

Editor: Craig Ligibel ; tcligibel@vml.com

All the catboat news that's fit to print.

After a soggy start, 2021 Chesapeake Catboat Association Season is one for the record books!!

As our fearless Commodore once said, "Damn Covid 19—Full Steam ahead!!!!"



Our 2021 Season is drawing to close with the much-anticipated Long Cruise just about a week away. But what a Sailing season it has been! The Prospect Bay



Event drew a record number of boats; Corsica continues to delight with great sailing and equally great food...and the Oxford Parade just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Who cares if the first day of the Parade

was a washout!

As usual, there has been plenty of tall tales and great catboat conversations between the markers. Our hat's off to 2021 Event organizers Phil Livingston, Butch Miller and Rich McLaughlin. And, Butch reminds us it's still not too late to join your fellow catboaters for what promises to be an adventure of a lifetime as our intrepid crew heads south for an unforgettable voyage into the lower Potomac. The cruise is fast approaching...Sept.18-25 are the dates. Give Butch Miller a holler if you want to join by land or by sea!

Prospect Bay Race & Rendezvous-2021

By Butch Miller

This year's event was held on Saturday, June 12 and was a "Round the Islands" course; Parson's and Bodkins. Everyone sailed in but due to the rain the day prior those making the hop across the bay did so on race day with a departure time of 5:30 am to make the noon start. *Patriot* and *Pride* braved the rain on Friday to be rewarded with a warm, dry dinner at the unusually tame Jetty restaurant. Race day was an exercise in herding cats beginning with a delayed start to allow *Curlew*, *Muriel* to join *Lark*, *Old School*, *Patriot*, *Pride* and *Tigger* at the line. *Liberty* and *Mystic Wind* dropped in along the way. Brother Bill and company manned *Party O' Five* for race committee duties and although rookies did a fine job.



The course tracked once around the two islands, start to windward but captain's choice of direction, either clockwise or counter, finish either way through the line. Wind, current and obstacles were all in play to make it interesting. We had NE 6knts or so at the start that went smoothly until *Muriel* got hung up on the pin's anchor rode. A radio call from the host requesting a restart was answered with a resounding "Hell No" from the lead boat at which point the wind died, karma bites again. *Curlew*, and *Pride* offered moral support and a tug from *Lark* freed her. All but *Lark* (local knowledge) headed counterclock-



wise around the course. After riding the current through the narrows between Parson's and the main land just beyond the start the wind picked up with a shift to the North and the fleet spread out using different tacks and tactics until lining up like ducks in a row after the turn around Bodkin's and the legs home. The "wrong way" *Larks* felt a bit out of place being passed head to head by the rest of the fleet but in the end made up the rescue delay and came across the finish behind *Patriot*, *Old School* and *Pride* followed by *Tigger*, *Curlew*, *Muriel* and *Mystic Wind*.



Prospect Bay continued.

The awards and dinner party was held at Fisherman's Inn at Kent Narrow in a fantastic room arranged by Frank Newton as a holdover from last year's cancelled reservation. A half dozen or so other members and friends joined the racers which made for a great get together. Following a welcome from Frank the awards were presented the first of which were presented to Fred Sherriff and Phil Livingston for making the trek over in the rain. Lawn chair umbrellas seemed appropriate for the feat. The newly traditional Lyon's Rum was presented to the race winners. First Place to Phil Livingston, *Patriot*; Second to Jim Palmer, *Old School* and Third to Fred Sherriff, *Pride*.



A wonderful time was had by all and it was great to see old friends once again.



A true-life catboat adventure...

Amazing but True! We can't make this stuff up!!!

By
Digger Vermont



Josie and I are happy to say that we too have a new used catboat! Just earlier today I traded a certified check for a 1991 Menger 19, and with Frank Newton at the helm of his pickup we trailered it down from Long Island to its new home at Island View Marina near Kent Narrows. Her name will be "Pip Squeak," but it will likely go by Pip for short.

We started out this morning hoping for an un eventful ride until Frank noticed a driver pointing and signaling for us to pull over. Fearing a problem with the trailer or

boat we pulled off the parkway and into a gas station to look things over. Hmm, everything looked good -- lines and straps tight, tires fine. Hmm. Then I thought, wait maybe we're not supposed to be on Long Island Parkways with a trailer?

