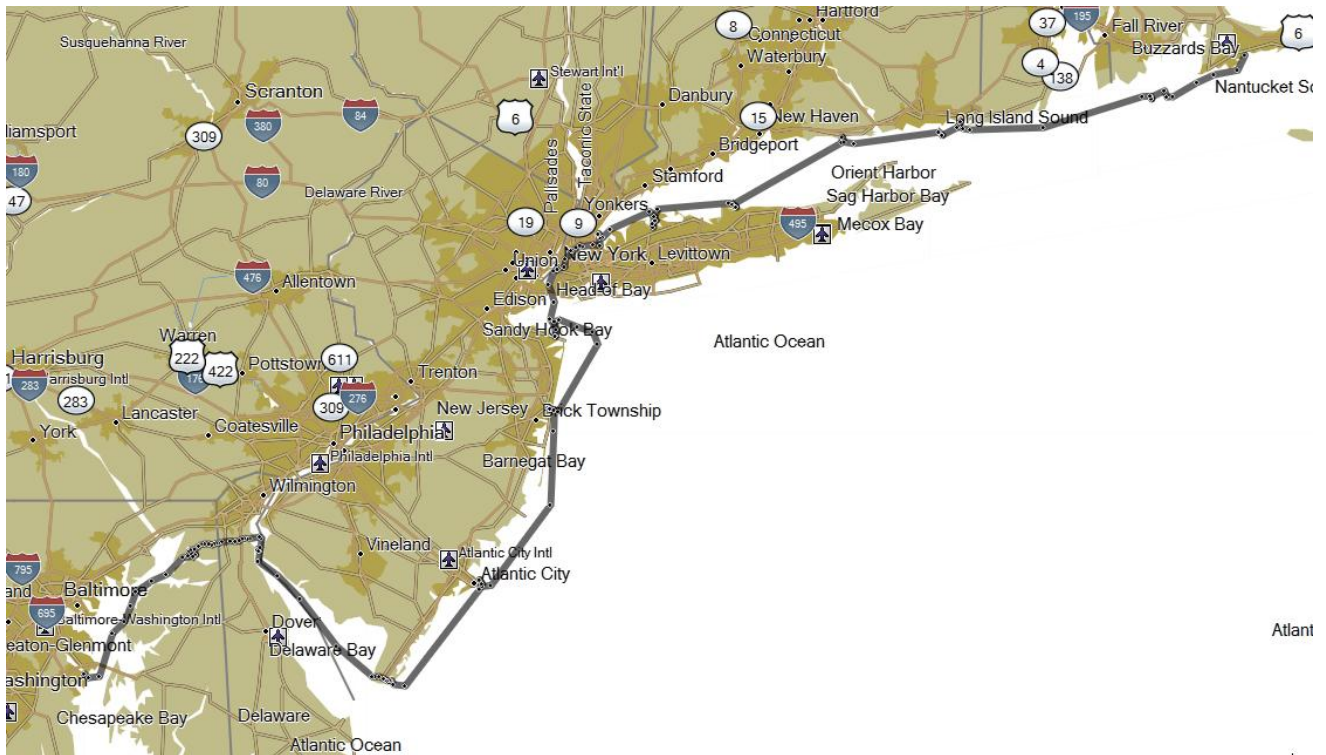


Skip-Jack's Trip to Annapolis, MD

1. Sunday 9/16/2012, Cotuit, Ma to Cuttyhunk Island, Ma --29 NM Miles/33 Statute Miles
2. Monday 9/17/2012, Cuttyhunk Harbor to Stonington, Ct --49 NM/56 Statute Miles
3. Tuesday 9/18/2012, Stonington, Ct to Fishers Island, NY --6 NM/7 Statute Miles
4. Wednesday 9/19/2012, Fishers Island, NY to Clinton Harbor, Ct --25 NM/29 Statute Miles
5. Thursday 9/20/2012, Clinton Harbor, Ct to Port Jefferson Harbor, Long Island, NY --32.2 NM/37 Statute Miles
6. Friday 9/21/2012, Port Jefferson, NY to Oyster Harbor, NY --21 NM/24 Statute Miles
7. Saturday 9/22/2012, Oyster Harbor, NY to City Island NY-- 23 NM/26 Statute Miles
8. Sunday 9/23/2012, City Island, NY to Atlantic Highlands, NJ (Sandy Hook) --36 NM/41 Statute Miles
9. Monday 9/24/2012, Atlantic Highlands, NJ to Manasquan inlet, NJ --39 NM/45 Statute Miles
10. Tuesday 9/25/2012, Manasquan inlet, NJ to Atlantic City, NJ 2 nights -- 55 NM/63 Statute Miles
11. Friday 9/28/2012, Atlantic City, NJ to Cape May, NJ 2 nights --38 NM/44 Statute Miles
12. Sunday 9/30/2012, Cape May, NJ to Reedy Island, MD --48 NM/55 Statute Miles
13. Monday 10/1/2012, Reedy Island, MD to Bohemia Bay, MD --26 NM/30 Statute Miles
14. Tuesday 10/2/2012, Bohemia Bay, MD to Annapolis, MD -- 46 NM/53 Statute Miles

Total Nautical Miles 473

Total Statute Miles 544



Sunday 9/16: Cotuit, Ma to Cuttyhunk Island, Ma -- 29 NM

We left Cotuit with light fair winds and favorable current for the afternoon as we headed west on Nantucket and Vineyard Sounds arriving in Cuttyhunk harbor easily by 1600. There was room to anchor in the inner harbor; so we settled in, had a beer, and got ready for supper.

Monday 9/17: Cuttyhunk to Stonington, Ct – 49 NM

We were underway early with a light Northwesterly breeze. Our route kept us well offshore to avoid the Rhode Island Sound head currents. Off Point Judith, the current was running 1 to 2 knots against us and wind too light to make good headway; so we resorted to the “Iron Sail”. As we approached Watch Hill the head current was starting to ease; and we entered Fisher’s Island Sound with fast-fading daylight. We had been in Stonington only once before; so navigating with the GPS and charts was challenging. That is what a depth sounder is for! Inside the jetty at 2030, we grabbed the first open mooring we found, made dinner, and hit the bunks.

