

**HIGH COTTON** is a year 2000 Camano Troll, a trawler that was originally designated as 28' but is now known as 31'. HIGH COTTON is powered by a single Volvo TAMD41P diesel engine and is equipped with a bow thruster. There is no onboard genset, but there is a four battery house bank and a 2000 watt inverter. The galley is equipped with a refrigerator and a three burner propane range with oven and broiler and a microwave oven. Cruising at 2000 RPM, she makes 7 knots over slack water and burns about 1.8 GPH.

The following is an account of a cruise north on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from Charleston, SC to the Chesapeake Bay and back, beginning May 2, 2014 and ending on July 16, 2014.

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### **Captain's Log, day one (May 2, 2014)**

Well, we're headed north this time. The plan is to take the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway north to the Chesapeake Bay, then cruise the Bay and visit the small towns and large cities that line the shores of the Bay.

Patti, Kiki the Sea Dog and Captain Ron caught a ride with a friend to Rivers Edge Marina so we wouldn't have to leave our car there for a couple months. We spent the night and left our slip about 6:15 AM. Down the Ashley River, across the Charleston Harbor, and up the ICW we went. We started out driving from the flybridge but it seemed to be getting colder, not warmer as the day went on, so we eventually pulled the helm seat out of the engine compartment and moved to the lower helm for the rest of the day.

We saw the usual Dolphins (Kiki knows them as "big fish"). We passed several groups but none swam with us. North of Awendaw we saw several bald eagles sitting in the dead trees that line the waterway. We could tell they were bald eagles; they had their feathers combed over to one side!



[Eagles on the ICW - Awendaw, SC](#)

We have run into a swarm of small bugs. They look like "love bugs" but they aren't "making love". There are hundreds on the boat as we sit anchored. Just imagine what will happen when we turn the anchor light on.

Anyhow, we are anchored for the night near Butler Island on the Waccamaw River a few miles north of Georgetown, SC.

### **Captain's Log, day two (May 3, 2014)**

We had a peaceful night anchored behind Butler Island. Even Kiki slept through the night. Before we could leave though, we had to take our scrub brush and the whisk broom and clean all the dead love bugs off the flybridge. Today was a much warmer and sunnier day so we ran the boat from the flybridge. We even had to put the bimini top up about noon.



Sunset near Butler Island, SC

We had to wait about ten minutes for the Socastee swing bridge to open because it had just opened a few minutes before we got to it for another boat. We lucked out at the Little River swing bridge, the bridge tender held it open for us after another boat went through.

As on our last trip, Kiki growled and barked at all the Jet Skis. They weren't as bad today as they were on our last trip north.

There aren't a lot of anchoring options on this part of the ICW so we chose Calabash Creek where it intersects with the ICW. It's in all the cruising guides and there is room for several boats but it suffers from boat traffic and wakes.

We got ourselves anchored and decided to take the dinghy to the nearby beach to stretch our legs and let Kiki run a bit. We had let the air out so we

could keep it on the bow but still see to operate from the lower helm. We got out our new West Marine electric dinghy inflator and hooked it up. It ran for about three minutes and I heard a cracking noise. It was still running but not pumping air (later inspection revealed a broken piece inside). We had the trusty foot pump that came with the dinghy so we finished inflating it and we put it in the water, hung the motor and went to shore. Kiki had a blast playing in the surf.

Back on the boat, we had pasta with tomato sauce, Italian green beans and pudding cups for dessert. By that time it was getting dark and time for bed. More fun tomorrow!



Anchored on Calabash Creek with company

### **Captain's Log, day three (May 4, 2014)**

We shouldn't have said more fun tomorrow. The holding in Calabash Creek is apparently good. Very good in fact. We couldn't break the anchor loose by cleating the line because we only had eight feet of water. We eventually stripped the gears in the windlass but were able to bring the anchor up by hand once it broke loose. An inspection of the windlass this afternoon revealed that there's nothing we can do with it but replace it. We have no way to get to West Marine but we checked and

their price is just under one thousand dollars. Defender.com is under seven hundred dollars for the same windlass, a \$300 difference.

Our plan is to call defender and order it and have it sent to a marina we'll be staying at in Norfolk, VA. We'll either handle the anchor by hand or stay in marinas. We can spend lots of nights in marinas for \$300.

Other than that and the one kayaker who thought we shouldn't be making a wake on the ICW, today's run was uneventful. We took a slip at Deep Point Marina, a marina where the ferry to Bald Head Island is based. It's a pretty nice place with nice showers, free laundry and a pool (a little cold though). We were able to fill our fuel tanks right at our slip.

There's a path from the marina to the Cape Fear River and a small beach. We walked over and Kiki played in the water and dug in the sand. She had a shower when we got back and she is a very tired puppy.

We removed the broken windlass to get it out of the way and covered the holes with our trusty duct tape, and then it's on to bed and up tomorrow for another leg of our journey.

### **Captain's Log, day four (May 5, 2014)**

We had a nice stay at Deep Point Marina last night. We took long hot showers and did a load of laundry even though we didn't really need to (the laundry that is, we needed the showers.)

As we were getting ready to leave we struck up a conversation with a lady on a 65 foot trawler. She told us about places she and her husband liked on the ICW and insisted that we take her year old anchorage and marina guides. They get new ones every year.

We got underway about 10:00 AM up the Cape Fear River. We had the current with us this time but it was pretty windy. By the time we got to Snows Cut and Carolina Beach we had changed into long pants and long sleeved shirts.

We decided to have a short day today and got a slip in Wrightsville Beach at the Dockside Marina. It's called a marina but it's more of a restaurant/bar with boat slips. It's pretty cheap though.



**Dockside Marina, Wrightsville Beach, NC**

At this point we feel obligated to put in a plug for West Marine. Not their products, but their service. We mentioned before about the new dinghy inflator failing after just a couple uses. Well, we decided we needed to go for a walk and since the West Marine store was less than a mile away, we packed up the inflator and we walked to the store. We explained to the manager that we had purchased the pump just three or four months ago and had used it only a couple of times. We told him we were cruising and the receipt was at home. He looked up our purchase using our West Marine advantage card and replaced the defective pump at no charge. That's one advantage to sometimes paying a little more for marine needs. The \$300 price difference between West Marine and defender is a different story. The replacement

windlass is being shipped by defender to Waterside Marina in Norfolk, VA.

Funny thing about the windlass, we priced it at \$689 on Sunday but today it was a hundred dollars more. Apparently the sale ended at 8:00 AM today. We called them up and explained to them how good a long time customer we were and they honored the sale price. Sometimes things go your way.

So now it's off to bed and up tomorrow for another fifty miles or so.

### **Captain's Log, day five (May 6, 2014)**

We left Dockside Marina a little after 8:00 AM and headed north on the ICW. We easily cleared the Wrightsville Beach Bridge and continued through the no-wake zone. A large boat pulled out of the marina on the other side of the waterway and fell in behind us. At the end of the no-wake zone, he gave us a slow pass and then hit the throttle. In a few minutes he was out of sight. We wouldn't want to have his fuel bill.



Some things are hard to explain - Wrightsville Beach, NC

The Figure Eight Bridge at twenty one feet clearance gave us no problem but a little before 11:00 AM, the twelve foot clearance Surf City

Bridge came into view. It's on a restricted schedule and is supposed to open only on the hour. We called anyway and the bridge tender said the next opening would be at 12:00 so we slowed down to wait. Then he called back on the radio and told us to speed up, we had seven minutes to get through the bridge. We still don't understand what happened, but we sped up and he opened the bridge for us. That was about 11:15. We didn't have to wait until noon.

Looking at our cruising guides, we had two choices; anchor in Mile Hammock Bay or continue another two and a half hours to a marina in Swansboro, NC. Since we want to spend some time in Beaufort, NC and Mile Hammock Bay splits the time between Wrightsville Beach and Beaufort, we chose to anchor.

Mile Hammock Bay is actually within the Camp Lejeune Marine base but is open to civilians as long as they don't come ashore. As we type we can hear some military activity. So can Kiki and she's not impressed. It's a popular anchorage in spite of the possibility of noise. There was a boat anchored when we got here and five others have come in after us.

Tomorrow it's on to Beaufort, NC where we'll probably stay a couple days.



Camp Lejeune, NC

### **Captain's Log, day six (May 7, 2014)**

By the time it was all over, there were about ten boats in the anchorage. It's plenty big, ten more could have anchored there. The military exercises ended about dusk and we had a peaceful night's sleep. We woke around 7:00 AM and a couple of the boats had already pulled their anchors and left. They must have been in a hurry.

As we were uncovering things on the flybridge, two older guys in a small center console boat came by and asked me how to get to the ocean from there. I didn't know so I suggested asking at one of the other boats. I'm thinking that was a pretty small boat to be in the ocean, especially if you don't know the area.

We got everything situated, pulled up the anchor (by hand) and got underway around 8:00 AM. We had another bridge that needed to be opened but only had a few minute's wait. Other than being windy, it was an uneventful trip although we did see some military vehicles that had apparently been used for target practice.



**It's important to stay in the channel - Bogue Sound, NC**

We left the ICW at Moorhead City for the short side trip to Beaufort, NC and were in a slip at the Beaufort Town Docks about 2:00 PM. We rinsed the salt off the boat and took Kiki for a walk around

town. We came back, left Kiki on the boat and went to some of the stores and then to dinner. After that, it was back to the boat, another walk for Kiki, then showers at the marina building.

Tomorrow if it's nice, we plan on taking Q-Tip across the creek to the nature preserve where wild horses roam. We'll stay here a couple days and then move on northward.

### **Captain's Log, day seven (May 8, 2014)**

Today was a day in port. We did something we don't often do; we went to a restaurant for breakfast. No "McFood", a real restaurant with food cooked to order.

We came back to the boat, put Q-Tip in the water, and motored across the channel to the Rachel Carson Reserve where there is a sandy beach, nature trails and wild horses. Kiki dug in the sand, rolled in the mud, played in the water and barked at the horses. It was an interesting walk of about a mile. We got back in Q-Tip and motored up Town Creek looking for more horses but we didn't see any. Kiki had a bath when we got back to the boat.



**Kiki checks out the "big dogs" - Beaufort, NC**

Then it was back to the boat, more walking and shopping, a quick look around the Maritime Museum and dinner at the Dockhouse restaurant

so Patti could cash in the two free beer tokens we got when we checked in at the marina.



**Kiki makes a new friend - Beaufort, NC**

Tomorrow, we head back to the ICW and north. We're planning on stopping at New Bern, NC which is several miles off the ICW but supposed to be worth a visit.

### **Captain's Log, day eight (May 9, 2014)**

Beaufort, NC is further east than Charleston so the sun comes up earlier. We understand this but Kiki does not. Once it starts getting light, she thinks it's time for everyone to wake up and start the day. So, 7:00 AM saw us getting ready for today's trip. Captain Ron checked the oil and coolant and filled the water tanks while Patti cooked breakfast and got things ready on the boat. We walked to the marina office and paid our bill and bought a bag of ice and got underway about 8:30.

There's a drawbridge that we had to pass under but it had 16 feet of clearance so we just put the antenna and bimini down and motored on through.

We had talked to a couple on a sailboat who were heading to New Bern, NC to leave their boat for a

while and they suggested that we visit and recommended the marina where they will be leaving their boat. Apparently, they left Beaufort about 7:30 and we caught up to them a couple miles before New Bern. They were next in line behind us getting a slip at the marina.

It doesn't seem possible to spend an entire day fighting the current but we did. The couple on the sailboat said the same thing.

We got docked and went to the dockmaster's office to check in. The couple from the sailboat, Paul and Suzie, were there too and invited us to their boat. From there we walked into town and had dinner together. It turns out that they have been cruising for twenty years and have done the Great Loop (up the east coast of the USA, through the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River) as well as the Bahamas and Caribbean.

We walked back to the boat, then back to the office for showers. Tomorrow will be another day in port. There's an antique car show in town and we'll see what else we can find.

### **Captain's Log, day nine (May 10, 2014)**

We've been noticing what seemed like a reflection in some of my photos. Then we realized it was in all of our photos. A close inspection revealed a smudge or possibly a dried water drop on the camera lens. Well, that's easy to take care of so from now on the photos will be a little better.

There was an antique car show in New Bern today so we walked the couple blocks from the marina and checked out the antique cars. Most were from the thirties, but several were from the fifties and sixties and reminded Captain Ron of cars he owned back then. And also how easy it was to work on them.

Walking around after the car show we came upon an old time hardware store with probably anything you would ever need in the way of hardware, gardening supplies, etc. The merchandise had price tags, not bar codes and they keyed in the prices at the register.



<http://www.mitchellhardwareonline.com/>

Back at the boat, our slip neighbor came over to talk. It turns out he is the author of one of the Chesapeake Bay books we have. Unfortunately, it's one we didn't bring on the boat or we would have asked him to autograph it. He lives on his boat at the marina.

We walked to the city park and the "free docks". Well, it's pretty obvious why they are free, that's about what they are worth. There was one sailboat tied up there but it looked like a junk yard with a mast.



City park free docks - New Bern, NC

We came back to the boat and had leftovers for dinner, showered, and for good measure, took another walk. This time we stopped for ice cream.

Tomorrow it's back to the ICW and headed north.

### **Captain's Log, day ten (May 11, 2014)**

We said goodbye to our new cruising friends and headed out about 10:30 AM. We decided on a short day today, the choices were short or pretty long. We needed fuel anyway and Oriental, NC is one of the places we wanted to visit so that was our choice. The current was with us this time so in a little over three hours we made it from New Bern to Oriental.

Backing into a fixed dock with pilings was a new experience for us, but the dockmaster was a big help. We were the first boat in today but by dinner time the marina was just about full. It's a pretty small marina though. There's a free dock nearby but it only holds two boats and two boats were there when we got there.

We walked to the grocery store and West Marine. It turned out to be a longer walk than we expected so it was good that we left Kiki to guard the boat. The grocery store had corned pig tails but we

passed on them. We did buy some things we needed including a small broom to sweep the boat with.

We'll head north again tomorrow morning. Hopefully we can get the crew up earlier than today.

### **Captain's Log, day eleven (May 12, 2014)**

We woke today to fog. Not serious fog, but enough to limit visibility to a quarter mile or so. Regardless, we pulled out of the Oriental Marina and headed up the ICW. We ended up in a line of sailboats, perhaps ten or so, all going just slightly slower than our normal cruising speed. Eventually the fog cleared and we started passing sailboats. Since we were only going a tenth of a knot or so faster than most of them it was quite a while before they were all behind us. When we got to the Pungo River, several of them put their sails up and began sailing.