Yep, after frantically searching the internet that seemed to be the case. It was hard to find though. And equally hard to find was how the heck to go across Long Island without going on the Parkways! The best map we could find online was very good at pointing out where we couldn't go, but not at all helpful in giving any hint on how we should go. Even the phone navigation apps are no good. Every app we tried had no way of setting an option for the type of vehicle or a trailer, rather they would do nothing but insist we go via the Parkways. I ended up having to do it the old fashion way and actually look at a map to plot out our course. Once figuring out a route and a plan we were on our way -- but not without listening for the next half hour to Google maps continually tell us to take the next exit, turn around, and go back to the Parkway. Fortunately the nagging voice coming out of the phone eventually gave in to our way of thinking and pretended to give us directions for the route we had decided on our own.

The moral of the story: don't drive on the Long Island Parkways while trailering a boat.

See you on the water!

digger

Commodore's Column

By Steve Flesner

It seems like only yesterday we were huddled under the porch at Hartge's for the West River Regatta watching it rain...ok, so it was 3 months ago, and we all had a great time even if we didn't go sailing, we stayed dry! Butch and the fleet enjoyed the Prospect Bay race. Nice wind for most of it followed by rum trophies...what more could you ask for! Reports from The Corsica River race said it was a big boat day but Ironman Phil refused to reef per regulations drawn up by some kid on a sun fish! He held on and stayed upright and finished first! We got rained on at the Oxford Parade but no one's spirits were dampened, might have had something to do with dark and stormy's! Phil moved the parade to Sunday and all the locals, to include catboat folks, were happy, what the hell, who doesn't love a parade! The downside to our event schedule was the cancelling of the Great Whitehall Bay Race & Rendezvous that Capt Bill Hoover established over 30 years ago. Seems the community made the decision that only residents can use the club house, those stinkin' catboat guys probably have germs anyway! In a time of the pandemic, I guess it's understandable that caution rules. We are hoping that one of our members in the Annapolis area or within sailing distance will offer to put on the replacement for Whitehall next year. Many of us have hosted events so if you step up, rest assured you will get plenty of help from the rest of us...so, think about it. The long cruise is in a few weeks and one of their overnight stops will be in my back yard on St. Leonard creek. We had plumbing issues the last time the gang showed up but they have been resolved and Jim Ohlmacher will only be allowed 10 minutes in the powder room...after that, we get a boat hook!

See you on the water...I'll probably be in my Whaler...don't ask!!!

CD



Sid Tiesega crossed the bar in early September. He sailed Quest, a Menger 23. He and Gail sailed up from White Stone, VA and hooked up with our motely crew on two long cruises. The first in 2005, for the St Mary's Maritime Festival where Cruise Commander Marc Cruder dubbed him Sid "Marlinspike Seamanship" Tiesenga since he spent much of his time lacing his destroyer wheel. In 2009, they

met us on our cruise up the lower Potomac. Farewell friend, you will be missed, just teach those sailors upstairs your fancy wheel lacing and stay the course.

Put Next Year's Low Country Catboat Rally on your sailing calendar!! May 10-15, 2022.

It's an event unlike any other.

A bit of history: The Lowcountry Catboat Rally, starting in 2022, is the evolutionary result of combining the 15-year-old Classic Boat Rally and the 4-year-old Lopwcountry Catboat Gathering. The Classic Boat Rally had been open to all displacement sailboats at least 16-feet LOA. In the beginning, it was a 6-day adventure from Savannah to Charleston with overnight stops at Hilton Head, Beaufort, Edisto Island, and Johns Island. Organized by Beaufort Yacht and Sailing Club, the event was co-hosted by Savannah Yacht Club, South Carolina Yacht Club (Hilton Head), and Carolina Yacht Club in Charleston. The event was a featured story in Sail magazine in 2007 and again, with the cover photo, in 2017.

Here's how Woody describes the event:

"The rest of the world needs to know, and that might inspire some confidence in the whole event and not scare away sissies who might be intimidated by such a *tour de force* (a French expression sort of like *Concurs elegance*).

We're getting good "mo" with responses of intent. For the uninitiated Yankees, they might just think we have something really worthwhile going here, which we do.

Getting this going early establishes us as advance planners and encourages other potentially competitive events from using our dates.

Unlike a purely local event like the Water festival Regatta, The Lowcountry Catboat Rally involves advance commitments for meals and space at multiple locations. It's inherently complex, yet Peter Kellogg has been kind in characterizing The classic boat Rally as one of the best organized sailing events he has attended. That's (one reason) why he's coming back.