Tuesday 9/18: Stonington to Fishers Island, NY – 6 NM

The weather forecast was poor with a front headed our way with strong winds and rain. With a favorable wind direction but grey sky, we decided to make a short run to Fishers Island before the front arrived. The prospect of a smaller harbor and short run was appealing. We would get a few miles behind us and see a “new harbor”. Setting out around 0900, with a north wind on our stern, we blew into Fishers Island in a couple of hours. The harbor was empty with plenty of available moorings. As it turned out, the front didn’t hit until that evening; but we were safe, comfortable, and secure for lunch and overnight. As we prepared dinner, I noticed there was something amiss with the refrigeration. The holding plate was showing areas with no frost. I had noticed there were issues before we left and had added 3 ounces of 134A refrigerant. It seemed to be working O.K. on departure; but I’m grateful that the cooler was built with a drain, so we would be able to revert back to Ice, inconvenient but acceptable, for the rest of the trip.



Wednesday 9/19: Fishers Island to Clinton Harbor, CT – 25 NM

Wednesday morning brought in a strong 20 to 25 knot southwesterly. The rain had passed, so we decided to set out early and catch a favorable current. For us early is 0800 -- after coffee. I was hoping to make it to the Thimble Islands but settled on Clinton harbor. Clinton offered a marina where we could take on Ice for the cooler. The wind was stiff on the bow as we headed out of the harbor and cleared the tip of Fishers Island where we were able to bear off enough to set sail. A fair Long Island Sound current allowed us to make good progress even close hauled under jib alone. By noon, the wind

had dropped off enough to set the main. Things were going fine. We sailed, listened to the radio, and had a comfortable lunch under way. As we approached Clinton Harbor, the current changed easterly running over two knots. It seemed to take forever to reach the river entrance to Clinton, but we were inside minutes before 1700. We pulled up to the dock, topped off the fuel tank, bought two blocks of ice; and the Marina closed for the evening. We normally don't elect to tie up to slips, but they were very reasonable, and it gave us a chance to have welcome hot showers. We had dinner and a few glasses of wine before turning in to our books and a good, comfortable nights rest.

