est Moi* gave a GPS course and distance of 160 deg. and 9 mi. to the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal entrance. By 1700 we were abeam the mouth of the Mispillion River.

The next 2 hrs found the weather deteriorating and visibility decreasing, although the shoreline was obvious. Continual boarding seas were starting to take their toll and I was getting chilled. At about 1900 we visually sighted the large-buoyed, rock jetties that marked the canal entrance. Doused sail and headed in.

Moored temporarily to the dock at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment (not a small boat search and rescue station). Everything was locked up tight. It wasn't a good place to tie up, being exposed to the east and now southeast winds, so I moved down the canal to the public launching dock next to a permanently moored lightship and the original U.S. Lifesaving Service Station (now a fledgling museum). There we happily found CCBA member Jack Smith shoreside, who advised that this was our best bet until morning when we could move down to the public dock on the north side of the draw-bridge that marks the beginning of the canal.



Matthew learning about the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal.

Needless to say, this was our longest and most trying day yet, but everybody made it. The Angler's Restaurant opposite our dock was calling, so *Sylph* became the ferry vessel for dinner ashore as we dried out, had a stiff one and a hot meal. I charged my VHF while we ate. The Delaware Bay was over. We ferried back and spent a quiet night at the dock.

### Cruise Notes:

1. Batten the hatches down and get your foul weather gear on early.
2. Believe in your plotted course and persevere. This was one day that sailing alone might have been even more mentally challenging without the support of a group. You can't miss the entrance once you get down that far, but it sure felt like we'd never get there.

**Best Sea Story:** *C'est Moi* coming out of nowhere with the GPS course and distance. I can only say that it was the moral and mental encouragement we needed to press on.

**Kid's Log (Matthew):** I looked out the cabin window once and couldn't see land in any direction.

## Thursday, 6/15: Day Six - Destination: Indian River Inlet (Delaware)

**Weather:** Sunny and clear with light southerly breeze that built to 15 kt. by afternoon.

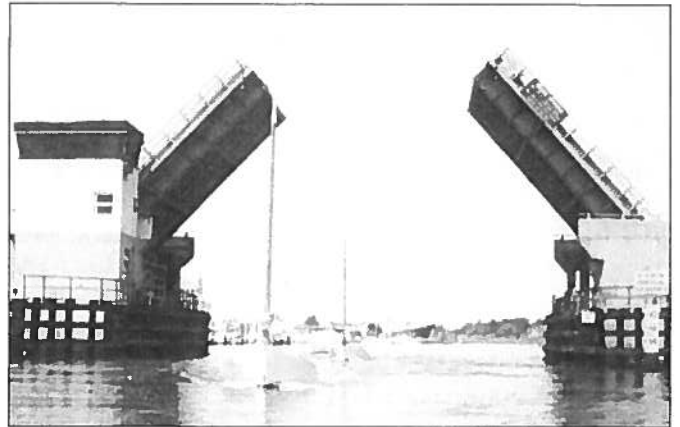
Sound sleeping dockside after yesterday's leg, with some rain overnight, but no bugs. With daylight came intermittent sun, then strong sun, so we hung everything out to dry. Got ice and gas at a local dock. Found I had left my portable VHF charging at Anglers. Sent Matthew over by dinghy when I saw the morning cleaning crew inside; got my fully charged radio back.

Since today was a short mileage day, we all had time to dry out and go ashore after shifting berths from the launching dock to the town dock. Stopped to see the bridge tender, who said he'd be ready when we were, so I gave him a tentative time of 1300. He said he'd advise the bridge tender at Rehoboth. I thanked him. There were no other sailboats or other openings all morning, so we were his event of the day. Back in town, we visited the home of the Lewes Historical Society; various historical buildings; strolled the main street; stopped in an antique store and bummed around the lightship and U.S. Lifesaving Station. The place I really wanted to see was the Marine Museum located in the Cannonball House (yes, there is a British cannonball embedded in the foundation, allegedly from the War of 1812). Lewes was originally a whaling community and has an interesting history, but the museum was closed. The highlight for us was the homemade ice cream parlor that opened at noon. Matthew and I had root beer floats for lunch. It was getting hot, so air conditioning, ice cream and an ice water chaser made us ready for the next leg. *Gull* reported good ale and reubens at the Rose and Thistle.