I want us to be considered a center of catboat enthusiasm. I want our event to become a "must attend" event in the world of cat boaters. The center of the universe for cat boat sailing in Spring and Fall. Let the New Englanders have the summer. They deserve it after enduring the long and harsh winters there.

They should rush to shed their mukluks and snow throwers and pull their shivering catboats out of the shed, ripping off the winter's protective garments, and unplugging their cars from the umbilical block heaters to drive south where the temps are in the 80s and life is easy.

This will be the coming of adulthood for Beaufort's nascent catboat development. We know how to conduct regattas. We now have developed a level of skill to put against any and all competitors. That's an explicit challenge. "Y'all come on down here and show us yo' stuff, OK?"

Cat boaters convene to share knowledge and experience and challenge each other in good spirit on the race course. Two sailboats going in fundamentally the same direction are, by tradition and compulsion, "racing" whether either acknowledges this truth or not."

Woody



For more info, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/153801523401972/>

2021 Chester River YC Regatta

By Richard McLaughlin

The 79th Annual Corsica River Yacht Club Regatta was participated in by the Chesapeake Catboat Boat Association over the July 24-25th weekend. Local lore has it that this is the longest running sailing regatta on Maryland's Eastern Shore. I'm not certain how long the CCBA has been participating but they say Commodore Flesner attended the first regatta. I remember attending for the first time with *Tenacity* at Captain Dunn's invitation in 2003. It was also my first time meeting Captain Hoover, and my introduction to 'Mars & tonics'.

Dinner at RHYC



Five catboats participated in the event beginning with arrival on Friday at RHYC. Friday was sunny with light air making a long day for Capt. Livingston & *Patriot* sailing up from Oxford. Captain's; Palmer & *Old School*, Miller & *Lark*, and Sherriff & *Pride* followed *Patriot* into Lawyer's Cove. Our new member Captain Jim Stevenson and his recently acquired vintage Marshall 22 *Tally Ho* was already on a club mooring at RHYC. Cocktails and dinner were enjoyed by a group of nine CCBA members while overlooking the scenic Chester River. By 7:30pm the boats pulled anchor or slipped away from the dock to make way across the Chester to Emory Creek on the Corsica to anchor for the evening in advance of a 10:00am captain's meeting at CRYC. All except for Capt. Stevenson who offered to tow the 18' Swift Explorer ketch over in the morning, which Capt. Crawford & I sailed back across to RHYC after crewing and staying for the eastern shore dinner on Saturday evening.

Racing conditions were favorable by noon on Saturday, sunny and clear and the air was fresh. The course was set with a start / finish and 3 marks.

Is that a watch in Cathy's hand?!

We would race twice around and had three races. Five catboats with experienced skippers made for a lively day. No vessel reefed, however my guess is Phil had his hands full with the Sanderling.



**Patriot don't
need no stinkin'
reef**



Pride hard on the wind

It was “a big boat day “and Capt. Palmer and *Old School*, with her large Chesapeake rig, were in their natural habitat. She portrayed power and grace as Palmer put her on long tacks with flawless execution. Captain’s Miller with his 23’ *Lark*, and Sheriff with his M22 *Pride* competed closely, but in the end, novice cat boater Jim Stevenson took the honors. Jim says as a former log canoe sailor he never before appreciated the sailing capabilities of the catboat. He has since changed his tune.

Welcome to the Club, and congratulations Jim! And thanks for the tow and inviting me as crew with you and Cathy on your inaugural CCBA event.

On Saturday evening a small craft advisory was posted for the Chester and northern Bay which continued throughout the remainder of the weekend, so the race committee cancelled Sunday’s race. Thanks to all the CCBA members who traveled by land or by sea to attend this longstanding regatta.

Results

| Place | Boat | Skipper |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>Tally Ho</i> M22 | Jim Stevenson |
| 2 | <i>Patriot</i> M18 | Phil Livingston |
| 3 | <i>Old School</i> M22 | Jim Palmer |
| 4 | <i>Pride</i> M22 | Fred Sherriff |
| 5 | <i>Lark</i> Americat 22 | Butch Miller |



Oxford Catboat Parade 2021

By Phil Livingston

The Oxford Catboat Parade of 2020 was canceled because of the pandemic. This resulted in moving it to the second week in August 2021.