Thursday 9/20: Clinton Harbor to Port Jefferson Harbor, NY – 32.2 NM

Before getting underway, I took advantage of being at a slip and took a mile walk into town for supplies. Back on SKIP-JACK, there was a nice pot of coffee waiting. The wind was breezy from the south east. We had a following sea, so we set out with the jib alone and ran down wind all day. During the afternoon, the seas built to about 3 feet, so keeping a steady course was a challenge. With the tide in our favor and fair wind at our back, we were able to make 7+ knots and Port Jefferson by 1700. Port Jefferson is large and well protected, but deep. We anchored in 22 feet of water and settled in with three other boats close by. Further down the harbor was the ferry dock where the large Bridgeport-Port Jefferson car ferries arrive and depart every hour.

Fortunately, they go slow enough in the harbor and were far enough away so as not to leave a wake.

Around 0100 we heard a large engine. When I looked out the port, I was surprised to see a large tug tying up to a mooring a couple hundred feet away.



Friday 9/21: Port Jefferson to Oyster Bay, NY -- 21 NM

We woke to a bright, clear, calm day; made coffee and took our time making ready to head out. With our second coffee in hand, we set out under power for

about 3 miles before the breeze picked up enough to set sail. With a southerly wind and fair current, we were able to make good speed under sail. We were in the lee of the land -- slight seas, and comfortable sailing. According to the charts and the Cruising Guide there is a refuge called the Sand Hole on Lloyds Neck. It is small and requires local knowledge, but it looked easy enough to give it a shot. There was tidal current into Sand Hole, so we went very slow watching the depth carefully. I could see a few boats moored inside, but they were power boats. All of a sudden the bottom came up and we were hard aground. Then I noticed an old weathered sign on shore stating "This channel is not Navigable". We struggled for about 10 minutes, but were able to back off and head for Oyster Bay. Oyster Bay is a large harbor with deep water and mostly private moorings. Off to the south side, there is a shallow area which looked good. We headed there; and set anchor in 12 feet of calm, still water. We had our afternoon beer, made dinner and enjoyed a very pretty sunset before heading hitting the sack.

Saturday 9/22: Oyster Harbor to City Island, NY -- 23 NM

The current was in our favor starting at 1100, so we took our time and had breakfast before setting out. As we approached New York City, the barge traffic increased dramatically. Approaching City Island, where the Sound narrows, we looked astern to see a large tug and barge bearing down on us. We quickly exited the channel and let it pass.

The last heading for City Island brought us very close to the wind. The current was turning foul, skies were grey, seas were choppy, and commercial vessel traffic was requiring constant attention. We elected to set the "Iron sail" for the last few miles. As we entered the mooring field off City Island, I noticed boats washed on shore. Apparently, a strong wind had broken a dozen or so boats free of their moorings. I think this was the same system that we avoided by hunkering down at Fishers Island a few days earlier.

Harlem Yacht Club had moorings available at a reasonable cost with launch service included and use of the yacht club facilities. There was a grocery store a couple of blocks away so we took the opportunity to restock supplies. We added another 10 lbs of Ice added to the cooler and settled in for a good dinner then our books.

City Island is the place where I was first exposed to sailing while in high school. One of my class mates lived on City Island, had a 110, and invited me and another classmate for a day sail. I was too young to drive, but I had a bicycle. If my mother had known that I rode my bike 30 miles into New York City, I'm sure I would have been grounded forever. She never did find out, and we went for three or four sails that summer. Once I felt the acceleration after a tack or silently blasting along with water splashing over the sides, I was hooked. It would be another fifteen years before I was able to get a boat of my own, a Pearson 26. That was three boats ago.