When we got back, the bridge tender had stopped by to advise us to get moving when we were ready, as the tide was ebbing and there was a 2.5 ft. spot at low tide we had to get through. So we all got out in the stream and a lift from the drawbridge at about 1245 to start our canal transit. A dismantled bascule bridge followed the drawbridge, then a 35 ft. fixed bridge. *Mufasa* hit his radio antenna on the fixed bridge, which was the start of a new problem we'd hear about again later. At 1435, the Rehoboth drawbridge opened for us without our signaling. That roadway is busy with beach traffic, but the tender timed our speed and was ready. This was followed by another 35 ft. fixed bridge. This time *Mufasa* hit his anchor light, but made it through. The canal transit was otherwise uneventful, but interesting as we dried out along the way. We saw some expensive homes in the swamps, and all had a large screened porch or day room; a testament to living with the insect world I'm sure.

At 1500 with south winds, we cleared the canal into Rehoboth Bay and set sail with a reef in. This was our first indication that pretty, shallow water bays were not synonymous with calm water. We sailed hard, burying the rail most of the time, until we picked up the buoyed channel on the south side of the bay. Now equipped with Dramamine, Matthew was fine. The channel snakes through some interesting shoals as you weave between the drifting recreational fishermen, who really don't care whether they are in the channel or not. The buoys

popped out with a solid visual on the Route 1 Bridge and the inlet at about 1600. Winds had picked up considerably, so I wanted a better read on the weather from the local Coast Guard.



Catboats clearing the drawbridge at Lewes, DE.

At about 1700, I powered into the Coast Guard Station's docking area, tied up and spoke with the station petty officers about the weather, tide times and transiting the inlet. Their weather info was the same as ours, NOAA, but they had local tide times, recommending we transit the inlet near the very end of its flood, just before slack water. This prevents the wall of water caused when the hard flowing ebb reaches the end of the inlet where the water depth drops off substantially. Bud Schindler describes this phenomenon in his book, since he went through it. Although not optimum, it was a forced, calculated risk waiting for more outgoing tide to ensure clearance for his 32 ft. mast. Leaving while still on the flood was fine for the smaller catboats, but *Mufasa* would have the same problem Schindler had, so we wouldn't all be leaving together. Winds were from the southwest, and predicted to increase. I was looking for wind from any western quadrant, so that we might have something of a lee, once in the ocean.

The nearest facilities were at the Indian River Yacht Basin just down the road in a little cove on the north side, inland of the Coast Guard Station. *Gull* and *Mufasa* went back into the cove and rafted up while I attended to Debbie, her Mom and Noelle, who had arrived to take Matthew ashore (strict orders from Debbie that none of her babies were going in the ocean!). *C'est Moi* hadn't come through the last buoyed channel yet. I planned to spend the night on the boat, while the family found a place to stay in Ocean City. I instructed Debbie to come by the yacht basin in the morning or, if she didn't see little gaff sails off the beach, by mid afternoon.

Just as I was pulling out of the Coast Guard Station, I sighted *C'est Moi* and stayed out in the channel until he saw me. We joined the raft up at the yacht basin. Discussion ran high on waiting for better weather, after our hard sail in Rehoboth Bay. *C'est Moi* particularly had had a rough go of it when the wind kicked up. The forecast was for increasing SW winds. Made a big portion of Debbie's white chili with chicken that had been frozen since the start of the trip. Filled all bellies, except *Mufasa* and crew, who went ashore to talk to the Coast Guard about the bridge height. *C'est Moi* moved off to his own anchor. I stayed rafted up on *Gull's* yachtsman (due to

my own laziness) and went to sleep wondering what I'd do with the family while we waited on weather. Wind up again... no bugs. Called my nephew Danny, whose high school graduation I was missing. Hit the rack.

### Cruise Notes:

1. At my Coast Guard retirement, my boss gave the kids each a weather cube radio from Radio Shack. These turned out to be a good back up when listening to weather for extended amounts of time, instead of running down the portable VHF battery.

2. Although the bridge tender was concerned, we had no grounding problems. This canal is really a narrow ditch, so you must stay in the middle.