By mid June menus were gone over, activities and route put to paper and initial emails sent. If you ever want to spruce up, clean out stuff from your boat barn, just invite everyone from the Chesapeake Catboat Association over. The boat barn was the location and I had my Marshall 18 sitting in it. By the second week in April it was in the water. Now it was only cleaning up the barn so we could have everyone over. As most workshops go, this was no small task.

When the end of July was upon us, everything was falling into place. People were replying to the RSVP and we had thirteen boats registered and a total of thirty people committed to being in Oxford.

For those that have never had the pleasure of being in Oxford, MD, it sits on the Tred Avon River which is part of the Choptank River that flows into the Chesapeake Bay. All of this water is tidal and is an outstanding place to sail and live. Oxford has more boat slips than people in the village. The 2018 Star Worlds were here and the 2021 Shields Nationals are being held in Oxford.



People and boats began to arrive by Thursday, with Jack Smith and his Marshall 18 *Winters Dream* leading the group. When Friday afternoon rolled around, Town Creek Marina began to look like catboat heaven. The first real activity was dinner at a local restaurant. The best part of the evening was going to the Scottish



Highland Creamery for ice cream. This is ranked as the best ice cream in Maryland and the 9th best in the country. Needless to say, we all had a few more pounds of ballast.

Saturday morning starting at 6am my wife, Karen and Wanda, Fred Sherriff's wife, and an Oxford friend Susanne were busy making breakfast for everyone. We had a French toast buffet with a host of toppings, bacon, eggs, juice and coffee. After breakfast most everyone walked over to the Oxford Community Center where they were having, Cars and Coffee. This is a great place to view classic and exotic cars. Those that went had a wonderful time. Then, as promised, the

90% chance of rain, started. When the skippers meeting was held at noon, it was decided to postpone and make a decision at 2:30.





Parade continued...

Follow the floating arrows...ignore the kids racing...ouch!

During this time the wives saw an opportunity to visit the independent book store and other shops in the village. Meantime the guys went to the Oxford Market and brought back some two handed sandwiches. When 2:30 arrived, it was decided to cancel until Sunday morning. The rest of the day had folks standing on the dock in the rain talking catboats.

Dinner was great. hot dogs, hamburgers and pot luck sides were the menu for the evening. Frank Newton was our chief on the grill and cooked everything to perfection. Then, with a few dark and stormies, Fred Sherriff divided the group and played stump-the-dummy with a question and answer book about boating from 1910! Needless to say everyone had fun and nobody knew the score at the end. Maybe it had something to do with rum, I don't know.

During the weekend I was approached by an anonymous catboat admirer who offered to buy breakfast for everyone at the fire house on Sunday morning. We had around twenty people walk over to the fire house on Sunday morning for the best Fire

Department breakfast in the county.

Then it was back to the barn for the parade brief and shove off. During this weekend we also had over one hundred Optis, 420s and Lasers with 6-18 year olds in for a Junior regatta. Yes, we gave them a wide berth, especially the 6 yr olds. By now we were down to eight boats, *Pride*, *Lark*, *Winters Dream*, *Patriot*, *Pip-Squeak*, *Red Squirrel*, *Old School* and *Tigger*. Since this wasn't a race but a parade, here are the boats that registered:



- Liberty*- Marc Cruder
- Mystic Wind*- Craig Ligibel
- Seabuscuit*- Peter McCrary
- Lark*- Butch and Denise Miller
- Tigger*- Frank Newton and Dave Park
- Old School*- Jim and Barbara Palmer
- Meow*- Earl Segal
- Pride*- Fred and Wanda Sherriff
- Winter's Dream*- Jack Smith
- Red Squirrel*- Jeremy and Marsha St. Pierre
- Pip Squeak*- Digger Vermont & Josie Smith
- Perr-fection*- Scott and Judy Shuler
- Patriot*- Phil and Karen Livingston

Everyone loves a parade

At the end of the parade most people peeled off and headed home. *Pride* came alongside *Patriot* and dropped off our newest member, Rick Acker who has a Marshall 22 on order. In spite of the rain, overall it was a great Chesapeake Catboat Association weedend and I for one can't wait for the next event.