**Behind the sailboats**

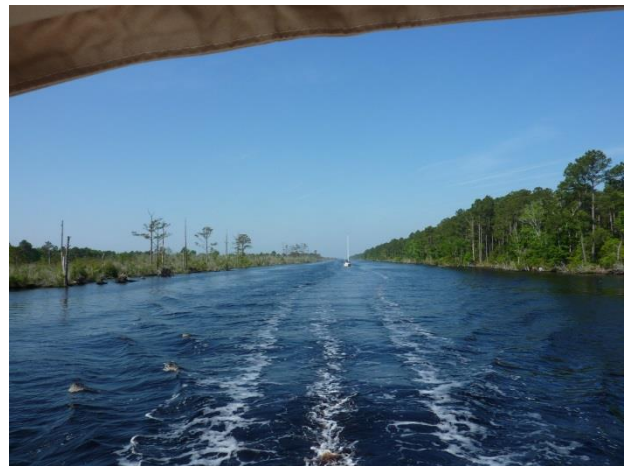
The Alligator River-Pungo River Canal is over twenty miles long with no place to tie up or anchor so it's important to allow time to transit the canal before dark. Having already motored for nearly seven hours today, we decided to anchor in a cove near the

entrance to the canal. Apparently, lots of people read the same guidebooks we do because there are about ten boats anchored around us. We're betting every one of them thinks they will get underway before the others and be the lead boat in the canal parade. We'll probably just sleep in and get underway when we're good and ready.

The plan is to go through the canal tomorrow, then down the Alligator River to Albemarle Sound. Albemarle Sound is supposed to be pretty rough with significant winds so we'll probably cross it the next morning. Norfolk, VA should come into view Friday and we'll get our replacement windlass and install it.

### **Captain's Log, day twelve (May 13, 2014)**

Well we were wrong about the race to start up the canal and we think we see why. The canal runs west to east (or the other way around depending on your perspective) and the rising sun was directly in our eyes. Anyhow, we all fell into line, more or less and headed up the canal. A couple boats passed us and we passed a couple. It took a full three hours to transit the canal and then we entered the Alligator River which got wider and wider until it resembled a bay.



**The Alligator River-Pungo River Canal**



People have reported seeing lots of wildlife on the canal. We did see a fawn playing in the water while the mother watched, a small alligator that ducked underwater as we passed and a bald eagle sitting high in a dead tree.

As the day warmed up, we started having a problem with insects. They didn't bite but they were everywhere. Other boaters were complaining about them as well. Once we got to our anchorage, Patti just took a bucket of water and washed them away.

Near where the Alligator River meets the Albemarle Sound we came to the Alligator River swing bridge. We called on the VHF radio and asked for an opening and the bridge tender opened the bridge right away. We didn't even have to slow down.



**The Alligator River Swing Bridge – The Alligator River, NC**

There's an anchorage just past the bridge on the left in the Little Alligator River. Getting to it involved dodging a couple hundred crab pots but we made it and anchored around 2:00 PM. We shared the anchorage with another trawler.

We've been taking Q-Tip off the bow when we anchor to get good air flow through the cabin so we decided to put the outboard on and take it for a spin.



**Captain Ron and Q-Tip – Little Alligator River, NC**

We'll get an early start tomorrow to try to beat the wind on Albemarle Sound and take the Dismal Swamp route to Elizabeth City, then on to Norfolk.

### **Captain's Log, day thirteen (May 14, 2014)**

Why did HIGH COTTON cross Albemarle Sound?

- a) To get to the other side.
- b) To see if everything on the boat was tied down or properly stored.
- c) To see the world's largest display of crab pot floats.
- d) All of the above.

The answer, of course, is "a" but as it turned out, "d" would also be correct. Even starting out from our anchorage at 7:00 AM, the Sound was pretty rough because the waves were on the beam. Talk about Rock 'n Roll, this was it, a rough two hours plus. Eventually we made it to the Elizabeth City free docks. There was only one boat there when we got there, a sailboat. We backed into a slip but with pilings, not a floating dock. It was similar to what we found in Oriental, NC but there was nobody there to help. We made it though, and learned a few things in the process.

Shortly after we pulled in and got tied up, another trawler arrived and tied up on the fixed face dock. It turns out they were the other boat we shared the anchorage with last night. Eventually four more trawlers came in and docked.

The city usually puts on a wine and cheese party if there are five or more boats at the dock but they were unable to put on the party so we all just got our folding chairs out and our own wine and cheese and had a little “party”.

These folks were all more experienced boaters than we are and travel south every winter and north every summer. Some live on their boats and have no fixed address. They had lots of stories to tell and had visited many of the places we have visited. All had spent time in Charleston.



Dock party - Elizabeth City, NC

Eventually it was time to break up the party and go to dinner. Some ate on their boats, we picked a restaurant.

Tomorrow we have to get through the drawbridge at 8:30 AM to make it to the locks on the Dismal Swamp canal by 11:00. We'll spend the night at the welcome center and finish the canal and the trip to Norfolk on Friday.

### Captain's Log, day fourteen (May 15, 2014)

We woke this morning early. Not early enough for the 7:30 AM bridge opening but too early for the 8:30 AM opening. We took Kiki for a short walk and then Patti walked to the bakery and got us a bag of ice and a sausage and egg sandwich to split. Kiki got a couple bites as well.

There's a local resident, Gus, who hangs around the town docks and helps boaters but mostly talks. He's quite a character. He's one of those people who you're not quite sure if you should take seriously or not. He was at the docks when we went to bed and he was there when we got up the next morning.

Anyway, two of the other trawlers were heading up the Dismal Swamp Canal so we got in line behind them for the bridge opening. The locks in the Dismal Swamp Canal operate four times a day and if you're not there, you wait for the next opening. We made it to the South Mills lock for the 11:00 opening and locked through with five other boats.



Entering the South Mills Lock – South Mills, NC



Ready to lock up - South Mills Lock – South Mills, NC



Eight feet higher and on the Dismal Swamp Canal, NC

All the cruising guides say to look for wildlife along the Dismal Swamp Canal. Deer, bears, bald eagles, etc. All we saw was a pair of ducks and what appeared to be a couple beaver dens but no beavers. Maybe the other boats scared them back into the woods.

Our original plan was to stay overnight at the Visitor Center on the Dismal Swamp Canal but after hearing the weather forecast we decided to continue on and get to Norfolk a day early. We made it early to the Deep Creek lock so we rafted to another boat that was waiting and another boat rafted to HIGH COTTON. At 3:30 PM we passed

under the drawbridge and entered the lock to be lowered about eight feet. Locking is an interesting experience but it went well. No problems and no boats were damaged.



Railroad Lift Bridge, Norfolk, VA

We had reservations at Waterside Marina but passed it by so we had to turn around and come back to it. By this time the wind had really picked up but with the help of two dockhands we were able to back into our slip. We had a pretty good pile of laundry to do and were in need of long, hot showers so we took a load of laundry to the marina laundry room. Patti is taking a shower and Captain Ron is next.



Waterside Marina - Norfolk, VA

The replacement windlass arrived so tomorrow if it's not raining, Captain Ron will install it. Also, we're expecting a visit from our friend, the lovely and talented Ms. Patty Lucarelli and her mother from Charleston. Then we have to get busy planning the rest of our trip.

#### **Captain's Log, day fifteen (May 16, 2014)**

We woke to the sound of rain. Heavy rain! According to the TV news, there has been more than four inches of rain in the area so far. Streets are flooded and schools are on a staggered schedule. The TV station is preempting regular programming for flood coverage. Probably the best place to be right now is on a boat. It was a good decision to continue to Norfolk yesterday.

We didn't wake up until 9:00 AM or so, I suppose because of a long day yesterday and the lack of sunshine due to the clouds and rain. The rain finally stopped and we walked to a pizza restaurant and had lunch. When we came back to the boat we found Kiki had been throwing up so we decided to take her to a veterinarian while we were in a city and while we had transportation. Patty Lucarelli was kind enough to drive us there and pick us up afterwards. She had no stomach or intestinal blockage so they gave us some medicine for her. Got to take care of the baby. If she doesn't feel good, we don't feel good.

By the time we got back it was after 7:00 PM and we hadn't had dinner yet. We didn't want to be away for too long so we all went to Outback Steak House in the Waterside Center.

We didn't get done until nearly 9:00 PM so we skipped the showers and went to bed.

#### **Captain's Log, day sixteen (May 17, 2014)**

Kiki seems to be feeling better. Not her normal playful self but she's eating a bit and not throwing up. Patti went to breakfast with Patty and her mother while Captain Ron began installing the replacement windlass. Everything went as planned although it took a little longer than expected. We also learned today how boat windshield wipers work and how to fix them if they don't.

Patti returned with a sandwich for Captain Ron's lunch and left again with Patty and her mother to attend Patty's granddaughter's ballet recital.

The marina was less than half full when we pulled in Thursday afternoon, but it's filling up fast today. It seems there's some sort of beer festival going on next to the marina and beer seems to attract boaters.

We've decided to stay here another day just in case we have to take Kiki back to the Vet. We don't think we will but we would rather be where one is available than in some remote anchorage or even a small town. Besides we haven't really planned our next leg of the trip. We're thinking Cape Charles, VA on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. We'll have to stop for fuel first before we head out across the Bay.

#### **Captain's Log, day seventeen (May 18, 2014)**

What can we say – another day in port. Walk, eat, shop, walk and eat some more. Patti went to breakfast with Patty and her mother again, and then Patty and her mother headed home. Kiki is just about her old self again and that's a relief. She's playing, eating, walking and looking for squirrels to chase.

A gentleman with a boat in the marina invited us to tour his boat. It's a 53 foot Selene trawler worth

about \$1.5M. It's a beautiful boat and he runs it singlehanded at times, other times with his wife or friends on board. He's been to Alaska and through the Panama Canal with it and he's heading north to New York and beyond.

We have enough fuel to make the trip to Cape Charles so that's our plan. The routes have been transferred from the computer to the plotter so we should be able to find our way.

### **Captain's Log, day eighteen (May 19, 2014)**

The Birthday Bunny somehow managed to get into the locked boat again and leave two birthday cards for Captain Ron. He does appreciate them though. He doesn't feel a day older than yesterday but apparently another year has gone by.

We made it from Norfolk to Cape Charles VA in about five and a half hours. About four of that was on open water in the Bay. Leaving Norfolk a Naval ship overtook us. We thought about asking for a slow pass but instead we just got out of the way.



[Would you contest the right of way with this guy?](#)

We took on sixty one gallons of fuel at Cape Charles Harbor and then tied up on a face dock. Cape Charles Harbor takes great pains to identify as a "harbor" not a marina. There are many work

boats here as well as the pleasure boats. Everything here is nearly new and in great condition. The town itself doesn't have a lot to offer though I suspect it comes to life during the summer season. There's a nice beach on the Chesapeake Bay but dogs aren't allowed from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM from April 1 through Labor Day so we walked to the little grocery store for ice cream and then back to the boat.



[Ice cream - Cape Charles, VA](#)

There is a pretty decent restaurant at the marina ("harbor") and we had a nice lunch there before our walk around town.

We need to rinse the salt off the boat and then input some more routes into the chart plotters. It looks like tomorrow will be an "anchor out" night in Occohannock Creek, then on to Onancock, VA. Where do they get these names?



Sunset over Cape Charles Harbor - Cape Charles, VA

### **Captain's Log, day nineteen (May 20, 2014)**

We had a short run planned today so there was no rush to get underway. We took Kiki for a short walk, got a bag of ice, topped off the water tanks, talked to a few of the cruisers on the dock and got underway about 10:30 AM.

The weather forecast said the winds were calm but all the boats were rocking. It looks like they were more like ten knots blowing directly into the harbor. Our course for the day was pretty much north and the winds were out of the west so the boat was rocking pretty well again. Patti and Kiki had to go below and Captain Ron finally went below as well.

The winds finally died down just before we left the Bay for the anchorage in Occohannock Creek. It's nice and quiet here, so far we're the only boat anchored. The sun is shining, the wind has died down and it's about 78 degrees.

The veterinarian in Norfolk told us to change Kiki's food from chicken and rice to a special bland dog food. Kiki would rather have the chicken. Patti cooked a chicken thigh and mixed some of the meat with the new dog food. Kiki picked out the chicken and left the dog food. She's sitting staring

and growling at the remaining chicken on the counter.

Watching the weather on TV, the forecast is for a "chance of showers". Translated into real life, that means we wake up tomorrow and look out the window. It shouldn't be a problem though even if it means running the boat from the lower helm. It's about four hours to Onancock, VA and the little town marina there.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty (May 21, 2014)**

The weather forecast called for rain overnight and this morning. There might have been a sprinkle for a few minutes but no rain and when we woke up around 6:00 there was no rain and just light thin clouds. We decided to get underway in case the weather turned bad but it never did. We left about 7:00 AM and pulled into the Onancock Town Wharf before noon. It's a brand new facility (not the docks but the building and grounds) and it's very nice and clean. The clothes washer and drier are free so we did a load of laundry.



Town Wharf - Onancock, VA

We took Kiki for a walk through the town and stopped for a sandwich. Later we walked through part of the historic residential area. It's a beautiful town. We stopped at an Irish Pub and looked at

the menu and decided to go back for dinner. We did and the food was great.

We got back to the boat and took Kiki for another walk. That's one way to get exercise on a boat cruise.

The plan is to head for Crisfield, MD tomorrow but we need to check the weather forecast first (and look out the window tomorrow morning). This place is nice enough to spend another night if the weather is bad.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty one (May 22, 2014)**

After last night's dinner and dog walk we talked to a couple in a sail boat. It was their first night of a planned year living on their boat. They live in Deltaville, VA and plan to go to Maine for the summer and Florida for the winter.

We woke up this morning, paid our bill, and got underway about 9:00 AM. The weather on the Bay was pretty calm and the crew was able to stay on the flybridge the entire time. We crossed from Virginia into Maryland and in just under four hours we were docked at Somers Cove Marina. It's a nice State run marina with a very friendly staff. Fixed docks again though.



Somers Cove Marina, Crisfield, MD

They have a special "pay for two, stay for three" rate so we will be here for the next three nights. The swimming pool should open tomorrow.

We walked to Main Street and to the waterfront for ice cream. They even gave us a small bowl for Kiki. There's something about cruising and ice cream.