3. The mast on *Mufasa* is allegedly specified to be 34 ft. The standard fixed highway bridge is 35 ft. Based on the above experience, this was a tight fit. The specs may only be the mast itself, without accounting for the height of the step above the waterline in the hull, and any other appurtenances you have on top.

4. Run the Indian River inlet just at the end of the flood and before slack water. You won't feel or see any transition.

**Best Sea Story:** How fast those people fishing on the pier ends outside the Coast Guard Station reeled their lines in when they realized *Sylph* was coming in hell or high water.

**Kids Log (Matthew):** Boy does that Dramamine work!

### Friday, 6/16: Day Seven - Destination: Ocean City, MD

**Weather:** Sunny and clear with winds from the SW at 15 kt. increasing to 20 kt.

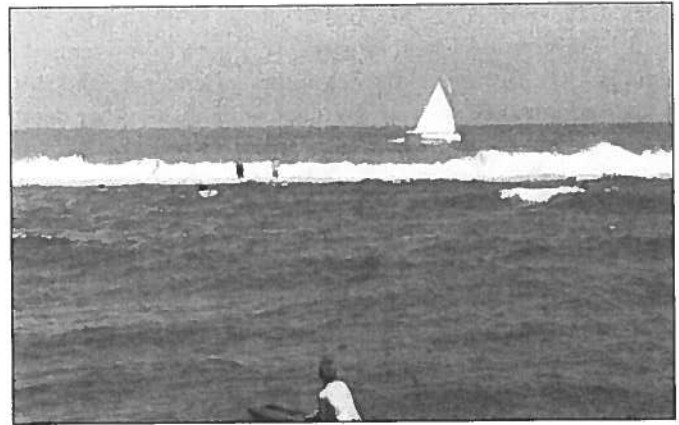
It was another quiet night until about 2315 when I heard the sound of *Gull's* engine come up with a roar. I looked out the portlight to see the three-boat raft up coming around smartly toward a rock embankment and a moored powerboat. Got the outboard started in seconds, put it hard astern to minimize impact, while *Mufasa* was up in the buff and cranking over that big four cylinder in the Atlantic City 24. Impact never came as all the horsepower engaged. Being on the outside, I quickly untied to ease the situation and moved off to an anchor. *Gull* and *Mufasa* sorted things out without damage or grounding... Lived to sail another day.

Slept well after that, and was up at about 0700 listening to the weather forecast. It hadn't changed and was predicted to last over the next two or three days, getting worse before it got better. I simply wasn't convinced and decided at the very least to take a practice run at the inlet. The flood would stop at about 0930, so I had plenty of time to hit it right.

Got underway at 0800 enroute the inlet. Headed out around 0830 pushing the flood and easily eased past the jetties. The seas were docile with a gentle swell and light winds. This was much easier than I expected. The weather was not exactly as NOAA had predicted, although it was from the SW. Returned to report my findings and reasoned that it was steady weather, with a western wind component we wouldn't have again without considerable delay. Putting their faith in me, the group assembled. *Mufasa* would wait about 6 hrs for the lowest tide

to clear this, the last fixed bridge of the trip, and meet us at Ocean City.

At about 0935, with a slight flood still in progress, the Mystic 20s and I made our way out into the ocean with no noticeable transition. The wind and seas had increased in just the hour since my first transit, but I nonetheless raised sail with one reef in and stayed on the engine to keep close on the wind and drive through the seaway. Remarkably, the ocean swell was much easier to deal with than the wind driven seas on the bow that we saw in Rehoboth Bay. The inlet was no issue at all. We were sailing south within sight of each other, making good progress, until the wind took a more southerly component, increasing in strength and forcing us to tack.