Tally Ho

By James H. Stevenson

My first memorable encounter with a Catboat was during a fun race on Chester River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. I had borrowed a Day Sailor with stained sails and a dirty bottom that I referred to as 'The Floating Reef'. We were sailing in Comegy's Bight in a fresh breeze and as I was nearing Deep Point a 22 ft Catboat was beating upriver, all grace and serenity in her elegant ease. The plumb bow, gaff main and easy sweep of the sheer endeared me to the classic lines. I waved to the skipper, but I suppose the prospect of acknowledging our slovenly state would be too great a stain on his ego to respond, so he steered on, but I was hooked.

By the 2019 Annapolis Boat Show the hook was irretrievably set. Geoff Marshall of Marshall Marine advised me of the availability and condition of used Marshall catboats in his inventory. He suggested I wait for a preowned 22 soon to become available with a relatively new Yanmar diesel and low hours. After considering the nearly new engine and an encouraging survey report I bought the boat sight unseen.

My strategy was to sail her from South Dartmouth, MA the home of Marshall Marine to Rock Hall, MD in the spring and race her on the Chesapeake. Unfortunately, Covid stymied my plans until July when we boarded a flight to Providence, RI, dodged the Covid Police and Kathy and I were cordially whisked away to Padanaram by Geoff's Mother.

Eight months had passed since I had bought 'Puddle Duck', soon to be rechristened 'Tally Ho'. What a relief to find her actually floating at the water's edge. Geoff was kind enough to lend us the yard pickup so we could provision for the trip do a little sightseeing and even the use of his house for showers.



First look at our new boat at Marshall Marine

My Blue Water sailing experience is limited, consisting of racing and deliveries in my teens and twenties' the rest of the time spent mainly on the Chesapeake, so trusting in the compass to find a point of land beyond the horizon and whose next stop is San Juan tends to give the novice ocean mariner pause. Cuttyhunk, MA is the western terminus of the Elizabeth Islands, a string of islets that dribble from the outstretched bicep of Cape Cod's arm. From Padanaram, it is a natural destination for a shakedown cruise.

So, fully provisioned with Ditty More Beef Stew and two coolers icing down our groceries, we passed through the Padanaram Bridge out into Buzzards Bay. I wish I could say that it was a relief to finally be sailing but no sooner had we settled in the wind freshened and we began to broach. I decided that with a novice crew on a boat that I was as yet unfamiliar, the safest course of action was to motor to Cuttyhunk. The decision was soon justified as the swells increased 4-6 ft. Though a bumpy ride, the

Marshall 22 proved to be a fine sea boat delivering us safely to port.

Cuttyhunk Pond was a popular anchorage with all manner of sail and power boats jammed into an area about half as long as the island and we anchored at the northern end amongst the seaweed with a refreshing southwest breeze. This evening would be the true test of a budding sailor served Ditty More Beef Stew cooked on a single burner alcohol stove.



Home sweet home

The next day we hiked to the highest point of the island and were rewarded with a splendid view of Martha's Vineyard. Kathy had lobbied hard to go there but I judged sailing East to the Vineyard with adverse currents paving the way to Edgartown would add another week to a trip that eventually took four.

I'm always watchful for the rare bird and ran into Chris and Candy Powell. Chris proved to be an ebullient ambassador to the avifauna of the isles and confirmed that a brown duck paddling around the harbor was indeed a Common Eider. We chatted about birds and boats while ice cream ran in rivulets to our elbows.

I cannot sufficiently convey the charm of New England and it was a rare opportunity to meet interesting people from the graciousness of Geoff Marshall to the Police chief who ran the tender in Cuttyhunk harbor. I found that the locals I spoke with would reflect before responding, mining a quarry of wit earning them the epitaph 'Droll Yankees'. The air was

clean and the water clear, something we used to see in winter in 'The Bay' but is now very rare. I should not have been surprised to find that the areas we visited have metamorphosed from the working class blue collar fishing towns of my youth to retail destinations and second homes for the prosperous. I think that this is a natural result of an ascendant economy and certainly the architecture has not suffered through neglect. Despite Covid, all popular destinations were packed.

The next morning, we slipped out the channel, and headed west to Block Island. My first mistake of the trip was to set my compass course directly to Block Island ignoring the charted obstruction between. The Marshall draws only two feet so I felt safe navigating close to the reef, but these waters harbored uncompromising obstacles as compared to the Chesapeake's relatively benign waters.