Later, walking back from the bathhouse, we stopped to talk with another boater who was walking his dog. We thought he looked familiar and it turns out he and his boat were rafted up to us waiting for the northern lock on the Dismal Swamp Canal. He was here last night and said there were some severe storms last night. As we were talking, the sky began to darken and the temperature dropped. We walked back to the boat and it started raining. It stopped after a few minutes, but on the TV news they are reporting severe storms and a tornado watch fifty miles or so from where we are. That's a good place for them unless of course, that's where you live.

We walked to one of the local crab restaurants and had dinner, then to the bathhouse for showers. It looks like a quiet night in Crisfield. If it rains, we look at that as a free boat wash.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty two (May 23, 2014)**

Yesterday as we docked, the dockhand asked us if we wanted our excess electrical cord on the boat or on the dock. We usually keep it on the dock so that's what we told him. That turned out to be the wrong choice. As the tide went out overnight, the boat lowered with the tide and the fixed dock didn't. Since the cord was on the dock and got caught on a piling, the cord (which was securely screwed to the boat's inlet) pulled the inlet out of the boat. Fortunately there was enough slack in the boat's wiring that nothing came undone and

we were able to reattach it to the boat. We'll have to do a more permanent job when we get a chance. We also retied the boat to better account for the tide and wind and rigged a fender on a piling to better protect the boat.

Other than that we walked around town again, talked to some other boaters and local people and got dinner and brought it to the boat because Kiki was with us. The pool is open now but with the wind, it was a little cold to try it out. Some children did use it though.

Showers and to bed, tomorrow is another day.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty three (May 24, 2014)**

We slept in late today then went to a restaurant for breakfast. We ate enough to hold us through to dinner. Actually, enough that we had to take naps after breakfast!



**The main drag - Crisfield, MD**

Every time we go to the marina office they give Kiki a dog biscuit. Now when we walk her she heads straight for the office and sits at the door waiting to go in.

It's still too windy and cool to enjoy the pool so we walked to the city dock (and more ice cream).

While we were there, one of the ferry boats came from Tangier Island. They brought in over fifty bushels of crabs and took back a couple dozen large bags of clams for crab bait. There were also some people and their stuff going back to the island. Smith Island and Tangier Island can only be reached by boat. It's truly another way of life.



**Unloading crabs and loading bait for Smith Island**

The next two nights will be at anchor so tomorrow we'll top off the water tanks and head out. This has been a pleasant stop at a nice marina even though we didn't get to use the pool.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty four (May 25, 2014)**

We checked the oil and coolant levels like we usually do, topped off the water tanks and walked to the marina office for ice. One of the girls working at the marina started playing with Kiki and had her running around in circles and entertaining everyone. When we left, Kiki got a "doggie bag" of dog biscuits to go.





**Kiki the Sea Dog**

We made our way through the twisting channel and back into the open Chesapeake Bay. We had a short run planned and were anchored in the Deal Island Harbor by 1:00 PM. We saw a small beach on the way in so we inflated Q-Tip and headed back out of the harbor to the beach. There were a few people already on the beach when we landed. They had come by land.



**Q-Tip on the beach – Deal Island, MD**

Kiki played a bit in the water but she seemed to like the sand better. She dug several holes. Then she would run to the water, play in the surf and go back to digging. We hadn't put on sunscreen so we couldn't stay too long but Kiki had to have a wash down before we left the beach and a shower on the boat before she could come inside.



**Kiki riding back to HIGH COTTON**

Dinner this evening was leftovers from our restaurant meal last night with the addition of mashed potatoes and corn. Patti has the galley situation under control. So far, we are the only boat anchored but there are docks on either side of the harbor with a few work boats tied up. It's only about five feet deep at low tide so we don't expect any large boats will show up.

Tomorrow we hope to get an early start so it's early to bed tonight.



**Sunset on the Chesapeake Bay – Deal Island Harbor, MD**

### **Captain's Log, day twenty five (May 26, 2014)**

Well, we were wrong about the boats. Just as the sun was going down, a large catamaran sailboat came through the harbor entrance and anchored. It was still there when we left. Apparently a catamaran doesn't need as much water as a traditional sailboat.

We got our early start; we pulled the anchor up about 6:00 AM and headed out of the harbor. Several crab boats left before us though. We saw them working their crab pots as we headed out and turned north. Professional crabbing is hard work with long hours.

We were nearing our planned anchorage spot by noon and it didn't look like anything special so we decided to skip it and head for Cambridge, MD. It was an eight and one half hour day on the water.

We've run one hundred and four hours since we left RiversEdge Marina so it was time to change the oil and filters in the engine and transmission. Patti and Kiki took a walk while Captain Ron worked. The job was done in an hour or so and by that time our slip neighbors wanted a tour of our boat. We showed them around, talked for a while and then walked to town for dinner.

We've burned 198.6 gallons of fuel so far and that amounts to about 1.9 gallons per hour. Not too bad, we suppose.

We're going to stay here two nights and do the laundry, then head on up the Bay for another destination. The marina manager let us leave the used oil and filters for pickup and disposal.



[HIGH COTTON is in there somewhere - Cambridge, MD](#)

### **Captain's Log, day twenty six (May 27, 2014)**

What can we say, another day in port. We went to a good Mexican restaurant for lunch, and later went to dinner with the couple from the sailboat next to us. He has done the Great Loop and is doing it again. His girlfriend is along for the summer. It's interesting to talk to folks who have been to the same places we've been or are planning on visiting.

We did walk the town again and got some necessities at the drug store. There are not a lot of stores left in downtown Cambridge and many of them are closed on Monday and Tuesday. We did see some nice historic homes and churches though.

A check of the weather indicated the possibility of storms tomorrow so we may not get out of here as planned. All we can do at this point is wait until tomorrow morning and see how it looks.

### Captain's Log, day twenty seven (May 28, 2014)

We woke to sunshine and a nearly cloudless sky. Unfortunately, the sand man took over and we went back to sleep. An hour or so later we got out of bed, checked the weather forecast and decided today would be fine for boating. A talk with our more experienced slip neighbor confirmed our decision as he was planning on sailing north as well.

We got to the drawbridge at Knapps Narrows just as another boat was approaching from the other direction. We let them come through first, then went through the drawbridge. It's a very narrow channel and shallow as well. Just as we cleared the drawbridge it started to rain. Patti took Kiki and all the stuff below and Captain Ron stayed on the flybridge until we were back in deeper water and then he went below as well. After fifteen minutes or so the rain stopped and the sun came out so we went back to the flybridge for the rest of the run.



Knapps Narrows Drawbridge - Knapps Narrows, MD

We have seen a lot of crabbers on the Chesapeake Bay so far. It's a big industry here and crab pots are everywhere.



Crabbers setting out their crab pots - Chesapeake Bay, MD

When we got to the marina we had chosen in St. Michaels we couldn't get them on the radio so we called on the phone. The lady said she was at the bank but could direct me to our slip. Following her directions we found the slip and backed in and tied up. This is really more of a boatyard with transient slips than a marina but it's about half the cost of the big resort marina in town and it's closer to the town itself.

We put Kiki's harness on her and walked to town. St. Michaels seems to be doing pretty well compared to many of the towns we've stayed in. There are the usual restaurants but more shops and an actual grocery store. We plan on stocking up before we leave here.

We came back to the boat, tidied up a bit, scanned for TV stations, and then walked back to town (without Kiki) for dinner. We had planned on having dinner at an Irish pub, but walking down the street we saw a sign in another restaurant window advertising half price burgers so that's where we ate. They were pretty good hamburgers for four dollars each!

We finished dinner and walked across the street to the Acme grocery store and picked up a few things so we wouldn't have to carry as much the next time. We've been having leg cramps at night so we

bought two bananas and ate them on the way back to the boat. Bananas on a boat are said to be bad luck. By the time we got back to the dock the wind had picked up and the temperature had dropped. We may need the heat tonight.

Patti seems to like this town (we both do) so we'll probably stay an extra day.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty eight (May 29, 2014)**

The weather can sure change quickly. Yesterday Captain Ron was shirtless and this morning the National Weather Service reports fifty six degrees here in St. Michaels. The broken thermometer has displayed seventy one degrees for several days now. We've got to get a new one when we get to a Walmart or home center.

We were walking Kiki and came to a small town park. Kiki was chasing squirrels and chased one up a kid's sliding board. The squirrel jumped off and ran up a tree but Patti put Kiki on the sliding board. She slid down and seemed to enjoy it so Patti put her on it again. She slid down several times.



**Kiki at the playground**

It started raining early in the afternoon so we pretty much stayed on the boat. It stopped so we took Kiki to the park again. Then we went to

dinner and ice cream afterwards. As of now, the weather forecast for tomorrow looks OK so we plan to head out later in the morning.

### **Captain's Log, day twenty nine (May 30, 2014)**

We were in no rush to get underway this morning so we slept until Kiki decided it was time to get up. We walked to the Acme grocery store for a few things, got ice from the marina and cast off about 10:00 AM. It was a little cool on the flybridge so after a half hour or so we decided to go below to the lower helm. We stayed below until we got near the Kent Narrows drawbridge. This bridge is one of those hard to explain situations where the bridge was replaced by a high rise bridge but the drawbridge was left in operation for local traffic. It's a very narrow bridge with a convoluted and shallow channel. Many boaters choose to go around Kent Island to avoid this bridge but we didn't. The bridge has an eighteen foot clearance so we didn't really need an opening but we arrived just as it was opening for a southbound sailboat so we asked the bridge tender if he would hold it open for us and he did. The current through the narrow bridge opening had to be at least three knots and it was swirling around but we made it through without incident. The channel north of the bridge has a bunch of twists and turns but following the markers and the chart plotter got us back to open water.



**Kent Narrows Drawbridge - Kent Island, MD**

It was pretty much a straight shot from Kent Island to the Rock Hall Harbor entrance channel. We called the marina and got instructions to our slip and were greeted by two competent dockhands. We checked in, then took Kiki and walked around town. Surprisingly, there was a West Marine in town. We didn't need anything but they had a sale going on so we ended up with three pairs of shoes.



**The girls and HIGH COTTON - Rock Hall, MD**

Back at the marina, we showered, dressed and went to the adjacent restaurant for dinner. As we were finishing dinner, Patti looked out the window onto the deck and saw the couple we had met and had dinner with in Cambridge a few nights ago so we went out and talked to them. They left

Cambridge after us but stopped at different places than we did. It's a small world sometimes.

Back at the boat we had ice cream left over from yesterday. Apparently our freezer is cold enough for chicken parts but not ice cream but it was good even though it was soft. Time for a little cable TV, then to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty (May 31, 2014)**

When we checked in to the marina yesterday they told us there would be a triathlon today starting at the harbor. The participants had to swim twice around the harbor, ride twenty five miles on bicycles and then run.

About sunrise, we woke to find the organizers setting up for the event and washing down the dock. It turns out that after the swim they exited the harbor on the dock right behind us and headed for their bicycles. There were supposedly five hundred participants and it was interesting to watch from the flybridge of HIGH COTTON.



**Start of the triathlon - Rock Hall, MD**

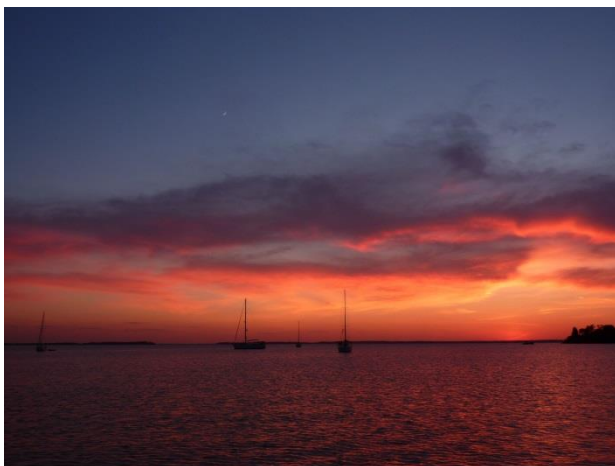
After the event was over we took our time getting ice and getting underway. This turned out to be a mistake because once we got on the open Bay, the winds picked up and the seas became pretty rough.

It was a short but rough run of about two and a half hours to our planned anchorage in Worton Creek. Once we got off the Bay and into the creek we were protected from the wind and waves. We inflated Q-Tip, put her in the water and motored over to the beach. Kiki had a good time playing in the water and digging in the sand.

There were only two other boats anchored when we pulled in but during the afternoon more pulled in and anchored. There are about sixteen anchored as we write this. Several have gone to the beach or other boats in their dinghies.



**HIGH COTTON anchored on Worton Creek, MD**



**Sunset on Worton Creek, MD**

Tomorrow it's up the Sassafras River as far as we want to go, then we'll anchor for the night again.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty one (June 1, 2014)**

We slept to 8:00 AM or so, then got up and had breakfast of sausage and eggs. Some of the other boats had already left the anchorage, some were leaving and some folks were heading to the beach in their dinghies.

We didn't have far to go so we set a leisurely pace north on the Bay. The current was with us and as we looked at the chart plotter we were making eight and a half knots so we throttled back and let the current do some of the work.

As we entered the Sassafras River, we passed Betterton Beach on the starboard side. We continued up river towards Georgetown looking for a good place to anchor. It's a beautiful, scenic river but eventually we decided to turn around and head for the free dock at Betterton Beach. There's no electricity, no water and no dockhands but it's free and secure and next to a public beach and restrooms.



**Free Dock - Betterton Beach, MD**

After we docked we decided to walk to town. It turns out the town is only homes and apartments, no business district at all. The Internet shows two restaurants but we never found them. Other than

that, the town is nice with mostly well-kept homes and a lot of new condos.

We enjoyed the park and beach, dined on leftovers from our restaurant meal in Rock Hall, watched TV and went to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty two (June 2, 2014)**

Greetings from the top of the Chesapeake Bay! Actually, we've crossed into the Susquehanna River by a quarter of a mile or so.

We woke this morning, ate breakfast, walked Kiki the Sea Dog and then headed out of our slip from Betterton Beach to Havre de Grace. As has happened lately, it was a short run but although the current was with us again, the seas were a little rough. The crew decided to ride below while Captain Ron manned the helm from the flybridge.

The channel into Havre de Grace is pretty convoluted but wide enough that it's not difficult. We called the marina and got docking instructions but it's a "do it yourself" marina. It's apparently part of a condo and the transient slips are managed by the owners of another marina at the other end of town. There's no staff at this location. No problem though, they are single wide slips with floating finger piers on each side and long enough to dock bow in and still be able to get on and off the boat easily. Besides, bow in gives us a view of the water, not the condos. The docks are a little rough but the restrooms and showers are first rate.



