



DARIEN SAIL & POWER SQUADRON
DISTRICT 2, UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS®

DSPSCT.org
DSPSCT@gmail.com
September, 2023

Long Island Circumnavigation, Part Deux

— *By Frank Kemp*

The Dark Side

First of all — you may not have known that I have “gone to the dark side.” My beloved “Lovinde,” an 18' Marshall Catboat, has been sold and is now in good hands in Centerville, Cape Cod. For the past 30 years I have been sailing that boat — and for the past three years it has been sailing me! It was time to let her go — and move on to a sturdy center console.

I purchased a well-used Mako-19 from Joe Gerace of Dockside Marine in Stamford (203 348 9007). Joe had maintained the boat and engine for another customer of 15 years — and vouched for its reliability and sea-worthiness. Indeed, this trip validated his good care and maintenance over the years. He told me I could do it, and I did it.



I went from this — Marshall 18 Catboat



To this — Mako 19 110 hp

I had done this before: counterclockwise in the Catboat

I should mention that Roger Klein and I did this round-trip, “counterclockwise” in 2014, in six days. It was a great trip, traveling with Roger in our two Catboats — never more than 1/4 mile apart, having lobster dinners each night — and checking with each other by radio during the day. This trip

(Continued on page 2)



The Bridge

- Commander
Cdr Lynn Oliver, AP
- Executive Officer
Lt/C Jeff Brown, S
- Education Officer
P/C Mark Dam, P
- Treasurer
D/Lt/C John Pedersen, SN
- Admin Officer
Lt/C Fred Elliott
- Secretary
Lt/C Marilyn Ramos
- Asst Education Officer
1/Lt Shawn Munday
- Asst Admin Officer
1/Lt Mark Bodian, S
- P/C Geoff Axt, AP
- Members at Large**
Peter Adler, N
P.J. Adler, P
Lorraine George-Harik
Gerry Raasch, P

Advisors

- P/D/C Jeff Gerwig, AP-IN
- Neal Konstantin, AP
- Rob Steckel, P
- Jim Travis, JN

Paper Charts

All traditional NOAA paper nautical charts will be canceled by January 2025.

NOAA has already started to cancel individual charts and will shut down all production and maintenance of traditional paper nautical charts and the associated raster chart products and services by January 2025.

See [Farewell to Traditional Nautical Charts](#), [Cancelled Charts](#), and [Pending Chart Cancellations](#).

(Continued from page 1)

recapped that pleasant sojourn — and by going “clockwise” around the island this time I guess it “unwound” the process, and reset it to zero. I’m ready to go again.

Incidentally, for the second leg of the 2014 trip — from City Island, down through NY and around the corner at Breezy Point, Rockaway, to Freeport, Roger and I each had crew: Peter Adler and Pat Linskey — who kept our spirits, and navigational skills, up to par. However, for this journey, I decided to do it alone, at my own speed, not trying to set any records. It was an easy-does-it trip — I could have pushed harder.

I made the trip in four days: a half day at the beginning (to Westbrook), a full day to Shinnecock Canal, a full day to East Rockaway, and a half day — up through the NY harbor to home. It was about 250 miles: a big day of 78 miles, and leisurely day of 41 miles, the other two days: in between.

The Weather Window and Sleeping On Board

I began by looking for a weather window of four days. There would be absolutely no joy in fighting the wind, waves or rain — it was to be a pleasure trip, not an endurance run. When the window appeared on Sunday, I got my supplies together and departed, Monday, at high tide (to get over the Holly Pond Dam) in mid-afternoon.

I had slept over on the boat, here at the dock, on Sunday night, to test out the system. I had an air mattress, a sleeping bag, and a waterproof outer shell. I devised a way of bringing the canvas Bimini down to create a shelter at the bow — and rigged a 6' x 8' canvas to bring the shelter back to the windshield of the console.

This arrangement would surely have leaked badly and even blown away in foul weather — but it did work to keep the evening dampness off of the deck. After a few tries at using the sleeping-bag protective shell — I gave up on it — my enclosure was dry enough not to need it.



The sleeping shelter looked like this

Due to the limited deck shape in the bow, which was sheltered by the Bimini and the tarp, I slept most of the evening in the shape of a "question mark" — curled up to fit the mold. Needless to say — the bed at home, after three days of this, was very welcome. But it worked.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

The sea-state during the trip

The sea-state was varied — but not threatening. To Westbrook, the Sound was like glass — I was flying at an easy 20kts and made the trip in 3.5 hours with a fuel stop in Milford. The next day, from Westbrook to Plum Gut was “lumpy” — with a lot of spray flying and pounding ... but it was over quickly — only 13 miles of hardship — followed by an easy slack-water passage through the Gut, and calmer conditions on the other side, around to Greenport. After that, it was all inland with moderate wave action. At the western end of Long Island, I traveled out in the Atlantic from Jones Beach to East Rockaway and then the next day, from East Rockaway to the Verrazzano. Yes, it was in the Atlantic — but on a pleasant day — there was no chop, and it was very similar to trips to Block and the Vineyard in the old days. Nothing heroic, no “Perfect Storm” rollers — else I wouldn’t have been there!