Sunday 9/23: City Island to Atlantic Highlands, NJ (Sandy Hook) – 36 NM

I read everything I could find about transiting New York Harbor, and I was careful to choose the departure time so that we had a favorable current down the East River. This meant we had to get up very early, and we under way at 0700. The Tide in Long Island Sound runs opposite to that of the East River, so we headed out against the current for the first few miles into a strong west wind and overcast skies. We weren't sure what to expect; but, as it turned out, we had little trouble navigating the East River. As we approached the United Nations building, there were Police and Coast Guard boats with lights flashing running up and down. When we were close, they advised us with a bull horn to stay all the way over on the left bank and away from the U.N. Building. They were quite



intimidating boats and crews with machine guns on the bows. Apparently the U.N. was holding an assembly with many heads of state speaking including President Obama.

We had an awesome view of the new Twin Towers under construction, and New York looked much better from the water than I remember it from looking from the streets. After passing the tip of Manhattan, we were able to set sail again passing the Statue of Liberty and sliding under the Verrazano Bridge accompanied by a plethora of ships coming into and leaving the harbor. They didn't have to go very fast to make formidable wakes, but there was plenty of room.



We made our way past Sandy Hook to Atlantic Highlands, NJ where we set anchor among 20 other boats at the south end of the mooring field. It was only 1500. I put the motor on the dinghy, and we made way for shore. After some football and a couple of Frosties, we headed back to SKIP-JACK for the evening.

Monday 9/24: Atlantic Highlands to Manasquan Inlet, NJ – 39 NM

Blue skies and favorable light wind from the West greeted us in the morning, and the forecast was favorable for our first leg offshore. We made a pot of coffee, and set out with a cup in hand early. The day was perfect, favorable current carried us past Sandy Hook and out to sea quickly. We sailed a beam reach all day arriving at Manasquan Inlet by 1600.

We could have anchored further up the river, but it looked difficult and insecure with a strong current on the outgoing tide. There was also a draw bridge which did not respond to my calls, so we decided to take a slip at the Brielle Marine Basin, right next to the bridge.

We took on fuel and ice before tying up for the evening. The showers were brand new and wonderful! Trains came by regularly till around 2200, then it was quiet the rest of the night. A brand new, 48 foot Beneteau tied up right behind us. The Beneteau's crew was all guys, and I figured they were headed to Annapolis as we were. It turned out that they were contracted to deliver the boat for the Annapolis show.

SKIP-JACK took a beating against the pilings all night, because we could not tie up tight enough to keep it from moving forward and backward against the dock as the tidal current ran in, then out. The fenders would not stay where the pilings were. The pilings had bumpers, but the wakes from fishing party boats leaving and coming in bounced us against them regularly.

Tuesday 9/25: Manasquan inlet to Atlantic City, NJ – 55 NM (2 nights)

This leg of the trip would be the longest. We set out early again with a southwest wind, forecast to be 15 to 20 knots. Everything I read said that Atlantic City was accessible in all weather, and we've sailed in 15 to 20 knots many times. The wind against the current set up some very big standing waves leaving Manasquan, but there was only about a quarter mile to fight in order to clear the inlet. SKIP-JACK's bow did bury a number of times as we worked our way out under full power.



Our course on this leg needed to be south-west-south with the wind from the southwest but we were able to maintain a heading a little better than 180° magnetic, which forced us to tack occasionally. We were making poor progress so decided to motor-sail in an effort to arrive at Atlantic City before dark. As we were motor sailing, we noticed a school of dolphins was in the vicinity, which made Pam ecstatic. At time we were treated to the view of 8 to 10 dolphins simultaneously breaking the water's surface in perfect unison. The ecstasy was soon to be broken by what was to follow.