**HIGH COTTON at Log Pond Marina - Havre de Grace, MD**

Havre de Grace seems to have a lot more going on in the central city than many of the towns we've visited so far although most of the businesses are past walking distance on US route 40. We ate lunch at a nice Italian restaurant and got change for a one hundred dollar bill at one of two or three banks in the business district. Then we got ice cream (again) at the ice cream shop. Patti had to call her doctor for a prescription and we were able to get it filled at the local pharmacy.

We came back to the boat, got Kiki and took her for a walk in the park. Then Patti took a load of dirty clothes to the marina's laundry/restroom facility.

We'll probably stay here another day and then head back south.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty three (June 3, 2014)**

Not much to report today. We walked (with Kiki of course) to a different local park and watched the boats on the river and the trains on the bridge. This is the busy rail line from Washington, DC to New York City.



**Amtrak heading north over the Susquehanna River - Havre de Grace, MD**

We walked back to the boat for lunch. We heard thunder and in a few minutes it started pouring. The rain lasted just a short time and the sky cleared.

We went back to the Italian restaurant for dinner and stopped at the ice cream parlor for desert. Then we took showers and got the boat ready for tomorrow's run.

#### **Captain's Log, day thirty four (June 4, 2014)**

We got an early start this morning to try and take advantage of the calm seas and outgoing tide. We dropped the anchor near the Hart Miller Island swimming beach before noon. After a lunch of bratwurst and baked beans we put Q-Tip in the water, hung the outboard and headed for the beach. It's a Maryland State Park, accessible only by boat. There were just a couple other boats anchored and we had the beach pretty much to ourselves.



**Hart-Miller Island State Park, MD**

As soon as we touched the shore in Q-Tip, Kiki was out of the boat and onto the beach digging holes. She alternated between digging holes in the sand and playing in the surf. She actually swam a bit. So did Captain Ron.

We didn't want to overdo it so after a while we went back to the boat for a rest. Pretty soon a sailboat appeared behind HIGH COTTON. The guy said he was tired of sailing and had just purchased a Camano like ours. He left and a few minutes later another Camano like ours pulled alongside us. They live nearby and had seen us anchored so they came over to say hello.

We decided to go back to the beach and that's when we learned something new. We learned how many people can sit on one side of Q-Tip without it flipping. The answer is "one" and that's one less than we had! So, all three of us went for an unintended swim behind the boat. Fortunately, Kiki had her life jacket on and Patti and Ron didn't go completely under the water. Also, Q-Tip righted herself without losing anything on board.

We pulled out the swim ladder on HIGH COTTON's swim platform, climbed on board and got back on Q-Tip gracefully. We went back to the beach where Kiki dug some more holes and met another puppy. Patti and Captain Ron talked to some of



the local people for a while, then we got back in Q-Tip and headed back to the big boat.

We'll spend the night here and possibly tomorrow night, then we're headed for Baltimore for the weekend.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty five (June 5, 2014)**

This morning we awoke to Rock and Roll. Not Chuck Berry, the boat was rocking and rolling! Then it started to rain. Yesterday we made the decision to leave the outboard motor on Q-Tip with the intention that we would go back to the beach today. It turns out that was not a good decision because here was Q-Tip tied behind HIGH COTTON bobbing up and down in the waves and we needed to get the motor off so we could leave our anchorage for a more protected spot with Q-Tip in tow.

We did manage to get the outboard motor off and onto HIGH COTTON without injury to either of us or the motor. We pulled up the anchor and headed for an alternate anchorage that we had put in the chart plotter "just in case". It was a relatively short trip but we had to rely on the chart plotter as it was difficult to see the markers until we got close.

We arrived and anchored without incident. It was still raining but the anchorage was protected from the wind. The weather forecast called for the rain to stop and the skies to clear and that's what happened but the wind kept up so we stayed where we were.

In the afternoon, another Camano Troll like ours entered the harbor and they came over and rafted to us for a short visit and an exchange of boat tours. It turns out they bought their Camano in Charleston. It used to be at the Ashley Marina and we remembered seeing it there.



**Another Camano visits - Sue Creek, MD**

We have reservations at a marina in the Baltimore Inner Harbor for the weekend and are expecting visits from friends and relatives who live in Maryland. That should be fun. The weather is supposed to cooperate at least through the weekend.

### **Captain's Log, day thirty six (June 6, 2014)**

We slept relatively late and got underway about 8:45 AM. The yacht club at the entrance to the creek has good fuel prices and we had to pass right by the fuel dock on the way out so we decided to top off the tanks. Forty four gallons brought both tanks to the full mark and then we were on our way.

Eventually we came to the Francis Scott Key Bridge and then into the Baltimore Harbor. Boats were going every which way but no big ships were moving.



**Francis Scott Key Bridge - Baltimore, MD**



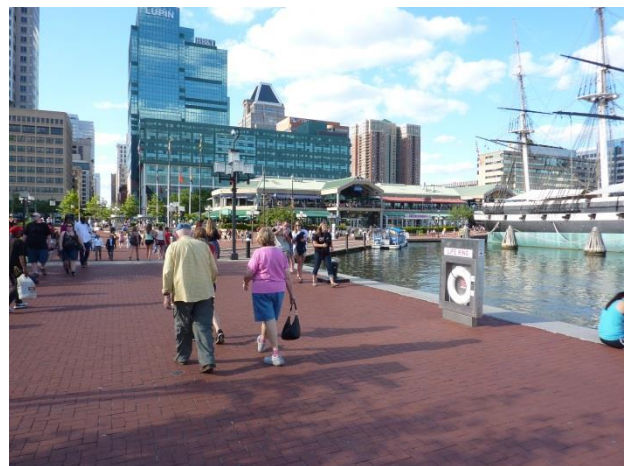
**HIGH COTTON - Harbor East Marina - Baltimore, MD**



**Fort McHenry - Baltimore, MD**

We made our way to the Inner Harbor and into our slip at Harbor East Marina. For the first time in our entire trip, Kiki was asked to leave the marina office. We thought about claiming her as a service dog but thought the better of it so Patti took her outside and Captain Ron paid the bill. Other than the “no dogs in the office” policy, this is a pretty nice place with good clean showers and two washers and driers. It’s a bit high priced but so are all the marinas near the Inner Harbor. Like they say, “Location, location, location”.

We ate a snack for lunch, then took Kiki for a walk (what’s new?). She met some new friends and had her back and ears scratched. After Kiki’s walk we put her back on the boat and walked around the harbor area checking out the shops and restaurants. Baltimore’s Inner Harbor is like Jacksonville’s Jacksonville Landing and Norfolk’s Waterside Festival Marketplace except that the Inner Harbor is alive and full of restaurants, shops and people while the other two are essentially ghost malls, especially the one in Norfolk.



**Inner Harbor - Baltimore, MD**

We got a couple of sandwiches and drinks for dinner so we wouldn’t have leftovers and headed back to the boat for showers and to do a load or two of laundry. We have family coming tomorrow

and friends coming Sunday so between that and all there is around here, we'll be pretty busy.

#### **Captain's Log, day thirty seven (June 7, 2014)**

Not much to report today. We got up, walked Kiki, and then walked to an Irish Pub for brunch. Patti's nephew and his family who live in Baltimore came to visit so we took a cruise around the harbor to show them Baltimore from the "other side". We walked with them to Fells Point and had dinner, then they went home and we watched a bit of TV and went to bed.

#### **Captain's Log, day thirty eight (June 8, 2014)**

Since we got back to the boat late last evening we postponed our showers until this morning. As Patti was walking back to the boat, she and another boater noticed smoke and flames coming from a spot along the seawall that had been covered by a large plastic safety drum. The fire department was called, then the electric company. It turns out the city is doing construction and beautification along the waterfront and a temporary electrical connection had been made and covered by the drum. The drum fell over and water draining from the street filled the drum and shorted the wires. People came and fixed it with no further damage and no interruption to service on the dock.

We had a visit from old friends Roy and Susan from Frederick, MD so we went to lunch with them and visited for a while. Captain Ron played music with Roy for thirty years or so before we moved to Charleston.

After they left we walked back to the boat and promptly fell asleep (all three of us). This boating and eating is tiring work!

We paid some bills electronically, then we walked to Little Italy for Pizza and back to one of the piers for ice cream.

Tomorrow we'll do some grocery shopping and head out if the weather turns out as forecasted.

#### **Captain's Log, day thirty nine (June 9, 2014)**

Today was a good example of how uncertain the weather can be around here. We awoke to gray and gloomy skies. We took showers and then walked a couple blocks for last minute supplies. There's a Whole Foods grocery store with a CVS across the street. Whole Foods is pretty strange as grocery stores go. We got most of what we needed at CVS. We needed some chicken thighs for Kiki so this week she is having organic free range chicken for dinner. I doubt she knows the difference.

By the time we got underway about 10:30 AM, the skies were partly cloudy with mostly sunshine. Two hours later it was overcast and windy and started to rain. As we entered the channel for the Magothy River, the wind stopped and the sun came out.

We made our way to the beach side of Dobbins Island and anchored off the beach. We inflated Q-Tip, hung the motor on and made our way to the beach. As is her habit now, Kiki was the first one out of the boat and onto the beach. She dug holes and actually swam a bit as she played in the surf. Captain Ron swam a bit as well but not Patti.



**Patti and Kiki on the beach - Dobbins Island, MD**



**Captain Ron gets in the picture - Dobbins Island, MD**

We talked to some of the local residents who use this beach often. Nobody lives on the island; it's just a local hangout. The word is, it's a zoo on weekends, but today (Monday) it's pretty quiet. A few boats have come and gone.

Dinner tonight will be leftover Chinese food from Baltimore. The plan for tomorrow is to get a slip in Annapolis.

### **Captain's Log, day forty (June 10, 2014)**

Forty days now. It seems to be going so fast it's hard to remember where we've been. It's a good thing we're writing it down and taking pictures.

We had a quiet night's sleep and awoke to grey skies but calm seas. The weather forecast was a little iffy so we put Q-Tip on the bow, knowing we would have to let the air out if it rained and we had to operate from below.

The best two options in Annapolis seemed to be Annapolis City Marina (actually across the river in Eastport) and "Ego Alley", a short canal in the center of Annapolis with slips and bulkhead tie-ups. It's nicknamed "Ego Alley" because many boats just cruise in and out just to be seen without actually taking a slip.

The advantage to Ego Alley is that it's right in the center of the downtown action. That's also the disadvantage as it is reported to be noisy and people have reported strangers boarding their boats when left unattended or during the night. Also, the restrooms and showers are across the street and parking lot. Ego Alley does not take reservations, it's "first come, first served", so we decided to stay at the Annapolis City Marina and walk to town.

The weather was gloomy but pretty calm on the Bay as we headed south and under the Chesapeake Bay Bridges. As we neared Annapolis it started to rain but not hard so we put up the bimini top and got into our slip at the marina. Once we docked and checked in, the rain came down harder for an hour or so. Then it stopped and the sun came out.



Entering the harbor - Annapolis, MD

The marina listing indicated a “five minute walk across the bridge to historic downtown Annapolis”. I don’t think you could drive it in five minutes, much less walk it, but we set out across the bridge with Kiki. We walked to Ego Alley and it was mostly empty. There were three or four boats docked and about fifteen empty slips.



HIGH COTTON - Eastport, MD

We checked a few of the shops and stopped for ice cream. We headed back to the boat but ended up carrying Kiki most of the way. It’s a very long walk when your legs are as short as hers.

We showered and let Kiki nap. We walked to a restaurant just a couple blocks from the marina and had a great dinner. It looks like we’ll stay here

an extra day and walk back to Annapolis leaving Kiki on the boat.

### **Captain’s Log, day forty one (June 11, 2014)**

We woke this morning to the sound of thunder and Kiki the Sea Dog barking at it. Then it started raining. No problem, we rolled over and went back to sleep. Around 10:00 AM the rain stopped and the sun came out so we walked to the office and paid for another night and then walked back to Annapolis leaving Kiki to guard the boat.

There were still several empty spots in Ego Alley. We stopped in the shops and bought a few things we didn’t really need and ate lunch (we may not have needed that either). We walked and shopped some more and bought ice cream again. Then it was back to the marina.

Another walk with Kiki, another walk to dinner, showers and then to bed. Tomorrow we head south.

### **Captain’s Log, day forty two (June 12, 2014)**

Today dawned as one of those “iffy” days. A day where you wonder if you should stay in port or head to the next destination. The weather forecasts (they didn’t completely agree with each other) suggested showers and a chance of thunderstorms. There wasn’t much left for us to do in Annapolis in the rain except sit on the boat and we figured at \$75 per day, we would do just as well sitting on the boat somewhere else. Besides we only had a couple watchable TV stations in Annapolis.

We left our slip in light drizzle at about 9:30 AM with Captain Ron driving from the upper helm and wearing a raincoat. Once we got out of the harbor

and into a larger clear area, we dropped Q-Tip from the bow and rigged up the tow line so we could see from the lower helm. As we motored towards our next scheduled stop on the Rhode River, the rain picked up and became heavy but there was no thunder or lightning.

By the time we got to the entrance to the river, visibility was down to a couple hundred feet so we had to really rely on the chart plotter to get us near our anchorage.

As we started to anchor, the rain stopped so we didn't get soaked dropping and setting the anchor. This is an anchorage we used a few times when we lived in Maryland and had a smaller boat. There are a couple of small uninhabited islands and a small beach. We warmed up leftovers for a hot lunch and then it started to rain again so it was time for TV and a nap.

About 5:00 PM the rain stopped and the sun came out between the clouds so we loaded up Q-Tip (we had to dump the rain water out first) and went to what remains of the beach on Flat Island. As usual, Kiki was the first one out of the boat and started digging in the sand. She seems to love to dig in the sand. She never finds anything; she digs for a while and then starts another hole.



HIGH COTTON - Rhode River, MD



Kiki digs in the sand again – Flat Island,, MD



Playing at the beach is dirty work

We stayed until it started to sprinkle again, then headed back to HIGH COTTON. . As usual, Kiki had to take a shower and get dried off before she could go inside. Dinner was leftover jerk pork and mashed potatoes from our meal in Eastport with the addition of a can of black beans and shredded cheese. We eat pretty well on HIGH COTTON.