On the final morning, after clearing Hell Gate, and fueling at City Island, the return to Darien was the wettest — smash and splash — spray flying and me soaking. But I was homeward-bound, and Long Island Sound chop is ... Long Island Sound chop — just put up with it!

In short — I caught a lot a spray on the way to the Gut, and from Hell Gate to home — but with some good foul-weather gear and a sense of humor — it was a minor inconvenience.

Fuel Management in a Hungry 2-Cycle

Fuel management was a big issue. “Welcome to the world of power-boats, Kemp.” A Mako-19 requires a reliable flow of fuel — hour after hour. The internal tank is 25 gallons. I refueled eight times, twice a day — usually about 12 gallons, although after one long run I needed 19 gallons to fill it up again. I carried two spare external 5-gallon cans, lashed to the front of the console, which I never used. But it made me feel better to have them on board. I found that I averaged about 2.5 miles per gallon — I would like to know how that compares with other boat/engine configurations. Let me know.

Fuel docks are precious. Yacht clubs usually don’t have them, and places that are listed in the old guidebooks have gone out of business. The remaining fueling stations are often inconveniently located: Greenport has none (I quickly learned that you need to cross to Dering Harbor), and Rockaway’s only fuel dock is 5 miles up a side-creek (and 5 miles back!) way, way, off the main channel.

I carried four spare gallons of 2-cycle oil for the reservoir, and used two of them. I added StarTron Enzyme Fuel Treatment at each top-off.

Navigation in a Fast Boat

A console-mounted chart-plotter is essential. Things happen quickly: at 15 to 20kts, the buoys appear so quickly that keeping your thumb on the proper location of a paper chart is a losing proposition. This boat has a Garmin 740S installed, and I brought a little hand-held Garmin GPS III to track the mileage and time for the trip. I just checked eBay and found that a little old GPS III goes for \$25 these days. It’s a keeper. The little device kept the mileage and time-under-way totals and subtotals for the trip, since I would reset it in the mornings so as to collect the daily numbers. I believe the big 740S could have done this simple task as well, but it was reassuring to reach-out and check the numbers on the little unit to determine how many miles and how much time had elapsed in planning for a fuel-stop. There were only two remarkable navigation issues on this route. One: the clearance of the lowest bridge in Shinnecock is 22’ at high tide (tide range is about 2.5’).

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

It was very satisfying to slip under this railroad bridge this time, after having to unstep the Catboat's mast on the 2014 trip. Two: the inland channel north and east of the Moriches Inlet is famous for its shifting sandbars. The Coast Guard and County have apparently given up on indicating the best channel — but have instead posted “Caution” buoys, and called it quits. Seeing where the sandbars currently are can possibly be done in the right sunlight, or by following a local boater through the unmarked current channel. Not to worry: it's just sand — and if you watch your depth-finder, you can figure it out. But it is the only bad place in the 250 mile trip — and extends for about two miles. Despite going slow, and watching the depth-finder, I tapped the bottom at one point. I quickly raised the engine, and let it drift into deeper water, and resumed my way, following a local. Could have been worse!

I had several marine hand-held VHF radios on board — and only used one, once, to have a conversation with a draw-bridge operator, to confirm where a fuel-dock was located. He didn't know!

The Mistake that Turned out Well

The key to the trip is that along the South Shore of Long Island there is an “Inland Waterway.” It is a connection of canals and bays from Shinnecock to Rockaway, allowing the transit of some 60 miles of the 70-mile length of the South Shore. It is protected from the Atlantic, and entered from inlets at Shinnecock, Moriches, Fire Island, Jones, and finally East Rockaway.

(Continued on page 5)

Coming Attractions

- **Tuesday, October 10, 7:00 pm**—Boating Course starts at St. Luke's Parish, Parish Hall, Darien. Tuesdays & Thursdays for 6 classes + exam. Details [here](#).
- **Sunday, October 22, 3:00 pm**—Speaker Series at Rowayton Community Center: Tom Verde on the 1938 hurricane. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).
- **Sunday, November 12, 5:00 pm**—Speaker Series at Norwalk Yacht Club: speaker and topic TBD. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).
- **Sunday, December 17, 5:00 pm**— Holiday Party and Speaker Series at Norwalk Yacht Club: speaker and topic TBD. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).
- **Sunday, January 21, 5:00 pm**—Speaker Series at Norwalk Yacht Club: David Tunick on Solo Transatlantic Sail. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).
- **Wednesday, January 24**—Boating Course and Marine Navigation course. Details TBD.
- **Sunday, February 25, 5:00 pm**—Speaker Series at Norwalk Yacht Club: Joseph Schnierlein on Climate Change Affects Long Island Sound. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).
- **Sunday, March 17, 5:00 pm**—Change of Watch at Norwalk Yacht Club: speaker and topic, if any, TBD. See the [DSPS Calendar](#).