To our misfortune, the wind continued to increase all day. By 1800, we could just start to see some of the buildings in Atlantic City, but they were still far off. We were tacking against the wind with jib alone against a 25 to 30 knot wind. The seas were building to an uncomfortable level, and I began to get a little nervous. With the wind strengthening, all of the inlets were too dangerous to enter, and it looked as if we were committed to staying out till we arrived at Atlantic City. Pam agreed with me, but she was concerned that we could not make Atlantic City at a reasonable hour. The seas kept building as wind increased. We had a clear view of Atlantic City at night with all the casinos lit up like Christmas trees, but the wind was now over 30 Knots and the waves were cresting high.

By 2200, I was getting very nervous. Each wave would bring us to a standstill, and our speed kept dropping until we were down to 3 knots under jib alone. The tacks were becoming very violent. The boat was slamming into the waves, often with the whole boat shuddering like jello, as the waves slapped the windward side. The autopilot was useless in seas that were running eight feet high. All I could do was to steer down the waves as best as I could in an effort to carve a smooth path through them.

I noticed that the radar reflector had chafed though, fallen, and the lines had wrapped around the jib sheet and stays. We were headed off shore; so, before we could tack the lines had to be cleared away. I turned off the wind and moved up the high side with a knife to clear the mess. The boat motion made the effort challenging, but it didn't take long.

Our conversation faltered, then ceased as time got later and later. On the next tack, the sheet got hung up on one of the halyard winches and would not fill. The anemometer was showing the wind speed to be well over 30 knots headed to 40. I let her come off the wind enough to where boat motion wasn't

too bad, and Pam took the helm as I ran forward to free the sheet. This episode was too scary to repeat! We decided it would be safer to just power directly into the wind and waves. It was 2300. We could clearly see Atlantic City eight miles away. We had no choice but to deal with a bad situation and to keep on going.

There were few words between us the rest of the night. The night was dark with so little light we could not see the waves till they were right on us. All I remember is steering to avoid the worst of what was bearing down on us, then I heard Pam say, "It looks like It's getting light out". I couldn't believe it! We had sailed through the night: No food, no drink, and only one trip to the head; and the wind never let up. By 0800, I could see the end of the channel into Atlantic City Inlet. The waves were chaotic, and the GPS had our speed over ground at 0 knots as we plunged into the troughs and a mere 1.0 to 1.5 knots as we came off the crests. It took forever.

We finally arrived in the harbor at Atlantic City and took a slip at Senator Frank Marina, it was 1000. We had been underway, offshore, in lousy weather for 27 straight hours without so much as a nap. We did a walk around of the boat to check for any damages. The Anchor pin had somehow pulled out and the anchor was dangling at the bow. This caused a nice silver dollar sized hole in the bow, but it didn't go through. One of the turnbuckles in the lower lifeline worked its way off and was lost, and the Radar reflector was down with all the lines. I wasn't worried about the lower lifeline, and the anchor was simple to put home in the anchor roller.



We were too wound up to sleep right away so we used the laundry and did a wash including the clothes soaked with salt spray. During the half hour wash time we headed into one of the Casinos for a quick beer. It was only 1100, but it didn't feel like it.

There were four other boats at the pier where we tied up. We were all transients and all stuck in the same weather pattern. One story that stood out was that of a 50 ft sloop lofted out of the water to the mast as it came off the crest of a wave. Few boats ventured out of the Inlet that day.

The wind finally settled down to a pleasant 10 knots the next morning, 9/26, with clear blue skies. We were not ready to head right out to sea. I restrung the lines used to hoist the radar reflector because we would soon be running along the shipping channel in Delaware Bay. We spent the rest of the day walking the boardwalk, checking the sights, and getting some exercise. We found a nice Irish pub on a side street where the food was very reasonable and the beer was very cold.