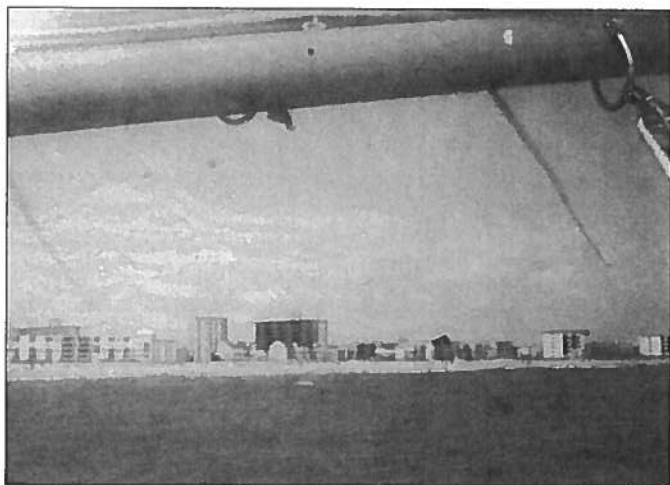
*Gull*, offshore cruising just outside the surf line -Ocean City, MD.

Sighted the first Ocean City skirted water tower at about 1100. Although the wind and seas were up, the sun was out, visibility was good and we were making progress every tack, coming in to the breaker line and heading back out. It was very exhilarating, but work nonetheless. Radio checks were hourly and *Gull* was bringing up the rear as *Sylph* led with *C'est Moi* securely in hand between us. At 1300, I sighted the Ocean City Ferris Wheel and knew the inlet was just behind it. Reported "end in sight" to the catboats astern, dousing sail and coming through the inlet pushing a strong ebb at about 1400. The ocean passage was over!

Proceeded to the agreed upon No. 3 green off Assateague Island. Being just off the beach, a herd of the famous wild ponies were watching. With the sun high and no more boarding seas, I hung out everything to dry as I waited for the Mystic 20s. About an hour later sighted *Gull* and *C'est Moi*. Lots of wind and current with an iffy bottom where we were, so went looking for a better anchorage. Things are so developed in this area that after several investigative sojourns, we tied up to the Shanty Town dock on the south side of the route 50 bridge, and made our way to the bar. This is where I told Debbie we'd meet. It was early in the afternoon, so we sat for awhile. Pete had another rough day, while Bill and I discussed how much we enjoyed the long tack down. Unfortunately, we couldn't even shake Pete into a better humor as the drinks were weak, the food was cold and substandard, and the dockmaster wanted us off before the weekend pier fishermen came. We eventually tied to a bulkhead at a new house construction site in the commercial fishing harbor. *C'est Moi* found a marina with a slip



and *Gull* went out to find a good anchorage. *Mufasa* was sighted with mast intact, coming in the inlet at about 1900 and tied up behind me. Debbie finally found me in this obscure location, and the picture was complete. All were safe and sound, with dinner, shower and bed ashore for me with the family. We had an excellent meal at the Captain's Galley in the commercial fishing harbor. This was the first exceptional meal, worth talking about. Strong drinks, salad bar, kid's menu, great seafood, big portions etc., recommended without reservation as it was obviously frequented by the locals instead of the tourists.



Offshore Fenwick Island.

### Cruise Notes:

1. Six hp Yachtwin was run at full tilt for the whole leg today and was needed. There's no substitute for displacement.

2. Another location with a tide range over 4 ft.. Be prepared.

3. Poor holding ground and no obvious good anchorage when wind and seas are up; my 18 lb. Danforth was rigged in the cockpit from this stop until our return to the Chesapeake Bay. Plan to pay for a slip if you want some peace of mind.

4. We could have waited on weather, but then been delayed at least four days as the weather actually turned out, with limited facilities and access in Indian River.

**Best Sea Story:** While out on the ocean, turned back once to check on *C'est Moi*, not sure if I saw Pete in the cockpit because his sail was half up looking unattended. Then I saw some splashes near his boat and thought the worst. When I got close, he was there and fine. The splashes were a pair of dolphins... good luck I hoped.

**Kid's Log (Matthew and Noelle):** We didn't miss you at all dad; we had a great day at the ocean.

### Epilogue: Part II

Well, that covers the first major segment of the trip with two of what I thought were the most hazardous segments behind us; those being the Delaware Bay and the ocean passage. From here, the trip was expected to be down hill. But that's not exactly what happened, so stay tuned for the next installment which will bring us through some interesting experiences negotiating the Virginia Inside Passage. There we learned a thing or two about the bays behind the barrier islands on the lower Eastern Shore. The water got shallow but the food ashore got better.