As usual the breeze blew up from the Southwest and as we passed the end of the island an extraordinary chop developed with enormous chaotic swells tossing us around. At the time I didn't know any better and staying the course, noticed over to port what looked like the gray back of a whale surrounded in white water and spray, only it didn't move! I bore off quickly to the north avoiding an early end to the trip on Sow and Pig Reef. Clearing the reef, the seas resumed a less confused motion and we got back on track for 'The Block'. But again, the Southwest trades built to small craft warnings and the seas to six plus feet so we decided to bear off to the northwest to the Sakonnet River. This had the effect of lengthening the trough of the wave so that we were not battering our way forward in a boat that is nearly half as wide as it is long.

Getting a decent start the next morning, we headed back out to sea for 'The Block'. This was the first day of nearly calm seas. We putted along at about 5 knots under a blistering sun and no awning. Kathy kept busy on her phone and I fell into a routine of watching the compass, scouting the horizon and checking the gauges. I was in the midst of remembering a poster in the Carpenter Street Saloon in St. Michaels depicting a square rigger about to plunge off the edge of the earth with the caption "I told you so", when not 30 yards off our bow a large silvery fish launched straight out of the water. Directly on its heels a massive creature leaped in hot pursuit. I recall thinking it looked like an Orca, dark above, light below with large pectoral fins. It evidently gave up the chase and swam near the surface its dorsal fin popping up and down as it cruised beneath the gentle swells.

Kathy taking photos said, "Slow down and make a circle around it".

"Ok Hon".

We closed to within 15 feet and I was impressed by the fin which appeared to be about two feet tall but sticking out of the water at a diagonal. I wondered later if he was rolled over on his side checking us out and sizing up a potential meal.

"Get closer".

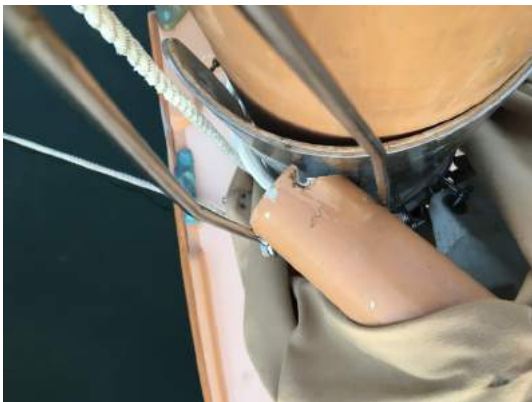
"Sweetie I think we are close enough", remembering that sharks are known for attacking boat propellers.

Kathy dashed off a picture to my oldest son James the fisherman of the family and he soon responded, "Yup, Great White".

Before leaving for the trip, I badgered the Rock Hall Yacht Club for a copy of 'The Register of American Yacht Clubs'. I had great hopes that other yacht clubs would reciprocate with RHYC. The reality of reciprocity never materialized. No clubs that Kathy called responded citing Covid worries. Marinas were also suspicious of transients, but we always managed to get wedged in somewhere.

As we entered the Great Salt Pond on Block Island I was not a little surprised at the sheer volume of yachts and the carnival atmosphere with banners flying from the tuna towers and tenders plying to and fro. One of the strangest sights occurred while standing at a dock when someone said, "Look at that!", and silently ghosting through the fleet on what appeared to be a surfboard levitating above the water was a man nonchalantly headed for the beach. The impression was like an aquatic take on the 'Back to the Future' hover board scene, and seriously doubting if what you were seeing was real. It turned out to be an electric hydrofoil.

So far, the trip had not been suitable for sailing. The wind was either on the bow or excessive, but the morning we left for Mystic looked like an easy reach. Relieved to get in a little sailing I hoisted the main and as the breeze increased the gooseneck on the gaff crumbled raining pieces of the casting and part of the gaff to the deck. Refurling the sail, I cranked up the Yanmar and headed for Fishers Island Sound. I called Geoff Marshall and described what had happened and he said that he could send a new casting to Mystic or some other port along the way, but I demurred not wishing to delay our delivery. Also, the wind was typically on our bow and sails would be no help on the New Jersey ICW, besides the little motor was so far reliable, surprisingly quiet for a diesel and able to push us at a respectable 5kts.



Broken gooseneck Block Island

From Cuttyhunk to New York City the coast is dotted with ports and anchorages gratis the last ice age. Fishers Island provided a bulwark for the ports of Stonington, Mystic, New London, Groton, and others. We chose Mystic and motored up its meandering namesake through the railroad swing bridge then further on the magnificent Bascule Bridge that was all wheels and levers.