Casinos are not our thing. The first day we arrived and had our beer at the Marina Casino, the cacophony of sounds coming from every direction was disturbing, and our money is too valuable to throw into a bunch of machines for the remote promise to win a fortune. We continued our walk through Atlantic City, not one of the most picturesque cities we've visited, and then headed back toward

a restaurant I had noticed across from the marina, on the water. After an order of muscles and a couple glasses of wine we headed back to Skip-Jack for dinner and the sack.

Friday 9/28: Atlantic City to Cape May, NJ – 38 NM (2 nights)

The wind is light with fair skies. The forecast is favorable and we head out early. After motoring out of the harbor, we set full sail and found the wind to be too light to move at minimum speed of 5 knots to

make the distance to Cape May. I went to start the engine and nothing happened. The batteries were all showing 12.5V, and everything seemed to be OK, but nothing happened again as I pushed the starter button. I went below, took my tester out, and chased down the problem to the fact that the ignition switch was dead. I dug out some wires from the small inverter we had on board and attached one end to the Ignition switch hot side and then other end to one of the 15 amp breakers in the electrical panel, and tried the starter again. It worked! We were on our way motor-sailing. The rest of the day was uneventful, arriving at the Cape May channel by 1800.

There were a dozen other boats anchored off the Coast Guard Station, and it took a few tries anchor a comfortable distance from the others boats. The current in the channel put us in an odd location related to the anchor. We noticed that almost all the other boats were from Canada, I thought I was in the wrong country! We were tired, so we made dinner, had a glass of wine, and headed below for another chapter in our books.

The next morning after coffee we decided to stay the day, chase down the bug in the starting system, and head to town for some groceries. I thought there must be a fuse in the ignition system but had no idea where it was. Leaving the jumper to the ignition switch in place, I disconnected the connectors in the ignition wires between the starter and the ignition switch one at a time and checked the voltage at each of the connectors. Everything was good to the last connector near the starter, then I noticed a bulge in the wires, wrapped in electrical tape. I unwrapped the tape and, Viola! There was the fuse case with a blown 30 amp fuse. There was also a spare fuse inside the fuse case, so I replaced the blown fuse and checked. Everything was back to normal. I examined all the wiring carefully to see if there were any bare wires or any places where there could be a short, but found nothing. While refastening wires back in place, insulation was added at any point that might be able to abrade



though from engine vibration.

That done, we headed ashore, where there was nice pub with a brick oven serving a killer pizza. After lunch, we headed out on foot for our long walk to town for groceries. When we returned to Utsch's Marina (a four or more mile walk), I noticed they had bicycles available to rent. Oh well, next time. We stopped in a marine store and picked a few spare 30 Amp fuses, should the starter problem recur, then headed back for the boat, it was almost dinner time.

Sunday 9/30: Cape May to Reedy Island, MD –48 NM

The cruising guide said it would be wise to navigate the Cape May Canal with a favorable current, which meant setting out early. The wind was light and favorable as we set out at 0700 with coffees in hand. We were through the Canal and in Delaware Bay by 0800 and headed north. Delaware Bay has few harbors available which are convenient for transients. They are all on the East side and up rivers. I didn't see any place where moorings or anchorages looked practical, so we were heading to Reedy Island. Things went well till about 1400. The Canadian boats were visible in the distance and seemed to be traveling in groups. As the bay narrowed, the current changed and grew stronger. Our speed dropped from six knots, to five, and to four. The skies began clouding up. The wind was forecast to go westerly which would be good for us; but, when it arrived, it was quite strong and generated an uncomfortable chop. Our progress became poor, down to 3 to 3.5 knots. As we reached the narrow north end of the bay around sunset, the skies opened up, and rain arrived in torrents. This was the first real rain we had encountered to this point. With the Dodger and Biminis up, we tried to stay away from the windward side. The next available anchorage was at the south end of Reedy Island, seven miles ahead. We pressed on at the slow speed of 3 knots against the current as night came upon us.