We'll spend the night here and see what tomorrow brings. Sun or rain, we'll wait and see.

### **Captain's Log, day forty three (June 13, 2014)**

We woke this morning to the sounds and wakes of crabbers tending their trot lines. Maryland allows crab traps in the Bay but not in the tributaries so the crabbers run trot lines. As we were preparing to leave we overheard one of them complaining about how few crabs he had caught.

It rained pretty hard last night so it took a little time to dry off things on the flybridge. As we pulled the anchor up the chain and anchor were covered in mud so we had to wash that off as we hauled it up.

We had several choices for today's destination and eventually settled on the Rod 'n Reel Dock in Chesapeake Beach. As was the case yesterday, the weather kept changing during the trip going from cloudy to hot and sunny and back. As we neared the channel to the marina it started to sprinkle but then stopped as quickly as it started. We came in and backed into our assigned slip without incident.



**Chesapeake Beach, MD**

The Rod 'n Reel Dock is part of a hotel and restaurant complex so we can use the heads and pool in the hotel. There's a small strip mall within walking distance with a CVS and a grocery store as well as a McDonalds and a Chinese restaurant. We

got sodas at the grocery store and ice cream at McDonalds then came back to the boat.



**Chesapeake Beach Resort and Spa (and Rod 'n Reel Dock) – Chesapeake Beach, MD**

The complex has an outdoor stage and we were surprised to see that an old friend of ours from Maryland was scheduled to perform tonight. Then we learned that the show had been cancelled because of predicted storms. That was a disappointment.

We caught up with an old friend who used to live in Charleston but had moved north and happened to be visiting her brother in Chesapeake Beach so she picked us up and we enjoyed dinner with her family.

Back at the marina we went to take showers and learned that the showers are the same ones used by hotel guests before entering the pool so although they were nice and clean, there were no provisions for towels and clothes and no private area for dressing. We showered anyway, went back to the boat and to bed.

### Captain's Log, day forty four (June 14, 2014)

We decided that staying at the Rod 'n Reel Dock for another day wasn't worth the ninety dollars a day they were charging so we ate breakfast, walked to the grocery store again for last minute supplies and headed out. We forgot to top off the water tanks but the gauge showed a little over half full.

Once we got back into the Bay we wondered if we had made a mistake. The winds were strong and the water was rough. It wasn't bad enough to turn back but we decided against anchoring off Scientist Cliffs where Captain Ron's family vacationed in the 1950s and taking the dinghy to shore to look for shark's teeth. It would have been unsafe trying to get the motor on the dinghy and us into it.

The friend we met in Chesapeake Beach had recommended the Calvert Marina in Solomons so we made a reservation. We pulled in about 2:00 PM to a modern floating dock. It's been a while since we've seen one of these. The price here per night with electricity is thirty four dollars a night. That's just over a third of what we paid last night and there's a nice pool on the marina grounds. This place used to be a Navy base and it's gigantic with lots of open grassy space. Some parts are best described as "rustic" though.



Docked at Calvert Marina - Solomons, MD



Captain Ron checks out the pool



Not only Dogs, but Cats are excluded from the pool

We checked out the pool, Captain Ron took a short swim, then we walked back to the boat got cleaned up and had dinner at one of the on-site restaurants. They have a loaner vehicle so tomorrow we'll get it and hit the home center, the grocery store and probably West Marine.

We can't pick up any TV stations here but the marina has books and DVDs to lend out. We got "The Titanic". Probably not the best choice to watch on a boat trip. Maybe we'll just take it back.



### **Captain's Log, day forty five (June 15, 2014)**

Since the marina provides a loaner vehicle, we decided to take it and run some errands. The accumulator tank on the water system seems to be not functioning, the indoor/outdoor thermometer has been reading minus forty degrees for a couple weeks and the battery died in one of the electric toothbrushes.

We mentioned that parts of the marina were "rustic". Well, so was the loaner vehicle. It's a twenty year old Dodge compact pickup with a standard transmission (five speed floor shift) a broken ignition switch (it works but don't ever take the key out), and a broken parking brake (apparently). If you want to roll the windows down, you **roll** the windows down. Oh, and the passenger door won't open from the outside.

Captain Ron hasn't driven a standard transmission vehicle in twenty years or so but it came back to him and off we went to West Marine, CVS and the home center. The replacement accumulator tank fixed the water problem and the toothbrush was replaced, but the new indoor outdoor was defective so we had to get the truck again and take it back.

The marina has a small "doggie beach" so of course we took Kiki. Kiki dug in the sand as usual but after watching another dog swimming she decided to try it herself so she swam out a few feet and then swam parallel to the beach.

We walked back to the boat, gave Kiki a shower and then we took showers and went to dinner at the same restaurant we went to last night.



**Captain and crew - Solomons, MD**

Tomorrow we'll see if we can get slip reservations in Washington, DC and if we can, we'll head that way. If not, we'll just keep on heading south.

### **Captain's Log, day forty six (June 16, 2014)**

We started the day by calling the Capital Yacht Club in Washington DC to secure dockage for the coming weekend. Once that was confirmed, we called the Point Lookout Marina to arrange for dockage for tonight and to top off our fuel tanks.

We headed down the Patuxent River, down the Chesapeake Bay, rounded Point Lookout and headed up the Potomac River. Point Lookout Marina is just a few miles up the Potomac River from the Chesapeake Bay and is a good starting point for our trip up the Potomac.

We topped off our fuel tanks, secured HIGH COTTON to the face of “A” dock, and checked in. Of course we had to take Kiki for a walk around the grounds, then we changed and went for a swim in the pool. This time, we both took a dip.



Fuel tanks full and docked at Point Lookout Marina - Point Lookout, MD

Back at the boat, it was time for dinner (leftovers from last night), then showers and then to bed. We won't have to push it; we have four days to do one hundred miles.

### Captain's Log, day forty seven (June 17, 2014)

We're officially headed for DC! We woke this morning and took Kiki the sea dog for her customary walk. A sailboat that had been anchored off the marina was approaching the fuel dock and the marina wasn't open yet so we walked over to lend a hand. There was a lot of yelling and arguing going on about who should be doing what and how. The captain pulled up to the one diesel pump that wasn't working. He had to move down the dock but was concerned about his dinghy which was hung on the back of the boat hitting the pilings.

Eventually, everyone convinced him to move but he only moved to the middle. That left another

boat that wanted fuel with nowhere to go. The fuel attendant arrived about this time so we decided to let them all sort it out among themselves and went back to ready HIGH COTTON for today's journey.

Dividing the distance by the number of days before our DC reservations, we found a good first night's anchorage near an island on the Virginia side of the Potomac named “Shark's Tooth Island” so that's where we headed.

Once we got ourselves anchored and situated, we set up the dinghy, clamped the motor in place and headed for the island. As usual, Kiki was the first out of the boat and onto the beach. She seems pretty proud of learning to swim and she walked out to where she could swim and swam back and forth along the beach.

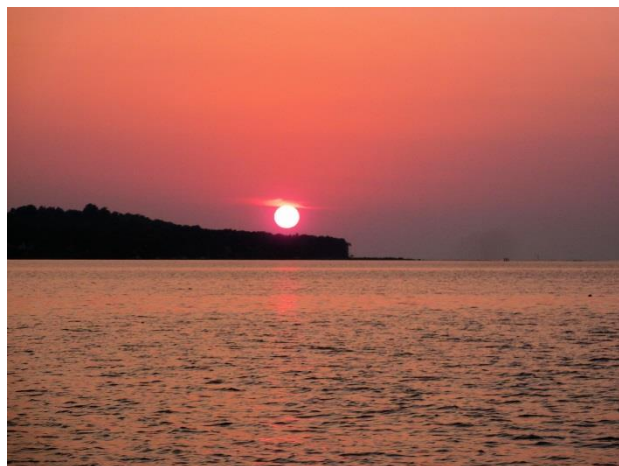
We started looking for sharks teeth but didn't find any at first. We asked a local family about them and they showed us several that they had found. Eventually we found a few on our own.



Sharks teeth - Shark Tooth Island on the Potomac River

Back on the boat, we rinsed ourselves off, took naps to cool off and ate a dinner of Italian sausage and sauce over pasta with Italian green beans on the side.

We got back into Q-Tip, leaving Kiki to guard HIGH COTTON and went back to the island for more sharks tooth hunting. As the sun began to set, we headed back to the big boat. Kiki was looking out the window waiting for us.



Sunset from Sharks Tooth Island - Potomac River

Tomorrow, it's another anchorage, this time on the Maryland side of the river.

### Captain's Log, day forty eight (June 18, 2014)

Our day started out normally enough, backtracking out from behind Sharks Tooth Island and heading north on the Potomac River. About an hour into our voyage we got a call on the VHF from "Range Boat Four". There's a Navy facility in Dahlgren, VA and it turns out they were testing ammunition today on the river. We were told to go to the Maryland side and hug the coast until we past the testing range. We heard them call several other boats and direct them out of the danger zone as well. We heard a few loud booms as we traveled up the river but didn't see anything unusual.



Dahlgren Range Boat on the Potomac River

We continued hugging the Maryland shore, passed under the Route 301 Bridge, and headed up the Port Tobacco River to our anchorage near Maryland's Chapel Point State Park. This is a small undeveloped park with a small swimming beach near La Plata, MD.

When we got to the park there were a couple of older people fishing and a couple of young women on the beach. There was a police boat where we wanted to anchor so we asked them if it was OK to anchor there. They said "yes as long as you stay out of the channel". Duh!



Anchored off Chapel Point - Port Tobacco River, MD

We anchored and rode Q-Tip to shore. Kiki was the first one out of the boat and swam along the

beach. It was pretty hot so we found a shady spot where Kiki could explore and dig.



**Kiki the swimmer – Port Tobacco River, MD**

As we explored the beach we noticed that it was becoming crowded and that nearly everyone was young. It turned out that today was the last day of school and many of the students decided to celebrate by going to the beach. They were not loud and most of them went to the other end of the beach.

Eventually we went back to the big boat, rinsed off, ate dinner and went to sleep. The only TV station we could pick up reliably was the Korean news channel.

### **Captain's Log, day forty nine (June 19, 2014)**

It was hot last night! How hot was it? We talked about our problems with the thermometer, but we think it was in the upper nineties yesterday and close to that at bed time. We turned on the fan and did OK.

We had planned on anchoring out again tonight but with the heat and the forecast of possibly strong storms we decided to take a slip near the planned anchorage. The marina is the Sweden Point Marina and it's part of Smallwood State Park.

It turns out there is a major FLW bass fishing tournament going on at the park this week so we watched fifty or so bass boats speed in and weigh their fish.



**Bass boats heading in to weigh their catch – Sweden Point Marina, MD**

Other than the fishing tournament there's not much going on here so we took showers, gave the boat a quick wash/rinse, got some dinner from the marina office (yuck) and then took Kiki to the bath house for a shampoo.



**In the slip - Sweden Point Marina, MD**

We haven't seen the storms yet but we did get a little rain. We've got a couple dozen TV stations to choose from so there will be entertainment tonight. Tomorrow we head for Washington, DC

where we hope to visit with Captain Ron's children and grandchildren.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty (June 20, 2014)**

Fifty days on a boat! We woke up this morning to a nearly empty marina. All the bass boats left at sunrise and they hadn't come back yet. We took Kiki for a walk, talked to some of the marina/park employees and got underway. Once we got back to the Potomac River, bass boats were flying every which way. I suppose they were looking for that secret hole where the prize winning fish were hiding. What is a bit surprising is, these boats have larger engines, horsepower wise, than HIGH COTTON.

We passed a large boat, perhaps fifty feet or more that had seven large outboard engines on the stern. Yep, seven. Just imagine the fuel bill! A few minutes later it passed us on plane. It belongs to the US Army.



**Mystery Boat - Potomac River**

We rounded the bend at Fort Washington and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge came into view. This is part of the DC beltway and the beginning of Washington DC on one side and Alexandria, VA on the other side. Airplanes were taking off and landing at the airport and cruise boats were

heading downriver to Mount Vernon. We headed up the Washington Channel and pulled into our space on the T head at the Capital Yacht Club.



**National Harbor Marina – MD - At \$125 per night we didn't stay there.**



**We had company on the Potomac River near National Airport**

The Capital Yacht Club is actually that; a yacht club but they have a few transient spots available. There's a nice clubhouse with a mahogany bar and lounge, five sets of washers and driers, nice showers and heads and complimentary coffee. Surprisingly, it's not expensive compared to some of the marinas we have stayed at and it's near the National Mall. Many of the boats docked here are liveaboards and the owners work in the area.



Capital Yacht Club straight ahead - Washington, DC

We gathered up the dirty clothes, towels and bedding and tied up three of the washing machines with our laundry.



Patti heading for the washing machines



Not bad for a marina – Capital Yacht Club, Washington, DC

We walked over to the famous Maine Street fish market and were impressed by the quantity and variety of seafood available raw or cooked. We'll return tomorrow for lunch and/or dinner.

We walked about two thirds of a mile to a burger restaurant for dinner and Safeway for groceries then took our showers and went to bed. It's supposed to rain tomorrow so we'll wait and see what happens.



Coming back from Safeway with the groceries

### Captain's Log, day fifty one (June 21, 2014)

The Washington DC waterfront is undergoing "revitalization" so there's a lot of construction

going on. When we arrived yesterday we had to circle around two construction barges to get to the dock. We awoke this morning about 6:30 AM to the sound of the barges being moved away from the marina. That's nice; it improves the view from the boat.

The yacht club puts on a \$7.00 buffet breakfast on Saturdays so we walked to the clubhouse and ate our fill. It was good. After that we decided to walk to the Washington Monument and the National Mall.



**Patti and Ron - Jefferson Memorial - Washington, DC**

It turns out you need tickets to go to the top of the Washington Monument and they were all gone for today. We walked down the mall and went to the Air and Space Museum. By that time, we were getting pretty tired and still had to walk back. We stopped at CVS and Safeway again to pick up a couple things we thought of after yesterday's visit and then continued walking back to the boat.

Captain Ron's son and grandchildren came to visit from nearby Maryland so we visited for a while and then walked to the wharf and got steamed shrimp and corn on the cob and took it back to the boat

for dinner. The grandchildren checked the boat out and then fed the ducks off the cockpit.