Though the Maritime Museum was a veritable Covid ghost town it was still open and we could walk the grounds and enjoy the company of vessels whose original missions were long past, but whose memories were enough to propel them to a new life as living history. The so-called Maritime Museums of CT and MD are, in my opinion, a little miss-named as they are also working boatyards where classic vessels are maintained, repaired but also built.

Moving on we made ports of call at Guilford, Milford and then a long day to Stamford where we waited out all fifteen minutes of Hurricane Isaiah, as luck would have it, behind a hurricane barrier.

From Stamford we made our last dash up Long Island Sound to City Island to wait for the ebb current to jet us through the East River to the Hudson. A parting gift from Geoff Marshall was the classic Eldridge tide table and despite having written descriptions plus diagrams, I managed to read the wrong column and got the tide backwards. In my home, Chesapeake tides are not as noticeable as the Northeast especially at the notorious 'Hell Gate', the confluence of the Harlem and East Rivers.

By the time we reached Wards Island the jig was pretty well up. We were fighting a losing battle against the current coupled with the wakes of motor yachts hurtling past and tugs barely in control of their barges. Nearing a bulkhead on the west side of the river we were hit by a wake that nearly put us on beam ends. From the helm I watched as everything loose below flew to the cabin sole and the unattached forward hatch slid overboard.

Backtracking we ducked into a little cove at Stony Point and dropped anchor, waiting for the current to ebb and contemplated what to do with a square hole in our foredeck. In a collaborative effort we found that one of the plastic storage containers neatly fit the hole and could be wedged in place between the boom and deck. By late afternoon the tide had changed, and we ventured out into the ebbing current and enjoyed a thankfully uneventful passage past Manhattan to the Hudson River.

That evening we stayed at a marina on the New Jersey side of the Hudson and savored the lights of Wall Street. I felt that this was the end of the first part of the journey as the terrain would change from the rocky glacial moraine seacoast of the Northeast to the sandy barrier islands of the Coastal Plain.

The change was also in that while harbors were plentiful behind the barrier islands, the source of entry to the Jersey ICW is not. From Atlantic Highlands, the first Inlet was Shark River which we were advised to pass because of fierce tides and spare dockage. The next port would be a good day's haul to Manasquan.

Manasquan was spooky. We arrived by late afternoon and the channel was buzzing with powerboats. We tied up at a marina with a restaurant and I was barely able to reach the decking except by standing on the cabin top, getting a leg up on a stringer and hoisting myself up the piling. I named the place 'Covid Paradise' as our first of port of call where masks were per functionary, the bars and restaurants were packed and head boats took out parties of college kids celebrating all night, minus masks. At about 2:00 AM a parade of fishing boats headed out the channel for deep water.

This was to be our first day on the ICW, but when we headed inland to the channel entrance, the tide was foul and without much thought I turned the boat around and we headed for the ocean and Barnegat Bay.

The New Jersey shore runs about SSW from Barnegat Bay to Cape May and with few exceptions especially at the inlets, the 10 foot drop off is no more than 200 yards from shore. The weather had been clear with slight chance of thunder showers. I noted a fog bank offshore and kept that in mind. This was the first time I took the GPS seriously which helped me to skirt the shore but generally it was mile after mile of sandy beaches and summer homes. There were occasional schools of porpoise that would sound when they got near the boat.

From Barnegat Bay, we started in fog that soon burned off and motored to Little Egg Inlet and the next day gave the ICW another try to get in the back door to Atlantic City. This proved to be a character building experience. The tides inside the Barrier Islands can be vicious and so are the biting black flies. The ICW here winds back and forth through narrow channels and low scrubby islands.

Finally spotting Atlantic City in the distance, the frustration only grew as we seemed to be back-tracking, but the buoys reassured us as the numerical sequence was consistent and we eventually pulled into the Golden Nugget marina at dusk. That evening after dinner we sat on the boat and watched tendrils of fog wisp in from the ocean.

It should not have been a shock to find ourselves fog bound in the morning, but the weather forecast being favorable, we dashed off into the misty netherworld anyway. The fog was not so thick that we couldn't see the beach and the trusty GPS was a great confidence builder.

I am basically a cave man and Kathy is my cosmopolitan companion, a social butterfly always game for the night life and a fast dance so when we neared Ocean City, I think she could hear the tread of flip flops on the boardwalk. We darted in and stretched our sea legs for an evening.