South of Reedy Island Inlet is a small cut through two jetties running along the shore in the narrow north end of Delaware Bay. The Cruising guide suggested finding Can 3R and heading west to the cut between the jetties. The problem was that we have never been there before, it was raining, it was dark, and there were lights everywhere. The compass heading of west had to be severely corrected to compensate for the current. I was very insecure watching the depth carefully as we crept toward the jetty, which we could not see. Finally I could see the red navigation light at the edge of the cut and kept it close to starboard as we entered the safe water south of Reedy Island. A couple of the Canadians were already there as we set anchor in 15 feet of water, it was 2030. We got out of our wet clothes and took out some leftovers for supper, ate, and headed for the sack as the flotilla of Canadians motored in and anchored around us.

Monday 10/1: Reedy Island to Bohemia Bay, MD – 26 NM

Coffee in hand, we headed out with clear skies headed for the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal under power. As we approached the canal there were barges and ships anchored off the entrance, and a Coast Guard boat meandering around. The Coast Guard boat began heading south till they went by us then abruptly turned toward us with their flashing lights on. "I hope everything is in order" I thought to myself, as they asked to tie up to us. They were courteous as they introduced themselves as the Delaware Police and Coast Guard. I went below to get the ships papers they asked for, as Pam answered all their inquiries, such as: Where are you from, where are you headed, where do you live, are you American citizens, etc. I passed them the ships papers while they continued the questions. The ships papers were in order, and I was relieved they never came aboard. I know SKIP-JACK's head would not pass their inspection, since I never added the lock to the Seacock. We always make a practice of abiding by the no discharge zones. They bid us safe trip and let us go on our way.

We continued on through the Canal to Chesapeake City and stopped to have lunch. I was amazed; the available town floating docks are free for 24 hours for transients. There was another boat at one of the docks. The crew came over and took lines as we tied up. They were friendly and eager to explain the harbor's points of interest. They had been there two days. There seemed to be an honor system for those who wished to use the utilities, there were written instructions on the pier describing where to pay and a rate schedule for electricity and water. We could see a nice Tiki Bar/restaurant right a short distance around the harbor, where we headed for a pizza and beer. It was 1500, before we headed out toward Bohemia Bay, the most northern harbor in the Chesapeake.

Bohemia Bay Yacht Harbor is the marina where we had arranged to winter the boat. I introduced myself to the manager, Ken Long and arranged for a slip for the night. A mooring in Nantucket is more expensive than the slip we were in.

Tuesday 10/2: Bohemia Bay to Annapolis, MD – 46 NM

The forecast was for a favorable northwest wind but with rain showers all day. We set out early in steady rain, heavy at times, running south at a swift 6.5 knots under sail alone. The Biminis and Dodger helped, but it was still damp and uncomfortable. However, this was the last leg in my long sought after quest to attend the Annapolis Boat Show by water. We stayed just outside the shipping channels and arrived at the Annapolis Naval Anchorage just before dark. There was plenty of company in the anchorage with boats from all over the U.S. and Canada.

We attended the boat show Thursday and Friday during which I was able to make a decision on how to deal with the broken refrigeration system. I had long conversations the people at the Spectra Watermaker booth, after having our first year's experience using our Ventura 150.



When we return in the spring, armed with the experience of this trip, I will be more able to plan our trip north. I plan to take more advantage of the currents and allow more time. We will also obtain more detailed weather forecasts for at least 24 hours ahead. The Cruising Guide was invaluable for understanding the harbors available and what to expect once there. We prefer anchoring to tying up at slips or moorings. Most harbors had anchorages; but at the end of a long day, I didn't want to anchor in an insecure location. Having been there, we now know better where we can and cannot anchor.

We are looking forward to sailing the Chesapeake in the spring for a month or more before heading north. I am very grateful to my first mate, Pam, for being strong when it counted and giving me the support to deal with the challenging conditions at various times during the trip. She never complained and her only demand was that we be more careful and conservative in the future. Gerald Muller