(Continued from page 4)



Miles of canals near Moriches



A "Look-Right-Through" glass house on stilts

When traveling along these 60 miles it becomes routine to take the “preferred channel” at each channel junction — i.e., go with the flow. If you see a red-and-green buoy — take the preferred channel and you will be OK. Up to a point. Without paying 100% attention in the vicinity of the Jones Inlet, I routinely took the preferred channel, which in this case was to port, to left, and continued on, listening to the jazz on the ship’s AM radio. A few minutes later, as I glanced around, instead of seeing the barrier beach to my left, as had been the case for 60 miles, I saw: a container ship!



A mile offshore at Long Beach

I had inadvertently left the canal system and had transited the inlet and was out on the ocean. At that point I could have made a U-turn and retraced my steps ... but the Atlantic was docile — the afternoon was ideal — so I continued my trip to East Rockaway, along Long Beach with all its hotels and apartment buildings to my right, without incident. But I will always remember that shock of seeing the big container ship on the horizon and the five seconds of wondering: where the heck am I ??? !!!

Key Moments of the Trip

Folks have asked me about this — and the hands-down answer is the Verrazzano Narrows Bridge — but I will save that for last. Here are some other nominations:

- The glass-smooth LI Sound from Darien to Milford for fuel, and then from Milford to Westbrook’s Duck Island Roads. A surreal couple of hours, seeing the familiar ports of call fly by — a few miles offshore and going like stink. Surreal.
- The passages through Plum Gut, the Shinnecock Canal’s Lock, and Hell Gate. Each transit was timed to slack water, which necessitated getting up early to make the timing work out right. In each case the need to get up early was the buy-in for a glorious sunrise and the chance to hear the small noises of nature

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

waking up as well: gulls, ducks, and the ‘bonk’ of a distant buoy’s bell. Yes — that’s boating for you: the joy of an early start.

- The kindness of strangers. In Shinnecock, while I was off at supper, someone left me a package of fruit, cookies and water — which I found, with no explanation, when I returned to the boat. I was not successful in tracking down my benefactor.
- Then, in East Rockaway, at the little Cedarhurst Yacht Club, the club’s manager invited me for supper with his wife and son — for good conversation, poached salmon, and then some cherry cobbler for dessert. In the morning at 6:00am he appeared at my slip at his dock with some hot coffee, some advice about the channel — and a kind shove-off for the last leg of the trip.



Water, fruit, snacks — from a stranger — while I was at supper!

- The trip through the harbor: Statue of Liberty, Wall Street, the big bridges, the UN, Roosevelt Island, Hell Gate, LaGuardia’s planes low overhead, Whitestone and Throgs Neck — the usual stuff: but early in the morning.



Wall Street - from the Buttermilk Channel



The River Cafe at the Brooklyn Bridge — only a \$200 Prix Fixe

- Finally, — the Verrazzano. After completing the westerly trek in the Atlantic along Rockaway Beach, one turns North, parallel to the Ambrose Channel — the classic approach to New York Harbor. In the morning mist, though, you don’t really see these landmarks: over to your left is the gray bulk of New Jersey at Sandy Hook and the Raritan Bay, slightly forward, Staten Island is looming, and then to the right Coney Island rests easy. At this point, 8 miles out, on a misty morning, you depend on your compass, your GPS, and “faith” — that you are really heading in the right direction — as the landmarks I mentioned are only a fuzzy “suggestion” and not a firm reference at all. Only after a mile or so of this mystery — there it is! The Verrazzano appears low on the horizon (7 miles away) about the size of a thumb-nail — a very welcome sight, reassuring, magnetic, and just a suggestion — in and out of the mist. Over the next few miles the bridge becomes clearer and then you are under it — gazing up at the thin road ribbon and all the

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

noise of the traffic. Wow! But what I remember most fondly is first seeing the bridge from way, way out at the Ambrose Channel.



The Verrazzano from the Ambrose Channel - 2 miles to go

I could go on and on

Well I could go “on and on.” But I already have! This memo is longer than I planned — but it was fun putting it all down.

Just as Mark Twain, or Churchill, said: “I could have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time!”

Best to you all — *Frank Kemp*



Every Rock Has A Cormorant or Every Cormorant Has A Rock