The last leg of the New Jersey coast was uneventful between Ocean City and Cape May, except for morning fog and the schools of porpoise were a little friendlier. I remember a youngster getting next to the boat and looking up at us like a curious good natured puppy.

The long run up Delaware Bay and the C & D Canal took the most planning and patience. Years ago, I did a delivery to Newport from Annapolis and my father quipped that sometimes going up Delaware Bay you feel as though you are racing duck blinds. Our good friend Joe Halstead counseled us to begin an hour before mean low water and ride the tide up the Bay, catch the peak at Delaware City, then coast down to Chesapeake City on the ebb. You can knock it out in 12 hours. The trick is to ask God for a Southwest breeze blowing in the same direction as the tide otherwise the wind will set the waves up like walls of water making for a miserable passage.

The only other problem was that out of three different tide charts none of them agreed on the time of low water. I had to dash home to do some unexpected banking via the Cape May Ferry and on the way back as we were disembarking I heard two men behind me talking about the tides so I turned and happened to be face to face with the Captain. I told him about my predicament, and he said that there can be several factors affecting the tides but on the whole the Eldridge tide table is pretty reliable.

The next day, low water was at 6:00 AM. We rode the last of the ebb out the Cape May Canal and then headed west on a diagonal to meet up with the shipping channel opposite Port Mahon. Delaware Bay is wide and shallow and the shipping lane is fairly slim but there are numerous light houses and buoys to guide the way. As the Bay narrows we passed the Ship John Shoal light crawling with cormorants and a lone Bald Eagle standing like a figurehead perched on the prow of its guano lathered perch.

In 10 hours, we had reached the entrance to the C & D Canal sometimes clocking eight knots, then rode the ebb towards the Chesapeake arriving at about 7:00 PM at Chesapeake City having spent an hour en route fueling and using the pump out facility. We anchored in the lovely little cove at the Chesapeake Inn and had our first meal (the Hairy Mexican) in home waters.

The next leg down the Elk River was picturesque and Southern. We were passed by a herd of cigarette style craft that had been tied up the night before at the Chesapeake Inn. They roared past with blue and white banners flogging the air and a forty footer with enormous outboards and, 'Trump Train' painted in hefty letters across its beam leaving us to wallow in its wake.

Our last evening aboard was spent at the Tolchester Marina, about 10 miles by car from home in Chestertown but still another 5-6 hours to the Rock Hall Yacht Club. We ate at the Beach Bar listening to live music and as the sun set, watched power boats well fortified with Eastern Shore cheer cruise westward into the mists.

Unmooring the next morning to the rattle like call of a Kingfisher, we headed out to the channel. The grey cliffs and pebbly beaches of the upper Chesapeake were gradually giving way to the broad bays and salt marshes of home. In passing the old familiar landmarks I had time to reflect on the trip that was nearing its end and what I had learned. The journey was a great adventure that I sorely needed and did not disappoint. I had wanted to motor the New Jersey ICW but either the tide was foul and I did not want to wait half a day for it to change, or luckily I found out that a railroad bridge was closed for repairs so I decided going 'Outside' was the best option. Going 'Outside', port to port takes planning as a rip current in a crowded channel is daunting and dockage, at least during the pandemic is dicey. The passage from Cuttyhunk to New York City again could have been less 'bumpy' to wait for a favorable tide but the wait itself is impractical if you are under time constraints.

The other factor that I had not considered was that I was no longer seriously racing. The competitive juices don't automatically retire when you do and I can't remember ever being on a pleasure cruise when some part of me wasn't in chase mode. My anxiety over a jaded retirement vanished when my three-year-old grandson sprang from my twelve foot peapod up and over Tally Ho's side and into the cockpit. The boat has been a great hit with the family. We raced her in the 'Down River Race', from Chestertown to the Rock Hall Yacht Club and were pleasantly surprised in that she pointed well with the other boats and had comparable boat speed.

Safe Harbor Rock Hall TC

Though somewhat small for a cruising boat, 'Tally Ho' none the less bore our expedition well and we would do it again. I find that the cockpit accommodates four to six adults comfortably and the grand kids love looking out the ports and sleeping on the bunks. As a comfortable shallow draft day sailor with a novice crew the Marshall 22 is fun to sail, and a weekender with a lot of class. Tally Ho.