**Andrew, Nathan, Chloe, Patti, Kiki and Captain Ron - Maine Street Seafood Market – Washington, DC**

After all the walking, we are pretty tired so it looks like an early bedtime tonight.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty two (June 22, 2014)**

Another day in port today so not a lot of nautical news today. As usual, Kiki got her morning walk and Captain Ron got his morning coffee. After all the walking we did yesterday we didn't feel like doing a lot of walking but we did walk over to the wharf and get lunch which we brought back to the boat. Then Captain Ron's daughter and her husband dropped by for a visit so we walked over to the wharf again so they could get lunch.



**Wally, Robyn, Kiki and Patti - Washington, DC**

We had a nice visit and after they left for home we walked back to the wharf to get some dinner. There's not really a place to eat there so again we brought it back to the boat. For some reason we felt the need for ice cream so back to the wharf we walked.

After that it was showers and then to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty three (June 23, 2014)**

Apparently a lot of people had to get out of Washington today because about daybreak the planes started taking off from National Airport just about continuously. We wanted to take the boat up the Potomac River past the monuments to Georgetown so we got everything ready to go. We had to wait until 9:00 AM to settle our bill but shortly after that we got underway.

The lowest bridge on that part of the river has an eighteen foot clearance so we slipped under it and several more. We got a good view of the monuments and went as far as Georgetown.



**Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial - Washington, DC**

It's possible to tie up to the seawall in Georgetown and visit the shops but we didn't see a good reason to so we turned around and headed back down the river. As we passed the airport, airplanes were still taking off and landing one after the other. At one point they were flying directly over us.

As was the case on the way north, we passed by George Washington's home, Mount Vernon.



**Mount Vernon - VA**

We hope to stop in Colonial Beach, VA on our way back down the Potomac so we found a nice anchorage about halfway between DC and Colonial Beach. We decided not to inflate the dinghy to go



to the beach because it was a little later than usual so we're just enjoying the scenery.

Dinner was leftovers from last night heated in the microwave. Fried fish, collard greens and mac and cheese.

We enjoyed a nice sunset across the river and it will soon be time for bed.



Sunset on the Potomac River – Wades Bay, MD

#### **Captain's Log, day fifty four (June 24, 2014)**

We had a great night's sleep last night in Wades Bay. It's really just a cove off the river on the Maryland side but close to shore it's protected by cliffs and trees. A boater we met at the Capital Yacht Club recommended it.

As we approached the route 301 bridge, we again got a call from the Dahlgren range boat. Last week's detour was inconvenient, this time it was pretty annoying. Our destination was Colonial Beach on the Virginia side of the river but the range boat instructed us to go back to the Maryland side, proceed several miles south of Colonial Beach, cross the river and head back north on the Virginia side. This would have been several miles out of our way and at seven knots, a couple hours or more.

As we were more or less across from Colonial Beach, the range boat called and cleared us to cross the river at our "best speed" so it ended up being only a couple miles out of the way.

We had selected the marina on Monroe Bay closest to the center of Colonial Beach and called the dockmaster earlier that morning. He said he would be at the dentist but we should dock the boat and make ourselves at home.

We found a convenient slip, docked, tied up, connected the electric cord and walked to the beach on the other side of the peninsula. As soon as Kiki saw the water she ran in and began swimming, then she came out and started digging in the sand. We were near a family with small children and Kiki entertained them with her playing.



Safe in the slip at Bayside Marina - Colonial Beach, VA



**Kiki and her new friends - Colonial Beach, VA**

We came back to the marina and settled up with the dockmaster (he is also the owner). Since we had not taken showers the night before, we got ourselves cleaned up, dressed in our best cruising clothes and walked to the Thai/French restaurant at the marina. We had a great dinner and surprisingly, it was not expensive. We did each eat our whole dinners though. No leftovers for tomorrow.

Back on the boat, we planned the routes for the next few days and then went to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty five (June 25, 2014)**

We had a choice of two plans for today. Spend the night and fuel up at a marina thirty miles or so down the river or fuel up at the one marina in Colonial Beach that has diesel and spend the night anchored somewhere down the river. Since the marina didn't offer anything special, we decided to fuel up in Colonial Beach and head out. The problem was, the marina wasn't supposed to open until 9:00 AM. When we called to see if they were open, the phone greeting said they actually opened at 10:00 AM. It seems that if you have the only fuel in town you can set your own hours.

We happened to meet another boater on the dock and he suggested a good fuel stop that would be on our way south so we called to make sure they had fuel and then cast off our lines and headed out onto the river.

We expected to hear from the range boat again and have another detour but they must have shot everything they had to shoot earlier in the week and there were no restrictions.

As we neared the marina where we were to get fuel, the wind and waves picked up and Kiki and Patti had to go below leaving Captain Ron to sway back and forth at the helm.

We pulled into the marina and took on fifty six gallons of diesel. As we were paying for the fuel we noticed – Ice Cream! So, we bought a couple cups and a bag of ice and headed back down the river.

We rounded the marker and headed up the Yeocomico River to an anchorage that seemed like it would be safe and smooth. It's not bad but nothing special. There's no good place to take the dinghy so we didn't bother inflating it. Besides, we have a long run scheduled for tomorrow.

We dined on roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and broccoli/ cauliflower mix. There is good eating on HIGH COTTON!



#### Dinner on HIGH COTTON

As scan of the TV stations came up empty so we'll go to bed early and leave early tomorrow morning.

#### Captain's Log, day fifty six (June 26, 2014)

We decided to get an early start this morning to beat the wind and seas. It didn't work. Patti and Kiki went below before we even got out of the Yeocomico River. No matter, we pressed on and made good time even though it was uncomfortable.

Dozier's Regatta Point Yachting Center is a well-known marina in Deltaville, VA. These are the same people who publish the Dozier Waterway Guides. It's a large, modern and clean facility with new floating transient docks, a nice Captain's lounge, laundry and pool. Unfortunately, there is only one washer and one drier and there is a troop of Sea Scouts (Boy Scouts) here in a fleet of five boats and they are doing their laundry today. We'll get ours done later today or tomorrow.



#### Dozier's Regatta Point Yachting Center - Deltaville, VA

We borrowed one of the loaner cars and drove into town for lunch. Tomorrow we'll probably go to the market and restock the boat.

It was time for a thorough cleaning of the inside of the boat so Patti and Kiki took care of that while Captain Ron checked out the pool.

There are no restaurants within reasonable walking distance of the marina (no businesses at all for that matter) and the loaner cars are only available when the marina office is open but some of the restaurants will send a car to bring people to their restaurant and return them after dinner so that's what we did, had a local restaurant come and get us.

Once again, we got no TV stations so after dinner we walked Kiki the Sea Dog and turned in for a good night's sleep.

#### Captain's Log, day fifty seven (June 27, 2014)

We woke this morning to the sound of diesel engines starting. Apparently, our slip neighbor and the Sea Scouts decided today would be a good day to leave and daybreak would be the best time to do it. No big deal, it also meant we had the washer and drier to ourselves.

After the two loads of laundry were washed and dried, we got one of the loaner vehicles and went to the grocery store for supplies. We stopped at West Marine on the way back out of habit. We didn't need anything but Patti found a couple shirts that called out to her ("buy me").

We came back, put everything away and decided to spend some time in the pool. It's small but unlike yesterday, there were no Boy Scouts so it was just us and a couple other adults quietly floating and reading.

After the pool, we got the loaner car again, drove to town, stopped at West Maine for boat stuff and went to the pizza restaurant for a pizza to bring back to the boat.

We walked Kiki, sat in the rocking chairs on the marina porch and then went inside to watch a little TV in the captain's lounge.

Then it was showers and early to bed for an early departure tomorrow morning.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty eight (June 28, 2014)**

As Mr. Rogers used to say, "It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood", that neighborhood being Deltaville, VA. Out on the Chesapeake Bay, the forecast is for winds from the east at thirteen knots and two foot seas. Since we would be heading south, that would be a pretty uncomfortable ride so we decided to tough it out here in the swimming pool and sitting in the rocking chairs on the porch! We changed our reservation in Hampton, VA to tomorrow night and we'll enjoy better conditions on the bay tomorrow.



**Old folks rocking on the porch - Dozier's Regatta Point Yachting Center - Deltaville, VA**

Walking the dock today we came upon another boat named "HIGH COTTON". What are the odds of that? It's a sailboat, though, out of Connecticut.

There's a farmer's market in town every Saturday morning so we got the loaner car and checked it out. Then we went to West Marine again to get a replacement washdown hose (on sale), the grocery store again, and stopped at the gas station to get more gas for Q-Tip's outboard motor.

We had leftover pizza for lunch but for dinner we're having a home (boat) cooked meal. Kielbasa with sautéed onions, green peppers and fried apples. Yummy!

Friends of ours from Maryland were scheduled to perform on the Midwest Country TV show on RFD TV and it was available on the TV in the captain's lounge so we went up early and turned on the channel. A lady walked in, looked at the banjo players on the screen and turned around and left without a word. We had the lounge and TV to ourselves.

After their portion of the show we turned off the TV and headed for the boat and bed. We will leave early tomorrow for Hampton, VA.

### **Captain's Log, day fifty nine (June 29, 2014)**

We got underway about 6:15 AM. It was smooth going until we hit the Chesapeake Bay. Whoever wrote the weather forecast of 6 knot winds and one foot seas missed it by a mile. We can't measure the wind easily but we know a foot when we see one and this was far more than one foot seas. Patti and Kiki had to go below and it wasn't too long before Captain Ron joined them.

If the wind and waves weren't enough, as we began to head towards Hampton, the US Coast Guard decided we were suspicious enough looking that we needed to be boarded for a "safety inspection". They managed to bring their rigid inflatable boat alongside HIGH COTTON and several officers jumped on board as we were underway. They checked out photo IDs, our documentation, and our life jackets (Why is it you need a photo ID to drive a boat but not to vote?). Then for some reason they wanted to check the forward bilge and the head. They asked if we had weapons on board (Shouldn't that have been their first question?), wrote a report, gave us a copy and jumped back onto their boat. They were polite and professional, it's just a bit unnerving to have a bunch of strangers with guns board your boat and ask a bunch of questions while you're trying to stay in the channel and avoid other boats.

We found the marina (it's really just slips along the river with public access and run by the city), called for docking instructions and backed into our slip. It was time for another oil change so Captain Ron tended to that while Patti and Kiki checked us into the marina.



[Hampton Public Piers - Hampton, VA](#)

We walked a bit, then took Kiki back to the boat and walked to the restaurant district for a late lunch. As we were walking along the dock there was a boy, perhaps twelve years old with two crab nets trying to scrape crabs off the pilings. When we came back from lunch, our crab net was gone from the back of the boat. He probably has three crab nets now. Nothing else seemed to be missing though.

We rested a bit, then went out for another walk, this time with Kiki. There was a festival going on in the park but we had already eaten and didn't bring any money so we just walked through and came back to the boat.

After our restaurant lunch we weren't very hungry so we ate tomatoes and cucumbers from the farmer's market in Deltaville. We're back in TV range now so we'll watch a bit of TV and go to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day sixty (June 30, 2014)**

We had a little excitement on the dock last night. Early in the evening a boat backed into the slip next to ours. The boat had a bent propeller and there was a diver waiting to see if it could be fixed. It turned out it couldn't and the boat's owner didn't have a spare so he would have to make it

back to Washington, DC (nearly one hundred miles) on one engine. The boater said he thought he could make it in one day if he started early.

Apparently, these people had some relationship with a group in a boat at the other end of the dock but as it was getting dark a fight started between two of the females. A real fight, not just an argument. Someone called the police and things were settled and we got to bed.

At first light, a little before 5:00 AM, the guy next to us started his engine for his trip to DC. That was expected, but for some reason he chose to idle his engine in the slip for twenty minutes or so before heading out.

Once he was gone we fell back asleep and slept to about 8:00 AM. We walked Kiki, hit the on-shore heads, grabbed a cup of coffee from the hotel lobby, topped off the water tanks and set off downriver for Portsmouth.

It was only about a twelve nautical mile trip but the river was full of traffic on this Monday morning. Navy and commercial ships were leaving their berths and heading out to sea, tug boats were pulling and pushing barges and there was a group of tugboats towing sections of a tunnel being constructed in Norfolk. The radio chatter never stopped and we had to be on our toes.



US Navy ship heading out to sea – Norfolk, VA



A section of road tunnel made in Baltimore and towed to Norfolk, VA

There are two free docks in Portsmouth, the North Landing and the High Street Landing. They aren't really "docks", they are areas cut into the shore with bulkheads on three sides. Among other uses, they are stops for the ferry boat that crosses the river to Norfolk. We picked the High Street Landing because it's in the historic and restaurant district.



### High Street Landing - Portsmouth, VA

We docked and secured HIGH COTTON and walked around the historic district, checking out the shops and restaurants. There's a well-known German Restaurant on High Street so we stopped there for dinner. We have leftovers for another meal.

There are reports of a tropical storm brewing off the Florida coast and it may head north as we are heading south so we're making plans to deal with it. Tomorrow we'll fuel up just a half mile or so from here and head for the Dismal Swamp Canal and Elizabeth City to get ready to cross the Albemarle Sound again.

### Captain's Log, day sixty one (July 1, 2014)

Well, the free dock at High Street Landing was worth exactly what we paid for it. Twenty four hour noise from the shipyard across the river wakes and horn signals from boats and ships on the river and the locals partying on the river walk until late at night. A marina slip would have been a better choice.

Our plan was to top off our fuel tanks at the marina near the landing and then head for the Dismal Swamp canal and catch the 11:00 AM locking. According to the Internet information we had, the marina opened at 7:00 AM but when we called, the

recording said 8:00 AM. We figured we could wait at the fuel dock so we left and headed up river. Just ahead of us was a sailboat and it pulled into the fuel dock in front of us. No matter, there were two fuel pumps so we tied up next to the other one.

When nobody showed up at 8:00, we tried calling the marina but got the same recording. We tried the radio but nobody answered. Finally, the sailboater found a dockhand and began fueling his boat. Unfortunately, the pump we were tied near wasn't working so we had to wait for the sailboater to fill his tank and four extra five gallon fuel jugs. Then he had to walk the length of the marina, pay for his fuel and walk back before he moved and we could move forward to the working pump.

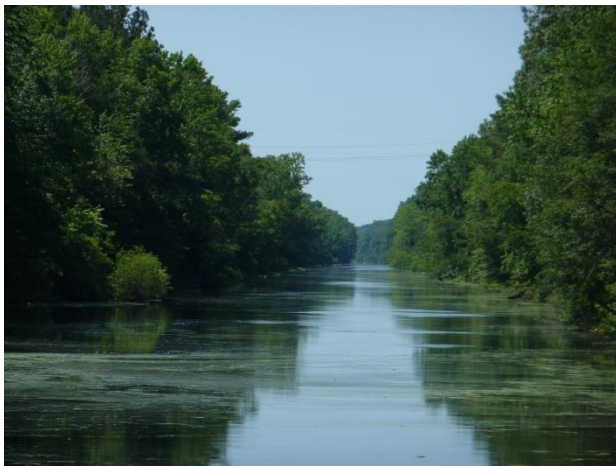
Once we finished fueling we walked to the office to pay but nobody was there. We had to flag down the dockhand and get him to come to the office before we could pay and leave. Altogether, it took us over an hour to fuel and get underway.

The Norfolk/Portsmouth area is a busy area with boats and ships coming and going, being repaired, etc. We had to wait for a tug pushing a barge out of a slip and turning down river. Then we had to wait for two railroad bridges to open. One had a short train coming; the other seemed to be closed for no reason.



Waiting for the train – Norfolk, VA

We arrived at the Deep Creek lock in time for the 11:00 AM locking and rose the eight feet to the Dismal Swamp Canal. Our transit of the canal was uneventful and again, we saw none of the wildlife that it is supposedly known for.



The Dismal Swamp Canal - VA and NC

We made the 3:30 locking at Great Bridge and continued on to Elizabeth City. The wind began to pick up and because of our experience with the free docks on the way north and the fact that were hot and sweaty, we decided to stay at a marina so we would have air-conditioning and take long refreshing showers.

We got into the slip just as the marina was closing but we had already paid and gotten the bathhouse

codes by phone. We walked Kiki and then took long showers. By that time the boat had cooled down so we ate dinner, watched some TV and went to bed. Looking at the weather forecast, the winds weren't going to die down anytime soon, they would be getting worse so we decided to leave at first light to get across Albemarle Sound.



The Pelican Marina - Elizabeth City, NC

### **Captain's Log, day sixty two (July 2, 2014)**

We pulled in our lines and left Elizabeth City just before sunrise. We set up the folding helm chair so we could drive from the lower helm without standing all day. Patti and Kiki remained below while Captain Ron guided the boat down the rest of the Pasquotank River and into Albemarle Sound. This lasted for a couple of hours and then Captain Ron had to go below as well. Not only were we trying to keep on course, we had to dodge crab pots.





The sun also rises - Elizabeth City, NC

Our original plan was to anchor in the headwaters of the Alligator River and continue to Belhaven tomorrow but with a storm coming, we decided to continue on to Belhaven.

Unfortunately, when we called the marina we had selected, we were informed that they weren't taking any transient boats because of the pending tropical storm. We called another marina and a recording stated that the marina was closed because of the pending storm. We called River Forest Marina and they said they could tie us up at their boatyard on a protected creek.

We pulled into the marina and the owner drove us over in his truck to show us the boatyard. Then we came back and he hopped aboard HIGH COTTON to guide us through the shallow and unmarked creek to the canal behind the boatyard.

We used the marina's golf cart to go back to the marina for showers and then to town for dinner. Because it was getting dark, we got our dinners to go and returned to dine on HIGH COTTON.

We get just a few TV stations and only one with news but we are closely monitoring the storm. After a long day, it shouldn't take long to fall asleep tonight.

### Captain's Log, day sixty three (July 3, 2014)

After yesterday's long and rough ride, we were asleep in minutes and didn't wake until just before 9:00 AM when one of the marina staff knocked on the boat looking for the keys to the golf cart. We told her we had planned on taking it to the grocery store this morning and she offered us a loaner car instead. It's a good thing because the grocery store turned out to be two miles or more away and on a highway where we probably shouldn't be riding in a golf cart.

The coming storm is now "Hurricane Arthur" and seems to be getting stronger. We took Kiki for a walk and the marina/boatyard owner's wife invited us into her home to check the weather forecast. Still, it's just that, a forecast so we won't really know what's going to happen until it actually happens.

On the way back to the boat, Kiki decided to jump into the standing water in a drainage ditch after some small fish. This was some stinky water! We got her to go in the cleaner water at a ramp behind our boat but we still had to give her a bath when we got to the boat. Actually, she needed two baths to get rid of the smell.

About 5:00 PM, the owner and his staff came by and we tied HIGH COTTON up for the expected storm. We have four lines on the dock, two lines to hurricane ties (steel eyes embedded in concrete) and two heavy lines from the boat to a large tree on the other side of the canal. This should keep us in place and off the dock but we may have to adjust them during the night.



Tied up in the canal waiting for the storm



Tying to the tree kept us off the dock

### Captain's Log, day sixty four (July 4, 2014)

We're still where we were last night with no damage so the location and tie up was good. Kiki slept through the whole thing, the rest of us got up to check now and then but we didn't have to go out and adjust the lines. There was no damage to the boat; all we have is some twigs and leaves to sweep off the decks.

Today is Patti and Captain Ron's thirty second wedding anniversary so we swapped the cards we bought in Portsmouth.

Belhaven moved all its Independence Day activities back one day because of the hurricane so we'll miss the fireworks but that's OK because they upset Kiki. They do have some activities today so we took the golf cart to town and checked out the vendors and bought ice cream. Patti bought a couple bags of fried pork rinds. Kiki met two puppies at the ice cream stand and they all played a bit.



Transportation in Belhaven, NC



Kiki makes some doggie friends

We rode back to the marina, took showers and went to town for our anniversary dinner. Belhaven is a golf cart friendly town, they were everywhere.

There were big ones, little ones, fancy ones and plain ones.

For a relatively small town, there are a couple nice restaurants. We ate at one called “Spoon River Artworks and Market” which is neither an art store nor a market, it’s a nice restaurant.

After dinner we checked out the activities again. The streets were blocked to traffic and full of people visiting the vendor’s booths and watching and dancing to the band that was playing.



The band playing in the park - Belhaven, NC

Since the local fireworks had been postponed until Saturday night, we rode the golf cart back to the boat and watched the National Mall celebration on TV.

### Captain’s Log, day sixty five (July 5, 2014)

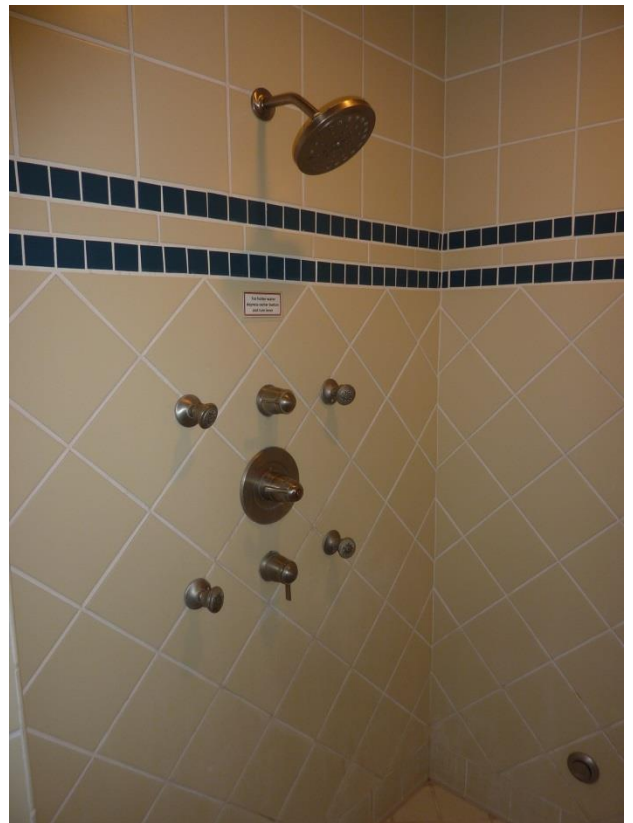
What a difference a day makes! We left the creek behind Belhaven and headed south on the ICW. Belhaven is a nice small town but the marina was several stars short of five.

It was a beautiful day on the water. We left the Neuse River and headed up Broad Creek to the River Dunes Marina. For \$1.50 per foot we have a country club setting with a pool, two hot tubs,

fitness center, laundry and steam showers. It’s a protected location with sturdy floating docks. There’s a clubhouse and an upscale restaurant (no T shirts and no jeans). There’s nothing else nearby but they do have a loaner car.



River Dunes Marina - Oriental, NC



Steam Shower - River Dunes Marina

We did a load of laundry, swam in the pool, and met some nice people. Kiki made some human and dog friends. Most of the boats here seem to be owned by people who live within an hour or so of the marina and come here for the weekend but they do have room for transients. It's all part of a development that's supposed to end up with a few hundred homes in several years.



**HIGH COTTON in the slip at River Dunes Marina - Oriental, NC**

Dinner was leftovers from one of the restaurants in Belhaven with the addition of some frozen (yes we cooked them) green peas. After that we each took a steam shower, watched one of our favorite TV shows on satellite TV in the fitness center and went to bed. Life is tough here but we decided to stay another day and give the pool a workout.

### **Captain's Log, day sixty six (July 6, 2014)**

There was no need to get up early today so we didn't but we did have a reservation for the loaner car at 11:00 so we walked Kiki, looked at the other boats and talked to some of the boat owners. Although it's pretty expensive to live here or even lease a slip, the people all seem down to earth and unpretentious. They talked about their boats and places they have visited and about the development and club.

We got the keys to the car and drove into Oriental, NC, the nearest town. This is the same town we walked around on our way north. We found the Walmart that we had missed previously. It's actually a "Walmart Express" with groceries, personal care and cleaning supplies as well as some boating and fishing gear. Apparently, you can order regular Walmart merchandise in the morning and it will be delivered to the store in the afternoon. We found what we needed and headed back to the marina. Other than the West Marine Express, there's not much in town.

Back at the marina, we ate lunch at the poolside snack bar and then changed into our swimsuits and lounged in the pool and hot tub.



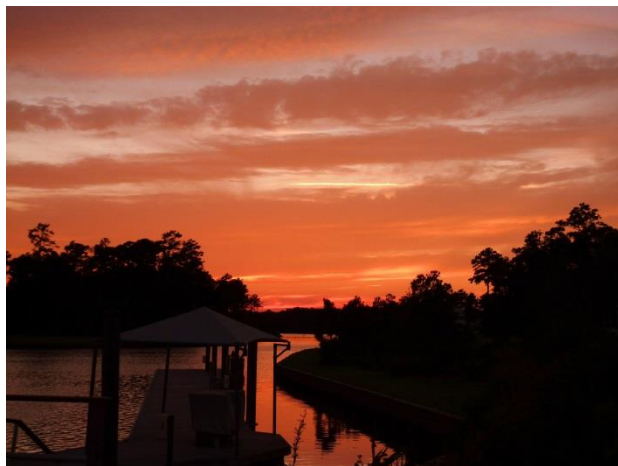
**Hard work but someone has to do it - River Dunes Marina**

After that we went back to the boat where Captain Ron discovered that the engine drive belts needed to be replaced. That would be a task for tomorrow morning. We relaxed a bit and then changed into our best clothes for dinner at the restaurant. We clean up pretty well when we have to.

We took our steam showers and then watched another country music show on the TV in the

fitness center. It was still set to the same channel so it doesn't get much use.

Tomorrow we change the belts, top off the water and head south again. It's a shame to leave this place but we can't stay here forever.



Sunset at River Dunes Marina

### **Captain's Log, day sixty seven (July 7, 2014)**

Well, the drive belts needed to be changed before we left so Patti went to the clubhouse to settle the bill and get some coffee (for Captain Ron) while Captain Ron set to work changing the belts. This wasn't too difficult and didn't take too long but they will have to be re-adjusted later. It's a good thing we had a spare set (actually, it was planned).

We topped off the water tanks, disconnected the power and dock lines and backed out of our slip. The destination for today is Shackleford Banks, near Morehead City, NC, about a five hour trip in HIGH COTTON.

Apparently we weren't the only people planning on going to Shackleford Banks by boat today. There were twenty or thirty other boats anchored or beached. Don't these people have jobs?

We inflated Q-Tip, hung the motor on and piled in to visit the beach. As usual, Kiki was the first one out of the boat and onto the beach. She found a horseshoe crab shell and barked at it until we pulled her away. We all relaxed in the water and cooled off. Kiki did her usual digging and swimming.



The beach at Shackleford Banks

We took Q-Tip back to HIGH COTTON where all three of us needed a thorough rinse before we got inside the boat.

It was time for a rest so we all napped. As we were eating dinner, three of the wild horses appeared on the island.

There are a couple houseboats anchored off the beach and a couple tents set up on the beach so it looks like we won't be alone tonight. Tomorrow we'll head for a slip at Morehead City. It's supposed to be very hot and very windy.

### **Captain's Log, day sixty eight (July 8, 2014)**

We rocked and rolled a bit last night. Kiki slept through it but the humans had a hard time sleeping. In the morning it seemed like the wind died down (actually it changed direction so the island was blocking it) so we decided to go back to

the beach to hunt for shells and let Kiki play and swim some more. We saw the wild horses again but they were gone by the time we landed.



**Wild horses on Shackleford Banks – Morehead City, NC**

Apparently, the sandbars behind Shackleford Banks have shifted since our chart was created and we had a hard time getting in yesterday so we talked to a local boater who told us the best way to get back to the Beaufort Inlet. We headed back to HIGH COTTON, put Q-Tip on the bow and called a marina in Morehead City and reserved a slip.

Once we got out from behind the protection of Shackleford Banks, the wind and seas hit us pretty hard. Like everyone else, we were rocking and rolling. As we neared the marina, we found ourselves on the wrong side of a pair of tugs pushing and pulling several hundred feet of floating pipes so we had to circle back to get on the other side of them.

Portside Marina is pretty decent at \$1.50 per foot with free electric and free laundry, but it's open to the sound so we're still rocking and rolling a bit. At least we're secure and have our air conditioning.



**Portside Marina - Morehead City, NC**

We walked to town for a pizza and did two loads of laundry and cleaned the inside of the boat once we returned. We also replaced the stolen crab net at the hardware/marine store. We're not planning on crabbing until we get home but it's a good tool to have on the boat to fish things out of the water.

The wind and waves really picked up late in the day. It's a good thing we are on the downwind side of the floating dock as the wind is keeping us from banging the dock. We did decide to put out extra dock lines just for security.

As it was getting dark, TowBoatUS brought in a disabled sailboat and tied it on the other side of the dock. It seems like it is helping to block the wind and seas. Another boat, a large sportfish came in overnight and tied up at the fuel dock.

It's supposed to be very windy for the next couple of days so it looks like we will be here for a while.

### **Captain's Log, day sixty nine (July 9, 2014)**

The winds seemed to die down early in the morning so we were able to sleep in. We got up a little after 8:00 AM to take Kiki for a walk and retrieve our clothes from the clothes drier. We met the man on the sailboat that was towed in last

night. He is on his way from New England to Georgetown, SC. His sails got damaged in the hurricane and his transmission failed so he's stuck until he can get it repaired. He has a cat on board who just had kittens, a young puppy and a parrot.

We walked along the waterfront and checked out the little shops and the charter boats. We got lunch and took it back to the boat to eat. While we were waiting for our lunch, Kiki discovered a cat near the restaurant and wanted to investigate. Not knowing what the cat might do, we decided that wasn't a good idea so we kept her on a short leash.

Later in the day the wind and waves picked up again and the boat was rocking. Everyone at this marina has been very nice but it's time to get out of here tomorrow if at all possible. The weather forecast shows a little less wind but the chance of thunderstorms. We can deal with that.

### **Captain's Log, day seventy (July 10, 2014)**

We rocked and rolled again last night. As planned, we got up early enough to settle with the marina when they opened at 8:00 AM and got underway shortly after that. The trip to Swansboro, NC was only a little over three hours and the seas were not as bad as we had feared. It was mostly a straight shot through Bogue Sound. The trick is to stay in the dredged channel because the sound is only a couple feet deep outside the channel.

We had called Casper's Marina to reserve a slip this morning. Just as we were about to enter the marina, the sky opened up and we were in the midst of a thunderstorm. We decided to just wait outside the marina for the storm to let up and just like that, it did. It was no more than five minutes.

Two dockhands tied us up on the inside of the face dock and we checked in at the office. After the

water stopped draining from the flybridge we took on sixty plus gallons of diesel fuel and got the cable TV hooked up and working.



[Casper's Marina - Swansboro, NC](#)

We walked into town and had lunch at one of the restaurants. After lunch we stopped in a few of the shops but decided to stay another night at the marina so we could check them all out. Swansboro is a nice little town with lots of shops and restaurants downtown and a shopping area with a grocery store and other stores within walking distance of the waterfront.

We walked back to the boat and took a nap. We didn't intend to, we just fell asleep.

There's only one other boat in the marina other than the dry stack boats and we talked to one of the people from the boat. It seems they've been to some of the same places we have been and they are heading south to their home in Florida. We walked to the Dairy Queen for ice cream and to Piggly Wiggly for cash for tips, etc. and then back to the marina for showers and a good night's sleep.



Yes, ice cream again

### **Captain's Log, day seventy one (July 11, 2014)**

We had a quiet night's sleep last night but a little after daybreak, Kiki thought we should get up and take her for a walk. Later, after coffee and cupcakes (our "boat breakfast"), we took her to the little sandy beach at the marina. As usual, she dug in the sand and swam. She found a hermit crab in a shell and carried it around on the beach for a while. Of course she needed a shower before she was allowed back inside the boat.

We walked back to town for lunch and more shopping. Back at the marina, another trawler came in but for some reason, it didn't stay. We spent some time planning the rest of our trip and then walked to one of the parks and talked to some of the local folks.

Dinner on HIGH COTTON was leftovers from one of the restaurants in Morehead City. They were just as good as they were in the restaurant.

After dinner we showered and talked to the other boat couple some more. Even with cable TV there wasn't anything worth watching so we went to bed.

### **Captain's Log, day seventy two (July 12, 2014)**

There ought to be a law requiring mandatory boater education and licensing!!! More on that later.

We had a short day planned heading for an anchorage but the other two trawlers decided to move out early and with all the noise, we were up about 7:00 AM. That was fine; we had a good, quiet night's sleep. Kiki wanted to sleep in a little longer but once we got up and dressed, she was ready to go.

We talked a bit to the couple from the first trawler and then saw them off. We filled our water tanks, bought two bags of ice and cast off our lines heading south. Being Saturday and nice out, there were a lot of boats on the water, mostly smaller boats, but a couple of trawlers and sailboats.



A bald eagle on the ICW - NC

We made it right on time for the first bridge opening but had to wait about twenty minutes for another. This part of the ICW is mostly a narrow dredged channel in wider bodies of water. We



could see birds wading just a few feet from our boat.

It was just a little past 1:00 PM when we reached the turnoff for our planned anchorage so we decided to press on and head for our next day's destination, Carolina Beach State Park on the Cape Fear River.

As we neared Wrightsville Beach, the boat traffic really picked up. Since we were the slowest boat by far, other boats were passing us on both sides and of course coming at us as well. It was one boat wake after another and Kiki had to bark at every boat that went by.

Now for the mandatory boater education and licensing: As we mentioned above, we were in a narrow channel, about ten feet deep and it was just a couple feet deep outside of the channel. It was dead low tide so with our draft we had to stay inside the channel.

A boat came toward us towing two teenage girls on a tube. It seemed to be heading straight for us so we sounded the danger signal (five horn blasts) and brought the throttle back to idle. At the last minute the boat veered off out of our path, but of course the tube with the girls didn't. There was a lot of screaming but the tube missed our stern by inches. Apparently the girls jumped off because looking back, they were in the water. A Coast Guard Auxiliary boat was behind us and it stopped to either check on the girls or talk to the operator, we don't know which.

Captain Ron's editorial comment: *If you want to kill yourself by stupid boating, that's fine with me but don't risk the lives of your family members or friends and don't involve other innocent boaters!*

After making sure there were no injuries, we throttled back up to our breathtaking eight knots (the current was with us) and continued on

through Wrightsville Beach and past Carolina Beach. We saw a lot of "party beaches" with dozens of boats beached and tents and umbrellas in the sand. It appears everyone who lives in this area owns a boat or has a friend who owns one.



Boat traffic on the ICW - Wrightsville Beach, NC

While we were on the ICW south of Wrightsville Beach we were buzzed by the BOATPIX helicopter. They fly around taking photographs of boats on the water and then offer them for sale to the owners. They should be good photos but probably expensive.

We continued on the ICW through Snows Cut and then made the turn into the Carolina Beach State Park marina. \$30 for the night. That's when we had our second encounter of the day with stupidity. Entering the marina, there were people fishing from the seawall with their lines across the channel. We sounded our horn and most of them pulled their lines in. One lady did not. We had to stop the boat and ask her to pull her line in out of the way. Captain Ron editorializes again: *It's not that we care about you losing your line; we just don't want it wrapped around our prop shaft.*



Carolina Beach State Park - NC

We had a boat cooked dinner of pulled pork, baked beans and stewed tomatoes with corn and okra. Actually, the pork was frozen and the beans and stewed tomatoes were from cans but it was good none the less.

After dinner we walked Kiki to the park office and got some ice cream. On sticks, not the real stuff. Then it was time for showers and bed.

### **Captain's Log, day seventy three (July 13, 2014)**

The showers weren't air conditioned but it was cooling down outside by the time we took them. We slept like logs in the quiet, air conditioned comfort of HIGH COTTON.

We had checked the tide and current tables for the Cape Fear River the day before and figured it would be best to leave later in the morning to get a favorable current and smooth ride. We cast off from the Carolina Beach State Park about 10:00 AM and had a smooth ride down the river once we sorted out the incoming and outgoing boats in Snows Cut. We had to dodge an Army Corps of Engineers ship heading north through the cut and a couple sailboats while staying in the deep water.

As it was yesterday, it was a beautiful warm and sunny day on the water and everyone who owns or could borrow or rent a boat was out on the water and going as fast as possible. There were wakes everywhere but at least there were no close calls. We did hear an argument on the radio between a sailboater and a Sea Tow operator over who had the right of way and what the regulations stated but we didn't see it and don't know who won.

Kiki was her usual self, barking at every boat that passed. The people in the passing boats thought this was pretty funny but after a while we didn't.

We have an invitation to stop in Myrtle Beach and visit a friend of Patti's who has a home and dock on the ICW so we split the distance and stopped for the night in Calabash Creek, one of the anchorages we used on the way north. The boat traffic has pretty much died down and there's one other boat sharing the anchorage with us so far. Tomorrow's run is only about three and a half hours so we'll get underway at our leisure.

### **Captain's Log, day seventy four (July 14, 2014)**

Calabash Creek is a decent anchorage and just a couple hundred yards off the ICW but there is some boat traffic and wakes to contend with. Several head boats leave Calabash and head offshore and of course they leave at daybreak so we were up early.

We had to wait at the Little River drawbridge for a few minutes while they moved a construction barge out of the way. As we were leaving the drawbridge, a sailboater asked if he could pass us and then commented "I guess you'll be passing us in a little while." We asked how fast he would be cruising and it was slower than our cruise speed so we politely told him we would keep the lead. As

predicted, he fell further and further behind us as we headed towards Myrtle Beach.

Being Monday, the jet skis weren't as bad as on the weekend but we still had a few to contend with. As we mentioned, we had an invitation to visit Patti's friend Curtis and her husband Bob so we pulled into their dock just a half mile or so north of the Socastee Swing Bridge just after noon.



**Docked at Curtis and Bob's private dock - Myrtle Beach, SC**

We had great conversations; a home cooked meal, hot showers, and slept in a bed off the boat for the first time in nearly two and a half months. They have two dogs and Kiki had a great time trying to get them to play with her. She also got to run around their living room.

Since their home is directly on the ICW, we sat on their deck and watched the boats go by. Once it got dark, we tucked ourselves into the non-rocking bed for a good night's sleep.

### **Captain's Log, day seventy five (July 15, 2014)**

The dogs woke up about 6:00 AM and of course Kiki heard them so we all got up earlier than we had planned on. We had breakfast of coffee, bagels and cinnamon bread and finally left about

8:30 AM. The first order of business was to call the Socastee Swing Bridge and request an opening.

We went through with no delay and headed towards the Waccamaw River. This is a beautiful and scenic river and we enjoy it every time we pass through.

As we neared the route 17 bridge and Winyah Bay, the wind and seas began to pick up but nothing like we experienced on the Albemarle Sound earlier in our trip. We could see dark clouds to the west and a little lightning but all we got were a few raindrops.

Not too long after we made the turn out of Winyah Bay into the Estherville Minim Canal we noticed a trawler behind us in the distance that was slowly catching up to us. A little bit south of McClellanville, it passed us and a voice came on the radio "Hey Ron, it's Captain Tom from RiversEdge." It seems he was delivering a boat from North Carolina to Patriot's Point.

We happened to hit this portion of the ICW at dead low tide and we had a hard time staying in at least five feet of water. The alarm went off several times but we managed to stay off the bottom.

We wanted to try a new anchorage, Awendaw Creek and the timing was right so we pulled off the ICW and set our anchor. We were alone except for a pontoon boat with people fishing. After a while, they left. There were lots of dolphins all around us. We turned on the TV and saw the predictions of heavy rain and thunderstorms in the area. We had put out extra anchor rode in case of strong wind or heavy seas but all we had was rain and not that much or that long.

We took showers on the back of the boat and went to bed.

### Captain's Log, day seventy six (July 16, 2014)

We wanted to time our arrival at RiversEdge Marina so we could dock at or near slack current so we got underway a little after 7:00 AM. Again, it was low tide and our depth alarm sounded a couple times on the ICW but we didn't hit the bottom.

It was just a bit chilly at first but it warmed up to a comfortable temperature after the first hour or so. We had partly cloudy skies most of the way. We saw several dolphins along the way and one small alligator. Kiki likes to watch the dolphins playing in the water.



Getting closer to home - The Ben Sawyer Swing Bridge

As we entered Charleston Harbor, the seas got rough enough that Patti and Kiki decided to go below to the saloon. After a bit, Captain Ron decided to join them.

As we neared the City Marina, the wind and seas calmed down and eventually everyone moved back to the flybridge. It was nearly high tide at the Ashley River Bridges so we put down the antenna and bimini tops and cruised on through.

Because of the tannin stains on the bow of HIGH COTTON and the fact that the port side seldom gets washed well or waxed, we decided to pull bow first into the slip so we could take care of these issues. We were docked by 1:00 PM.



Home in sight - RiversEdge Marina, North Charleston, SC

We had a friend coming to pick us up so we gathered all the dirty clothes, towels and bed sheets as well as the leftover food, and called her to come get us.

It was certainly a fun trip and something we'll remember for a long time, but it was also good to walk in the door of our own home after seventy six days.



Two and a half months' worth of mail

## Epilogue

Duration	76 days
Distance	1820 nautical miles (2,094 SM)
Time underway	259.5 hours
Fuel used (diesel)	495.3 gallons
Fuel consumption	1.9 gallons per hour
Fuel mileage	3.7 nautical mpg (4.2 St mpg)
Fuel cost	\$1,914.84
Nights anchored	20
Nights docked	56 (5 free docks)
Marina cost	\$2,468.40

We've been asked if we would do a trip like this again. The answer is a definite "yes". We had a great time, saw lots of interesting sights and wildlife, including manatees, alligators, dolphins, turtles and many birds, and met some nice and interesting people along the way. Many of these people cruise for months at a time. Some live on their boats and have no land based residence.

Of course we're sitting home now wishing we had stopped in many places that we passed by. It would take months, perhaps years to visit every place worth visiting along the route we took.

Other than stripping the gears on the windlass and having to replace it and replacing the potable water system accumulator tank which failed, we had no boat problems. We did have to change the engine oil twice during our trip but that was expected and we were prepared for this task.

Having a portable wireless hotspot and a laptop PC on board allowed us to pay our bills online and keep in touch with friends and family. It also allowed us to find anchorages and marinas and read reviews of these places by other cruisers.

Two of the online resources we used were <https://activecaptain.com> and <http://cruisersnet.net>.

Other resources were:

Anchorage Along the Intracoastal Waterway (Skipper Bob Publications)  
Marinas Along the Intracoastal Waterway (Skipper Bob Publications)  
Dozier's Waterway Guide Atlantic ICW  
Dozier's Waterway Guide Chesapeake Bay  
The Great Book of Anchorages Norfolk to FL  
The Great Book of Anchorages Chesapeake Bay  
Guide to Cruising the Chesapeake Bay (Chesapeake Bay Magazine)

Our neighbor kept our lawn mowed, brought in the mail and packages, and kept an eye on the house for us.

For anyone else considering an extended boat cruise, we have to say "Go for it!" For us, it's time to start planning the next trip.